

"Shivo Bhokta, Shiva Bhojya Shivo Karta, Shiva Karma Shiva Karanatmakah"

Shiva is the experiencer and the highest object of experience. Shiva is the goal of Sadhana. There is nothing apart from Shiva. There is nothing other than Shiva. Whatever there is, is Shiva. There is nothing, which is not Shiva. There is no place, which is not Shiva. There is no time, which is not Shiva. To be aware of this is to be aware of Shiva.

Shri Guru Gita

The Guru Gita is a Hindu scripture of 182 verses [citation needed], authored by the sage, Vyasa. It is the heart of Skanada Purana. It describes a conversation between the Hindu God, Lord Shiva and his wife, the Hindu Goddess Parvati, in which she asks him to teach her about the Guru. Shiva answers her by describing the Guru principle, the proper ways of worshiping the Guru and the methods and benefits of repeating the Guru Gita.

The direct experience of Suta is brilliantly expressed through each and every couplet in it.

The couplets of this Guru Gita is the great remedy for the longlasting disease of birth and death. It is the sweetest nectar for Sadhakas. The merit is diminished by drinking the nectar of heaven. By drinking the nectar of this Gita sin is destroyed which leads to Absolute Peace and Knowledge of one's real nature.

Who do you think are the angry Gods in Hinduism? You strive hard to please these Gods and not invite their wrath upon you. There are certain Gods in Hinduism who are considered to have a hot temperament. It is said that when these Hindu Gods are not angry they will bless you with all goodness. But, once these Gods get angry, havoc is wrecked. Let us know some facts about these angry Hindu Gods.

Kali- Goddess Kali is one of those Hindu Gods who is largely worshiped. She is the Goddess of the destruction of evil and the consort of Lord Shiva. She is also considered as the Goddess of death. Kali is represented in most of the images clad in an animal skin with a garland of skulls hanging from her neck. Whenever she gets angry due to the evil activities of people, she wrecks havoc. That is the reason why dacoits worship this angry Goddess. They try to keep her pleased so that they do not become the victims of her banger.

Shiva- Lord Shiva is considered to be an epitome of all the good qualities of a husband. It is very easy to please Lord Shiva. But at the same time he starts 'tandava' whenever he gets angry. According to the most popular Hindu beliefs whenever Lord Shiva gets angry, he opens his third eye and wrecks destruction.

Durga- Durga, the Divine mother is a fierce Hindu Goddess. She is also known as Mahishasura Mardini as she had slayed the demon Mahishasura. She is a manifestation of Shakti or the divine power. She is depicted with 10 hands, carrying a lot of weapons. Durga is also a representation of woman power and wrath.

Shani- Lord Shani is said to be one of Gods who gets angry very fast. That is why people make all efforts to please Gods as such and not call upon their anger at any cost. People abound in prosperity if the lord is pleased upon someone. And at the same time they get destroyed if the Lord is displeased with them. He is depicted dark blue in colour. He also has a great influence on all the astrological charts.

Hanuman- Hanuman is an ardent devotee of Lord Rama. It is said that he hates any kind of unjust things and gets infuriated by misdeeds. His colour is orange, which is again a manifestation of anger and wrath. He is the God of strength and takes it away from anyone who commits any kind of evil deeds.

You may easily please these angry Hindu Gods by not committing or avoiding any kinds of evil deeds.

SIGNIFICANCE OF LORD SIVA

By Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Of all the Hindu Gods, none appealed to the emotions of a Hindu mind as much as Lord Shiva, the dweller of the mountains and the bearer of the trident, who with His third eye symbolizes the all knowing awareness of the universe.

Description of Siva:

Unlike Vishnu who is depicted as dark blue, Siva is white in color, except for his neck, which is dark blue. His neck became dark blue when he swallowed the poison emanated from the sea in the process of churning the amutham. He took the whole poison by himself to protect the cosmos from destruction and thus the images of him are prevailing in dark blue color here and there.

He leads a life of severe austerities. But in the images we find him tall and well built. His body is usually besmeared with ashes, denoting his frequent rounds to the cremation grounds and highlighting his fondness for Thiruneeru, a white sacred ash. He has three eyes. The third eye rests between his eyebrows. It is the eye of wisdom, by opening which he destroys the evil to maintain the cosmic harmony.

Though he is described in the scriptures as god of anger, he is, in fact, the god of love and he always bestows all kinds of wealth and power to the devotees and this is the reason for which we generally find him in his cheerful and jovial mood in the images.

Ravana and Surapathma were blessed with immortal powers by Lord Siva which gave a room for the birth of Rama and Skanda. Sometimes he is depicted with a lot of innocence in his demeanor as Bholenath. He is generally shown sitting cross-legged in a yogic posture, with his eyes closed and deep in meditation. When he is shown with his eyes open, his face expresses love and compassion.

The images of Siva evoke us in deep emotions. Those who are inclined to worship god are naturally drawn to him as they hold him in their minds and this is the reason for which the Saint Thirumular used to name him as Anbe Sivam, the lord of love.

Siva is the god of simplicity, exemplary humility and austerity. A tiger skin and an elephant skin serve as his garments. His long matted hair is normally tied into a knot or left flowing. He has four arms. With

one he holds his weapon the trident. With another, he holds Damaru, a small drum. The remaining two is held in abhaya and varada mudras (postures).

The Trident and the Snakes

The Trident

The trident is the weapon of Siva with which he destroys evils and restores order. The trident stands for the triple qualities of nature, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas. Siva is the master of maya and thereby master of these three qualities with which he controls the universe.

The trident symbolically represents the fact that Siva is the controller of the universe and the controller of all illusion. The trident also represents the three aspects of time, the past, the present and the future.

Siva is master of Time, Kala Bhairava who determines the progress of the universe according to his will. The trident represents the three paths to self-realization, namely the path of knowledge, the path of action and the path of devotion.

With these three paths, Siva transforms his devotees and destroys the evil in them. The trident stands for the three primary evils which need to be destroyed in order to make progress towards the divine. They are the evil of anger, the evil of lust and the evil of pride

The damaru denotes his connection with the primal sound AUM, the creation of alphabets, languages, grammar and music. His long matted hair denotes his spiritual life and his great powers. The crescent moon adorns his hair like a silver diadem.

Symbolism of Snakes

He wears a garland of snakes around his neck. Sometimes we see more snakes; one across his body like a sacred thread and two acting as bracelets around his muscular hands. The snakes symbolically

represent his control over desire and sensuality. Sometimes in his ferocious aspects, he is shown wearing a garland of skulls.

There is a deep symbolism hidden behind this. The snake stands for all the evil and demonic nature in the world. By wearing the snake around his neck, Lord Siva gives us the assurance that no evil can touch us or destroy us once we surrender to him, seek his protection and worship him with deep devotion.

The snake also stands for the power of kundalini, which is described as a coiled serpent lying dormant in the muladhara chakra of all human beings and descends upwards when one starts ones spiritual journey and becomes increasingly divine oriented.

The snake around the neck of Siva conveys the meaning that in him the kundalini not only has arisen fully but is also actively involved in the divine activity by keeping an eye on all the devotees who approach Siva with their individual problems.

The snake also stands for all passions and desires. By wearing the snakes around his neck, Lord Siva conveys the message to all his devotees that He has overcome all desires and is in full control of Prakriti, or maya and its various machinations.

Tha Ganges

And the Ganges flows from his head down into the world below.

The river Ganges is very sacred to the Hindus. Those who take a dip in the river are said to be ridden of all their sins and attain immortality.

It is believed that the river used to flow in the heavens till the sage, Bhageerath, made severe penances and directed its flow towards the earth to save his 60000 ancestors who were lying in the nether world (patala) in a heap of ashes due to a curse delivered by sage Kapila.

Since earth was not yet prepared to withstand the impact of its downward descent, Lord Siva came forward to allow it to fall on His head first and then flow down towards the earth. He also made the

Ganges His permanent companion. Three of them flowed west and three east. The remaining seventh stream followed Bhageerath to the nether worlds and helped all his ancestors from damnation. The river is eternal and said to reward immortality to those who come into contact with it.

Symbolically, on the earth plane, the river stands for divine consciousness. It descended into the earth consciousness through the efforts of sage Bhageerath.

Being divine consciousness, who ever immerses himself in it becomes immortal. It is eternal because it is the highest consciousness, which human beings are capable of attaining during their spiritual endeavor.

In the body plane, the story of Ganga reveals the divine origin of kundalini and its descent through the various chakras of the body into the lowest chakra, the muladhara corresponding to the patala regions of the world, where it remains coiled like a serpent till it ascends again into the higher chakras during ones spiritual sadhana.

If we interpret the word Bhageerath as "bhaga"+"raasi" it means he who rides bhaga (the reproductive organ) which is the place where the kundalini ordinarily remains in a coiled state. Probably the sons of Sagara whom sage Bhagirath rescued correspond to the various nerve centers in that region.

The divine consciousness thus entering into earth plane (human body) through Lord Siva made spiritual evolution possible on earth as well in human body.

The second interpretation is that Ganga symbolically represents a particular branch of divine and esoteric knowledge with the powers to elevate the dead as well as the living towards heavens, with the strength of its purity and illumination, which was probably not available to the mankind, till sage Bhagirath tried to bring it down into human awareness through his devotion and surrender to Lord Siva, who ultimately helped him to receive it and help his ancestors attain immortality.

Siva and his Family

Though Siva is an ascetic, he lives with his family. He is very fond of his consort, Parvathi, whom he married after subjecting her to a lot of tests. Siva treats his wife as his equal and shares his seat with her. She is literally his better half and occupies half of his body. This earned him the title ardhnanarishwara (half female, half male). Normally we find Parvathi always by his side, especially when he is seated in Kailash, sharing with her all the honors that he receives.

His beloved children are Skanda or Kumara and Lord Ganesha or Vinayaka. The Bull Nandi is his vehicle. Nandishwara is humility personified. He is very knowledgeable also. Nandi taught universe the secrets of Vedas and lessons in humility! Hanuman is a form of representation of the powers of Lord Siva. Another important member of his pariwar is Bhringi, the zealous devotee who was not inclined to worship anyone other than Siva and refused to worship even Parvathi, till he was made to realize his mistake. Although a mountain dweller, Siva is not attached to anything and true to his ascetic nature, keeps wandering from place to place. Mount Kailash is his abode, where live his family, his devotees who attained liberation and his great army of goblins, imps and ghosts.

Symbolism:

Siva symbolically represents the tamasic quality. Because of this, he is called pasupati, (the lord of the animals). His body color, which is white, denotes his purity (sivam) and association with the snowy mountains. His three eyes represent the sun, the moon and the earth, the three paths of liberation and the triple nature of creation. The third eye is actually the eye of wisdom or occult knowledge. The moon that adorns his head represents the movement of time and also his cosmic proportions. With the moon there, his head becomes the night sky, for which he earned the name Vyomakesa (one who has the sky or space as his hair). The moon also symbolizes his association with the occult and the tantras.

Siva is generally seated in yogic posture with which most Hindus are familiar. However we also come across Siva as nataraja or tandavamurthi in a dance posture. With his hair flying in all directions and hands and feet in dynamic motion, the image of nataraja is a symbol of harmony and rhythm. Among the objects, which are associated with him popularly, apart from the trident and the Damaru, are battleaxe (parasu), rosary (aksamala), pasa (noose), khatvanga (magic wand) and khadga (sword).

Lord Siva is know as Pasupathinath, the lord of all creatures. Being a lord of the animals he has complete control on their behavior. Since a snake is one of the most feared and dangerous animals in the world, the garland of snakes around the neck firmly establish the fact that he is a lover of animals and the animals always remain under his control.

Although universally acknowledged as one of the trinity gods of Hinduism, to His followers, He is Maheswara, representing the Trinity all by Himself, His different aspects manifesting themselves as the creator, preserver and destroyer of the worlds He creates. Symbolically He is worshipped as Lingeswara, which name stands more for His creative powers.

Historians believe that He was a pre-Vedic god who was admitted into the Vedic Pantheon because of His immense popularity during pre-vedic period. There is a theory that the seated yogi found on the seals of Indus Valley Civilization, was a prototype of Lord Shiva only. References to Him are found in the Rigveda.

In the Mahabharata we come across several references to Him. Both Arjuna and Krishna worshipped Him and obtained favors from Him. In the Ramayana too we come across several references to Him. Sage Valmiki depicted Ravana, the demon king and chief villain of the epic, as a great devotee and daily worshipper of Lord Shiva.

With the popularity of Saivism a great deal of literature grew around Him, which came to be recognized as Agama literature. So great was His popularity and fame that Agama literature was placed on equal footing to even the Vedas by His followers.

Saivism as a popular movement took shape mainly in South India because of the patronage of the Pallavas and the dedicated work of many great Tamil Saints, who built enormous bhakti or devotional literature in His honor and made His name a household name. Siva is also referred as the Lord of the south as he faces the south always in his form as Dakshinamurthy.

Megasthenese mentioned the worship of Siva in his book Indika. So did Patanjali, the composer of Yoga Sutras. Two great rulers of ancient India, Kanishka and Harshavardhana were His great followers. In the south the Pandiyas, Cholas and Pallavas built many temples in His honor

Siva and His Titles

He is known by many names and titles. As a god of anger, He is Rudra, the Red One, feared by one and all. As Kailaspathi, He is the Lord of Kailash, His Abode in the Himalayas. As Purusha, He is Iswara Himself. As the Lord of the beings, He is known as Pasupathinath. As the husband of Uma, the Mother Goddess, He is known as Umapathi or Parvathipathi.

As the bearer of the sacred river Ganges, He is known as Ganagadhar. Because of His matted hair, He is dearly called as Jatadhari, by His ascetic followers. As a perfect being, He is Siddheshwar. With His Trident in His hands, He became popular as heroic and fearless Trisuladhari. As the world teacher, Adi Shankara eulogized him as Dakshinamurthi in his famous book, "Hymns to Dakshinamurthi".

To the connoisseurs of art, He is well known as Nataraja, master of all dance forms. As the perfect Yogi, He is credited with the source of all knowledge concerning the various yogas. Such was His powers and divinity, that Lord Vishnu in His incarnations as Rama and Krishna, worshipped Him with great reverence. He was dearer not only to gods but also to demons.

Many demons like Ravana, Bhasmasur and Surapathna were His ardent followers, to whom He gave several boons out of His unbound love and in the process invited great trouble for Himself and for others. Ever willing to help those who are in distress, He saved the cosmos and all the gods by partaking Halahal during the churning of the oceans.

It is interesting to note that while He is worshipped as he is the guru of Tantrics sastras relating to kama, He is also known for destroying the physical form of Cupid, kama with His third eye when the latter tried to disturb Him during His meditation. Men and women love Him alike for his unsurpassed qualities of love and generosity. Even today many young and unmarried girls in India worship Him and pray to Him seeking a devoted husband like Him.

Because of His close association with Vishnu, He is also known as Hari Har. Combining in Himself both the male and female aspects of creation, He earned the popular name of Ardhanariswara. As rider of the Bull Nandi, He is known to the world as Nandiswara. Loved by His children Ganesha and Skanda, and followed by His dutiful wife Parvathi, He became a symbol of ideal householder to His devotees despite of His well-known image as an introvert and an ideal ascetic.

Siva and Tantra

Siva has been the object of worship by many schools of tantras, some of whom follow sexual cults and other different paths in search of self-realization.

The fact that a great mass of heterogeneous cults and practices came to be associated with Him, suggests that in His unlimited wisdom and boundless love as a World Teacher and Father of all, Lord Shiva gives immense freedom to His followers to chose whatever path they want to follow for their self-realization.

To the followers of Vira Saiva cult, He is Vira Bhadra, valor personified. In His terrific forms, He is worshipped as Bhairavamurthy, Pataleswar and so on. He has many temples built all over India and in many other places in the world. He has shrines in almost every village or city, on the banks of every river and even in remote hilly areas of India.

Followers of Saivism are familiar with three words pati, pasu and paasa. Pati is Siva himself, the lord and husband. Pasu is the deluded self that is caught in the cycle of birth and death. Pasa is the bond that binds the pasu to this world and it gains liberation through devotion and surrender to pati.

His names are endless. So does His popularity. Even as early as the 2nd Century A.D., His fame spread beyond the boundaries of the Indian Subcontinent and spread to Central Asia.

As the Hindu culture spread to far east, temples were built in His Honor in many places like Java, Champa (Indo-China), Kambhoja (present day Cambodia) and in the adjoining areas of the now south east Asian countries. Some of these temples were built there as early as 5th Century A.D.

Aspects of Lord Siva:

Siva is known by several names and worshipped in various forms. We are mentioning below some of his most famous aspects:

Sivalingam: The Sivalingam is the symbolic of the Supreme Self. It is verily Maheswara Himself, the Highest Self and the Lord of the universe. In this aspect it has three parts. The lower part represents Brahma. The middle part, which is octagonal in shape, represents Vishnu. The upper part, which is cylindrical in shape, represents Rudra and is also called Pujabhaga.

Sivalingam literally means the body of Siva. Next to the symbol of AUM, it is perhaps the most potent, powerful and popular symbol in entire Hinduism. In almost all the Siva temples, worship is generally made to Sivalingas only. In the North part of India, we come across his images in the sanctum sanctorum of any Siva temple. A Sivalingam is usually a round or cylindrical and protruding object. The cylindrical part is held firmly by a circular base.

On the physical plane, the object resembles the male sexual organ, suggestive of the creative power of Siva. The octagonal base resembles that of the female, suggestive of his consort Parvathi. Physically a Sivalingam is a phallic symbol, representing the male and female sexual organs in a state of conjugal bliss.

Mentally it symbolizes the union of mind and body. Spiritually it represents the union between Purusha and Prakriti, the highest principles of the manifest universe.

The Sivalingas are normally found installed in the temples. But many devotees of Siva keep them in their houses and offer regular worship. People are however cautioned not to keep Sivalingas in their houses without offering worship, since they are believed to be powerful sources of divine energy.

Sivalingas are either naturally found or made artificially. Different materials are used in their making, such as clay, gold, crystal, glass, diamonds, precious stones and wood.

The round and smooth stones found in the river beds of the Narmada or the Godavari are considered to be the most ideal for worship. Sometimes Sivalingas are made temporarily with clay or sandal paste and disposed of after worship. Some devotees wear Sivalingas on their bodies or around their necks. When Sivalingas are found fortuitously in the river beds and desolate places, it is considered to be a great omen. They are housed in temples or houses and offered regular worship.

Siva Murthy:

Panchanana Siva: In some temples Siva is shown with five faces. Each of the faces has a name and represents a specific aspect. These five faces are Isana, Tatpurusa, Aghora, Vamadeva and Sadyojata. Isana faces south east and represents Iswara aspect of Siva known as Sadasiva, or the Eternal Siva. Tatpurusha faces the east. He is Siva in his aspect as a deluded purusha or ego. Aghora faces the south and represents the destructive and regenerative aspect of Siva that, like fire, first devours life and then prepares the ground for its renewal. Vamadeva faces north. He is healer and preserver. Sadyojata faces west and represents the creative power of Siva.

Anugrahamurthy: This is the milder or peaceful aspect of Lord Shiva when he is in the company of his beloved devotees or his family members.

Ugramurthy: Also known as Rudra , Bhairava, Kankala or Samharamurthy, this is the ferocious or angry form of Siva, generally associated with the events during which Siva assumed his terrible form to slay the demons or the wicked.

The following are his well known terrible forms:

Kankala-bhairava: The form which he assumed after cutting off the fifth head of Brahma.

Gajasura-vadha-murthy: The form he assumed while killing a demon named Nila.

Tripurantakmurthi: The form he assumed while destroying the three cities of gold, silver and iron built by the three sons of Andhakasura.

Sarabhesa-murthy: The form in which he allegedly fought and sanctified, Narasimha, the incarnation of Vishnu.

Kalari-murthy: the form in which he fought and defeated Yama to save his devotee Markandeya.

Kamantaka-murthy: The form in which he destroyed Manmadha, the god of lust, for disturbing him while doing penance.

Andhakasura-vadha-murthy: The form in which he defeated Andhakasura, who subsequently joined his forces as his commander and became popular as Bhringi.

Bhairava-murthy: The form generally found in connection with the cults of teaching the secrets of tantras, yantras, alchemy, magic and occult knowledge.

chandrashEkharar

Slokam:

With the hands in abhaya (protecting) and varada (boon giving) postures, with a pleasing and decorated expression, a blossomed face and eye, with the shadow created by moon on the crown, with an upright body, and feet in the same level, Coral like formed, holding the deer and axe, (He) stay in the lotus pedestal. (of my heart)

purANa of the deity :

chandra shEkharar : moon ornamented Lord (bhOga mUruti)

Daksha had twenty seven stars as daughters. All of them were married to moon. But the moon had special attraction towards rOhiNi. So all the other wives complained it to the father daksha that their husband moon is not treating them fairly. daksha got angry and cursed the moon to lose its luminance (kala) day by day. Everyday the moon started losing one luminance part (kala) out of his 16 parts. Afraid and ashamed moon disappeared into the ocean. There are many herbs that require the light of the moon to grow. Without moon, they were harmed. Consequently there was suffering in the world. To end the problem the celestials advised moon to take refuge in the Great Divine, Lord shiva. Left with only one kala, he took refuge in Lord Shiva. Being the graceful Almighty, He wore the moon crescent on His head, making him grow for 15 days and decay for 15 days periodically.

Thus chandrashEkharar is considered a giver of refuge.

kalyANa sundarar

SlokaM:

Red in color (si.ndhUram), Three eyed, shoulders like yugas (four shouldered), wearing necklace and bracelet, Colorful in divine wonderful dress, Shining in the wedding robe, ornated, with enchanting body, salutations to that mUrTi who is in marriage posture, with a hand of dEvi in one lotus hand, with axe and deer in hands and ga.nga and moon on the wound-up hair.

purANa of the mUrTi:

kalyANa su.ndarar : The beautiful (mUrTi)in marriage(bhOga mUrTi)

Shakthi was born as pArvati, the daughter of the king of Himalayas. As a young child, She was not interested in playing like the other children. She was more inclined towards meditating on Lord Shiva in the mountains. She desired to marry Lord shiva. For that she wanted to perform austerity in the snow covered himalayas. Her parents hesitated, but finally had to subdue to the determination of pArvati. pArvati performed austerity from an ashram. Lord Shiva who was happy with Her worship, came as an old devotee to her place. pArvati offered Her respect to the Old bhakta of Her Beloved Lord. Now, He tried to convince Her that She shouldn't waste Her youth doing tapas, but should enjoy life getting married ! He further suggested that She could get married to Him, instead of desiring for Lord shiva Who dances in the cemeteries and wears skulls and bones! pArvati, without knowing that He is God Himself, got very angry on hearing the Old man's words and told Him that She showed Him respect only because He seemed like a devotee and She would not want to hear any little blasphemy of God further. She asked the Old Man to leave the place immediately. The Lord, pleased with Her determination and devotion, revealed who He is. pArvati was surprised and begged the pardon of God. However God had accepted Her scolding as the most pleasant hailing. Didn't it come from a very deep love for God ?! He gave Her the boon She yearned for - getting married to Her.

The himalayan king's family was delighted to see their beloved daughter's wedding. The region was decorated and shining with prosperity. The young beautiful pArvati was decorated with chosen best ornaments for the wedding. Now came the Groom - Lord shiva - to the wedding place - on an old bull,

with skull and bone ornaments, with the skin of the tiger as the clothing, accompanied by the roar of the bUta gaNas !! The mother of pArvati mEnai fainted to see the groom in such a form for her sweet daughter, softer than the flowers. Now the Lord changed to the form, glittering in a beautiful wedding robe - with golden ornaments and splendid clothing! When mEnai woke up and saw the Groom she was thrilled to see such a beautiful form and was very pleased that He is "the suitable" groom for her daughter. The play of the Lord has no bounds ! mEnai saw only the external appearance of the Groom. Other than the great pArvati who knows the glory of that Groom ?! The enchanting Lord in the wedding robe got married to the Daughter of the mountains and this form of God is called kalyANa sundharar

kalyANa vratam (paNguni uththiram)

kalyANa vratam is one of the eight auspicious vratas. When the Sun is shining in the Pisces sign(mIna rAsi) that is in the month of paN^guni (mid of March to mid of April) on the uththara naxaththiram on the Moons growing face (shukla paxam), this vratam is observed. This is the day Shakthi married Lord Shiva after a great austerity in the Himaalayas, as the daughter of Himavaan. It is also observed as the auspicious day when Lord Muruga married devaseenas. This vratam is explained in the skandha purANam.

In the morning after getting up, the observer of the vratam should meditate on the charming Lord shiva in the wedding posture with umA. After taking bath and through with other required deeds, should worship the Lord. The golden idol of the God and Goddess (who can afford to) should be anointed devotionally with holy substances. Then decorating them should make the wedding ceremony of the Goddess with the God. Making the nice and sweet offerings to the divine Parents, should salute them. Inviting the spiritual people who think of good to all the creatures, who have learnt the vEdas and who are devotees of Lord shiva, along with their wives, should host them a feast. Later should go to the shiva temple, worship, circumambulate three times and prostrate in front of the Lord. In the night should dine along with the kind hearted devotees of Lord shiva and eat the sweet dishes like fruits and pAyasam. Should sleep on the dharbai grass. The next morning after regular deeds, should donate the golden idol of God and Goddess to disciplined love hearted people who are the devotees of Lord shiva. Should eat only once that day.

