

Lord Shiva, the God of auspiciousness



Compiled from the speeches of
Sadguru Sri Nannagaru



Desires resemble the binding handcuff. As you are bound by the handcuff, even your desires bind your mind. It is Shiva alone who can release you from the bonds of desire. The entire glory of Shiva lies here: He needs nothing but bestows you with everything.

- Sadguru Sri Nannagaru

Lord Shiva is Adi deva (the first and foremost God)



The Self which shines in the spiritual Heart forever in all the three states of the mind (waking, dream and sleep) and in all the three periods of time (past, present and future) is

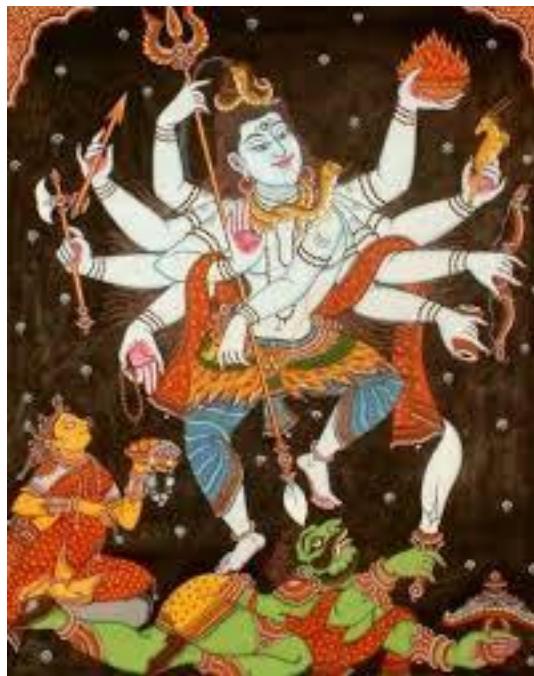


called as Shiva. Shiva refers to the Supreme Consciousness. Shiva refers to Adi deva (the first and foremost God). Rama and Krishna have parents. But Lord Shiva does not have any parents. Therefore Lord Shiva is called as Swayambhoo. He is an embodiment of simplicity, the egoless one and the one whose clothes comprise of all the four directions.

Shiva implies ‘the auspicious one’



God is formless and attribute less. The formless one has assumed a form only for our sake. Shiva implies ‘the auspicious one’ and the bestower of auspiciousness. You will become purified by contemplating upon Him. Normally



the other gods are seen wearing silk clothes. But you can see Lord Shiva wearing the tiger's skin. Hence He is very simple even in His dressing. Lord Shiva is very simple and ego less.

Remembrance of Lord Shiva is auspicious. You are formless and attribute less in your deep sleep. But don't you exist in your deep sleep? You do exist. It is only the true 'I'. He is only Lord Shiva.

Shiva is the dissolver of the Universe



Shiva has a name called ‘The Dissolver of the Universe’. Don’t interpret the word ‘dissolver’ in a negative sense. Even dissolution is part of creation. If the new world has to emerge, the old world has to get dissolved. The fresh leaves cannot emerge without the fall of the dried leaves. Similarly one cannot attain the permanent Bliss and Self Knowledge without

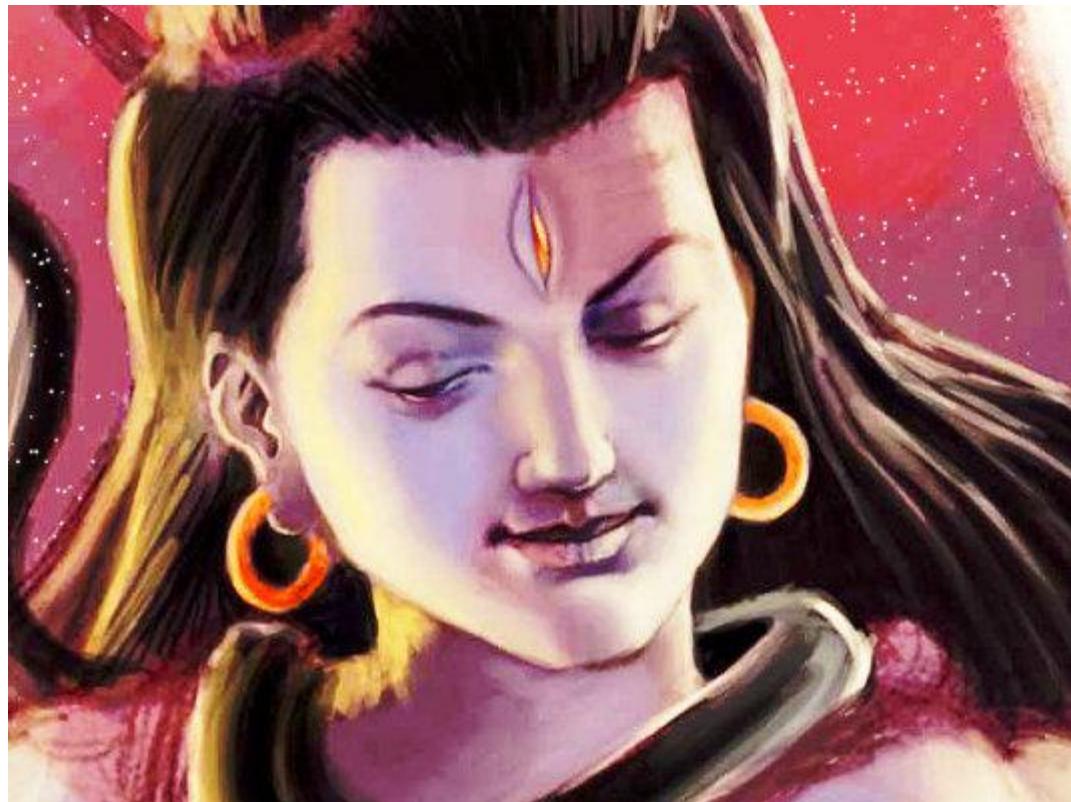


dissolution of their mind. Lord Shiva dissolves the roaring mind into the Heart. Hence He got the name of dissolver. The dissolver does not refer to the one who ruins you. He is the one who eradicates your filth.

