

SHIVA MAHIMNA STOTRAM: HYMN ON THE GREATNESS OF SIVA

The Shiva Mahimna Stotra is very popular among the devotees of Lord Shiva and is considered one of the best among all Stotras (or Stutis) offered to Lord Shiva. The legend about the circumstances leading to the composition of this Stotra is as follows.

A king named Chitraratha had constructed a nice garden. There were beautiful flowers in this garden. These flowers were used every day by the king in worshipping Lord Shiva. One day a Gandharva (Singer in the court of Indra, the Lord of the Heaven) named Pushhpadanta being fascinated by the beautiful flowers, began to steal them, as a consequence of which king Chitraratha could not offer flowers to Lord Shiva. He tried very hard to capture the thief, but in vain, because the Gandharvas have divine power to remain invisible.

Finally the king spread the Shiva Nirmaalya in his garden. Shiva Nirmaalya consists of the Bilva leaves, flowers, etc. which have been used in worshipping Lord Shiva. The Shiva Nirmaalya is considered holy. The thief Pushhpadanta, not knowing this, walked on the Shiva Nirmaalya, and by that he incurred the wrath of Lord Shiva and lost the divine power of invisibility. He then designed a prayer to Lord Shiva for forgiveness. In this prayer he sung the greatness of the Lord. This very prayer became well known as the 'Shiva Mahimna Stotra'. Lord Shiva became pleased by this Stotram, and returned Pushhpadanta's divine powers. The recital of this stotra is very beneficial, and Shri Ramakrishna, one of the famous saints of the nineteenth century, went into samadhi just by reciting a few verses from this hymn.

1.If the praise of Thee by one who is ignorant of the extent of Thy greatness be unbecoming, then the praises of even Brahma and others are inadequate for Thee. And if all remain unblamable by praising Thee according to their intellectual powers, then even this attempt on my part to compose a hymn is free from any blemish.

2.Thy greatness is beyond the reach of mind and speech. Who will praise That which even the Vedas describe with trepidation by the method of 'not this, not this'? - how many qualities does That possess? and can be perceived by whom? Yet to the form taken later, whose mind and speech do not turn?

3.O Brahman! Does the praise of even Brihaspati cause any wonderment to Thee who art the author of the nectar like sweet Vedas? O Destroyer of Tripura, the thought that by praising Thy glories I shall purify my speech has prompted me to undertake this work.

4.O Giver of boons, in refutation of Thy Divinity which is described by the three Vedas, which creates, preserves and destroys the world, and which is divided into three bodies according to the different qualities, some thick headed persons offer arguments, which are pleasing to the ignorant but in reality hateful.

5.To fulfil what desire, having what body with what instruments, support, and materials does that creator indeed create the three worlds? - this kind of vain argumentation with regard to Thee whose Divine nature is beyond vociferous to the delusion of mankind.

6.O Lord of gods, can the worlds be without origin though they have parts? Is creation of the worlds possible without a creator? Who else but God can begin the creation of the worlds? Because they are fools, they raise doubts as regards Thy existence.

7.There are different paths of realization as enjoined by the three Vedas, Samkhya, Yoga and Pasupata doctrine and Vaishnava Sastras. Persons following different paths - straight or crooked according as they consider that this path is best or that one is proper due to the difference in temperaments, reach Thee alone just as rivers enter the ocean.

8.O Giver of boons, a great bull, a wooden club, an axe, a tiger skin, ashes, a human skull and the like - these are Thy sole possessions, though by the mere casting of eyes Thou gave the gods great treasures which they enjoy. Indeed, the mirage of sense - objects cannot delude one whose delight is in the Self.

9.O Destroyer of Pura some say that the whole universe is eternal, while others say that all is transitory. Yet others maintain that all these are eternal and non-eternal - having different characteristics. Bewildered, as it were by them I do not feel ashamed to praise Thee. Indeed this garrulity indicates my audacity.

10.O Girisha, Brahma trying above and, Vishnu trying below failed to measure Thee who took the form of a pillar of fire. Afterwards when they praised Thee with great devotion and faith, Thou revealed Thyself to them of thy own accord, indicating whether Thy worship can go without bearing result.

11.O Destroyer of Tripura, that the ten-headed Ravana, after riding the three worlds of any trace of enemies, remained with arms eager for fresh war is due to the fact of his having great devotion to Thee devotion which prompted him to offer his heads as lotuses to Thy feet.

12.When Ravana extended the valour of his arms whose strength was obtained by worshipping Thee - to Kailasa, Thy abode, Thou moved the tip of Thy toe, and he did not get a resting place even in the nether world. Verily, when affluent the wicked becomes deluded.

13.O Giver of boons, that Bana, who had the three worlds at his command, put to shade the wealth of Indra is not to be wondered at - he being the worshipper of Thy feet. What prosperity does not result from bowing down the head to Thee?

14.O Three eyed one, it is not that the dark stain on the throat of Thee who drank poison as an act of favor to gods and demons at their being panicky at the threatened destruction of the universe all on a sudden, has not beautified Thee. Even deformity is admirable in one who is given to freeing the worlds of fear.

15.O Lord, the god of love whose arrows do not fail anywhere in the world of gods, demons and men but are always successful became simply an object of memory by looking upon Thee as an ordinary god. For an insult to the self controlled does not conduce to good.

16.In order to save the world when Thou danced, the earth wondered at the striking of Thy feet, whether it would not come to sudden end; so felt the spatial region along with the planets, oppressed by the movement of Thy iron-cube like arms; and the heaven became then miserable - its side being struck by Thy waving matted hair. Ah, Thy very mightiness is the cause of trouble.

17.The river which pervades the sky and whose foams look all the more beautiful because of stars and planets, seems no more than a drop of water when on Thy head. That again has turned the world into islands surrounded by waters. And by this should be inferred how vast is Thy divine body.

18.When Thou wanted to burn the three cities which were but a piece of straw, the earth was Thy chariot, Brahma Thy charioteer, the great mountain Meru Thy bow, the sun and the moon the wheels of Thy chariot, Vishnu Thy arrow why this paraphernalia? The Lord is not dependent on others - He was playing with things at his command.

19.O Destroyer of Tripura, Hari rooted out his lotus eye to make deficiency when one flower was missing in his offering of a thousand lotuses to Thy feet; this great devotion transformed into a discus is alert in protecting the three worlds.

20.The sacrifice being destroyed Thou ever remainest the connecting link between the sacrificers and the fruit of the sacrifice. When does the destroyed sacrifice bear fruit, if not accompanied by the worship of the Lord? Therefore knowing Thee to be the giver of fruits and putting faith in the Vedas, people become resolute about the performance of sacrificial rites.

21.Thou Giver of refuge, even the sacrifice where Daksha, the Lord of creation expert in sacrifices was the sacrificer, Rishis were priests, gods were supervisors, was destroyed by Thee though Thou art bent upon giving fruits of the sacrifices. Surely the sacrifices cause injury to the sacrificers in the absence of devotion.

22.O Lord, the fury of Thee who became a hunter with a bow in hand has not as yet left Brahma though, keenly pierced by Thy arrow and terror stricken, he has fled to the sky.

23.O Destroyer of Tripura, O Giver of boons even on seeing in front the god of love, bow in hand burnt like a straw in a trice by Thee, if Parvati proud of her beauty thinks that Thou art under her fascination, because she was allowed to occupy half of Thy body on account of austerities, ah, surely the young women are under delusion.

24.O Destroyer of the god of love, O Giver of boons, Thy play is in cremation grounds, Thy companions are the ghosts, Thou besmearest Thy body with the ashes of burnt bodies and human skulls are Thy garlands all Thy conduct indeed is thus full of evil. But Thou conduces to the great good of those who remember Thee.

25.Thou art indeed that unspeakable truth which the Yogis realize through meditation on the Self, on controlling the breath according to the scriptural directions, and realize which they shed tears of thrilling joy and swimming as it were in a pool of nectar, enjoy inner bliss.

26.The wise hold this limiting opinion about Thee - Thou art the Sun, Thou art the Moon, Thou art the Fire, Thou art the Air, Thou art the Water, Thou art the space, thou art the Earth and Thou art the Self. But we do not know that thing which Thou art not.

27.O Giver of refuge, with the three letters A,U,M indicating the three Vedas, the three states, the three worlds and the three gods, the word OM mentions Thee separately. United by the subtle sound the word OM collectively mentions Thee - Thy Absolute Transcendent State.

28.O Lord, Bhava, Sarva, Rudra, Pasupati, Ugra, Mahadeva, Bhima, and Isana - these eight names are mentioned even in the Vedas. To Thee who art beloved and effulgent I bow down.

29.O Lover of solitude, my salutations to Thee who are very near as also very far, far away. O Destroyer of the god of love my salutations to Thee who art the minutest as also the largest. O Three eyed One, my salutations to Thee who art the oldest as also the youngest. This is my salutations to thee who art all as also transcending all.

30.Salutations to Brahma in whom Rajas preponderates for the creation of the universe, salutation to Rudra in whom Tamas preponderates for the destruction of the same. Salutation to Vishnu in whom Sattva preponderates for giving happiness to the people, Salutation to Siva who is effulgent and beyond the three attributes.

31.O Giver of boons, why is my ill-developed mind subject to misery and where is Thy Divinity - eternal and possessing infinite virtues? Though terror stricken because of this, I am forced by my devotion to offer this hymn at Thy feet.

32.O Lord if the blue mountain be the ink, the ocean the ink-pot, the branch of the heavenly tree be pen, the earth the writing leaf, and by taking these if the Goddess of Learning writes for eternity, even then the limit of Thy virtues will not be reached.

33.The best of the demi-gods, Pushpadanta by name, composed in great devotion this beautiful hymn of the Lord, who is worshipped by demons, gods and the best of sages, whose praises have been sung who has got the moon on His forehead and who is attributeless.

34.The person who with purified heart and in great devotion always reads this beautiful hymn to Siva becomes like Siva after death in the abode of Siva, and while in this world gets much wealth, long life, many children as also fame.

35.There is no God better than Siva, there is no hymn better than the Hymn on The Greatness of Siva, there is no sacred word better than the name of Siva, there is nothing better to be known than the real nature of spiritual teacher.

36.Getting initiation into the spiritual life, charity, austerity, pilgrimage, knowledge of the scriptures the performance of sacrificial rites - these do not give one-sixteenth part of the merit that is got by reciting the Hymn on the Greatness Of Siva.

37.The Lord of Gandharvas, Pushpadanta by name is the servant of the great God who has the crescent moon on His forehead. Fallen from his glory due to the anger of the Lord, he composed this very beautiful Hymn on the Greatness Of Siva to regain His favor.

38.After worshipping Siva, who is adored by gods and who grants heaven and liberation, if one with single minded devotion and folded palms reads the unfailing hymn composed by Pushpadanta, one goes to Siva, being worshipped by Kinnaras.

39.This unparalleled, sacred hymn composed by Pushpadanta and describing the glory of God is all very fascinating from start to finish.

40.This hymnal worship is offered to the feet of Siva. May the ever - propitious Lord of gods be pleased with me at this.

41.O Lord, I do not know the true nature of Thy being - of what kind Thou art. Of whatever nature Thou mayest be, O Great God to That my salutation again and again.

42.The person who reads this hymn once, twice or thrice is glorified in the abode of Siva, being freed from all sins.

43.If a person learns by heart, reads or keeps in the home this hymn, which came out of the lips of Pushpadanta and which destroys sins and is dear to Siva, Siva the Lord of creation becomes very pleased.

Here ends the Hymn on the Greatness of Siva composed by Pushpadanta.

I.SADSIVA

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14. The greatness of Rudraksa
15. Maha Sivaratri

Sadasiva, Sadashiv, Siva, Shiva, Shiv are referred to:

“That from whom words recede, not approaching him even with the mind; that from whom this entire Universe, beginning with Brahma, Visnu, Rudra and Indra along with all elements and all sense organs is evolved at first, he is the lord Mahadeva, Sadasiva – The Omniscient, the lord of the Universe. He can be realized by supreme devotion and not by other means. Rudra, Hari, Hara and other lords of Devas are ever desirous of seeing him moved by a great devotion.”

One is liberated by devotion unto Siva, devotion to Siva is due to his grace and his grace is due to devotion, just as seed gives rise to the sprout and the sprout produces the seed. It is by the grace of Siva alone, the means of achievement of the achievable can be realized and that is the essence of the Vidya, mystic learning, mentioned in the Vedas.

Listening to the glory of Siva, glorifying him by means of words and deliberation within the mind, constitute the greatest of the means of achievement. Sadasiva is to be heard glorified and meditated upon.

Siva alone is glorified as Niskala, nameless and formless, since he is identical with supreme Brahman. He is also Sakala as he has an embodied form. He is both Sakala and Niskala. It is in his Niskala aspect that the Linga, the linga image is appropriate and in the Sakala aspect, the worship of his embodied form is appropriate. Other deities, not being Brahmin, have no Niskala aspect anywhere. In view of other deities being embodied alone, are worshipped solely in the bodily form while Siva has Brahmatva and other Jivatva.

1. Origin of Linga Image, The Linga of Siva

Once, the noble souls Brahma and Visnu fought with each other, to establish their Supremacy. In order to eradicate their arrogance, lord Paramesvara, the great lord Siva, showed his unembodied Niskala form in the form of a column in their midst. He showed his phallus emblem separate, evolved out of the column with a desire to bless the three worlds. The embodied forms of different Devas yield only enjoyment whilst Siva, the linga emblem and the embodied form together bestow auspicious enjoyment and salvation.

Once, long ago, foremost among Yogins, Visnu, was having a nap on his serpent – couch, surrounded by the goddess of fortune and his attendants when Brahma, the foremost among the Vedic Scholars happened to come there and asked the lotus-eyed Visnu to stand as a mark of respect for him. Brahma even told Visnu that expiatory rights were ordained for that spiteful wretch who behaved like a haughty fool at the site of a honourable elderly person.

Visnu did not lose his cool and asked Brahma to sit on the couch. Brahma told Visnu that he was the protector of the world. On this Visnu told Brahma that the whole universe

was situated within him and that Brahma's thinking was that of a thief. He further told Brahma that he was born of the lotus from his naval-region and that he was his son.

Arguing with each other, claiming that each was better than the other, they got ready to fight like two foolish goats desirous of killing each other. The two heroic deities, seated on their respective vehicles, namely the Swan and the Garuda, fought together along with their attendants.

The scene was witnessed by different groups of Devas moving about in aerial chariots and scattered flowers everywhere. The Garuda vehicle deity, Visnu became infuriated and discharged unbearable arrows and many kinds of weapons on Brahma's chest. Brahma too hurled many arrows of fiery fury with different kinds of weapons on Visnu. The Devas commented on the wondrous fight and were agitated, Visnu in his great fury and mental agitation breathed hard and discharged the Maheswara weapon over Brahma. Annoyed at this, Brahma aimed the terrible Pasupata weapon at the chest of Visnu. These two weapons of Brahma and Visnu faced each other in terrible clash. Devas in their helpless agitation and vexation talked among themselves as people do at the time of war between the monarchs.

The three pointed trident bearing deity, the supreme Brahma; Siva was the cause of creation, maintenance, annihilation, concealment and blessing. Without His corroboration even any individual anywhere cannot split a blade of grass. Devas, thus desired to go to Siva's abode and accordingly came to the summit of Kailasa, where the moon crested god rested. On seeing that region of Paramesvara in the shape of Omkara, they bent their heads down in reverence and entered the palace. Siva, the supreme leader of the Devas was brilliantly shining on the gem-set seat in the company of Uma on an altar in the middle of the council-chamber. His right leg was kept on the knee of the left, his lotus like hands were placed over the legs with his attendants all round him.

Devas were happy to see the lords. The lord on seeing the Devas beckoned them to him through his attendants and addressed them gravely with sweet auspicious words.

Iswara asked them of their well being saying that if they were happy under his suzerainty. He told them that he was aware of the fight between Brahma and Visnu and agitation in their part was like a redundant speech. In that very assembly the lord announced his desire to go to the battlefield of Hari and Brahma and accordingly issued His directive to a hundred of the commanders of his attendants.

2.Narration of Siva Temples

Siva's all temples accord salvation. The Earth, fifty crores of yojanas in extent, abounding in mountains and forests, supports the people at the bidding of Siva. The lord has himself raised up these temples and holy centres in different places for the liberation of the residents of these localities. These temples whether self-risen or not, in view of their being accepted (as their frequent resort) by the sages and Devas are intended for the redemption of the people.

An intelligent man shall resort to Ganga or the Kaveri River; certainly the sins will be quelled thereby. There are many holy centres yielding Rudraloka. Only by good conduct, good predilections and good concepts as well as by being sympathetic can the devotee derive the benefit, not otherwise. Meritorious actions performed in a holy centre flourish in many ways. Sinful acts committed in a holy centre, though slight, become manifold.

If the sin committed in a holy centre is only for livelihood, the merit will destroy that sin. Merit accords prosperity and quells physical, verbal and mental sins. The mental sin is

adamantine in sticking to the sinner and it continues for many Kalpas. The mental sin can be wiped off only by meditation and not otherwise. Japas and the physical sin wipe off the verbal sin by forcefully causing the emaciation of the body. Sins committed by means of wealth can be wiped off by making charitable gifts and not otherwise, though crores of Kalpas (aeons) may elapse.

Hence those who wish for happiness must refrain from committing sins.

3. Description of Fire – sacrifices.

Householders who have started their Aupasana rite shall maintain the rite in the sacrificial fire kept in a vessel or pit always. The offering in the fire in the evening for the fire-god is the bestower of prosperity. The offering in the morning for the sun god is conducive to longevity. This is called Agniyajna in as much as it enters the sun during the day.

The different sacrifices Sthalipaka etc. for the propitiation of Indra and other gods by offerings in the fire are called Devayajna. The rites of Cauila (ceremony of tonsure) etc. are performed in the ordinary fire.

The regular study of the Vedas is called Brahmajajna. A Brahmin shall perform this constantly for the propitiation of gods. This is to be practiced by all and hence no special rules are prescribed.

At the beginning of the first creation, the omniscient, merciful lord Mahadeva created the different weekdays for the benefit of the entire world. Lord Mahadeva, the global physician, the omniscient, the panacea of all panaceas, made the first day his own day that bestows good health.

Next he created the day of Maya, Illusion, the bestower of prosperity. Afterwards when the birth of Kumara was attended with some mishaps, he created the day for the sake of surmounting mishaps and idleness. With a desire to bless the worlds and for their nurture and protection, he created the next day dedicated to Visnu, the protector of the worlds. The next day created by the lord is for the sake of longevity of the worlds dedicated to the creator of the three worlds, Brahma, called also Paramesthin, who is the bestower of longevity too. Hence this day too bestows longevity.

The last two days are the bestowers of worldly enjoyments and removers of premature death respectively. The world made the sun etc. is His own manifestations and is firmly established in solar cycle, Jyotiscakra, the lords of different days. Their worship in their respective days accord the respective benefits viz: - health, riches, removal of sickness, nourishment, longevity, enjoyment of pleasures and prevention of death respectively. It is said that respective merits of the different days are secured through the gratification of the gods. Siva is the ultimate bestower of the fruits accruing from the worship of other gods as well.

In the ailments, of the eyes or head or for quelling leprosy, the sun shall be worshipped and the Brahmins fed for a day, a month, a year or three years. If the action meritorious or otherwise that has begun to fructify is sufficiently strong, the ailment, old age etc. are alleviated. The repetition of the mantras of the favourite deity accords the respective benefits of the day of the week. The first day of the week dedicated to the sun has the special merit of the removal of sin, especially for Brahmins.

For the sake of riches, the intelligent devotee shall worship Lakshmi etc. on Monday with cooked rice soaked in ghee and shall feed Brahmin couples.

For alleviating ailments, the devotee shall worship Kali and others on Tuesday.

He shall feed Brahmins with an Adhaka a measure of cooked rice, the pulse, black gram and green gram. The scholarly devotee shall worship Visnu with curd-rice on Wednesday. Sons, friends, women folk etc. will always be well nourished forever.

A person who seeks longevity shall worship the deities for their gratification, with sacred threads, cloth, milk and ghee on Thursday. On Friday for the sake of enjoyment of worldly pleasures, the devotee shall worship devas with concentration. Brahmins should be propitiated with the cooked food consisting of six flavours. Good cloth should be presented to women to gladden them. The wise devotee shall worship Rudra and others on Saturday that wards off premature death, by performing Homa with gingerly seeds. He shall make gifts to the Brahmins and feed them with cooked rice and gingerly seeds. Thus worshipping the deities he shall derive the fruit of good health etc.

