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**LORD AYYAPPAN**  
**THE DHARMA SASTA**

Pyyappan

GENERAL EDITORS •

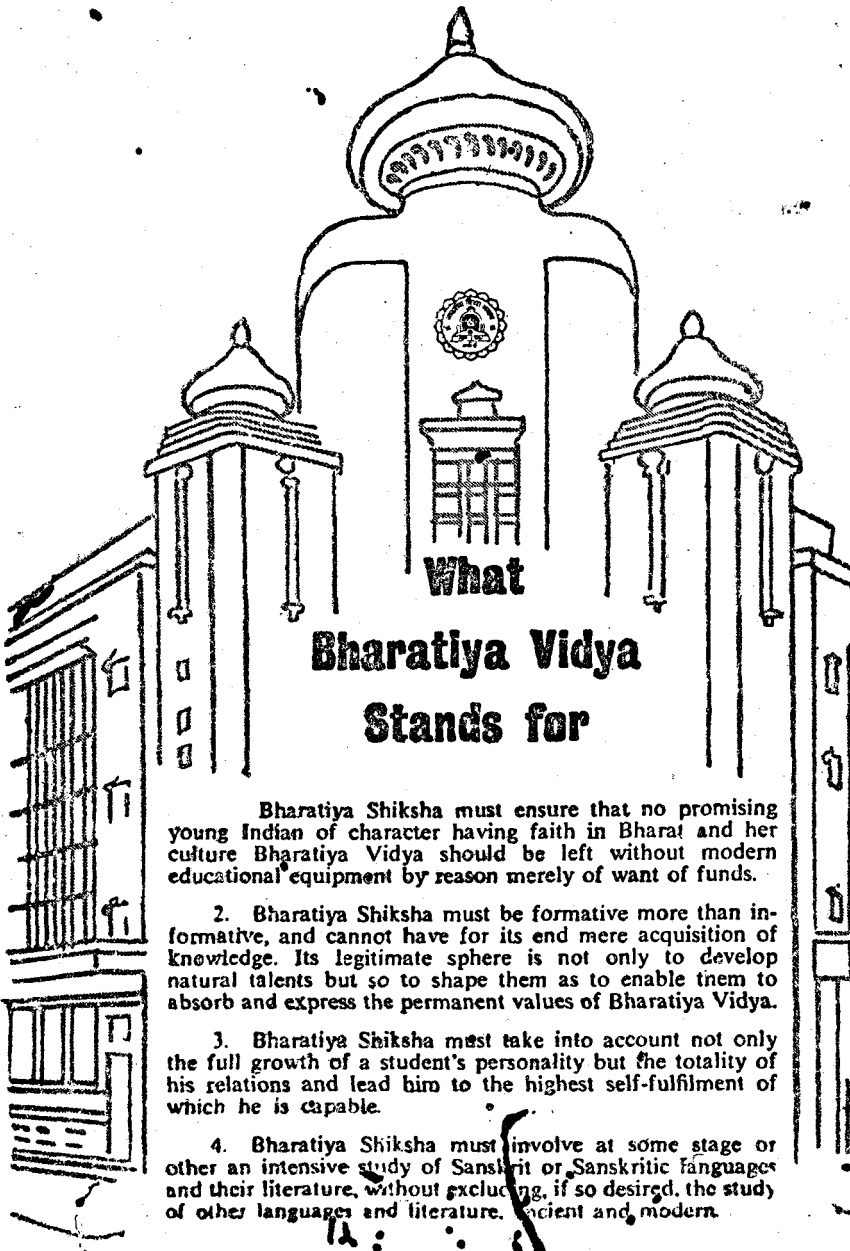
K. M. MUNSHI

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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY



What

## Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through the study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry.

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world





आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

*Let noble thoughts come to us from every side*

—Rigveda, I.39.i

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*General Editors*

**K. M. MUNSHI**

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**LORD ĀYYAPPAN**

, By

**PĀYYAPPAN**

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**LORD AYYAPPAN**  
**THE DHARMA SASTA**

BY  
**PYYAPPAN**



1966

**BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN**

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## GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bhavan's Book University volumes had rare success. About a million and a quarter volumes have been sold in about eleven years. However, there is an insistent demand for the stray volumes which the Bhavan has issued from time to time at a lower price. In order to meet this demand, it has been decided to issue the new One-Rupee Book University Series side by side with the Book University Series.

I hope this new One-Rupee Series will have the same good fortune which the other Series had, of being useful to those who are interested in the fundamental values of Indian Culture, and of reaching out to a wider audience.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,  
Chowpatty Road, Bombay-7.