Observing this vratam will get one the great boon of shri Lord sha.nkara's delight. It would bring much joy and comfort in life, lead to the abode of Lord shiva and give the liberation. mahA vishNu got wedded to laxmi sincerely observing this vratam. brahma wedded saraswati, indra wedded indrANi, moon wedded the 27 stars, sage agastiya wedded lobhamudra observing this vratam. The two daughters of vishhNu namely amR^itavalli, saundaryavalli were married to the six faced Lord as devasEna and vaLLI.

The daughter of vedAN^ga R^ishhi called sukesi got married to nandi devar. The two daughters of sage satyapUrNar pUrNa, pushhkaLai were wedded to mahA sAsthA. kAma got rathi, slta got rAma, jAmbhavati got kR^ishhNa, sage saupari got many princess' and so many more benefitted all in the glory of this vratam. The man who observes this vratam will get the girl he likes and the woman gets beautiful man as her husband. The couple who observe this will get good offspring. Anybody who observes with devotion will get His grace.

ardhanArlshvarar

SlokaM:

In the form of male and female, matted hair with moon, axe, smeared in red (aruNa), wearing snakes and the skin of tiger, embracing the bull and with a bent leg, this the right half, and the left black in color, hand holding a (lily) flower close to the chest, with a silk like lotus foot, wearing gold ornaments, salutations to the Half female God.

purANa of the deity

ardha nAri Ishvarar : half female God (bhOga mUrti)

Sage bRingi is one of the ardent devotees of Lord shiva. He used to worship only Lord shiva and not shakti. Goddess shakti, being the power as the name indicate, pulled out the energy from bRingi maharishi's body. Now he was even unable to stand. He pleaded to God. God shiva provided him with a stick. On its support he stood and still worshipped Lord shiva alone. Goddess shakti wanted to become an inseparable part of Lord shiva's form. She observed the kEdhAra mahA vrata (1) austerity, which is now known as deepAvali. Pleased with her austerity, Lord shiva granted her the boon of being part of His form. So the Lord now appeared male on the right side and female on the left side and hence became archanArlshvara.

Significance of this form

This is one of the very important form of God, Hindus worship. This is a much-hailed form in scriptures of various languages. Hindus do not say that the God is only male. God is male - female and neuter too ! Since God is conceptually beyond sex, though gets referred as He/She many times, it is more appropriate to refer as It, especially at Its intrinsic condition, as do many hindu scriptures.

Philosophically, this form is quite associated with the Grace of God. shiva and shakti are one and the same Supreme. The formless God is called parashiva. On Its own free-will for the benefit of pashus (souls), which are drowned in pAsha (bondage), It thinks to create the worlds. Its dynamism of creation thus springs out of It, which is called shakti. Now shiva and Its power shakti create everything. This is the form of their togetherness that springs out of Lord shiva. Because of this the form is associated with the grace of God. shiva and shakti though the same may also act independently. They are associated like the person and the action of the person. They are one and the same like the ice and the water - one becomes the other. For this reason scriptures describe that shakti to shiva is a wife (they are together), mother (shakti becomes shiva - so shiva comes out of shakti) and daughter (shiva become shakti). Poet kAlidAsa hails them as inseparable like the word and its meaning, the letter and pronunciation !!

kedhAra (gauri) vratam - Deepavali

KedhAra Gowri vradham familiarly known as dIpAvaLi (Diwali) is celebrated throughout India in a grand manner. Without Caste creed, rich - poor differences people observe this festival. Infact very few people know that it is one of the important Saivite vratas. Brungi rishi is a great Shiva bhaktha. When he prays to Lord, he prays only to Lord Shiva and ignores Shakti. Angered by his act Shakti devi removed the energy from his body. He was not able to stand. He prayed to Lord Shiva. God gave him a stick to support his body. Shakti wanted to become part of Lord's body. She observed the kEdhAra vrata, one of Gods favorite vratas. Pleased by Her austerities God gave the left part of His body to shakti and became ardha nArIshwara. The vrata is then called kEdhAra gaurI vrata since Gowri observed it.

When observed

This kedhara vratam is observed for twenty one days starting from shukla paxa dasami (Tenth moonday in its growing face) in the month of purattAchi (mid Sep to mid Oct). The final day (dIpAvaLi) also should be observed in great devotion.

How to observe this vratam

mantras to perform this pUja (pUja vidhAnam)

Install Lord kedhArIshwara svAmi in a filled pot (kalasham). Make a roof (manTapa) above the kalasham. Make vrata threads - 21 fibers having 21 knots. The 16 courtasy worship has to be done for 21 days

starting from the purattAchi shukla paxa dasami to aipachi amarapaxa chaturdashi (dIpAvali) or amAvAsya. On the culmination day (21st) in a clean decorated area devotionally install the kalasham over the grains spread in a banana leaf and offer various food and fruits to the Lord as offering and donate to others.

Glory

The glory of this vratam is very splendid as shri gauri devi observed this vratam in full devotion and got to be in half the body of Lord Shiva !! viShNu became Lord of vaikunta observing this vratam. braHma got hamsa vehicle, the guards of the eight directions got rid of the bane they got from braHma, bhagyavati and puNyavati got lots of wealth all due to the glory of this vratam. One who observes this vratam with devotion pleases Lord shiva.

naTarAjar

Slokam:

A face with four shoulders, three eyes, to the left destructive fire (in the hand), moon and leaves on the head, hand stretching downwards, the raised foot pointing down, to the right swastika earring, Damarukam (drum), ga.nga (in the head), and protection posture, salutations to that God of ceaseless dance whose matted hair is flowing, standing on the unconscious body (hyapasmAra dEham)

purANa of the deity :

naTa rAjar : king of dance (yOga mUrti)

Lord Shiva dances during the creation, protection and destruction of the worlds, though the kind of His dance varies with respect to the action. (san^dhyA tANdava, Urdhva tANdava, rudra tANdava, samhAra tANdava etc.). The dance of the Lord takes place in every minute particle, for all of us to exist and act. That is the source of all the energy. His movement is shakti. Yogis hear and see the dance of the Lord by invoking the kuNDalini shakti.

There were two ardent sages vyAgrapAda and patanjali who were worshipping God to see Its blissful dance that energizes the worlds. vyAgrapAda out of his devotion asked for the eyes and legs of the tiger, so that he could go very early in the dawn, even before the bees wake up, to pluck the flowers very

fresh - not even touched by the bees to offer to God ! That is why he was called vyAgrapAda. The other sage was the serpent AdiseSha on which mahA viShNu reside, desired to see the glorious Dance of God. They were performing austerity at the holy place called thillai .

At the same time bhadrakAli, the fierce form of goddess asked for a competition with God in dance. God and mahAkAli came to the thillai, where the sages were performing austerity to see His dance and there began the competition between kAli and Lord shiva. The Lord, Who keeps dancing creating, protecting, destroying, hiding and blessing, won the play by acting the Urdva tANDava, raising His Feet to His Head. The gracious dance of the God filled the hearts of the sages and those who ardently seek Him.

Lord Shiva danced in the five ambalams during various occasions. Out of them chithambaram is very much renowned. Lord danced here to fulfill the worship of patanjali and vyAghra pAda mahaRishis.

kAlAri

SlokaM:

Red in color (sin^dhUram), Three eyed, shoulders like yugas (four shouldered), with hands holding up the sUlAm , noose, axe in hands, with frightening teeth, nice face, with the left foot standing up over the chest of kAla (time - death), with cast down red matted hair, to that pashupati(Lord of creatures), kAlAntaka I prostrate.

purANa of the deity:

kAla ari : The enemy of kAla(vIra mUrTi)

kAla is the dEva who is responsible for death. Taking the kAla as time it can be said kAlari represents the fact that God is beyond the limits of time (mRityuJNjayan).

The sage mRikaNDu did not have an offspring for quite a long time. He performed tapas to get the blessings of Lord Siva. God appeared in front of him. Now the sage had two choices - either a son indisciplined, cruel and dumb living for long or a son loving, intelligent and a gem of character living very short span of life. The sage chose the second one. His wife gave birth to a child mArkaNDEya, out of a boon from Lord Siva, by which mArkaNDEya would be very intelligent but would live just for 16 years.

Young child mArkaNDEya grew up learning the great scriptures, caring and loving, devotional towards God. His parents were very pleased with him. When he became 16, he found his parents weeping. He came to know that he would die at 16 and that was the cause of the gloom. Intelligent mArkanDeya realized that none other than the God, Who is beyond all the scopes of time and hailed as mR^ityuNjaya - who conquered the death, can save him from the strong clutches of death. Determined and devotional, he started doing Siva pUja and surrendered himself completely to the Lord. The yamadUtAs who came to take his life away were scared away by the flame of this young boy's devotion. As the attendants couldn't take away his life, kAla the god of death, himself came. Young mArkaNDEya did not lose his devotion even in the crisis moment. He embraced the Siva liNgam. As kAla still tried to take away mArkaNDEya's life, the Lord appeared furious from the Siva liNgam and kicked kAla to death!! He blessed the sincere devotion of the young boy and made mArkaNDEya to be in 16 always - deathless !

All the gods pleaded to Lord to show mercy on kAla. On their request, God gave kAla life back and ordered him not to disturb His devotees.

thiruk kadavUr is the temple associated with this valourous deed of Lord Siva.

daxiNAmUrTi

SlokaM:

The leg pressing over a demon, on the top of which the Embodiment of merits is sitting with one leg folded, the one who teaches difficult words (vedas) with ease, the sages enjoying (the teachings, sitting) on ground, with the (hand) posture of explaining, a fire pot, book and akshamAla in the four hands, Who trembles away my ignorance, to That dakshiNAmUrTi (salutations).

purANa of the deity :

dakshiNA mUrTi: south faced Lord (yOga mUrTi)

The four sons, of brahmA, sanaka, sanandana, sanAtana, sanat kumAra did austere tapas and analysis, but they were unclear of the Supreme Truth. They finally decided to come to Lord Siva to get the

knowledge of the Truth. The Lord sat under the banyan tree, and the four sages also sat down around Him. Lord stayed in the yOga posture without saying a single word. The four sages got all their doubts cleared just by that posture. The form in which God appeared as a Supreme Guide is the form of wisdom dakshiNAmUrti.

This explains that the Truth cannot be explained in words and must be experienced. Including the great chinmudra posture, the posture of shri dhakshiNA mUrti, who is the teacher of all the teachers, indicates a lot of information that needs days to explain. As thirumUlar says, the posture of the guru is a thing to be thought about always. That is the clarity ! (theLivu guruvuru chindhiththal thAnE)

Siva As Nataraja:

Tandavamurthy:

Nataraja is Siva who is hidden in all the rhythmic movements of the manifest creation, the so called cosmic dance that ensures the orderliness (Rta) of the universe, the movement of the earth and the heavens, the arrangement of the galaxies and the inter stellar spaces, on which depends precariously the whole balance.

His dance is a divine activity that suffers no conflicts. It entertains our suffering minds and dispels our ignorance. It destroys our illusions and burns the worlds of demons and darkness. Finally, at the end of creation it dissolves the entire universe into a mysterious period of ekanda, a suspended activity.

Lord Siva is a master of dance forms. He is the author of all dance forms. The science of dance (Natya sashtra) dealing with the 108 types of classical Indian dance forms said to have originated from him just as all the yogic postures.

In case of Lord Siva all dance is a form of expression, which he uses either to destroy the evil or alleviate the sufferings of his devotees.

About nine forms of Siva in dancing mode are described, of which the most popular form is Nataraja (the king of dance). Though we have a number of icons of Siva as Nataraja, he is rarely worshipped in this form either in the temples or in the households.

His other dance forms include, Ananda-tandava-murthy, dancing in a pleasant and cheerful mood, Uma-tandava-murthy, dancing in the company of Parvathi, Tripura-tandava-murthy, dancing while slaying Tripurasura and Urdhva-tandava-murthy, dancing in the air.

The Apasmrapurusha (the forgotten and deluded self), on whose body he rests his feet in the image of Nataraja symbolizes this fact. And for Siva this whole wide world of apasmrapurushas is a stage on which he enacts his dance drama.

Dakshinamurthy:

This is Siva in his aspect as the universal teacher, teaching the secrets of yoga, tantras, yantras, alchemy, magic, occult knowledge, arts and sciences, ancient history or knowledge of the future to the sages and saints, gods and goddesses and his highly qualified devotees.

He is called Dakshinamurthy, because he does his teachings sitting on the snowy mountains of Himalayas and facing towards the Indian subcontinent, which is in the southerly direction to him.

The images of Dakshinamurthy, depict Siva in his pleasant mood, seated on a high seat, with one leg folded while the other rests on the Apasmrapurusha, the deluded self.

Two of his arms hold a snake or rosary or both in one hand and fire in the other. The snake is a symbol of tantric knowledge and the fire is a symbol of enlightenment. Of the remaining two one is in abhaya mudra (posture of assurance) and the other holds a scripture in gnanamudra (posture of presenting knowledge).

Lingodbhava-murthy:

This image signifies the importance of Siva in the form of Linga as the Supreme Self, without a beginning and without an end. According to Hindu mythology, Siva once revealed his infinity to Brahma and Vishnu in the form of a pillar of fire that could not be scaled by either of them from one end to the other. As Lingodbhava-murthy, Siva appears seated in the heart of a Linga, with four arms, while Brahma and Vishnu adore him from the two sides.

Bhikshatana-murthi:

This is Siva in his ascetic aspect, wandering from place to place, with a begging bowl made of human skull, doing penance or lost in his own thoughts. Even today we can see some followers of Siva going around the villages in India in this form. Some of them even do a little magic to attract our attention or scare away the trailing children.

Hridaya-murthy:

This is Siva in a mood of reconciliation and friendship with Vishnu. Also known as Harihara or Sankaranarayana. The images show the right half of Shiva on the right side of the image and the left half of Vishnu on the left side.

Ardhanariswara:

This Siva and Parvathi together in one form signifying the unity of Purusha and Prorate. The feminine left half of Parvathi is fused with the masculine right half of Siva in one continuous form, sometimes standing with the Bull Nandi in the background, or sitting on a pedestal and blessing the worlds, with eyes open or closed.

Shiva Pariwar:

These are part of Siva's Retinue. The most important of them are Nandi, Bhringi, Virabhadra and Chandesvara.

Nandi:

Nandi, the Bull, is Siva's vehicle. Nandi is invariably found sitting right in front of the sanctum sanctorum in every siva temple facing the image and looking at him all the time.

In fact no one is supposed to see the chief deity in a siva temple without paying homage first to the seated Nandi and looking at Siva from a far through the space between the ears and the top of his head.

There are some temples in India which are exclusively built for Nandi like the famous Nandiswara temple in Karnataka. Nandiswara in his anthropomorphic form appears just like Siva, with three eyes and four hands of which two are permanently dedicated to the veneration of Siva while the other two carry his weapons.

Symbolically Nandi represents the passion and love of Siva for beings. Nandi is well versed in all scriptural knowledge. Nandi is the first disciple of Lord Siva and he imparted the teachings of Siva to this world. He is the Guru of the great saint Thirumular and he imported the knowledge of devotion to Hanuman. It is a tradition in many parts of rural India to let a Bull roam free in each village as a mark of respect to Nandi and to inseminate the cows in the village.

Bhringi:

He was originally a demon named Andhaka, who was transformed by Siva into a humble devotee and admitted into his force as a commander of his armies.

Bhringisa was so loyal to Siva that in his state of devotion he would not offer his worship to any one including Parvathi. It is said that when he saw once Siva in his Ardhanariswara form, he tried to bore through the middle of the body in the form of a bee to complete his obeisance to only the Siva side of the form, much to the annoyance of Parvathi. Bhringi who got his name thus was made to realize his mistake and change his behavior by Lord Siva.

Virabhadra:

He is Siva in his ferocious mood. Siva manifested himself as Virabhadra, when Daksha, his father in law, ill treated and insulted his wife Sati, Daksha's own daughter, in front of a large gathering.

Unable to cope with the insult, Sati immolated herself. This angered Siva so much, that he descended upon the place of Daksha with his large army and beheaded Daksha's.

The images of Virabhadra depict the anger and ferocity of Siva in that destructive mood, wearing a garland of skulls, and with four arms holding four different kinds of weapons.

Virabhadra is a warrior god who was worshipped during wars in ancient and medieval periods. He is also the principal deity of Virasaiva movement and still worshipped by many in the Karnataka region of India.

Chandesvara:

He is an aspect of Chandi in human form later elevated to the status of divinity, to signify the connection between Siva and Chandi, or Durga.

Chandesvara is a ferocious god, holding weapons of war and ready to do battle for a divine cause. His images are generally found in a corner in all the Siva temples.

As in case of Nandi, devotees usually visit him and pay their respects at the worship of the Sivalingam in the sanctum sanctorum.

Famous Saints of Saivism:

Saivism is a very ancient sect of Hinduism with a known history of at least 3000 years. It is a historical fact that though Saivism found its adherents in the early Vedic works such as the Svetavatara Upanishad, it took shape mainly in southern India in the remote past.

Many great devotees of Lord Siva who hailed from the land of Tamils, enriched Saivism with their devotional fervor and meritorious religious compositions.

They brought Hinduism out of the closed door policy of castism by taking religion to the masses and teaching them the path of selfless devotion as a way of salvation.

They countered the attacks from monastic religions like Buddhism and Jainism, and defied the social order of their times by often initiating people from the lowest castes into Saivism.

They created a body of entirely new religious literature, of great devotional merit and deep philosophical truths.

Just like many aspects of ancient Indian history, we have little information about the early Saiva saints who shaped Saivism into a great religious movement.

We come across few names like the famous sage Thirumula, Agastya, Manickavasaga, Sundarar, Appar and Thirugnanasambandar. They probably lived during post vedic and later Vedic periods. They were ardent devotees of Lord Siva, and remembered in the scriptures for their devotion and contribution to Saivism.

Tirumular:

An ardent devotee of Lord Siva and a disciple of Nandi, he lived sometime during the sixth century A.D, was endowed with supernatural powers and composed about 3000 poems in the name of Thirumantiram.

Manikkavachaka:

First among the four greatest ancient teachers of Saivism, he is considered as the founder of the path of truth or 'sat marga'. Known for his intelligence from an early age, he worked as a chief minister in the court of a Pandya king for sometime before he became a true enunciate. Gifted with poetical abilities, which earned him the title of Mannikkavachaka, which literally means he whose utterances are gems, he composed many songs in honor of Lord Siva. His work Tiruvachakam is considered to be a pioneering work in Saivism.

Appar:

A contemporary of the Pallava King Mahendra¹, and reckoned as the second greatest ancient teacher of Saivism, he lived about 7th Century A.D. He is credited with the discovery of dasamarga or the path of the servant in Saivism. Originally a follower of Jainism he became subsequently a great devotee of Lord Siva and spent considerable time rendering bodily service (dasa seva) to him.

He also composed many poems out of which only a few are available today. He is often compared to the legendary Prahlada for his devotion to Lord Siva.

Gnana Sambandha:

He was a disciple of Appar. He is considered as the third greatest ancient teacher of Saivism, who found the path of satputra marga or the path of the son and therefore he is regarded as the father of the saiva sect.

A precocious child, he was dedicated to Lord Siva and Parvathi from a very early age. He was blessed with the divine feeding of the mother of universe, Parvathi.

He and Appar toured many places in South India and said to have performed many miracles. He composed many beautiful poems extolling Siva and Parvathi. But only a few poems are available today.

If Sambandha had a great teacher in the form of Appar, he also had a great disciple in the form of Tirunilakanda Yalpanar who accompanied him always in his tours and sing along with him.

Kannappa:

Kannappa lived in the region near Kalahasti in the present day Andhra Pradesh. A hunter by profession, he was totally dedicated to Lord Siva. He worshipped Siva regularly every day, with intense love, sometimes offering him such things as flowers and even meat.

Overwhelmed with intense devotion, once he said to have plucked out one of his eyes and offered it to Lord Siva as a symbol of sacrifice. He tried to pluck out the other eye also immersed totally in his devotion, when Lord Siva said to have appeared in front of him and prevented him from proceeding further.

Sundaramurthi:

He is the last among the four greatest ancient teachers of Saivism. He founded sahamarga or the path of the friend. He led a very unusual life. He became a renunciate just before his marriage and thereafter traveled to many places singing songs in praise of Lord Siva. But strangely after sometime, he married a beautiful non Brahmin, maiden named Paravai.

He stayed with her for sometime as she was also a great devotee of Lord Siva. But their association did not last for long. A few miles north of Chennai, he married again, this time to a Brahmin virgin. Subsequently he lost vision in both of his eyes and said to have suffered greatly.

But he regained his lost vision through intense spiritual discipline and devotion. He composed many thousands of devotional poems of which very few are available today.

Karikkal Ammaiyar:

Her devotion to Lord Siva can be compared in some way with that of Mira Bai, the famous devotee of Lord Krishna. Born into a princely family, she was married to a wealthy merchant at an early age.

Seeing her devotional fervor and spiritual yearning, her husband decided to leave her to herself and married another woman. But Ammaiyar, though devoted to Lord Siva from an early age, could not overcome her traditional respect and love for her husband initially.

But seeing her husband in his new role, she overcame that afterwards and dedicated her life completely to Lord Siva. She also composed many devotional poems which reflect the depth of her devotion to Lord Siva.

Auvai:

Another famous woman saint of Saivism, she was endowed with great literary talents and devotional fervor. She composed many verses which immortalized her name in Tamil religious literature.

Meypporul Nayanar:

A king by birth he sacrificed his life out of love for Lord Siva.

Sakya Nayanar:

Originally a Buddhist, he later embraced Saivism and was said to have been blessed with a vision of Lord Siva and Parvathi.

Nandanar:

An untouchable by birth, he was a great devotee of Lord Siva who won the recognition of many learned people and was even admitted into the precincts of the Chidambaram temple which at that time was not open to people from his caste.

Meykandar:

Initiated into Saivism at the early age of three by a sage, he is credited with the composition of the famous work Siva-Jnana-bodham, which contains twelve famous Siva Sutras or aphorisms.

Meykandar is known in the history of Saivism as the seer of Truth and his life is a shining example of knowledge and devotion coming together in total dedication to God.

Arundai Sivachariar:

He became a disciple of Meykandar, after the latter opened his eyes in a famous encounter to the world of devotion and self-surrender. He composed Siva-Jnana-sittiyar, according to the wishes of his guru, explaining the truths hidden in the aphorisms of the latter.

Marai-Gnanasambandar :

Arundai Sivachariar also remembered in Saiva tradition for his initiation of Marai-gnanasambandar into Saivism. The latter though hailed from an untouchable caste was blessed with great literary talent and devotional fervor.

Umapathi Sivam:

Marai-gnanasambandar in turn initiated another famous Saiva saint, named Umapathi Sivam and helped him attain self-realization. Umapathi Sivam contributed greatly to Saiva literature in Tamil. He wrote eight philosophical treatises on Saivism, apart from a short biographical work on the famous 63 Saiva saints.

Pattinathar:

A rich merchant by birth, he turned to spiritualism in strange circumstances when he realized that all his wealth would not accompany him beyond his death.

He along with his princely friend Bhadrakavi composed many devotional poems, exhorting people to renounce their worldly ways and enter the world of devotion and self-surrender. He lived about tenth century in Tamilnadu.

Arunagiri:

He lived about fifteenth century. Early in his life, he led a very sinful life giving himself up entirely to the pleasures of the world. But later a great transformation took place in him and he became a great devotee of Lord Murugan, the first divine child of Lord Siva. Tiruppugal is one of his famous compositions which is known for its lyrical beauty and devotional depths.

Tayumanavar:

He lived in the seventeenth century, and belonged to the priestly family which was attached to the Siva temple at Vedaranyam, in Tamilnadu. He lived and worked for some time at the court of a Naik ruler from Tiruchinapalli, before he renounced his worldly life and became a great devotee of Lord Siva. He expounded the philosophy of Saivism from a Vedantic point of view and tried to reconcile the existing contradictions.

Lingayat Saints:

Mention may also be made of the five famous Lingayat Saints of Virasaivism path, namely Sivaprakasa 1, Santalinga, Kumaradeva and Sivaprakasa 2. They were men of great religious and spiritual merit, who lived during the seventeenth century and composed many religious songs and treatises.

The meaning of Samkara and Shankara:

The word "samkara" or "sankara" is a combination of two words: "sam"+"kara". "Sam" means good and "kara" means doer and therefore "samkara" means doer of good deeds.

According to another interpretation, "sam" means the "sam" of "samadhi" or the state of complete self absorption or self realization. According to this interpretation, the word "samkara" means the cause of union or self realization.

The word "sam" also means harmony, as in the word "sam/veda" or "sama/veda". Of all the Vedas, Samaveda contains the most musical hymns and are actually sung according to a set melody.

Probably for this reason, Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad gita that of all the Vedas He would be found in the Samaveda, signifying the harmony and melody hidden in the hymns. If we go by this meaning, the word "samkara" means creator of harmony or music. Indeed Lord Siva is very much the master of sounds and music as symbolized by the dhamru he carries.