4. Bestower of salvation, Sivalingas, their types and forms

Siva gets delighted by the dedication of selves and bestows the salvation of complete identity. This lifetime offering shall be made only to Siva. Siva exemplifies birth in as much as He has the form of both Yoni (vaginal passage) and Linga (Penis). Hence in order to ward off births, the Janmapuja is of Siva alone.

The entire universe consisting to the movable and the immovable is of the nature of Bindu (dot) and Nada (sound). Bindu is Sakti (Power) and Siva is Nada. Hence Siva and Sakti pervade the universe. Bindu is the support of Nada. The universe has the support of Bindu. Both Bindu and Nada together support the entire universe. The unification of the Bindu and the Nada is called Sakalakarana and the universe takes its birth as a result of this Sakalakarana.

The Linga emblem is the fusion of Bindu and the Nada (sound) and is the cause of the universe. Bindu is the goddess and Siva is the Nada and the fusion of the two is the linga emblem of Siva. Hence to ward off future births, the devotee shall worship the linga emblem of Siva. Goddess of the form of Bindu is the mother and Siva of the form of Nada is the father. Great bliss is the result of the worship of the parents. The devotee shall worship the linga emblem for the acquisition of the Great Bliss.

The lord delighted at the worship of His symbol, wards off the function of the symbol, that function being birth etc. cease.

The worship should be performed on Sundays, which wards off births. The devotee shall worship the great linga emblem on Sundays with the syllable Om. The syllable Om (a+u+m) is Dhvani Linga.

The svayambhu linga is Nada Linga; the Yantra, diagrammatic contrivance, is Bindulinga. "M" syllable is the installed, Pratisthita, linga. "U" syllable is mobile, Cara, Linga and the "A" syllable is a Linga of huge form Guruvigraha. A person who worships the lingas perpetually becomes liberated soul undoubtedly.

A devout worship of Siva liberated man from the bondage of births. A fourth benefit is achieved by wearing Rudraksa beads sacred to Siva and a moiety is achieved by smearing the holy ashes over the forehead. Three-fourths can be achieved by the recital of mantras and a man becomes full-fledged devotee by means of worship. A man who worships both the linga emblem of Siva and the devotees of Siva attains salvation. Stable devotion can be found firmly established and flourishing only in that person who reads or listens to it attentively.

5. The glorification of the syllable Om, Pranava and the five-syllabled mantra

The syllable Om means an excellent boat to cross the ocean of worldly existence.

Pra = of the Prakriti i.e. the world evolved out of it. Navam – Navam Varam – an excellent boat, Pranava, Om, is that which leads to salvation. Or it may mean that which leads to new knowledge. After annihilating all actions it gives the persons who repeat the mantra or worship, a fresh knowledge of the pure soul. This Pranava is two-fold (1) the subtle (2) the gross.

The subtle one is of a single syllable where the constituent five syllables are not differentiated clearly. The gross one is of five syllables where all the constituent syllables are manifest.

The subtle one is for the liberated living soul, jivanmukta. The need for the contemplation of the meaning through the mantra is only up to the destruction of the physical body. When the body is destroyed, he completely merges in Siva undoubtedly. The mere repeater of the mantra attains the yogic communion with Siva certainly.

A person who repeats the mantra thirty-six crores of times, certainly attains the yogic communion. The subtle Pranava is again two fold – the short and the long.

The long one is present in the heart of the Yogins alone – separately in the form of “A” syllable, “U” syllable, “M” syllable, Bindu and Nada. It is endowed with all the digits of the time sound. Siva. Sakti and their union are indicated by “M” syllable ramified into three and this is called the short subtle Pranava (OM). The short Pranava shall be recited and repeated by those who desire their all sins annihilated.

The devotee who practices the Japa of Pranava (Om) with due ritualistic placing of fingers on the parts of his body becomes a sage. He shall attain all the benefits of the ritualistic Nyasa such as the blessings of ten mothers and the (attainment of) six pathways.

As for those who are devoted to activities and those who both refrain from and indulge in activities, the gross Pranava is recommended. Sivayogins are of three types being devoted to Rites, Austerities and Japas.

The Kriyayogin is the one who engages him in sacred rites and worship spending money, using limbs of the body and uttering words Namah (obeisance) etc.

Tapoyogin is the one who desists from injuring others, restrains all external sense organs, take limited quantities of food and performs worships.

Japayogin is the one who is quiet, performs Japa always, is free from all sorts of desires and maintains all observances.

A five-syllabled mantra of Siva is the Gross Pranava. The name Siva is used in the dative case with Namah prefixed. (Namah Sivaya – Homage to Siva). It implies the five principles. The Japa of the five-syllabled manta shall always be performed along with Pranava i.e. OM NAMAHA SIVAYA. A man can achieve everything by means of the Japa of the five-syllabled mantra.

The five-syllabled mantra shall be repeated five hundred thousand times, all the time remembering the various aspects of Lord Siva who is seated in the lotus pose. He is the bestower of all auspiciousness. He has the crescent moon for his coronet. He has given shelter to Ganga in His matted hair. With Sakti seated on his left thigh, He shines with His great concourse of attendants around Him.

He bears the moon on his forehead. He shows the gestures of bestowing boon and offering freedom from fear. He is the cause of perpetual blessing. He is Sadasiva. He shall be mentally worshipped at first or stationed in the heart or in the solar zone. While performing the Japa of the five syllabled mantra, he shall sit facing the east.

6. The nature of bondage and liberation and Glorification of linga emblem of Siva

A Jiva is said to be bondage if the noose of eight fold primary essences, Prakriti etc, ties him up. When freed from them, he is called liberated. Perfect control and subjugation of Prakriti and its offshoots is Salvation. A Jiva in bondage when freed from it is called a liberated soul. The set of eight that binds is – Prakriti, Buddhi (cosmic intellect), Ahamkara (cosmic ego) of the nature of attributes, and the five Tanmatras (cosmic principles of Ether etc.) The body is evolved out of these eight. The body carries on activities. The activities generate the body. Thus birth and activities continue in a series.

The body is of three types: the gross, the subtle and the casual. The gross body is responsible for all activities; the subtle body yields the enjoyment of pleasures through the senses. The casual body is for the sake of experiencing the good and the bad results of the activities of the Jiva.

The Jiva experiences happiness as a result of virtue and misery as a result of sin. The Jiva bound by the rope of activities revolves round and round for ever like a wheel by means of the three types of body and their activities.

The creator of the wheel must be worshipped for the cessation of the revolution of the wheel. The Prakriti etc. constitute the great wheel and Siva is beyond the Prakriti. The creator of the wheel is Lord Siva. He is beyond the Prakriti. Just as a boy drinks or spits out water as he pleases so also Siva keeps Prakriti etc. just as he pleases. He is called Siva because he has brought it under his control (Vasikrta). Siva alone is omniscient, perfect and free from desire.

The mental prowess of Mahesvara which Vedas alone can comprehend consists of omniscience, satiety, beginning less understanding, independence, never failing and infinite power. Hence Prakriti etc. come under control due to Siva's grace. One shall worship Siva alone for the acquisition of Siva's grace. The result of self-less worship of a perfect being is an activity done with dedication to Siva causes pleasure to a being. Keeping Siva in view, the devotee has to worship the linga or the embodied image of Siva. He has to worship his devotee by means of the body, mind, speech and money spent.

Siva, the great lord, who is beyond Prakriti is delighted at the worship and specially blesses the worshipper. The Karma etc. come under control gradually due to Siva's grace. Beginning with Karma and ending with Prakriti when everything comes under control, the Jiva is called liberated and he shines as a self-realised person.

By the grace of Siva, when his body that is resultant from activities (Karmadeha) comes under control, the devotee attains residence in Sivaloka. This is called Saloka form of liberation. When the subtle elements come under control, the devotee attains nearness to Siva. Then he attains similarity with Siva by means of weapons and activities. This is called Sarupya. When the devotee acquires the great favour, the cosmic intellect too comes under control.

The mental prowess of Siva becomes his without any difficulty. On acquiring the omniscience and prosperity of Siva, the devotee becomes resplendent in his soul; this is called Sayujya, complete identity by persons well versed in the Vedas and Agamas, sacred texts. It is in this order that one gets salvation by the worship of the linga image of Siva.

Hence the devotee shall worship Siva by performing sacred rites etc. for the acquisition of Siva's favour, Siva's sacred rites, Siva's penance, and the Japas of Siva mantras

always. Knowledge of Siva and meditation on Him shall be practiced more and more. The time till retirement to bed, the time till death shall be spent in contemplating over Siva. One shall adore Siva by means of the “Sadyo” mantras and flowers. One will attain welfare.

7. The rules governing worship of Siva in the linga and other forms

The first linga form is the Pranava that confers all desires. It is called Suksma Pranava (the subtle one) if it is Niskala. The Sthula (gross one) is Sakala and it consists of five constituent syllables. The worship of these two is called a penance. Both of them accord salvation. There are many linga emblems of Paurusa Prakriti

These are of five types: Svayambhu, Bindu, Pratisthita, Cara and Guru Linga.

When he is gladdened by the austerities of devas and sages, Siva in the form of Nada assumes the form of a seed under the ground and suddenly piercing the ground above like a germinating sprout manifests Himself outside and makes His presence felt. Since this emblem is self-raised, it is called Svayambhu.

The Bindu and Nada forms, the stationary or mobile ones are conceptual but belong to Siva.

If the image is installed with pure mind in pure altar either by the Gods Or the sages for the realisation of the soul, it is either called Paurusa and it comes under the category of the installed linga image of Siva. By a regular worship of this linga image, the devotee will obtain all Paurusa Aisvaryas (human riches). If great Brahmins or rich kings install linga prepared by the artisans, it is called Pratisthita and Prakrta. That which is forceful and permanent is called Paurusa. That which is weak and temporary is called Prakrta. The mountain comes under the Paurusa class and the surface of the world under the Prakrta class. Trees etc. are Paurusa and creepers etc. are Prakrta.

Rasalinga as fore most among mobile lingas belonging to Caralingas is a bestower of all wishes to the Brahmins. The auspicious Banalinga is a bestower of vast kingdoms to the Ksatruyas.

A gold linga bestows the ownership of vast wealth on the Vaisyas. A Silalinga (a linga made of rock) bestows great purity on the Sudras. A crystal linga and a Banalinga bestow all sorts of wishes on all. If a devotee does not possess a linga of his own, there is no harm in using another’s linga for the purpose of worship.

A ritualistic shall perform all the worship in a Vessel. At the conclusion of Abhiseka (ceremonial bath) the Naivedya consisting of cooked rice of the Sali variety shall be offered.

When the worship is over, the linga shall be kept in a casket and placed separately in the house. Persons who worship their own lingas shall, after the worship is over, offer as food those articles of diet to which they are accustomed. All non-ritualistic shall worship the subtle linga. In the place of floral offerings, they shall use sacred ashes for adoration and food. They shall keep the linga after worship on their head forever.

The ash is of three types, derived from ordinary fire, Vedic fire and Siva fire. The ash derived from ordinary fire shall be used for the purification of articles of mud, wood or metals and even for grains. The ashes resulting from Vedic rites in fire shall be smeared over the forehead at the end of the rites.

Bilva twigs shall be burnt repeating the Atma mantra of Aghora. This fire is called Sivagni. The ashes resulting there from are called Sivagnija. The dung of cow, preferably

of Kapila cow, shall be burnt first and then the twigs of Sami, Asvattha, Palasa, Vata, Aragvadha or Bilva shall be burnt. The ash resulting there from is also Sivagnija.

The word Bhasma (Ash) means that which is honoured and adored. Siva formerly did so. The gastric fire burns different kinds of foodstuffs and with their essence nourishes the body. Similarly the great lord Siva, the creator of the universe presided over by Him and takes the essence out of the same. After burning the universe He applies the ashes over his body. Under the pretext of annihilation He has taken the essence of the same. He assigned the essence of His own body. The essence Akasa (the Ether) constitutes His hair. The essence of the wind principle constitutes His face

The essence of the Fire principle constitutes His heart that of the principles of waters the hip and that of the principle of the Earth the knees. Thus the other limbs too. The Tripundraka (the three parallel lines of ash marks over the forehead) is the essence of Trinity: Brahma, Visnu and Rudra. Similarly Mahesvara has retained the essence of everything in the form of Tilaka (the small circular mark) on the forehead

The word Siva signifies him who controls everything and whom none can control, (Siva Vasi) just as Simha signifies the creature that attacks other animals and whom other animals cannot attack. The word Siva is another interpretation. The syllable S means Permanent Bliss. The letter "I" means Purusa (the primordial male energy), the syllable "Va" means Sakti (the primordial female energy). A harmonious compound of these syllables is Siva.

Ashes must first be smeared in the dust form and then in Tripundraka form. At the time of worship, water is added to the ashes. For mere sanctification, the ashes are used without water. The devotee, whether it is day or night, whether it is man or a woman shall use water with the ashes and wear Tripundra at the time of adoration.

The one who has Tripundra made of ashes with water and performs worship derives the entire benefit of the same, no one else. Wearing the ashes with Siva's mantra, he comes out of the limitations of the Asramas. He is called Sivasrami for he is solely devoted to Siva.

Being the devotee of Siva and devoted to his sacred rites, he need not observe impurity accruing from death or birth in the family. The characteristic sign of Siva's devotee is that he has a circular dot of white ashes or mud put by himself or by his preceptor on the top of his forehead. The word Guru (Preceptor) signifies a person who wards off bad qualities.

Hence the intelligent devotee shall know that the physical body of the preceptor is known as Gurulinga the worship of which is service rendered to the preceptor.

The pair of births and deaths originates from the Maya of Siva. After such a dedication, the devotee is not born again. As long as the body exists, the Jiva is dependent on activities and he is spoken of as being in bondage. But when the three forms of the physical body are under control, the scholars call it "Salvation".

Siva, the primary cause of the causes, is the Creator of Mayacakra. He wipes off the Dvandva birth and death – which originates from His Maya. The Dvandva is conceived and created by Siva. It shall be dedicated to Him. A person observing worship of Siva shall observe silence and perform one of these – a sacred rite, penance, Japa, maintenance of the knowledge or meditation. He shall observe truthfulness etc. The devotee of Siva shall always resort to the linga emblem of Siva. One becomes Siva by resorting to stationary linga emblem.

8. Glorification of the worship of Siva's earthen linga image

The linga emblem of Siva made of precious gems was considered the best in the Krta age; of pure gold in the Dvapara; of mercury in the Treta and of earth in the Kali age. Among the eight cosmic bodies of Siva, the earthen body is the best. Since it is not worshipped by anyone else, it yields great benefit.

Just as Siva is the oldest and most excellent of all deities, so also his earthly linga image is the most excellent of all. Just as the celestial river, Ganga is the oldest and the most excellent of all the rivers, so also is the earthen linga image of Siva, the most excellent of all. Just as the Pranava is considered as the greatest of all mantras, so also the earthen linga image of Siva that is worthy to be worshipped, is the most excellent of all.

Just as Kasi is considered the most excellent of all the holy cities, so also the earthen linga image of Siva is spoken of as the most excellent of all other linga images. Just as the rite of Sivaratri is the greatest of all sacred rites, so also the earthly linga image of Siva is the most excellent of all other linga images. Just as Siva's energy is considered as greatest of all goddesses so also the earthen linga emblem of Siva is spoken of as the most excellent of all.

The propitiation of the earthen linga image is sanctifying, bestower of bliss, Longevity, satiety, nourishment and fortune and it must be observed by all good aspirants. He who worships the earthen linga image in the three junctures of the three-fold division of the day every day gains the bliss for twenty-one future births.

He who worships the earthen linga emblem of Siva every day stays in Sivaloka for so many years of Siva, as he had been visiting Siva's temple in his life. If he had any wish, he would be reborn in the land of Bharata as a sovereign monarch. If a man without any desire worship every day the earthen linga image, would stay in Siva's region forever.

All mobile linga emblems shall be single whole, Stationary linga images shall be made of two pieces. This is the rule about broken and unbroken linga images both immobile and mobile.

The pedestal is the great Maya; the linga image is lord Siva. Hence in immobile image, two-piece construction is recommended; those who know the principles of Saiva Cult that a stationary linga image shall be made of two pieces have mentioned this. Those who make a stationary linga image as a single whole and a mobile one pieced are fools. They never reap the benefit of worship.

9. The number of linga images of Siva used in worship for fulfillment of desires

In the four Vedas, nothing else is mentioned so holy as the worship of the linga image. This is the conclusion arrived at in all sacred lores. All other rites can entirely be abandoned. A really learned man shall worship only the linga image with great devotion. If the linga image is worshipped, it means that the entire universe consisting of the mobile and immobile has been worshipped. There is no other means to save persons submerged in the ocean of worldly existence.

Men of the world are blind due to ignorance. Their minds are sullied by worldly desires. Except for the worship of the linga image, there is no other raft to save them from destruction. Hari, Brahma and other devas, sages, Yaksas, Raksasas, Gandharvas, Caranas, Siddhas, Daityas, Danavas, Sesa and other serpents, Garuda, and other birds, all the Manus, Prajapati, Kinnaras, men etc. have worshipped the wealth-yielding linga image with great devotion and have achieved their desires surging in their heart of hearts.

Brahmins, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras, persons born of inter-caste marriages and others shall worship the linga icon with great devotion with their respective mantras. The true devotee after performing worship in the prescribed manner shall worship the eight cosmic bodies (of Siva) consisting of three worlds. The Earth, the waters, the fire, the wind, the Ether, the sun, the moon and the sacrificer – these are the eight cosmic bodies. Sarva, Bhava, Rudra, Ugra, Bhima, Isvara, Mahadeva and Pasupati are the manifestations of Siva who shall be worshipped with these cosmic bodies respectively.

Siva's worship shall always be performed facing the north, not the east. Siva shall not be worshipped without Tripundara, Rudraksa and Bilvapatra.

10. Partaking of the Naivedya of Siva by others and the greatness of Bilvapatra

A devotee of Siva who is pure and clean, devoutly performing good rites and of fixed resolve shall partake of Siva's Naivedya. He shall abandon all thoughts, which are not worthy of being entertained. Even at the sight of the Naivedya of Siva, all sins disappear. When it is taken in, crores of merits flock in, no moment, a thousand sacrifices are of no avail, hundred million of sacrifices are useless. When Siva Naivedya becomes popular with the members, that house becomes sacred and it can make others also sacred. When Siva's Naivedya is offered it shall be accepted with pleasure and humility. It shall be eaten eagerly while remembering Siva. After initiation in Saiva cult, the devotee shall partake of the offerings of eatables made to the linga image whether conceived in the heart or made of moon-slab, silver, gold etc. The Naivedya of all linga icons is called a great favour and is auspicious.

A devotee after initiation into Saiva cult shall eat it. With regard to the following linga images viz: that which is obtained from Salagrama stone, Rasalinga, lingas made of rock, silver, gold, crystals and gems, lingas installed by devas and siddhas, Kasmira lingas and Jyotirlingas, the partaking of the Naivedya of Siva is on a par with the rite of Candrayana. Even the slayer of a Brahmin if he partakes of the remains of the food offered to the God quells all the sins immediately.

After performing the ceremonial ablution duly if any one drinks the water three times, all the three types of sins committed by him are quickly destroyed. If at all anything from Siva naivedya is not to be taken it is that article which is actually put on the linga. That what is not in contact with the linga is pure and as such, it can be partaken of. When it is in contact with Salagrama Sila, it is pure and can be taken whether it is food –offering, leaf, flower, fruit or water.

11. The greatness of Bilva

One who worships Mahadeva in the form Linga at the root of Bilva becomes a purified soul, shall certainly attain Siva.

One who pours water over his head at the root of the Bilva can be considered to have taken his bath in all sacred waters in the earth verily he is holy. Seeing the water basin round the foot of the Bilva tree full of water, Siva becomes greatly pleased. The man who worships the root of a Bilva tree offering scents and flowers attains the region of Siva. His happiness increases, his family flourishes.

He who places a row of lighted lamps at the root of Bilva tree with reverence becomes endowed with the knowledge of truth and merges into Siva. He who worships the Bilva tree abounding in fresh tender sprouts becomes free from sins. If a man piously feeds a devotee of Siva at the end of the root of Bilva tree, he reaps the fruits thereof, ten million times more than in the usual course.

One who makes a gift of rice cooked in milk and ghee to a devotee of Siva, at the root of a Bilva tree, will never become poor.

