

॥ काशी पञ्चकम् ॥  
KĀŚĪ PANCHAGAM

(1)

मनोनिवृत्तिः परमोपशान्तिः  
सा तीर्थवर्या पणिकर्णिका च ।  
ज्ञानप्रवाहा विमलादिगङ्गा  
सा काशिकाहं निजबोधरूपा ॥

There is inactivity of the mind and complete cessation. And that foremost holy place is the manikarnika. There is the perennial flow of knowledge (in the form of) the pure Ganga (Ganges). I am that Kasika (Kasi) of the form of real knowledge.

(The word Kāśī is derived from the verbal root *kāś* meaning "to shine" and hence stands for something that is foremost. The sacred place Kasi is also known as Avimuktā and Vārāṇasī. Avimuktā means that Lord Śiva never discards this place. It is known as Varanasi because it is situated between the rivers Varuna and Asi, the two tributaries of the Ganges. Another speciality of the place is that the river Ganges flows northwards here.

There are many sacred ghats in Vārāṇasī (Benares). Among these, Maṅikarṇikā and Daśāśvamedha are the foremost, the former located in the middle of the ghats, and the latter considered to confer immense benefits [of performing ten Asvamedhas (Horse sacrifices)] to the pilgrims who visit this ghat and take a holy dip in the Ganges.)

(2)

यस्यामिदं कल्पितमिन्द्रजालं  
चराचरं भाति मनोविलासम् ।  
सद्यित्सुखैका परमात्मरूपा  
सा काशिकाहं निजबोधरूपा ॥

This created illusory world of movable and immovable beings, a fancy of the mind, shines here. I am that Kasika of the form of real knowledge and supreme Self, that is itself Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

(*Indrajāla* : merely magic that does not last long.)

(3)

कोशेषु पञ्चस्वधिराजमाना  
बुद्धिर्भवानी प्रतिदेहोहम् ।  
साक्षी शिवः सर्वगतोऽन्तरात्मा  
सा काशिकाहं निजबोधरूपा ॥

Every body is the house. Goddess Bhavani is the intellect that holds sway over the five sheaths. Lord Siva, th witness, is the all - pervading indweller, the Self. I am that Kasika of the form of real knowledge.

(There are five sheaths (*Kośa*) supposed to cover the soul — the *annamaya* (the earthly body), the *prāṇamaya* (the vesture of the vital airs), the *manomaya* (the sensorial vesture), the *vijñānamaya* (the cognitional vesture) and *ānandamaya* (the vesture of supreme bliss).)

(4)

काश्यां हि काशते काशी  
काशी सर्वप्रकाशिका ।  
सा काशी विदिता येन  
तेन प्राप्ता हि काशिका ॥

Kasi shines at Kasi. Kasi makes everything shine. One who has known Kasi *per se* has gained Enlightenment.

(The word *kāśā* denotes a kind of grass as well as its flower. Here the word *kāśī* has probably been derived to mean the place full of *kāśā*.)

(5)

काशीक्षेत्रं शरीरं त्रिभुवनजननी व्यापिनी ज्ञानगङ्गा  
भक्तिःश्रद्धा गयेयं निजगुरुचरणध्यानयोगः प्रयागः ।  
विश्वेशोऽयं तुरीयं सकलजनमनः साक्षिभूतोऽन्तरात्मा  
देहे सर्व मदीये यदि वसति पुनस्तीर्थमन्यत् किमस्ति ॥

The body is the sacred place Kasi. The knowledge that is of the form of the Ganges is the mother of the three worlds and all - pervading. Devotional faith constitutes this Gaya. The path of contemplation at the feet of one's preceptor is Prayaga. The inner soul, the witness of the minds of all people - the fourth state - is the Lord Visvesa. When all (the holy places) dwells within my body, then what else is a sacred place?

(In this concluding verse, the author equates the body, knowledge and different religious spiritual practices with the three sacred places - Kāśī, Gayā and Prayāga which are held highly meritorious for the performance of ancestral rites. Prayāga (near Allahabad) is the place of the confluence of the rivers Ganges, Yamunā and the invisible Sarasvati. The feeling that the sacred places are present in one's own body sanctifies a person, and there is no need for that person to have any pilgrimage at all.

There are three states of existence for all the human beings viz., the states of waking, dreaming and sound sleep. In the fourth (*turiya*) state the soul becomes one with the Supreme Brahman. Viśveśa or Viśvanātha, the Lord of the universe denotes Lord Śiva, the presiding deity at Kāśī. The inner soul is equated with Lord Viśveśa.

Although Kāśī has been the name of the place since olden days, the place is now popularly known as Vārānaśī or Benares. Now Kāśī is a small station to the north of Vārānaśī.)