There is no true equivalent to the Sanskrit letter "sa" of the word "samkara" in English. The nearest rendering of it is "Sha". In practice Lord Siva is pronounced as "Shankara" or "Shankar" not "Samkara" or "Samkar"

If we take the word as "Shankara" instead of "samkara", we come across two more interpretations. The word "Shankara" is a combination of two words, namely "shanka" and "hara". "Shanka" means doubt and "hara" means destroyer. Thus the word "Shankara" means, He who destroys or defeats doubt.

Shankara destroys the animal nature in man, which is represented by the tamasic and rajasic qualities. These two qualities are primarily responsible for his lower nature, his egoistic disbeliefs and profound ignorance. By destroying these qualities and thereby our lower nature, Siva establishes the conditions conducive to the emergence of divine nature in man.

It is interesting to note that in the Hindu mythology, most of the demons, such as Ravana of the Ramayana, Surapathma or Bhasmasur and many others, were great devotees of Siva, who despite of their excessive wickedness, showed immense faith in Siva.

These stories tend to suggest that only Siva can transform such individuals, who are characterized by excessive rajas and tamas, through His immense powers. The moral of these stories is that if you have excessive rajas and tamas in you, should invariably worship Lord Siva in order to overcome these impediments.

Siva, the Destroyer

Shankara is the dispeller of all doubts. By his dynamic response to our prayers, He destroys all our doubts, and stabilizes our faith in Him.

There is a saying that a destroyer of the properties of Siva, will get destroyed by Siva. Here the properties of Siva means not just the non living things but include the living things also. This constitutes that one who disturbs a devotee of Siva will get ruined. Rama since he took an avathar as a human he underwent many troubles that a normal human will undergo as per the law of karma. The latter part of Rama's life after the killing of Ravana is miserable. One of the reasons for the miseries is the bramahathi dhosha he obtained by killing a devotee of Siva, namely Ravana.

If Brahma is the creator, Vishnu the preserver, Siva is the destroyer. His duty is to destroy all the worlds at the end of creation and dissolve them into Ekanda, nothingness.

Modern theories of space do suggest the possible ending of the physical universe after some billions of years through the expansion of a gigantic black hole devouring the matter from endless galaxies.

Before the worlds really come to an end, Siva has many things to do to keep the worlds going. His first and foremost task is to destroy many things in order to ensure the cosmic harmony (Rta) or the order of the universe.

Siva's destruction is not negative. It is a positive, nourishing and constructive destruction that builds and transforms life and energy for the welfare of the world and the beings that inhabit it.

He destroys in order to renew and regenerate. His destruction is for the construction like a mother does cooking to feed her children. Through destruction he facilitates the smooth transitions of things and events from one stage to another.

He destroys our imperfections in order to ensure our spiritual progress. He destroys our illusions, desires and ignorance. He destroys our evil and negative nature.

He destroys our old memories, so that we can move on with the movement of time. He destroys our relationships, attachment, impurities, physical and mental wrong doings, the effects of bad karma, our passions and emotions and many things that stand between us and God as impediments to our progress and inner transformation.

And in the end when we have made sufficient progress, when we are ready and prepared, and when we are willing without any inner conflict, he destroys death.

Glory of Lord Siva

Om. I bow with folded hands to Lord Siva, who is the Lord of the universe (Jagat-Pati), world's Teacher (Jagad-Guru), who is the destroyer of Trisuras (three cities—egoism, lust and anger), who is the Lord of Uma (Uma Sankar), Gauri (Gauri Sankar), Ganga (Ganga Sankar), who is full of light (Jyotirmaya), knowledge and bliss (Chidanandamaya), who is the Lord of Yogins (Yogesvara), who is the storehouse of knowledge and who is known by various names as Mahadeva, Sankara, Hara, Sambhu, Sadasiva, Rudra, Sulapani, Bhairava, Uma Mahesvara, Nilakantha, Trilochana (the three-eyed), Tryambaka (the three-eyed), Visvanatha, Chandrasekhara, Ardhanarisvara, Mahesvara, Nila-lohita, Parama Siva, Digambara, Dakshinamurti, etc.

How merciful He is! How loving and kind He is! He wears the skulls as a garland around His neck. He is an embodiment of renunciation, mercy, love and wisdom. It is a mistake to say that He is the destroyer. Lord Siva in reality is the regenerator. Whenever one's physical body becomes unfit for further evolution in this birth either by disease, old age or other causes, He at once removes this rotten physical sheath and gives a new, healthy, vigorous body for further quick evolution. He wants to take all His children to His lotus-feet quickly. He desires to give them His glorious 'Siva-Pada'. It is easier to please Siva than Hari. A little love and devotion, a little chanting of His Panchakshara is quite sufficient to infuse delight in Siva. He gives boons to His devotees quite readily. How large is His heart! He gave Pasupatastra to

Arjuna without difficulty for his little penance. He gave a precious boon to Bhasmasura. In Kalahasti near Tirupati, He gave Darsan to Kannappanayanar, the devoted hunter who plucked his two eyes to replace the weeping eyes in the Murti. In Chidambaram even the untouchable Pariah saint, Nandan had Darsan of Lord Siva. He ran with tremendous speed to make the boy Markandeya immortal, when he was in the clutches of the God of Death—Yama. Ravana of Lanka pleased Siva with his Sama chantings. He initiated the four virgin youths Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara into the mysteries of Jnana in the form of Guru Dakshinamurti. In Madurai, in Southern India, Sundaresvara (Lord Siva) assumed the form of a boy and carried earth on His head for a devoted lady for the sake of Puttu (a kind of sweetmeat) as wages, when an anicut was erected in the Vaigai river. Look at the unbounded mercy for His devotees! When Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu went to find out the head and feet of Lord Siva, He assumed an infinite, expansive blaze of light (Jyotirmaya-Svarupa). They were baffled in their attempts. How magnanimous and self-effulgent He is! He lived in the house of Pattinattu Swami in Southern India for several years, as his adopted son and disappeared after giving him the small note: "Even a broken needle will not follow you after your death". The reading of this note was the starting point for attainment of Jnana for Pattinattu Swami. Why not you attempt this very second with sincerity to realise God (Lord Siva)?

Hatha Yogins awaken the Kundalini Sakti that is lying dormant in the Muladhara Chakra by Asana, Pranayama, Kumbhaka, Mudra and Bandha, take it above through different Chakras (centres of spiritual energy)—Svadhishthana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna—and join it with Lord Siva at the Sahasrara, the thousand-petalled lotus at the crown of the head. They drink the nectar of Immortality (Siva-Jnana-Amritam). This is termed Amritasrava. When the Sakti is united with Siva, full illumination comes for the Yogi.

Lord Siva represents the destructive aspect of Brahman. That portion of Brahman that is enveloped by Tamo-Guna-Pradhana-Maya is Lord Siva who is the all-pervading Isvara and who also dwells in Mount Kailas. He is the Bhandar or storehouse of Wisdom. Siva minus Parvati, Kali or Durga is pure Nirguna Brahman. With Maya (Parvati) He becomes the Saguna Brahman for the purpose of pious devotion of His devotees. Devotees of Rama must worship Lord Siva also. Rama Himself worshipped Lord Siva at the famous Ramesvaram. Lord Siva is the Lord of Ascetics and Lord of Yogins robed in space (Digambara).

His Trisul (trident) that is held in His right hand represents the three Gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. That is the emblem of sovereignty. He rules the world through these three Gunas. The Damaru in His left hand represents the Sabda Brahman, It represents OM from which all languages are formed. It is He who formed the Sanskrit language out of the Damaru sound.

The wearing of the crescent moon on His head indicates that He has controlled the mind perfectly. The flow of the Ganga represents the nectar of immortality. Elephant represents symbolically the Vritti, pride. Wearing the skin of the elephant denotes that He has controlled pride. Tiger represents lust. His sitting on the tiger's skin indicates that He has conquered lust. His holding deer on one hand indicates that He has removed the Chanchalata (tossing) of the mind. Deer jumps from one place to another swiftly. The mind also jumps from one object to another. His wearing of serpents around the neck denotes wisdom and eternity. Serpents live for a large number of years. He is Trilochana, the three-eyed One, in the centre of whose forehead is the third eye, the eye of wisdom. Nandi, the bull that sits in front of Sivalinga, represents Pranava (Omkaara). The Linga represents Advaita. It points out "I am one without a second—Ekameva Advitiyam." Just as a man raises his right hand above his head, pointing out his right index-finger only.

Kailas hills in Tibet are a huge range with a central, beautiful, naturally carved and decorated shining peak, eternally clad with silvery snow, 22,280 feet above sea-level. Some take the height to be 22,028 feet. This particular peak is in the form of a natural, huge Siva Linga (Virat form). This is worshipped as the form of Lord Siva from a distance. There is neither a temple, nor a Pujari, nor a daily Puja there. I had the fortune to have Darsana of Kailas through the grace of Lord Siva, on July 22, 1931. I even climbed with panting breath to the foot of Kailas peak where the Indus takes its origin. It is a very picturesque, soul-stirring scenery. You will have to ascend from Didipha Guha, the first halting stage in Parikrama of Kailas. The Indus gushes out as a small streamlet through blocks of ice from behind the back portion of Kailas peak. Though in the pictures of Lord Siva it is shown that the Ganga flows from His head, it is really the Indus (Sindhu) that takes its origin from the head of Siva (Kailas) in the physical plane. Parikrama of Kailas covers 30 miles. It takes three days. On the way comes the famous and sacred Gauri Kund which is eternally covered with snow. You will have to break the snow when you take a bath.

The Name of Lord Siva chanted in any way, correctly or incorrectly, knowingly or unknowingly, carefully or carelessly, is sure to give the desired result. The glory of the Name of Lord Siva cannot be established through reasoning and intellect. It can certainly be experienced or realised only through devotion, faith and constant repetition of the Name and singing His hymns with Bhava. Every Name is filled with countless potencies or Saktis. The power of the Name is ineffable. Its glory is indescribable. The efficiency and inherent Sakti of the Name of Lord Siva are unfathomable.

The mind is purified by constant repetition of Siva-Stotra and Names of Lord Siva. The Stotras are filled with good and pure thoughts. Repetition of the hymns to Siva strengthens the good Samskaras. "As a man thinks, that he becomes". This is the psychological law. The mind of a man who trains himself in thinking good, holy thoughts, develops a tendency to think of good thoughts. His character is moulded and transformed by continued good thought. When the mind thinks of the image of the Lord during singing His hymns, the mental substance actually assumes the form of the image of the Lord. The

impression of the object thought of is left in the mind. This is called Samskara. When the act is repeated very often, the Samskaras gain strength by repetition, and a tendency or habit is formed in the mind. He who entertains thoughts of Divinity, becomes transformed actually into the Divinity himself by constant thinking. His Bhava or disposition is purified and divinised. When one sings the hymns of Lord Siva, he is in tune with the Lord. The individual mind melts in the cosmic mind. He who sings the hymns becomes one with Lord Siva.

Just as fire has the natural property of burning inflammable things, so also the Name of Lord Siva has the power of burning the sins, Samskaras and Vasanas and bestowing eternal bliss and everlasting peace on those who repeat the Name of the Lord.

Just as burning quality is natural and inherent in fire, so also the power of destroying sins with their very root and branch and bringing the aspirant into blissful union with the Lord through Bhava Samadhi, is natural and inherent in the Name of God.

O friends! Take refuge in the Name of Siva. Sing His hymns. Nami and Name are inseparable. Sing Lord Siva's hymns incessantly. Remember the Name of the Lord with every incoming and outgoing breath. In this Iron Age, Nama-Smarana or singing the hymns is the easiest, quickest, safest and surest way to reach God and attain Immortality and perennial joy. Glory to Lord Siva! Glory to His Name!!

Ravana propitiated Lord Siva by his hymns. Pushpadanta pleased Lord Siva by his celebrated Stotra—Siva Mahimna Stotra, which is even now sung by all devotees of Siva throughout India, and obtained all Aisvarya or Siddhis and Mukti. The glory of the Stotras of Siva is indescribable. You must all sing the hymns of Lord Siva and obtain His grace and salvation, not in the unknown future, but right now in this very second. You can please Lord Siva easily. Fast on the Sivaratri day. If you cannot do this, take milk and fruits. Keep perfect vigil the whole night and sing His Stotras, and repeat 'Om Namah Sivaya'. May the blessings of Lord Siva be upon you all!

Siva Tattva

In Me the universe had its origin,

In Me alone the whole subsists;

In Me it is lost—Siva,

The Timeless, it is I Myself,

Sivoham! Sivoham! Sivoham!

Salutations to Lord Siva, the vanquisher of Cupid, the bestower of eternal bliss and immortality, the protector of all beings, destroyer of sins, the Lord of the gods, who wears a tiger-skin, the best among objects of worship, through whose matted hair the Ganga flows.

Lord Siva is the pure, changeless, attributeless, all-pervading transcendental consciousness. He is the inactive (Nishkriya) Purusha. Prakriti is dancing on His breast and performing the creative, preservative and destructive processes.

When there is neither light nor darkness, neither form nor energy, neither sound nor matter, when there is no manifestation of phenomenal existence, Siva alone exists in Himself. He is timeless, spaceless, birthless, deathless, decayless. He is beyond the pairs of opposites. He is the Impersonal Absolute Brahman. He is untouched by pleasure and pain, good and evil. He cannot be seen by the eyes but He can be realised within the heart through devotion and meditation.

Siva is also the Supreme personal God when He is identified with His power. He is then omnipotent, omniscient active God. He dances in supreme joy and creates, sustains and destroys with the rhythm of His dancing movements.

He destroys all bondage, limitation and sorrow of His devotees. He is the giver of Mukti or the final emancipation. He is the universal Self. He is the true Self of all creatures. He is the dweller in the cremation-ground, in the region of the dead, those who are dead to the world.

The Jivas and the world originate from Him, exist in Him, are sustained and rejected by Him and are ultimately merged in Him. He is the support, source and substratum of the whole world. He is an embodiment of Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Bliss. He is Satyam, Sivam, Subham, Sundaram, Kantam.

He is the God of gods, Deva-Deva. He is the Great Deity—Mahadeva. He is the God of manes (Prajapati). He is the most awe-inspiring and terrifying deity, Rudra, with Trisul or trident in His hand. He is the most

easily pleased (Asutosh). He is accessible to all. Even the untouchable Chandalas and the illiterate rustics can approach Him.

He is the source of all knowledge and wisdom. He is an ideal Yogi and Muni. He is the ideal head of an ideal family with Uma as His devoted wife, Lord Subrahmanya, the brave general of strength and courage, Lord Ganesa, the remover of all obstacles.

Sadasiva

At the end of Pralaya, the Supreme Lord thinks of re-creation of the world. He is then known by the name Sadasiva. He is the root-cause of creation. From Sadasiva creation begins. In Manusmriti He is called Svayambhu. Sadasiva is unmanifested, He destroys the Tamas caused by Pralaya and shines as the self-resplendent light bringing forth the five great elements, etc. into being.

The Siva Purana says that Siva is beyond both Prakriti and Purusha. Siva is Mahesvara. He is the witness, well-wisher and nourisher of all beings. The Gita says: 'Upadrashtanumanta cha bharta bhokta mahesvarah'.

Mahesvara conducts the work of creation according to His will and pleasure. The Sruti says, 'Mayam tu prakritim viddhi mayinam tu mahesvaram'. Know Prakriti to be Maya and Mahesvara to be the wielder of Maya or Prakriti. The Sakti of Siva works in two different ways. Mula Prakriti and Daivi Prakriti. Mula Prakriti is Aparakriti from which the five elements and other visible objects and the Antahkarana are evolved. Para Prakriti is Chaitanya Sakti which converts the Aparakriti and gives name and form to it. Aparakriti is Avidya and Para Prakriti is Vidya. The controller and dispenser of these two Prakritis is Lord Siva.

Siva is distinct from Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra.

Lord Siva is the Lord of innumerable crores of Brahmandas or worlds. Isvara united with Maya gives rise to Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra out of Rajas, Sattva and Tamo Gunas respectively, under the command of Lord Siva. Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are the trinities of the world.

There is no difference among the trinities, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. By the command of Mahesvara these three do the creative, preservative and destructive duties of the world. The work of all the three deities is done conjointly. They all have one view and one definite purpose in creating, preserving and destroying the visible universe of names and forms. He who regards the three deities as distinct and different, Siva Purana says, is undoubtedly a devil or evil spirit.

The Lord who is beyond the three Gunas, Mahesvara, has four aspects: Brahma, Kala, Rudra and Vishnu. Siva is the support for all the four. He is the substratum for Sakti also. Siva is distinct from the Rudra included in the trinities. Rudra is really one though according to the different functions He is considered to have eleven different forms.

The first face of Siva does Krida or play, the second does penance, the third destroys or dissolves the world, the fourth protects the people and the fifth, being knowledge, fully covers the entire universe by its power. He is Isana the creator and promoter of all beings, from within.

The first form of Siva is the enjoyer of Prakriti as Kshetrajna Purusha. The second is Tatpurusha resting in Sattva-guna, rooted in Bhogya-Prakriti, the Prakriti-enjoyed. The third is Ghora rooted in the eightfold Buddhi like Dharma, etc. The fourth is Vamadeva rooted in Ahankara and the fifth is Sadyojata, the presiding deity of the mind. The eight forms of Siva are Sarva, Bhava, Rudra, Ugra, Bhima, Pasupati, Isana and Mahadeva, rooted respectively in earth, water, fire, air, ether, Kshetrajna, sun and moon.

Ardhanarisvara

Brahma was unable to create and bring forth creatures from his mental creation. To know the method of creation he did Tapas. As a result of his Tapas Adyasakti arose in Brahma's mind. Through the help of Adyasakti Brahma meditated upon Tryambakesvara. Pleased by the penance of Brahma, Lord Siva appeared in the form of Ardhanarisvara (half male and half female). Brahma praised Ardhanarisvara. Lord Siva then created from His body a Goddess by name Prama-Sakti. Brahma said to the Goddess: "I was not able to bring forth creatures by my mental creation. Though I created the Devatas yet they could not multiply. Therefore, I wish to bring forth creatures by intercourse. Before Your appearance or till now, I was not able to create the endless female species. Therefore, O Devi, be merciful and take birth as the daughter of my son, Daksha."

World-Teacher

The most auspicious and useful work beneficial to mankind ever carried out by Lord Siva, is to impart the knowledge of Yoga, Bhakti, Jnana, etc., to the world. He blesses those who deserve His grace and who cannot get out of Samsara without His grace. He is not only the World-Teacher but also an ideal example to the Jivanmukta or sage. He teaches by His very actions in His daily life.

Pasupata Yoga

Uniting the self with the true Siva Tattva by the control of the senses is real wearing of Bhasma, because Lord Siva through His third eye of wisdom burnt passion to ashes. The meditation of Pranava should be done through Japa. One should attain the real Jnana, Yoga and Bhakti by steady practice. In the heart, there is a ten-petalled lotus. It has ten Nadis. It is the Jivatma's abode. This Jivatma lives in a subtle form in the mind and it is Chitta or Purusha itself. One should ascend to the moon by cutting open or transcending the Dasagni Nadi by the regular practice of Yoga as instructed by the Guru and practising dispassion, righteousness and equality. The moon then gradually attains fullness, as it gets itself pleased with the Sadhaka on account of his regular application in Yoga and purification of Nadis. In this state, the Sadhaka overcomes waking and sleeping state and through meditation merges himself in the object meditated upon in this waking state itself.

The Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy

The Saiva Siddhanta system is the distilled essence of Vedanta. It prevailed in Southern India even before the Christian era. Tinnevely and Madurai are the centres of Saiva Siddhanta school. Saivites elaborated a distinctive philosophy called the Saiva Siddhanta about the eleventh century A.D. Even Saivism is a very popular creed in South India. It is a rival school of Vaishnavism.

Tirumular's work—Tirumantram—is the foundation upon which the later structure of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy was built. The twenty-eight Saiva Agamas, the hymns of the Saiva saints form the chief sources of Southern Saivism.

In the books which treat of Saivism, there is a reference to four schools, viz., Nakulisa-pasupata, the Saiva, the Pratyabhijna and Rasesvara.

Lord Siva is the supreme Reality. He is eternal, formless, independent, omnipresent, one without a second, beginningless, causeless, taintless, self-existent, ever free, ever pure. He is not limited by time. He is infinite bliss and infinite intelligence.

Lord Siva pervades the whole world by His Sakti. He works His Sakti. Sakti is conscious energy of Lord Siva. She is the very body of Lord Siva. The potter is the first cause for the pot. The stick and the wheel are the instrumental causes. The clay is the material cause of the pot. Similarly Lord Siva is the first cause of the world. Sakti is the instrumental cause. Maya is the material cause.

Lord Siva is the God of love. His grace is infinite. He is the saviour and Guru. He is engaged in freeing the souls from the thralldom of matter. He assumes the form of a Guru out of the intense love for mankind. He wishes that all should know Him and attain the blissful Siva-Pada. He watches the activities of the individual souls and helps them in their onward march.

In the Saiva Siddhanta, there are 36 Tattvas of which 24 are known as Atma Tattvas, 7 as Vidya Tattvas, and the remaining 5 as Siva Tattvas. The 24 Atma Tattvas are the 5 elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth; the 5 Tanmatras, sound, touch, form, taste and smell; the 5 sense-organs, ear, skin, eye, palate and nose; the internal organ; the 5 motor organs, speech, hand, foot, anus and the generative organ; and Ahankara, Buddhi and Guna. The 7 Vidya Tattvas are Purusha, Raga (love), Vidya (knowledge), Kala (art), Niyati (order), Kaala (time) and Asuddha (impure) Maya. The 5 Siva Tattvas are Suddha Vidya, Isvara, Sadasiva, Sakti and Siva.

Maya evolves into the subtle principles and then into the gross. The individual soul experiences pleasure and pain through Vidya. Siva Tattva is the basis of all consciousness and action. It is undifferentiated (Nishkala) Suddha. Maya, the Sakti of Siva starts her activities. Then Siva becomes the experiencer. Then He is called Sadasiva known also by the name Sadakhya, who is not really separate from Siva. The Suddhamaya becomes active. Then Siva, the experiencer becomes the Ruler. He is then Isvara, who is not really separate from Sadasiva. Suddhavidya is the cause of true knowledge.

The five activities (Pancha-Krityas) of the Lord are Srishti (creation), Sthiti (preservation), Samhara (destruction), Tirobhava (veiling) and Anugraha (grace). These, separately considered, are the activities of Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Mahesvara and Sadasiva.

In the five-lettered Mantra (Panchakshari) 'Namassivaya', Na is the screening power of the Lord that makes the soul to move in the world, Ma is the bond that binds him in the Samsaric wheel of the births and deaths, Si is the symbol for Lord Siva, Va stands for His grace and Ya stands for the soul. If the soul turns towards Na and Ma he will be sunk in worldliness. If he associates himself with Va he will move towards Lord Siva.

Hearing the Lilas of Lord Siva and the significance of Panchakshara, is 'Sravana'. Reflection on the meaning of Panchakshara is 'Manana' or 'Chintana'. To develop love and devotion for Lord Siva and meditate on Him, is 'Sivadhyana'. To become immersed in 'Sivananda', is 'Nishtha' or 'Samadhi'. He who attains this stage is called Jivanmukta.

Pati-Pasu-Pasa

'Pati' is Lord Siva. It is the object of all the Vedas and the Agamas to explain the concepts of Lord (Pati), bound souls (Pasu) which really means cattle, and bondage (Pasa). Lord Siva is infinite, eternal, one without a second. He is changeless and indivisible. He is the embodiment of knowledge and bliss. He energises the intelligence of all souls. He is beyond the reach of mind and speech. He is the ultimate goal of all. He is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest. He is self-luminous, self-existent, self-contained and self-delight.

'Pasus' are the individual souls who are sunk in the quagmire of Samsara. They assume bodies to work out their good and evil actions and are born as lower and higher beings according to their nature of Karma. They do virtuous and vicious actions in the course of experiencing the endless fruits of their Karma and have countless births and deaths. Ultimately they attain the grace of Lord Siva through meritorious acts and their ignorance is dispelled. They attain salvation and become one with Lord Siva.

'Pasa' is bond. The web of bonds is distinguished into Avidya or Anavamala, Karma and Maya. Anavamala is egoism. It is the taint due to the false notion of finiteness which the soul has. The soul imagines itself to be finite and confined to the body and of limited knowledge and power. It erroneously identifies itself with the perishable body and mistakes the body for its reality. It has forgotten its essential divine nature.

'Karma' is the cause of bodies and manifold bodily experiences and births and deaths. It is beginningless. It is the cause of the conjunction of the conscious soul with the unconscious body. It is an auxiliary of Avidya. It is done through thought, word and deed. It takes the form of merit and sin and produces

pleasure and pain. It is subtle and unseen (Adrishta). It exists during creation and merges into the substratum of Maya during Pralaya. It cannot be destroyed. It must work out its results.