12.The glorification of the Rudraksa and of the names of Siva

Those who adore Siva are blessed and content. Their birth is fruitful and their family is elevated. Sins never touch those from whose mouth the names Sadasiva, Siva etc. come out for ever, as they do not touch the burning charcoal of the khadira wood. When a mouth utters “Obeisance to Thee, holy Siva” that mouth (face) is on par with holy centres destroying all sins.

Siva’s name, the ashes and the Rudraksa beads – the three are very holy and are on par with Triveni, the confluence of the three holy rivers.

The sight of the persons who have these three in their bodies is a rare occurrence. But when obtained it removes all sins. There is no difference at all between these two – a sight of the holy man and a bath in the Triveni. One who does not realise this is undoubtedly a sinner. The man who has no ashes on his forehead, has not worn Rudraksa on his body and does not utter names of Siva shall be shunned as one does a baseman.

Brahma wishing to bestow beneficence weighed one against the other. He put on ones side the benefit achieved by a person in whose body the three things were present. On the other side he put the blessedness achieved by those who took their bath in the holy Triveni. Both were found equal. Form that time onwards, Brahma, Visnu and other Devas wear these three. Their very sight dispels sins.

Mountainous heaps of great sins are destroyed as in blazing forest fire when the names of Siva are repeated. They are reduced to ashes without any difficulty. Those who are drenched by the nectarine downpour of Siva’s names never feel ill at ease even in the middle of the conflagration of worldly existence. The noble souls, who have acquired great devotion to the names of Siva, and those like them, attain perfect liberation instantaneously.

Only he who has performed penances in the course of many births can acquire devotion to the names of Siva that destroys all sins. Salvation is easy of access only to him who has extraordinary and unbroken devotion for the names of Siva.

Even if a person has committed many sins, a person who has reverence for the Japa of Siva names, becomes certainly free from all sins. Just as the trees in forest are burnt and reduced to ashes by the forest fire, so also are the sins destroyed by Siva’s names.

After going through all the Vedas it has been decided by our ancestors that the noblest means of crossing the ocean of worldly existence is the performance of the Japa of Siva’s names. The power of the names of Siva in destroying sins is more than the ability of men to commit them.

13.The greatness of holy ashes

One is known as Mahabhasma, the great ashes and the second are known as Svalpa, the little. The Mahabhasma is of various types: Sruta (Vedic), Smarta (resulting from smriti rites) and Laukika (prepared from ordinary fire). The Svalpa is the ordinary ash, which is of various forms. The Sruta and the Smarta ashes are to be used only by the twice born. Every one can use the Laukika.

When dry cow dung is reduced to ashes, it is called Agneya (fiery). Men seeking intellect shall use the ashes resulting from Agnihotra and other sacrificial rites for the Tripundra. When the ashes are put on the forehead or smeared with water, the seven mantras “Agni” etc, mentioned in the Jabalopanisad, shall be recited.

Siva, Visnu, Uma, Lakshmi, goddess of speech and other gods and goddesses, Brahmins, ksatriyas, vaisyas and persons of mixed castes and hill tribes have observed Tripundra and dusting always.

Even after hundreds of crores of kalpas, Siva knowledge will not dawn upon, those who do not observe with faith Tripundra and Uddhulana. One who makes the Tripundra on the forehead with white ashes shall attain, on death, the primordial worlds.

All the holy centres and sacred rivers go ever to the place, which a person who is endowed with Siva Jnana (knowledge of Siva) and has put on ashes casually visits.

Neither Brahma, nor Visnu, nor Rudra, nor sages, nor the other devas can explain adequately the greatness of the application of the ashes. Those men who exclude a man wearing Tripundra and perform holy rites are not liberated from worldly bondage even after crores of births.

A person who has applied ashes on his body actually wears, as many lingas as there are particles of the ash that remain on his body. Just as the fire when touched with or without knowledge burns the body so does the ash worn consciously or unconsciously sanctify the man.

Those who censure Tripundra actually censure Siva. Those who wear it with devotion actually wear Siva. Fie upon the forehead that is devoid of ash. Fie upon the village that has no Siva temple. Fie upon that life that does not worship Siva. Fie upon the lore that does not refer to Siva.

He who makes Tripundra duly with the ash is freed from groups of great as well as small sins.

He who wears the Tripundra on his forehead gains the same merit as one who takes his bath in the sacred rivers like Ganga and whatever other sacred ponds, lakes and holy centres there are in the world.

The five syllabled mantra which grants Siva Kaivalya is on a par with seven crores of great and many crores of other mantras.

Mantras of other deities bestowing all blessedness are easily accessible to the devotee who wears the Tripundra. One who wears Tripundra raises a thousand predecessors and a thousand successors in his family.

In this life he will enjoy all worldly pleasures and live long without any disease. At the end of his span of his life, he will have a peaceful death.

He will assume then a divine auspicious body endowed with eight accomplishments. He will travel by a divine aerial chariot attended by celestial gods. He will enjoy the pleasures of Vidyadharas, powerful Gandharvas, in the worlds of Indra and other guardians of the quarters and those of Prajapatis and finally reach Brahma's region where he will sport with a hundred virgins. He will enjoy different kinds of pleasures there for the full period of the span of life of Brahma. He will then enjoy the pleasures in the Visnuloka till hundred Brahma's die. Thereafter he will attain Sivaloka and enjoy everlasting bliss there. Finally he will attain Sivasayujya. No suspicion need be entertained in this matter. After going through the essence of all Upanishads again and again, Tripundara is conducive to great excellence. A man who wears the Tripundara while performing Sraddha, Yajna, Japa, Homa, Vaisvadeva and the worship of the deities is a purified soul and he conquers even death.

Bath with the ash is a holy centre where Ganga Snana is possible every day. Siva is represented by the ash, which directly sanctifies the three worlds. In fructuous is the

knowledge, meditation, gift and japa if these are performed by a Brahmana without wearing Tripundraka. In the different parts of the body as the forehead etc. three lines constitute the Tripundara.

The Tripundara on the forehead extends from the middle of the eyebrows to the tips of the brows on either side. With the middle and the ring fingers a line drawn in the opposite direction is called Tripundara. With the three middle fingers, ashes are applied in the Tripundara on the forehead. It would give worldly pleasures and salvation. For each of the three lines, there are nine deities everywhere in the body.

The nine deities of the first line are: The syllable "A", Garhapatya fire (sacrificial fire), Earth, Dharma, the attribute Rajas, Rgveda, Kriyasakti (the power to do), Pratahsavana (morning rituals) and Mahadeva.

The nine deities of the second line are: The syllable "U", Daksina fire (sacrificial fire), the principle of Ether, Attribute Sattva, Yajurveda, Madhyandina Savana (midday rituals), Icchasakti (the will power), the Antaratman (the immanent soul) and Mahesvara.

The nine deities of the third line are: The syllable "M", Ahavaniya (sacrificial) fire, the supreme soul, the attribute Tamas, heaven, Jnana Sakti, Samaveda, the third Savana (evening rituals) and Siva.

Thus making obeisance to the deities of the different parts with devotion, one shall apply the Tripundara. One becomes pure and derives worldly pleasures and salvation.

14. The greatness of Rudraksa

Rudraksa is a favourite bead of Siva. It is highly sanctifying. It removes all the sins by sight, contact and Japas. Formerly Siva, the supreme soul, for rendering help to the worlds, declared the greatness of Rudraksa to the Goddess.

Once Siva had been performing penance for thousands of divine years. Although it was controlled rigorously, his mind was in flutter. Out of sport, he happened to open his eyes from a desire of helping the worlds. Drops of tears fell from his beautiful half closed eyes. From those teardrops, there cropped up the Rudraksa plants. They became immobile.

In order to bless the devotees, they were given to the four Varanas devoted to the worship of Visnu. They were classified into Brahmins, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. These Rudraksas are of auspicious nature. The colours of the four types of Rudraksas are respectively white, red, yellow and black. All people shall wear the Rudraksa of their own Varna. If they desire their benefit, namely worldly pleasures and salvation and if the devotees of Siva wish to gratify Siva, they must wear the Rudraksa.

A Rudraksa is the size of an Emblic myrbalan (Dhatriphala) is mentioned as the most excellent; one of the sizes of the fruit of the jujube tree (Badariphala) is spoken of as the middling.

The meanest of Rudraksa is of the size of a gram according to his excellent classification. The wearing of Rudraksa is recommended for the sake of destroying sins. Hence that which is conducive to the achievement of every object has to be worn certainly. Rudraksa of even size, glossy, firm, thick and having thorn like protrusions yield desires and bestow worldly pleasures and salvation forever.

Six types of Rudraksas shall be discarded: -that, which is defiled by worms, is cut and broken, has no thorn like protrusions, has cracks and is not circular. That which has a natural hole from end to end is the most excellent, that which is bored through by human effort is the middling one.

The wearing of Rudraksa is spoken of as conducive to the destruction of great sins. If eleven hundred Rudraksas are worn on the person, the man assumes the form of Rudra. Even in hundreds of years, it is impossible to describe adequately the benefit derived by wearing eleven hundred and fifty Rudraksas. A devout man shall make a coronet consisting of five hundred and fifty Rudraksas.

Hundred and one Rudraksas should be worn round the neck; eleven Rudraksas should be worn round each of the arms, elbows and wrists. Devotees of Siva should have three Rudraksas in the sacred thread and round the hips five Rudraksas should be tied. The person who wears so many Rudraksas is worthy of being bowed to and adored by all like Mahesa. Such a person, while in contemplation should be duly seated and addressed. Seeing him everyone is freed from sins. A devotee of Siva should refrain from eating meat, garlic, onion, red garlic, potherb, Slesmataka, pig of rubbish and liquors.

Rudraksa is an auspicious complement to His linga image. The small one is always praiseworthy. If anyone wears it during the day, he is freed from sins committed during the night; if it is worn during the night, one is freed from sins committed during the day. Similar is the result with its wearing during morning, midday or evening. Those who wear Tripundra, the matted hair and the Rudraksa do not go to Yama's abode.

Yama's directives to his attendants:

All shall honour those who wear atleast one Rudraksa on their heads, Tripundra on the forehead and repeat the five syllabled mantras. They are indeed saintly men.

One can bring the man who has no Rudraksa on his person, and no Tripundra on his forehead and who does not utter the five-syllabled mantra. All those who have the ash and Rudraksa are honoured always after knowing their power.

Rudraksa as well as the person who wears it, is Yama's favourite. Even if has committed sins, he becomes pure. One who wears the Rudraksa round the hands and arms and over the head cannot be killed by any living being. He can roam in the world in the form of a Rudra; and is respected by the gods and Asuras always. He is honoured like Siva. He removes the sins of anyone seen by him. If a person is not liberated after meditation and acquisition of knowledge, he should wear Rudraksa. He is freed from all sins and attains the highest goal.

A mantra repeated with Rudraksa is a crore times more efficacious. A man wearing Rudraksa derives a hundred million times more merit.

As long as Rudraksa is on the person of a living soul, he is least affected by premature death. One shall attain Rudra on seeing a person with Tripundra, his limbs covered with Rudraksa and repeating the Mrtyunjaya mantra. He is the favourite of the five deities and a favourite of all gods. A devotee has to repeat all mantras while wearing a garland of Rudraksa (or counting on the beads). Even the devotees of Visnu and other deities unhesitatingly wear the Rudraksa. Especially the devotee of Rudra wears Rudraksas always.

15.Maha Sivaratri

"Maha-Sivaratri" is a Hindu festival observed on the night of the fourteenth day of the dark half in the month of 'Magha', in Tamil 'Masi', corresponding to the English months 'February-March', in honour of Siva, one of the Hindu Trinity, representing the destructive aspect in the universe. Though generally, the night time is considered sacred and suitable for the worship of the feminine aspect of the deity and the day time for that of the masculine, yet on this particular occasion Siva is worshipped during the night

time, and as a matter of fact, it is specially enjoined to be observed then. The observance of the Vratha is believed to secure for the devotee immunity from the effects of sin committed either wittingly or unwittingly. The night is divided into four quarters, each quarter going by the name of a Jama called also Yama and pious people keep awake during every one of it, worshipping Iswara.

It is said that the whole world was under destruction once and the Goddess Parvati worshipped her husband Siva then and prayed to him that the Jivas (living souls) remaining in space like particles of gold dust in a lump of wax during that long period of pralaya (deluge) night, should, when they became active once again and are in the enjoyment of their short day and night, have his blessings if they but worshipped him just as she did then, and her prayer was accordingly granted. The night fixed for the worship of Iswara by mortals by Parvati was named Maha-Sivaratri or the great night of Siva, since pralaya is brought about by him and hence the period is really his night from the great night or pralaya which was the cause for the origin of this Sivaratri.

The people who observe this Sivaratri- Vratha take only single meal during the day previous to the Vratha day and sleep in clean place during the night. In the morning of the Vratha day they take a bath in the waters of a sacred river, and then go to witness the divine worship in a Siva temple, and at night offer worship to Siva during every one of the four Yamams. Night long vigil on Sivaratri day, watching the sacred ablutions of Siva Linga at the temple, is the core of the Sivaratri festival. The Rudra Japa Abhisheka of Siva Linga resounds the multifaceted glory of Lord Siva, who is also called Asutosh or One who is easily pleased by copious ablutions with water, the cheapest available commodity. We should remember that water in essence is Prana Sakti or life force. Such an observance of Sivaratri will really bestow on the devotee the greatest grace of Lord Siva, the auspicious knowledge of Atma Jnana. Besides the devotee is also blessed with material prosperity the items of which are beautifully listed in the Chamaka Mantra uttered on this occasion.

There is also a myth emphasizing the importance of the worship of Siva during the Sivaratri night and it is in brief as follows:

Once there was a hunter, and he one day went into the forest to procure meat for his family by hunting some animal. He wandered up and down in the forest from morning till night in search of game but was unable to shoot any. At last, when night overtook him, he climbed up a Bael tree to escape from a wild animal that was pursuing him, being roused from its lair by the hunter. The animal was lying down at the foot of the tree quite certain that the man would fall down either from sleep or from exhaustion, and that he might eat him. The hunter, exhausted as he was from his exertions and hunger, wished to scare away the animal by throwing handful of bael leaves. These leaves dripping with water on account of the recent shower, fell on a Siva-Lingam that was near. The night happened to be the Maha-Sivaratri night. He had fasted during the whole day since he could not find anything to eat. The drenching rain constituted a bath and his action of throwing the bael leaves on the Siva-Lingam, the worship of Siva on the Sivaratri night. Though his actions were not intentional to worship Siva, yet he is said to have gained heaven as he had observed the Sivaratri - Vratha unwittingly.

The basic principle underlying the observance of the Maha-Sivaratri Vratha appears to be to emphasize the fact that death is sure to follow birth, night is sure to follow day, Pralaya, active cosmic life and so on, and consequently people should always bear in mind while enjoying the one its opposite and regulate their life accordingly. They should

not be elated at success nor should they allow themselves to be carried away by despair at failures but always have trust in God and worship him.

II.RUDRA SAMHITA

- 1.Creation
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1.Creation

Siva the consort of Gauri, the sole cause of the origin, sustenance, dissolution of the universe, who has understood the reality, who is the endless renown, who is the support of Maya but is free from its influence, whose form is incomprehensible, who is unsullied and who is perfect knowledge itself.

Siva who is prior to Prakrti, who is calm and tranquil, the only excellent Purusa, who has created this visible universe and who stays both within and without like ether. Siva, of manifest form, who having extended himself by way of creation stands in the middle of it while the worlds move around him like iron fillings round the magnet.

The three deities Brahma, Visnu and Mahesa are born of Siva. Among them Mahesa when he has all the substrata of elements is Siva himself as distinct from Mahesa. Like the holy waters of Ganga, the inquiry into the anecdotes of Sadasiva sanctifies the three persons: the narrator, the inquirer and the hearer.

2.Kamadeva to disturb the penance of Narada

Once Narada, the excellent sage, son of Brahma was inclined to perform penance controlling him. There is a beautiful cave in the Himalayan Mountain near which the celestial river flows rapidly. There was a great hermitage of divine splendour, which was resplendent in many ways. Narada endowed with divine vision went there to perform the penance. The sage performed meditation and contemplation wherein the realisation was generated. When Narada performed the penance, the mind of Indra became excessively agitated and got trembled, since he wanted to spoil the penance. The King of devas, endowed with crooked intelligence to achieve his interests, saw Kama.

Narada was performing a penance in the Himalayan Mountain directing his mind towards the Lord of the universe with great mental control and firm resolve. Indra was scared that Narada may beg Brahma for his kingdom and so he decided to go there and cause hindrances to the penance. Being thus commanded by Indra, Kamadeva, accompanied by his wife Rati and Madhu, his friend, went haughtily to that place and prepared their own means of attack.

Indra applied all his arts there immediately. Spring too haughtily spread his prowess of diverse nature. Narada's mind still did not waver. Only their arrogance suffered a setback and that too by the favour of Mahesa.

By the controlling power of the lord, Kama could not exercise any influence. It was at that very place, that Siva, the indefatigable enemy of Kama, had formerly performed a great penance. It was there that Kama was reduced to ashes – Kama who used to spoil the

penances of sages. Siva said that whatever place all around that spot was visible to persons there, will be out of the influence of Kama forever. It was due to this statement of Siva that Kama's viles did not prevail upon Narada. From Siva's abode he went to Indra. Kama then narrated everything about the sage and commended his power. At Indra's bidding, Kama returned to his own place. Deluded by Siva's Maya (power of illusion) Indra was unaware of the true facts and was greatly surprised and admired Narada.

Siva's Maya is incomprehensible to all. The whole universe is deluded by it. Only the true devotees of dedicated souls escape. Backed by Siva's blessings, Narada stayed in the hermitage for a long time. Then realising that his penance was complete, the sage Narada concluded the same. Thinking that he had conquered Kama, he was puffed with pride. He was devoid of true knowledge and deluded by Siva's Maya.

Blessed and very blessed is Siva's Maya. Even Visnu, Brahma and others did not know the turn it would take. In the state of delusion and puffed up arrogance, the great sage Narada went to Kailasa to expatiate on his own achievement. Bowing down to Rudra, the sage arrogantly spoke of his exploits with the conviction that he was equal to the noble – souled lord, the conqueror of Kama, i.e. Siva.

Siva, who is favourable, disposed to his devotees, advised Narada who was ignorant of the real case, whose mind had strayed and whom His Maya had deluded.

Rudra told Narada that he was blessed and told him to not to speak like that anywhere else, especially in the presence of Visnu. He further told him that even if he was asked, he should not mention his achievements. These should be guarded as close secrets and should never be expressed. Rudra told this Narada since he was a great devotee of Visnu as well as his follower.

Lord Rudra, the cause of creation advised him in many ways. But Narada who was under the influence of Siva's Maya did not take up the wholesome advice. Then the great sage went to Brahma's world. After saluting Brahma, he told him about his conquest of Kama as a result of his penance.

On hearing that Brahma remembered the lotus like feet of Siva and knew thereby the true cause, he then forbade his son.

Although, foremost among the wise, Narada did not take up the advise of Brahma as he had been deluded by Siva's Maya. The sprout of arrogance had been so fixed in his mind. Everything takes place in the world in the manner Siva wills. It is true that the entire universe is dependent on His wills. Narada hastened to Visnuloka in the same state of senseless arrogance, to boast of his exploits in the presence of Visnu. When Visnu saw Narada approaching, he could guess the purpose of his visit. He stood up and received him cordially and walked forward and embraced him lovingly. He made Narada sit comfortably. After remembering the lotus-like feet of Siva.

Visnu told Narada that he was foremost among all the sages and was blessed. Visnu was sanctified by his visit and asked him the reasons of his visit. On this, Narada narrated the story in the same haughty manner. On hearing the arrogant words of the sage Narada, Visnu remembered the lotus like feet of Siva again and understood the true cause. Visnu, a leading devotee of Siva, with his soul dedicated to Siva, bowed his head and eulogised Paramesvara, the lord of the holy mountain, with his palms joined in reverence.

Visnu requested the Lord Mahadeva to be pleased and enchant everyone. Having thus chanted the prayer to Siva, the supreme Atman, he closed his eyes and meditated on His lotus-like feet and stopped.

Visnu tried to explain Narada about his success in penance; Narada replied what could Kama do to me if you remain favourable to me. After having made this statement Narada who had paid a casual visit bowed to Visnu and left.

3.Illusion of Narada

When Narada left who had come casually, Visnu skilful in wielding his Maya, spread his Maya on Siva's will. On the path of Narada a big city was created, which was surprisingly more beautiful than the Heaven. The king named Silanidhi was preparing for the gorgeous celebration of the voluntary wooing, Svayamvara, of his daughter. On seeing such a splendid city Narada was enchanted and he eagerly went to the palace threshold with his kindled love. King offered Narada a seat on the splendid throne studded with precious gems and asked her daughter Srimati to kneel down at the feet of sage.