Shiva is the bestower of Self Knowledge

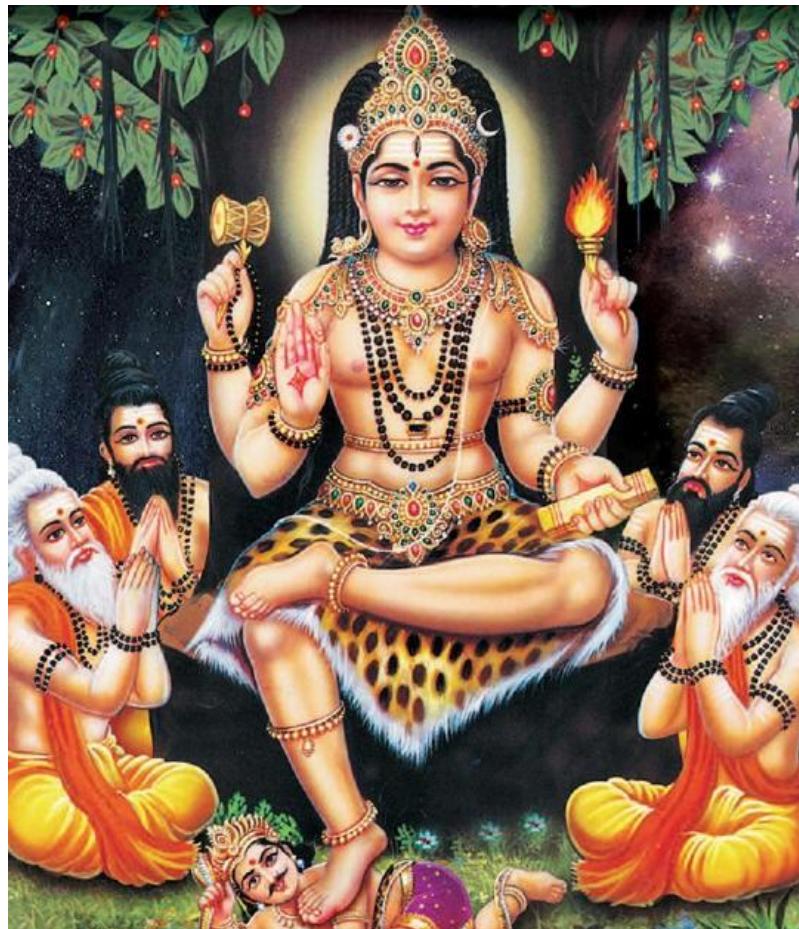


It is said that Lord Shiva bestows you with Knowledge. Knowledge and Liberation imply one and the same. Here Knowledge does not refer to the worldly knowledge. Worldly knowledge refers to the knowledge acquired through the senses, mind and intellect. Knowledge attained by the introversion of the



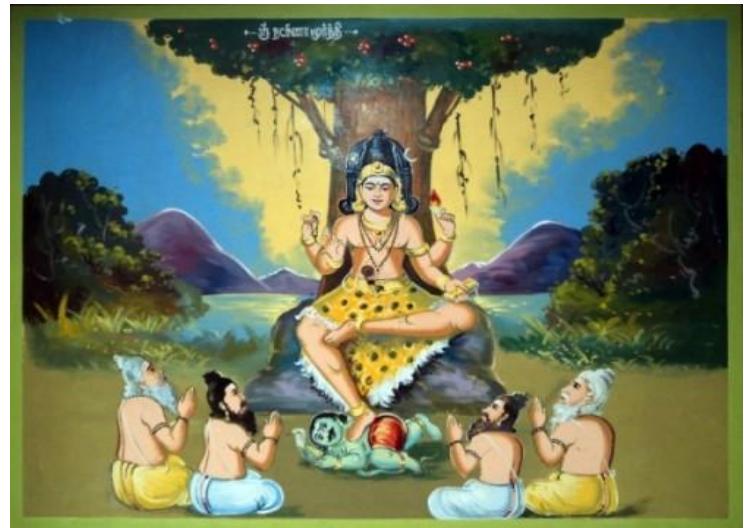
mind is called as Self Knowledge. Therefore the senses and mind can be utilized to acquire worldly knowledge but not the Supreme Consciousness. Where ever your senses, mind and intellect get subsided, Supreme Consciousness is revealed to you. Hence Lord Shiva is the one who bestows you with the Self Knowledge and not the worldly knowledge.

Shiva is the Adi Guru



In the quest of Self Knowledge, Sanaka, Sanandadi Maharishis visited the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva). But when they saw the Trinity with their consorts, they felt it to be futile in seeking Self Knowledge from them for

being associated with women. Then Lord Shiva, out of immense Compassion, assumed the form of Adi Guru Lord Dakshinamurthy. He was seen sitting under a banyan tree facing the south. Being impressed with the radiance of Lord Dakshinamurthy, Sanaka, Sanandadi Maharishis accepted Him as their preceptor and sat down at His feet seeking Self Knowledge. As the Maharishis were advanced souls and refined souls, all their doubts got clarified in the Silence of Lord Dakshinamurthy. They finally attained Self Knowledge.



