

laugh, quake and run, stoop and weep and in a 108 different ways express the feelings and sentiments that suffuse the human heart! Let us look at some of these marvels of creation of the artist. One of them is appropriately called Lalitam (Grace). No comment is needed to draw attention to the truly graceful pose of the figure. Fear generated by the sudden perception of a snake at close quarters is depicted in Fig. III (Bhujangatrasitam), while ecstasy experienced while meditating deeply on and worshipping one's Ishta Devata is brought out in a third one (Kuncitam). Some of the poses depicted demand almost superhuman skill in their execution. One such is Lalata Tilakam. The right leg is to be shot up straight from behind, and the right toe is to touch the forehead in front, the left hand helping it. Another is Sakatasyam. As a most significant part of this dance, Bharata Muni prescribes that the artist should jump up, and while up in the air, curve the body round into a cart-wheel, and then come down gracefully to a natural standing posture.

Apart from these tiny sculptures we have others, carved on a massive scale, depicting

sacred legends and mythological incidents. Two of these Ardha Nariśwara (Fig. IV) and Sri Nataraja in the Urdhva Tandava pose (Fig. V) are located at a great height on the inner face of the Western Gopuram. Nor are sculptural surprises lacking in the Chidambaram temple. In the shrine dedicated to Sri Subrahmanya, there is a solitary sculpture in relief, in a low wall, which has puzzled many scholars. The pose is one of those characteristic of Lord Buddha. The sacred thread is found occasionally in well-identified Buddha figures. But the Uṣṇisa is not there, and a Buddha figure without Uṣṇisa is unthinkable. May this be Ādi Subrahmanya? There is another puzzle sculpture in the stair way to the Hall with a thousand pillars. The entire style of the carving is strangely reminiscent of Ajanta, the difference is in media. The figure seems almost a replica of the girl in the panel 'The Dying Princess' at Ajanta!

Such are the treasures hidden in the Chidambaram temple. The author feels that systematic research will reveal sacred sculptural wealth in the shrine, hitherto unnoticed and uncared for.

MEANING OF THE INSIGNIA OF THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

श्री रामकृष्णसङ्खलाञ्छनरहस्यम्

SWAMI HARSHANANDA

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उद्यन्सूर्यः सरोजं च तत्पत्रं हंस एव च ।
सर्पः संक्षुब्धनीरं लाञ्छनं साधिकं स्मृतम् ॥ १ ॥

1. Rising sun, lotus, its leaf, swan, serpent, and wavy waters—(a suitable combination of these as shown) is the insignia of the (Ramakrishna) Order.

सूर्यो ज्ञानमहिर्योग नीरं कर्म तथाऽम्भसि ।
पादं पत्रं त्वसंगत्वं कमलं भक्तिमेव च ॥ २ ॥
हंसोऽनक्ति परात्मानमेवं चिह्नं निरूप्यते ।
प्राप्नुयाद्योगकर्मभ्यां भक्त्या ज्ञानेन वा परम् ॥ ३ ॥

2-3. The sun represents knowledge, the serpent represents yoga, the lotus-leaf in water desirelessness, the wavy waters karma, the lotus represents devotion and the swan represents the Highest Atman. It is thus that the Insignia is interpreted. One has to attain the Highest Atman either through (devotion as represented by) the lotus or through (karma as represented by) the wavy waters and (desirelessness signified by) the lotus leaf or

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delights of the world are not his delights. He only wants to be pure in heart.

What do we gain by being spiritual? This is not his question at all. How can I see God?, is his question.

Though his whole being is agonized, he is not impatient. For he knows for certain, that even if he has to wait for lives before he can see God, it is the only thing that is to be done. Everything else has to be done for this one thing. Life, in fact, has no other business

but to rush to its source, which is God. Therefore his love leaps Godward like a flame to be united with the Mother flame.

Hence this is the gain of being spiritual : (1) For the *mukta*, the illumined, the gain is God. (2) For the *mumukṣu*, the aspirant yearning for the vision of God, is the agony for God. When you have this agony, you have next to the greatest thing in the universe. And soon you will have the greatest too. Sri Ramakrishna says : after the rosy dawn, the glorious sun will surely break forth.

MEANING OF THE INSIGNIA OF THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

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through (knowledge as represented by) the sun or through (yoga as represented by) the serpent.

सन्तमसं यथा सूर्यो विनाशयति तत्क्षणम् ।
तथा क्षपयति ज्ञानमज्ञानं पूर्वसंचितम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. Just as the sun destroys dense darkness at once, even so does knowledge destroy ignorance accumulated through the ages.

मण्डलीकृतसर्पस्तु यदि यष्ट्या प्रताडितः ।
यथोत्तिष्ठति वेगेन बिलं प्रति च धावति ॥ ५ ॥

तथा कुण्डलिनीशक्तिः प्राणायामादिकारणे ।
मूलाधारात् सहस्रारं प्राप्य मुक्तिं प्रयच्छति ॥ ६ ॥

5-6. When a coiled serpent is struck with a stick, it rises fast and runs towards its hole. Even so the (latent spiritual) power called Kundalini, when roused through yogic practices like the pranayama etc., moves up from (the plexus called) Mooladhara to (the highest plexus called) Sahasrara and gives liberation.

पादं पत्रं जले मग्नं न क्लिप्तं तेन सर्वथा ।
असंगः कर्म कुर्याच्चेत् पुरुषो नैव बद्धयते ॥ ७ ॥

7. The lotus-leaf immersed in water never gets wet by that water. Similarly if a person can work unattached, he will not be bound by his actions.

उत्फुल्लपत्रराजीवं रूपगन्धादिभिर्यथा ।

आकृष्य वित्तमस्माकमानन्दं चापि यच्छति ॥ ८ ॥

भक्तिपद्मं तथैवापि मानस परमेशितुः ।

आकृष्य भक्तलोकाय मुक्त्यानन्दं प्रयच्छति ॥ ९ ॥

8-9. A well-bloomed lotus gives us pleasure by attracting our attention through its colour, fine smell etc. In the same way the lotus of devotion draws the attention of the Highest Lord, gives the bliss of liberation to the devotees (through Him).

पुरा विधृत्य हंसत्वं परमात्मोपदिष्टवान् ।

सनकादीन् अतो ह्यात्मा परो हंस इतीर्यते ॥ १० ॥

10. In olden days the Supreme Atman assumed the form of a swan and taught (the highest truth) to the sages like Sanaka and others. Hence that Supreme Atman is known as 'Hansa' (swan).

विवेकानन्ददत्तं नः सर्वयोगसमन्वयम् ।

प्रदर्शयल्लान्छनं त्वां प्रणमि शिरसाऽनिशम् ॥ ११ ॥

11. O Insignia, I ever bow my head to you, who were given to us by Swami Vivekananda and who are exhibiting to us the synthesis of all the yogas !