Maya is the material cause of the world. It is unconscious or unintelligent, omnipresent, imperishable. It is the seed of the world. The four categories, viz., Tanu, Karana, Bhuvana and Bhoga beginning with the bodies, spring up from Maya. It permeates all its developments and causes perversion in the Karmic souls. During Pralaya it is the basic resort of all souls. It is itself a bond for the souls. All these processes in it are due to the energising influence by Lord Siva. Just as the trunk, the leaf and the fruit grow from the seed, so also the universe from Kala to earth, springs from Maya.

The real Nada, the root of sound is evolved from pure Maya by the will of Lord Siva. From Nada, the real Bindu springs up. From it, the real Sadasiva originates and gives birth to Isvara. Suddha Avidya is developed from Isvara. The world originates from Bindu and develops into various forms.

Sadhana

One will develop love and devotion for Lord Siva if he is freed from egoism. Chariyai, Kiriyai, Yoga and Jnana are the four Sadhanas or steps to kill egoism and attain Lord Siva. Erecting temples, cleaning them, making garlands of flowers, singing Lord's praises, burning lamps in the temples, making flower gardens constitute Chariyai. Kiriyai is to perform Puja, Archanas. Yoga is restraint of the senses and contemplation on the internal light. Jnana is to understand the true significance of Pati, Pasu, Pasa and to become one with Siva by constant meditation on Him after removing the three Malas, viz., Anava (egoism), Karma (action) and Maya (illusion).

The worship of the all-pervading, eternal Supreme Being through external forms, is called Chariyai. The requisite initiation for this, is Samaya Diksha. The worship of the cosmic form of the Eternal Ruler of the universe externally and internally, is called Kiriyai. The internal worship of Him as formless, is called Yoga. For Kiriyai and Yoga, the requisite initiation is called Vishesha Diksha. The direct realisation of Lord Siva through Jnana Guru, is called Jnana. The initiation that leads to it, is called Nirvana Diksha.

The aspirant should free himself from the three kinds of Mala, viz., Anava, Karma and Maya. Then only he becomes one with Lord Siva and enjoys 'Sivanandam'. He should thoroughly annihilate his egoism, free himself from the bondage of Karma and destroy the Maya which is the basis of all impurities.

Guru or the spiritual preceptor is very essential for attaining the final emancipation. Siva is full of grace. He helps the aspirants. He showers His grace on those who worship Him with faith and devotion and who have childlike trust in Him. Siva Himself is the Guru. The grace of Siva is the road to salvation. Siva lives in the Guru and looks with intense love on the sincere aspirant through the eyes of the Guru. Only if you have love for mankind, you can love God.

If the aspirant establishes a relationship between himself and Lord Siva, he will grow in devotion quickly. He can have the mental attitude or Bhava—Dasya Bhava or the relationship of master and servant which Tirunavukarasar had, or the Vatsalya Bhava wherein Lord Siva is the father and the aspirant is the child of Lord Siva which Tirujnanasambandar had, or the Sakhya Bhava or the relationship of friend (Lord Siva is regarded as the friend of the aspirant) which Sundarar had, or the Sanmarga wherein Lord Siva is the very life of the aspirant which Manikkavasagar had, which corresponds to the Madhurya Bhava or Atma Nivedana of the Vaishnavites.

The devotee becomes one with Siva, like salt with water, milk with milk, when the three Malas (Pasa) are destroyed, but he cannot do the five functions of creation, etc. God only can perform the five functions.

The liberated soul is called a Jivanmukta. Though he lives in the body, he is one in feeling with the Absolute. He does not perform works which can produce further bodies. As he is free from egoism, work cannot bind him. He will do meritorious acts for the solidarity of the world (Lokasangraha). He lives in the body, until his Prarabdha Karma is exhausted. All his present actions are consumed by the grace of the Lord. The Jivanmukta does all actions on account of the impulsion of the Lord within him. Glory to Lord Siva and His Sakti!

Ashtamurti

Siva is spoken of as being in eight forms (Ashtamurti). The eight forms of Siva are the five elements, the sun, the moon and the priest who performs sacrifice.

Vishnu appeared in the Mohini form after the churning of the milk-ocean. Siva embraced Vishnu in that form. Sasta is the offspring of Siva and Mohini. Sasta is called also by the name Hari-Hara-Putra or the son of Hari and Hara.

Appar wanted all Saivas to regard Vishnu as only another aspect of Siva.

According to Appar, there are three aspects of Siva. (1) The lower Siva who dissolves the world and who liberates Jivas from their bondage. (2) The higher form is called Parapara. In this form Siva appears as Siva and Sakti (Ardhanarisvara). It has the name Param-Jyoti. Brahma and Vishnu were not able to comprehend this Jyoti. (3) Beyond these two forms is the Param, or the ultimate being from whom Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra originate. It is purely the Saiva form. It is formless. It is the Sivam of the Saiva Siddhanta. It is Para Brahman of the Upanishads and Vedantins.

The Mahavishnu of Vishnu Purana corresponds to Param of Saiva Siddhantins. Narayana or the higher Vishnu corresponds to the Param-jyoti of Appar or Saiva Siddhantins. The lower Vishnu does the function of preservation. He corresponds to the lower Siva.

What is the inner meaning of all the Saiva allusions about Vishnu worshipping Siva and all the Vaishnava allusions about Siva worshipping Vishnu? The lower Siva must take Narayana, the Parapara or Param-jyoti as his Superior. The lower Vishnu must take Param-jyoti or the Parapara as his Superior. The higher Vishnu and higher Siva are identical. They are inferior to Param, the Highest.

In that highest condition called Siva Mukti, there is no duality. No one can see anything. One merges himself in Sivam or the Highest. If you wish to see, you will have to come to the stage immediately below the Highest.

The Siva Murti or manifestation is inferior to the real 'Sivam' which is formless.

According to the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, the Tattvas are reckoned as ninety-six. They are as follows:

24 Atma Tattvas, 10 Nadis, 5 Avasthas or conditions, 3 Malas or impurities, 3 Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), 3 Mandalas (Surya or the sun, Agni or the fire and Chandra or the moon), 3 humours (Vata, Pitta and Sleshma), 8 Vikaras or modifications (Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya, Dambha and Asuya), 6 Adharas, 7 Dhatus, 10 Vayus, 5 Koshas and 9 doorways. The twenty-four Tattvas are the 5 elements (Bhutas), 5 Tanmatras (Sabda, etc.), 5 Jnana-Indriyas, 5 Karma-Indriyas and 4 Karanas (Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara). All these 96 relate to the body. Over and above these 96, there are the 5

Kanchukas or coverings. They are Niyati, Kaala, Kala, Raga and Vidya. The five enter the body and cause weariness to the Tattvas of the body and afflict the body.

Suddha Saiva

The Suddha Saiva does not attain the final emancipation by Kriya (Kiriyai) alone. He attains only Salokya. Jnana in Kriya leads to Salokya, the world of Siva. Jnana in Charya (Chariyai) leads him to Samipya (proximity to Siva). Jnana in Yoga bestows on him Sarupya (likeness in form). Jnana in Jnana leads him to Sayujya, merging or absorption.

‘Ambalam’ means ‘open space of the heart’ or Chidakasa or Chidambaram.

And Lingam is the Visvarupa or the God’s form of the Universe.

He who brings about the destruction of the world is Siva or Rudra. That is the reason why He is held superior to Brahma and Vishnu.

The Siddhantins divide Jivas or Pasus into three orders, viz., Vijnana Kalar, Pralaya Kalar and Sakalar. Vijnana Kalar have only the Anava Mala (egoism). Pralaya Kalar have Anava and Maya. Sakalar have all the Malas, Anava, Karma and Maya. The Malas affect only the Jivas and not Siva. Those who are freed from the Malas or impurities become identical with Siva. They are Siddhas or perfected beings.

Philosophy Of Symbols

Snake On The Body Of Siva

Serpent is the Jiva or the individual soul which rests upon Siva, the Paramatman or the Supreme Soul. The five hoods mean the five senses or the five Tattvas, viz., earth, water, fire, air and ether. They also represent the five Pranas, which hiss in the body like the serpent. The inhalation and exhalation are like the hissing of the serpent. Lord Siva Himself became the five Tanmatras, the five Jnanendriyas, the five Karmendriyas and other groups of five. The individual soul enjoys the worldly objects through these Tattvas. When the individual attains knowledge through control of the senses and the mind, he finds his

eternal resting abode in Lord Siva, the Supreme Soul. This is the esoteric significance of Lord Siva wearing the snake on His body.

Lord Siva is absolutely fearless. Srutis declare, "This Brahman is fearless (Abhayam), Immortal (Amritam)." Worldly people are afraid even at the very sight of a snake but Lord Siva is wearing serpents as ornaments on His body. This indicates that Lord Siva is absolutely fearless and immortal.

Generally serpents live for hundreds of years. Wearing of serpents by Lord Siva signifies that He is Eternal.

Significance of Bhasma, Nandi, Etc.

Namassivaya is the Mantra of Lord Siva. 'Na' represents earth and Brahma; 'Ma' represents water and Vishnu; 'Si' fire and Rudra; 'Va' Vayu and Mahesvara; 'Ya' Akasa and Sadasiva and also the Jiva.

Lord Siva has white complexion. What is the significance of white colour? He teaches silently that people should have pure heart and entertain pure thoughts and should be free from crookedness, diplomacy, cunningness, jealousy, hatred, etc.

He wears three white-lined Bhasma or Vibhuti on His forehead. What is the significance of this? He teaches silently that people should destroy the three impurities, viz., Anava (egoism), Karma (action with expectation of fruits), and Maya (illusion), and the three desires or Eshanas, viz., desire for landed property, desire for woman, desire for gold, and the three Vasanas, viz., Lokavasana, Dehavasana and Sastravasana, and then attain Him with a pure heart.

What does the Balipitha or altar which stands in front of the sanctum sanctorum of the Siva's temple represent? People should destroy their egoism and mineness (Ahamta and Mamata) before they attain the Lord. This is the significance.

What does Nandi or the bull which is in front of Sivalinga represent? Nandi is the attendant or doorkeeper of Siva. He is the vehicle of Lord Siva. He represents Satsanga. If you make association with the sages, you are sure to attain God-realisation. Sages will show you the way to reach Him. They will remove pitfalls or snares that lie on your path. They will clear your doubts and instil in your heart

dispassion, discrimination and knowledge. There is no other safe boat than Satsanga to reach the other shore of fearlessness and immortality. Even a moment's Satsanga or association with the sages, is a great blessing to the aspirants and the worldly-minded persons. They get firm conviction in the existence of God through Satsanga. The sages remove the worldly Samskaras. The company of sages is a formidable fortress to protect oneself from the temptations of Maya.

Lord Siva represents the destructive aspect of the Godhead. He is seen absorbed on the mountain peak of Kailas. He is an embodiment of serenity, renunciation and indifference to the world. The third eye in the centre of His forehead represents His destructive energy which when let loose destroys the world. Nandi is His favourite. He is the door-Keeper. He is seen hushing all nature, so that the Lord may not be disturbed in His Samadhi. The Lord has five faces, ten hands, ten eyes, two feet.

Virshabha or the bull represents Dharma Devata. Lord Siva rides on the bull. Bull is His vehicle. This denotes that Lord Siva is the protector of Dharma, is an embodiment of Dharma or righteousness.

Deer represents the Vedas. Its four legs are the four Vedas. Lord Siva is holding the deer in His hand. This indicates that He is the Lord of the Vedas.

He has sword in one of His hands. This signifies that He is the destroyer of births and deaths. The fire in one of His hands shows that He protects the Jivas by burning all fetters.

Philosophy of Abhisheka

Salutations and adorations to the blissful Lord Siva, the lover of Uma or Parvati, the Lord of all beings (Pasupati).

"Alankarapriyo Vishnuh, Abhishekapriyah Sivah—Lord Vishnu is very fond of Alankara (fine dress, beautiful ornaments, etc.); Siva is fond of Abhisheka.' In Siva temples, a pot made up of copper or brass with a hole in the centre is kept hanging over the image or Linga of Siva, and water is falling on the image throughout day and night. Pouring over the Linga, water, milk, ghee, curd, honey, coconut water, Panchamrita, etc., is Abhisheka. Abhisheka is done for Lord Siva. Rudra is chanted along with the Abhisheka. Lord Siva is propitiated by Abhisheka.

Lord Siva drank the poison that emanated from the ocean and wore the Ganga and moon on His head to cool His head. He has the fiery third eye. Constant Abhisheka cools this eye.

The greatest and the highest Abhisheka is to pour the waters of pure love on the Atmalinga of the lotus of the heart. The external Abhisheka with various objects will help the growth of devotion and adoration for Lord Siva and eventually lead to internal Abhisheka with pure abundant flow of love.

Abhisheka is a part of Siva Puja. Without Abhisheka, worship of Siva is incomplete. During Abhisheka Rudra, Purushasukta, Chamaka, Maha-mrityunjaya Japa, etc., are chanted in a particular rhythm and order. Monday is very important day for Lord Siva and the thirteenth day of the fortnight (Pradosha) is very sacred. On these days, devotees of Siva worship Him with special Puja, Abhisheka with Ekadasa-Rudra, Archana, offering plenty of Prasad, and illumination.

In Ekadasa-Rudra Abhisheka, every Rudra is chanted with distinctive articles for Abhisheka. Ganga water, milk, ghee, honey, rose-water, coconut water, sandal paste, Panchamrita, scented oil, sugarcane juice and lime juice are made use of for Abhisheka. After every Abhisheka, pure water is poured over the head of Siva. When Rudra is repeated once, the different articles of Abhisheka are made use of after every stanza of the Rudra. The Abhisheka water or other articles used for Abhisheka are considered very sacred and bestow immense benefits on the devotees who take it as the Lord's Prasad. It purifies the heart and destroys countless sins. You must take it with intense Bhava and faith.

When you do Abhisheka with Bhava and devotion, your mind is concentrated. Your heart is filled with the image of the Lord and divine thoughts. You forget your body and its relation and surroundings. Egoism gradually vanishes. When there is forgetfulness, you begin to enjoy and taste the eternal bliss of Lord Siva. Recitation of Rudra or Om Namassivaya purifies the mind and fills it with Sattva.

If you do Abhisheka with Rudrapatha in the name of a person suffering from any disease he will be soon freed from that disease. Incurable diseases are cured by Abhisheka. Abhisheka bestows health, wealth, prosperity, progeny, etc. Abhisheka on Monday is most auspicious.

By offering Panchamrita, honey, milk, etc., to the Lord, thoughts of your body diminish. Selfishness slowly vanishes. You derive immense joy. You begin to increase your offerings unto the Lord. Therefore, self-sacrifice and self-surrender come in. Naturally, there is an outpouring from your heart, "I am Thine, my Lord. All is Thine, my Lord'.

Kannappa Nayanar, a great devotee of Lord Siva, a hunter by profession, did Abhisheka with the water in his mouth for the Linga at Kalahasti in South India and propitiated Lord Siva. Lord Siva is pleased by pure devotion. It is the mental Bhava that counts and not the outward show. Lord Siva said to the temple priest: "This water from the mouth of Kannappa, my beloved devotee, is more pure than the water of the Ganga".

A devotee should be regular in doing Abhisheka for the Lord. He should get by heart Rudra and Chamakam. Ekadasa Rudra is more powerful and effective. In Northern India, every man or woman takes a lota of water and pours it on the image of Siva. This also causes beneficial results and brings about the fulfilment of one's desire. Abhisheka on Sivaratri day is very effective.

May you all recite Rudrapatha which describes the glory of Lord Siva and His manifestations in every living being, in every animate and inanimate being! May you do Abhisheka daily and thus obtain the grace of Lord Siva! May Lord Visvanatha bless you all!

Fruit of Abhisheka and Rudra Japa in Siva's Temple

Chamaka is divided into eleven sections. Each of these is then combined with Namaka (Rudra) and repeated. This is called Rudra. Eleven such Rudras make one Laghu Rudra. Eleven Laghu Rudras make one Maharudra. Eleven Maharudras make one Atirudra.

Rudra is to be repeated after performing the initial Sankalpa, Puja, Nyasa, Anga. Panchamritasnana and Dhyana. The fruit of Rudra Japa is stated as shown below:

No. of Japa

Fruit of Japa

1 Rudra

Freedom from Bala graha (diseases common to children).

3 Rudra

Freedom from imminent difficulties with which one is faced.

5 Rudra

Freedom from the evil effects of certain planets occupying unfavourable positions.

7 Rudra

Freedom from great fear.

9 Rudra

The fruit of one Vajapeya sacrifice; and also attainment of peace of mind.

11 Rudra

Getting the favour of kings and great wealth.

33 Rudra

Attainment of wishes for objects and having no enemies.

77 Rudra

Enjoyment of great happiness.

99 Rudra

Attainment of son, grandson, wealth, grain, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and freedom from death.

1 Maharudra

Attainment of the favour of kings and becoming the Lord of great wealth.

3 Maharudra

Fulfilment of impossible tasks.

5 Maharudra

Acquirement of vast lands.

7 Maharudra

Attainment of the seven worlds.

9 Maharudra

Freedom from births and deaths.

1 Atirudra

Becoming God.

Materials for Abhisheka: Pure water, milk, sugarcane juice, ghee, honey, waters of sacred rivers, sea water.

For getting rain, Abhisheka should be done with pure water. For freedom from diseases, and for begetting a son, Abhisheka should be done with milk. If Abhisheka is done with milk, even a barren woman begets children. The person also attains plenty of cows. If Abhisheka is done with Kusa water, one becomes free from all diseases. He who desires wealth, should perform Abhisheka with ghee, honey and sugarcane juice. He who desires Moksha, should do Abhisheka with sacred waters.

Philosophy of Siva Tandava

The Tandava or celestial dance of Lord Siva is extremely thrilling and charming, exquisitely graceful in pose and rhythm and intensely piercing in effect.

Nritya or Tandava is an inseparable, sacred movement of the various limbs of the body in accordance with the inner divine Bhava. Nritya is a divine science. The Adigurus for this celestial Nritya were Lord Siva, Krishna and Mother Kali. In Nritya, the six Bhavas, viz., Srishti, Samhara, Vidya, Avidya, Gati and Agati are demonstrated.

The dance of Lord Siva is for the welfare of the world. The object of His dance is to free the souls from the fetters of Maya, from the three bonds of Anava, Karma and Maya. He is not the destroyer but He is the regenerator. He is the Mangala Data and Ananda Data, bestower of auspiciousness and bliss. He is more easily pleased than Lord Hari, He grants boons quickly, for a little Tapas or a little recitation of His five letters.

‘Aghada Bhum’ is His song of dance. When Siva starts His dance Brahma, Vishnu, the Siva Ganas and Kali with Her bowl of skull, join Him. Have you not seen the picture of Pradosha Nritya? It will give you an idea of the dance of Siva.

Kali was very proud of Her ability in dancing. Siva started dancing to quell Her pride. He danced very beautifully, very artistically. Kali had to put Her face down in shame.

Lord Siva wears a deer in the left upper hand. He has trident in the right lower arm. He has fire and Damaru and Malu, a kind of weapon. He wears five serpents as ornaments. He wears a garland of skulls. He is pressing with His feet the demon Muyalaka, a dwarf holding a cobra. He faces south. Panchakshari itself is His body. Lord Siva says: “Control the five senses which are hissing like serpents. The mind is jumping like a deer. Control the mind. Burn it in the fire of meditation. Strike it down with the Trisula of discrimination. You can attain Me’. This is the philosophical significance of the picture of Lord Siva.

You can witness the dance of Siva in the rising waves of the ocean, in the oscillation of the mind, in the movements of the senses and the Pranas, in the rotation of the planets and constellations, in cosmic Pralaya, in epidemics of infectious diseases, in huge inundations and volcanic eruptions, in earthquakes, landslips, lightning and thunder, in huge conflagrations and cyclonic storm.

As soon as the Guna Samya Avastha, wherein the three Gunas exist in a state of equilibrium, is disturbed by the will of the Lord, the Gunas manifest and quintuplication of elements takes place. There is vibration of Omkara or Sabda Brahman. There is manifestation of primal energy. This is the dance of Siva. The whole cosmic play or activity or Lila is the dance of Siva. All movements within the cosmos are His dance. He gazes on Prakriti and energises Her. Mind, Prana, matter begin to dance. When He begins to dance, the Sakti Tattva manifests. From Sakti, Nada proceeds and from Nada, Bindu originates. Then the universe of names and forms is projected. The undifferentiated matter, energy and sound become differentiated.

The burning grounds are the abodes of Siva. Rudra is the destructive aspect of the Lord. Lord Siva dances in the crematorium with Kali, in His ten-armed form. The Siva Ganas also join with Him in the dance.

Nataraja of Chidambaram is the expert dancer. He has four hands. He wears the Ganga and the crescent moon on His matted locks. He holds Damaru in His right hand. He shows Abhaya Mudra to His devotees with His raised left hand. The significance is: "O devotees! Do not be afraid. I shall protect you all." One left hand holds the fire. The other right hand points down on the Asura Muyalaka who is holding a cobra. He has raised the left foot in a beautiful manner.

The sound of the drum invites the individual souls to His feet. It represents Omkara. All the Sanskrit alphabets have come out of the play of the Damaru. Creation arises from Damaru. The hand which shows Abhaya Mudra gives protection. Destruction proceeds from fire. The raised foot indicates Maya or illusion. The hand which points down shows that His feet are the sole refuge of the individual souls. Tiruakshi represents Omkara or Pranava.

Chidambaram is a sacred place of pilgrimage in South India. All the Tamil saints have sung hymns in praise of Nataraja. There is Akasa Linga here which indicates that Lord Siva is formless and attributeless. The popular saying goes: "He who dies in Banares with Ramanam in his lips and heart, attains salvation. He who remembers Arunachalam or Tiruvannamalai attains Mukti. He who gets Darsana of Nataraja attains final emancipation." Real Chidambaram is within the heart. Nataraja dances in the hearts of devotees who have burnt egoism, lust, hatred, pride and jealousy.

He dances quite gently. If He dances vehemently the whole earth will sink down at once. He dances with His eyes closed, because the sparks from His eyes will consume the entire universe. The five activities of

the Lord, Panchakriyas, viz., Srishti (creation), Sthiti (preservation), Samhara (destruction), Tirobhava (illusion) and Anugraha (grace), are the dances of Siva.

May you all comprehend the true significance of the dance of Siva. May you all dance in ecstasy in tune with Lord Siva and merge in Him and enjoy the Sivananda, the final beatitude of life!

Lord Siva is an embodiment of wisdom. He is the Light of lights. He is Paramjyoti or supreme Light. He is self-luminous or Svayam-Jyoti. The dance of Siva represents the rhythm and movement of the world-spirit. At His dance the evil forces and darkness quiver and vanish.

In the night of Brahma or during Pralaya, Prakriti is inert, motionless. There is Guna-Samya Avastha. The three Gunas are in a state of equilibrium or poise. She cannot dance till Lord Siva wills it. Lord Siva rises from His profound silence and begins to dance. The undifferentiated sound becomes differentiated through the vibration set up by the movements of His Damaru or drum. Sabda Brahman comes into being. The undifferentiated energy also becomes differentiated. The equipoise in the Gunas becomes disturbed. The three Gunas Sattva, Rajas and Tamas manifest. All the spheres, the atoms and the electrons also dance rhythmically and in an orderly manner. Atoms dance in the molecule and molecules dance in all bodies. Stars dance in time and space. Prakriti also begins to dance about Him as His glory or Vibhuti. The Prana begins to operate on Akasa or subtle matter. Various forms manifest. Hiranyagarbha or the golden egg or the cosmic mind also manifests.

When the time comes, Lord Siva destroys all names and forms by fire while dancing. There is stillness again.

This is the symbolism involved in the form of Nataraja. The deer in the hand of Siva represents Asuddha Maya. The axe represents knowledge which destroys ignorance. The drum, the outstretched arm that carries fire, the water (Ganga), the hand with the axe, the foot standing on the Asura Muyalaka, are the formless or Sukshma Panchaksharas.

Srishti (creation) is in the drum; Sthiti (preservation) is in the Abhaya hand; Samhara (destruction) is in the hand that holds the axe; Tirobhava (veiling) is in the pressing foot; and Anugraha (blessing) is in the uplifted foot.

There are various kinds of dances of Siva. There are the Samhara dance, the five dances, the six dances, the eight dances, the Kodu Kotti dance, the Pandam dance, the Kodu dance. The Kodu Kotti is the dance after the destruction of everything. Pandam is the dance after the destruction of the three cities, wearing the ashes of those cities. Kodu or Kapalam is the dance holding Brahma's head in the hand. Samhara is the dance at the time of dissolution or Pralaya.

Srishti, Sthiti, Samhara, Tirobhava and Anugraha, and also Muni-Tandava, Anavarata Tandava and Ananda Tandava constitute the eight dances. Sivananda dance, Sundara dance, the golden city dance, the golden Chidambaram dance and the wonderful dance form the five dances. The five previous dances and the Ananda dance in the end form the six dances.

Lord Siva is the only dancer. He is the Master or expert dancer. He is the King of dancers. He quelled the pride of Kali. Lord Siva's destruction is not a single act, but is a series of acts. There is a different kind of dance at every stage.

May Lord Nataraja, the great dancer help you in the attainment of Sivanandam or the eternal bliss of Siva!