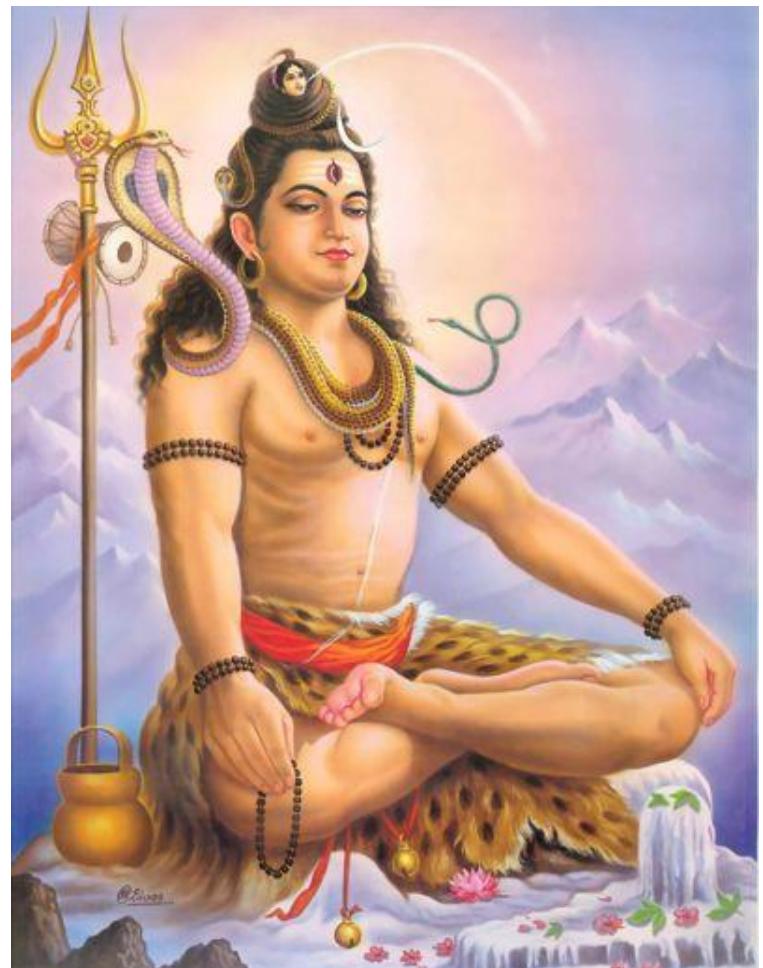
Shiva begs for His food only to set the ideal of leading an egoless life

Shiva begs for His food. By doing so He sets up the ideal of leading an egoless life. Shiva uses the skull as His begging bowl. The brain resides in the skull. Being seated in the brain, the intellect carries out its work. Therefore Shiva annihilates the weaknesses and flaws within the intellect. It indicates that Shiva is the one who purifies our intellect. One can attain liberation only through the entrance called purity of mind and not through any other gate.



Lord Shiva resides in the burial ground in order to accompany you after death

You may show off silk clothes or very expensive golden ornaments in the society. But your body has to get converted into ashes in the burial ground ultimately. In order to remind this, Lord Shiva has made the



burial ground as His residence. Shiva does not require a separate house to stay. All the Jivas reach the burial ground after their death. Their riches do not accompany them. Even their relatives accompany them only upto the burial

ground. Their body also gets burnt in the burial ground but does not accompany them. It is Shiva alone who accompanies them. It is only to console and assure the lonely Jivas (after their death) that Lord Shiva made the burial ground as His residence. As long as you are alive, if you make Lord Shiva as your companion, you will realize that it is Lord Shiva who accompanies you in the burial ground after death. It is only in the companionship of Lord Shiva that your journey after death proceeds peacefully.



Ashes are given as a sacrament of Lord Shiva

You may own a 100 storied building or crores of Rupees. However your body will turn into ashes finally. As and when each and every part of your body is burnt, only ashes are left out. Similarly even though everything gets destroyed only the Supreme Consciousness is left out. Why are the ashes given as the sacrament of Lord Shiva? It is only to remind you that your body turns into ashes ultimately.



Lord Shiva is the Innocent God

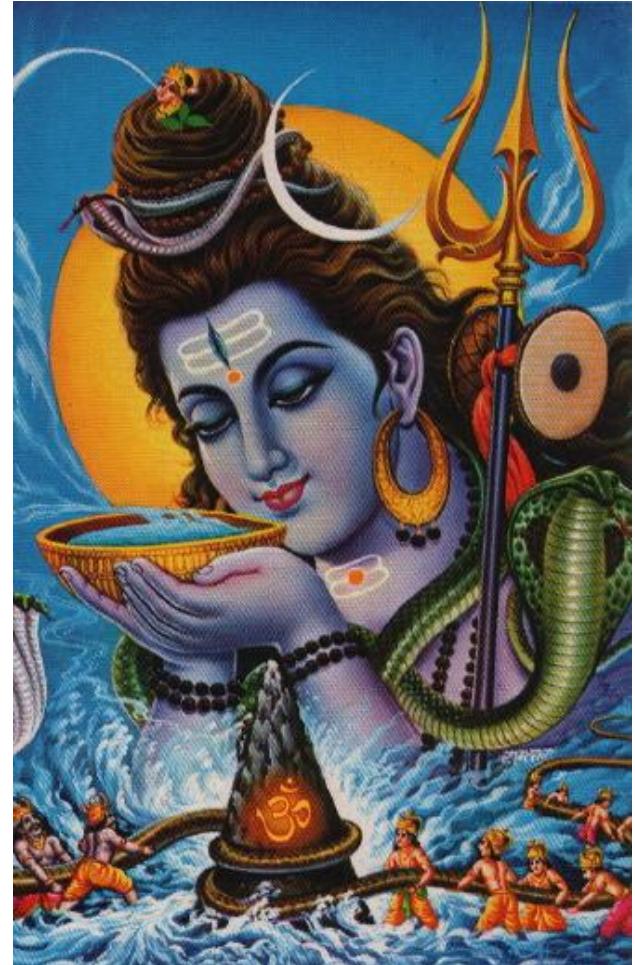


Lord Shiva is often referred to as 'the innocent God' (Bhola Shankara). Shiva is the embodiment of simplicity. He can be made happy very easily. It is enough if you give Him a Holy bath. He will become very happy.