4.Narada Curses Visnu

After cursing the two attendants of Siva suitably, the sage still under the earlier delusion looked into the water and saw that his face was quite normal. It was also due to Siva's will. Thereupon recollecting that it might have been a deception of Hari, he became unbearably infuriated and went to Visnuloka. There he angrily poured abusive words blazing like kindled fire since his wisdom had vanished due to Siva's will.

Narada accused Visnu, of being extremely wicked and a deceptive enchanter of the world. He also said that he was unable to brook others enthusiastic success and that he dabbles in illusory tactics and his intentions were always dirty. He also said that formerly he assumed the form of an enchantress and showed his deceptive power and he made the demons drink liquor and not the nectar.

Narada said to Visnu-If out of pity Siva had not drunk poison, all your illusory tactics would have been quelled since you take pleasure only in deception.

O Visnu, a deceptive path is extremely attractive to you. You had never been of saintly nature, but the lord made you free from control.

What is done by Siva the supreme Atman does not seem proper. Thinking of your influence and strength when you act independently and seeing the way you go He has now repented. He has announced that a Brahmin is superior to all, thereby making the Vedas pronounced by Him authoritative.

O Visnu, knowing that, I shall now teach you through that power so that hereafter you will never do such things.

You are fearless because till now you have not come into clash with an equally powerful person. Now you will derive the fruit of your own deeds.

After saying this, the sage still under the influence of Maya furiously cursed Visnu, thereby exhibiting the superiority of his brahminical power.

O Visnu, the enchanter that you are, you made me distressed for the sake of woman. O Hari, you shall experience misery in that human form which you imitated while proceeding with your deceptive tactics. Your allies will be those whose face you assigned to me.

O inflictor of miseries upon others, you shall get the misery of separation from a woman. You shall have the travails of a human being deluded by ignorance.”

Thus Narada, deluded himself by ignorance, cursed Hari. Visnu quietly accepted the cause praising the Maya of Sambhu.

Thereafter Siva, of great divine sport withdrew his enchanting Maya whereby Narada became wise and free from delusion.

When the Maya vanished he became as intelligent as before, regaining perfect knowledge and becoming free from distress. He was surprised. He cursed himself after repenting again and again. He praised the Maya of Siva, which could enchant even wise people.

On realizing his mistakes due to illusion, Narada, the most excellent of the devotees of Visnu, fell at his feet.

Consoled by Hari and freed from wicked ideas he apologized to Visnu that being deluded and evil-minded he had spoken many wicked words to him and he pleaded to make them ineffective. He realized that he had committed a great sin and for that he would certainly be falling into a hell.

He asked Hari to direct him what to do whereby he would destroy his sins and prevent his downfall into hell. Saying thus, the excellent sage once again fell at Visnu's feet and with the mind purified repented sincerely. Thereupon Visnu lifted him up and spoke affably and courteously. Visnu said-Do not be sorry too much. Undoubtedly you are my true devotee. Dear sage, now listen. I shall tell you what is certainly beneficial to you. You will not fall into hell. Siva will make you happy. Deluded by your haughtiness you disobeyed the instructions of Siva. The true bestower of fruits according to the actions. He has given you this result.

Be sure in your mind that everything has happened in accordance with Siva's wish. That lord Siva, the supreme lord, removes haughtiness. He is the supreme Brahman; the supreme Atman, Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. He is free from the three Gunas, changes and deviations. He is beyond Rajas, Sattva and Tamas. He is both Saguna and Nirguna. He Himself availing of his own Maya manifests into three forms- Brahma, Visnu and Mahesa.

In his attributeless pure form He is glorified as Siva, the supreme Atman, Mahesara, the supreme Brahman, the undecaying, the endless, and Mahadeva. Serving him, Brahma becomes the creator and I the sustainer of the worlds. He himself in the manifestation as Rudra is the annihilator always. Different from Maya, the pure Being in the form of Siva is the Saksin and moving about according to his will and indulging in divine sport He blesses his devotees. O sage Narada please listens to a good remedy that bestows happiness removes all sins and yields worldly pleasures and salvation.

Cast off all your doubts. Sing the songs of noble glory of Siva. With your mind not turning to anything else, always repeat the hundred names of Siva and his hymns. By this Japa all of your sins will perish instantaneously. After saying this to Narada, Visnu continued mercifully. "O" sage, do not be grief-stricken. Nothing has been perpetrated by you. It was Siva who did everything. There is no doubt in this. It was lord Mahesvara who deluded your splendid intellect and made you suffer on account of love. It was he who made you His mouthpiece and cursed me.

In this manner the great Conqueror of Death, Kala of Kala, always devoted to the uplift of his devotees, made His own conduct of life manifest in the world. There is no other lord and master so loving and pleasure inspiring unto me as Siva. The same Paramesvara bestows all power on me. O sage, perform His adoration. Worship him always. Hear and sing his glory. Perpetually pay him homage.

He who approaches Siva by means of his body, mind and speech is a great scholar. He is called a living liberated soul. The name Siva blazing like the forest conflagration reduces

mountainous heaps of great sins to ashes without any difficulty. The different kinds of miseries arising from sins shall be destroyed only through the worship of Siva, and not through other means. He who always seeks refuge in Siva, O sage, is the real follower of the Vedas, a meritorious soul and a blessed scholar. He must resort to Him by means of his body, speech and mind forever.

The different sacred rites of those who have full faith in the worship of Siva, the destroyer of Tripura become fruitful instantaneously. O great sage, there are not so many sins in the world as the worship of Siva is capable of destroying. The sins relating to persons who cross the ocean of worldly existence in the raft of Siva's names, perish undoubtedly. The sins that are at the root of worldly existence are destroyed certainly by the axe of Siva's name.

Persons scorched and distressed by the conflagration of sins must drink the nectar of Siva's names. Without that there is no peace and tranquility to those who are scorched and distressed by the sins' wild fire. Those who are drenched by the downpour of the nectarine names of Siva are not distressed in the midst of the conflagration of worldly existence. There is no doubt in this. Immediate salvation can be achieved only by the people who have performed penance in various lives. They alone will have devotion for Siva the cherished consort of Parvati. Men who frequently indulge in passions of love and hatred will never have devotion for Siva.

The devotion for Siva that extends to other deities is futile. It is necessary to be exclusively devoted to Siva. It is my conviction that salvation is easy of access only to the person who has exclusive and unflinching devotion for Siva and not for any other. Even if he commits endless sins, he will be freed from them all, if he has true devotion for Siva. There is no doubt about it. Just as trees in the forest are reduced to ashes in the wild fire so also the sins of the devotees of Siva are burnt away in the fire of Siva's name. He who is ever devoted to the worship of Siva with his body purified by the ash, definitely crosses the terrible and endless expanse of the ocean of worldly existence. A man serving the three-eyed Siva is never sullied by sins even if he misappropriates a brahmin's wealth or kills many Brahmins. After going through all the Vedas this has been definitely concluded by ancestors that the sole means of destroying worldly existence is the worship of Siva.

From now onwards you shall always worship lord Siva who is Samba and Sadasiva, with care, effort and due observance of the rules of procedure. Dusting profusely and carefully your body from head to foot with the particles of ashes, you shall perform the Japa of the six-syllabled mantra, Om Namaha Shivaya, of Siva, well known in all the Vedas. You shall wear on the different parts of your body Rudraksa beads pleasing to Siva, repeating the respective mantras with devotion and observing the rules of procedure.

Listen to Siva's anecdotes forever. Narrate the stories of Siva always. Strenuously worship the devotees of Siva again and again. Without blundering ever seek refuge in Siva, because a perpetual worship of Siva bestows bliss.

Bearing the lotus like feet of Siva within your pure heart, carry on at first the pilgrimage to various holy centers of Siva, O excellent sage. Observing the unrivalled greatness of Siva, the supreme Atman, O sage, you must next go to Anandavana, which is a great favorite of Siva. Seeing Siva, the lord of the universe there, worship him with devotion. After bowing to him and eulogizing Him you will become free from all doubts.

Thereafter you must go to Brahmaloaka, to achieve your wishes. That is my command to you out of love. After bowing to and specifically eulogizing your father Brahma, you shall ask him many points regarding Siva's greatness with an endearing mind. Brahma, the foremost among the devotees of Siva, will narrate to you the greatness of Siva as well as the hymn of hundred names, out of love. From now onwards become a devotee of Siva, solely devoted to Siva. You will be liberated. Siva will grant you his special blessings. After advising the sage thus, Visnu was pleased. Remembering, saluting and eulogizing Siva he vanished from that place.

5. Narada goes to Kasi

Suta said-

O Brahmins, when Visnu vanished, the excellent sage Narada roamed over the Earth seeing Siva lingas with piety.

In the course of his wanderings over the Earth, O Brahmins, with his mind full of devotional pleasure he saw many forms of Siva that confer worldly pleasures and salvation on the devotees.

On knowing that Narada of divine vision was wandering over the Earth, the two attendants of Siva approaching him who by that time had become pure in mind.

They bowed to him and touched his feet. With a desire to secure release from the curse they spoke to him respectfully.

The attendants of Siva said-

O celestial sage, son of Brahma, please hear our words. We who formerly offended you are really not Brahmins.

O brahminical sage, we, your former offenders, are the attendants of Siva. Induced by Siva you had cursed us when your mind was deluded by the illusory infatuation for the princess at the Svayamvara. Realizing that the occasion was inopportune we kept quiet then.

We reaped the fruit of our own action. No one is to be blamed for it. O lord, be pleased. Bless us now.

Suta said-

On hearing the words of the attendants uttered with devotion and respect, the sage replied lovingly, repenting.

Narada said-

O attendants of lord Siva, most worthy of the respect of good people, please listen to my words now free from delusion. They are true and shall make you happy.

Formerly my mind had been depraved. Certainly it was Siva's will. In that state of delusion and crookedness of the mind I had unfortunately cursed both of you.

What I have said is bound to happen. Still, O Ganas listen. I shall tell you the way of redemption from the curse. Please forgive my sin now.

You will be born as demons from the semen virile of a great sage and due to his power you will secure the commanding position of the king of demons endowed with prosperity, strength and valorous exploits. You will rule over whole of the universe as devotees of Siva with your sense conquered. You will gain your former position after courting death at the hands of a manifestation of Siva.

Suta said-

On hearing these words of the noble-souled Narada, the two attendants of Siva became delighted and went back to their abode joyfully.

Narada too was delighted. Meditating exclusively on Siva he continued his wanderings over the earth seeing the various holy centers of Siva personally.

Reaching Kasi that excelled all other cities in holiness, which is favourite resort of Siva, which easily bestows the favour of Siva and which is identical with Siva the sage became contented. He saw Siva, the lord of Kasi and worshipped Him with great pleasure and love.

Narada then went to the region of Brahma with devotion and eulogized him with different prayers. With his mind being highly purified by remembering Siva. He was eager to know further the principles of Siva.

There he bowed to Brahma with devotion and eulogized him with various prayers. With his mind riveted to Siva he asked him the good principles of Siva.

6. Principles of SadaSiva

Brahma said-

Neither the principles of Siva nor His supreme wonderful forms have been understood by me or by Visnu or by any one else.

At the time of great Dissolution when all the mobile and immobile objects of the world are dissolved everything gets enveloped in darkness, without the sun, planets and stars.

There is no moon. The day and the night are not demarcated. There is no fire, no wind, no earth and no water. There is no unmanifest primordial being. The whole firmament is one complete void, devoid of all Tejas elements.

There is no Dharma or Adharma, no sound, no touch. Smell and color are not manifest. There is no taste. The face of the quarters is not demarcated.

Thus when there is pitch darkness that cannot be pierced with a needle and what is mentioned in the Vedas as "The existent and the Brahman" is alone present.

When the present visible world is not in existence, the Sat Brahman alone is present which Yogins observe perpetually in the inner soul, the inner firmament.

It is incomprehensible to the mind. It cannot at all be expressed by words. It has neither name nor color. It is neither thick nor thin.

It is neither short nor long. It is neither light nor heavy. There is neither increase nor decrease in it.

The Veda says that it envelops whatever is in a surprising way. It is the splendor, the truth, the knowledge, the eternal and the great Bliss.

It is immeasurable, propleless, changeless, formless, attributeless, and perceptible to the Yogins, all pervasive and the sole cause of the universe.

It is free from alternatives. It has no beginning. It is free from illusion and its harassment. It has no second. It has neither beginning nor end. It has no development. It is in the form of pure knowledge.

People have doubts about giving it a name. That Being, then after sometime, it is said, wished for a second.

The Being, having no form of its own, wished to create, in the course of its own sport, an auspicious form of its own endowed with all power, qualities and knowledge.

A form that goes everywhere, that has all forms, that sees all, that is the cause of all, that should be respected by all, that is at the beginning of all, that bestows everything, and that sanctifies everything should be created and hence created that form of Isvara of pure nature. The original being without a second, with neither beginning nor end, that illuminates everything, that is in the form of Cit (Pure Knowledge), that which is termed

supreme Brahman, the all pervasive and undecaying, vanished. The manifest form of the formless Being is Sadasiva. Scholars of the ancient and succeeding ages have sung of it as Isvara.

7. Creation of Visnu and Brahma by Siva

Isvara though alone, then created the physical form sakti from his body. This Sakti did not affect his body in anyway.

This Sakti is called by various names. Pradhana, Prakrti, Maya, Gunavati, Para. The mother of Buddhi Tattva, Vikrtivarjita.

That Sakti is Ambika, Prakrti and the goddess of all. She is the prime cause and the mother of the three deities.

She has eight arms. Her face wears a peculiar splendor, the splendor of a thousand moons. Thousands of stars perpetually sparkle round her face.

She is bedecked in various ornaments. She has various weapons. She is capable of various movements. Her eyes beam like a full blown lotus.

She has a brilliance, which could hardly be conceived. She is the generating cause of all.

She sprang up singly as Maya. In her union she manifested in various forms.

The supreme Purusa is Siva. He is called Sambhu. He has no other lord over Him. He holds the Mandakini (Ganga) on his head, and the crescent moon on his forehead. He has three eyes.

He has five faces. He is always joyful. He has ten arms. He holds the trident. He is as pure and white as camphor. His body is entirely dusted with the ash.

That Brahman of the form of Kala together with Sakti, simultaneously create the holy center called Sivaloka.

The same is called Kasika, the excellent holy center. It is the seat of salvation shining over and above everything.

The holy center is of the nature of extreme Bliss in as much as the primordial lovers, supremely Blissful, made that beautiful holy center their perpetual abode.

O sage, that holy center is never, even at the time of great Dissolution, free from Siva and Sakti Hence it is called Avimukta.

Since the holy center is the cause of Bliss, the Pinaka bearing lord, Siva, called it "the blissful forest" and later "Avimukta".

O celestial sage, the blissful, two deities thus sporting in the forest wished, it is said, for another being to be created.

Siva thought within himself like this-"Another being shall be created by me. Let him create everything, protect it and in the end let him dissolve it with my blessing. Having entrusted everything to him we two, remaining in Kasi shall roam as we please keeping only the prerogative of conferring salvation.

We can stay happily in this blissful forest being free from worries. With the consent of Siva the supreme lord spread the liquorine essence of nectar on his left side, on the tenth limb, nectar that was the outcome of churning the ocean of his mind wherein thoughts were the waves, the Sattva Guna was precious gem, Rajas being coral and Tamas-crocodile. Thereupon a person came into being who was the most charming one in the three worlds, who was calm with Sattva Guna being prominent, and who appeared to be the ocean of immeasurable majesty.

O sage, he was endowed with patience. There was none comparable to him. He had the luster of sapphire. He was glorious with his excellent eyes shining like a lotus.

He was having a golden form and features. He wore two excellent silk garments of golden color. His arms were brown and brilliant. He was indefatigable.

He bowed to Siva Paramesvara and said-“O lord give me names and assign me my task.

Siva said-

“You will be famous as Visnu by name as you are all-pervasive. You will have many other names conferring happiness on devotees.

Perform penance highly conducive to the achievement of the matter in hand, Be firm in it.” Saying so, the lord bestowed on him the Vedas through his nostrils.

Siva vanished accompanied by Sakti and his attendants. After due obeisance to Siva, Visnu began his great penance.

Even after performing the penance for twelve thousand divine years, Visnu could not achieve his desire, the vision of Siva that confers everything.

He became suspicious and respectfully meditating on Siva pondered “What shall I do now?”

In the meantime the auspicious voice of Siva was heard. “Perform penance again for removing your doubts.

On hearing it Visnu performed a terrible penance, for along time, following the path of meditation.

That Being Visnu became enlightened, following the path of meditation. He was delightfully surprised. “O what is that True entity?”

From the body of Visnu who thus exerted himself, water currents of various sorts began to flow as a result of Siva’s Maya.

O great sage, the supreme Brahman in the form of divine waters pervaded the entire void. A mere contact with the same is destructive of sins.

Visnu, the weary person went to sleep amidst the waters. He was in that blissful state of delusion for a long time.

As approved in the Vedas, his name came to be established as Narayana. Excepting for that Primordial Being there was nothing then.

In the meantime, the Principles too were evolved out of evolved out of the Great soul. O wise one of great intellect, listen to my enumeration of the same.

From Prakrti came into being the Mahat (cosmic intellect) and from Mahat the three Gunas. Ahamkara the cosmic ego arose there from in three forms according to the three Gunas.

The Essences, the five elements, the senses of knowledge and action too came into being then.

O most excellent of sages, I have thus enumerated the principles. All these principles originating from Prakrti are insentient, but not the Purusa. These principles are twenty four in number. Visnu, the Purusa, accepted all these, as was the will of Siva, and began his sleep in the Brahman.

8. The description of the body of Sabdabrahman

Brahma said:

Siva, the protector of the distressed, remover of the haughtiness of the haughty and the undecaying lord of every thing took mercy on us. There arose the sound “Om Om” in the prolated accent. It was very clear. The divine sound in form of a word came out from the most excellent of Gods.

Visnu who is worthy of respect from all the gods saw the eternal being's manifestations on the right side of the Linga. First he saw the syllable "A" like the blazing sphere of the sun and he saw the syllable "U" dazzling like fire there after. He saw the syllable "M" glittering like the lunar sphere in the middle and Nada the mystical sound in the form "Om" in the end. Above that he saw the supreme Brahman, the greatest refuge. It had the luster of the pure crystal.

Visnu meditated on universal soul and wished to examine the source whence the Fire-column arose and to go deep down the unequalled fiery column. Then there came a sage who told him the essence of the truth. Visnu realized the sage himself was the great lord the supreme Brahman embodied in the SabdaBrahman the mystic syllable Om.

The Brahman is Rudra free from worries. The words and the mind are incapable of comprehending it; without reaching it they returned. The single-syllable mantra "Om" can express it.

The supreme Brahman, the Truth, the Bliss, the Amrta, the greatest of the great and the ultimate can be expressed by the single-syllable mantra.

The single syllable "A" is the source of the lord Brahma. The single syllable "U" is the source of Visnu, the ultimate cause.

The single syllable "M" is the source of Rudra. The letter "A" expresses the creator. The letter "U" expresses the enchanter.

The being expressed by the letter "M" blesses always. It is all-pervasive and progenitor; the letter "A" is the seed. The being expressed by the letter "U" is Visnu. It is the source, the primordial nature and the primordial being, the progenitor, the seed, source and sound. All these constitute Lord Siva.

The progenitor is stationed after dividing it self. From the Linga of the progenitor, the lord arose the seed –the syllable "A". The Bija being deposited in the Yoni, the letter "U" began to increase all round. It became a golden egg. It was some thing known which could not be delineated.

The divine egg floated in the waters for many years. Then at the end of thousand years, it split into two giving birth to Brahma. The egg floating in waters on being hit by Isvara split into two. The auspicious golden upper lid became the upper region and the lower one became the Earth of five characteristics. From (the inner part of) the egg was born the four-faced lord Brahma.

He is the creator of all the worlds. He alone is the lord manifesting in three Forms. Persons well versed in the Yajurveda call it Om Om. On hearing the words of Yajurveda, both the Rgveda and the Samaveda respectfully called us Visnu and Brahma. Then realizing the lord of the Gods we eulogized, as far as we could, Lord Siva, the cause of great achievement.

9.Description of Sivattva

Brahma said

He had five faces and three eyes, and the crescent moon on his forehead, with matted hairs. He was white complexioned and had wide eyes. His body was dusted with the ashes. He had ten arms. His neck was blue in color. He was bedecked with all ornaments. He was very handsome with respect to every limb. Three ash-lines marked His forehead.