*Vijaya Dashami*

September 28, 1963

K. M. MUNSHI



## BENEDICTION

*H.H. Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi*

The Supreme Being manifests Himself as Siva and Narayana, the former to teach us *jnana* (true knowledge) and the latter to protect us.

We conceive of Siva as one sitting under a tree or on the peak of a mountain, besmeared with sacred ash, wearing the skin of the tiger and the elephant, calm and serene, contemplating inwardly, and showing the symbol of knowledge or *jnana mudra*. He is the Supreme Teacher who taught us the ultimate Truth which is nothing else than Himself.

Protection is a kingly duty and so we contemplate Narayana as one gorgeously dressed and wearing priceless jewels.

Siva likes to be bathed with holy water always, while Narayana likes to be decorated.

So we say, *alankara priyo Vishnu, abhisheka priya Sivah*.

The beauty of Vishnu's form is such that one would not like to withdraw one's eye from Him.

The beauty of this physical form is carried in His avatars like Sri Rama and Sri Krishna.

The *Brahma-amsa* of Siva, associated with *jnana* and *tapas* (penance) and the *Kshatra-amsa* of Narayana, associated with *bhakti*, *prema* and *kripa* (devotion, love and mercy) are both required to guide and protect us.

The *Puranas* contain instances of Narayana assuming a feminine charm capable even of attracting the austere mind of Siva. When this merciful charm of Narayana and the serene *jnana* of Siva combined, an effulgent light (*tejas*) was the outcome.

Out of this *tejas* was born Ayyappan also known as Ayyanar, Sasta or Hariharaputra.

Ayyan is a corruption of Aryan, which means 'one worthy of reverence.'

Ayyanar has come to be regarded as the third son of Siva, the other two being Pillaiyar (Ganesa) and Kumaran (Kartikaya), both names conveying the meaning 'child'.

Ayyanar embodies in Himself the qualities of both Siva and Vishnu.

There are temples dedicated to Him in the South, in Tamil Nad and largely in Kerala. He keeps guard over us, protects us from evil spirits, and also endows us with *jñana*, leading to salvation.

It is significant that while on the one hand, the freedom of speech guaranteed to us under the Constitution is being utilised by some people to spread atheism, devotion to Ayyappan is also growing steadily.

From distant Kerala, Ayyappan is gradually extending His sphere of influence into Tamil Nad too.

It is an encouraging sign and a sure antidote to the anti-God propaganda.

If we do our duty invoking His Grace, we are bound to succeed and prosper.

## FOREWORD

All glory to the Lord Ayyappan, the Son of Hari and Hara, the Indweller and the Inner Ruler of all hearts, the Timeless and Spaceless Tarak Brahman. My prostrations unto Him.

From ancient times the sacred shrine of Lord Ayyappan, situated in the enchanting scenery of the Shabari Hills, in the District of Kerala in South India, has been a source of inspiration and centre of faith for innumerable devotees of the Lord. The detailed story of the Lord is not found in the Puranas. Most of the Lilas of the Lord Ayyappan are known to South Indians especially to Keralites. People in North India and those of foreign countries are mostly unaware of the elevating stories of the Lord, the miracles of His saving Grace and the fervent devotion of His innumerable devotees. Though the Supreme Lord is One without a second, yet He is worshipped in different shrines, with special emphasis on different aspects of His Divine Nature, and each shrine of the Lord has a special charm, a special influence, a special significance for the devotees.

Sri Pyyappan—Ji, the excellent writer of this book, has rendered a great service to mankind by revealing the Lilas of the Lord to a far larger public through the English language. The story of the Lord Ayyappan has been told in a most interesting, inspiring and elevating style. Apart from the beauty of literary presentation, every line of the book rings with the note of supreme devotion, unflinching faith, burning aspiration for God-realisation and utter dedication and renunciation. There is unique sweetness and indescribable charm in the story of the Lord.

The author beautifully describes how the Lord was found as a babe by a king Rajashekhara on the banks of the river Pampa, how the babe, Manikantha, was brought up by the

king and queen who were childless, how Manikantha bestowed the power of speaking and hearing upon the deaf and dumb son of his teacher in the form of Guru-Dakshina, how He had to obtain the milk of a leopard, owing to a scheme of the jealous queen to put an end to his life, how He destroyed the demoness Mahishi, how He bestowed Immortality upon the king, and various other anecdotes connected with the advent of the Lord.