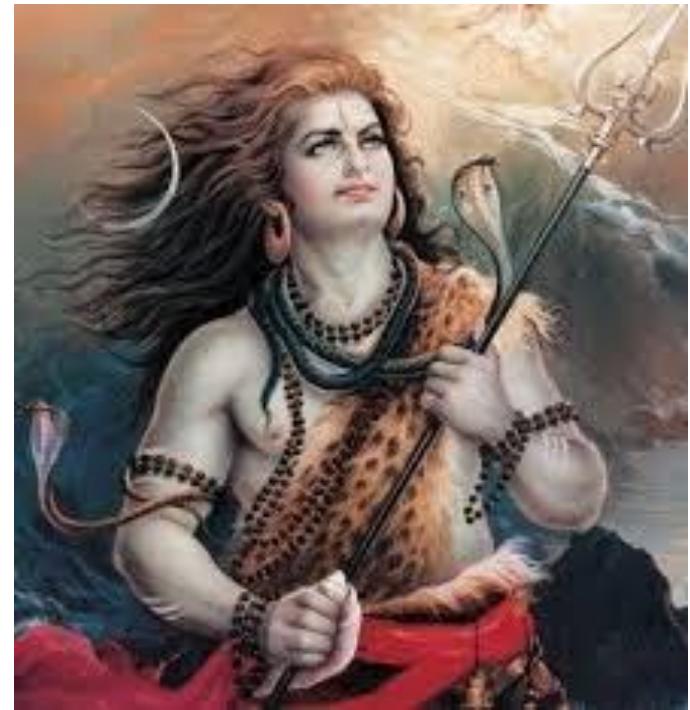


When the milky ocean was churned, all the good things like the wish fulfilling tree (Kalpavriksha), cow of plenty (Kamadhenu) etc were shared amongst the gods. However it was Lord Shiva who had to accept the deadly poison that emerged from the churning of the milky ocean. No other god came forward to accept it. Had Lord Shiva swallowed the poison, the worlds within Him would have been destroyed.

Had He vomited out the poison, the worlds outside Him would have been annihilated. Therefore Shiva neither consumed the poison nor vomited it out. He retained it within His throat. Therefore He is called as garala kanta (the one who retained poison in His throat). Shiva's throat became blue due to this poison. Hence He is also called as Neela kanta (the one with a blue throat). In some instances we should also neither partake nor vomit out some things resembling poison but endure them patiently like Lord Shiva. This is the lesson to be learnt from Lord Shiva.



When the river Ganges was to be brought onto the earth, no common man was eligible enough to forbear the force of the Ganges. If the Ganges from Heaven was left untapped on this earth, it would directly reach the underworld. Therefore Lord Shiva accepted the burden of trapping the Heavenly Ganges into His hair locks and gradually released it onto the earth. Thus all such tough tasks were undertaken by Lord Shiva. Hence He is called as ‘The Innocent God.’ Lord Shiva (the innocent Lord) bestows His Grace even upon the demons if they adore Him devotedly.



Shiva and Parvathi are inseparable



The word Shiva comprises of Sha+ee+va. The ‘ee’ within Shiva is represented by Parvathi. Without ‘ee’ Shiva will become Shava ie a corpse. Shiva and Parvathi are inseparable. If Shiva represents the fire then Parvathi

represents the heat in the fire. If Shiva symbolizes the word, Parvathi symbolizes the meaning of the word. If Shiva represents the lamp, Parvathi represents the light. Once, Bhagavan Ramana was asked: "Why do you always speak only about Shiva and not about Parvathi? Then Bhagavan replied: "My every word about Shiva applies to Parvathi also. Parvathi is not different from Shiva. Moreover Parvathi also attained half of the Shiva's body through penance. Hence Lord Shiva has another name called Ardanareeswara (A composite form of Shiva and Parvathi).



The Story of Arunachala



Brahma and Vishnu were engaged in a very heated argument claiming their superiority over each other. When there is a fight between two elderly people, we can't resolve it. A Superior in terms of power or authority, whose words are authoritative, has to resolve the same. Therefore Ishwara who is greater than Brahma and Vishnu, appeared in the form of a

fiery column of Light and resolved the same. Ishwara doesn't imply Shiva alone. Ishwara refers to the Owner of the entire Universe. The word Ishwara is applicable to Rama, Krishna as well as Shiva. Ishwara means the Controller who controls our bodies as per their destiny. To resolve this fight between Brahma and Vishnu, Ishwara appeared in the form of a Light and devised a contest between them. Ishwara said: "They will be declared victorious who find out the beginning or the end of this Light and returns back first." Vishnu went downwards taking the form of a boar (Varaha) in order to find the beginning of the Light. Brahma took the form of a swan and flew upwards to find the end of the Light. The end exists only where there is a beginning. Ishwara, who is unending, has neither beginning nor the end. Vishnu

failed to find the beginning of the Light and so did Brahma fail in his attempt to find the end of the Light. Brahma saw the Ketaki flower and Kamadhenu coming from the upward direction. He asked them “Where are you coming from?” They answered, “We fell down from the Head of Ishwara and have been travelling down since time immemorial.” Brahma felt that by this time Vishnu might have found the beginning of the Light and it is highly impossible for him to reach the end of the Light instantly. Therefore he devised a plan. He asked both the Ketaki flower and Kamadenu to give a false evidence



saying ‘yes’ when he would falsely proclaim before Ishwara that he has seen the end of the Light. This tradition of the necessity for two evidences in a court derived from here only. The Ketaki flower and Kamadhenu were not willing to give false evidence but the person asking them was Brahma himself (their creator) and so they could not refuse him.

