The nineteenth century was a creative age of great potentialities. It produced an unusually large number of distinguished men in different parts of the globe. It was an era of new awakening in almost all walks of Indian life. A careful analysis shows that behind the over all consciousness and general stir to reform medievalism, there was a deep rooted spiritual urge for higher values within the very soul of our country.

Brahmananda Sivayogi was the prominent thinker of the nineteenth century, who insisted a necessary, rational and revolutionary change in the social structure of Kerala. A society is a web of social relationships and therefore, social change means change in the system of social relationships. These are to be taken in terms of social process, social interaction and social organisation. Social change is common to all societies. Its nature, pattern and causation are linked with certain historical and social conditions existing at the time. A society may also have wide regional variations regarding to its nature of social structure as well as its patterns of change.

Almost all social customs and institutions in India derived sustenance from religious injections and sanctions. Therefore no social reform can made without changing the existing religious notions which sustained the social customs. Indian reformers well understood the close interaction between different aspects of human activities. Sivayogi believed that religious reform must precede demand for social reform or political rights. Sivayogi’s movement is very radical in character, seeking both religious and social reform with great intensity.
Sivayogi’s gradual evolution towards radicalism had two sources: a belief in equality and an inflexible determination to submit everything to the scrutiny of reason. His love of equality led him to advocate against caste system, hereditary priesthood, and social discrimination and to advocate complete rejection of the existing social system. His refusal to believe without rational grounds led him to reject religion including belief in God. It made him keenly critical of absurdities and anomalies in the society. Like all radicals he could not excuse anything on the ground that it was traditional. It was clear that with every great historical revolution in social conditions the outlook and ideas of men, and consequently their religious ideas, are revolutionised.¹

For the intellectuals, there was the need to rationalise the traditional society. A wave of unrest swept over the thinking minds during the early years of the nineteenth century. Out of that unrest the Indian Renaissance began to take shape. In the wake of that awakening the socio religious reform movements also emerged. The nineteenth century in the history of India possessed the same characteristics which the eighteenth century possessed in the history of Europe. It was an age of enlightenment and awakening, of renaissance and reform, of rationalism and progress, which all culminated in a growing consciousness of the need for liberty and unity.

Sivayogi’s approach to social revolution and his ideas and thoughts on it are better known from his works. A reflective thought regarding the irrational, meaningless social and religious customs prevalent in India especially in Kerala, developed in him. Sivayogi made sincere and strenuous efforts to study the reality behind religions and dared to prove it with his own reasons and convince others. Sivayogi identified and theorised the most important questions of his time – religion, the caste system, the gender question and the lot of the common people.

¹ Marx, Engles, On Religion (Moscow, 1975), p.83.
On Religion

Swami Vivekananda says: “Religion, as it is generally thought all over the world, is said to be based upon faith and belief, and, in most cases consists only of different sects of theories, and that is the reason why we find all religions quarrelling with each other. These theories again, are based upon belief.”

Religious knowledge may be gained from religious leaders, scriptures, and personal revelations. This knowledge is unreliable, since the particulars of religious knowledge vary from religion to religion, from sect to sect, and often from individual to individual. Religion is one of the strongest bulwarks of established authority and at the same time one of the most radical instruments for social change. Originally revolution in a religion can be achieved by completely freeing the will of man from the belief in God, soul, re-birth, and fatalism, life after death, karma and idolatry.

Religious beliefs usually relate to the existence, nature and worship of a deity or deities and divine involvement in the universe and human life. On religion, opinions differ from the great religious leader down to an ordinary man. All religion is nothing but the fantastic reflection in man’s mind of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces.

Religions have a large impact on the personal lives of Keralites. It is based on faith and rituals. Religious disagreement and conflicts among dogmatists of various religions have led to violent and bloody conflicts in society. Atheism can be hostility towards organised main stream religion, or can be extended to include any form of belief in the supernatural or the divine. Anti-religion is opposition to some or all religions. People who are anti-religious see religions as inherently dangerous, destructive, foolish or

---

2. Swami Vivekananda, Rajayoga or Conquering the internal nature, 34th ed. (Kolkata, 2007), p.2.
3. Marx, Engles, op.cit, p.128.
irrational. Anti-religion is distinct from atheism, although many anti-religionists are also atheists. Sivayogi belongs to this category. He was prepared to agree to those principles derived from truth, justice and Dharma of every religion which were subjected to his sharp scrutiny and relentless reasoning.  

Sivayogi tries to convince the senselessness of the religious theories. All religions had not recorded their principles in writing. Similarly, religious teachings had to undergo several changes with the onward march of time. Sivayogi interpreted the principles of religion in their right way and pointed out the evil social effect of orthodox religions. He refused to believe any religion as a dependable guide for society and rejected all of them. People who follow religion do so blindly, just because their ancestors also did so. They do not bother to think about the nature or the utility of religion for human beings. In spite of having so many religions and religious sects, man cannot live a happy and useful life. One who wishes to lead such a life will have to find some other means to help him.  

According to Sivayogi human beings should aim at finding happiness for themselves and others. One should accept only such good and truthful principles, which are practicable and useful. The principles and restrictions, which are imposed on the people by the various religions, are not going to benefit mankind. It is best to discard such doctrines, which are contrary to human nature. What is required for the present times is a – universal religion – religion of bliss, which would bring into its fold all the followers of several religions who now go for to warring and dissension. It may include those atheists who do not believe in the existence of God in order to live amicably a life of harmony and peace. He found fault with the social leaders

5 Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Moksha pradeepam*, (Mal.), p.17.
who are embracing Buddhism, Christianity, Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj and Islam expecting permanent happiness and peace. He notes the incapability of those religions to give permanent happiness and peace.

In ‘Anandadarsamsam’ Sivayogi tells that people perform all irrational things as prescribed in unreasonable religious works blindly believes them to be the sayings of God or great sages. The attitude of blind faith towards one’s own religion breeds contempt and intolerance towards followers of other religions. Religious conflict has caused much bloodshed and suffering in the world. Besides, much time, energy and wealth are wasted in senseless religious rituals, like idol-worship, prayers, etc. Sivayogi believes that religions should be critically examined before their acceptance. Sivayogi’s view maintains that duty of all religious teachers is to remove the ignorance and give knowledge like a doctor restores eye sight to a blind man and thus helps him to walk without falling down. Then only the people will give up their differences and live in peace.

The attitude of blind faith in religious scriptures obstructs free and critical thinking, which, in its turn, obstructs the growth of knowledge and causes intellectual, moral and social stagnation. There are many contradictory statements in these scriptures, which do not have any logical or scientific basis. It is difficult for any rational person to accept them. Faith, or strong belief even in the absence of evidence, is the foundation of religious belief. Rationalists, on the other hand, are supporters of logic and scientific method. They reject faith, intuition, revelation, authority and other alleged extra irrational sources of knowledge. The religious attitude, thus, is the negation of the rationalist attitude. The rationalists emphasis on reason as a source of knowledge whereas religionists mostly emphasis on faith. So, it is natural and normal for rationalists to reject religion.

9. Brahmananda Sivayogi, op.cit., p.64.
Element of faith is central to all religion hence Sivayogi clearly rejects all religions. According to Sivayogi, religious principles are not dependable for everyday worldly life. Religion is concerned, not with the physical existence of man, but with his soul. Religion explains the relationship between man and God. Religion has nothing to do with the five senses of man and is concerned with the soul or spirit beyond human perception. It ignores the worldly life with its joys and sorrows. Besides, according to Sivayogi religion favors the rich people and expresses the view that religion is a barrier, which has blocked human progress. Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion.\footnote{Swami Vivekananda, \textit{Caste, Culture, and Socialism}, op.cit., p.39.} Sivayogi expresses the view that it is best to get rid of all institutionalised religions and to adopt a rational philosophy of life based on logical and scientific thinking on the basis of experience.

**On the concept of God**

It is first of all necessary to establish what is meant by God. This term is used to designate a supreme being endowed with the qualities of omnipotence, and omniscience, who is the creator of the universe with all its contents, and the chief law giver of man. God is therefore a person of some kind, and the question whether such an entity exists or not is fundamental to all theistic systems. In contrast to these notions of a personal God some modern theologians interpreted the term ‘God’ as representing some kind of abstract principles of ‘good’. This view was first developed in the ancient Indian Upanishads where God is equated with an abstract principle (Brahman). The Vedic and Brahmanic religion postulated a large number of gods, many of them are personification of natural forces.

Each religion holds diverse beliefs about their God. Followers of the most religions – monotheistic and polytheistic religions – believe that God was the creator of mankind and the rest of the universe. God control the weather and the changing of the seasons. God sometimes set aside natural
laws and create miracles. They see their own God as having revealed himself to his followers. The message is conveyed either through a verbal tradition or in written form. Most believers see their own religious texts as accurate documents and others is work of fiction.

The religion of India emphasizes freedom from the material world through purification of desires and elimination of personal identity. Hinduism considers the ultimate reality as threefold: Brahman (or God), Soul (or souls), and Samsara (or the material world). The philosophical systems that have Brahman included in their formulation or application are referred to as the theistic philosophies or Brahmanical philosophies, after Brahman or God. Moreover, these systems accept the authority of the Vedas. Thus, since the Vedas admit the existence of Brahman, these philosophies are also considered Vedic in addition to being Brahmanical. The philosophical systems not based on or using the concept of Brahman and considering only the remaining two components of Reality (i.e. Soul and / or Samsara) are called non-theistic, atheistic or Nastika. Note that non-theistic philosophies are also recognised as Hindu philosophies because Hinduism considers Soul and Samsara, the essential constituents of non-theistic philosophies, as part of ultimate reality. Besides the systems of thought which admit the validity of Vedas are called, astika (or theistic, Brahmanical, Vedic), and those which repudiate it are nastika, atheistic or non-theistic. Sivayogi did not believe in the existence of God and he rejects the definite assumption of an omnipotent universal creator. Moreover rejects the validity of Vedas. In this sense he is an atheist

In Indian philosophy, three schools of thought are commonly referred to as Nastikas- Jainism, Buddhism and Carvaka. However, all these schools also rejected a notion of creationist God and so the word Nastikas became strongly associated with them. The assumption that God is superior to man limits man’s initiative and fixes him in servility. He feels inferior in every field.

The slavish submissiveness of the majority provides handle for the active minority to exploit fellowmen. Consequently theistic order of life introduces inequalities and injustices, greed and violence, ignorance and cowardice. The greater the faith the wider these evils spread. The essence of atheism is the freedom of the individual. Freedom releases the immense potentialities of human imagination, initiative and effort that lay oppressed under theistic faith. Atheist always assert: they never surrender.

Culturally and philosophically atheist thought is as old as the Rig Veda, the most ancient of the four Vedic texts in India. Rig Veda contained ideas which might be indicative of atheism.\textsuperscript{13} From the philosophical level, atheism entered the social level to oppose the tyranny of Brahmanism as it maintained the social divisions of high and low through the so called Varna system. This is a method of social stratification by professions. Atheism was then a tool to demand and achieve social equality of all human beings. Numerous schools of thought gained prominence during the epic period as a reaction against the excessive ritualism and empty dogmatism of Vedic religion or perhaps the increasing rigidity of caste system. The authors of the Upanishads had opened the doors for various heterodox currents to emerge in society. Of them Lokaayatas, the radical atheists, Jain agnostics and heterodox Hindus and Buddhists wanted to reconstruct society on a less discriminatory and more humane basis.