Lord Nataraja—The Great Dancer

'Ya' in Namassivaya represents Jiva or the individual soul. The Panchakshara Namassivaya forms the body of Lord Siva. The hand that wears fire is 'Na'. The foot that presses the demon Muyalaka is 'Ma'. The hand that holds Damaru is 'Si'. The right and left hand that move about are 'Va'. The hand that shows Abhaya is 'Ya'.

Once upon a time, a group of Rishis abandoned their faith in the true Lord and took to the worship of false deities. Lord Siva wanted to teach them a lesson. He stirred in them strange passions. The Rishis became very furious. They created many evils through their power of penance and let them loose upon Siva. Lord Siva overcame them and finally defeated the great Kali, a creation of the Rishis, by the cosmic dance.

At the time of Sri Nataraja's dance, Patanjali Rishi and Vyaghrapada were witnessing the dance and enjoying it. They were standing on either side of the Lord. Even in paintings and sculpture of the

Nataraja's Murti, you will find the figures of Patanjali and Vyaghrapada on either side of Nataraja. The lower part of the body of Vyaghrapada will resemble that of tiger and the corresponding part of Patanjali that of the serpent.

The most wonderful dance of Nataraja is the Urdhva Tandava. In this dance the left leg is lifted up and the toe points to the sky. This is the most difficult form of dance. Nataraja defeated Kali by this pose in dancing. Kali successfully competed with Nataraja in all other modes of dance. Nataraja lost His earring while dancing. He succeeded by means of His toe, in this form of dance, in restoring the ornament to its original place without the knowledge of the audience.

Nataraja danced with His right leg lifted upwards. This is the Gajahasta pose in dancing or Nritya. He danced continuously without changing His legs once.

There is another dance pose of Siva on the head of an elephant. In this form, Lord Siva is known as Gajasana Murti. At the foot of Lord Siva, there is the head of an elephant monster. Lord Siva has eight hands. He holds the trident, the drum and the noose in His three right hands. He holds the shield and the skull in His two hands. The third left hand is held in Vismaya pose.

An Asura assumed the form of an elephant to kill the Brahmins who were sitting round the Linga of Visvanath in Banares, absorbed in meditation. Lord Siva came out suddenly from the Linga and killed the elephant-monster and used the skin as His garment.

Dance of Siva

Lord Visvanath dwells now in a place where there was forest. He pleases the whole world. He bestows health and long life. Forests become Ashrams, Islands become an ocean, Ocean becomes an island, Cities become deserts, Siva gazes His Sakti Then there is the atomic dance There is the dance of Prakriti Lord Siva merely witnesses Then Prana vibrates, mind moves, Senses function, Buddhi operates, Heart pumps, lungs breathe, Stomach digests, intestines excrete, This is a world of change A changing thing is perishable Know the Imperishable Which is changeless And become Immortal. This is the dance of Siva.

Siva and Sakti

Hinduism is the only religion in the world which has emphasised much the motherhood of God. The Devi-Sukta appears in the tenth Mandala of the Rig-Veda. It was revealed by Bak, the daughter of Maharshi Ambrin. In this Rigvedic hymn addressed to the Divine Mother, Bak speaks of her realisation of God as Mother who pervades the whole universe.

Siva and Sakti are essentially one. It is said in the very first verse of Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa that Sakti and Siva stand to each other in the same relationship as the word and its meaning. Just as heat and fire are inseparable, so Sakti and Siva are inseparable. Lord Siva cannot do anything without Sakti. This is emphasised by Sri Sankaracharya in the first verse of Saundarya Lahari.

Sakti is spoken of as Mother, because that is the aspect of the Supreme in which She is regarded as the genitrix and nourisher of the universe. But God is neither male nor female. He is named according to the body in which He is manifested.

Sakti is like the snake with motion. Siva is like the motionless snake. Waveless ocean is Siva. Ocean with waves is Sakti. The transcendental Supreme Being is Siva. The manifested, immanent aspect of the Supreme is Sakti. Siva is attributeless. He is Nishkriya. Sakti is with attributes. She creates. Sakti is compared to a rope made up of tricoloured threads.

Mother Kali dances on the breast of Siva. She has terrible form but She is not really terrible. She is all-merciful and gentle. She wears a garland made up of the skulls. What does this mean? She wears the heads of Her devotees. How loving and affectionate She is to Her devotees!

Kali is the Divine Mother. She is the Sakti or power of Lord Siva. She is the dynamic aspect of Siva. Siva is the static aspect. Lord Siva is like a dead corpse. What does this signify? He is absolutely calm, motionless, breathless, with His eyes closed in Samadhi. He is actionless, changeless. He is untouched by the cosmic play or Lila that is eternally going on, on His breast.

He is absolutely dead to the world. He is beyond the three Gunas. There is no duality, no plurality, no relativity, no differentiation between subject and object, no distinction, no difference, no Triputi, no Dvandvas, no Raga-Dvesha, no good and evil in Him. He is ever pure, Nirlipta (unattached). And yet He is the source, substratum, support, first cause for this universe. He simply gazes. Sakti is vitalised. She

works and creates. In His mere presence Sakti keeps up the play of this universe or Lila. The whole world is a mere vibration or Spandana in Him. He is superconscious and yet He has cosmic consciousness. He constitutes all the names and forms and yet He is above all names and forms. This is a great marvel and a supreme mystery which cannot be comprehended by the finite intellect.

Without Siva, Sakti has no existence and without Sakti, Siva has no expression. It is through Sakti that the Impersonal Supreme Being Siva or Nirguna Brahman becomes the Personal Being or Saguna Brahman. Siva or Nirguna Brahman becomes the Personal Being or Saguna Brahman. Siva is the Soul of Durga or Kali. Durga or Kali is identical with Siva. Siva is Satchidananda. Durga or Kali is Satchidananda Mayi. Siva and Sakti are one and neither is higher than the other. Sakti is Chit, Chidrupini, Chinmatra Rupini.

The Divine Mother

Siva and Sakti are inseparable. This is shown in Ardhanarisvara—Siva and Parvati (with one body, half-male and half-female). Lord Siva has Parvati as the left half of His body.

Siva-Jnana leads us on to the realisation of Self and bestows on us eternal bliss and frees us from births and deaths. It shows us the light of life. It is the eye of intuition. It is the third eye of Siva. This third eye destroys all illusions and passions.

Sakti is thought of in various forms. Sarasvati is the Goddess of learning. Lakshmi is the Goddess of wealth. Parvati or Uma is the bliss-bestowing Goddess.

The Markandeya Purana contains seven hundred verses which are known as the Sapta-sati or the Chandi or the Devi-Mahatmya. It is one of the most famous religious texts of the Hindus. It ranks almost equal with the Gita. It describes in an allegorical form, that in the path of salvation the chief obstacles are our own desire, anger, greed and ignorance and we can overcome them through the grace of Divine Mother if we sincerely worship Her.

The book gives a beautiful description of the three aspects of the Mother as Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Maha Sarasvati—the Tamasic, the Rajasic and the Sattvic aspects of the Divine Mother.

The Devas were oppressed by the Asuras. The gods invoked the blessings of Divine Mother. She appeared as the above three forms and destroyed the Asuras and protected the gods. The Divine Mother has given men as well as gods, Her definite and infallible promise that whenever they would remember Her in danger or difficulties She would save them.

Sakti Energises the Trimurtis

Sakti is the energy or the vital power that makes any activity possible. When a man does any work he does it only by virtue of his Sakti. If he is unable to do the work he says that he has no Sakti to do that work. Hence Sakti is that which enables one to work. Sakti is Devi. Sakti is the Divine Mother. Mind is Sakti. Prana is Sakti. Will is Sakti.

Devi Bhagavata deals with the forms of Prakriti. Devi took the Trimurtis to Her abode in Manidvipa, gave them their consorts Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Parvati and sent out for the life of universe in the new Kalpa.

Lord Narayana created Brahma from His navel. Brahma did not know what to do. Vishnu and Siva also did not know how to set going the life of a new universe in a new Kalpa after the dissolution. They were lifted in a Vimana or celestial car and they soon reached a strange region where they were transformed into women. They were in a land of women headed by Devi. It was Manidvipa in the Sudha Samudra, the ocean of nectar. The newly made women stayed there, for a hundred years. They did not know who they were, why they were there and what they were to do.

Then they were put in the company of men and they themselves became men. They were coupled, Brahma with Sarasvati, Vishnu with Lakshmi and Siva with Parvati. They found themselves at once in their original place and they knew what to do. They understood their functions. The Trimurtis attain Sakti through association with the Devi.

Parvati is the Sakti of Lord Siva who bestows Jnana and Mukti on men. Lakshmi is the Sakti of Vishnu who gives prosperity to the people. Sarasvati is the Sakti of Brahma who creates the world. Radha is the Sakti of Lord Krishna who leads humanity to Mukti through Bhakti.

May Sakti bless you all with Sakti!

Tripura Rahasya

The three cities are Anava Mala (egoism), Karma (bondage of Karma) and Maya (the illusory power of Lord Siva which veils the individual souls). Destroy the first city Anava Mala through self-surrender to Lord Siva and consequent descent of His grace (Anugraha). Annihilate the second impurity, viz., Karma, through consecrating the fruits of your actions to the Lord and destroying the idea 'I am the doer', by developing the Nimitta Bhava, the Bhava that Lord Siva is working through your various organs and that you are a mere instrument in His hands (Chariyai and Kiriyai). You will not be bound by actions. You will attain purity of heart and through purity of heart, realisation of Sivanandam or eternal bliss of Siva. Annihilate the third impurity, viz., Maya, through the recitation of Panchakshara, worship of Guru, hearing and reflection of the attributes of the Lord and His various Names and meditation on His form and Satchidananda aspect.

This is the destruction of the three cities or castles. This is Tripura Rahasya.

Destroy Tamas through Rajas and convert Rajas into Sattva, by developing various virtuous qualities, by taking Sattvic food, by Satsanga, Japa of Panchakshara and meditation on Lord Siva. Transcend Sattva also. You will attain oneness with Lord Siva.

This is the destruction of the three cities or castles. This is Tripura Rahasya.

Annihilate the evil tendencies or Asubha Vasanas, viz., lust, anger, greed, hatred, jealousy, through Subha Vasanas or good tendencies, viz., Japa, meditation, study of religious books, Kirtan or singing Lord's praise. You will enjoy the eternal bliss of Siva.

This is the destruction of the three cities or castles. This is Tripura Rahasya.

Serve the Guru. Purify your heart by serving him with faith and devotion. Learn the Yogic practices which lead to the awakening of Kundalini from him and practise them. Study the Yoga Sastras under him.

Observe celibacy. Kill the Shadripus or six enemies. Look within. Take the Kundalini through the Sushumna Nadi and break the Granthis through the Chakras and unite Her with Her Lord Sadasiva at the Sahasrara Chakra at the crown of the head and enjoy the eternal bliss of Lord Siva.

This is the destruction of the three cities or castles. This is Tripura Rahasya.

Kill the three bodies, i.e., transcend the three bodies, viz., the gross or physical body (Sthula Deha), subtle body (Sukshma Deha) and causal body (Karana Sarira). Go above the five sheaths or Kosas (Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya), through meditation on Lord Siva and attain Siva Sayujya.

This is the destruction of the three cities or castles. This is Tripura Rahasya.

Become a witness of the three states, viz., waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. Stand as a spectator. Withdraw yourself from the objective consciousness. Live within. Attain the Turiya state or the fourth state or Siva Pada.

This is the destruction of the three cities or castles. This is Tripura Rahasya.

Go above physical consciousness, subconsciousness and mental consciousness and attain the superconsciousness state or Nirvikalpa or Asamprajnata Samadhi.

This is the destruction of the three cities or castles. This is Tripura Rahasya.

Go above instinct, reason, understanding and open the eye of intuition, the third eye of Siva (Divya Chakshus) and merge yourself in the supreme light of Siva. Go above thinking, willing and feeling and enter the supreme silence or thoughtless state of Siva Nirvana.

This is the destruction of the three cities or castles. This is Tripura Rahasya.

Tripura Sundari is the Sakti of Lord Siva. She and Siva are one. She is extremely beautiful. She attracts the devotees to Her blissful Self and sheds wisdom, devotion and divine light on them. Hence, She is called Tripura Sundari. She helps the aspirants to destroy the three cities or castles mentioned above.

The whole world is under Her control. The entire universe is under the sway of Her three Gunas. All the ties and bonds of Karma can be broken down; the wheel of births and deaths can be rent asunder only by Her worship and benign grace. All sins can be destroyed and the eternal bliss of Siva can be realised only through singing Her praise and repetition of Her Names.

She is called Tripura, the three cities. The body of a man or a woman is one of the forms assumed by Her. The whole world is Her body. All the Devas are Her forms only. All the triplets of the sacred texts are contained in Her. The triplets, viz., the three Gunas, the three states of consciousness, the three fires, the three bodies, the three worlds, the triple power (Iccha Sakti, Kriya Sakti and Jnana Sakti), the three Svaras (Udatta, Anudatta and Svarita), the Trivarnikas, the three kinds of Karmas (Sanchita, Agami and Prarabdha), the Trimurtis, the three letters A, U, M, and the triad Pramata, Pramana and Prameya, knower, knowledge and knowable, seer, sight and seen, are all contained in Tripurasundari.

All the Devatas dwell in this body. They are the presiding deities of the various organs. The Lord Tryambaka dwells in Muladhara, Jambukesvara in Svadhishthana, Arunachalesvara in Manipura, Nataraja in Anahata, Kalahastisvara in Visuddha, Visvesvara in Ajna and Srikanthesvara in Sahasrara.

All the sacred places are in this body—Kedar in the forehead, Amaravati in the tip of the nose, Kurukshetra in the breasts and Prayaga in the heart.

All the nine planets have their special abodes in the body. Sun is in the Nada-Chakra, moon in the Bindu-Chakra, Mars in the eyes, Mercury in the heart, Jupiter in the Manipura, Venus in the Svadhishthana, Saturn in the navel, Rahu in the face and Ketu in the thorax.

Countless rivers and hills are also allotted special places in the body. Whatever is found in the outer world is found in the body also. This body is microcosm. It is Pindanda.

This is Tripura Rahasya.

May you attain the grace of Tripurasundari and understand the Tripura Rahasya and attain Sivananda or eternal bliss of Lord Siva.

Lord Siva and His Lilas

Siva is known by the name 'Girisa', as He is the Lord of the Mount Kailasa. Siva is called 'Tryambaka', because He has a third eye in His forehead, the eye of wisdom (Jnana Chakshus). The word 'Hara' is derived from the root 'Hru' to take and the suffix 'Ati', for He removes (Harati) all ills. 'Hara' means He who at the time of dissolution (Pralaya) withdraws the world within Himself. Siva is holding in His hands Parasu (axe) and deer. He is making with the other two hands the Vara and the Abhaya Mudras. The deer here is Brahma. Siva is very powerful. Even Brahma is under His control.

Tripurari

Siva was the destroyer of the Asuras, Tripuras. He destroyed the Tripuras or the three cities of the Asuras which were built of gold, silver and iron by Maya. The Asuras oppressed all theists, being protected by the three cities. Siva is called Tripurari because He destroyed the Asuras, Tripuras, and the cities, Tripuras.

Siva Jyoti

Brahma and Vishnu were one day disputing which of the two was the greater. Siva appeared in the form of an Infinite Jyoti or fiery Linga, in order to destroy their pride. Brahma and Vishnu set out to measure the Jyoti. They failed in their attempts.

Nilakantha

Lord Siva Drinks Poison

Once, the Devas and the Asuras had a formidable fight for a very long period. Many Devas and Asuras died in the fight. The Devas thought that they should prolong their lives by drinking nectar and then continue the war. They approached Brahma with this desire in view. Brahma said: "This work cannot be done by me. It can be done only by Lord Vishnu." Thereupon, Brahma and the Devas approached Lord

Hari in Kshirasagara. Lord Hari asked the Devas and Asuras to churn the ocean with the help of Mandaragiri as churning-rod and Vasuki, the serpent, as the rope. As they went on churning, poison (Halahala) came out first from the ocean. The terrible poison began to burn the people into ashes. The Devas, the Asuras and the Rishis began to fly away. Lord Vishnu was not able to destroy the poison. His body also became very black. He ran to Kailas along with the Devas and Brahma to see Lord Siva. He reported to Lord Siva all that had happened. Thereupon, Lord Siva collected the poison and kept it as a drop in the palm of His hand and swallowed it. Then Lord Vishnu and Brahma requested Lord Siva to keep it in His neck as a mark of their protection. Lord Siva did it accordingly. Due to the effect of the poison His throat became blue. From that day onwards Lord Siva is called by the name 'Nilakantha' (blue-necked one) or 'Kalakantha Murti'. Then Lord Siva said to them: "If you churn again, you will get nectar and several other things." They all started again the churning of the ocean and obtained nectar and many other things. All the Devas drank the nectar and rejoiced heartily.

Lord Siva Rides on the Bull

Turning of Chatur-Yuga two thousand times, is a day of Brahma. Such thirty days make a month for him. Such twelve months make a year for him. Such hundred years make the full life of Brahma. The whole life-period of Brahma is a day for Lord Vishnu. After one hundred years, Lord Vishnu also will pass away or merge himself in Parabrahman. All the Andas will perish. On account of the heavy blowing of Prachanda Vayu, the seven oceans will ebb high and cover the whole world. Lord Siva alone will exist. He will burn everything into ashes through His fiery third eye and then dance. The Dharmadevata or the Lord of Virtue reflected within himself: "How can I attain immortality? If I approach Lord Siva only, I can attain this." He assumed the form of a bull, went to Lord Siva and said: "My venerable Lord! Kindly accept me as Thy vehicle and thus protect me." Lord Siva agreed to the humble request of the God of Dharma and said: "Conduct the Dharma with four feet in the Krita Yuga, with the three feet in the Treta Yuga, with two feet in the Dvapara Yuga, and with one foot in the Kali Yuga. On account of My grace, you will be endowed with all splendour and powers. You will be always My vehicle. You will be one with Me." When Lord Siva destroyed Tripuras or the three cities, Lord Vishnu assumed the form of a bull and supported Lord Siva.

Lord Siva Wears Trident, Deer, Etc.

The Rishis of Darukavana performed a Yajna to destroy Lord Siva. A cruel tiger came out of the fire. They commanded the tiger to kill Lord Siva. Lord Siva killed the tiger and wore the skin around His waist. Then they created a trident, to kill the Lord. Lord Siva wore it in His hand as His instrument. Then they created a deer with sharp horns, to kill the Lord. Lord Siva wore it in His left hand. Later on they created countless black cobras to kill the Lord. Lord Siva wore them as His ornaments. Then they created countless Bhuta Ganas to kill the Lord. Lord Siva made them as His army. Then they created a Damaru to kill the Lord. Lord Siva wore it in His hand. Then they created an Asura, Muyalaka, to kill the Lord.

Muyalaka marched with the Yajna fire to destroy Lord Siva. Lord Siva held the fire as Malu in His hand and kept the Asura under His feet.

Lord Siva Wears the Ganga on His Head

Once upon a time in Mount Kailas, Parvati closed the eyes of Lord Siva with her hands. Thereupon the sun, moon and fire did not shine forth. This caused terrible havoc in the world. All were enveloped by darkness for a long period. Lord Siva opened His third eye a bit. The sun, moon and fire began to shine again and all darkness vanished. Parvati was frightened. She removed her hands and dropped down the perspiration from her fingers. This perspiration was turned into ten Ganges with countless branches. These rivers did much havoc to the world. Thereupon Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Indra ran to Lord Siva and requested Him to avert this catastrophe. Lord Siva felt compassionate and brought the whole waters in one hair of His matted locks. Lord Brahma, Vishnu and Indra requested Lord Siva to give a little of the water of the Ganga for their worlds. Lord Siva gave them a little. They became Virajanadi in Vaikuntha, Manasa Tirtha in Satyaloka and Devaganga in Indraloka. King Bhagiratha brought down the Ganga from Brahmaloaka to save the sixty thousand sons of Sagara.

Lord Siva's Lila of Begging

The Rishis of Darukavana thought that there was no use in loving and adoring Lord Siva and they could attain Moksha through the performance of sacrifices. They left off worship of the Lord and did sacrifices vigorously. Then Lord Siva said to Lord Hari: "Assume the form of Mohini and enter the abode of all Rishis in Daruka forest. They have no regard for Me now. They are treading the wrong path now. We should teach them a severe lesson. Excite their passion and delude them. Destroy their Vratas." He also put on the form of a mendicant-beggar. Thereupon, Lord Hari assumed the form of Mohini and entered the dwelling places of the Rishis in Darukavana. All the Rishis lost their power of understanding and discrimination and followed Mohini under strong excitement of passion.

Lord Siva entered the Parnakutirs of the wives of the Rishis, sang the Srutis and hymns beautifully and roamed about as a mendicant-beggar. The wives of Rishis became excited and followed Lord Siva. They entreated Him in a variety of ways to satisfy them. Lord Siva multiplied Himself and appeared in the mind of each woman. All the wives of the Rishis enjoyed heartily. They all brought forth in the morning eighteen thousand Rishis with matted locks, Danda and Kamandalu. They all prayed to Lord Siva. Lord Siva blessed them to do Tapas in the forest. The Rishis acted accordingly. The Rishis witnessed the condition of their wives and said: "We were deluded by the enchanting Mohini. The mendicant-beggar spoiled the chastity of our wives. Lo! how powerful is lust! Mysterious is Maya!"

Lord Siva Has Uma on His Left

After the Samhara was over, Lord Brahma born of the grace of Lord Siva thought of creating all beings. He created Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata. They did not enter the life of householders. They developed wisdom and became great Yogis. Lord Brahma went to Vaikuntha and saw Lord Hari and said to Him: "O venerable Lord! I am not able to continue the creation. Sanaka, Sanandana, etc., have become Yogis. They do not wish to become householders. Kindly suggest to me a way to continue my work of creation." Lord Vishnu said: "This is not in my power. Let us go to Lord Siva who abides in Kailasa." Brahma and Vishnu saw the Lord of Kailasa and said to Him: "O God of gods! The creative work of Brahma has been stopped as the four Kumaras have become Yogis. Kindly bless him to continue his creative work."

Lord Siva looked at the left side of His chest. Uma took Her birth from Lord Siva's left side. Lord Siva said to them: "Now there is no difficulty in creation. It will continue without any hitch." Thereupon Brahma and Vishnu repaired to their respective abodes. Then Lord Brahma created the worlds through the grace of Lord Siva. Men and women lived together happily and brought forth offsprings. The whole appearance is Saktimaya. Lord Siva witnesses Prakriti's activities.

Lord Siva Wears Elephant's Skin

In days of yore, Gajasura did severe penance. Brahma appeared before him and asked him: "O Gajasura! I am pleased with your penance. What boon do you want?" Gajasura said: "O venerable Lord! Give me prowess and inexhaustible wealth." "I have given you what you desired. But if you fight against Lord Siva, you will lose your boon." Then Lord Brahma vanished. Thereupon, Gajasura did Digvijaya, and defeated Devas and Indra. He troubled the Munis and the Rishis also. They repaired to Banares and fell at the feet of Lord Visvanatha and said: "Gajasura is trying to kill us. Protect us. O Lord! There is no other refuge for us." Gajasura attacked Lord Visvanatha also. The Lord killed the Asura, tore the skin and wore it as His garment. Then the Devas and the Rishis praised the Lord and became happy.

Ravana And Siva

Ravana was a great devotee of Lord Siva. He used to go everyday to Mount Kailas to worship Lord Siva. He found this very troublesome. He thought within himself to bring the whole mountain to his abode in Lanka in order to save himself from the trouble of a daily journey to Mount Kailas. He began to pull up the mountain which trembled. Parvati, consort of Siva, got frightened. She embraced Lord Siva. Siva pressed Ravana with His toe and sent him down to the nether world.

Hari and Siva

Hari used to worship Siva daily with a thousand lotuses. One day one lotus was missing. He plucked out His own eye to make the number of a thousand. Siva gave Vishnu the Sudarsana Chakra or discus, being very much pleased with His devotion. It is this Sudarsana Chakra which Vishnu always bears. This discus is itself an embodiment of devotion.

Brahma's Boon

A Rakshasa worshipped Brahma and asked Him to grant him the power to destroy the whole world. Brahma was partially unwilling to grant him this boon. He consented in a half-hearted manner and asked him to wait. The Devas, hearing this, were terribly frightened and went to Siva and told Him everything. Siva danced in order to delay the granting of this boon by Brahma, to distract him and thus save the world.

Birth of Subrahmanya

The Asura Taraka drove all the gods from heaven. The gods went to Brahma. Brahma said to the gods: "The Asura has acquired his power through my grace. I cannot destroy him. I shall suggest to you one plan. Go to Lord Siva. He is in Yoga Samadhi. He must be tempted to unite with Parvati. A powerful son will be born unto Him. He will destroy the Asura". Thereupon, Indra asked Cupid (Kama) to go with his wife Rati and his companion Vasanta (the spring), to Mount Kailas, the abode of Lord Siva. The three persons at once proceeded to Kailas. Spring season appeared there. All the Rishis were surprised at this. Kama stood behind a tree and shot an arrow at Siva. At this moment Parvati was worshipping Siva and offering flowers in His hand. Her hand touched the hands of Siva. Siva felt suddenly a thrill of passion and His seed came out. Siva was wondering what was it that thus distracted Him from His Yoga. He looked around and witnessed Kama behind a tree. He opened His third eye. A fire flashed and burnt Kama to ashes. Siva's seed was thrown into Agni (God of Fire). Agni was not able to bear it. He threw it into the Ganga. Ganga threw it into a forest of reeds where Subrahmanya, called the reed-born (Sara Janma, Saravana Bhava), was born. Subrahmanya became the commander of the Devas and destroyed the Asura as Brahma intended.