Both Brahma and Vishnu approached Ishwara. Vishnu gracefully accepted his defeat. Brahma falsely proclaimed that he saw the end of the Light and also produced the two evidences that he brought with him. Mahatma Gandhi said in his autobiography that the one who tells truth need not be careful, but the one who tells lies need to be more cautious. Understand the crisis for the ketaki flower and kamadhenu here. On seeing Ishwara they

became afraid that He will deduce all their proclamations to be false as He is the Omnipresent and Omnipotent Indweller. Moreover it was the Creator Brahma who was asking for false evidence from them. Therefore Kamadhenu gave false evidence through its mouth but wagged its tail indicating Ishwara not to believe it. But ketaki flower gave completely false evidence. Then Ishwara said: "As Vishnu accepted his defeat humbly and egolessly, He will be adored by everyone. Temples will be built in His name. As Brahma lied, he will not be worshipped at all. As Kamadenu gave false evidence through mouth and told the Truth with its tail, only its tail will be worshipped and not its face. As the ketaki flower gave completely false evidence it cannot be used in the worship of Ishwara."

Arunachala is the Adi Linga



As Ishwara appeared in the form of Light to resolve the fight between the ego & ignorance of Brahma and Vishnu, the Karthika deepam is lit in Arunachala to commemorate the same. Vishnu wanted to worship Ishwara. As the Light was without origin and end, on Vishnu's request it reduced its size to take the form of the Holy Hill. Vishnu said "How can we find

enough number of leaves and flowers to worship the Holy Hill?" Then the Holy Hill reduced further and took the form of Linga. The night Lord Shiva assumed the form of Linga is celebrated as Shiva ratri. This is the first ever Linga on the earth, the Arunachala Linga.

It is difficult for the human mind (Brahma) and intellect (Vishnu) to grasp the formless, attribute less and un-manifested God or Self (Shiva). Therefore Lord Shiva incarnated as the Linga. Does the Linga possess a form? No. It has neither legs nor hands nor eyes nor nose. But is the Linga completely formless? No. It has the form of a Linga.





Therefore Linga is called as formless form. As you are unable to grasp the un-manifested God, God Himself assumed the form of a Linga. By adoring Linga you can attain the experience of the un-manifested God. The objective of worshipping Linga is to attain the advaitic experience of oneness with the Absolute. Why did Lord Shiva assume the form of Linga in the midnight? It is because Shiva wanted to awaken the Jivas into Self Knowledge from the darkness of ignorance.

Linga symbolizes the existence of God



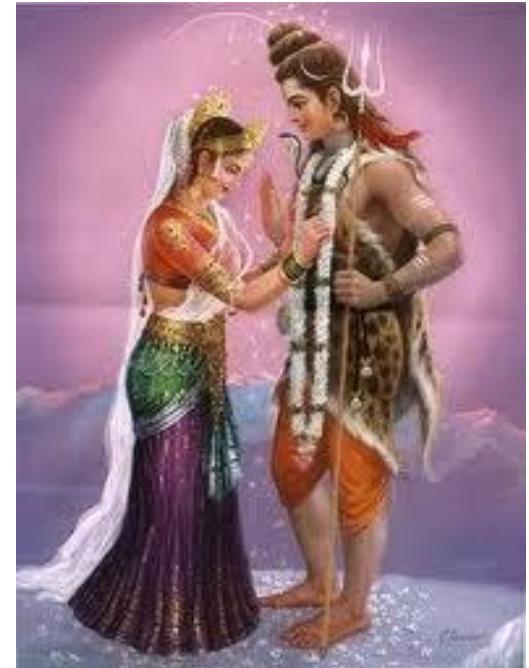
Linga represents a symbol. It symbolizes the existence of God. It neither represents a form nor can it be called formless. By worshipping the Linga, one evolves from Sakara (adoring the form) to Nirakara (adoring the formless one)



and from Saguna (worshipping the one with the attributes) to Nirguna (worshipping the attribute less one). By adoring the Linga, one becomes formless and nameless in spite of possessing a name and form. If you start adoring God in the temple, you will slowly get habituated to adoring the God residing in everyone's Heart.

Celebrate atleast one Shiva ratri (Shiva's night) per birth

You should adore the Linga and meditate upon Lord Shiva's form on the eve of Shiva ratri (night) and become the recipient of His Grace. Only then the spiritual state that you have attained becomes permanent. However great might be the fruit of your action, it is transient. However, the Grace of God is not so. Therefore your contemplation and meditation on Lord Shiva on this eve of Shiva ratri should resemble the uninterrupted flow of oil when poured from one vessel into another ie it should be constant. Meditate upon Lord Shiva and contemplate upon Him. Fill your Heart with the



name of Shiva and attain the deathless state even before the death of your body. This is the message of Shiva ratri.