The Carvaka or Lokaayatas system of thought believed neither in God nor in the after life of man. According to them, sense perception is the only true means of knowledge. In the case of Lokaayatas, atheism became a part of materialistic outlook\textsuperscript{14}. They believed in the existence of four elements only, namely the earth, water, fire, and air instead of the five elements of the Vedic scriptures of which space or ether was the fifth element. They declared that a combination of these four elements produced certain vitality

\textsuperscript{13} Debee Prasad Chattopaghya, \textit{Indian Atheism} (Calcutta,1968), p.32.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, p.6.
called life, which is very much in tune with the modern scientific theories of creation of life on earth. At the time of death these four elements would return to their respective sources, earth to earth, air to air and so on. There was no mystery of life beyond this.\footnote{Yuvaraj Krishnan, \textit{The Doctrines of Karma Its Origin and Development in Brahmanical Buddhist and Jaina traditions} (Delhi,1997), p.225.}

The original Buddhist doctrines do not entail any godly figures. Buddhism is a non-theistic philosophy. The pivotal point of view of the Buddhist philosophy is that rather than expect some supernatural entity to end human sufferings, man must realise that it was in human hands to end their sorrow. One can achieve it through conduct and action driven by knowledge, and correct understanding of human nature and the physical world. In the Jaina philosophy there is no God and the world is not created.\footnote{Hiriyanna .M, \textit{Out lines of Indian Philosophy} (Londo,1932), p.170.} In the philosophy of Mimamsa the universe is a continuous phenomenon. The world has ever been running the same, without any new creation or dissolution. God is not admitted as the creator and destroyer of the universe.\footnote{Das Gupta S.N., \textit{History of Indian Philosophy}, Vol.1 (Delhi,1975) Reprint, pp.402-403.}

Sivayogi refused to identify the divine attributes with gods, goddesses or superhuman beings. He considers God really as a destroyer of the universe.\footnote{Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Ananda adarsamasam} (Mal.), pp.18-19.} He raises series of questions to clarify his notions. If destruction is not the object, why should god create at all? Of the millions that pray for longevity, has god made a single man immortal? If He is good as spoken he would not engage himself in creation at all.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.,} pp.25-29.} Birth, death, disease and poverty, all these have come in the wake of creation.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.,} p.17.} No father kills his own children. But God does.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.,} p.28.} A father’s duty is to protect his children. People praise him as just and merciful father but he commit infanticides.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}
wild beasts look after their young ones but god commits infanticide. There is no virtue greater than kindness and no sin greater than cruelty.

Sivayogi mocks the impersonal concept of God. He goes on to criticise God as really like a corrupt judge who acquits the robber by accepting a share of the booty looted by him from others by murder, robbery and the like, thus encouraging the very crimes for which he is to meet out condign punishment.\textsuperscript{22} He never believes in Saguna concept of god.\textsuperscript{23} “God is a being without qualities, and there for impossible to be pleased by such things as worship and offerings”. We find God impotent even to protect himself when robbers enter temples, breakdown the images and carry away all the jewels and treasure. He is incapable to put a stop to the merciless butchery of lakhs of poor fowls and other animals perpetrated in his name. This is a cruel practice not dharma (virtue). The sinners are not punished and pious are not protected.\textsuperscript{24}

The fate of Jesus is an instance of callousness of God towards his worshippers.\textsuperscript{25} Unable to bear the agony Christ cried out when he was caught hold of by his enemies and nailed on the breast and crucified him. God did not give him any relief what so ever. If God is a one who is pleased of his devotees, he ought to have showered his mercy on Christ. But Christ was not blessed by God. Thus Sivayogi points out that there is no such God who is merciful, who is a friend of the distressed and who is the creator and destroyer. It becomes clear that God is heartless and is the seat of evil virtues.\textsuperscript{26}

Sivayogi repeatedly points out that the God who is worshiped as the creator; preserver and destroyer would ultimately destroy every one. There

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Anandadarsam} (Mal.),p247.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid} , p136.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Moksha pradeepam} (Mal.), pp.173-174.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Ananda Adarsamsam} (Mal.), p.23.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Ananda Matha Parasyam} (Mal.), pp.17-20, \textit{Anandadarsam} (Mal.), p.24.
\end{itemize}
is no use in attempting to please God by rituals of prayer, muttering mantras or by the tantric modes of worship, charms and other practices. If God is all powerful, omnipresent and endowed with other supernatural powers, why should one need an intermediary to relate human beings with God? Sivayogi also raises the question of the conflicting truth in the claims of different religions. Even if it is true, asks Sivayogi, that God should be realised only through religion, why should there be so many religions? Why should there be controversies and contradictions among them? Why should massacre take place in the name of religion? Why should sufferings and misery overtake humanity because of religion?  

Sivayogi claims that the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient and benevolent God is totally inconsistent with the presence of suffering and evil in this world. It is impossible for God to exist. God made races differing in intelligence, stature, and colour. Thus Sivayogi defines the belief of the supernatural creator as a persistent false belief in the face of strong contradictory evidences. Only real knowledge of the forces of nature ejects the Gods or God from one position after another.

**On idolatry**

Almost all religions worship a number of deities. All Gods and Goddesses represent the many aspects of the Absolute or ultimate reality. In initial stages the mind cannot accept the concept of Absolute. Thus, steadiness of mind can be obtained by idol worship. The images of God gave tangible forms to the abstract concepts of philosophy and mystic realization. Though Brahman is impersonal in its real sense, the personal symbols of it were introduced to satisfy the philosophical sense of the devotee and to make easy grasping of the absolute.

---

28 Ibid.
29 Marx, Engles, *op.cit*, p.131
According to Advita Vedanta, worship of Gods in the form of images is prescribed for the less qualified spiritual seekers. It is the easiest way for obtaining the spiritual consciousness. It is the medium through which devotee communicates with God. A true devotee feels the presence of God in it which helps him to move further at the path of devotion and spiritualism. He recognizes the existence of that supreme power through the worship of idol.

It should be made clear that the worship of God in the form of idol is not making the idol God. According to Hindu dharma (religion) Rama, Krishna, Shiva etc; are different names of one Isvara (God). Each devotee is free to worship any deity. It does not matter that he worships Rama or Krishna. Because of his faith in God he develops some kind of attachment towards the idol which we can say in his devotion for the God. According to Hinduism God is everywhere and in every creature of this world. He is present in every thing even if it is a tree or a river.

Among the Hindus, what ever the object of worship it is personified in the form of an idol. One cannot find a Hindu temple without an idol. This is done by officiating priest. The main purpose behind the introduction of the idol worship was the cultivation of optimism towards life, by the total dedication of one’s self to the unseen power through a visible medium. Hence in Hinduism, various images and symbols are provided for the reality. Thus image worship was originally aimed at the enlightenment of the ignorant masses, though it missed its goal gradually. It failed to cultivate spiritual progress among common man. They remained ignorant of the purpose behind idol worship and believed that the external celebrations and performances were the whole meaning of the worship of idols.

God is a single permanent entity and is to be treated alike for every human being. In Hinduism alone discrimination and artificial rules of

---

30 Usha Devi Dr. N., *Contribution of Brahmananda Sivayogi to Indian Philosophy* (Palakkad, 2000), p.86.
untouchability, un-approachability, and similar customs associated with casteism are highly observed. This danger can be averted only through the proper presentation of the facts of Hindu religion before the public. As a witness to this crisis of Hinduism, Sivayogi boldly declared the meaninglessness behind the prevalent practice of idol worship. Through his works he pointed out that idol worship was introduced with the wrong notions and so it should be abandoned.

Though in works like *Mokshapradeepam*, Sivayogi had pointed out the hollowness of idol-worship, it is in his book *Vigraharadhana Khandanam*, written in prose and verse form, he negates the idol-worship on the basis of experience, authoritative texts and logic. He asserts Idol worship is not the first stepping stone to the knowledge, but the main stepping stone to ignorance.

With reference to history, Sivayogi points out that the Kings and the Brahmins who worshipped idols had no gains even after spending a lot of money for many years. In the case of Kings, they were deprived off power and kingdom and lived under the suzerainty of the Mohammedans and the British rulers. As for the Brahmins who abandoned idol-worship and after learning English took up legal professions of advocates and judges, and some the occupation of farming or trade to make money.\(^{31}\) If at all they had any yields through idolatry they would not have left it for other jobs. If idol-worship cured them of illness they would not have gone to doctors or local physicians. Neither will it bestows on them boons of offspring, purity of mind or knowledge. If all these are not acquired by the Brahmins, nothing needs to be told of Sudras who are not allowed to worship.\(^{32}\) If the very people who install the idols are afflicted by diseases, how can those who follow it take away the malady? Nothing ever happens to the thieves who enter and steal money from temples like Guruvayoor, or to those who desecrate the idol by

---


heaving and putting it upside down. If the idols indeed had divine powers it could have given a warning or could have immobilised the hands and legs of the culprits.\(^{33}\) Why the idols did remain mute even when Tipu Sulthan plundered the temples and carried away the precious jewels? Have the yogis and sages attained any position after sitting and praying in the temples? Men who are animus worship the inanimate idols and falls into the abyss of ignorance.\(^ {34}\) Likewise, in the method of Socrates, Sivayogi raises numerous questions thereby making the hearer’s mind contemplate for an answer. He also points out passages from authoritative texts in Sanskrit and Tamil.

Sivayogi is also prepared to ridicule the idol worshippers. He says that one cannot attain purity of the mind if one worships Indra, who went to seduce Ahalya even when he has the company of heavenly-beauties like Urvashi and Menaka.\(^ {35}\) He mockingly comments that other deities will be down with common cold after having bathed in various liquids for a thousand times in the ceremony for the purification of the idols. When he says that “after being worshipped and worshipped throughout the three seasons with numerous eatables like sarkarapayasam, palpayasam, plantain, ada, vada etc. gods like Siva and Vishnu need to be treated for indigestion by the doctors”\(^ {36}\), the mockery reaches its apex.

In Bhagavad-Gita it is stated that God resides equally in all living beings. Then it is blasphemous to say that God is easily propitiated by idol-worship or by religious-offerings: Can God be considered as a biased priest or as a corrupt judge? He also rejects the arguments that idol-worship is the first step towards Yogajñana. He argues: “small children need small dress; big ones are unsuitable. Likewise, dim-witted persons need idolatry; they cannot meditate Brahma.” This is as nonsensical as the saying that small

\(^{33}\) Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Vighararadhana khandanam* (Mal.), p.2.
children need a small sun to see; they cannot see the light of the big one. He also suppresses the argument that idolatry is akin to paying homage to and gaining happiness by looking at the photograph of father or a teacher in their absence. “Who gave a definite form to God who is formless,” he asks. Does the form of God resembles the one sculptors and artists have carved or painted? “Wise people have no need to appease God through idol-worship and it is a necessity for the ignorant ones.” He severs this argument like this: “the advice to quit drinking is not intended for the individuals who had already stopped it. It is for those who are yet to realise the harmful effects of drinking and to them who have become depraved by drinking. In the same way, the agitation against idolatry is intended against the ignorant ones.” “If the Almighty is present everywhere and to exist in pillars and stones, then why the need to build temples at huge costs and worship idols?” he asks. The version that “in order to see the inanimate, the help of the animate is rendered” is baseless. That argument diverts us from the correct path. A child accompanying its parents to the temples, after seeing the pompous and grand ways of idol-worship misunderstands that this is the only way to please the gods. Since many idols are worshipped in the temples it gives a wrong impression that there are many gods.

While Sivayogi with his logical reasoning was engaged in his efforts to estrange the god-men and idolatry from the public, the religious-leaders in Kerala and people like Sri Ramakrishna Mission from north India were trying to spread the practise of idol-worship. Sivayogi condemns and criticises this. No one in Kerala had questioned the practice of idol worship before Brahmamanda Sivayogi .The rejection of this practice, the age long method

37 Ibid., p.19.
38 Ibid., p.19.
39 Ibid., p.25.
40 Ibid., p.21-22.
41 Ibid., p.25.
42 Brahmamanda Sivayogi, Anandadarsam (Mal.), p.230.
of worship might have been the main cause of the decline and loss of public appeal of his ideology.