On seeing Siva accompanied by his consort, Visnu along with me eulogized Him again with appropriate words, Siva the merciful, who was delighted breathed the Vedas into Visnu and conferred Perfect Knowledge on him, the secret of the supreme Atman. After

receiving the Vedas, Visnu was satisfied and bowing to Him with palms joined in reverence along with me asked the Lord Siva, How are you propitiated?

Siva said:

Look upon me as a great deity. Cast off all your fears. Worship my Linga and do meditate upon the form, which you see just before you.

When I am worshipped in the linga form I will be delighted and will bestow different benefits upon all people, all that they wish for in their minds. O' foremost among all deities, whenever any misery befalls you, it shall be destroyed when my Linga is worshipped.

O' strong ones, you two are born of my own Prakriti, out of my left and right sides, Brahma from my right and Visnu from my left side. I am the supreme Atman. I am the lord of every thing.

Although Nirguna, I am Saguna too and the author of dissolution, maintenance and creation. I am the supreme Brahman without decay and change. Existence, Knowledge and Bliss are my characteristics. Truly, I am Niskala, Nirguna, and forever. For the activities of creations and maintenance and dissolution I manifest my self in the three forms of Brahma, Visnu and Hara.

A great form similar to this shall become manifest in the world through your body. He will be called Rudra. His capacity will never be less, since He will be my own part and parcel. He is I. I am he. In the mode worship too there is no difference. Hence Siva and Rudra shall not be considered different.

Siva said you two are born of Prakriti but not Rudra. My command is carried to that place through Brahma's eyebrows. I am therefore spoken of as Tamasa and Prakrta, Hara in respect to the Gunas alone and shall be known as Vaikarika too, which is actually the Ahamkara, the Ego. That is called Tamasa only in name and not in reality. For this reason Brahma shall be the creator and Hari the protector.

My would-be part shall be the cause of dissolution. This goddess Uma, Paramesvari is the Prakriti. Her Sakti, the goddess of speech shall resort to Brahma. Another Sakti arising out of the Prakriti will resort to Visnu in the form of Laksmi. Another Sakti Kali will surely share my part.

Visnu be the bestower of salvation too at my bidding. The benefit accruing from your vision will be same as that from mine. This boon is given to you now. It is the truth. Visnu is in my heart and I am in Visnu's heart.

I am author of creation, protection and dissolution by the attributes Rajas etc. But I am different from these Gunas and directly beyond Prakriti and Purusa. I am the supreme Brahma, the eternal, the endless, the perfect and the unsullied.

Then Visnu has Tamas within but Sattvas outside. He is the protector of the three worlds. Hara who causes dissolution of three worlds has Sattava within but Tamas outside. Brahma who creates the three worlds has Rajas both within and without. This is the position of the Gunas in three deities. Siva is spoken of as different from the Gunas.

You and Brahma shall worship Rudra. The author of dissolution of the three worlds is the complete incarnation of Siva.

Siva said o Visnu you are to be meditated upon by Rudra and Rudra is to be meditated upon by you. There is no difference between Rudra and You.

You will assume the form of the vital airs in every one at my bidding. At the time of distress my manifestation Rudra shall be worshipped.

He who has sought refuge in you has certainly sought refuge in me. He who differentiates will certainly fall into hell.

Listen to the span of life of the deities Brahma, Visnu and Hara. There shall not be any doubt in this respect.

A thousand sets of the four-yuga periods constitute of Brahma, the period of night is also similar. Further measurement of time is based on this calculation. Thirty such days (days and nights) constitute one month and twelve months one year. The span of life of Brahma is hundred such years.

One year of Brahma constitute one day of Visnu. Then Visnu lives for hundred years in his own calculations. One year of Visnu constitute one day of Rudra. When a hundred year passes, Rudra assumes the form of Nara (supreme man). He stays like that as long as Sadasiva retains the breath. When He exhales he merges into Sakti.

Visnu said o Sankara, the ocean of mercy, the lord of the universe, be pleased to hear. I shall do all these things strictly adhering at your behests.

I shall always meditate upon you. I would not act otherwise. I have already experienced you omni potency. O lord if any one of my devotees were to censure you, you will please assign perpetual residence in hell to him.

O lord, who ever be your devotee shall also be my favourite. He who knows and realizes this shall not find salvation inaccessible to him.

The rite of the worship of the Linga is instituted ever since in world. Siva installed in the Linga bestows worldly pleasures and salvation. The great goddess is the pedestal for the Linga. The Linga is Lord Siva Himself. Since the whole universe finally merges into in, it is called Linga.

III.MARRIAGE OF SIVA

- 1.Parvati's Birth
- 2.Birth of Planet Mars
- 3.The Birth of Taraka and Vajranga and their Penance
- 4.Kama's Destruction
- 5.Penance of Parvati and Marriage with Siva
6. The Dalliance of Siva
7. Birth of Ganesa
- 8.Ganesa's Marriage
- 9.The Tripuras
- 10.The Birth of Jalandhara and his Marriage
- 11.Birth of Sankhachuda
- 12.The Curse of Tulasi
- 13.Story of Hiranyaksa
- 14.Story of Hiranyakasipu
- 15.Story of Andhaka
- 16.Story of Usa
- 17.Story of Gajasura

When the great Goddess Sati, the daughter of Daksa did not receive his due attention at the place of sacrificial rites became angry and cast off her body, at the same time Himacala's beloved Mena (Mena or Menaka the wife of Himavat and the mother of Parvati) wanted to propitiate Goddess in Sivaloka for a boon.

1.Parvati's Birth

The wife of the mountain, Mena, by the grace of the Goddess who had sympathetically stationed herself in the mind of the Mountain, conceived.

Mena bore the characteristic signs of pregnancy, which almost indicated the imminent rise in pleasure of her lord and served as the auspicious cause for the future bliss of the Gods.

The intelligent lord of Mountains performed all the sacred rites befitting his love for his wife, the loftiness of his mind, the vastness of riches earned by him and the injunctions of the Vedas.

When nine months were completed, in the tenth month, the Goddess, the mother of the universe, bore all the states of a child in the womb in the complete form.

She was born at midnight when the constellation Mrgasiras was in conjunction with the moon on the ninth day in the month of Madhu (March-April) in the spring season like the Ganga from the moon's sphere.

Coming out of the belly of Mena at the proper time in her real form, she resembled Laksmi coming out of the ocean.

Visnu and other Gods reached there in time and saw the mother of the universe. They were delighted and happy.

Mena said "Great favour has been shown by you, O Goddess, O mother of the universe, in as much as you have manifested yourself in front of me brilliantly.

You are the primordial one among all Energies. O Goddess Siva, you are the mother of the three worlds. O Goddess you are the beloved of Siva, you are great goddess eulogized by the gods.

O great goddess be pleased. Remain in my meditation in this form, but have the form of my daughter in public view."

The Goddess Siva of great brilliance assumed the form of her baby child in front of Mena and began to cry in accordance with the ways of the world.

Accompanied by the chief priest and learned Brahmins, the lord of mountains came there and saw the child who shone in her lovely clothes. The lord of mountains rejoiced on seeing the child shining in dark splendour like that of the blue lotus.

All the citizens there, both men and women, rejoiced much. There were great festivities. Different sorts of musical instruments were played. Auspicious songs were sung. The lord of mountains performed postnatal sacred rites and made charitable gifts to the Brahmins.

In an auspicious hour, in the company of the sages, Himavat named his daughter Kali and assigned other pleasing names to her. There in the place of the lord of mountains the Goddess Siva grew up like Ganga in the rainy season and like the moon light in the autumn.

The child was fondly attached to every member of the family, hence the kinsmen called her Parvati, a name befitting her family. The girl had all the qualities of good conduct and behaviour.

The Goddess Siva when the suitable time for her education arrived learnt all the lores from a good preceptor, with concentrated mind and great pleasure.

Himavat asked sage Narada about the horoscope of his daughter. Narada told Himavat that his daughter has all the auspicious signs. Like the first digit of the moon she will increase day by day. She will delight her husband, and heighten the glory of her parents. She will be a great chaste lady. She will grant bliss to everyone always. Her husband will

be naked Yogin, without any qualities. He will be free from lust. He will have neither mother nor father. He will be indifferent to honours. His dress and manners will be inauspicious.

Convinced that Narada's words could not be false, Goddess Siva turned her mind and love to Siva's feet.

Narada continued that there is only one bridegroom like that. He is lord Siva who has supportively assumed a physical form. In Him all bad characteristics are equal to good characteristics. Hence you give your daughter in marriage to Siva. That will be a wise step. Lord Siva who is the sole lord, unchanging and without any aberration is worthy of being resorted to. A love akin to this pair will not be found anywhere. Never in the past was it seen nor will it occur in future. Nor it is current now.

Siva will become Ardhanarisvara (half male and half female), with your daughter forming half the part of his body. By propitiating Siva with her penance she will acquire the lustre of gold and will be known as Swarnagauri. Your daughter will be as fair complexioned as lightening. This girl will be famous in the name of Gauri. She will deserve the respect of Vishnu, Brahma and the other Gods.

Himavat said that it is heard that the great God abhors all attachments. He has perfect self-control. He is ever busy in penance and is out of the reach of even the Gods. The supreme Brahman is great and imperishable. It is like the streak of a lamp. It is termed Sadasiva. It is without aberration. It is beyond Brahma. It is both full and devoid of qualities. It has no special traits, no desires. It sees within and not without.

Narada enlightened Himavat, Parvati, was formerly the daughter of Daksa. Sati was her auspicious name. Sati who was Daksa's daughter became Rudra's wife. Being dishonoured at the sacrifice of her father, and being the witness of Siva's dishonour she was furious and she cast off her body. She herself is born in your house as Parvati. There is no doubt that she will become Siva's wife."

All inauspicious things are auspicious in Sadasiva.

The omniscient supreme Goddess Parvati told her mother that at night she had a dream in which a Brahmin sage advised her to perform the penance of Siva.

2. Birth of Planet Mars

Returning to His Mountain, Siva in his excitement caused by his separation from his beloved, remembered Sati, who was dearer to Him than his very life. Not seeing her anywhere, the pangs of his separation from Sati increasing, Siva, the benefactor of His devotees, returned to His mountain and entered into trance for the destruction of misery.

Thereupon He saw His imperishable real form. Thus Siva remained for a long time eliminating the three attributes, and unaffected by aberrations. The lord Himself, the controller of illusion remained in the state of Supreme Brahmin.

The drops of sweat caused by exhaustion fell on the Earth from the lord's forehead and took the shape of a child immediately.

Parvati, along with her maids, continued her daily service to the moon-crested lord, coming and going without any hindrance. She washed Siva's feet and drank that holy water. With a cloth heated in fire she wiped his body. After worshipping Him with sixteen types of offerings duly, and bowing to Him repeatedly she used to return to her father's abode.

Siva on seeing her with perfect control over her sense organs and engrossed in serving Him always, thought that he would take her only when the last seed of ego goes away from her; when she herself performs a penance."

3.The Birth of Taraka and Vajranga and their Penance

Saint Kasyapa married Diti, the eldest daughter of Daksa. A Son was born of Diti and was named Vajranga (of adamantine limbs) who was on a par with the Gods. Befitting his name, his body was strong and powerful even from his very birth.

Brahma created an exquisite lady named Varangi and offered her to Vajranga, the son of Diti. Varangi told her husband to grant her a powerful son who will conquer three worlds and cause misery to Visnu.

Varangi devoted to Vajranga conceived. The child within her body developed in many years with its brilliance. Varangi, when the time was complete, delivered of a son of huge body and great strength dazzling the ten quarters. Then Kasyapa Prajapati thought well and named the powerful demon Taraka.

That heroic demon, with his manliness and valour manifesting quickly grew and developed with his steely frame like the lord of mountains. Then the demon Taraka, of great strength and exploit, endowed with a lofty mind, requested permission of his mother for performing penance.

For a hundred years he performed penance with his hands lifted up, standing on only one leg and gazing at the sun, with his mind steady and firm he observed all sacred rites. Then for a hundred years, the lord and king of Asuras, Taraka performed the penance: stood steady touching the ground with the single big toe.

For hundred years he performed penance by drinking only water; another hundred years by sustaining himself on air alone, another hundred years standing in water and another hundred years standing on dry land. A hundred years he performed the penance amidst fires, a hundred years in a topsy-turvy position and a hundred years supported on the ground by the palms of his hands. Another hundred years he remained with his head down and feet up clinging fast to the branch of a tree and inhaling the pure smoke of the sacrificial fire.

After going there, the haughty Kama, deluded by Siva's magic power, stationed himself, after first spreading the enchanting power of spring all around. The fragrant flowers of Mango and Asoka trees shone heightening feelings of love.

Diverse sounds of the humming of the bees rang sweet in the ears of everyone heightening temptations of love. The bright light of the moon scattered all around appeared to be the emissary of lovers and their beloveds.

On seeing the untimely display of spring, Siva the lord, who had assumed a physical body indulging in divine sports, thought it surprising. But He, the chief of the self-controlled and the remover of man's misery continued his severe penance. Kama usually stationed within the mind manifested himself outside. But he could not find any vulnerable loophole in Siva whereby he could enter him.

In assistance to Kama, Parvati reached the place near Siva with emotions of love and accompanied by spring. In order to make the trident-bearing lord take interest in her, Kama drew his bow very carefully and discharged his flowery arrow on Him. As was her usual practice she approached Siva, bowed to Him, worshipped Him and stood in front of Him (awaiting further instructions).

Then, Lord Siva began to describe her limbs joyfully. Siva said that Parvati is blessed of mysteriously wonderful features. There is no other woman equal to her in beauty in three worlds. She is the storehouse of finest beauty. She has wondrous beautiful limbs. She is an enchantress of even sages. She increases great happiness.

Parvati smilingly laid bare some parts of her body and cast graceful glances at Him with great pleasure. On seeing these movements and gestures Siva became fascinated. Lord Siva indulging in great divine sports spoke that he felt great pleasure on merely seeing her and what pleasure would he derive by embracing her?" Lord Siva realized that How wonderful and mysterious is the situation that has arisen! How is that he has been deluded and fascinated? Though he was the lord and master, Kama has perturbed him.

4.Kama's Destruction

He saw Kama stationed on His left side with his bow fully drawn and ready to discharge the arrow, Kama was haughty and so was very senseless. On seeing Kama in that attitude, instantaneously anger was aroused in lord Siva, the supreme soul. Standing high up in the air, holding the arrow and the bow, Kama discharged his arrow, usually unerring on Siva. The infallible weapon became futile on the great lord. The furious weapon calmed down in regard to the great soul, Siva.

A great flame of fire sprang up from the third eye of the infuriated Siva. That fire originating instantaneously from the eye in the middle of His forehead blazed with flames shooting up and resembling the fire of final dissolution in refulgence. After shooting up in the sky, it fell on the ground and rolled over the earth all round.

Even before the Gods had the time to say "Let him be forgiven, let him be excused" it reduced Kama to ashes. With pallid face and limbs, the extremely agitated daughter of the king of mountains returned to her palace taking the maids along with her. Due to the misery on account of the death of her husband, Rati fell down unconscious, as if dead.

Indra and other Gods came there and told Rati to take some ashes and preserve them. The lord will resuscitate your lover and you will regain your lover again.

The Gods requested Siva to ponder over the action of Kama, as there was no tinge of selfishness in what he has done. The chaste Rati is lonely and miserable now. She is in great lamentation, O bestower of everything, please console her.

Siva told Gods that what has happened, thanks to my fury, cannot be altered. The lord Kama, the husband of Rati, shall remain bodiless till Visnu, incarnates as Krsna on the earth and marries Rukmini. Krsna will beget Kama in Rukmini when he goes to Dwarka and begins to procreate children. His name will certainly be Pradyumna.

The demon Sambara will abduct the boy at the time of his very birth. After abducting the boy, the great demon, Sambara, will throw him in the sea. Rati shall stay in his city till then. There alone you will get back to your husband Pradyumna. Kama in the name of Pradyumna will regain his wife after killing Sambara in a battle.

Meanwhile Parvati told her mother that she would be performing penance to achieve Siva. Parvati was prevented from going to forest and forbidden to perform penance since she was prevented from going to forest and forbidden to perform penance by Mena and hence she acquired the name Uma.

5.Penance of Parvati and Marriage with Siva

Parvati eschewed necklace and wore the pure deerskin. She arrived at Gangavatarana for performing penance. The Gangavatarana was in the Himalayas ridge where Siva who was performing meditation burned Kama.

She performed penance in the excellent holy centre Srngitirtha, which (later) acquired the title "GauriSikhara" due to her performance of penance thereon.

Suppressing her sense organs with her mind, she started the great penance in a place within the proximity.

In the summer she kept a perpetually blazing fire all round and remaining within continued muttering the mantra. In the rainy season she continuously remained sitting on the bare ground on the rock and got her drenched by the downpour of rain. During the winter, with great devotion she remained in water throughout. During snowfall and in the nights too she performed her penance observing fast.

6. The Dalliance of Siva

When Siva returned to Kailasa, the joyful Ganas made all arrangements for His happiness.

Then taking Parvati the daughter of the mountain, with Him, Siva, the great Lord, went to a delightful brilliant isolated place.

Making a wonderful bed conducive to good sexual pleasure, rendered smooth and fragrant with flowers and sandal paste and auspiciously supplemented with objects of enjoyment, lord "Siva" the bestower of honour, indulged in dalliance with Parvati for a thousand years of god.

In that divine sport at the mere contact with Parvati, Siva elapsed in unconsciousness. She too lapsed into unconsciousness due to the contact with Siva. She neither knew the day nor the night.

When Siva was indulged in dalliance, along with Brahma and the Gods, Visnu, the favourite deity of the gods came to him. Visnu said O great lord, what are you doing inside? Save us from the distress of Taraka. Being disturbed Siva's semen was discharged.

Siva asked the Gods that who would take his discharged semen. After saying this He let it fall on the ground. Urged by the gods Agni became a dove and swallowed it with his beak.

When Siva took a long time to return, Parvati hastened there and saw the gods. On coming to know of the incident she became very furious.

The goddess told the Gods that you are wicked and particularly selfish and for that purpose they give pain to others. And for the sake of realizing their self-interests you have propitiated the lord and spoilt her dalliance. She had become a barren woman therefore. Parvati cursed them that from now onwards the wives of the gods would be barren and the gods who offended her be unhappy, Parvati, the daughter of the mountain, immediately returned to her apartment along with Siva. Unable to endure the force of the semen lord Agni became afflicted. Visnu and other gods had already lost their sense at the curse of Parvati.

Siva told god to vomit his semen. The semen of Siva lustrous and golden in color falling on the ground seemed to touch the heaven, as it was as huge as a mountain.

Agni dev asked for forgiveness from Siva and he was directed by the lord to deposit the semen in womb of some good woman. Brahma said there is no woman in three worlds except Parvati to hold it in her womb. Then Narada suggested depositing the semen of Siva in bodies of the ladies who take their morning bath in the month of Magha.

Meanwhile the wives of the seven celestial sages came there desirous of taking their early morning bath in the month of Magha with other observances of rites.

After the bath, six of them were distressed by the chillness and were desirous of going near the flame of fire. Arundhati of good conduct and perfect knowledge saw them deluded and dissuaded them at the behest of Siva.

The particles of the semen entered their bodies through the pores of hairs.

Vanishing immediately from the scene, Agni in the form of a flame, went back happily to his region, mentally remembering Siva.

The women became pregnant and were distressed by the burning sensation.

The wives of the sages cast off their semen in the form of a foetus at the top of Himavat.

They felt then relieved of their burning sensation.

Unable to bear that semen of Siva and trembling much, Himavat became scorched by it and hurled it in the Ganga.

The intolerable semen of lord Siva was deposited by Ganga in the forest of Sara grass by means of its waves.

The semen that fell was turned in a handsome good-featured boy, full of glory and splendour. He increased everyone's pleasure.

On the sixth day of the bright half of the lunar month of Margasirsa, the son of Siva was born in the world.

At that time, on their mountain, Parvati the daughter of Himavat and Siva became very happy.

Out of joy, milk exuded from the breasts of Parvati.

7. Birth of Ganesa

Once when Parvati was taking her bath, Sadasiva rebuked Nandin and came into the inner apartment. The mother of the universe, seeing the untimely arrival of Siva in the midst of her bath and toilet stood up. Parvati thought that there must be a servant of her own who will be expert in his duties. He must not stray from my behest even a speck. The friends Jaya and Vijaya discussed with Parvati that Pramathas are numerous. But none of them can be called our own.