The author has written an inspiring chapter on the esoteric significance of pilgrimage and the methods of the worship of the Lord Ayyappan. The austerities such as Brahmacharya, selfless service, Satwic food etc. have been described as a preparation to the pilgrimage to the sacred shrine of the Lord.

Life, verily, is a pilgrimage of the soul to the Supreme Lord or Paramatman, through the successive steps of Yoga and devotion. The external pilgrimage is the outer mode of the inner process. When the pilgrim has intense faith and devotion, his every step towards the shrine removes the inner obstacles from the inward path and draws his soul nearer and nearer to the Blessed Abode of the Lord. Various methods of worship, such as carrying a coconut filled with ghee, have spiritual significance and the knowledge of them is highly beneficial for satisfying intellectual curiosity on the path.

The soul wanders in this world due to its attachments to the material sheaths. One should purify one's heart by the practice of austerity, worship and devotion to the Lord in order to obtain Divine Grace. It is Divine Grace that sweeps away all the impurities of the heart, breaks all the fetters of attachment and takes the soul to the Infinite Abode of Immortality on the shining wings of faith and aspiration. This is the essence of the teachings of the Lord.

The book is replete with general instructions on spiritual Sadhana. The enchanting power of desire and its baneful consequences have been amply illustrated. Jealousy, anger, impurity and other vicious emotions of the heart must be

controlled and eradicated for the attainment of true devotion to God.

Without doubt the book is an exquisite piece of Bhakti literature. Its daily Swadhyaya is very auspicious. It is an inspiring book for all. I hope the devotees of the Lord will find a rare treasure in this beautiful work.

May the Lord bless the author with long life, peace, prosperity, success in all undertakings, Immortality and Eternal Bliss.

May the blessings of the Lord Ayyappan be upon us all.

*Rishikesh*

SWAMI SIVANANDA

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## I. THE PLEDGE REDEEMED

*"Sarvadharmā parityajya mamekam saranam vraja  
Aham tvaam sarva papebhyo mokshayishyami ma sucha."*

"Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me.  
I shall redeem you from all sins. Do not grieve."

These words from out of the mouth of God is a definite promise, in unequivocal and categorical terms, of redemption from all sins, however great they may be, if only we take refuge in Him.

Not a day passes without this verse, a verse pregnant with meaning, being chanted in a Hindu house, but it is not for mere parrot-like chanting only that God has given it to the World. These are Divine words, a call to mankind to understand their true meaning and live up to it, so that they shall not fall deeper into the mire of this world but be redeemed from sin and united with Him immortally.

The call to take refuge in Him, "mamekam saranam vraja", is preceded by the words "sarvadharmā parityajya", "abandoning all dharmas." What then are these 'dharmas' and why has He asked us to abandon them? They are the many dharmas of the lower ignorant consciousness of mind, life and body, and the many rules, standards and laws imposed upon man by the society to which he belongs, dharmas as envisaged by man. These are superfluous in the World of the Divine and they do not constitute a means for the realisation of the one eternal Dharmā, the highest spiritual Divine Consciousness and, therefore, they have to be abandoned. Ignoring, therefore, the dharmas of the lower ignorant consciousness, which are no more than codes of life, and rejecting them, we have to surrender ourselves to the Supreme

## II. THE LORD DESCENDS

Pantalam, small town in the heart of Kerala, is the chosen and blessed place where Lord Ayyappan, the presiding deity of the Sabari Hills spent His human term of twelve years before fulfilling His divine work on earth. At the time of the epic Pantalam was a kingdom by itself, ruled by Raja Rajasekhara. It was later, when Raja Martandavarma came to power, that this kingdom was integrated with other similar small ones to form Travancore, which is now a part of Kerala State.

Rajasekhara was pious and charitable, a just ruler and God-fearing, held in high esteem by his subjects.

The royal couple were blessed with all mundane happiness except an heir to the throne. Gloom was writ large on their faces owing to the absence of a heir, for no king is happy without an heir to his throne, nor a man without an heir to his property. To whom would he entrust his crown. To whom would he hand over the reins of government? This was a source of perpetual grief to him and his consort and sadly did they spend their lives, not without supplicating God to bless them with their desire. How intense and spontaneous the supplication must have been we leave the reader to imagine, since the Lord Himself chose to come down on earth to fulfil their desire. As time passed the longing for an heir overclouded the pride of royalty.

No man in the world is happy, for desire, endless desire, is the harbinger of unhappiness, the source of unending misery and a perpetual curse to mankind.