**On irrational customs and traditions**

Man, from birth to death, is undergoing the process of socialization. It is believed that the acquisition of spiritual knowledge is necessary for attaining the eternal bliss. It will enable one to gain wealth, wisdom, and enough protection. He seeks relief in fasts, prayers, worship, and in indulging in traditional Hindu Dharma customs and ceremonies. Belief is a conviction that a particular thing is true, like the belief in the existence of an unseen power God; the belief in the existence of hell and heaven and the belief in the immortality of soul. Beliefs are powerful influences on human actions. Beliefs may be true or false, founded on factual or faulty evidences.

Sivayogi criticises the irrational social practices like Thalikettukalyanam observed then in Kerala society. Thalikettukalyanam has widely existed among the Non Brahmins especially in the Nairs, Ezhavas, and Kammals society in Kerala. The ‘thali’ tying was performed on a girl or a batch of girls between the ages 12 and 13. The assumption was that with thali tying the girl had become an eligible bride. In fact, the Thalikettukalyanam was a mock or sham marriage. Sivayogi criticises: “it incurred a high expenditure; many people were invited, astrologer is called and an auspicious time prescribed, and the sacred thread is tied. Later the sacred thread is cut off, and the bride is given to another person in place of the individual who tied it. Since the sacred thread is severed and the bride is given to another it is definite that the ceremony is a nonsensical one… Similarly there are many such irrational practices in the past”

Brahmananda Sivayogi opines that such superstitious observances are due to the ignorance and it is high time to stop these.

---

43 Brahmananda Sivayagi, *Vigraharadhana khandanam* (Mal.), p.25.
Sivayogi also criticises the practice of religious-offerings as superstitious. All things are not acquired through religious-offerings to temple and God. By touching fire one is always burnt? Similarly, if the idols have real power, then would not all our demands met by these offerings? He compares religious-offerings to the act of bribing the judge.

**On Ritualism**

Ritual is the repetition of acts that have become traditional. No religious practice exists from the most primitive to the most sophisticated and modernized without ritual. Ritual is a set of actions performed mainly for their symbolic value; which is prescribed by a religion or by the traditions of a community. The purposes of rituals include compliance with religious obligations or ideals, satisfaction of spiritual or emotional needs of the practitioners. Believers performed the rituals to achieve desired effects, such as heaven and prosperity. Hindu rituals occur in the home, in the temple, at way side shrines and at places of pilgrimage. Rituals occur to mark special occasions, to ask for blessings or to propitiate Gods. Ritual patterns constrain life from birth, through childhood, to marriage and finally death. This ritual behavior can be extremely diverse; it is encoded in manuals and in behavior patterns and passed through the generation from parent to child.

There are many styles of worship in Hindu tradition. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian offerings are made to innumerable deities through out India. In any case the essential feature of a ritual is that the action and their symbolism are not arbitrarily chosen by the performers, not dictated by logic or necessity, but are at least in past, prescribed and imposed upon the performers by some external source.

Sivayogi exposed the futility of these rituals. None can go against nature with out danger. Several religious leaders propagated that there was nothing impossible for man and that even death could be conquered. But all

---

44 *Ibid., p.27.*
of them are dead and gone.\textsuperscript{45} The impersonal God cannot do any thing and there is no use of considering the meaning of the mantra-tantras and Vedas prescribed in the worship of that nirguna god. Sivayogi maintains that there is no benefit for the observance of religious rules of penances, pilgrimages and the worship of God.

Sivayogi states that the rituals are opposed to Jnana and Yoga. The wise have condemned the path of rituals like sacrifices, vows, fasts, pilgrimages, idol worship and so forth, as a result of their own experience in not attaining any happiness.\textsuperscript{46} When we take up to rituals, the mind becomes fixed up in the performance of those rituals which lead naturally to ignorance. According to Sivayogi the easy means for the attainment of life’s goal is to take direct to Yoga without getting entangled in the performance of any ritual at all. The ritualistic practices are observed by those who are really ignorant and have not attained the vision of equality towards all beings.\textsuperscript{47}

Sivayogi goes on to expose the futility of the rituals and religious rites. “Those who are engaged in the performance of these rituals from time immemorial are not seen blessed with any special grace of God, or with any mental purity, or knowledge, but on the other hand, we see in them a daily increasing sense of inequality, as “I am high, you are low” and the like, which take them to their everlasting ruin.”\textsuperscript{48} Further he argues that due to non attainment of the wished-for enjoyments through rituals, many of the twice-born give up those rituals, and take up to cultivation, commerce, English education and other pursuits. Besides the ritualistic Karma is with in the means of the rich only and not of the poor and it is not one that is ordinarily possible to all alike.\textsuperscript{49} “It is believed that whatever a man desires, such as influence over a king, great prosperity, destruction of enemy or cure of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[45] Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Anandaadarsamsam} (Mal.), p.24.
\item[46] Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Mokshapradeepam} (Mal.), p.170.
\item[47] Ibid., p.100.
\item[48] Ibid., p.101.
\item[49] Ibid., p.101.
\end{footnotes}
disease, and so on can be achieved by the performance of rituals, such as
the muttering of mantras, sacrifices, penance, pilgrimage, and idol worship.
Following this many Brahmins and rulers and almost all Hindus waste their
precious life in recitation of mantras, in fast, pilgrimage, building up temples
and in several other indirect ways. Yet we do not see them blessed by God
or any disease cured there by.\textsuperscript{50} Instead it increased miseries in the life of
man. They never gained mental purity or jnana, without having attained any
feeling of equality towards their fellow beings and paved the way for their
own degeneration and downfall.\textsuperscript{51} Yogi justifies his argument on the basic of
the philosophical treatise, Vasudeva manana:

\begin{quote}
Just as the overcastting of clouds intensify the darkness
of a new moon light so also rituals increase ignorance.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

Superstition is a belief that events are influenced by specific behaviors
without having casual relationships. Our superstitions are the major reason
for the defects and indignities of our society today. Like wise people take to
penance, pilgrimage and the idol worship. Sivayogi argues on the basis of
reasoning and experience that bliss can be had, if only the superstitious
beliefs and rituals are given up.

In acting up to the scriptural injection that one should enter the temple
and worship God only after taking bath, people believe that one would attain
purity only by bathing and bath takes a strong hold on the people as a chief
agent for purity. Out of ignorance they would never approve that the bath
mentioned above, refers to the removal of the impurity of the mind which
alone can make one pure and not the mere dip in water. Hindus believe that
all their sins are washed away by having a dip in the holy water of the
Ganges.\textsuperscript{53} A holy bath in pilgrimage may remove the dirt of the body, but not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, p.96.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Ananda Sopanam} (Mal.), p.1.
\item \textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, p.109.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Ananda sootram} (Mal.), pp.55.
\end{itemize}
the impurity of the mind. By the holy bath they have not purified their ill
nature even by a grain. Further, even in the case of those who have their
permanent habitation in the vicinity of the holy places, and who takes their
bath daily in the holy water, we see the same defects as strongly as they
existed before they took bath. The holy baths have not the power to purify
the mind. "If the bath in the river Ganges has the power to purify the mind,
the frog and fishes living in the sacred rivers like the Ganges from their birth
to death would possess mental purity. If Kasi is a place of merit, the whole
people of that place will have any superior knowledge or excellence. That is
not seen. Instead many thieves and murderers are seen there."  

Persons go to holy places to deposit the bones of their dead relatives
in order to bring liberation for them. Their attempt is futile. If a father has
gone to heaven or hell, he cannot come here again to eat the food given to
him by his sons. People work hard for attaining liberation after death. They
are misled. Real liberation can be attained while living in this world itself. The
non-violent vegetarian Brahmin commit sins in their life by sacrificing
innocent creatures and ignorant follow them. Hindus had a cruel custom that
the wives were thrown in to their funeral pyre with the corpse of their
husbands. Sacrifices of human beings were also encouraged. Religion is the
main cause for these superstitions and degradation. Upavasā does not
mean fasting. 'Upa' means near, and 'Vasa' means dwelling. Hence upavasā
means the abiding of the individual soul close by the supreme soul. Rituals
block the door of bliss and increase ignorance. Sivayogi advises the wise, by
their weapon of knowledge, cut off the root of the poisonous tree of ritualism.
In order to justify his arguments he cites Garuda Puranam and Devi
Bhagavatam. Many take to pilgrimages but there is not even slightest
change in their state or bend of minds.

54 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Moksha pradeepam (Mal.), p.163.
55 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Ananda sootram (Mal.), p.55.
Penance is also a kind of inflicting harm. All difficult practices like putting up with hunger, thirst, heat and cold, are included in penance. These result in the loss of physical strength and several diseases. Since there is the injunction that no being is to be harmed, it is not reasonable to harm to one’s own Atman and self. Their action is of the nature of destroying their temple of body, the temple of God. The best penance consists in controlling the senses and the mind. He goes on to assert that the wise has condemned the path of rituals as a result of their own experience in not attaining any happiness there by. Superstitions are the major reason for the defects and indignities of the society and Sivayogi tries to convince it to others.

**On Infallibility of Vedas**

The schools of ancient Indian thought are generally classified by orthodox Hindu thinkers in to two broad categories, namely, Orthodox (asthika) and Heterodox (Nastikas). The six main Hindu systems of thought – Mimamsa, Vedanta, Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, and Vaiseshika -are regarded as orthodox (asthika), not because they believe in the existence of God, but because they accepted the authority of the Vedas. Manusmrity too upholds the infallibility of the Vedas. Though popularly Hinduism is a theistic religion, belief in the authority of the Vedas is more important. Scriptural testimony is believed to be the word of god, and therefore, it is regarded as perfect and infallible. They believe the Vedas are the eternal source of knowledge from which all the other Hindu Scriptures originated. Scriptures are the holy books of a religion that are pious and revered.

Sivayogi does not believe in the infallibility of Vedas. He also does not believe their testimony of the Vedas as a valid source of knowledge. Vedas could not have come into existence before human beings appeared on this earth, and before Sanskrit language came into existence. There are no good

---

reasons for believing that Sanskrit language came into existence even before human beings appeared on this earth! For what would be the purpose of a language which is not required to be used by anyone before man existed? Sacred scriptures are bundle of contradictions. They are intended more to mystify the people than to convince them of any rational argument. Yogi asserts that many propositions contained in the Vedas are not facts but false. For example, according to Purushasukta of Rig- Veda, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras originated respectively from the mouth, hands, thighs and feet of the Purusha or Creator. Sivayogi rejects this statement as false. Varna vyavastha is a man made social institution and it has nothing to do with the alleged Creator of this world. More over he is not ready to accept them as divine, eternal and impersonal. With the appearance of human beings and Sanskrit language in which they were written. Thus he rejects the exclusive divinity of Vedas. Sivayogi’s main aim is to point out the right and denounce the wrong to the welfare of the world.

Sivayogi justifies his arguments on the basis of scriptures. Bhagavat Gita says that there is no need for knowledge or even the study of Vedas. “Even the worst shrunk will get the god’s blessings provided he has the faith.” That means there is no respect for scholarship or devotion but only faith - unquestioned faith. No need for enquiry or no need for reasoning. In Hinduism it is very easy to wash off the sins - just recite the ‘mantra’ or wear a ‘mala’ (beads) or apply vibhooti (ash) or offer some money or some such thing to gods, Brahmins or temples. When it is so easy to wash off the sins, why not commit more and more sins and then washes off by chanting a mantra. It is ridiculous.58

Another ridiculous argument of the Upanishads is that any sin or crime can be committed but Upanishads are capable of washing it off. Bhasmajalpalopanishad says: “he who uses this (bhasma)……. is purified from the sin of slaughtering his mother” and Sharbopanishad says those

58 Rajasekhar Shetty V.T., Brahmanism the curse of India (Banglore, 1981), p.22.
studying Sastras, “hallowed from the sin of sharing the bed with his Guru’s wife”. Under Brahmanism anything is possible. It is advantageous only to the Brahmins. Brahmanism and rationalism never go together. Sivayogi argues that if the man who bears the divine ashes obtains liberation, the dog which rolls in the ashes must have obtained liberation at first.