Thinking thus the goddess created a person with all the characteristics, out of the dirt from her body. He was known as Ganesa. He was spotless and handsome in every part of his body. He was huge in size and had all brilliance, strength and valour. She gave him various clothes and ornaments. Parvati told him to work as her gatekeeper from today. She told him that he was her son and without her permission, no one, by any means, shall intrude her apartment.

Thus placing her son at the doorway, Parvati began to take bath with her friends, unworried. At this very moment Siva, came near the door. Not knowing that he was lord Siva, Ganesa told him that without her mother's permission no one could go in. On seeing him Siva replied that he does not know who he was. He told him that he is Siva and none else. When lord Siva tried to enter the house, Ganesa became infuriated and struck him with his staff.

Then Siva too became furious. He commanded his own Ganas. The infuriated Ganas of Siva questioned the son of Parvati who stood at the gate of his whereabouts. They told him they considered him as one of the Ganas and would not kill him. Otherwise he would have been killed.

Though warned thus, Ganesa, the son of Parvati, stood fearless. He did not leave his post at the door. After hearing his words, the Ganas of Siva went back and informed Siva about his stand. Siva asked them to beat him.

When rebuked thus by lord Siva, the excellent Ganas went back. Girding up his loins, tying his turban firmly and clapping his calves and thighs, he spoke fearlessly to all the Ganas. He told them that he was the son of Parvati. They are the Ganas of Siva. Both of us are thus equal. They cannot enter the apartment either forcibly or humbly.

The fight between the parties of Parvati and Siva is the one between a strong army and a boy. When thus taunted and rebuked they rushed towards Ganesa with big batons, decorating their arms and taking up different kinds of weapons. Gnashing their teeth, grunting and bellowing the Ganas rushed at him.

Nandin came first and caught hold of his leg. He pulled at it. Bhringin then rushed at him and caught hold of his other leg. Before the Ganas of Siva had time to pull his legs Ganesa struck a blow at their hands and got his legs free. Then seizing a big iron club and standing at the doorway he smashed the Ganas.

Now none among them stood face to face. Just as deer flee to any direction on seeing a lion, the Ganas who were thousands in number fled in that manner. At this time, urged by Narada, all the gods including Visnu and Indra came there. Brahma went to pacify Ganesa. On seeing him approaching, the powerful Ganesa came to him very furiously and plucked his moustache and beard.

Brahma told him that he has not come for fighting and that he was a Brahmin. He said that he has come to make peace and would cause no harm. On seeing the powerful Ganesa seizing the iron club he began to run away immediately. On seeing them in that plight and on hearing the news, Siva, an adept in sports became very angry. He issued directives to Indra and other gods, to the Ganas led by the six-faced Kumara and to goblins, ghosts and spirits. At the bidding of Siva they all desired to kill Ganesa.

Whatever weapon they had was hurled on Ganesa with force. In the meantime, goddess, the mother of the universe, of special knowledge, came to know of the entire incident and was very furious. The goddess created two Saktis then and there for the assistance of her own Gana.

One Sakti assumed a very fierce form and stood there opening her mouth as wide as the cavern of a dark mountain. The other assumed the form of lightning. She wore many arms. She was a huge and terrible goddess ready to punish the wicked. The weapons hurled by the gods and the Ganas were caught in the mouth and hurled back at them.

The earth with all the oceans quaked. As a result of violent battle even mountains fell down. The sky whirled with the planets and the stars. Everything was agitated. The gods fled. The Ganas too did likewise. But the Ganas fought in vain with the two Saktis. The weapons of the gods and the Ganas were broken and hence withdrawn by them. Then the furious Rudra became more furious and went there along with his Ganas.

The entire army of the gods along with the discus bearing Visnu shouted in jubilation and followed Siva. Visnu of great strength, valour and skill and possessing great divine weapons and Siva's form fought with him. Ganesa hit all the chief gods with his staff. He hit Visnu too, all of a sudden; the hero had been conferred great strength by the saktis. Parvati's son of great strength and heroism saw Siva arrived there with desire to fight him to a finish, the great lord with the trident in his hand.

Ganesa felled that to the ground by means of his iron club. The hero had been conferred great strength by the saktis. Ganesa, son of the Saktis whirled the iron club and hurled it at Visnu. After remembering the lotus-like feet of Siva, Visnu took up his discus and split the iron club by means of discus. Securing this opportunity, the trident bearing deity

came there and cut off his head with his trident. When the head of Ganesa was cut off, the armies of the gods and the Ganas stood still.

After cutting off the head of Ganesa even as Siva became sorry, goddess Parvati became furious. Lamenting thus, the great goddess of all the worlds angrily created in a moment hundreds and thousands of Saktis. On being commanded by her, the infuriated Saktis got ready to destroy the gods and others. Just as the fire consumes dry grass so also these saktis attempted to destroy. Leaders of Ganas or Visnu, Brahma or Siva, Indra or Kubera, Skanda or the Sun, Saktis began to destroy them.

Narada and other sages went to Parvati in order to appease her anger. They then propitiated her. They bowed to her again and again. They eulogized her with many hymns. They tried to please her with devotion and at the behest of the gods and Ganas spoke thus. On hearing their words Parvati was pleased and she replied to the sages with her mind full of compassion. If her son regains life there may not be further annihilation. If they can arrange for him a honourable status and position among them as the chief presiding officer, there may be peace in the world.

Siva hearing this sends Gods to the northern direction and told them to bring head of whatever person they meet and fit it to Ganesa. Gods paid homage to it and started towards the north. It was a single tusked elephant that they met. They took the head and fitted it to the body of Ganesa.

Then Brahma, Visnu and other gods jointly sprinkled the holy water invoked by the mantras, on that body after remembering Siva. Immediately after the contact of the holy water the boy was resuscitated to life and joined with consciousness. He was handsome, extremely comely. He had the face of an elephant. He was red-complexioned. He was delighted with face beaming. He was brilliant and had fine features.

They showed him delightfully to the goddess. On seeing her restored to life, the goddess was greatly delighted. Siva, Visnu and Brahma told the gods with pleasure that just as they were worshipped in all the three worlds, so also all shall worship Ganesa. He shall be worshipped first and they shall be worshipped afterwards. If he is not worshipped, they too are not worshipped. If the other deities are worshipped when he is not worshipped, the fruit of that rite will be lost. Siva told him to be the presiding officer of all his Ganas and worthy of worship, another boon was granted to Ganesa by the delighted Siva of great soul

Ganesa, born in the first Prahara on the fourth day in the dark half of the Bhadra month at the auspicious hour of the moonrise, since his form manifested itself from the good mind of Parvati, his excellent Vrata shall be performed on that Tithi itself or beginning from that day. It will be very auspicious and conducive to the achievement of all Siddhis. The Vrata shall be performed till the fourth day at the end of a year. Ganesa shall be adored with incense, lamps and different kinds of food-offerings.

8.Ganesa's Marriage

The love and affection of the parents towards the six-faced lord and Ganesa increased to a great extent like the moon in the bright half of the month. Parvati and Siva thought that the two sons had attained to marriageable age and how best their marriage should be celebrated. Both quarreled with each other.

Siva and Parvati told them that the auspicious marriage would be celebrated of that boy who comes here first after going round the entire earth. Kumara started immediately from the fixed point in order to go round the earth. Ganesa worshipped Siva and Parvati and

circumambulated seven times and bowed too seven times. Then Ganesa told them that his auspicious marriage should be celebrated quickly. Siva and Parvati told him that he should circumambulate the earth with all its forests. Kumara has already gone. He too should start and return first. Ganesa replied that I have circumambulated the earth frequently, for seven times.

Parents asked him when was the great earth circumambulated by him, the earth consisting of seven continents extending to the oceans and consisting of vast jungle. Ganesa replied that by worshipping his parents, Parvati and Siva, he has intelligently circumambulated the earth extending to the oceans. The holy center of a son consists of the lotus like feet of his parents. This holy center is near at hand, easily accessible and a means of virtue. For a son and wife, the auspicious holy center is in the house itself. These things are mentioned frequently in the Sastras and the Vedas. Ganesa said that his auspicious marriage be celebrated and that too very quickly. Otherwise the Vedas and Sastras are declared false. Then, Siva and Parvati praised their son who was clever and intelligent. Appeasing Ganesa, the ocean of intelligence, they resolved to perform his marriage.

In the meantime Prajapati Visvarupa became delighted and happy on knowing their intention. Prajapati Visvarupa had two daughters of divine features. They were famous as Siddhi and Buddhi.

The lord Siva and Parvati jubilantly celebrated the marriage of Ganesa with them. The delighted gods attended their marriage as desired by Siva and Parvati. Visvakarman made all arrangements for the marriage.

After sometime, the noble Ganesa begot two sons, one each of his wives. They were endowed with divine features. The son Ksema was born to Siddhi. The highly brilliant son Labha was born to Buddhi. While Ganesa was enjoying the inconceivable happiness, the second son returned after circumambulating the earth.

Thereupon Narada addressed him.

After driving you out under the pretext of circumambulating the earth, Parvati and Siva have celebrated the excellent and auspicious marriage of Ganesa, the entire earth consisting of oceans and jungles has been traversed by you due to their deceptive behest. This is the result of that.

Narada told Kumara that your parents have not done well. Just ponder over it. I do not think their has been good.

After bowing to his father, the infuriated Kumara went to the Kraunca Mountain though forbidden by his parents.

Ever since that day, the son of Siva, Karttikeya remains a bachelor. His name bestows auspiciousness in the world. It is famous in the three worlds. It dispels all sins, is meritorious and confers the sanctity of celibacy.

In the month of Karttika, the gods, the holy sages and great ascetics go there to see Kumara. Parvati became grief stricken by separation from Skanda. She piteously requested Siva to take her to him. Goddess Siva went to that mountain partially for her happiness. They assumed the pleasing form of Jyotirlinga known as MalikaArjuna.

On the full and new moon days, Parvati and Siva are excited by love towards their son. On new moon days, Siva himself goes there. On full moon days, Parvati goes there certainly.

9. The Tripuras

When Skanda, the son of Siva, killed the Asura Taraka his three sons performed austerities. The eldest of them was Tarakaksa, the middle one Vidyunmali and the youngest Kamalaksa.

Eschewing all enjoyments captivating the mind, they went to the cavern of the mountain Meru and performed a wonderful penance.

They were not at all vexed or distressed thereby. They gradually increased the severity of their austerities. Thus the three excellent sons of Taraka performed penance with Brahma as the object of their worship. Maintaining strict severity in their austerities, the excellent Asuras made their bodies emaciated by their penance.

Satisfied by their penance, Brahma the supreme lord of the gods and Asuras, of great glory, appeared in front of them in order to grant them boons. The Asuras requested him to grant them indestructibility at the hands of everyone, every living being.

Brahma told them that there couldn't be invariable indestructibility. They would have to seek some other boon. Except Siva the destroyer of Death, and Visnu all else are mortals. Immortality is impossible for the gods and the Asuras. The Asuras then requested him to build and give them three wonderful cities richly endowed with wealth and unassailable even to the gods. Tarakaksa then said that Visvakarma should make a city, which cannot be broken even by the gods, and that golden city would be his. Kamalaksa requested for a great silver city. The delighted Vidyunmali requested for steel-set magnetic city.

They continued that they would join together during midday at the time of Abhijit, at the end of a thousand years; these cities shall never join otherwise. When these cities are joined together, the lord who embodies all the gods sitting in a wonderful chariot containing all necessary adjuncts, may, in his distorted sport, discharge a wonderful single arrow and pierce our cities.

On hearing their words, Brahma, the grandfather and creator of the worlds remembered Siva and granted them the boon.

He ordered Maya to build three cities, one of gold, another of silver and a third one of steel. The three fort-like excellent cities were in order in heaven, sky and on the earth. Entering the three cities thus, the sons of Taraka, of great strength and valour experienced all enjoyments.

Thus the Asuras, sons of Taraka, after acquiring the boons, lived there subservient to Maya, a great devotee of Siva. Abandoning the other parts in the three worlds they entered the cities and ruled the kingdom following the principles of Siva.

The distressed gods including Indra went to the place where the bull-bannered god Siva was staying. Eulogizing thus the bull-bannered, the trident bearing lord Siva with various kinds of divine hymns. The gods said that the Asura accompanied by his brothers has defeated Indra; the sons of Taraka have defeated all the gods.

Siva said that a meritorious person is the presiding ruler of the Tripuras now. A sensible person should not kill him who practices meritorious deeds.

Those Asuras are my devotees and are very strong. The gods or demons cannot kill them. They should not be slain as long as they continue their devotion to me. This reason may very well be intimated to Visnu.

When the three cities came to a unified whole, a tumultuous shout of joy rose up among the noble Gods and others. Then stringing the bow tight and fixing the arrow Pasupata worthy of worship, he thought of the Tripuras.

In the auspicious moment called Abhilasa he drew the bow and made a wonderful and unbearable twanging sound. He addressed the great Asuras and proclaimed his own name. Siva discharged an arrow that had the refulgence of countless suns.

The arrow which was constituted by Visnu and whose steel head was fire god blazed forth and burnt the three Asuras who lived in the three cities. It thereby removed their sins. The three cities reduced to ashes fell on the earth girt by the four oceans.

Just as the universe is burnt at the end of a Kalpa so also every thing and every one there, whether woman or man or vehicles, was reduced to ashes by that fire.

Those who were not opposed to the gods were saved by Siva's brilliance, those who devoutly sought refuge in lord Siva at the time of adversity.

On merely seeing the terrible form of Siva, dazzling the ten quarters, resembling countless suns in refulgence and on a par with the fire at the hour of dissolution, and also the goddess Parvati, the daughter of Himavat, the illustrious gods stood humbly in their fight.

In the meantime the Asura Maya, who was not burnt due to the strength of grace, came there on seeing Siva delighted. Maya the foremost among the Asuras, with his mind full of devotion and voice choked with emotions of love eulogized facing Siva. He requested Siva to grant permanent devotion to him.

Then the lord, after completing the tasks of gods, vanished from the scene accompanied by his Ganas, goddess Parvati and the sons. Then Brahma, Visnu, the gods, sages, Gandharva, Kinnaras, Nagas, serpents, celestial damsels and the delighted men went to their abodes praising the glory of Siva.

10. The Birth of Jalandhara and his Marriage

Once Brahaspati and Indra went to Kailasa with great devotion, to see lord Siva. Lord Siva wished to test their knowledge. Accordingly, the lord, the excellent goal of good, stood blocking their path in the naked form with matted hair and beaming face.

Indra asked the Brahmin his whereabouts and asked whether Siva was in his apartment or has gone anywhere. The naked lord, though asked repeatedly by Indra, did not say anything, for he wanted to test the knowledge of Indra. Looking at him ferociously Indra raised his thunderbolt in order to kill him. On seeing Indra lifting up his thunderbolt, Siva prevented the fall of the thunderbolt by making his hand benumbed.

Then Siva became furious. His eyes became terrible. He blazed with his burning splendour. On seeing him resplendent, Brahaspati realized immediately that he was lord Siva himself and bowed to him.

Then the noble minded Brhaspati joined his palms in reverence. He prostrated before him and began to eulogise the lord. Brahaspati requested him to quieten the anger rising from his eyes. He requested him to protect Indra who has sought refuge in him.

Siva told him that he has to cast off this fire born of his eye in the forehead intended to kill Indra lest it should afflict him. On saying this he held that wonderful brilliance born of the eye in the forehead and cast it off in the briny ocean.

The brilliance of Siva born of the eye in the forehead and cast off into the briny sea immediately assumed the form of a boy. At the confluence of the river Ganga and the ocean, the boy of terrific features cried loudly.

Brahma descended from Satyaloka to the earth along with the gods. Then he went to the oceans desirous of knowing what it was. The son of the ocean caught hold of the neck of

Brahma and shook it several times. In due course tears came out of the eyes of Brahma, the creator of all the worlds.

Since he was able to make Brahma's eyes water he was famous in the name of Jalandhara. He became a youth at that moment. Brahma said that He will become a master of all sacred lores, very valorous, courageous, heroic, invincible and majestic. This boy will become the emperor of Asuras. He will conquer even Visnu. He cannot be slain by anyone except Siva.

With a joyous heart ocean nurtured the boy with diverse great means. The boy grew into a beautiful youth of exquisite limbs and wonderful splendour. Then the ocean invited the great Asura Kalanemi and requested him to give his daughter named Vrnda in marriage to his son.

He gave his beloved daughter to Jalandhara, the brave son of the ocean, in marriage performing the nuptial rites according to the Brahma style. The heroic son of the ocean, Jalandhara, foremost among the Asura warriors, received a very beautiful lady as his wife and he ruled over the kingdom with the support of Sukra.

Once the son of the ocean, the noble hearted husband of Vrnda, was seated along with his wife and the Asuras. The brilliant Bhargava came there joyously illuminating the ten quarters as the embodied brilliance.

Bhargava told them that all the gods, the assistants of Visnu churned the ocean eagerly for the gain of nectar, along with the Asuras. The enemies of the Asuras extracted jewels from the ocean. The gods seized the nectar and drank it deceitfully. Then the gods including Indra increased in strength and prowess by the drinking of the nectar and harassed the Asuras with the assistance of Visnu. This Visnu who is always a partisan of Indra, cut off the head of Rahu as he was drinking the nectar along with the gods. Then on hearing about the churning of his father, the heroic son of the ocean, the valorous Jalandhara became furious and his eyes turned red with anger. Jalandhara called his excellent emissary Ghasmara and sent him to Indra as his messenger. Ghasmara, the intelligent emissary of Jalandhara, hastened to heaven where all gods were present.

Ghasmara told the Gods that Jalandhara, the son of the ocean, is the lord and emperor of all the Asuras. He is excessively heroic and valorous. He has the support and assistance of Bhargava. Jalandhara has asked Gods why was his father, the ocean, churned by them with the mountain? Why were all the jewels of his father taken away?. They should return all of them to him immediately and Gods should seek refuge in him.

On hearing the words of the messenger, Indra, the lord of the gods, was bewildered. Indra told him that those who oppose him can never remain happy.

Dismissed thus by Indra, the intelligent emissary Ghasmara hastened to the place where the heroic Jalandhara was present. On hearing it, the lips of the Asura throbbed with anger. Desirous of conquering the gods he exerted himself immediately. Very soon, he reached the heaven along with his force.

After going to heaven he stationed himself in Nandana. In the midst of all his forces he roared like a lion. Then a battle between the armies of the gods and Asuras ensued. They rushed against one another with iron clubs, arrows, maces, axes and spears. They hit one another. Within short time both the armies began to wade through streams of blood.

Bhargava resuscitated the Asuras killed in the battle with the Vidya of Amrtajivini and drops of water infused with mantras. The sage Angiras too resuscitated the gods in the battle with the divine herbs frequently brought from the mountain Drona.

Bhargava told Jalandhar that if he wishes for victory she should immediately uproot the mountain Drona and hurl it into the ocean. With his powerful arms, the Asura brought the mountain Drona and hurled it immediately into the ocean. All the gods including Indra, struck by the king of the Asuras all a round, lost courage and fled in all directions. On seeing the gods routed, the Asura, Jalandhara, the son of the ocean, entered Amravati with sounds of victory from the conches and drums.

All the Gods including Prajapati eulogized Visnu after bowing down to him. The gods told him that all the gods have been driven out of heaven by Jalandhara.

Visnu then came to the battlefield on his vehicle Garuda. Roaring like a lion and accompanied by the gods who blazed with Visnu's splendour, he reached the place where Jalandhara was waiting.

Then on seeing the Asuras afflicted by the gusts of wind, Jalandhara rushed against Visnu shouting out cries of bravery angrily.

Thus the Asuras clever and efficient in battle, commanded by Jalandhara on the one hand and gods equipped with the four sorts of fighting groups on the other fought one another with maces, arrows, javelins, spears etc. They hit one another with axes and spears. Thus the fight between the gods and the Asuras was terrific.

Striking with a single arrow, Visnu smote the heart of the Asura. With innumerable arrows he cut off the umbrella, banner, bow and arrows of the demon. The infuriated Asura with throbbing lips hit Visnu in his heart with his sharp spear diffusing its splendour.

Then the infuriated Jalandhara, invincible in war, terrifying to the Asura hurled a trident, resembling fire, at Visnu. Immediately Visnu remembered the lotus like feet of Siva and cut the trident with his sword Nandaka.

When the trident was split, the lord of the Asuras leapt and rushed against Visnu and hit him in the chest with his fist. Without minding the pain in the least, the heroic Visnu hit Jalandhara in the chest with his firm fist.