Lord Siva and Daksha

Daksha goes to attend the sacrifice of the sages who are the progenitors of the world, and not being honoured by Rudra who has come before him, Daksha reproaches Him and leaves the place. Nandisvara in his turn, curses Daksha and other Brahmins. Rudra then leaves the place of sacrifice. Sati, daughter of Daksha, known also by the name Dakshayani, requests Siva's permission to attend her father's sacrifice, the Brihaspati-sava, and Siva shows how inadvisable it would be. In spite of her Lord's advice, Sati goes

to Daksha's sacrifice. Disregarded by her father and enraged at finding no offering made to Rudra, she praises the greatness of her Lord, censures Daksha and by the Yoga method casts off her body. Hearing of Sati's casting off her body, Sankara creates in His anger Virabhadra out of His Jata (or matted locks) and causes Daksha's death. Informed by the gods of the destruction of Daksha, Brahma pacifies Rudra, and Daksha and others are revived. Being pleased with Brahma's praise, Siva goes along with the gods to the scene of sacrifice; Daksha and others are revived; Vishnu issuing forth from the sacrificial fire is praised by Daksha and others. After the closing ceremony of ablutions, the gods return home. Maitreya describes the benefit of listening to this story, the birth of Sati as Parvati, and that of Skanda.

Dakshinamurti

On the Mount Kailas, with Parvati Devi by His side, Lord Siva was sitting in a hall beautifully decorated by precious stones. At that time, Devi worshipped the Lord and requested Him to alter the name of Dakshayani given to her before, for being the daughter of Daksha. This Daksha was killed by Lord Siva for his disrespect and arrogance. On hearing this request Lord Siva ordained that Devi should be born as the daughter of Parvata Raj who was doing rigorous Tapas for getting a child. He also told Parvati that He would come over to her and marry her. Thus ordained, Parvati Devi was born as the child of Parvata Raj and since her fifth year, began to do rigorous Tapas for being the bride of Lord Siva. During the absence of Devi, when Lord Siva was alone, the sons of Brahma, who are sages Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara, came to have Darsana of Lord Siva and prostrated before Him. They entreated the Lord to teach them the way to remove Avidya and attain salvation. They expressed that in spite of the vast study of scriptures they had no internal peace and they were in need of learning the inner secrets, by knowing which they could attain salvation. Lord Siva, hearing this appeal made by the sages, assumed the form of Dakshinamurti and remaining as the Guru Supreme, began to teach them the inner secrets by keeping Mouna and showing the Chammudra by His hand. The sages began to meditate on the lines shown by the Lord and attained the state of inexpressible and illimitable joy. Thus Lord Siva came to be known as Dakshinamurti. May the blessings of Lord Dakshinamurti be upon us all! May you all dive deep and enjoy the everlasting Peace and Bliss through His Grace!

Tripura Samhara

This occurs in the Karna Parva of the Mahabharata. In times of yore, there was a war between the Devas and the Asuras. The Asuras were defeated in the battle. The three sons of the Asura, Taraka, wanted to take revenge on the Devas. They performed rigorous penance and obtained a boon from Brahma, the creator. By virtue of this boon, they could not be conquered by any one save somebody who could destroy their three castles by a single arrow. They made three castles, one of gold in heaven, the second silver in air, and the third of iron on earth. They began to oppress the gods and the Rishis. Thereupon, all the gods made a complaint to Brahma. Brahma replied that no one save Mahadeva who knows Yoga and Sankhya, through particular penance, could vanquish these Asuras. All the gods approached Mahadeva and provided Him with a chariot out of all forms of the universe. They also supplied Him with

a bow and arrow, the constituent parts of which were Vishnu, Soma and Agni. They requested Mahadeva to discharge the arrow against the three castles. Brahma became the charioteer. Mahadeva discharged the arrow against the three castles. The three castles fell down in the twinkling of an eye. Then all the gods eulogised Mahadeva and departed to heaven. Mahadeva said to the gods that He Himself could not destroy the Asuras, as they were very strong, but that they themselves would be able to vanquish with the help of half His strength. The gods replied that they could not bear half His strength and that He should take up the task with the help of half their strength. Mahadeva agreed to this. He became stronger than all the gods. Hence He was called Mahadeva or the great God.

Lord Siva Curses and Pardons Nakirar

Once, a Pandya king of Madurai felt that his queen's hair had some kind of natural fragrance. A doubt arose in his mind as to whether human hair could have natural fragrance, or could be rendered fragrant only through association with flowers or scents. He went to the Sangham or the Tamil Academy the next day, suspended a bag containing one thousand gold pieces and said to the poets that anyone who would write a poem clearing the doubt he entertained in his mind would get the gold pieces as a prize. Many poets composed poems but they were not able to satisfy the king. Darumi, a Brahmin priest in the temple, was extremely poor. He requested Lord Siva thus: "O all-merciful Lord! I am very poor. I wish to marry now. Relieve me of my poverty. Help me to get these gold pieces now. I take refuge in Thee alone". Lord Siva gave him a poem and said: "Take this poem to the Sangham. You will get the gold pieces". The king was immensely pleased with the poem as it cleared his doubt, but the Sangham poets did not accept it. Nakirar, one of them, said that there was a flaw in the poem. The poor priest was greatly afflicted at heart. He came back to the temple, stood in front of the Lord and said: "O Lord! Why did You give me the poem which contained a flaw? Nobody will take You for the Lord. I feel very much for this". The meaning of the poem is: "O fair-winged bee! You spend your time in gathering flower-dust. Do not speak out of love, but speak out of truth. Is there any among the flowers known to you that is more fragrant than the hair of this damsel who is most loving, is of the colour of the peacock and has beautiful rows of teeth!" Thereupon, Lord Siva assumed the form of a poet, went to the Sangham and asked: "Which poet found out flaw in the poem?" Nakirar said: "It is I who said that there is a flaw." Lord Siva asked: "What is the flaw?" Nakirar said: "There is no flaw in the composition of words. There is flaw in the meaning." Lord Siva said: "May I know what defect is there in the meaning?" Nakirar said: "The hair of a damsel has no natural fragrance. It gets the fragrance from association with the flowers." Lord Siva said: "Does the hair of Padmini also possess fragrance by association with the flowers?" Nakirar said, "Yes." Lord Siva said: "Does the hair of celestial damsels also possess fragrance by association with the flowers?" Nakirar replied, "Yes. Their hairs become fragrant by association with Mandara flowers." Lord Siva said: "Does the hair of Uma Devi who is on the left side of Lord Siva whom you worship possess fragrance by association with the flowers?" Nakirar replied: "Yes. Quite so." Lord Siva slightly opened His third eye. Nakirar said: "I am not afraid of this third eye. Even if you are Lord Siva, even if you show eyes throughout your whole body, there is flaw in this poem." The fire from the third eye of Lord Siva fell upon Nakirar. Nakirar was not able to bear the heat. At once he jumped into the neighbouring lotus-tank to cool himself. Then all the poets approached Lord Siva and said: "O Lord! Pardon Nakirar." Lord Siva

appeared before Nakirar. Through the grace of Lord Siva his body was rendered cool. He repented for his mistake and said: "I pointed defect even for the hairs of Uma Devi. No one but the Lord can pardon me." He sang a song with intense devotion. Lord Siva entered the tank and brought him to the shore. Then Nakirar and other poets gave the purse of gold to Darumi.

Know Your Guru

Devotion to the Lord dawns in the heart of a man who has done virtuous actions in his previous births without expectation of fruits and egoism or the idea of agency. Devotion leads to knowledge of the Self (Jnana) and through Jnana, he attains Moksha or the final emancipation.

In days of yore, Virasindhu was the king of Kalinga country. He did severe Tapas, meditation and Yoga in his previous birth, but did not attain Moksha. He became a Yoga-Bhrashta as he had to enjoy the fruits of some residual Karmas in this last birth of a King. He took his birth as the son of a king. When he attained the proper age, he was crowned as the king of Kalinga. He ruled the kingdom for a period of ten years.

Owing to the force of previous spiritual Samskaras, and the grace of the Lord, discrimination and dispassion dawned in his heart. He reflected within himself: "I am doing the same acts of eating, drinking and sleeping. My several forefathers who ruled the country, had been reduced to dust. I have no peace of mind despite my wealth and dominion. I should get a Guru and obtain initiation from him to get knowledge of the Atman and reach the abode of immortality and eternal bliss.

King Virasindhu sent invitation to all Pandits, Sannyasins, Sadhus and Mahatmas. He wrote in the letter thus: "I will give half of my dominion to that supreme Guru who will give me the right initiation and make me realise the Self. If he fails to do so he will be put in the prison."

Many Pandits and Sadhus saw the king. One gave him Taraka Mantra, another gave Panchakshara, a third gave him Ashtakshara, but no one was able to satisfy the king. He put them all in the prison. He had initiation into these Mantras in his previous births.

King Virasindhu became very restless as he did not obtain his Guru. Lord Siva assumed the form of an ordinary coolie. He had a very black complexion. He wore some rags and appeared before the king. The king went in advance to receive him. Through the grace of the Lord, he came to know that this coolie

was none other than the Lord. The coolie raised his hand towards the king and said "stop", and vanished immediately. The king understood that the Guru has commanded him to stop the mind and control its movements. The king closed his eyes, while he was standing, and did not allow the mind to think of the sensual objects. He controlled all the modifications of the mind. It was easy for him as he had practised Yoga and meditation in his previous birth. He entered into Nirvikalpa Samadhi and became like a statue. He did not open his eyes.

The ministers were waiting in the Durbar Hall for hours together. King Virasindhu did not open his eyes for days together. Then the ministers reflected: The king is in Samadhi now. We do not know when he will return from the Samadhi. We will have to manage the affairs of the State." They removed the ring from his finger and used it for putting the seal in the papers of the State.

The king opened his eyes after six years, and asked the ministers: "Where is my Guru?" The ministers replied: "O venerable king! The Guru said a word to your majesty and vanished at once. You are standing here like a statue for the last six years. We are conducting the affairs of the state with the aid of your ring. Here is the seal of your ring in all the registers and papers."

The king was struck with awe and wonder. He thought within himself: "Six years have passed like a second. I enjoyed supreme bliss. I have no desire to rule the State after tasting the supreme bliss." He left the palace and entered the forest and sat in Samadhi.

The force of Yogic Samskaras of the king that was generated by the practice of Yoga in his previous birth, helped him in the attainment of the beatitude in this birth. Those who have not much piety and religious inclination in this birth should do Japa, Kirtan, meditation, and study of religious books. They should live in the company of sages. They will develop good religious Samskaras. This will be a valuable asset for them in the next birth. They will start the practice of Yoga in the next birth in the early age.

It is difficult to say in what form the Guru or the Lord will appear before you to initiate you. He may come in the form of a leper as Sri Hanuman did, or in the form of an untouchable as Lord Krishna did, or in the form of a groom as Lord Siva did. The aspirants must be very careful and vigilant to detect the Lord in the various forms which He assumes.

The Twentyfive Lilas of Lord Siva

The following are the 25 Lilas (sportive plays) or manifestations of Lord Siva:

1. Wearing of moon on the head, 2. Living with Uma Devi, 3. Riding on ox, 4. Tandava dance with Kali, 5. Marriage with Parvati, 6. Begging, 7. Burning of Manmatha or the God of Love, 8. Victory over Yama or the God of Death, 9. Burning of Tripuras, 10. Killing of Jalandarasura, 11. Killing of Gajasura, 12. Incarnation of Virabhadra, 13. Harihara, 14. Ardhanarisvara, 15. Transforming into Kirata, (hunter), 16. Assuming the form of Kankala, 17. Blessing Chandisvara, 18. Drinking poison, 19. Giving of Chakra to Lord Vishnu, 20. Destroying of obstacles, 21. Having sons of Uma Devi with Him, 22. Becoming Ekapada Rudra, 23. Being in easy pose (Sukhasana), 24. Assuming the form of Dakshinamurti, and 25. Assuming Linga form.

Rudra Upanishad

Now, at this moment, I take refuge in that Pure State of the Supreme Absolute which can be known by the Vidya, called the Rudra Hridaya Upanishad.

After prostrating before the celebrated form of Sri Mahadeva-Rudra in his heart, adoring the sacred Bhasma and Rudraksha and mentally reciting the great Mahavakya-Mantra, Tarasara, Sri Suka asked his father Sri Vyasa Maharshi, thus:

Who is the real God of gods? In whom are all these existences established? By worshipping whom, can I please the Devas in whole?

Hearing these words, Sri Veda Vyasa replied thus:

Rudra is the embodiment of all Devas. All devas are merely different manifestations of Sri Rudra Himself. On the right side of Rudra, there is the sun, then the four-headed Brahma, and then three Agnis (fires). On the left side, there exist Sri Umadevi, and also Vishnu and Soma (moon).

Uma Herself is the form of Vishnu. Vishnu Himself is the form of the moon. Therefore, those who worship Lord Vishnu, worship Siva Himself. And those who worship Siva, worship Lord Vishnu in reality.

Those who envy and hate Sri Rudra, are actually hating Sri Vishnu. Those who decry Lord Siva, decry Vishnu Himself.

Rudra is the generator of the seed. Vishnu is the embryo of the seed. Siva Himself is Brahma and Brahma Himself is Agni. Rudra is full of Brahma and Vishnu. The whole world is full of Agni and Soma. The masculine gender is Lord Siva. The feminine gender is Sri Bhavani Devi. All the mobile and immobile creation of this universe, is filled up with Uma and Rudra. The Vyakta is Sri Uma, and the Avyakta is Lord Siva. The combination of Uma and Sankara is Vishnu.

Hence everybody should prostrate to Sri Maha Vishnu with great devotion. He is the Atman. He is the Paramatman. He is the Antaratman. Brahma is the Antaratman. Siva is the Paramatman. Vishnu is the Eternal Atman of all this universe. This whole creation of Svarga, Martya and Patala Lokas is a big tree. Vishnu is the top portion (branches) of this tree. Brahma is the stem. The root is Lord Siva.

The effect is Vishnu. The action is Brahma. The cause is Siva. For the benefit of the worlds. Rudra has taken these three forms.

Rudra is Dharma. Vishnu is the world. Brahma is Knowledge. Therefore, do Kirtan of His name, 'Rudra', 'Rudra'. By singing like this, the hallowed name of this great Lord, all your sins will be destroyed.

Rudra is man. Uma is woman. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is Brahma. Uma is Sarasvati. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is Vishnu. Uma is Lakshmi. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is Sun. Uma is shadow. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is moon. Uma is star. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is day. Uma is night. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is Yajna. Uma is Veda. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is Agni, Uma is Svaha. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is Veda. Uma is Sastra. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is tree. Uma is creeper. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is scent. Uma is flower. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is meaning. Uma is word. Prostrations to Him and Her.

Rudra is Linga. Uma is Pitha. Prostrations to Him and Her.

The devotee should worship Sri Rudra and Uma with these Mantras referred to above. O my son, Suka! With these hymns, you should meditate on the Eternal Para-Brahman, which is beyond the reach of the senses, which is pure Existence, knowledge and Bliss and which cannot be understood either by the speech or by the mind. After knowing this, there is nothing more to be known, because everything is the form of That, and there is nothing separate from That.

There are two Vidyas to be known. They are Para and Aparā. Aparā Vidya is the embodiment of the four Vedas and their six Angas. They do not deal with the Nature of the Atman. But the Para Vidya is called the Moksha-Sastra. It deals with that supreme philosophy of the Absolute Truth, understandable, impersonal, Nirguna, Nirakara, without ears, without eyes, without hands, without feet, eternal, omnipresent, imperishable, and knowable by the intelligent daring sages.

From that Lord Siva who performs a terrible penance in the form of Supreme Jnana-Marga, this whole world is created which is the food of the mortals. This world is Maya. It seems to appear just like a dream. It is superimposed on the Lord just like a rope on a serpent. This is the eternal Truth. There is no creation in reality. All is absolute. All is Truth. Knowing this, one is liberated at once.

Only through Jnana, you can get rid of this Samsara. Only through Jnana, you can understand this existence and never through karma. Understand this through the guidance of a Brahmanishtha-Srotriya Guru. The Guru will give the disciple all the necessary knowledge of Brahman, the Absolute. By cutting off the bondage of Ajnana or Avidya, one should take refuge in Lord Sadasiva. This is the real wisdom to be understood by an aspirant seeking after Truth.

The Pranava is the bow. The Atman is the arrow. The Para-Brahman is the target. Just like the arrow, the Atman will become one with Brahman.

But all these three, the bow, the arrow and the target are not different from that Sadasiva. There do not shine the bodies of the sun, moon or the stars. There does not blow the wind, there do not exist many Devas. He, the One Lord only exists. He only, the Purity of purities, shines for ever and ever.

There are two birds in this body, the Jiva and the Paramatman. The Jiva eats the fruit of his Karmas, but the Paramatman is untouched by anything. The Paramatman is only the Sakshi. He does not do anything. He only assumes the form of the Jiva through His Maya, just as the Akasa inside a pot seems to be different from the Akasa outside and assumes the form of the pot. In reality all is Siva, Advaita, the One Absolute. There is no difference of whatever kind.

When all is understood to be One, Omkara, the Absolute, there is no sorrow, there is no Maya. Then the attainment of the Advaita-Paramananda is very easy. Think that you are the basis of all this universe, you are the One, Kevala, Sat-Chit-Ghana. All people cannot understand this Truth. Those devoid of Maya can know this secret. After knowing this, the Atman does not move towards any place at any time. It becomes one with the Absolute, just like Ghatakasa with Paramakasa. Just as Akasa does not move anywhere, similarly this Atman does not have any movement. It becomes one with OM.

One who knows this great secret Truth is the real Mumukshu. He becomes the Para-Brahman Itself. He becomes Satchidananda. He attains permanent peace.

Dust of Gurudev's Feet

Venkatesananda

1. Sundaramurthi Nayanar

Sundaramurthi Nayanar flourished in the 8th century. He was a great devotee of Lord Siva. He is one of the Tamil Samaya Acharyas (four Tamil religious Teachers).

Sundaramurthi Nayanar sang the glories of Lord Siva at all the sacred places that he visited. These hymns are called Thevaram. They have been collected into a book-form. All devotees sing the Thevaram even today. The hymns sung by Sundarar, Appar or Tirunavakkarasu, and Tirujnana Sambandar are called Thevaram. The hymns of Manickavachagar are called Thiruvachagam.

Sundarar had the Sakhya Bhava or the attitude of a friend towards the Lord. He freely demanded of the Lord whatever he wanted. He did not do so with selfish desire, however. Whatever he asked for was for the sake of those who were dependent on him. He lived only eighteen years.

Sundaramurthi Nayanar was born in Thiru Navalur where the entire atmosphere was full of spiritual vibrations and Saivism was well established. In this place, there lived a pious, devout and respected Brahmin by name Sadaiyanar whose ancestors were all ardent devotees of Lord Siva. Isaignaniar was his dutiful wife. She gave birth to a divine child whom the parents named 'Nambi Arurar' after its grandfather.

In his previous incarnation Arurar was Alala Sundarar, who was an ardent devotee of Lord Siva. When the Milky Ocean was being churned by Devas and Asuras, a deadly poison began to spread on the surface of the ocean threatening the existence of all beings. Then Alala Sundarar collected that poison in his hand and gave it to Lord Siva Who drank it for the protection of the world. Hence, Sundarar got the word Alala (for Halahala, the poison) prefixed to his name.

Once when Alala Sundarar was living by the side of Lord Siva in the Mount Kailas, serving the Lord and bringing flowers from the garden for His worship, he cast a lustful look at Aninditi and Kamalini, the attendants of Goddess Parvathi who had also gone to the garden to collect flowers for the divine Mother's worship. They, too, fell in love with him. Lord Siva, through His divine vision, understood all that had happened in the garden. He called Alala Sundarar and said: 'Sundarar, since you fell in love with these girls, you and they, too, will go down to the earth and take a human birth. You will marry them and enjoy the pleasures of the world. Sundarar wept bitterly, regretting his folly which had resulted in his separation from the Lord. He prayed to the Lord: 'Oh Lord! It is due to my evil thought that I have to undergo this separation from Thee. I am afraid lest I should be steeped in ignorance and forget Thee. Oh Lord of mercy! Let this not happen to me. Oh Lord of compassion! Dispel my ignorance soon and take me back to Your lotus feet.' Lord Siva granted this wish.

There was another cause for Sundarar's human birth. To an ordinary man it may appear that Sundarar was a victim to lust, even in the divine realm of Kailasa. It was not so. Sundarar was only an instrument in the hands of God. It was Lord Siva's wish that Sundarar should sing Tiru Thonda Thogai for the benefit of mankind. So, Lord Siva entered his mind and created a desire for these two girls. Also, the Lord wanted to teach mankind a great lesson. Lust is extremely powerful. It can delude even a great devotee of the Lord like Sundarar, if he is not ever vigilant. Maya's charms are powerful. Unless this evil quality is burnt, the Jiva cannot reach Siva. Yet another lesson. The lustful eye was the cause of Sundarar's

downfall. But, when it is used in the service of the Lord (for looking at the holy shrines, holy images of God, saints, and study of scriptures) the very same organ will help towards our emancipation.

Sundarar was, therefore, born as Arurar. The king of that place, Narasinga Munaiyar, happened to see the beautiful child. He liked him. He wanted to bring him up himself and asked for the parents' permission, Sadaiyanar, whose mind was full of dispassion and who was not attached to anything in this world, immediately complied with the king's wish. As we shall see later, he and his devout wife are also regarded as Nayanars.

The boy grew up under royal care. At the proper age, the parents wanted to get their son married. Sadaiyanar sought Sandakavi Sivachariar's consent to obtain his daughter's hand for his son, Arurar. Sivachariar gladly agreed. But, the wedding was not to take place.

Just when the ceremony was to begin, an old Brahmin, with sacred ashes on his body, Rudraksha around his neck and matted locks on his head appeared and said: 'This man, Arurar, is my bond-slave. I have a document to that effect executed by his grandfather. He cannot marry.' This put an end to the ceremony. Sundarar and the Brahmin left the place. The young bride fixed her mind on the holy feet of Sundarar, shed her mortal coil and attained the immortal abode of Lord Siva.

Sundarar and the old man had a heated argument. Sundarar asked him: 'Who are you and from where have you come?' To which the Brahmin replied: 'I belong to Tiruvennai Nellur.' Sundarar called him a liar and said: 'Come, let us go to Tiruvennai Nellur and get this dispute settled by the wise men there.'

At Tiruvennai Nellur, before an assembly of wise men the old Brahmin produced the document which read as follows:

I, Aruran, the Adi Saivite of Tirunavalur, execute this bond of slavery with heart and soul. I and my progeny for all time to come are bond-slaves to Pithan of Tiruvennai Nellur, and we are bound to serve him by all means.

Pithan means Lord Siva who delights to be called a 'mad man', to exemplify the state of the highest Yogi whose behaviour resembles that of a mad man but who teaches us that there is nothing in this world worth taking any notice of and the worldly 'wise men' are all mad people in truth.

After examining the witnesses cited in the document and verifying the grandfather's signature, the assembly confirmed the old man's claim. Sundarar had to accept it as God's will. Followed by all of them the Brahmin entered the temple of Tiru Arul Turai on the pretext of showing them his house, and promptly vanished. Arurar understood that it was the Lord Himself who had appeared as the old man to save him from the shackles of Samsara. He was afflicted very much at heart that he had not recognised Him earlier. He cried aloud. The Lord appeared before him and blessed him: 'Oh noble soul. You are already My Bhakta. You were in My Abode in Kailasa before this birth as a man. A wrong thought made you take this birth. Now I have Myself come to save you.'

Because Sundarar had quarrelled with Him, the Lord Himself called him Vanthondan (the devotee who used harsh words) and asked him to sing His glories. 'My dear child, you called Me Pithan (madman) during your quarrel. So, begin with this word and compose a poem.' Sundarar did so: the result was that inspiring poem Pitha Pirai Soodi. The Lord Himself came to be known as Taduthatkonda Iswar (the Lord prevented and saved him from Samsara).

Sundarar later visited a number of holy places and sang the praise of the Lord in all of them. He came to Adigai Virattanam, the sacred place where Appar served the Lord Viratteswarar and was blessed. Sundarar did not like to place his foot on the sacred ground and so stayed on the outskirts of the village.

That night when Sundarar was asleep, the Lord in the guise of an old man entered the Mutt. He lay down close to where Sundarar was sleeping and pretended to sleep. He then placed His feet on the head of Sundarar. When Sundarar objected to this, the old man apologised. Sundarar went over to another corner of the room. There, too, the old man repeated the same action. Sundarar did not lose his temper. He calmly asked him for his identity and explanation for the abnormal behaviour. 'Oh friend, don't you know me?' asked the Lord and disappeared. Sundarar realised that it was again the Lord Himself. Since he had not gone into the place for His Darshan, the Lord Himself had come out to where the devotee was! Sundarar prayed: 'Oh Lord! How kind and merciful You are! Even devotees who are well versed in Vedas and Agamas cannot touch Your feet. Out of love towards this poor creature, You left Your abode and came here to bless me with Your Holy Feet.'