On Asceticism (Sanyasam)

From Hindus to Buddhists, from Jews to Christians to Muslims, virtually every world religion and most indigenous ones have ascetics. Some have even regarded this radical way of life the withdrawal from the world, combined with practices that seriously affect basic bodily needs, up to extreme forms of self-mortification as the ultimate form of a true religious quest. The word Sannyasa means renunciation. One who renounces both externally & internally is called as a Sanyasi. Those who have desires cannot be sanyasis. A true Sanyasi is one who has no attachments to worldly things. He has no self interest and whatever he does is for the benefit of society. This is more a state of mind and does not depend on whether he is a grihastha, brahmachari or sanyasi. As per Vedic tradition, a person must enter into Sanyasam at the age of 60 or 65. But there is an exception to the rule. One can take the lifestyle of Sanyasa straight from Brahmacharya ashram, means straight away as student before entering to Grihasthashrama.

On the contrary Sivayogi tries to convince that the Hindus and followers of other religions have been deceived by the religious scriptures, temples, churches, mosques, prayers, religious ceremonies, etc; created and believed in by men for long time past. Sivayogi ridicules the mendicants. The animals like deer, mice and the like live up on grass, leaf and water and pass their life always in the forest do not become ascetics. In the same way, living up on roots and fruits and living alone in the forest, will not bless any body with salvation. If one takes to a path for a long time and finds

---

59 Ibid., pp.35-39.
eventually that it does not lead one to the goal, it is but natural that the path is condemned. Like wise, the wise have condemned the path of rituals, as a result of their own experience in not attaining any happiness there by that their efforts had been but in vain. If the people torture themselves by fasting are sages, then the people who does not have food due to poverty are also sages.

Similarly Sivayogi criticises begging alms. He condemns the practice of leaving all possessions and begging for arms as it is improper for a man to take up to begging to keep up his body. Such a mode of life is very low and degrading. Yogi’s view is that having had property originally, to have cast away that and take up to begging is highly sinful. Men earn money in several ways. Some earn illegally by giving false evidence or by deceiving or robbing others. When a Jnani takes to alms, he runs the risk of enjoying a share of the ill-gotten fortune too, and thus became liable for a share of the sins also. He further points out that when one has to live upon begging, one is liable to fall sick, not getting regular food at times, and what is got at times may be quite unwholesome too. Hence it is not wise for a Jnani, after discarding what fortune he had originally with him, take up to begging alms to bring troubles to himself and others. Besides, the begging will be considered as a nuisance and they will be subjected to severe disgrace and curse from the common man. Thus he expose himself to sin and sorrow and he is liable to become a pray to diseases. It is only ignorant would think that acceptance of begging and sanyasihood alone leading them to self realisation.

All happiness is born of the soundness of the body. The Lord who protects the worldly poor, sages and even emperors is the food. No one

60 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Moksha pradeepam (Mal.), p.169.
61 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Anadodarsam (Mal.), p.178.
63 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Sidhanubhooti (Mal.), pp.58-59.
64 Ibid., p.211.
survive without food. Great men like Buddha, Jesus Christ, and Barthruhari by begging food, taught the people that, they sacrificed everything, since they were thoughtless. Hence ascetics required food for their living and should be kept with themselves. Sivayogi concludes that we can understand from the lives of these great men, that abandoning everything we have, denies our happiness and pleasure. The mind can attain bliss without divine worship and religious worship if only it can control itself. Control of mind is the only means to salvation and give up all worship of God performances of religious rites. He advised saints should not encourage fanaticism of religions and destroy it by teaching people the essence of their religion.

On caste

A defining feature of Hinduism is caste system which encompasses a complete ordering of social groups on the basis of ritual purity. For thousands of years the relations amongst the castes and their sub-castes have been governed by religious and moral laws. A person is considered a member of a caste in to which he or she is born and remains with in it until death. The first reference of Varna (class based on birth or caste) is to be found in the Purushasukta of the Rig Veda. In the very first chapter of Manusmrity, it is clearly stated that Brahmins, kshatriyas, vaisyas and sudras were created by Brahma (creator of the world). The duties of the different Varnas are also mentioned in the Manusmrity. The Brahmins were created for teaching, studying, performing yajnas (ceremonial sacrifices), and getting yajnas performed, giving and accepting dana (gifts). The kshatriyas are created for protecting the citizens, giving gifts, getting yajnas performed and studying. The Vaisyas were created for protecting animals, giving gifts, getting yajnas performed studying, trading, lending money on interest and doing agricultural work. The sudras were created by Brahma for serving Brahmins and the other two varnas with out being critical of them. The dwija (Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaisya) must study the Vedas before he studies
anything else. Otherwise, he becomes a ‘sudra’ but there is no way by which a Sudra may become a Brahmin. A Sudra must always remain a Sudra.

The secular outlook in the Upanishads (recognition that conceptions of god could be quite varied, that brahmanical rituals were not essential to spiritual release, and that individuals might choose different deities or methods of worship) encouraged the growth of alternative view points not only in the field of religious practice but also on norms of how society ought to be structured. Brahmin hegemony received challenges from radical atheists like Lokaayatas, from Jain agnostics and heterodox Hindus and Buddhists who wanted to reconstruct society on a less discriminatory and more human bases.

Caste is closely connected with Hindu philosophy, religion, custom and tradition. It is believed to have a divine origin and sanction. It is deeply rooted in the social institution of India. The Sanskrit word for caste is Varna which means color. The major attributes of caste are the hierarchy, the separation, and division of labour. Caste system hierarchically divides the society. The Brahmins were placed at the top of the hierarchy and are regarded as pure or supreme. The degraded castes or the untouchables occupied the other end of the hierarchy. Thus the status of an individual is determined by birth and not by selection nor by accomplishments. Each caste has its own customs, traditions, practices and rituals. It has its own informal rules, regulations and procedures. The caste system has imposed certain restrictions on the food habits of the members and these differ from caste to caste.

There has been strong criticism of the caste system in Hindu society came both from Hindu fold and from outside. At every period of India’s awakening, there have always been great efforts made to break down caste. Buddha, Mahavira; Ajivikas were against any kind of caste structure. In South India, the religious leader Ramanuja condemned untouchability. In

---

65 Swami Vivekananda, *Caste Culture and Socialism*, p.44.
Andhra Pradesh Veera Brahmendra Swami (10\textsuperscript{th} Century A.D.) criticized the practice while Sri.Basaveswara, minister of Mysore state (12\textsuperscript{th} century) fought it with great vigor. In Andhra Pradesh, minister Brahma Naidu of Polnadu (14\textsuperscript{th} Century A.D.) condemned the practice and appointed a ‘un touchable’ named Chenna as his army chief. Nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of social reformers who stood for human equality. JyothiRao Phule and Ranade in Maharashtra, SreeNarayana Guru in Kerala, Periyar in TamilNadu and Gora in Andhra Pradesh fought against the indignity of the caste system. Vivekanananda observes:

From the time of the Upanishads down to the present day, nearly all our great teachers have wanted to break through the barriers of caste, i.e., caste in its degenerate state……\textsuperscript{66}

In Kerala the caste system put restriction on the range of social relations also. The inequality among castes are considered by the Hindus faithfully as a part of divinely ordained natural order and expressed in terms of purity and pollution. Each caste is sub-divided in to a number of sub-castes. In order to eradicate all these inequalities and establish an equalitarian society Sivayogi tries to create self awareness among the deprived sections. Yogi shows how useless caste really is and points out his reasons for rejecting Varna Vyavastha. Caste distinction is man made. All objects in this universe, movable and immovable, have been created with particular differentiating forms and natures that could be easily distinguished even by children. He argues that if god has ordained different castes in the human race as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra they ought to at their very birth the distinctive marks of the sacred thread and the like. The babies of all these men who pride in the difference of caste look uniform at their birth. All of them have the symmetry of generative organs that pertain to those of the same species. There is pleasure for them in sexual union and

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p.44.
they beget issues too. Further Yogi states that when a Brahmin becomes a
convert to Islam or to Christianity, he becomes a Mohammedan or Christian.
If Brahmin is of a superior caste and others are of low castes, how can he
thus change his caste? When an elephant gets in to a flock of sheep, it does
not turn out to be a sheep. Hence the caste distinctions among men are but
man made.\textsuperscript{67} God endowed men not with any distinctive marks to
differentiate them one from the other unlike other beings of his own creation.
Hence all mankind is but one caste.\textsuperscript{68}

Further Sivayogi states that Sudras think that they have no right to
worship God themselves and it is ordained only for the sect called Brahmins.
It is foolishness to worship through the high caste and to place implicit faith
in it. Sivayogi ridiculed the belief through his statement: "God is not like a
judge of a court who does not know the vernacular of the locality, and has to
be interpreted by a Vakkil (lawyer) in a language known to him. It is really
stupid".\textsuperscript{69} Here he vehemently criticises priesthood. It is unjust to say that
some only are entitled to enjoy the smell of a jasmine flower, and not others.
In the same way the religious injection lays down that a Sudra is entitled
neither to propitiate God nor to read the scriptures. This belief that these are
ordained by God is really based on ignorance. If God thus ordained, Sudras
can have no inclination to read the scriptures. Even if they read, they will not
be able to pronounce it, in which language they are written. They will never
be able to understand their meaning just like the cattle, which should not be
able to pronounce Sanskrit sounds, nor would they have any inclination to
read the scripture.\textsuperscript{70}

Sivayogi clears the fact that, all those who has eyes to see, can see
the light of the sun, whether they dress up on as a brahmin, sudra, chandala,
muhammedan, christian or a buddhist; but not those who suffer from

\textsuperscript{67} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Moksha pradeepam} (Mal.), p. 178.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p.183.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., p. 184.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p.187.
cataract or any other similar eye disease. Likewise, he who has a pure, bright mind and is not affected by any impurity can see the supreme light. But he, whose mind is full of ignorance, will not be able to see it. If the impurity of the mind is removed, everyone can see his own mind, the supreme god. As the mirror helps to see the face, so the mind is the mirror that helps to see the supreme. It is not reasonable to maintain that, some only are entitled to look into the mirror, and some only will have their face reflected in it too. The idea of the creation of four castes, with their respective rights, tends but to mutual dissensions of the society, to their lasting ruin.

Sivayogi ridicules Gita for promulgating Chaturvarnya. It is laid down in it that, “the four castes were created by me” (Chaturvarnya maya srushtam). It goes on to show that God has created but the four castes of Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. On the contrary, we see several other sub-castes, like thiyyas and others even in the Hindu fold, several others outside, like Christian, Mohammedan, Buddhists and so forth. Who is it created them? What are their duties? Nothing about them is enclosed in Gita. Since Krishna has ordained that the duty of a Sudra is but to serve the twice-born, surely he is a hater of Sudras. Krishna is a deadly foe of all mankind like Sudras and others.