Princely recreations may have been many, but the one most common to kings at that time was hunting, Rajasekhara one day decided upon a hunt and, followed by his Dewan and a company of hunters, he found recreation in the chase of wild animals. After a full day's hunt, he and his party reached the

### III. MANIKANTHA

The young child grew into a boy. He was put under charge of a guru for his education and physical training. Manikantha surpassed his friends in his lessons and exhibited extraordinary proficiency in archery and sword-play. His guru was happy at his achievements and, believing him to be some Divine personality, always held him in respect and treated him with reverence.

In due course, Manikantha's education and training were completed and he presented himself before his guru to offer the customary gifts. The guru said: "I know your divine nature. You are no ordinary person. My son is both blind and dumb. Be merciful enough to grant him the powers of sight and speech." At the request of his guru Manikantha took the child in his arms and by his divine touch brought him sight and speech, and blessed him. The guru, when Manikantha paid his respects, blessed him, declaring that he would be a king of kings.

Many miracles are said to have been performed by Manikantha but this is an important one because it has a bearing on the story to follow.

After some time the queen gave birth to a son. Quite naturally her maternal love was turned to the new-born child who was of her own blood. Manikantha was, after all, an outsider. It only required a spark to set her against him and spread misery in the palace.

From the time Manikantha first came to the palace the Dewan had had a deep dislike for him, since but for him, he would have had the opportunity of ruling the land after the king at least for a while. On several occasions he had made treacherous attempts on the boy's life. All these had proved abortive, but scheming minds are always busy and he was on the lookout for an opportunity to make a new attempt.

#### IV. BOONS AND MYSTERIES

At this time Mahishi, the powerful Demoness, resumed her atrocities against the Devas and, unable to bear her oppression, they sought the lotus feet of Lord Bhootanatha (Manikantha) at Ponnampalam, praying Him in His mercy to redress their grievance by ending her life. "Oh Lord Bhootanatha, Lord of the Universe, incarnation of mercy and love, we seek refuge in you to relieve us from our oppression by Mahishi. What else than your lotus feet shall we cling to for our rescue? To whom else shall we turn for succour?"

Who was this Mahishi? Why did she oppress the Devas? And why did the Devas seek succour at the feet of Lord Bhootanatha?

When the Trinity took up human forms for the establishment of dharma in the world there emerged from them a shakti or force which they named Datta. Perhaps he is the same as Dattatreya, a popular God of the North. There is no record to confirm this but it is generally believed to be so. References are also found to Datta as Dattatreya Maharshi.

Correspondingly, the consorts of the Trinity, by their Yogamaya, took human form and came to the world as the daughter of Maharshi Galava. The Maharshi named her Leela and in due course gave her in marriage to Datta.

Young as they were, Datta and Leela descended to the world and roamed about in the forests enjoying worldly pleasures of a youthful life. Forgetting herself, Leela became mad after mundane desires and Datta acquiesced in her wishes. Thus they spent a long time in the world.

In due course Datta became conscious of his Divine nature and decided to withdraw from his alliance with her. This was resented by Leela for her desires were still unsatiated. She besought Datta not to leave her, pleading:

## V. LEOPARDS!

Embracing Lord Bhootanatha, Lord Siva said: "Now that you have killed Mahishi there are yet other works to be done. You have to return to Rajasekhara who is passing his days in distress at separation from you. He is a great devotee. Bless him with immortality. In your incarnation as Rama, tapaswini Sabari adored you in the Saguna mode. She could not therefore attain immortality; she is again in the world, under the same name, seeking you in the mode of Nirguna. Bless her also with immortality. Rajasekhara will build you a temple near Sabari's Asram and the place will become famous as the Sabari Hill. You will reside there, in the hearts of your devotees and in Ponnampala. Return now to Rajasekhara. Devas will follow you as leopards and Devendra himself will be a royal tiger on which you will ride to Pantalam.

Having received these instructions, Lord Bhootanatha first blessed the Rishis, who were present, and then returned to Pantalam on a tiger, followed by thousands of leopards.

As the Lord reached the outskirts of Pantalam, news of his return reached the king and his subjects. People began to run helter-skelter for safety. Hearing the shrieks of horror and the shouting, the king came out and, to his dismay, he saw Manikantha mounted on a tiger, accompanied by the hosts of leopards. Dismounting from the tiger and standing respectfully by the side of the king, Manikantha requested him to take as much leopard's milk as was required to relieve the queen of her headache. The sight of the leopards and Manikantha with his serene and smiling face convinced the king beyond doubt that he was no other than God Himself; he therefore besought the Lord for mercy and requested Him to send the wild animals back in the same way as He had brought them, saying that the queen's headache had subsided

## VI. TEMPLE ON SABARI HILL

After the Lord's departure the king Rajasekhara again fell to brooding and became restless. He was overcome by grief and emotion when he recalled the days of Lord Bhootanatha's life in his palace. Disinterestedness so prevailed with him that he neglected his duties, even the duty of ruling his country.