Sundarar again continued his pilgrimage. At Tillai (Chidambaram), he went into a trance even as he saw the temple tower. In his ecstasy he rolled on the ground and shed profuse tears of love. He had the Darshan of Lord Nataraja. A heavenly voice commanded him to go to Tiruvarur.

He then visited many other shrines and came to Tiruvarur. The Lord appeared to the Brahmins of Tiruvarur and asked them to receive Sundarar with due honours. They did so. As Sundarar was worshipping the Lord in the temple, he heard a heavenly voice: 'Sundarar! I have made you My friend. I prevented you from getting married. Hereafter you will appear for ever as a bridegroom and sport on earth.' Immediately, Sundarar became a handsome bridegroom. People called him Tambiran Thozhar (friend of God).

In Tiruvarur, there was a chaste woman by name Paravayar who was none other than Kamalini, the attendant of Parvathi in Kailasa. Daily she would go to the temple and worship the Lord with faith and devotion and sing His glories. One day, she came to the temple, as usual, with her friends, to worship the Lord. At the same time, Sundarar, with his devotees entered the temple. Prompted by past Karma, Sundarar was attracted by Paravayar's beauty. He wanted to marry her, and entered the shrine of the Lord with this thought. The Lord was his friend, and so, he expressed his desire to Him!

Paravayar who had seen Sundarar in the temple also fell in love with him and wanted to marry him.

The marriage was pre-ordained by Lord Siva Himself and it was now His duty to bring it about. He appeared to both of them in their dreams and told them that they would get married. He also commanded His devotees in dream to arrange for the wedding of Paravayar and Sundarar the very next day. This was done accordingly, to the joy of both Paravayar and Sundarar.

One day, Arurar went into the temple and found a number of devotees of the Lord there. He wanted to sing their glories. The Lord Himself sang the first line of the famous poem Tiruthonda Thogai and by His grace, Sundarar completed it.

During his stay at Tiruvarur, a Vellala by name Kundaiyur Kizhar who was very highly devoted to him, was regularly supplying Paravayar with enough grains and groceries for the maintenance of Sundarar and the devotees. Suddenly there was famine in the district and people suffered for want of food. Kundaiyur Kizhar was also affected. He was afflicted at heart because he could not supply the needs of Sundarar. Lord Siva appeared in his dream and promised enough grain! Kubera, the God of wealth, did the needful, as commanded by the Lord. The next morning, Kundaiyur Kizhar found huge heaps of grain. At the same time the Lord appeared before Sundarar and informed him of the incident. At once Sundarar left for Kundaiyur to meet Kizhar. They met half-way. Sundarar saw the heaps of grain at Kundaiyur and knew that it was His Lila. He went to a nearby Koili and sang the praise of the Lord, and entreated Him to have the grain removed to Tiruvarur. A celestial voice immediately assured him of this.

Sundarar returned to Tiruvarur and informed Paravayar of all that happened. That night the Bhuta Ganas, the servants of Lord Siva, removed the heaps of grain and filled the entire town of Tiruvarur with it! Paravayar offered repeated prostrations to the Lord and sang His glory. She asked the people to take the grain to appease their hunger. Thus the famine came to an end. All the people glorified the Lord and Paravayar.

Kotpuli Nayanar of Tirunattiyattankudi, the Commander-in-chief of a Chola King, and an ardent devotee of Lord Siva came to Sundarar and entreated him to grace his house with his presence. Sundarar agreed to this and went. After worshipping Sundarar, Kotpuli Nayanar prostrated himself at Sundarar's feet along with his two daughters, Singadiyar and Vanappahaiyar, and pleaded that Sundarar should marry the two daughters. Sundarar, however, placed them on his lap and fondled them, treating them as his own daughters. Then Sundarar went to the temple and sang in praise of the Lord, a song in which he called himself Singadiappan, since he took Singadiyar as his daughter.

Sundarar then returned to Tiruvarur. It was Paravayar's custom to distribute plenty of money and other articles in charity on Panguni Uttaram, a festival day. Sundarar went to Tirupugalur and prayed to the Lord to give him gold for the sake of Paravayar. That night he slept there with a few bricks as his pillow. The next morning, he woke up to find that all the bricks had been converted into gold. Sundarar was surprised at this miracle of Lord Siva and sang His glory and returned to Tiruvarur. On the way he had a vision of the Lord at Tiru Panaiyur.

After visiting many holy places again and singing hymns in praise of the Lord, Sundarar came to Tiru Pachilasramam. There he worshipped the Lord and asked for a gold coin. He did not get it immediately. He sang a Padigam (song) and the Lord at once gave him a heap of gold. The Lord was so fond of hearing Sundarar sing.

Then, Sundarar left for Vridhachalam, visiting a number of holy places on the way. He had omitted Tiru Koodalaiyarrur. So, the Lord came to him as a Brahmin of whom Sundarar enquired the way to Vridhachalam. The Brahmin led the way up to a certain distance, and then suddenly disappeared. It was close to Tiru Koodalaiyarrur which Sundarar now visited and sang a song in praise of the Lord there.

Then Sundarar came to Vridhachalam. He worshipped the Lord, and sang a Padigam expressing his desire for gold coins. The Lord gave him 12,000 pieces of gold. Sundarar prayed to the Lord to remove these gold pieces to Tiruvarur. The Lord asked him to throw them into the river Manimukta and to receive them back at Tiruvarur. Sundarar did so, keeping a piece for identification. On return to

Tiruvarur, Sundarar and Paravayar went to the tank to get back the gold pieces. Sundarar dived into the eastern side of the tank and searched for the gold, as though he had put them there. He could not find them. Sorely afflicted at heart, he sang a song. That was what the Lord wanted. Sundarar got the gold. All were amazed. But, on identification, it was found that the gold was inferior in value to the piece that Sundarar had kept back with him. He sang a song: and the Lord restored to them their original value. So fond was He of hearing Sundarar sing a song.

Sundarar went out on another pilgrimage again. On the way, he was afflicted with hunger and thirst. The Lord Who is the Indweller of our hearts, erected a water-shed and was waiting for Sundarar there in the guise of a Brahmin. Sundarar and the devotees entered the shed, singing the Panchakshara. The Brahmin offered him food and water and asked him to rest awhile. All of them appeased their hunger, but the quantity of the food remained the same. When they were resting, after food, the Lord disappeared. They knew that it was none other than the Lord Himself. Sundarar sang a song alluding to this incident.

On another occasion, soon after this, while on a visit to Tirukachur, Sundarar went to the temple, worshipped the Lord and was resting outside the temple feeling hungry. The Lord understood it: and so, in the guise of a Brahmin came to Sundarar and said, 'It appears that you are hungry. Please wait here. I will give you food.' The Lord at once went out in the scorching sun, begged from each and every house, and offered the food so obtained, to Sundarar. As Sundarar and the devotees were eating, the Brahmin disappeared: and they understood that it was the Lord Himself. Sundarar sang a song alluding to this incident, revealing the Lord's supreme mercy.

Later on, he went to Tiruvotriyur and stayed there for some time, worshipping the Lord there. Aninditiyar, the other maid-servant of Parvathi in Kailasa, who had also taken a human birth, was now Sangilyar in Jnayiru in Thondai Nadu. Her father was Jnayiru Kizhar, a Vellala by caste. He was also a staunch devotee of Lord Siva. Sangiliyar was devoted to Parvati from her very childhood. Once her parents mentioned that she should get married, but the very word 'marriage' made her faint. Later, a respectable Vellala wanted to marry her. He sent some people to approach the girl's father. Jnayiru Kizhar did not like even to speak to his daughter about it. He sent them away with an evasive reply. Soon after, the boy who wanted to marry Sangiliyar, and the party that went to negotiate,—all of them died. When Jnayiru Kizhar heard this, he understood the greatness of his daughter. He took her to Tiruvotriyur and built a small Ashram for her there.

It was part of Sangiliyar's Sadhana to make garlands for the Lord in the temple. She regularly visited the temple and worshipped the Lord. One day Sundarar and the devotees went to the temple. After the

worship, they came to the place where some devotees were making garlands for the Lord. Sangiliyar was also there. Sundarar was attracted by her beauty, due to past Samskaras. He wanted to marry her, and expressed this wish to the Lord. The Lord promised to fulfil his wish.

The Lord appeared in Sangiliyar's dream and said: 'Oh noble soul, I am highly pleased with your devotion. Now I tell this for your own good. Sundarar wants to marry you. He is My friend. He asked Me to arrange the marriage. So, marry him. You will be happy.' Sangiliyar prostrated before the Lord and said: 'Oh Lord, I will obey Your command and marry him. But, he may desert me since he is already married.' The Lord asked her to get a promise from Sundarar that he would not part from her under any circumstance.

Then the Lord appeared before Sundarar and said that Sangiliyar had agreed to marry him on condition that he would not part from her. Sundarar said: 'Oh Lord, how can I agree to this condition since I am constantly moving about visiting many holy shrines? But, if You so desire, then assure me that You will withdraw Your presence from the Lingam in the temple and will take Your abode in the nearby tree, when I take the oath before Your image.' The Lord granted him this wish and disappeared.

He again appeared before Sangiliyar and said: 'Oh noble soul, Sundarar has agreed to your condition. But, ask him to make this promise, not before the Lingam in the temple, but in front of the nearby tree.'

The next morning Sangiliyar came to the temple. Sundarar was waiting there for her. Sangiliyar's friends told him that she wished the promise to be given in front of the nearby tree. He was taken aback, but accepted the proposal. The promise was given. The marriage was immediately solemnised.

In Tiruvarur, Vasanta Utsavam was being celebrated on a grand scale. Sundarar remembered the festival and longed to go there. He also recollected that Paravayar would sing and dance there in front of the Lord. At the same time, he could not part from Sangiliyar. For a long time, he struggled between the two conflicting duties. Finally, he decided to leave.

When he crossed the border of Tiruvotriyur, he suddenly lost his eye-sight and fell down on the ground. The Lord is impartial. None can escape the operation of the Law of Divine Justice. Sundarar slowly regained his consciousness. Immediately he realised his fault and prayed to the Lord for forgiveness, asking for the grant of the eye-sight. 'Oh Lord, I take complete refuge in You. I always repeat Your Name. Even when I fell down losing my eye-sight, I remembered You only. Oh Lord of Mercy, even if I commit a

crime, is it not Your duty to forgive me? Oh Lord of Compassion, save me.' In spite of the blindness, however, his thirst for the Darshan of the Lord at Tiruvarur did not abate. With the help of some people on the way he came to Tiru Mullaivayil. Here, again, he prayed to the Lord to give him eye-sight. At Tiruvembakkam he again prayed to the Lord in a similar strain. In the temple, he prayed and asked: 'Oh Lord Who accepted me into His fold, prostrations unto Thee. Oh Lord Who cleverly played a trick on me, are You inside the temple?' The Lord gave a stern reply: 'I am here; you can go.' and gave him a blind-man's stick. This attitude of indifference on the part of the Lord pained Sundarar and he pleaded for mercy. 'Oh Lord of Mercy, have I not taken You as my sole refuge and support? I committed a mistake thinking that You will pardon me. You are even indifferent to public criticism. Will they not accuse You for turning a deaf ear to a devotee who is sincerely weeping at Your feet, accepting his fault and craving for pardon? Oh Lord, can You not understand suffering? Like a loving child that has been separated from its mother for a long time and wants to hug her, I have come to You: but, instead, You treat me like a stranger. Oh Lord, You deceived me, who asked You to remain for a while near the tree, by cleverly informing Sangiliyar of the same and asking her to get the promise from me near the tree. Oh Lord, You gave me Sangiliyar and all the pleasures. But, now You give me the blind-man's staff and say 'You can go'. Oh Lord, am I unfit to receive Your mercy? Pardon me and relieve me of my sufferings.'

Then, completely resigning himself to God, Sundarar came to Conjeevaram, after visiting many holy places on the way. He worshipped Mother Kamakshi and expressed his sufferings to her and pleaded to her to relieve him of his sufferings. Sundarar then worshipped Lord Ekambareswarar. Mother Who is seated on His left side, had already been moved by Sundarar's prayers and wanted to shower Her grace on him. Lord Siva understood this. He at once restored vision to Sundarar's left eye. In ecstasy he rolled on the ground, shedding profuse tears of love.

After spending some days there, singing the glories of the Lord, Sundarar proceeded to go to Tiruvarur. At Tiruvavaduthurai, he again prayed to the Lord to forgive him and restore sight to the other eye, too. Sundarar then came to Thiruthirithi. The Lord asked him to take a dip in the northern tank there. Sundarar did so, and came out of it. To the surprise of all, his body had become as bright as polished gold. People were amazed at this change. Sundarar went into the temple and prayed.

Sundarar reached the outskirts of Tiruvarur. He grieved that, due to his partial sight, he could not get a complete Darshan of the Lord. The very sight of the temple tower entranced him. Sundarar wanted to feast both his eyes on the beauty of the Lord and so prayed to Him to restore vision to his other eye also. Sundarar's supreme devotion and lamentation moved the Lord's heart. He at once cured the other eye also. Sundarar was extremely happy. He worshipped the Lord and remained completely absorbed in divine bliss.

In the mean time, people whom Paravayar had sent to greet Sundarar and inform him of her eagerness to meet him, found out that he had married Sangiliyar. They went back and told Paravayar about this. Paravayar was sunk in grief. She was annoyed, too. Paravayar's people refused to allow Sundarar's devotees to enter the house. When Sundarar heard of this, he was afflicted at heart. He sent some elderly devotees to Paravayar, to bring about a reunion. They failed. At midnight when all the devotees were asleep, he prayed to the Lord for His help in pacifying Paravayar. The Lord appeared before him and assured him of His help. The Lord disguised Himself as Sundarar's messenger, a Brahmin priest, and went to Paravayar's house. The Brahmin pleaded Sundarar's cause and asked her to accept him back. She refused, though she herself was grief-stricken at the separation from Sundarar. Her annoyance at his second marriage was so great! The Lord coolly returned to Sundarar, who was anxiously awaiting His return. When the Lord informed Sundarar of all that had happened, Sundarar fell down on the ground, in grief. 'If You do not help me, Oh Lord, I will give up my life.' The Lord seeing Sundarar's pitiable condition, assured him of help and again set out to go to Paravayar's house.

In the mean time, the devout Paravayar had understood that the Brahmin was no other than the Lord Himself and was suffering from terrible anguish for not recognising Him. The Lord again went to her house: and this time He appeared before her in His real form. Paravayar at once prostrated before Him. The Lord said: 'O Paravayar, I have again been sent by Sundarar to plead his case. Do not refuse this time. He is undergoing terrible agony on account of separation from you. Accept him and allow him to come to your house.' Paravayar prostrated to the Lord again, with folded palms and said: 'Oh Lord, first You came in the guise of a Brahmin but I did not recognise You. Again You have come and have shown me Your real form. Oh Lord, how kind You are! You have graced my hut and showered Your grace on me. You have taken so much trouble this midnight, for the sake of Your friend. How can I go against Your wish? I will accept and obey Your command.' The Lord was immensely pleased with her. He blessed her and returned to Sundarar. The Lord informed him that he had pacified Paravayar and that he could now return to her. He then disappeared. Sundarar was overwhelmed with joy and sang the Lord's glories.

In the mean time, Paravayar had decorated her house beautifully and was eagerly waiting for her Lord. Sundarar, with his devotees, entered the house. Paravayar fell at his feet. Thus they were re-united after a long separation.

Yet, this was not all. The news that Sundarar had sent Lord Siva Himself as his messenger, had reached the ears of Eyarkon Kalikama Nayanar of Tiru Perumangalam in Ponnai Nadu. He was a great devotee of Lord Siva. He was terribly angry with Sundarar for treating the Lord as a messenger to settle a domestic quarrel. How, in a wonderful and mysterious manner Lord Siva brings about a reconciliation between the two Nayanars, both of them greatly devoted to Him, we shall see, when we describe the life of Kalikama Nayanar.

Equally interesting is the way in which the Lord unites in friendship Sundarar and Cheraman Perumal Nayanar, another royal devotee of the Lord. We shall describe it in detail when we come to the life of Cheraman Perumal Nayanar.

When, along with Cheraman Perumal, Sundarar was proceeding to Madurai, they arrived at Tirunagaikkoronam. Here Sundarar sang a song in which he asked the Lord to give him a pearl garland, precious stones, musk, spectacles, fragrance, clothes, jewelry, one-third of the wealth of Tiruvarur, horses which ran as fast as the wind, golden flowers, palanquin, etc. How wonderful is the relation between the devotee and the Lord! Sundarar regarded God as his friend, because God Himself had wanted it to be so. He adopted towards God the Sakhya Bhava (attitude of a dear friend).

In the company of Cheraman Perumal, Sundarar went on several pilgrimages, and met many of the kings of South India. Once, when they were at Tiru Kandiyur, they saw Tiruvaiyar on the opposite bank of the river. Cheraman desired to visit that place also. The river was in flood, and it was impossible to cross it. Sundarar sincerely prayed to the Lord to help them. He sang one of his songs which easily pleased the Lord. At once the river gave way, leaving a sandy track through which they could walk across to the other bank. As soon as they reached the other bank, the river resumed its former form. They were delighted at this miracle of the Lord. Even the five elements are ever ready to serve the devotees of the Lord, at His command.

Cheraman then took Sundarar to his own place, with great honour and pomp. Sundarar stayed with Cheraman for some time. He suddenly remembered the Lord of Tiruvarur and wanted to go there. Cheraman could not accompany him and was therefore grief-stricken. Sundarar consoled him and asked him to stay behind and rule the country wisely and justly. Cheraman prostrated himself before him and gave him rich presents. He sent his own people to carry these presents, and to accompany Sundarar. It was the Lord's wish that Sundarar should receive gifts only from Him! How could His friend receive from others? Hence, He desired to deprive Sundarar of what Cheraman had given him. When Sundarar and his retinue were passing through Tirumuruganpondi, the Lord sent His Servants to rob Sundarar of all the riches that he had received from Cheraman. The Lord's Servants disguised themselves as hunters and attacked the party that was carrying the presents. The party dropped all and fled. They went to Sundarar and reported to him what had happened. Sundarar went to the local temple and sang a Padigam. He came out of the temple and to his surprise he saw there all that they had been robbed of. Now, it was a gift from the Lord Himself, and so Sundarar, God's friend, could have it. Wonderful are the Lilas of the Lord.

After some time, Sundarar again desired to see Cheraman Perumal. On the way to Kundakolur, he went to Tiru Pukkoliyur Avinasi. As he entered this place, he heard simultaneously auspicious as well wailing sounds emerging from different houses.

On enquiry, he learnt how two Brahmin boys of the same age, from these two houses went to tank for a bath; and how one of them was caught by a crocodile, and the other escaped, providentially. The latter was being invested with the sacred thread that day, and hence the auspicious sound from that house. The people in the deceased boy's house were bemoaning the loss of the boy, sore at the feeling that, had he been alive, he would also be celebrating the sacred thread ceremony that day. Sundarar wanted to console the bereaved family. As he stood in front of the house, the people stopped wailing and came out to receive Sundarar. They were eager for a long time to get his Darshan, and so, forgetting their sorrow, they came to welcome him. Their devotion moved Sundarar's heart. He was prompted by the Lord to bring the dead boy back to life. So, he went to the same tank and sang a song on the Lord of Avinasi to give the child back to the parents. The Creator, pleased with Sundarar, entered the stomach of the crocodile and re-constituted the body of the boy, though it had already been digested. Lord Yama, too, for his part, released from his custody, the life he had once removed and the crocodile vomitted the boy! To the wonder of all, the boy was much more handsome than when he met with the accident, and he showed signs of growth, appropriate to the lapse of time. All were amazed at this miracle of Sundarar. The parents of the boy were immensely pleased and embraced Sundarar's feet. Sundarar took the boy to the temple and worshipped Lord Avinasiappan. He himself performed the sacred thread ceremony for him.

At Kodunkolur, Cheraman, who had already come to know of the crocodile miracle, received Sundarar with still greater love and veneration than before. Sundarar stayed with the king for some time. One day Sundarar visited the temple alone and worshipped the Lord. The very sight of the Lord sent him into trance. He rolled on the ground shedding tears of God-love. The hairs on his body stood on end and his mind was filled with rapture. He regained consciousness after a long time. He was tired of worldly existence and so requested the Lord to take him back to Kailasa. He sang a Padigam.

The Lord, desiring to take Sundarar back to His Abode, commanded the celestials to bring him to Kailasa on a white elephant. He also informed Sundarar of this. Sundarar came out of the temple. The white elephant was waiting for him there. He mentally wished to take Cheraman Perumal also with him to Kailasa. Then he climbed the elephant and proceeded towards Kailasa.

In a Padigam he sang on this occasion, Sundarar himself reveals that this departure for Kailasa was not in his physical body, but in his spiritual body. The physical body was discarded here in this world itself, and the elements of which it was composed were returned to their sources.

Cheraman learnt by intuition of Sundarar's departure for Kailasa. At once, he mounted a horse and came to Tiru Anchaikalam. There he saw Sundarar going along the sky on the celestial elephant. At once Cheraman pronounced the Panchakshara in the ears of the horse. The horse flew up and reached Sundarar. Cheraman worshipped Sundarar there. Both of them went to Kailasa in their spiritual body.

At the Gate of Kailasa, Sundarar was allowed to enter, while Cheraman was not. Sundarar went into His presence and praised His mercy: 'Oh Ocean of Mercy, You have pardoned my sins and released me from the quagmire of Samsara. You have taken me back into Your fold, and bestowed on me the Immortal Bliss. How kind and merciful You are!' He then informed the Lord that Cheraman was outside the Gate. To please His friend, Lord Siva sent His Mount, Nandikesvarar to bring Cheraman also in. The Lord asked Cheraman how he could come to Kailasa without His permission. Cheraman replied that when he saw Sundarar proceeding to Kailasa, he could not bear separation from him and so accompanied him. Now, by the good offices of Sundarar which earned for him the Lord's grace he had been admitted into the Lord's Abode. In these words, Cheraman expressed a very great truth: that even if the devotee is undeserving, if he is devoted to a saint (the Guru) he will also gain a place in the kingdom of God, through the intercession of the Guru.

Sundarar, as before, engaged himself in His service with all his heart and soul. Paravayar and Sangiliyar, being purged of their Karmas, also reached Kailasa. They resumed their original duty as the servants of Mother Parvathi.

36. Siruthonda Nayanar

In Tiruchenkattangudi in the Chola kingdom, there lived a Siva Bhakta by name Paranjyoti. His was a family of army commanders. He himself was the Commander-in-Chief of the Chola king. He realised that devotion to the Feet of Lord Siva was the best means of obtaining Liberation from Samsara and so, he clung to Them.

Once, at the instance of his king, he waged war with a North Indian king, defeated him and returned with a big booty. The king was highly pleased. The minister informed the king that Paranjyotiar was able

to achieve the victory because of his intense devotion to Lord Siva. This shocked the king, who was a Siva Bhakta himself: he regretted having compelled a Siva Bhakta to wage a bloody war. He called Paranjyotiar, apologised for having sent him, a Siva Bhakta to war, and, after giving him rich presents, sent him back to his village, with the request that he should henceforth engage himself in His Puja. Paranjyotiar returned to his village and from that time was engaged in the worship of the Lord and His Bhaktas. He would not eat without first feeding a Siva Bhakta. He regarded himself as the lowly servant of the Lord and His Bhaktas: hence the name Siruthondar (small servant).

Lord Siva wanted to bring out the glory of this noble saint. So, one day He appeared in front of Siruthondar's house, in the guise of a Vairavar (a special class of Siva Yogis). He enquired of Siruthondar's maid-servant, Sandana Nangaiyar, whether her master was at home. She said: 'No, he has gone in search of a Siva Bhakta, without feeding whom he would not take his food.' But, afraid lest this Siva Yogi should go away, she entreated him to come into the house. The mendicant would not: 'I shall not enter the house in which a woman is alone.' Siruthondar's wife Thruvengattu Nangaiyar heard these words and came out hurriedly and prayed to the Vairavar to stay in the house till the husband returned. The Vairavar repeated his objection and said: 'When he comes back tell him I am under the tree near the temple.' The Vairavar went away.

Immediately afterwards, Siruthondar returned. His wife told him all that had happened in his absence. Siruthondar was overjoyed because he was unable to find any other Bhakta that day. At once he ran to the temple and fell at the feet of the Vairavar and invited him to the house for Bhiksha. The Vairavar, however, hesitated and remarked: 'I doubt whether you will be able to fulfil the exacting conditions I shall demand for accepting your Bhiksha: so, better leave me alone.' Siruthondar was greatly grieved. He had thought that this mendicant had been specially sent by God to enable him to adhere to his vow and feed a Bhakta every day. He was prepared to meet any demand from the Bhakta, if only he agreed to take the Bhiksha. Now, the mendicant revealed his condition: 'Oh devotee, it is my habit to eat once in six months the fresh meat of a Pasu. That time has now come. I doubt whether you will satisfy me.' This word Pasu has two meanings: an animal and a human being. Siruthondar thought that the mendicant only meant animal meat: and readily agreed! To his surprise, however, the mendicant revealed that meant human flesh! He also added: 'Oh friend, it should be the meat of a child. The child should be five years of age. He must be healthy. He should be the only son of his parents. Such a boy must be held by the mother and cut into pieces by his father. This meat must be cooked nicely and offered to me.' Without the least hesitation, Siruthondar accepted conditions and took the mendicant home.