It is accepted by all religions that beast and birds are lower than human beings. There is neither degradation nor excommunication in dealing with lower orders of beasts. In Hinduism some of the human races are lower than the beasts and birds and degraded and excommunicated. He points out the anomalies existed in Hindu fold. Many Europeans take to the study of scriptures and translate them too in their languages. Brahmins associated with them in these translations, read them and take delight in them too. But

\[Ibid., p.102.\]
the same Brahmins cannot allow or tolerate when he hears that a Sudra reads the Vedas and other scriptures.\textsuperscript{72}

Sivayogi analyses reason behind such discriminations. The Brahmins do not lose anything in their income or in their respect in society; if a European or others of the type were to read the Upanishads and other Sastras. So they have no cause for any jealousy towards them. But when the Sudra reads and studies the scriptures and there by becomes enlightened, the Brahmins suffer in their income and respect at his hand.\textsuperscript{73} When the Sudras becomes enlightened they came to know the fact that a Brahmin is one who is steadfast in Brahma, gives up all his respect and veneration towards the self styled brahmins who are not really steadfast in Brahma. More over he is forced to give up his general habit of paying respect and worship to those so called Brahmins and offering them charitable gifts according to his means. Therefore the Brahmins disliked when the sudras takes to the study of Vedas and scriptures by Sudras out of jealousy. Thus Sivayogi points out that to divide men into separate castes is opposed to reason and experience.

Sivayogi blames the Sudras for spending lots of money in the performance of ‘Mrithyunjaya Homa’ and the like, in the hope that their miseries and death can be warded off through them. Yogi furthers his argument that caste distinctions and its rules and regulations are absurd by presenting examples of apparent design. People observe many blunders out of ignorance, but when true knowledge dawns they are caste aside. Priest craft is a bane of India. In the words of Vivekananda, “…..It is in its nature cruel and heartless. Kick out the priests who are always against progress, because they would never mend. They are offspring’s of centuries of

\textsuperscript{72} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Moksha pradeepam}, p.185.

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid.}, p.185.
superstition and tyranny. Root out Priest craft first".\textsuperscript{74} Brahmananda Sivayogi shares the same opinion.

Sivayogi tries to convince the people that caste system is logically unjustifiable. Caste distinctions are based on their respective functions in life and not on the distinction of any caste as such.\textsuperscript{75} He believes that people would realise the truth and certainly they would discard all the caste distinctions and social discriminations based on ignorance. Human body is a modification of the five elements. Castes and names are man-made. None has a name when he is born. Caste has been created by our ancestors.\textsuperscript{76} Sivayogi has given an important place to the ideal of equality in his ethics. Atheistic ethics is one and the same for all people. The main aim of Sivayogi is to convince injustice and cruelties embodied in varnavyavastha to the common people and exert themselves to get rid off its evil influences with acquisition of knowledge. Thus Sivayogi emphasizes the dare need to eradicate casteism, untouchability and all similar discriminations from the society.

**On Sakti**

Sivayogi opines the basis of universe is ‘Sakti’ or power. The individual soul, Supreme Soul, mind, God, Consciousness, Knowledge are in fact Sakti itself. This ‘Sakti’ is inherent in all objects.\textsuperscript{77} Sakti or power by itself is not a separate entity. All objects are endowed with power or Sakti. He quotes Devibhagavatam and Bhagavad-Gita to substantiate the position.\textsuperscript{78} Yogi postulates that it is the one power that goes by the names of Brahma and other innumerable epithets. All the word is of the nature of Sakti and that power supports the entire universe.

\textsuperscript{74} Swami Vivekananda, *Caste Culture and Socialism*, p.72.
\textsuperscript{75} Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Anandadarsam* (Mal.), p.175.
\textsuperscript{76} Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Moksha prdeepam*, p.189.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., pp.1-8.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., pp6-8.
On the basis of Devyupanishad, Yogi expounds: “the one power pervades every where. Hence it is called ‘Eka’ or one (without a second). That very one assumes manifold forms hence it is called ‘Aneka’ or many. There is nothing superior to that power. That power is the form of Sat (reality) Chit (energy) and Ananda (bliss), everything is an aspect of that power and that everything is subservient to that power.”79

Sakti is really the basis of the universe. Devoid of this none can move or reflect on the facts.80 According to Sivayogi the nature of the physical body of all beings, male, female and neuter, all are found to be the modification of the five elements. For instance heat is the burning power of fire. As the power of burning exists before, after and during the visible blazing form of fire, it is clear that the visible effulgence arises out of that power of burning, and consequently that power of burning is more prominent. It is by the friction of two objects that heat is produced. That friction also arises out of a power. Hence it is from one power that another power is produced. Sivayogi believes and clarifies that on deep and careful consideration, it becomes clear that in the beginning, in the middle, at the end and all times it is power that lay hidden. From that latent power rose all objects, and so all objects are seen endowed with power. Hence it becomes clear and certain that all are subservient to power.

This omnipotent energy or power is the full and Supreme Brahma, the Atma and the like. This Sakti concept proposed by Sivayogi is the same as the Brahma in Advaita. In Vedanta philosophy Brahma is referred as Sachidananda i.e. Sat Chit Ananda (Pure existence-Pure Consciousness-Pure Bliss). To Sivayogi, Brahma is immutable, inexpressible and unthinkable pure existence, but it is not the cause or creator of the universe. Brahma is the ultimate reality behind all world objects and Atman is pure

79 Ibid., pp.6-8.
80 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Siddhanubhooti (Mal.), p.2.
81 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Moksha pradeepam (Mal.), p.5.
spirit in all beings. Both Brahman and Atman are not different realities. They are identical. They are eternal, all pervading realities underlying in all existence. The concepts Atman and Brahman as separate are never accepted by Brahmananda Sivayogi.

On Ahimsa

The one message of all saints and prophets of all times and countries, is the message of love, of Ahimsa, of selfless service. It is a sublime virtue. Ahimsa or non-violence has been the central doctrine of Indian culture from the earliest days of its history. Ahimsa is the one not only to attain Salvation, but also to enjoy uninterrupted peace and bliss. Ahimsa, or refraining from causing pain to any living creature, is a distinctive quality emphasized by Indian ethics. Ahimsa or non-injury, of course, implies non-killing. But, non-injury is not merely non-killing. In its comprehensive meaning, Ahimsa or non-injury means entire abstinence from causing any pain or harm whatsoever to any living creature, either by thought, word, or deed. Non-injury requires a harmless mind, mouth, and hand.

Ahimsa is a great spiritual force. It is the fundamental quality of seekers after Truth. The power of Ahimsa is greater than the power of the intellect. It is easy to develop the intellect, but it is difficult to purify and develop the heart. It is the development of a mental attitude in which hatred is replaced by love. Ahimsa is a doctrine of peace and equality and involves a respect for all life. Practice of Ahimsa develops love. Ahimsa is another name for truth or love. Ahimsa is universal love. It is pure love. Where there is Ahimsa, there one will find love and selfless service.

Ahimsa or non-violence occupies a predominant role in Sivayogi’s ideology and it became an instrument of social change. He opines non-violence is the supreme merit. Not to cause pain is the highest virtue. Buddhism and Jainism are peaceful religions with non-violence at the heart of its thought and behavior. Sivayogi goes even beyond Buddha and Jaina in the concept of non-violence. Truth, happiness and compassion encloses in
the concept of his non-violence. Lack of compassion encourages people to kill innocent animals and eat their flesh.

Sivayogi’s criticism is mainly focused on animal sacrifice. The rejection of truth creates violence and misery. Such people propose animal sacrifice by citing scriptures. He disapproves those religious rites and belief to deprive the essential feeling of equality towards all, and conducive to injury as unreasonable. He preached the highly exalted gospel of Ahimsa or non-injury. All virtues are included in this great one word Ahimsa. According to Sivayogi Ahimsa is in fact, “not to cause pain to any being either by body, mind or word.” “One can injure another by mind. Even if you don’t encourage others in their act by your body or word, but remains silent without preventing them, one is liable to the charge of having caused harm to your foe in your mind. If you think that it is against your wish, you ought to have prevented them from doing the harm. Moreover, when the thought of doing harm arises in the mind, the mind works in several ways to fulfill the thought, and thus becomes disturbed and impure. Those thoughts may deprive you of even sleep.” Thus thought brings the harm to the thinker too. Hence mind is capable of doing harm both to oneself and to another. He discards the practice of the cruel slaughter of fowls, goats, and other animals to offer flesh to god by way of worship.

To quote Sivayogi, “There is no wicked deed greater than doing harm to another. Theft, assault, deceit have appropriate punishment. All religion admits that killing is the greatest of cruel deeds and there is no pain greater than killing or doing harm. Even the beasts and the birds like fowl, goat, dog and the like which have no power of reason to discriminate between virtue and vice also feels pain. As they have no power of reason, they must kill to live. Since man have been blessed with reason, it is really unreasonable to slaughter an animal in sacrifice for the sake of dispelling ones own sin. If

---

83 Ibid., pp.157,158.
ones finger affected with poison, it cannot be cured by cutting off another’s finger. All beings are to be looked upon as unto oneself. All beings desire to live.”

Many offer flesh to God by way of worship. They perform such animal sacrifice to please Gods to attain their grace. He contemptuously discards God as a vile wretch to hanker eagerly after flesh or a fox feeding on dead bodies. Ironically, in this way he pictures the God of the Hindus as a blood thirsty, horrible, uncompassionate giant worse than a tiger. Yogi cites Sivapurana deepika: “it is the wicked beast of the mind with its limbs of love, hatred, anger, lust and the like, which strays in to the evil path, which is not under control and which is overpowered by ignorance, that is to be killed and duly offered in sacrifice.” From this, it is clear that the animal slaughter mentioned here, means the control of the mind, and not the killing of goats by holding fast its legs, closing its mouth and nose and suffocating it to death. Even if all the animals of the world are thus offered in sacrifice, it results in the increase of sin and misery, and the animal of the mind will not be won over. Only when that is won, there will be an end to misery. Thus Siva yogi Shows how useless this animal sacrifices are. This is a serious crime and those commits this offence is condemned by the entire society and branded him as a great sinner. Not to do harm to others is the highest virtue in man (Ahimsa Paramo Dharma). All virtues are included in this one great word Ahimsa.

Penance is also a kind of inflicting harm. All difficult practices, like putting up with hunger, thirst, heat and cold are included in penance. From these result loss of physical strength and in turn several diseases. For doing fasting; the organs of sense are greatly afflicted. Such fasting lead to

84 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Ananda Sootram (Mal.), p.37.
86 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Ananda Sootram (Mal.), p. 43.
87 Ibid., 45.
88 Ibid., 40.
diseases too, and disease deprives the body of its strength as is known to all, and is painful too.\(^{89}\) Pilgrimage also shares the same defect as there is no chance for regular meals in time, and since it tends to cause great fatigue too to the body in other ways. Sivayogi views that the austerities preached by religions also form a kind of violence.\(^{90}\) He goes on to assert that the Brahmins who indulged in worldly life held non-violence as the noble ideal and at the same time included animal sacrifice as a part of yaga. These Brahmins manipulated the scriptures by adding animal sacrifice.

**On Karma**

The Law of Karma is one of the fundamental doctrines of not only Hinduism, but also of Buddhism and Jainism. The concept of karma or “law of karma” is the broader principle that all of life is governed by a system of cause and effect, action and reaction, in which one’s deeds have corresponding effects on the future. Karma is thus a way of explaining evil and misfortune in the world, even for those who do not appear to deserve it - their misfortune must be due to wrong actions in their previous life. Hindu texts also prescribe a number of activities, such as pilgrimages to holy places and acts of devotion, which can wipe out the effects of bad karma. Such positive actions are sometimes referred to as ‘good karma.’

Apparently the term “Karma”, also referred to the earlier portion of the Vedas called the “Karma Kanda”. Karma Kanda deals with (a) rituals and sacrifices (b) worship of deities and prayers (c) duties, values of life, and conduct of life in harmony with the welfare of all living beings. This part of the Vedas laid out in great detail the various rituals to be practiced to achieve any particular goal in life. The latter portions of the Vedas, called Vedanta or Upanishads or Jnana Kanda are the philosophical portions. The pursuit of Karma Kanda is the preparation for the pursuit of Jnana Kanda.