Maharshi Agastya came to relieve his distress. He was received with due reverence and the king, overcome with grief at the departure of Manikantha, said: "Will you not tell me where Manikantha is now? I am unable to forget the days he spent in my palace and his association with me, how he lived here as a son, a servitor and even as an administrator. How can I forget Him? The events of those days still pass before my very eyes as though they were happening today. Will you not bring solace to this afflicted heart?" The Maharshi replied: "I am here at the bidding of Manikantha. Have you forgotten the advice he gave you? All this is the game of Maya which is beyond human understanding. Manikantha is that Timeless and Spaceless Tarakabrahma. It is the result of your past Karma that you are not able to understand him. Therefore you set your heart on Tarakabrahma in order to free yourself of the effects of Karma. All that has been earned by past Karma has got to be experienced. There is no escape from it. To free yourself from Karma, serve the Lord without desire and meditate on Tarakabrahma. I am here now to advise you on the construction of the temple for Lord Bhootanatha. Do not waste any more time in taking up this work.

The Maharshi then described the importance and sacredness that had attached to Kumbhadala Tirtha and Pampa Tirtha ever since the time of the Ramayana. The king desired to know where Kumbhadala Tirtha was and why it was

## APPENDIX—GUIDE TO PILGRIMS

### A. THE TRAVEL KIT

If we analyse the significance of the pilgrimage to the Sabari Hill in consonance with the nature of the austerities to be observed, it would appear to be symbolic of the journey of the soul to merge with the Supreme on its attainment of immortality. Even though it is only a symbol, the value of the pilgrimage cannot be gainsaid, for it is only by a faithful and constant repetition of the symbolic pilgrimage that the truth of the real pilgrimage will dawn on us. The austerities are clearly expressive of "Sarvadharmā parityajya". Free as the soul is from the influence of this world of Maya, no dharmas of the world are, or can be, attached to it. The Lord of the universe presides there to receive all those who go to Him, irrespective of the religion they profess, as is evident from the great number of non-Hindu pilgrims seen among the sea of humanity gathering there, and, what is more, right in front of the shrine there is the temple of Vavara, a Muslim, the first lieutenant of the Lord, standing as a permanent monument to the Lord's declaration of the equality of mankind. The austerities call for the performance of no religious rites but demand action, not outer symbolic action but action within the field of the human body.

In undertaking the pilgrimage, therefore, the austerities are the most important, since they constitute the foundation. It is on the intensity of their observance, the unassailable faith behind them and the transformation they bring about in our mental being, that the result of the pilgrimage depends. It is for knowledge, knowledge by experience, that we undertake the pilgrimage and, unless we surrender to Him and to His Will, without any reservation whatsoever, ignoring our individuality born of the ego, it would be nothing but hypo-

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**Bhavan's Journal:** An English Fortnightly devoted to life, literature and culture started in August 1954. Present circulation 50,000 copies. Annual Subscription Rs. 6.50.

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

Hari, Lord Vishnu, took the form of Mohini, and gave Amrit to the Devas after cheating the Asuras out of their share by bewitching them into stupefaction through feminine charms.

Hara, Lord Siva, who had already saved the Devas by drinking the Kalakoota which threatened to deluge them, heard of this, and desired to see the Mohini form of Hari. Mohini appeared in a garden, playing with a ball, and tantalised by her beauty, Hara lost control over himself.

Hari-Hara-Putra, the god born of this episode, manifested in various forms at various times.

In Kerala he descended as child Manikantha and grew up to be known as Bhootanatha, Lord of the Elements; Ayyappan, Lord of the Senses; Dharma Sasta, Lord of the Verities. Bhagavan Parashurama installed him on Sabari Hill as the guardian of the land created by him.

A pilgrimage to Sabari Hill is a *Sadhana* of a rare combination of courage, humility and faith. The gamut of its correct observance covers the whole field of physical endurance, mental purity and moral upliftment, culminating in the complete eradication of ego-sense and the consciousness of utter surrender to Him Who Alone Is.

This book describes the Sabari pilgrimage in the language of true *bhakti* and the reader, after going through it, cannot but join his voice with those of the hundreds of thousands of humble devotees who cry in full-throated joy:

SWAMIYE SARANAM AYYAPPA!