How to find a boy of the mendicant's description? Siruthondar thought of his own son who fitted the description. The noble wife agreed, too, and asked him to get the child from school. As soon as he came the mother held him on her lap. The innocent child was laughing when Siruthondar, with one stroke cut his throat. The head is generally unfit for cooking, and is not fit for being offered to the Lord. So, they

gave it away to the maid-servant and began to cook, the rest of the meat. After worshipping the mendicant, Siruthondar was preparing to offer him Bhiksha. The mendicant ascertained the method adopted by them in cooking the meat and Nayanar explained everything (except the fact that it was their own son that they had sacrificed). The mendicant said he would eat the head, too. The maid-servant had anticipated this and had the head cooked and ready.

Once again, Siruthondar requested the Yogi to have his meal. Now, the Yogi wanted another Siva Bhakta to eat with him: and there was no one except the Nayanar himself. So, he sat with the Yogi, ready to eat the flesh of his son, to please the Yogi. Yet, one more condition had to be fulfilled! The Yogi said that unless the host's son ate with him, he would not eat! Nayanar tactfully explained that his son was not in the house and so could not join with them. But, the Yogi insisted: 'Go out and call for him: he will come.' Nayanar wanted to obey the Yogi and did as the Yogi had asked to do. Wonder of wonders: the young boy came running to the father as soon as the father had cried aloud, 'Siral, come here: the Yogi wants you to eat with him.' The parents were astonished to see their child, Siralan, come back to life. They entered the kitchen, but could not find the Yogi there. The meat had also disappeared! As they were searching for the Yogi, the Lord appeared before them, blessed them and took them to His Abode.

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- **Potuit Decuit Ergo Fecit*
 - **Argala Stotra*

**Mysticism and magic*

**Namavali*

**Chinnamasta's 108 names*

**Work as Temple Elephant*

**Psalm 19*

**Ayat al Kursi - the Verse of the Throne*

**Battle with the Angel*

**Love Her, Mind*

**Mount up with birds*

**Six-winged*

**God's Answer to Job*

**What would you like done with me?*

**Red Coral*

**Tere Ishq nachaiya*

**Maheshvara sutras*

**It is more than possible*

**Tell and still it is hidden*

**How to tell*

**Kun fa ya Kun!*

**Hafiz*

**St. Francis of Assisi*

**Brihadeeswarar Temple*

**Through the Pain*

**Varalakshmi Vratam*

**Mystic and mystification*

**Kumkum, Bindu and Sindur*

**Ravana's love*

**Struggle and Contemplation*

**Glory of Night*

!Tantra Shastra

!Nadi Astrology

!Live Effects of Stars

!Tarot School

!Today's Fortune

!Ayushya Yoga

!Astro Yogas

!Predictions by Vedic Astrology

!Jupiter in the house Uranus

!Totake (Remedies)

!Mysterious Death

!Use of Gem Stones

!Moon is Best Remedies

!Vedic Marriage

!Career by Rashi

!Diseases by rashi

!SIGNIFICANCE OF STARS

!Chalisa Chanting

!Sundar Kand

!Graha Mantra Chanting

!Meaning of Your Name

!Birth in Ashwini Nakshtra

!Birth in Bharani Nakshtra

!Birth in Kritika Nakshtra

!Birth in Rohini Nakshtra

!Birth in Mrigshira Nakshtra

!Birth in Adra Nakshtra

!Birth in Punarvasu Nakshtra

!Birth in Pukhshya Nakshtra

!Birth in Ashlekhā Nakshtra

!Birth in Magha Nakshtra

!Birth in Poorvaphalguni Nakshtra

!Birth in Uttaraphalguni Nakshtra

!Birth in Hasta Nakshtra

!Birth in Chitra Nakshtra

!Birth in Swati Nakshtra

!Birth in Bishakha Nakshtra

!Birth in Anuradha Nakshtra

!Birth in Jyeshtha Nakshtra

!Birth in Moola Nakshtra

!Birth in Poorvashadha Nakshtra

!Birth in Uttraashadha Nakshtra

!Birth in Shravan Nakshtra

!Birth in Dhanishtha Nakshtra

!Birth in Shatbhikha Nakshtra

!Birth in Poorvabhadrapada

!Birth in Uttrabhadrapada

!Birth in Revati Nakshtra

!Birth in Pieces Sign

!Birth in Aquarius Sign

!Birth in Capricorn Sign

!Birth in Sagittarius Sign

!Birth in Scorpio Sign

!Birth in Libra Sign

!Birth in Virgo Sign

!Birth in Leo Sign

!Birth in Cancer Sign

!Birth in Gemini Sign

!Birth in Taurus Sign

!Birth in Aries Sign

!Illness Removing

!How win a Lottery?

!Dreams in Astrology

!The Ritual Fire Offering

!Durga-Saptashati

!Yavnacharya not a Greek Astrologer

!Codes of Rigveda

!Yoga Siddhi

!Meaning Astra & Astrology

!Shakti in Rigveda

!Cosmic Vibration

!Vedic Agni & Illa

!Under standing Tantric Mantras

!The Great Tantra Challenge

!SECRETS OF THE SAPPHIRE

!House to House

!The Houses and Signs

!Encyclopaedia of Astrology

!Questions and Answers

!Lagna

!About Astrology

!Vedic astrology

!Grahas (planets)

!Rasis (signs)

!Bhavas (houses)

!Chakras (charts)

!Varga chakras (divisional charts)

!Nakshatras (constellations)

!Ayanamsa

!Dasa Systems

!Characteristics of Rasis

!Indications of Rasis
!Characteristics of Planets
!Planetary Dignities
!Planetary Relationships
!Lagnas (ascendants)
!Use of Special Lagnas
!Upagrahas (sub-planets)
!Vargas (divisional charts)
!Divisional Chart Significations
!Insights on Divisional Charts
!Using Divisional Charts
!Varga Grouping and Amsabala
!Significations of Houses
!30 Days Lesson of Astrology
!A Controversy
!Karakas (significators)
!Arudhas (risen ones)
!Use of Arudha Lagna
!Use of Bhava Arudhas
!Meaning of Arudha
!Use of Graha Arudhas
!Graha Drishti
!Rasi Drishti
!Graha Drishti vs Rasi Drishti

!Argala (Intervention)

!Virodhargala (Obstruction)

!Use of Argala

!Yogas (special combinations)

!Ashtakavarga (eight-sourced strengths)

!Different Strengths

!Shadbala and Astakavarga Bala

!Sahamas (sensitive points)

!Functional Nature

!Baadhakas

!Analyzing Charts

!Marakas (Killers)

!Vimsottari dasa

!Vimsottari Dasa Variations

!Ashtottari dasa

!Kalachakra dasa

!Narayana dasa

!Lagna Kendradi Rasi dasa

!Sudasa

!Drigdasa

!Niryana Shoola Dasa

!Shoola dasa

!Sudarsana Chakra dasa

!Moola dasa

!Transits and natal references

!Transits and ashtakavargas

!Timing with Sodhya Pindas

!Murthis (Forms/Idols)

!Rasi Gochara Vedha

!Taras (Stars)

!Special Nakshatras/Taras

!Sarvatobhadra Chakra

!Casting Annual Charts

!Casting Monthly Charts

!Casting Sixty-hour Charts

!Judgment of charts

!Compressed dasas

!Impact of birthtime error

!Re-interpreted Significations

!Using Birthcharts

!Prasna (horary astrology)

!Progressions (taught by Manu)

!Diseases Rectifications

!Who can use Vedic Astrology ?

!Penumbral Eclipse

!Peregrine

!Periodical Lunation

!Phase. (Obs.)

!Phenomenon

!Philosophy

!Philosopher's Stone

!Barren and fruitful

!Benefic and Malefic

!Stars in first House

!Stars in second house

!Stars in third house

!Stars in fourth house

!Stars in fifth house

!Stars in sixth house

!Stars in seventh house

!Stars in earth house

!Stars in ninth house

!Stars in tenth house

!Stars in eleventh house

!Stars in twelfth house

!Sun in 12 Houses

!Moon 12 Signs

!Mars in 12 Signs

!Mercury in 12 Signs

!Jupiter in 12 Signs

!Venus in 12 Signs

!Saturn in 12 Signs

!Rahu in 12 signs
!Ketu in 12 signs
!Pluto in 12 signs
!Uranus in 12 signs
!Neptune in 12 signs.
" Just Try and See
" Past Life
" Sadhana of the Sun
" Boost Your Brains
" Santaan Prapti Mangala Sadhana
" Narayan Kalp Sadhana
" Jwalamalini Sadhana
" Parad Ganpati Sadhana
" Sadhanas for Marriage
" Are Houses Haunted
" Paarad Ganpati Sadhana
" Akshay Paatra Sadhana
" Dharmaraaj Siddhi Sadhana
" Sadhana of Sun and Saturn
" Chhinmasta Sadhana
"Sadhana for Protection of Health
"Shree Siddheshwari Sadhana
"Worship of Shiva (Shivaraatri)
"108 Divine names " from January

"Riddance from Evil Spirits
"Panchanguli Sadhana
"Aakarshan Sadhana
"Megha Saraswati Sadhana
"Kaamdev Rati Prayog
"Mahamrityunjay Sadhana
"Mahalakshmi Poojan"
"Lakshmi Sadhanas of great Rishis and Tantriks"
"How to celebrate Diwali"
"The Right Way to perform Sadhana"
"Diksha for affliction of MARS"
"Shraadh Pitra Santushti Sadhana"
"Guru Purnima Sadhana"
"Gopal Prayog for Children"
"Solar Eclipse Sadhana"
"Lunar Eclipse Sadhana"
"Uchhisht Ganpati Sadhana"
"Guru Worship "
"Sadhanas using Moti Shankh"
"Swadhishtthan Chakra Sadhana"
"Quick Acting Bheirav Sadhanas"
"Sadhana of planet Moon"
"Miraculous Hanuman Sadhanas"
"Sadhana to Rid Addiction"

"Planet Shukra (venus) Sadhana"

"Lama Holi Sadhnas"

"Planet Shani (saturn) Sadhana"

"Durga Sadhana"

"Vaidyanath Sadhana"

"Some Simple Yantra Sadhanas"

"Amazing Mantras for new Millenium"

"Sadhna to get Mental Peace"

"Kanakadhara Sadhna"

"Another Mahakali Sadhna"

"Mahaganpati Sadhna"

"Kartikeya Sadhna"

"Sabar Lakshmi Sadhnas on Diwali"

"Simple Shree Yantra Sadhna"

"Sadhna to banish diseases"

"Face To Face With Divine Yogi "

" Enlightened Beauty "

" Gaayatri Sadhana "

" Gurutatva Sadhana "

" Garbhasth Cheitanya Sadhana "

" Priya Vallabha Kinnari Sadhana "

" Even You Can See Your Aura "

" Telepathy "

" Happy New Year "

" *The Mahavidya Sadhanas* "

" *The Mahavidya Sadhanas : Mahakali - The Saviour* "

" *The Mahavidya Sadhanas : Bhuvaneshwari - Bestower of Absolute Power* "

" *The Mahavidya Sadhanas : Baglamukhi - The Victory Giver* "

" *The Mahavidya Sadhanas : Tara - The Provider* "

" *The Mahavidya Sadhanas : Dhoomavati - The Terrifier* "

" *The Mahavidya Sadhanas : Kamala - The Wealth Giver* "

" *Jyeshthha Laxmi Sadhana* "

" *Anang Sadhana for Perfect Health & Vigour* "

" *Propitiating The Ancestors* "

" *Sadhana for Blissful Married Life* "

" *Kriya Yog Sadhana* "

" *Atma Chetna Sadhana* "

" *Treasured Traditions of Ancient India* "

" *A Simple Practice To Get Rid Of Diseases* "

" *Some Simple Miraculous Charms* "

" *Mahakali Sadhana* "

" *Shree Yantra Diksha Sadhana* "

Famous Tantra Books Written By Dr.Rupnathji(Dr.Rupak Nath) are given here as follows:-

1. *Matsya Sukt Tantra*
2. *Kul Sukt Tantra*
3. *Kaam Raj Tantra*
4. *Shivagam Tantra*

5. *Uddish Tantra*
6. *Kuluddish Tantra*
7. *Virbhadrodish Tantra*
8. *Bhoot Damar Tantra*
9. *Damar Tantra*
10. *Yaksh Damar Tantra*
11. *Kul Sharvashy Tantra*
12. *Kalika Kul Sharvashy Tantra*
13. *Kul Chooramani Tantra*
14. *Divya Tantra*
15. *Kul Saar Tantra*
16. *Kulavarana Tantra*
17. *Kulamitr Tantra*
18. *Kulavati Tantra*
19. *Kali Kulavaan Tantra*
20. *Kul Prakash Tantra*
21. *Vashisht Tantra*
22. *Siddh Saraswat Tantra*
23. *Yogini Hriday Tantra*
24. *Karli Hriday Tantra*
25. *Matri Karno Tantra*
26. *Yogini Jaalpoorak Tantra*
27. *Lakshmi Kulavaran Tantra*
28. *Taaravaran Tantra*

29. *Chandra Pith Tantra*
30. *Meru Tantra*
31. *Chatu sati Tantra*
32. *Tatvya Bodh Tantra*
33. *Mahograh Tantra*
34. *Swachand Saar Sangrah Tantra*
35. *Taara Pradeep Tantra*
36. *Sanket Chandra Uday Tantra*
37. *Shastra Trish Tatvak Tantra*
38. *Lakshya Nirnay Tantra*
39. *Tripura Narva Tantra*
40. *Vishnu Dharmotar Tantra*
41. *Mantra Paran Tantra*
42. *Vaisnavamitr Tantra*
43. *Maan Solaahs Tantra*
44. *Pooja pradeep Tantra*
45. *Bhakti Manjari Tantra*
46. *Bhuvaneshwari Tantra*
47. *Parijaad Tantra*
48. *Prayogsaar Tantra*
49. *Kaamrat Tantra*
50. *Kriya Saar Tantra*
51. *Agam Deepika Tantra*
52. *Bhav Choodamani Tantra*

53. *Tantra Choodamani Tantra*
54. *Brihast Shrikram Tantra*
55. *Shrikram Shidant Shekar Tantra*
56. *Shidant Shekar Tantra*
57. *Ganeshavi Mashchani Tantra*
58. *Mantra Mookavali Tantra*
59. *Tatva Kaumadi Tantra*
60. *Tantra Kaumadi Tantra*
61. *Mantra Tantra Prakash Tantra*
62. *Ramacharan Chandrika Tantra*
63. *Sharda Tilak Tantra*
64. *Gyan Varn Tantra*
65. *Saar Samuchay Tantra*
66. *Kalp Droom Tantra*
67. *Gyan Maala Tantra*
68. *Paaras Charan Chandrika Tantra*
69. *Agamoktar Tantra*
70. *Tatv Saar Tantra*
71. *Saar Sangrah Tantra*
72. *Dev Prakashini Tantra*
73. *Tantranav Tantra*
74. *Karam deepika Tantra*
75. *Paara Rahasya Tantra*
76. *Shyama Rahasya Tantra*

77. *Tantra Ratna*
78. *Tantra Pradeep*
79. *Taara Vilas*
80. *Vishwa Matrika Tantra*
81. *Prapanch Saar Tantra*
82. *Tantra Saar*
83. *Ratnavali Tantra.*

**Some Important Sanskrit Tantra books(Grantha) Written By Dr.Rupnathji(Dr.Rupak Nath) are also given below:-*

1. *Kali Kitab*
2. *Theth Karini Tantra*
3. *Uttar Tantra*
4. *Neel Tantra*
5. *Veer Tantra*
6. *Kumari Tantra*
7. *Kali Tantra*
8. *Narayani Tantra*
9. *Tarani Tantra*
10. *Bala Tantra*
11. *Matrika Tantra*
12. *Sant Kumar Tantra*
13. *Samayachar Tantra*
14. *Bhairav Tantra*
15. *Bhairavi Tantra*

16. *Tripura Tantra*
17. *Vamkishwar Tantra*
18. *Kutkuteshwar Tantra*
19. *Vishudh Deveshwar Tantra*
20. *Sammohan Tantra*
21. *Gopiniay Tantra*
22. *Brihaddautami Tantra*
23. *Bhoot Bhairav Tantra*
24. *Chamunda Tantra*
25. *Pingla Tantra*
26. *Parahi Tantra*
27. *Mund Mala Tantra*
28. *Yogini Tantra*
29. *Malini Vijay Tantra*
30. *Swachand Bhairav Tantra*
31. *Maha Tantra*
32. *Shakti Tantra*
33. *Chintamani Tantra*
34. *Unmat Bhairav Tantra*
35. *Trilok Saar Tantra*
36. *Vishwa Saar Tantra*
37. *Tantra Mrit*
38. *Maha Khetkarini Tantra*
39. *Baraviy Tantra*

40. *Todal Tantra*
41. *Malani Tantra*
42. *Lalita Tantra*
43. *Shri Shakti Tantra*
44. *Raj Rajeshwari Tantra*
45. *Maha Maheshwari Tantra*
46. *Gavakshy Tantra*
47. *Gandharv Tantra*
48. *Trilok Mohan Tantra*
49. *Hans Paar Maheshwar Tantra*
50. *Hans Maheshwar Tantra*
51. *Kaamdhenu Tantra*
52. *Varn Vilas Tantra*
53. *Maya Tantra*
54. *Mantra Raj*
55. *Kuvichka Tantra*
56. *Vigyan Lalitka Tantra*
57. *Lingagam Tantra*
58. *Kalotarr Tantra*
59. *Brahm Yamal Tantra*
60. *Aadi Yamal Tantra*
61. *Rudra Yamal Tantra*
62. *Brihdhamal Tantra*
63. *Siddh Yamal Tantra*

For other Important Books By Great Scholar Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji See other Websites.]

Siddha Yogi Rupnathji has Vak siddhi meaning whatever he says has the power of turning into reality. Vak means speech or voice, so Vak Siddhi literally means accomplishing a pure ability to use words. Attaining mastery of it, Siddha Yogi Rupnathji gains the ability to make changes to the physical material universe. Vak siddhi depends upon pure intentions. Vak siddhi means whatever one speaks turn to be true. Yes, God only gives power to those who have pure intentions and the feelings of harmlessness to everyone. Practicing Satya will bring one naturally to Vak Siddhi. "The word is a force; it is the intent. That is why our intention manifests through the word no matter what language we speak." The vak siddhi gave Rupnathji the power to make whatever he say or think turn out to be true. In other words, Siddha Yogi Rupnathji got the power to accomplish things by mere thought. This is also known as psychic speech. Using 'Saraswathi siddhi' (the siddhi by which the essence of great scriptures becomes known to him) along with 'Vak siddhi' (the siddhi of superlative communication) Siddha Yogi Rupnathji can cast a strong impression in the minds of people as regards imparting knowledge and virtue to them. People who hear the words or read

material written by the Siddha Yogi Rupnathji proficient in this siddhi become mesmerized and willfully compelled to follow his instructions or directions. Siddha Yogi Rupnathji is so impelled and charmed by the vivacity and clarity of the words that they immediately consent from within to abide by his advice. Knowledge and truth flow seamlessly and effortlessly from the mouth of Siddha Yogi Rupnathji like the clear waters of a free flowing river. There is great impact on people when he uses this siddhi. Using this siddhi, Siddha Yogi Rupnathji can turn a non-believer of God into a believer, a worldly man into one spiritually minded (if possible in the recipient's karma). With his words, he can turn an evil and dishonorable person into one who adopts the principles and tenets of 'Dharma' (righteousness). It is not possible for people to find fault or go against the teachings of such a Yogi, for his words are a reflection of 'Saraswathi' (The goddess of knowledge) and backed by the absolute truth of Brahman (Almighty). Siddha Yogi Rupnathji possesses the ability to bestow the eight siddhis and the [[nava nidhi]] (nine types of wealth).

Avadhuta Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji of India is a most divine Guru, possessing unique spiritual powers. He was, and still is, famous throughout India as an extraordinary saint. He always revelled in His own joy, identifying Himself with the entire universe. He is completely detached from all his actions and lived frugally. He is a divinely

intoxicated yogi and is a born Siddha ('Perfect Master'). After wandering across the length and breadth of India on foot.

A Siddha Guru is a spiritual teacher, a master, whose identification with the supreme Self is uninterrupted. The unique and rare quality of a Siddha Guru is his or her capacity to awaken the spiritual energy, kundalini, in seekers through shaktipat.

Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji is a Siddha Guru who walked the path of yoga under the guidance of his Guru. Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji received the power and authority of the Siddha Yoga lineage from his guru before he passed away in 1985. He teaches the Siddhas' message that the experience of divine consciousness is attainable in this human body. Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji constantly points us back inside ourselves, where this state is both possible and accessible.

As a Siddha Guru, he carries out his mission of awakening seekers to their own potential for enlightenment by bestowing shaktipat. Through his teachings and his writings and through Siddha Yoga teaching and learning events and study tools, he guides students on this mystical journey toward God, helping them move beyond their own limitations and reach the goal. Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji expresses a great love and reverence for children as the holders of our future and has written books and songs expressly for them.

His teachings are made available for seekers of all ages, around the world, through the work of the Rupnathji Foundation. In his Siddha Yoga Message for the year 1995, Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji describes the essence of her vision for all human beings:

Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji, one of the most revered Siddha Gurus of the modern era, is a janma siddha—one born with the full realization of his own divine nature. From an early age, Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji spontaneously manifested his mastery of atma jnana—knowledge of the Self.

Born in the North-East Indian state of Assam, Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji, as a young man, traveled on foot throughout India. As his reputation as an enlightened master and miraculous healer spread, crowds of seekers were drawn to his wisdom and blessings. Eventually, by the mid-1990s, he settled in the village of Cachar in the state of Assam. Out of honor and respect his devotees began to call him Siddha Rupnathji, a title that means 'the Magical Guru; the venerable one; the great one.' He always directed people to turn within and meditate.

Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji also undertook many philanthropic works. Over the next decade, he transformed the village by educating the villagers; feeding, clothing, and schooling the children; and providing for the building of roads and local facilities.

In 1996, Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji asked Swami Juktananda, one of his main disciples, who was later to become his successor, to settle

nearby in Bikrampur Village. Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji is known as Baba, so the devotees began to affectionately refer to Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji as Yogi Baba, which is Hindi for 'Sadhu Baba.'

Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji's core teaching is:

The Heart is the hub of all sacred places. Go there and roam.

This foundational Siddhi Yoga teaching has guided generations of students on the Siddhi Yoga path.

In truth, the gift of life must always be recognized and never be taken for granted. Why is life so precious? In Siddha Yoga philosophy, we recognize that in this human life we have a rare opportunity. We can transform an ordinary perception of this universe into an extraordinary vision. To be on this planet and to behold the universe from the divine perspective is a sign of an illumined heart. To put this vision to best use in the best way possible is a human being's highest duty.

Shastrishree Rupnathji (Dr.Rupak Nath) is a Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi since his birth. He is the master of ashta siddhis, radiant light of Yoga knowledge, salvator for mortal beings on earth and capable of giving them the divine experiences, master of masters, immortal. His birth was predicted thousands of years ago in Nadi Grantha."A Yogi is greater than an Ascetic, greater than an Empiricist and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, in all circumstances be a Yogi and to be a Yogi search

for a Real Satguru by mercy of whom a soul engaging itself with sincere endeavor in making further progress being washed of all contaminations in due course of time, ultimately attains the supreme goal i.e. SALVATION."Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Rupnathji(Dr.Rupak Nath)'s life is surrounded with numerous stories about miraculous deeds he has performed. There no any doubt that Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Rupnathji(Dr.Rupak Nath) is highly realized yogi who has acquired many Siddhis and have the miraculous powers on his disposal, which he used discriminately only for the propagation of Dharma. Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Rupnathji(Dr.Rupak Nath) commanded respect for yogis at every place he has visited, and his ways to make this happen is very unconventional, Unpredictable and incredibly powerful, Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Rupnathji(Dr.Rupak Nath) is as alive God amongst people, who knows the past and future and who able to bless and punish, both things which he frequently used to do. Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Rupnathji(Dr.Rupak Nath) is highly spiritual person, and for him there is no any difference between mighty Kings and simple people, as well as between gold and stones. Since young age Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Rupnathji(Dr.Rupak Nath) has been famous for performance of different miracles and there exist lot of stories connected with his childhood, which is impossible to mention in this short space. The life of Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Rupnathji(Dr.Rupak Nath) is full of so many different miracles he has

performed, that it is impossible to mention all of them in this short article, for a separate book would be required to mention all of them.

DR. RUPAK NATHUJ (DR. RUPAK NATH)