\(^{89}\) Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Mokshapradeepam*, p. 162.

\(^{90}\) Ibid., p. 163.
The doctrine of Karma has two inseparable ingredients of Karma and Punarjanma. According to Hinduism all Karma or deeds produce effects or bear results. Unkindedness yields spoiled fruits, called ‘papa’ and good deeds bring forth sweet fruits, called ‘punya’. As one acts, so does he become: one becomes virtuous by virtuous action, and evil by evil action. It is a law of personal responsibility; the doer himself must bear the consequences of his actions. This liability cannot be shifted. This doctrine of Karma is considered to be a basic tenet of Hinduism. According to this doctrine, differences between individuals, even at the time of their birth are due to their past Karma i.e., actions done in the past birth. All human inequality is traced to Karma. It is due to the Karma that some people are rich, other poor, some are wise others foolish and so on.

In Sanskrit ‘punar’, or ‘puna’ means, ‘next time’ or ‘again’ and ‘janma’ means ‘life’. Therefore ‘punarjanma’ means next life or the life after. It does not mean coming to life on earth again and again as a living creature. This concept of repeated births of cycle of rebirth was developed after the Vedic period. This doctrine was adopted later in subsequent Hindu scriptures including Upanishad, Bhagavat Gita and Puranas in a conscious attempt to rationalise and explain the differences between different individuals at birth and different surroundings in which people find them in with the concept of that Almighty God is not unjust. Since God is not unjust the inequalities and differences between people are due to their deeds in their past lives. The law of Karma turns on the presence of the Atma, with each reaping reward or punishment on the basis of past existence. Yet no one recalls those lives nor ever learns just why he is suffering in this life. Thus the concept of Karma suited the privileged caste in persuading the oppressed lower castes that they could earn merit by dutifully accepting their suffering.

---

92 Yuvaraj Krishnan, op.cit., p. 556.
Early Buddhists had completed the edifice of the doctrine of Karma and rebirth formulated by Upanishads. According to Jain doctrine, liquidation of the already accumulated Karma can be achieved through penances and self-mortification. In short, Brahmancial, Buddhists and Jains believes Karma as; ‘janmahetu’, the cause of birth and justification for inequality and sufferings. Thus Karma is at the root of empirical phenomena.

Siva yogi as a rationalist rejects this theory of Karma and punarjanma. Living body is made of five elements. On the dissolution of the elements it ceases to exist, there is no world beyond. On the dissolution of the body the individual ceases to be. The elements move through original impulse. There is no other world. A creature one burn to ashes at death can by no means return. The common meaning given to Karma is that of sacrifice and religious rights. Siva yogi repudiates the doctrine of Karma directly. He disapproves the doctrine of fate. Yogi a materialist denied the life after death. He goes on to assert that not knowing the real meaning of the authorities, and sticking fast to ‘swakarma’, as meaning nothing but sacrificial rituals, Hindus have set them against physical exertion and resorted either to the rituals or sacrifice, penance, idol worship and the like as a means to destroy their enemies, to attain sovereignty over kingdom and all prosperity. Thus wasting away immense wealth in those rituals or leaving them to the case of a fate.\textsuperscript{93}

Sivayogi gives prime importance to human exertion. “With out sufficient effort desires are not accomplished. It is only the cowards that will cling to the saying, ‘what is to happen must happen’. Only cowards will remain inactive, in the hope that God will bless them with all their desired objects.”\textsuperscript{94} Siva yogi points out that what ever objects have been achieved by the wise, is only through manly effort.\textsuperscript{95} Siva yogi conceives this as the

\textsuperscript{93} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Mokshapradeepam} (Mal.), p. 98.
\textsuperscript{94} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Mokshapradeepam} (Mal.), p. 280.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 89.
essence of the meaning of Bhagavad-Gita. To illustrate this point he quotes lord Krishna’s advices from Gita: “if you remain inactive, you cannot even maintain your body. Hence everyone should work, whether he is a king or a yogi, Jnani or Karmi. None should remain idle, giving up all physical inactivity or exertion.”\(^{96}\) Yogi cites verses from Hitopedesa and gives the meaning to justify his ideology. “There is a great enemy for man in his own body. That is idleness.”\(^{97}\) No other enemy can starve you, force to do unrighteous deeds and then do away your happiness here and after. But idleness can bring about all these. Hence it is styled as one’s great enemy.

Thinking Karma to mean sacrifice, homa, penance, pilgrimage, idol worship and the like, people built huge temples at very great expense, worship deities installed therein, observe several fasts and perform all kinds of actions enjoyed in the Sastras. In utter faith in all these people perform all such worship. But God cannot bless them with at least sufficient funds for the performance, build temples and so forth. Yogi points out that people now realised the futility of the rituals and giving up all the study of the Vedas and performance of sacrificial rituals. They took to English education and hold several positions as lawyers, judges, administrators etc., and wished for enjoyments of life.

He quotes the self contradictory statement from Bhagavat-Gita, “the Gods propitiated by sacrifices, will grand us the wished-for enjoyments”\(^{98}\) to elucidate his arguments. If Krishna had any such faith there in, should he advice Arjuna to fight and conquer the kingdom? Could he not have advised him to perform sacrificial rites and please gods thereby, and get from them as boons all wished for enjoyment and sovereignty? Instead lord Krishna insisting again and again on the advice, ”you should fight, you should never give up Karma; if you do so, you would never be able to keep up your body;

---

\(^{96}\) Ibid., p. 85.
\(^{97}\) Ibid., p. 85.
\(^{98}\) Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Mokshapradeepam*, p. 89.
I am contented in all ways; Still I am engaged in work; Without work or Karma, the world will go to ruin.\(^9^9\) Thus Brahmananda Sivayogi maintains the fact that Karma advocated by Krishna in Gita is not the ritual of sacrifice and other religious rites. It is certainly proper physical assertion. Without knowing what Karma or action is to be done for their own elevation, and how it ought to be done, people take to many actions. Sivayogi asserts that if all the members of a family are engaged in work according to their ability and live with good feelings the whole family will thrive happily. But if some of the members only engage in work and others remain idle, dissention, disaster and destruction are the results. There can be no kind of happiness at all among them. This is applicable to every society. Then the world will degenerate and will never attain happiness.

Those who are addicted to ritualistic Karma are mere fools. Siva yogi held that Karma is to be performed for making money and there by for saving the body. The body is to be safeguarded for attaining the eternal bliss through Raja yoga. Again he points out that common people always imitate the wise. If the wise are lazy in doing their duties it will effect the ignorant and will hamper the welfare of the society. In order to avoid it one is advised to do Karma. Siva yogi puts forward all these arguments to prove that Karma is the duty of everyone and not sacrifices and religious rites. Hence actions like begging alms, stealing, doing harm is to be strictly discouraged.\(^1^0^0^\) Sivayogi strongly refutes the common belief that when Karma is done in dedication to God there occurs mental purity.

He goes on to assert that the religious leaders mislead the ignorant common people to conduct sacrifices and religious rituals for attaining liberation. They made others believe that all that happens is pre-ordained due to their previous Karma and hence human effort is of no avail.\(^1^0^1^\) Here

---

\(^1^0^0\) Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Mokshapradeepam* (Mal.), pp. 95-103.
\(^1^0^1^\) Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Anandadarsam* (Mal.), p. 147.
Sivayogi broke absolutely with Hinduism. Transmigration and Karma are the very essence of Hindu religion. Sivayogi considers Vedas as oceans. The most valuable are kept secretly somewhere in the Vedas, like pearls in an ocean. But the valuable has been shadowed by Karma khanda which injects sacrificial rites. With out knowing the essence (Veda Sara) veiled by Karma khanda people get degenerated by performing different religious rites.

Thus Sivayogi has shown that soul, transmigration and Karma are mere speculations. He criticises the way in which the doctrines of rebirth and Karma have been used for justifying the miseries and sufferings of the common people. He clearly rejects the doctrine of the transmigration soul and rebirth and believes it is absolutely impossible.

**On Women**

Position of women in a country is closely related with the culture, religion or tradition of a country. Culture is not a static, fixed entity. It is a confluence of beliefs and values continuously undergoing change. It has to be redefined according to external and internal economic, political and social forces. In Indian society the status of women has changed from time to time. The position of women in society is the index to understand the standards of social organisation. In ancient India women enjoyed equal status with men in all fields of life. She received the same education which a man received. Many Hindu religious books like Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana and Mahabharata have mentioned the names of several women who were great scholars, poets, philosophers of the time. The wife was ‘Ardhangini’ which means she is half of her husband. An unmarried man was considered to be incomplete man. All religious ceremonies were performed by the husband along with the wife. This shows the importance given to the women in ancient period.

The Manusmrity has given a degraded and inferior status to women as well. Women are not considered fit for being independent. She must remain under the control of her father in childhood, of husband in youth and
son in older age after the death of her husband. They are denied equal status and position as men in society. Thus gradually the status of women went down. She was considered to be inferior to man. Her position became very miserable. Women, that is, even women belonging to Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya Varna are not entitled to upanayana and the study of the Vedas. For them, marriage is equivalent to upanayana and service of their husbands is equivalent to the study of the Vedas in the gurukul. A wife must treat her husband like god even if he is immoral, ignorant and brutal. A widower is allowed to remarry but a widow is not. Anti-women practices like child marriage, female infanticide, polygamy, Sati, restrictions of widowhood etc; existed simultaneously with wide spread worship of female deities.

As time passed on the above circumstances gradually changed. General position and status of women were changing from age to age, and so naturally the attitude of society towards them could not remain the same in different periods. One of the worst features of Indian society even in the beginning of 19th Century was its treatment of women. Improvement in the status of women came about from the 19th Century onwards, not as a conscious assertion on the part of Indian women, but through the programmes of social reform devised and carried out by enlightened men and the colonial administration. All the reform movements of modern India have advocated the uplift of women. The air of reformation held high the urgent need of educating women. The call for modernisation and progress was part of national resurgence which eventually aimed the overthrow of imperialism. There was a cry for new social ideologies, including transformed social structure of gender. The actual role that women played in their community was ignored deliberately or unconsciously. No regard was given for gender equality and women's dignity.

Women in Kerala experienced much worse suffering, humiliation and slavery in all spheres than even the untouchables. It was man’s superiority that created the slavery of women. The belief that God created man with
superior powers and women to slave for him, made things worst. Woman's traditional acceptance of it as truth only helped the growth of women's slavery. Women are confined strictly within the inner yards of household. The women are generally treated as sexual objects and as unfit for being independent and free. It was in the later half of the nineteenth century that issues concerning to the education of women began to crop up in the cultural arena of Kerala.

During the later years of the nineteenth century Sivayogi too voiced for the right to educate women. In the booklet called Sthreeridhyaaposhini, Sivayogi states his revolutionary ideas. It was well before the coming of Mokshapradeepam. He wrote about three important spheres in any social reformatory movement: freedom, education and equality for women. The first issue of Sthreeridhyaaposhini came out in 1899. But Yogi was languid enough to come out with a subsequent issue, and it was after his death, owing to great demand, that his wife and president of the Anandasramam, Yoginimatha, published the next edition. “It proves that women education is a fundamental concern for all, thereby countering the assertion of the anti-women education faction’s claim that women have no right to learn. The book is presently unavailable and people from many places demand it. Nevertheless, Swami is indifferent to reprint and to bring out another edition. The demand is rising day by day. I am a mute witness to both these situations. Because of this reason and fully aware of the fact that this book will be an apt companion for the women-folk, I take up the responsibility of publishing it”\(^{102}\) says Yoginimatha in the foreword.