There is a slogan: Atleast one Shiva ratri per birth. It implies that even before the body turns into corpse, celebrate at least one Shiva ratri. The Shiva ratri should be celebrated in the

following manner: Be proximate to Shiva in the day time and spend the entire night in the contemplation of Shiva. This should be maintained for the entire 24 hours. At least on the auspicious day of Shiva ratri, distance yourselves from the sensual thinking and contemplate upon Lord Shiva. In the name of fasting, don't allow your mind to ponder upon food. Rather habituate it to contemplate upon Shiva. Our fasting should make us close to God and not to the food. As a creeper wraps itself around a pole, even your senses and mind should wrap themselves in



the contemplation of Lord Shiva. You are hugging the sensory objects with your senses and mind on a daily basis. At least on the eve of Shivaratri, hug Lord Shiva with your senses and the mind. By doing so, you will not get affected by the blows of destiny. Only Lord Shiva will get affected. You will become the recipients of His Grace by leading such a life. Lord Shiva will bestow you with Self Knowledge.

Destiny pertains to body alone. When there is no identification with the body, the destiny cannot influence you. The destiny gets defeated in your hands. Therefore our elders have advised us to forget all our money, fame





and family affairs and concentrate upon the contemplation of Lord Shiva alone at least on the eve of Shiva ratri. As you constantly contemplate upon Lord Shiva, you will get released from the bonds of mind. In whose ever mind, there is an uninterrupted flow of unconditional Love for Shiva, they will get liberated by the Grace of Shiva.



Every person with a physical body is fond of the following three: food, sleep and desire. ‘Atleast one Shiva ratri per birth’ implies: Keep yourselves far away from these three and spend your time in the contemplation of Lord Shiva for at least one Shiva ratri in your entire life. ‘Upa’ means ‘to stay close’ and ‘vasa’ implies ‘God’. Therefore Upavasa implies staying close to God. On the eve of Shiva ratri,

you must be watchful and stay awake for the entire night in the contemplation of God. However some people spend the entire night in gossiping or in watching television. This is not correct. The studious students study for the entire night without even getting the thought of losing their sleep. Similarly you should immerse yourselves in the contemplation of God and in His meditation for the entire night without falling asleep. You should not resort to sensual thinking but should completely involve in the contemplation of Shiva on the eve of Shiva ratri. Bhagavan said: “If you completely give up your food, your mind starts craving for the food. Therefore it is better to eat little and contemplate upon Shiva rather than trying to forsake food completely and meditate upon God.”

The Story of hunter associated with Shiva ratri

The Shiva ratri is associated with the story of a hunter. This story is often narrated on the eve of Shiva ratri. Some people cannot get their food until they work on a daily basis. There lived a hunter who belonged to such category. He did not get any work on a Shiva ratri. Hence he fasted for the entire day and lay down on a tree in the night. In order to kill his time, he plucked the leaves of the tree and threw them down. He was not aware that there existed a Shiva Linga under that tree. All the leaves fell on the Linga. The leaves were filled with dew and as the dew fell upon the Linga along with the leaves, the hunter performed the Holy bath to the Linga. Thus the hunter adored Lord Shiva unknowingly. Therefore the hunter fasted for the entire day and remained awake for the



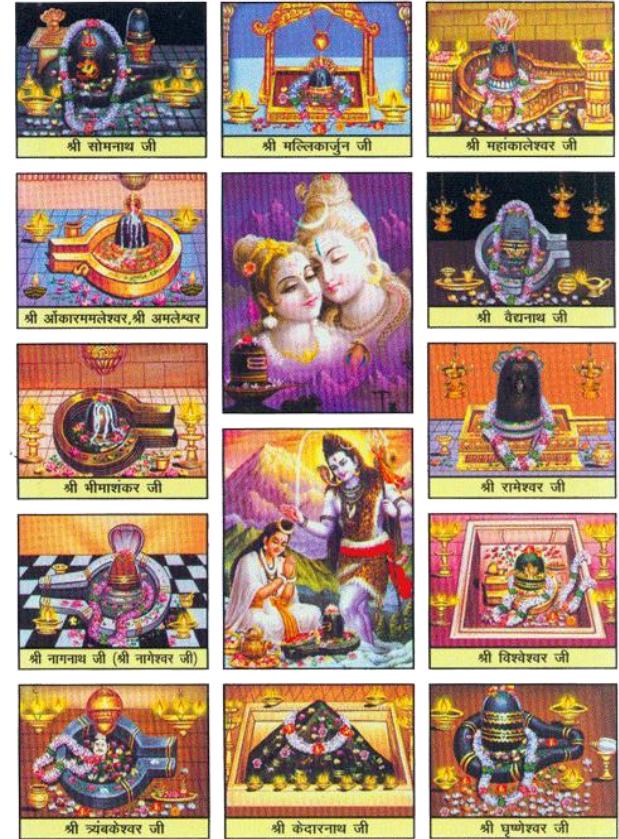
whole night in the worship of Lord Shiva. The hunter thus became liberated. When such is the benefit of adoring the Lord unknowingly, can you gauge the benefit derived by adoring Him consciously? The story of this hunter is narrated on the Shiva ratri to describe the benefit of adoring Lord Shiva.

The pilgrim centers associated with Lord Shiva

The pilgrim centers of Lord Shiva are associated with the five elements.

The following are the five

Lingas: bhoomi linga (related to earth) in Kanchi, Jala Linga (related to water) in Jambhukesvaram, Agi linga (related to fire) in Arunachala, Vaayu Linga (related to air) in Sri Kala hasti and Aakasha Linga (related to the sky) in Chidambaram. Also 12 Jyothi Lingas emanated for the worship of Lord Shiva. The word Kasi implies the light or brightness. As we have the Holy Hill in Arunachala, you have the Holy Ganges in Kasi in order to purify us.