Both of them equally powerful had hand-to-hand fight hitting each other with arms, fists and knees. They filled the earth with reverberating sounds.

Fighting with the Asura thus, for a long time, Visnu was surprised. He felt dejected in the heart.

Then he the foremost among the magic-wielders assumed a delightful aspect. Visnu told Jalandhara that he was blessed. He was invincible in war and was not at all afraid of even great weapons. Visnu asked him to choose a boon.

On hearing these words of Visnu, skilled in magic, the intelligent king of the Asura requested Visnu to stay in his house with all his followers and his wife, Jalandhara's sister. Then Visnu came to the city called Jalandhara along with his followers, the gods and Laksmi.

The son of the ocean confiscated whatever gem or jewels the gods, Gandharva or Siddhas had hoarded. Making gods, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Serpents, Raksasas and human beings, the denizens of his capital, he ruled over the three worlds.

When he was ruling the kingdom virtuously, none in his realm was sick or miserable or lean and emaciated or indigent. The distressed gods mentally sought refuge in Siva the benefactor, lord of gods and of everyone.

The great lord Siva, the bestower of all desires to his devotees called Narada and commissioned him with a desire to carry out the tasks of the gods.

Then the celestial sage, the wise devotee of Siva, went to the gods in the city of the Asuras at the bidding of Siva. On seeing the sage Narada coming, the distressed gods, Indra and others, stood up.

The gods said that the Asura Jalandhara from their abodes and positions of controlling authority has routed them. Hence they are miserable and distressed. The great Asura Jalandhara who has suppressed the gods and who is very powerful has made Visnu subservient to him in the battle.

Narada consoled them and went to the assembly chamber of Jalandhara to see the favourite Asura. Narada told him that he had been to the summit of Kailasa casually. It is ten thousand Yojanas wide. It has a grove of Kalpa trees.

Hundreds of Kamadhenus are found there. Cintamani gems illuminate it. It abounds in gold. It is divine and wonderfully brilliant. There I saw Siva seated along with Parvati. He has three eyes and the moon for his crest.

Narada continued that an idea of his prosperity struck into his mind. He said that Jalandhara deserves the most excellent of all the ladies. Jalandhara asked him where could he find such a lady. And even if the lady exists anywhere in the whole of this universe he would bring her here.

Narada said that Kailasa is very beautiful and it possesses all sorts of things conducive to prosperity. Siva lives there assuming the form of a naked Yogin. His wife Parvati is exquisitely beautiful in every limb. She is charming and has all the characteristics of a beautiful lady.

The prosperity that Siva enjoys in as much as he indulges in dalliance with the most excellent of all ladies has not come to Jalandhara.

After saying this, the world-renowned celestial sage Narada, pursuing his attempt to help the gods departed from there by the aerial path.

The king of Daityas who had heard of the exquisite beauty of Parvati became harassed with pangs of love. The deluded Daitya, Jalandhara, who had lost clear thinking, being swayed by Time called his messenger Rahu. Jalandhara told Rahu to go to the mountain Kailasa.

Rahu went to Kailasa and was allowed to enter by Nandin. The emissary named Rahu bowed to Siva. His haughtiness subsided by the brilliance of his body. He went near Siva. Rahu was desirous of speaking to him. Urged by his gesture Rahu spoke to the three-eyed god Siva.

The son of the ocean Jalandhara became the lord of all Daityas and now he is the lord of three worlds. The exquisitely beautiful wife is of no avail to you as you stay in the jungle attended by ghosts, goblins, spirits and other beings.

All excellent things shine in Jalandhara's possession, and Parvati is the most excellent of all ladies. She deserves him better than you who live on alms. Hence he too should surrender his wife the most excellent of all ladies to him.

When Rahu spoke thus, a terrific being resonant like the thunder came out from the space between the eyebrows of the trident-bearing deity.

He had a leonine mouth with a moving tongue; his eyes shed fiery flames; his hair stood at its end; his body was dry and rough. He appeared to be the man lion incarnation of Visnu. He was huge in size. He had long arms. His calves were as stout and huge as the Palmyra tree. He was very terrible. He immediately rushed at Rahu.

On seeing him rushing to devour, Rahu was terrified. Rahu pleaded to Siva that he was a Brahmin and these Ganas want to swallow a Brahmin.

The great lord told Ganas to leave the Brahmin Rahu, the emissary who has sought refuge. Commanded thus by the lord of Parvati, the Gana set Rahu free, on hearing the word Brahmin. After approaching Jalandhara the lord of Daityas, Rahu explained everything concerning Siva in detail.

On hearing it the powerful son of the ocean, the excellent lord of Daityas, Jalandhara became furious from head to foot.

The lord of the Asuras the valorous son of the ocean set out quickly accompanied by crores of Daityas.

On seeing his enterprise, the gods including Indra went to Kailasa, the abode of Siva without being observed. After going there and seeing Siva, the gods including Indra, bowed to him with stooping shoulders.

The gods told Siva that they were very much distressed by Jalandhara's harassment. All including Indra are deposed and compelled to stay on the earth. Visnu who was assigned the task of protection by Siva was unable to protect them. They told him that the powerful son of the ocean is coming to fight with him.

He should kill Jalandhara in battle without delay and save them as they have sought refuge in him.

On hearing the words of the gods the bull-bannered deity laughed. He called Visnu immediately and asked him why he did not kill Jalandhara in battle. Visnu replied that he did not kill Jalandhara in war because he was born of a part of Siva. Moreover he is Laksmi's brother. Then Visnu requested Siva to kill Jalandhara.

Siva told them to go back to their abodes fearlessly, considering the ruler of the Asuras already killed.

In the meantime, that valorous king of the Daityas went along with the well-equipped Asuras to the outskirts of the mountain. Accompanied by a vast army he laid siege to Kailasa. He stood there like the God of death roaring like a lion.

On hearing the tumultuous roar of the Daityas, lord Siva of great sports, the destroyer of the wicked, became very furious. Nandin, Vighnesvara, Kumara and all other Ganas, at the bidding of Siva hurriedly got ready for the battle.

Then at the ridges, valleys and sides of Kailasa, a terrible battle was fought between the leaders of the Pramathas and the Daityas. The whole earth shook resonant with the sounds of Great War drums, Mrdangas and conches that inspired the heroes as well as the sounds of elephants, horses and chariots.

The whole atmosphere was filled with javelin, iron clubs, arrows, great pestles, iron rods, pikes etc. as if strewn with pearls.

With the power of Sanjivani, Bhargava resuscitated the forces of the Daityas killed by the Pramathas in the battle again and again.

On hearing it lord Siva became terribly furious.

A terrible Krtiya came out of Rudra's mouth. Her calves were as stout as Palmyra trees. Her mouth was huge and deep like mountain caverns. With her breasts she crushed huge trees. Fearlessly she rushed amid the battlefield where Bhargava was stationed surrounded by the leading Daityas.

She enveloped the whole sky with her terrible brilliance. She split the ground she trod; she stuffed Bhargava into her vaginal passage and vanished in the sky.

On seeing Bhargava seized, the invincible armies of the Daityas became dejected and faded in their faces. They fled from the battleground.

On seeing the army destroyed, the powerful son of the ocean rushed at the Ganas in his chariot of waving and wafting colours. The many arrows discharged by Jalandhara as if by floating masses of mist enveloped the space between heaven and the earth.

Hitting Nandin and Ganesa with five arrows each and Virabhadra with twenty he roared like thunder.

Karttikeya the heroic son of Siva then swiftly hit the Daitya Jalandhara with his spear and roared. Then Jalandhara the infuriated leader of the Daitya hit Karttikeya in his chest with his mace.

Exhibiting the successful efficiency of the Mace secured as a favour from Brahma Karttikeya fell on the ground suddenly.

Similarly, struck by the mace Nandin too fell on the ground.

Then the infuriated hero Ganesa came there after remembering the lotus like feet of Siva and split the mace of the Daitya with his axe.

Virabhadra then hit the Danava in his chest with these arrows. He cut off the banner, umbrella, bow and the horses of the Daitya with seven arrows.

Then the infuriated leader of the Daitya lifted up his terrible Sakti and felled Ganesa.

Jalandhara, the heroic king of Daityas, hit Virabhadra with a fierce arrow and roared. Then both of them, the most excellent of heroes refulgent like the sun, fought each other with different kinds of weapons and missiles.

The heroic and powerful son of the ocean hit Virabhadra on his head with his great iron club.

Virabhadra, the leader of the Ganas, fell on the ground with his head shattered by the iron club and shed much blood. On seeing Virabhadra fallen, the terrified Ganas abandoned the battleground shrieking and fled to Lord Siva.

Then the great lord Siva assuming a terrible form went laughingly to the battlefield and sat on his bull, accompanied by his heroic Ganas. On seeing Siva the terrible, all the Daityas returning from the battlefield, Jalandhara rushed at Siva discharging thousands of arrows.

On seeing his army of Ganas enveloped in darkness by the volley of arrows, Siva split the net of their arrows and encompassed the sky with his own. He afflicted the Daityas with the gusts of wind raised by the arrows. He felled them to the ground with fierce volley of arrows.

Then the great Asura Jalandhara became infuriated and rebuked the Daityas in the battle.

Jalandhara the great Daitya hit the bull-bannered Siva of indefatigable endeavour, with an incessant volley of arrows.

Laughingly, lord Siva split all the arrows of Jalandhara by discharging his own sharp arrows even before his arrows reached him. Then with seven arrows he split the horses, banner, umbrella and the bow of Daitya Jalandhara.

The infuriated Asura the son of the ocean, devoid of a chariot and with bow split up rushed at Siva lifting his mace vigorously. Lord Siva of great sports immediately split as under the mace hurled by him, by means of his arrows.

Then, considering Siva more powerful, Jalandhara the Daitya created the illusion of Gandharva that mysteriously fascinated even Siva. By the power of his Maya, hosts of

Gandharvas and the celestial damsels came into view for fascinating Siva. On seeing that wonderful feat, Siva was fascinated by the Ganas.

On seeing Siva concentrated in the dance Jalandhara urged by lust immediately went to the place where Gauri stood. He entrusted the powerful Sumbha and Nisumbha with the conduct of war. With his demoniac Maya he assumed the form of Siva with ten brawny arms, five faces, three eyes, and matted hair. He was seated on the great bull. In every respect, Jalandhara appeared like Siva.

When the lord of Asura saw the beautiful Parvati, he let drops of semen fall and his limbs became benumbed. On realizing that he was the demon, the terrified Gauri vanished immediately to the northern shore of the Manasa Lake.

Parvati remembered lord Visnu mentally and told him that at her bidding, he should violate chastity of Jalandhara's wife. That great Daitya cannot be killed otherwise. In the earth there is no other virtue equal to chastity.

After going to the city of Jalandhara, Visnu thought of violating the chastity of Vrnda. The gentle lady Vrnda, the wife of Jalandhara, though of pure rites, had a very bad dream at night on account of Visnu's power of illusion. On realizing that it was a bad portent, the terrified lady began to cry, then she, the dejected gloomy wife of Jalandhara, wandered from forest to forest. The wandering lady saw two demons of terrible leonine faces with shining curved fanglike teeth.

Seeing the agitated lady followed by the demons the sage drove them back with a loud bellowing sound of "Hum". Vrnda said that he has saved her from the terrible danger, the wicked demons.

Vrnda asked the sage who would Jalandhara her husband fare in the war.

In the meantime two lordly monkeys came there and stood bowing down in front of him. At a significant gesture from his eyebrows, the monkeys rose into the sky again. Within a trice, they came back taking with them his head, body and limbs and stood in front of the sage.

On seeing the head, body and limbs of her husband, Vrnda fell unconscious, extremely pained at the misery of her lord.

Then steadying herself a little, and heaving deep sighs of grief she bowed to the excellent sage with palms joined in reverence and requested him to resuscitate her husband, Jalandhara was reviewed to life by the sage.

Delighted in mind he embraced Vrnda and kissed her face. Delighted in the heart and with all the dormant passions kindled up, she sported with him for many days in the middle of that forest.

Once at the end of the sexual intercourse she realized that it was Visnu. Vrnda rebuked him and cursed him that the two persons who appeared in front of her would become Raksasas and abducts his wife.

She continued that he would be distressed on account of separation from his wife and would roam about with Sesa "lord of snakes" who posed as his disciples. He would seek the help of monkeys in the forest.

After saying this, Vrnda entered fire though prevented by Visnu who was fascinated by her charms. Then the brilliance of the wife of Jalandhara immediately went to Sivaloka.

Unable to see Parvati, the king of Daityas returned to the battleground. The groups of deceptive Gandharvas vanished. It was only then that the bull-bannered deity regained awareness of the surroundings.

Then Siva was a bit surprised in the mind. He approached Jalandhara angrily in order to fight with him. On seeing Siva approaching again, the Aasura showered him with arrows. Lord Siva immediately split the cluster of arrows discharged by the powerful Jalandhara by means of his own excellent arrows.

Seeing Siva exhibiting wonderful feats of valour, Jalandhara created Parvati by means of his illusion in order to delude Siva. He saw Parvati tied to the chariot and crying, she was being harassed by Nisumbha, Sumbha and other Daityas.

On seeing that in her plight, Siva became dispirited and dejected in the mind like an ordinary man pursuing the way of the world.

Then Jalandhara hurriedly hit Siva in his chest, and the head with three arrows that went deep down as far as the feathered tail.

Then within a trice, lord Siva, the principle of perfect wisdom, expert in great sports, assumed a terrific form, dreadfully blazing. On seeing his excessively terrible form the Daityas fled to ten different quarters.

Sumbha and Nisumbha who were renowned for their prowess could not stand in the battleground.

The illusion created by Jalandhara had vanished in an instant.

On seeing Sumbha and Nisumbha fleeing, the infuriated Siva rebuked them and cursed that since they have escaped from a fight with him they would be killed by Parvati.

Then the infuriated Siva assuming a terrible form became as dreadful as the fire of dissolution, all of a sudden.

As desired by Brahma the lord protector of the worlds decided to kill Jalandhara, the lord Siva who had slain Daksa, Andhaka Aantaka and destroyed the three cities and the sacrifice of Daksa.

Siva held in his hand the wheel Sudarsana that he had made with his toe and got ready to kill him. Lord Siva hurled the discus Sudarsana that resembled a crore of suns and the fire of dissolution.

Blazing the heaven and the earth, the discus hit Jalandhara and severed his head with wide gaping eyes. The body of the son of the ocean fell on the ground from the chariot making the earth resonant. The head too fell. There was a great hue and cry.

His body fell in two halves like the mountain of collyrium split by the thunderbolt and hurled in the ocean. The whole universe was filled with his terrible blood. His entire blood and flesh, at the bidding of Siva was taken to the hell Maharaurva and became a big pit of blood there.

On seeing Jalandhara killed, the gods, the Gandharvas and the serpents became highly delighted.

Thus the entire universe of the three worlds regained their earlier health and normalcy much when Siva of infinite forms killed the son of the ocean.

11.The Birth of Sankhacuda

Among the wives of Kasyapa the excellent lady Danu was one. She was very beautiful, chaste and tenderly nurtured by her husband with all devotion and love. One of his sons was Vipracitti who was very powerful and valorous. His virtuous son Dambha of self-control was a great devotee of Visnu.

No son was born to him. He performed a great penance in the holy center Puskara for a hundred thousand years. Seating himself in a stable pose he performed the Japa of Krsna mantra for a long time.

Visnu was happy and asked his wish.

Dambha requested him to give him a powerful and valorous son, invincible to the gods and would conquer the three worlds.

The boy was born and on an auspicious day the father named him "Sankhacuda". Sankhacuda performed a penance in Puskara for along time in order to propitiate Brahma with devotion.

He requested Brahma to grant him the power of being invincible to the gods.

He gave Sankhacuda the divine amulet of Srikrna the most auspicious things in the universe, that yielded victory everywhere.

Brahma also told him to go to Badari and marry Tulasi, the daughter of Dharmadhvaja. The Danava went there and accepted her by means of Gandharva rite. After marrying her he went to his father's place.

With the consent of the Asuras, the preceptor Sukra made him the emperor of Danavas, Asuras and others with jubilant festivities.

Taking a vast army of Daityas, Danavas and Raksasas and seated in his chariot, he marched quickly to the city of Indra with the intention to conquer it.

The son of Dambha, the valorous leader of the Danavas, conquered all the worlds and took up the powers of the gods.

The great hero, the powerful Sankhacuda became overlord of the gods, Asuras, Danavas, Raksasas, Gandharvas, serpents, Kinnaras, Nagas and in fact all of the people of the three worlds.

When he ruled, none was miserable in the three worlds.

Sankhacuda was a close friend of Krsna, the resident of Goloka. He was powerful, and always engaged in devotion to Krsna.

All the gods went to Visnu and requested him to protect them from Sankhacuda. Visnu told them about his previous birth. He was Sudhama and was fascinated by Radha, wife of Krsna by Siva's illusion.

Cursed by Radha he is born as a Danava to his distress. Krsna has already ordained that the death of Sankhacuda will be by Rudra's trident.

Then lord Siva, Death to the wicked, goal of the good, decided in his mind to slay Sankhacuda in accordance with the wishes of the gods.

He made his friend Puspadanta the lord Gandharva his messenger and sent him in a wonderful chariot hurriedly to Sankhacuda joyously.

Puspadanta told Sankhacuda that he was the Emissary of Siva named Puspadanta. Siva has asked to return back Gods kingdom and their authority to them. If not then he has to fight with Siva, the greatest of the good warriors.

Sankhacuda told him that he would never return the kingdom to the gods and would fight with Siva.

Puspadanta told him that he should not regard Siva as an ordinary deity. He is indeed the great soul, the lord of lords of all. Indra and other gods abide by his commands. The Siddhas, the patriarchs, the sages and the serpent lords all follow suit.

He is the overlord of Visnu and Brahma. He is both possessed and devoid of attributes. By a mere twitch of his knitted eyebrow everything is dissolved.

Siva is the perfect form of gods, the cause of the annihilation of the worlds, the goal of the good, the destroyer of the wicked. He is free from aberrations. He is greater than the greatest.

Sankhacuda replied that he would neither give up kingdom nor the positions of authority, without a fight with him.

Puspadanta went back and told Siva everything. On hearing his words the infuriated emperor of the gods, Siva started along with his army. His delighted heroic Ganas followed him. In the meantime Karttikeya and Ganesa the overall generals of the army, came near Siva joyously, fully equipped with weapons and ready for war.

The lord of Danavas sent a leading Danava of great knowledge as his emissary to Siva.

The Emissary asked what does Siva desire?

Siva asked him to return Gods kingdom to them and stay in their kingdom happily and let the gods stay in their region. He told him not to offend people and not to be malicious to the gods.

On saying this, Siva the great god, stopped. The emissary stood up and returned to Sankhacuda.

The emissary returned and mentioned the words of Siva, in detail and truthfully.

On hearing that, the valorous Danava Sankhacuda accepted lovingly the alternative of a fight.

The mutual fight between the gods and the Danavas ensued. Both the hosts of the gods and the Danavas fought righteously. Elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers along with their drivers and riders were hit and split up.

The arms, thighs, hands, hips, ears and feet were cut off. The banners, arrows, swords, coats of mail and excellent ornaments were slit and split. The earth shone with heads divested of coronets but with earrings retained, strewn about and with thighs resembling trunks of elephants broken off during the tussle.

The soldiers running in the battlefield saw several headless bodies that jumped with many weapons lifted in their hands. Then Danavas defeated the gods, weapons and missiles wounded their bodies.

Returning to Siva, they sought refuge in him.

Commanded by Siva, the great hero Karttikeya, son of Siva fought fearlessly with the hosts of Danavas in the battle.

Clipping off their heads, Kali with eyes like a red lotus drank off the blood and devoured the flesh rapidly. Seizing ten million elephants and an equal number of men with a single hand she playfully thrust them into her mouth.

The Danavas wounded in their bodies by the numerous arrows of Karttikeya fled in fright.

On seeing the wonderfully terrible fight of Karttikeya that caused wastage in the rank and file of the Danavas like natural disasters, as well as the harassment and havoc wrought by Mahamari, Sankhacuda became furious and himself got ready for the battle.

He got into his excellent aerial chariot that contained different weapons and missiles, that was set in diamond and that encouraged and emboldened the heroes. Sankhacuda drew the string of the bow up to his ear and discharged volleys of arrows from his seat in the middle of the chariot.

The gods Nandisvara and others fled. Only Karttikeya stayed behind in the battlefield. Oppressed by that shower Karttikeya, the son of Siva, looked like the sun enveloped by thick sheets of frost.