Siva yogi creates awareness in the minds of the ladies regarding the irrational social structures and value system of the Kerala society. He advocates complete reversal of this position. He wanted to uplift women. It was their total seclusion which brought about their physical and mental degeneration. The lack of education is the root cause of many other

problems. During that time Kerala Society has a general prejudice against female education. Siva yogi composed Jnana Kummi, Ananda Kummi, Pilla Thalolippu and Sreevidya poshini to create awareness in the minds of the ladies of their position.

Like all radicals of that period, he believed in the omnipotence of education. Knowledge is something that removes all kinds of defects and gives cheerfulness to the mind. He highlights the apt phrase that “an uneducated person is like an animal” and points out the disadvantages of not being educated: such people are always quarrelling, using uncouth language and in the end make chance of court-disputes. The companionship of wise people is like being in heaven. The enlivening conversation with them will sweep away all our worries and sorrows. Denying such education to women is really bad. An educated woman rarely takes immoral path.

Here Sivayogi argues that both women and men, who give education to women, ought to have equal status in the society. Refusing to educate women is like the self-centered act of eating a delicious recipe by oneself. As per science, a female is the semi-corpus part of the male. In the broadest sense, education is everything that happens to promote the development of an individual. He considers Knowledge is something that removes all kinds of defects and gives cheerfulness to the mind. It is fundamental that women need to be educated. The conversation with a wise woman is in itself enlivening. By talking intelligently, she will delight the mind and remove sadness. She will pardon errors and lead us through the moral path. An educated woman helps her man to be just in his actions and to stern injustice. Husbands will rely on them if there is a greater compatibility and less unfavorable situations between them. Therefore providing education to women ensures a long-term happiness.

Trying to confine woman like a parrot in a cage which blindly mimics is a vain act. Some people have the wrong notion that woman who reads are

103 Ibid., p. 7.
unable to perform domestic chores efficiently. Women who read poems and plays during their youth can immerse themselves in the heavenly delight called love. If one needs liberation one can read illuminating texts of scientific wisdom and can make life happier. Mothers who are educated narrate moral stories to their children and thus make them good individuals of the future. They would not overly pamper their child, nor will they fail to punish children for their misbehavior.

The man who doubts his wife’s knowledge is like the one who gauges his eyes since it is the organ to appreciate beauty. Refusing to educate women is like the self-centered act of eating a delicious recipe by oneself. As per science, a female is the semi-corpus part of the male. If so, refusing to educate them is undeniably a shameful act. It is like putting butter in one eye and lime in the other. Sivayogi is more concerned with the female equality in the society while other reformers tried to modernise the women and family. He advises: “Never think that the best should always go to the males. No one can monopolise knowledge. It increases on giving. It makes one famous. It protects us like a mother and guides us like a father. It is lovable like a husband. The most important thing is the wealth-of-knowledge which removes poverty. It augments our honesty, generosity and compassion. An educated relative can advise us to win over anger, avoid frustration, destroy pride, and to rein cruelty.”

Sivayogi points out instances from the Puranas like Choodala, who removed sorrow by educating her husband and of Yajnavalkyan teaching yoga to his wife, Gargi. The deity of science and knowledge—Goddess Saraswati—is a woman. Kapilar taught everyone that yoga is good. It was because of their astuteness that Damayanti and Sita did not disown their chastity at times of danger. Satyabhama helped Krishna in battle. Men of

104 Ibid., p.9.
106 Ibid., p. 9.
depraved minds commit heinous crimes even though they are learned. Education is a necessity for a fit mind, both for men and women.\textsuperscript{107}

Sivayogi reiterates the need to educate women for the benefit of the family which in turn is beneficial for the whole society. Sivayogi speaks on the importance of education, about the theory that childhood is the apt age to grasp lessons easily and the fact that only an educated woman can inculcate values and nurture an intelligent child right from his boyhood days. Such children, when they grow up, become an asset to the society. Children raised by ignorant women will never be intelligent.

He criticises male dominance and advocates the need to bestow equal status for woman. He also gives the scientific-comment that woman is the complementing-half of the man. Here also, it is with logic, authoritative texts, and from experience that Sivayogi vouches for freedom for women and women’s education. Though other social reformers had had vocalised the need for education of women, what sets Sivayogi apart from the rest is that it was he who initiated the question of equal status for woman. He recognises women’s right as an individual’s right not only in the family and social affairs but in religious affairs. He promoted social awareness to gender issues and women’s human rights. Women empowerment is central to human empowerment. Gender equity depends on extensive awareness of the importance of women’s share in overall progress and give their honor and due respect as human. Brahmananda Siva yogi extends the attainment of the so called bliss through Yoga to all irrespective of sex.

Most men view themselves being the superior life-form in society. They force women to believe in their own inferiority to men and then incapability to excel educationally, politically, economically and domestically. Sivayogi stresses the truth that women will eventually advance in all these areas and come to realise that they do not need men to survive. He underlines the necessity of women education by recollecting facts like

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p. 15.
Queen Victoria, though a widow rules the kingdom better than her male counterparts. We do not realise that the subjugation of women leads to social ruin, that society which should grow, goes on declining day by day, in spite of its capacity of reason. Our women should change from considering themselves as slaves by birth.

Gender equity depends on extensive awareness of the importance of women’s share in overall progress and give their honor and due respect as human beings. Sivayogi advises to consider women as equal to men and stresses earnestly the need for their education. Without proper education either man or women is not at all useful to society. Such a view indicates the similarity between Phule, Gora, Periyar and Brahmananda Siva yogi. The outcome was the evolution of the nineteenth century generation of the "new woman". The latter half of the 19th century started seeing the rise of Indian womanhood to freedom and assertion.

**On Mind**

Mind refers to the collection of intellect and consciousness which are manifest in some combination of thought, perception, emotions, will and imagination. There are many theories of what the mind is and how it works, dating back to Plato, Aristotle, Buddha, Sankaracharya and other Greek and Indian philosophers. Pre-scientific theories, which were rooted in theology, concentrated on the relationship between mind and the soul the supposed supernatural or divine essence of the human person.

The Sakti concept proposed by Sivayogi is the same as Brahman in Advaita. Though the mind occupies a great place in Advaita, they consider it only as an inert substance. Sivayogi never accepted such a view. If Atman and mind are separate entity, the atman does see the unconscious mind during its deep sleep like that of a person who sits near sleeping person. Likewise, if there is a soul, which is awaken even when mind sleeps, can see

---

the mind too. But this is not possible since there is no soul apart from mind.\textsuperscript{109} Hence it is convinced that both the soul and the mind are one and the same.\textsuperscript{110} He goes on to assert that the soul does not notice the acts, during an operation by giving anesthesia. The soul does not notice the operation being performed and the unconsciousness. If there is a soul, which exists apart from mind, then it must see. Sivayogi argues that since it is unnoticed by soul hereby convinced that soul and mind are the same. In sushupti or deep sleep, the mind gets disturbed. All that time there is not the experience of any duality. There is no sort of sorrow of worldly bondage. This is within the experience of all. When the mind awakes there emerges the various conceptions of sorrow and happiness. This also is within the experience of all\textsuperscript{111}. Thus the nature of the mind is in fact the cause for one’s happiness and misery.

The essence of the individual soul is the mind itself\textsuperscript{112}. The various kinds of desires make the mind agitated and then the world will be horrible to live in. But when the mind is concentrated and is withdrawn from worldly objects the world becomes pleasant. It is due to the defect of their mind the people lead corrupted life and these results in the degradation of their values. Realising the fact, people have to treat their mind with medicine of knowledge at any cost. To get rid of human misery, it is the mind and not God that is to be pleased. With out purity of mind one cannot get relief from all pains. With absorption of mind, in bliss, one can relieve from all miseries and pains. Sivayogi trusts that the so called Mukti or Salvation is the absorption of the mind in the supreme of nature of the Sat (Reality), Chit (Energy) and Ananda (Bliss). It is impossible when the mind is concentrated\textsuperscript{113}.

\begin{itemize}
\item[110] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 41.
\item[111] Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Mokshapradeepam} (Mal.), p. 43.
\item[112] \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 11-14.
\item[113] Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Anandadarsam} (Mal.), p. 42.
\end{itemize}
Sivayogi quotes authorities to justify his concept of the absorption of mind. The mind is the cause for all things. The mind is to be treated even at any coast. According to Brahma jnana Tantra, “It is the mind that performs all actions. To the mind are attached all sins. When the mind is absorbed; one is absolved from all sins.” The Mind has to be controlled so long it gets absorbed in itself. The absorption of mind in itself is spoken as jnana Moksha (salvation). The one and only god, that showers all prosperity and grants us all our desired objects, is mind. Sivayogi convinces that mind is not an entity separate from Atman. When the mind gets absorbed in sushupti or deep sleep, nothing is seen, neither resolve nor life, neither chitta (intellect or reason) nor egotism. Therefore what existed as the names of several forms, is the mind, the faculty of thinking.

The mind also becomes several forms, such as organs of sense and so forth. Mind is transformed into Atman through Yoga. Mind will get absorbed in Atman. Yoga is the process of uniting the mind with Atman and getting it absorbed in it. Yoga is the means to get the mind absorbed in Atman as in sushupti or deep sleep. Siva yogi urged the people to accept any religion which contained yoga a means to get the mind absorbed. Good knowledge can be accepted like nectar which can be accepted even if it comes out of poison. To get rid of human misery, it is the mind and not God that is to be pleased. Without purity of mind one cannot get relief from all pains. With the absorption of mind, in bliss, one can relieve from all miseries and pains. One should wash off these impurities of the mind with

114 Ibid., p. 43.
115 Ibid., p. 44.
116 Ibid., p. 58.
117 Ibid., p. 59.
118 Ibid., p. 60.
one’s own wisdom and manliness and make it crystal pure. Without purity of mind no salvation is possible.\textsuperscript{119}

He convincingly establishes that mind is soul and God, friend and enemy. In short everything. When mind is in control one realises one’s ones duty and virtue and when it is out of control one commits wrong and sin. He cited Thaejovindo Upanishad that there is only one god worth knowing and that is the mind itself. That is the god which satisfies all desires. Without controlling this God, it is a waste to study Vedas and Sastras which give information about God.\textsuperscript{120} He also quotes Brahmajnana Tantram which says that mind is the cause for all things. It is the mind that performs all actions. All sins are attached to mind. When the mind is absorbed, one is absolved from all sins.\textsuperscript{121} Thus Sivayogi emphatically established that Mind, Sakti, Soul, God, Friend, Enemy are one and the same.\textsuperscript{122} There is only one god worth knowing and that is the mind itself. It is the God which satisfies all desires.

**On Rajayoga**

Rajayoaga is one of the six orthodox (astika) schools of Hindu philosophy, outlined by Patanjali in his Yoga sutras. Rajayoaga is considered principally with the cultivation of mind using meditation to further one’s acquaintance with reality and finally achieve liberation. Rajayoaga is so called because it is primarily concerned with the mind. The mind is traditionally conceived as the “king” of the psycho-physical structure. Thought, feeling, perception, or memories are the functions of the mind. It distorts and colors the mental mirror. If one can restrain the mind from forming into modifications, there will be no distortion, and one will experience one’s true self. While the Hata yogi starts his Sadhana with asanas (posture)

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{119} Brahmamanda Sivayogi, *Anandadarsam* (Mal.), pp. 249-252. Also see *Anandavimnanam* (Mal.), p. 54.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Brahmamanda Sivayogi, *Mokshapradeepam* (Mal.), p. 220.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p. 44.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Brahmamanda Sivayogi, *Anandadarsam* (Mal.), p. 41.
\end{itemize}
and Pranayamas, a Rajayogi starts Sadhana with the mind, although a certain minimum asanas and pranayamas are usually included as a preparation for the meditation and concentration.