The glory of Arunachala

Arunachala is the third eye (the eye of Knowledge) of Lord Shiva taking a physical form. The American and



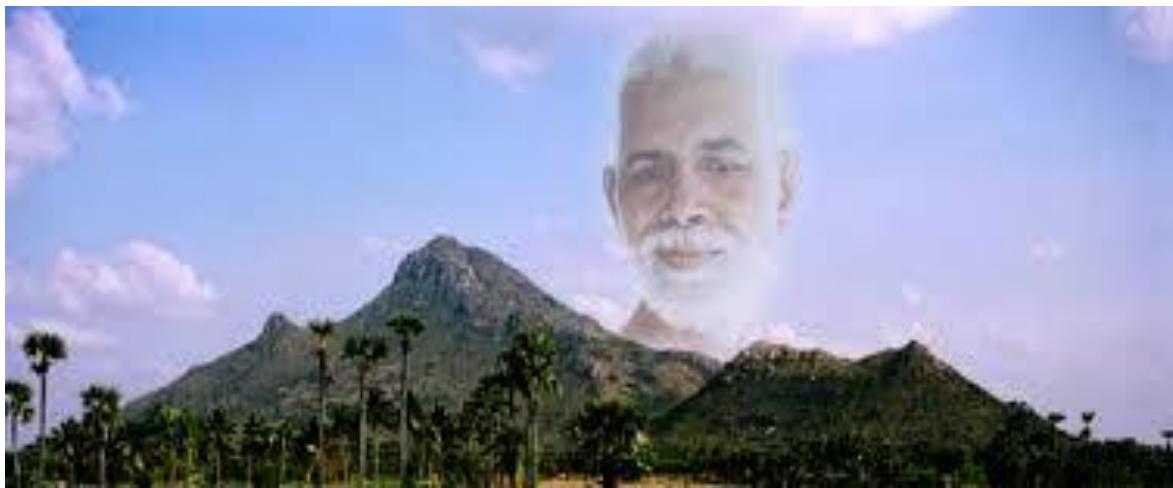
the English people have given a new name to Arunachala. They say, "The Mountain is very active within." Arunachala may look dumb externally but don't consider Arunachala to be dumb. Arunachala may seem to be a heap of stones. But don't consider it to be the same. Even after you go back home from Arunachala, it works very actively within. The following is the essence of the four Vedas: 1) Lead me from darkness to the Light. 2) Lead me from ignorance to the Knowledge. 3) Lead me from death to the Immortality. Whether you read

the Vedas from top to bottom or from bottom to top, this is the essence of the Vedas. It is Arunachala who bestows us with the essence of four Vedas.

It is said that you will attain liberation if you die in Kasi or if you take birth in Tiruvayyur. But the birth and death



are not within your control. It is also said that you will attain liberation if you visit Chidambaram. But one requires money to do the same. However the Skanda purana proclaims: “Mere remembrance of Arunachala will liberate you.”



A lawyer asked Bhagwan : “Is Liberation so easy that one can attain it by mere remembrance of Arunachala?” Bhagavan replied: “Yes! It is the command of GOD that mere remembrance of Arunachala will liberate us. Who are you to question the same? You first try to remember Arunachala and then see whether it brings you liberation or not.

The essence of Giri Pradakshina in Arunachala

Pradakshina implies circumambulation. ‘Pra’ indicates that Lord Arunachala annihilates your sins pertaining to previous births. Don’t presume that your entire sins will get annihilated in a single instance. Once you start circumambulation, Lord Arunachala sets fire to your sins. It may take some time for them to burn into ashes. ‘Da’ indicates that Lord Arunachala bestows you with whatever you ask for. One has to ask in case of some gods. However Lord Arunachala gives you whatever is needed even without being asked. If you desire something which you presume to be beneficial, He may not grant it if it is not worthwhile. He is concerned only with your reformation. If Lord Arunachala feels that you will be ruined on the fulfillment of your desire, He will not fulfill the

same. He decides when, how and where it needs to be granted as per your requirement. Even if He is rebuked for not fulfilling your desire, He will forbear it patiently but will not ruin you. ‘Kshi’ indicates that Lord Arunachala impoverishes you. As the breeze carries the fragrance in a flower even the Jiva carries its merits and demerits to the new body after its death. You cannot get rid of the ego. You may only act as if you have lost the ego but will not be able to do it in a true sense. When you identify yourselves with the ego how can you try to get rid of it? You possess several flaws unknowingly. You may try to hide them



by decorating yourself with snow and powder. But when you peep within, you find it all stinking. Irrespective of your white washing, the indweller keeps watching you. He tries to reduce your flaws. Without dragging out your flaws and burning them into ashes, even the indweller cannot bestow you with the Self Knowledge. ‘Na’ indicates bestowing you with Self Knowledge after annihilating your weaknesses.

It is said that Lord Shiva resides in the following three forms in Arunachala: The Holy Hill, the Linga and the Siddha. Adoring the Holy Hill in Arunachala and circumambulating around it is as important as taking bath in the Holy Ganges and adoring Lord Vishveshwara in Kashi. In Arunachala the Holy Hill has been given more importance. Here, many devotees



circumambulate around the Holy Hill very devotedly. While doing so, you should neither wear any slippers nor use any umbrella. This is the tradition. In the process of circumambulation, the elders advise us to use the left hand side of the road so that we do not obstruct the path of the gods who utilize the right hand side. You should walk slowly and silently and contemplate upon God alone and not upon any sensory objects in the process of circumambulation. The scriptures have

prescribed that one should walk as slow as a pregnant lady in her ninth month. Some people go around the Holy Hill in order to get their desires fulfilled. For such people Lord Arunachala's Grace is limited to their desires only. However if one circumambulates around the Holy Hill without any expectation, Lord Arunachala bestows them with both the material and spiritual prosperity.