The Buddhists accepted the practical side of Yoga, they recognised dhyanas and pranayamas. They also considered Yoga as a means for attaining the Bodhisattva condition or realisation of the emptiness of the whole world.\textsuperscript{123} The Jaina philosophy believes in Yoga as a means for liberation. Jaina Yoga is a complete course of moral discipline which leads to the purification of the mind.\textsuperscript{124} The generally accepted concept of Yoga school is the Yoga sutras of Patanjali, who is regarded as the founder of the formal Yoga philosophy. Different forms of Yoga practices and ideas which existed even before Patanjali were moulded with the Samkhya philosophy. The whole of Rajayoga is based on Samkhya metaphysics. Rajayoga is considered as the Yoga that helps for the realisation of the supreme reality. “There are indeed divergences in certain details or technical names, but the means to be adopted for purification are almost everywhere essentially the same as those advocated by the Yoga system.”\textsuperscript{125} Most of the latter schools of thought in India have accepted the necessary portions of Patanjala Yoga.

Studying all these, Sivayogi tries to reveal the essence of Rajayoga through the propagation of Ananda Matham, to the public with slight variations in certain respects. Sivayogi accepts the view of Patanjali in Yoga sутra: Yoga is the restraint of the functions of mind and gets the mind absorbed in its own origin, the atman. This absorption of the mind is known as Mukti or Salvation. It is the absorption of the mind in the supreme of the nature of Sat (Reality) Chit (Energy) and Ananda (Bliss). The mind is transformed in to Atman through Yoga. Yoga is but the process of uniting the mind with Atman and getting it absorbed in it.

\textsuperscript{123} Radhakrishnan Dr. S., \textit{Indian Philosophy}. Vol. I, op.cit., p. 427.
\textsuperscript{124} Das Gupta S.N., \textit{History of Indian Philosophy}.Vol.1, op.cit., p. 227.
\textsuperscript{125} Das Gupta S.N., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 77.
The goal of every religion should be the cessation of sorrow and misery and the realisation of perfect happiness. But the followers of Hinduism and other religions degenerated due to the observance of the unreasonable religious rites and blind superstitious beliefs and idolatrous practices. To end this state of humiliation Sivayogi expounded the principle of Rajayoga. Hinduism is a mixture of both good and evil. He refutes strongly the evil side of Hinduism. Those words which cannot stand the test of reason should be rejected at all costs, even though it might be said by God Brahman. We should accept the word of even a child if it is reasonable. 126

Rajayoaga is sometimes referred to as Ashtanga Yoga (eight-limbed Yoga) because there are eight aspects to the path to which one must attend. Sivayogi gives an elaborate description of the eight parts of Yoga in his work Mokshapradeepam as that of Patanjali with some differences. Sivayogi describes the eightfold of Yoga - Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi in a somewhat different way from Patanjali.127

According to Sivayogi Yoga means the restraint of the activities of the mind. When the mind is concentrated in Ananda sthanam, the spot where from Ananda emanates, and the other activities of the mind are restrained, i.e., the course of the mind towards the external objects of the senses is checked, the mind gets united unto bliss, just as the water, which flows out from a tank through the sluice, flows into the tank itself, if obstructed.128 When the mind that is affected by the miseries of worldly existence gets absorbed unto Bliss, we are relieved of the miseries and attain Bliss. All miseries come from fear (of death), from unfulfilled desires.

Almost all the philosophical schools of India accepted the greatness of Yoga. It came to be interpreted differently in different darsanas. This

---

126 Brahmananda Sivayogi, Anandadarsam (Mal.), p. 60.
127 Usha Devi Dr. N., Contribution of Brahmananda Sivayogi to Indian philosophy, p. 75.
confused the common people regarding its real nature. Observing this position, Sivayogi tries to reveal the essence of Rajayoga which was denied to the common man. According to him any one like child, youth, old man or a woman can practise Raja Yoga.\textsuperscript{129} Every thought, feeling, perception or memory one may have caused a modification in the mind. It distorts and colors the mental mirror. If one can restrain the mind from forming in to modifications, there will be no distortion and he will experience his true self. Rajayoga aims at controlling all thought waves and mental modifications.\textsuperscript{130}

In the opinion of Swami Vivekananda the science of Rajayoga, in the first place, proposes to give men such a means of observing the internal states, and the instrument is the mind itself.\textsuperscript{131} The power of attention of mind, when properly guided and directed towards the internal world, will analyze the mind, and illuminate facts for us. The powers of the mind are like rays of light being dissipated; when they are concentrated they illumine every thing. This is the only source of knowledge that we have.\textsuperscript{132} Sivayogi holds the same opinion and gives the most important place to the mind in his philosophy. When by analysing his own mind, man comes face to face, as it were, with something which is never destroyed, something which is, by its own nature, eternally pure and perfect; he will no more be miserable, no unhappy. Sivayogi asserts that the objective of Yoga is to arrest the functions of the mind gradually from its various states. When the mind becomes stable, it can master the whole universe. He recognises that the dissolution of the mind to its internal nature is called liberation and the experience of Bliss, and that everyone should follow the ways to control the mind,

According to Sivayogi the absorption of mind is salvation. This is cessation of all pains, this is Samadhi indeed. Action done in dedication to

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{129} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Vigraharadhanakhandanam} (Mal.), p. 21.
\textsuperscript{130} Brahmananda Sivayogi, \textit{Anandadarsam} (Mal.), pp. 14-18, 29, 30.
\textsuperscript{131} Swami Vivekananda, \textit{On Rajayoga}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 7.
\end{flushleft}
God can never purify the mind. More over if there is control of the senses, he can remain in society, finish his mission there, and reach the abode of Bliss Supreme. Every human being has this right and the power. The mind that is unsteady and ever wavering has to be controlled and has to be concentrated to the spot of Ananda. This absorption of mind occurs when the mind experiences any of the signals of bliss. It differs to persons to person. This absorption of the mind, by experiencing any of the objects such as smell, touch, sound, sight and taste is recognised by Patanjali also in his Sutra.

Sivayogi wanted everyone to realise that it is the human mind which produces excellent human beings. He calls upon everyone to conquer the mind through the power of control and knowledge. It cannot be conquered with the help of ritualistic Karma, asceticism or idol worship. The conquest of the mind means the conquest of enemies like passion and anger. Thus if one is able to control his mind properly, he can drive safe to his destination without causing injury to anyone. He would banish all evil thoughts and would not be prey to vices and malpractices. Raja yoga is the medicine for curing the mind diseased by contact with worldly experiences.

**Ananda Matham**

Anandam or Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence. Happiness is only a state of mind. The word 'happiness' is used in various ways. In the widest sense it is an umbrella term for all that is good. In this meaning it is often used interchangeably with terms like 'wellbeing' or 'quality of life' and denotes both individual and social welfare. This use of words suggests that there is one ultimate good and disguises differences in interest between individuals and society.

---

133 Ibid., p. 276.
134 Usha Devi Dr. N., op.cit., p. 75.
Mind is one and whole, and all the divisions into separate subjects and objects are just an appearance. The Mind creates illusions of separation. We all want to be happy and to live a worthwhile life. The true happiness can be achieved only in the finding and maintenance of a natural harmony of instrumental and intrinsic values of life. The good is pleasure. Pleasure is in turn inferred as a conscious absence of pain and disturbance. Brahmananda Sivayogi maintains that this is what human beings strive for. Sivayogi is not at all ready to consider the world as a false entity.

Actually a true religion provides complete freedom of thought to the people: it unites the divided, enlightens the ignorant, and elevates all up to a dignified level. Any religion failing in such qualities will not be helpful for the humanity. The greatest possible benevolence of every rational agent towards all the rest constitutes the happiest state of each and all. The common goodwill is the supreme law. Sivayogi propagated and believes in the establishment of universal religion. All of his exhortations are on the basis of sound and convincing arguments of reason and collectively referred as Anandadarsam. Anandamatham rests upon these rational teachings.

Sivayogi’s view maintains that all religionists - Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Hindus and all wish for bliss, therefore Ananda or Bliss is supreme. All the theists, with their different ideas and notions about God, extol their own religion and their own respective deities as superior and supreme. The atheists negate the very existence of a God. Whatever is worshiped by the theists as supreme is not accepted by the atheists, as they did not believe in the existence of a God. But all of them, those atheists and theists with different conceptions about religion and God, do extremely wish for bliss. Hence it is clear that Ananda or bliss is supreme above everything.¹³⁵

He cites examples from our daily life and tries to establish the fact that Happiness is supreme to all. The behavior of all animals goes to show that

¹³⁵ Brahmananda Sivayogi, *Anandasootram* (Mal.), p. 3.
Ananda or bliss is supreme above all. Human beings stand foremost among all created beings. The activities of all people are for the acquisition of happiness or bliss. The ritualists activities like worship God, observing vows, are not in their desire for misery but for happiness alone. If they have the knowledge that worship of God will not conduce to happiness, none will ever worship God. This clearly shows that Ananda or Bliss is supreme above all. When one sees no chance for any happiness owing to incurable disease or similar calamity, is seen to commit suicide by taking poison or by hanging or by shooting. This also shows that Ananda is supreme above all.\textsuperscript{136}

Our real father, mother and relations are but Ananda. That is the reason why Ananda ranks supreme above all. We love all and everything, deluded in the fact that they are conducive to our bliss. When we see them to be a hindrance to our bliss, we forsake them all. Hence it is clear that Ananda is the real father, mother friend and relation, fortune, everything and God supreme too. Hence it is universally acknowledged that Ananda is supreme above all. Sivayogi claims that there fore all of us are the children of happiness.\textsuperscript{137}

Sivayogi quotes Yajurvediya Thaithareyopanishad to convince his argument.\textsuperscript{138} This bliss or supreme happiness is Sakti. Sakti is not a separate entity different from Ananda or Brahma. It is the individual soul and the entire universe. There is but one without a second.\textsuperscript{139} The doctrine of Ananda holds out no promise of pleasure in life after death or in the other world and based on this worldly life. It outlines a practical solution for achieving happiness only by purifying the mind and to meet the world’s manifold challenges with courage. Anandamatham never stood for a particular class of people but for human beings and all creatures of the world. It puts forward Ahimsa as the greatest virtue and discards rituals,

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{137} Brahmananda Sivayogi,\textit{ Anadadarsam} (Mal.), pp. 76-84.
\textsuperscript{138} Brahmananda Sivayogi,\textit{ Anandsootram} (Mal.), p. 6.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., pp. 81-82.
sacrifices, belief in God and Sanyasa or penance. Accepts intellectual minority (sarapaksha) instead of ignorant majority (bhooripaksham) and refutes the infallibility of scriptures. Considers knowledge as the greatest wealth and superior excellence of man and insists to accept only on the bases of reason, experience and evidence. It believes renunciation means renunciation of the evils of minds. Mind is the God and soul. There is no separate existence.

Sivayogi proclaims that what is required at the present day is one religion of Ananda, which would bring under its fold the several religionists now ranged under hostile camps. This religion would keep them in amity and harmony and would rouse in them that deep ecstasy of bliss supreme. A true religion is to be valued to the extent to which it has discovered the right –key to this harmony, and organised its expressive motives and movements.

Thus the ideology of Sivayogi reflects the total rejection of the institutionalised religions, which was identified with hierarchy and inequality. As the distinctions are removed, the ideal of one humanity and world citizenship comes nearer to realisation of universal manhood. Truth, tolerance, love and equality are the basic needs of social harmony. A true revolutionary is guided by a strong feeling of love. This love made Brahmananda Sivayogi struggle against the evils existed in the society.