Even Bhagavan Ramana went around the Holy Hill till 1927. If Bhagavan Ramana had any attraction or attachment in this world, it was 'The Holy Hill' or 'The Divine Mountain' alone. This Holy Hill contains an imperceptible power beyond the reach of the human mind. The epics said that Lord Shiva resides in Kailasa. However Bhagavan Ramana said: "The Holy Hill itself is Lord Shiva."

The glory of chanting Shiva's name

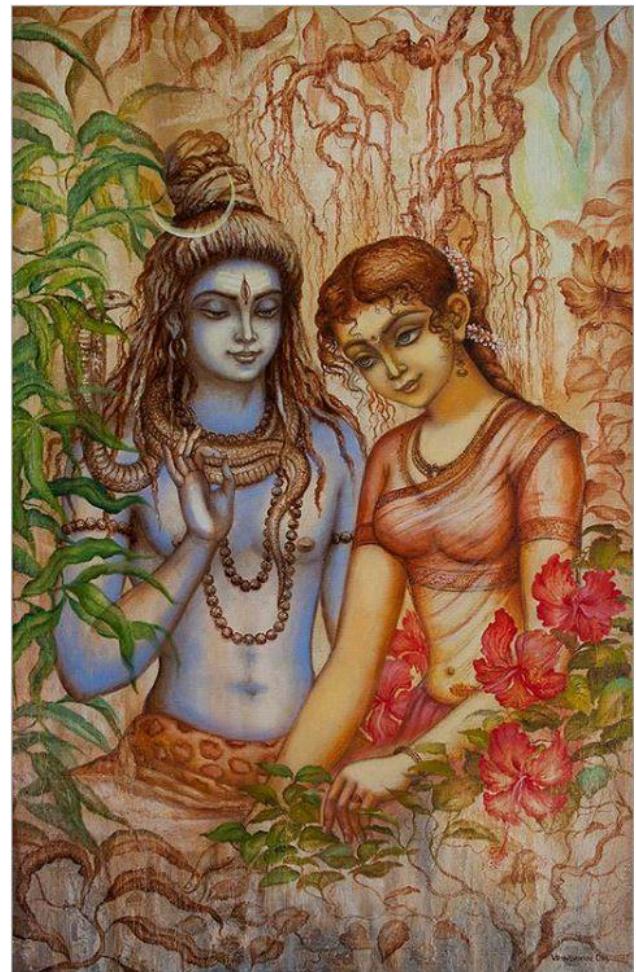


Once a devotee approached Bhagavan Ramana and said: “I want to attain God but I am an illiterate. Bhagavan replied: “It is enough if you chant Shiva, Shiva.”

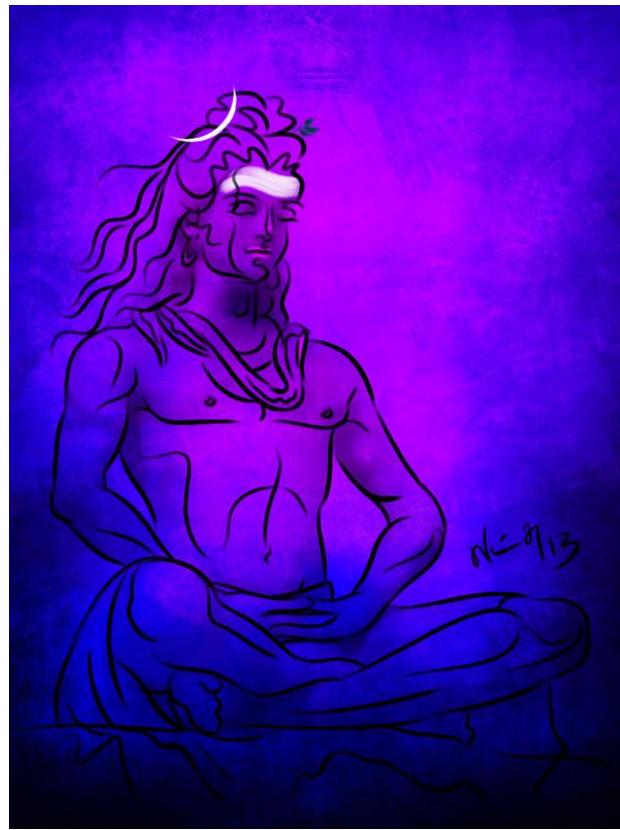


'Om Namaha Shivaya' is called as the Panchakshari mantra ie the five syllable Holy name. By chanting it devotedly one gets liberated. Arunachala is referred to as Jnana Panchakshari. The ego gets annihilated by the mere remembrance of Arunachala.

Until and unless the flaws in the mind are annihilated, you cannot attain Self Knowledge. They have been accompanying you since thousands of births. Chanting the name of Lord Shiva burns out the flaws in your intellect and bestows you with Self Knowledge thereafter. This is the peculiarity of chanting the name of Lord Shiva. Shiva is not anonymous to us. He is the indwelling Self ie Shiva refers to the true ‘I’. Fasting improves your physical health and Lord Shiva’s remembrance improves your mental health.



Remain Humble to attain Shiva



If you humbly bow down, you become Shiva else you become Shava (corpse). You will again get back into the cycle of birth and death. You will take rebirth and again become a corpse. Therefore Bhagavan Ramana said: “Until you attain Self Knowledge, don’t give up humility.”

Do not differentiate between Shiva and Vishnu



If Vishnu bestows you with liberation, Shiva bestows you with Self Knowledge. There is no difference between Liberation and Self knowledge. Hence don't ever differentiate between Shiva and Vishnu.



As the river keeps flowing constantly until it gets merged into the ocean, even you contemplate and meditate upon Shiva; work for the sake of His Grace, lead your life with Shiva as your goal and thereby attain Him.

- Sadguru Sri Nannagaru