At the same time, the powerful Sankhacuda of great illusion split Karttikeya's bow with a divine arrow. Sankhacuda split his divine chariot and the horses pulling it, while Sankhacuda with a divine missile shattered the peacock too.

The Danava hurled his spear as refulgent as the sun fatally on his chest, where at he fell unconscious by the force of the blow.

Regaining consciousness, Karttikeya the destroyer of heroic enemies, mounted his vehicle of sturdy build, set with gems. Remembering the feet of lord Siva accompanied by Parvati, and taking up weapons and missiles, the six faced deity fought terrifically.

He hurled his spear refulgent like the sun at the chest of the lord of Danavas. At the blow he fell unconscious.

That powerful Asura got rid of the affliction in a muhurta and regained consciousness.

He bit Karttikeya of great strength with his spear. Not making that spear, a gift of Brahma, futile, Karttikeya fell on the ground.

Taking him on her lap Kali brought him near Siva. By his divine sport and perfect wisdom Siva enlivened him.

In the meantime the heroic Virabhadra of great strength fought with the powerful Sankhacuda in the battle.

Going to the battleground, the goddess Kali roared like a lion. On seeing Kali, Sankhacuda hastened to the battleground. Immediately the goddess hurled the Narayana missile at him.

The Danava Sankhacuda fell flat on the ground and bowed again and again. On seeing the Danava humbled the missile turned away. Then the goddess hurled the Brahma missile with due invocation through the mantra.

On seeing the missile blazing he bowed and fell on the ground. The leader of the Danavas thus prevented the Brahma missile from attacking him.

He then hurled a Sakti, a hundred Yojanas long at Kali. By means of divine missiles she broke it into a hundred pieces. He hurled the Vaisnava missile on Kali. She blocked it with the Mahesvara missile.

Then the infuriated goddess Kali, as fierce as the god of death on the battleground, took up angrily the Pasupata sanctified by mantras.

In order to prevent it from being hurled, an unembodied celestial voice said—"O goddess, do not hurl this missile angrily at Sankhacuda." On hearing this, Bhadrakali did not hurl the missile. She devoured ten million Danavas as if in hunger.

The lord of Danavas hurled many divine missiles but before they reached her she broke them into hundreds of pieces. The goddess then hit him with her fist forcefully and angrily. The king of Danavas whirled round and fainted for a short while.

Immediately the Danava regained consciousness and got up valorously. He did not fight her with his arms by the thought that she was a woman like his mother. The goddess seized the Danava, whirled him again and again and tossed him up with great anger and velocity.

He got up and bowed down to Bhadrakali.

Highly delighted thereafter, he got into a beautiful aerial chariot of exquisite workmanship set with gems and did not lose the balance of his mind in the battlefield.

Bhadrakali drank the blood and devoured the flesh of many Danavas and went near Siva. She then narrated to him the events of the war in the proper order.

Siva, an expert in the knowledge of principles, went himself to the battle along with his Ganas. He was seated on his great bull and surrounded by Virabhadra and others, the Bhairavas and the Ksetrapalas all equal in valour to him.

On seeing Siva, Sankhacuda got down from the aerial chariot, bowed with great devotion and fell flat on the ground. After bowing to him he immediately got into his chariot. He speedily prepared for the fight and seized the bow and the arrows.

The fight between Siva and the Danava went on for a hundred years and they showered arrows fiercely like clouds pouring down incessantly. The heroic Sankhacuda discharged terrible arrows playfully. Siva split all of them by means of his arrows.

Maharudra, the odd-eyed Siva, the punisher of the wicked and the goal of the good, angrily hit his limbs with various weapons.

The infuriated Danava, Sankhacuda hurled a discus. Immediately Siva smashed it into pieces with his fist.

He hurled his club with force at Siva. Rapidly split by Siva, the club was reduced to ashes.

With divine weapons and arrows he encompassed the whole sky and shone.

The lord filled all the quarters with the sound of his horn. Siva himself roared then, frightening the Asuras.

The lordly bull then bellowed putting the haughty trumpeting elephants to shame. The deep roar filled the sky, the earth and the eight quarters.

Then coming again the valorous son of Dambha hurled at Rudra his spear terrible with shooting flames.

While it came on, blazing brilliantly like a great conflagration in the battleground, it was immediately suppressed by Ksetrapalas by means of the meteor springing from his mouth.

Then the infuriated Siva hit him with his trident. Unable to bear that blow he fell unconscious on the ground. The Asura regained consciousness rapidly. He seized his bow and hit Rudra and all others by means of his arrows.

The valorous Sankhacuda assumed ten thousand arms by means of magic and rapidly enveloped Siva by means of ten thousand discuses.

Then Siva, the infuriated consort of Durga, the destroyer of all insurmountable distress split the discuses rapidly by means of his excellent arrows.

By means of his trident, Siva hit the comely king of Danavas rapidly in the chest even as he approached with the spear in his hand, from the chest of Sankhacuda pierced by the trident, a valorous huge being came out and said "Stand by, Stand by".

Laughing noisily Siva severed the terrible head of the being that was coming out, by means of a sword. He fell on the ground.

The Danava hurled divine missiles at him and showered arrows like the cloud pouring rain. He exhibited various kinds of deceptive measures invisible and inscrutable to all the excellent gods and Ganas and terrifying as well.

On seeing that, Siva sportively discharged there at the excessively divine Mahesvara missiles that destroys all illusions.

Then in the battle, the powerful lord Siva suddenly seized his trident, which could not be withstood even by brilliant persons, in order to slay him.

In order to prevent him then, an unembodied celestial voice said-" O Siva, do not hurl the trident now."

It has been mentioned by Brahma, that as long as he wears the Armour of Visnu and as long as his wife maintains the marital fidelity, Sankhacuda has neither death nor old age. Then, in the guise of an old Brahmin, Visnu, the foremost of those who wield magic, approached Sankhacuda.

The aged Brahmin requested him to give him the alms. Then the deceptive Visnu in the form of a Brahmin begged him of his armour.

On hearing that the lord of Danavas, a well-wisher of the Brahmins and of truthful word handed over the divine armour, his vital breathe, to the Brahmin.

Visnu thus snatched off his armour by means of deception. Then in the guise of Sankhacuda, Visnu approached Tulasi.

Lord Visnu, an expert in wielding magic went there and deposited his semen in her vaginal passage for the protection of gods.

In the meantime the lord of Danavas approached Siva without the Armour. He took up his trident that blazed to slay Sankhacuda. That trident, named Vijaya, of Siva, the great Atman, shone illuminating heaven and earth.

It was as refulgent as a crore of midday suns and as fierce as the shooting flame of fire at the time of dissolution. It could neither be prevented nor withstood.

It had fierce halo all round. It was a thousand Dhanus in length and a hundred Hasta in width. It was eternal and uncreated. That trident whirling round over the head of Sankhacuda for a while fell on the head of the Danava at the behest of Siva and reduced him to ashes. Sankhacuda the king of Danavas was released from his curse by the favour of Siva.

After slaying him thus, Siva went to Sivaloka seated on his bull, joyously, accompanied by Parvati, Karttikeya and the Ganas.

12.The Curse of Tulasi

Narayana is the person who carries on the task of the gods. It was in the guise of Sankhacuda that he indulged in sexual dalliance with his wife.

Visnu carried off the excellent Armour of Sankhacuda assuming the guise of a Brahmin, rapidly, by having recourse to his Maya. He then assumed the guise of Sankhacuda and went to Tulasi's palace.

Knowing that her husband had returned she observed all auspicious rites and offered monetary gifts to the Brahmins. She then beautified herself.

The lord of the worlds lay down on his bed. Then out of joy Visnu indulged in sexual intercourse.

That lady began to suspect on observing a change in her happiness, endearment and attraction and asked him "who are you?" She said that her modesty has been outraged and hence she would curse him.

On hearing the words of Tulasi, Visnu became afraid of the curse.

Tulasi said that due to her curse he would become a rock.

After saying this, the chaste beloved of Sankhacuda, Tulasi lamented again and again in the excess of her grief.

On seeing her crying, Visnu remembered lord Sankara, Paramesvara, by whom the universe is deluded.

Then Sankara, favourably disposed to his devotees appeared in front of them. He was bowed to and eulogized humbly by Visnu.

Siva told her that in the world that is an ocean of actions and rites there is no external entity that bestows happiness and sorrow.

Siva asked her to cast her body. Take up a divine body and indulgence in dalliance with Visnu forever and be equal to Laksmi.

The body that she would cast off would become a river in Bharata and would be a sacred river famous as Gandaki.

As a boon granted by him, Tulasi became the most important constituent of the materials of worship of the gods.

In heaven, earth and the three worlds she became the Tulasi plant, more excellent than flowers.

As a result of her curse, Hari assumed the form of a rock on the banks of the river. Crores of terrible sharp-toothed germs would penetrate and erode the rock and carve rings on it.

Those pieces are to be known as Salagrama rocks and are meritorious.

Salagrama stone would signify Visnu's contact with Tulasi.

He who keeps Salagrama, Tulasi and Sankha in one place shall become wise and favourite of Visnu.

13. Story of Hiranyaksa

Formerly Siva, the emperor of the gods, kind to his devotees came to Kasi from Kailasa accompanied by Parvati, the daughter of the mountain and his Ganas because he was desirous of sporting there. He built his capital there. Once he went to the mountain Mandara to see its excellent grandeur. While sporting on the eastern ridges of the Mandara Mountain, Parvati sportively and playfully closed the eyes of Siva of fierce exploit. She closed the eyes with her lotus like hands, which had the luster of coral and golden lotus.

By this contact with lord Siva the rapturous rutting juice exuded from her hands became hot by the fire of the eye on his forehead and flowed out in copious drops.

Conception took place and a terrible inhuman being manifested itself. It was furious, ungrateful, blind, deformed and black in colour. It sang, cried, laughed, danced, put out his tongue like a serpent and thundered fiercely.

Parvati was surprised to see him and asked Siva that from where this child has come. Lord Siva told Parvati that when she closed his eyes, this being of wonderfully fierce might was born of his sweat. He shall be named Andhaka.

Siva told her that she was the cause of his creation though not in the natural way, he would be guarded by the Ganas lovingly as well as by her friends.

At that time, the Asura Hiranyaksa desired to obtain a son at the pressure of his wife who was envious at the sight of many sons of her husband's elder brother.

He resorted to forest and performed penance for obtaining son.

The trident bearing lord was pleased at his penance.

Hiranyaksa requested to Lord Siva to give him a powerful son as his brother has five sons of infinite valour, Prahlada being the eldest.

On hearing these words of the king, the kindhearted Siva was satisfied and told him that he cannot have a son born of his semen. Siva said that his son Andhaka has a prowess equal to yours. He cannot be defeated by any. You can choose him as your son.

After saying this, the delighted lord gave the son to Hiranyaksa.

Having obtained a son from Siva, the demon of great and fierce valour Hiranyaksa conquered all the gods and took the earth to Patala.

Then the gods, sages and the Siddhas propitiated Visnu of infinite vigour in the form of a Boar that constituted all sacrifices and all beings and was terrific in form.

With Visnu's Sudarsana dazzling like a crore of suns he chopped off the burning head of Hiranyaksa and reduced the wicked Daitya to ashes. Then his son Andhaka was crowned as the king of Daityas.

Visnu lifted up the earth from the Patala by means of his fangs. He sustained the Earth as before.

14. Story of Hiranyakasipu

When Visnu in the form of a Boar killed his brother, Hiranyakasipu was distressed with grief and excited by anger.

He performed a severe penance in the ravine of the Mandara Mountain. When he was performing penance, the gods accompanied by their forces defeated the Daityas and regained their lost seats.

Brahma went to the hermitage of the Daitya Hiranyakasipu and told him to choose a boon.

Hiranyakasipu requested the boon to be "Never may I have the fear of death from weapons, missiles, thunderbolts, dry trees, mountains, water, fire and onslaught of enemies- gods, Daityas, sages, Siddhas or in fact from any living being created by you. Let there be no death for me in heaven, on earth, in the day time, at night, from above or below."

On hearing these words of the Asura, the merciful lotus-born deity bowed to Visnu mentally and granted him the boon and told him to stop his penance, which lasted for ninety six thousand years.

After getting the boon, Hiranyakasipu became inclined to destroy the three worlds. The highly elated Asuras disturbed all activities and defeated all the gods in battle. Then the terrified Indra and other gods harassed by him got the permission of Brahma and went to the milk ocean where Visnu was lying.

The noble soul Visnu assumed the form partly of lion and partly of man. His head was matted and full of manes. Sharp fangs were his weapons. The claws were keen and pointed. The body was terrible and refulgent like a crore of suns, blazing and powerful.

The man-lion fought with the powerful Daityas. When the Daityas were burnt the king himself fought with the lion with all kinds of weapons, missiles, spears, swords, nooses, goads, fire and the like.

The lord of beasts with hands as powerful as mountains seized Daitya, he was placed on the knee, torn and scratched in the chest by the claws piercing every vulnerable joint in the body.

His heart lacerated by Lord's claws was filled with blood. He lay dead like a log of wood, his limbs being reduced to powder. He beckoned to Prahlada who bowed to him. He crowned him king and then left for his abode that could not even be imagined.

15. Story of Andhaka

Once Andhaka, his haughty cousins in the course of their sports addressed the son of Hiranyaksa, jokingly and games that he was blind and he cannot do anything with kingdom, on hearing their words Andhaka was distressed.

In the night he went to a desolate forest. For ten thousand years he performed a severe penance, repeating mantras. He stood on one leg, observed fast and lifted up his arms continuously. In short, he performed a penance that no god or Asura could do.

Every day he cut a piece of flesh and consigned it to the sacred blazing fire along with his blood repeating the mantras all along. This he continued for a year. In the end only the bones and the nerves were left. The entire blood was exhausted. When there remained no flesh to offer he desired to offer his whole body into the fire.

Then Brahma the creator was immediately propitiated.

The Daitya asked for a boon that Prahlada and others who had cruelly usurped his share in the kingdom be his slaves.

He said that he was blind but now he should be endowed with divine vision. And Indra and others pay him tax and tribute. No death should come to him from gods, Daityas, Gandharvas, Yaksas, serpents or human beings.

He should neither die from Narayana, the enemy of leading Daityas, nor from the omniscient and omniformed Siva”.

Brahma told him he has to accept some cause of death because none who is born or who will be born can escape the jaws of death.

Andhaka replied, “The most excellent of the ladies in the world for all time whether of mature, middle or young age should be like a mother to him. She should be the rare in the world, unapproachable to all men, bodily, mentally or verbally. If he covets her, destruction should befall on him instantaneously depriving him of the position of the ruler.”

Brahma granted him the boon.

Brahma touched his body with his hand and returned to his abode accompanied by the great gods and worshipped by the sages and Siddhas.

The moment he was touched, he became full bodied and strong. With eyes regaining sight he became beautiful and stout.

Considering him blessed with the boon, on his arrival Prahlada and other leading Danavas surrendered the entire kingdom to him and became his slaves.

Then Andhaka went to heaven to conquer it accompanied by his army and attendants. He conquered the Nagas, Suparnas, Raksasas, Gandharvas, Yaksas, human beings, and became the lord of mountains, trees and quadrupeds such as lions etc. by his force.

He enjoyed among other excellent things, divine juices, fruits, fragrant flowers, fine conveyances very pleasant to drive in and excellent mansions erected by Maya. Thus indulging in sports he passed ten thousand years beautified and rendered pleasant and mysteriously wonderful by means of flowers, incenses and dietary stuffs.

Proud of his affluence he slighted the Vedas, gods and preceptors.

He builds a wonderful stable and auspicious city on the ridges of the Mandara and forced people to settle there gradually.

His three ministers Duryodhana, Vaidhasa and Hasti once saw a beautiful woman in an excellent spot on the mountain.

The ministers told the lord of Daityas that in a mountain cavern they have seen a certain sage. His eyes are closed in meditation. He is handsome. The crescent moon adorns his head. He is wearing an elephant hide round his hips.

A woman of very auspicious features, young and beautiful was seen at the side of that sage. She is a gem under the sun. That divine lady, wife and beloved of that meritorious sage, is worthy of being seen and fetched here.

On hearing their words, the Daitya became lustful. Immediately he sent Duryodhana and others to the sage.

The ministers came to Siva and said that the auspicious lady be given to the lord of Daityas. They asked him to surrender his wife unto them peacefully.

Siva replied that his wife is young and beautiful. She bears everything patiently. She is the achievement of one that has gone everywhere. He told them to take whatever appealed to them.

The Danavas bowed to him and returned to their leader Andhaka who had taken a bow to destroy the three worlds.

Andhaka, the great Daitya king, deluded and smitten by Kama's arrows drank wine and started from his palace.

Siva performed penance for a thousand years the like of which could not be performed by the gods or Asuras. Parvati stayed behind in Mandara Mountain waiting for the return of the lord.

The chaste lady, endowed with good conduct remained alone in that cavern. Of course her son Viraka guarded her.

Then the Daitya, whose mental steadiness had been shattered by the arrows of Kama, became bold and haughty due to the boons that had been granted to him. He came to the cavern accompanied by his soldiers.

Forsaking food, drink and sleep, the infuriated Daitya accompanied by his army fought with Viraka a very wonderful battle for five hundred, five days and nights.

Viraka was covered by the weapons and could not be extricated. The goddess Parvati was afraid at the sight. From within the cave she remembered Brahma and Visnu. Thus remembered by the goddess, Brahma, Visnu, Indra and others assumed female forms and came there.

Sages of great dignity, Siddhas, Nagas and Guhyakas became women and entered the cavern where Parvati was staying.

All these celestial damsels, the chief of whom were Brahmasakti and the general Viraka of terrible valour pacified the mind of Parvati, the daughter of the lord of mountains and assured her.

Making Viraka of terrible valour and wonderful intellect, her general, Parvati fought a wonderful battle in the company of her friends and allies.

Andhaka made the frontal array terrific by the force of regular service. By the time this was done, the infuriated lord Siva came there, clad in hides he had the luster of a thousand fiery suns at the end of a kalpa.

On seeing lord Siva arrived after the lapse of a thousand years, the delighted women in the company of Viraka fought a very great battle.

Siva embraced her and then entered the cavern. The numerous women that had gathered were dismissed. Parvati honoured Viraka by hundreds of gifts and appointed him as the keeper of the gate.

Then the Asura chief, very clever in statesmanship, unable to see either Parvati or Siva sent his emissary Vighasa immediately to Siva.

The messenger told Siva that he has nothing to do with a woman and he should surrender the young and beautiful lady to the Daitya.

On hearing these words conveyed by the emissary, the great three eyed lord, the goal of the good, the destroyer of the pride of the wicked; the wearer of skull-garlands spoke furiously burning with grief.

Siva challenged him to fight with him if he has the might.

The king of Daityas, skilled in interpreting what he hinted at, seized his mace and hastened along with his army to the entrance of the cavern.

After reaching the cavern of the lord Siva, the Daitya attacked with his weapons as refulgent as thunderbolt. The others showered weapons on Viraka and yet others on Parvati, the daughter of the mountain.

Siva collected his army. The infuriated trident-bearing deity called them together, the terrible living beings, and the gods with their armies including Visnu and others.

Immediately after being called, the gods came to Siva and stood near him with palms joined in reverence.

When the gods had taken adequate rest along with their vehicles, the trident-bearing lord Siva sent them to the battle ground with the steady and chief resolve on victory.

In a trice all of them including Brahma, Indra, Visnu, the sun and the moon were swallowed by Vighasa. When the armies were devoured, only Viraka was left behind.

Leaving off the battle front Viraka entered the cavern and bowed to Siva and told him that his army has been devoured by the Daitya Vighasa. Viraka went out to fight but was swallowed by Vighasa.

Lord Siva got on to his bull and faced the Daitya Vighasa. Repeating the divine Mantra that compels the disgorging of what is swallowed, he stood there keeping the bow in readiness and the arrows as powerful as thunderbolts.

Then the sage Viraka came out of the mouth of Vighasa accompanied by Visnu and his army. Thus disgorged the delighted army fought a great battle again.

Thus the army of the Daityas was conquered. But Sukra revived the Daityas slain in the battle by the virtue of his science. The preceptor of Danavas was then bound like an animal and brought by the Ganas before lord Siva, the destroyer of Tripuras, who swallowed him.

Inside Siva's body, Sukra observed seven worlds including Patala. He saw the diverse worlds of Brahma, Visnu, Indra, Aditya and celestial damsels as well as the battle between the Pramathas and Asuras. Wandering round and round in the belly of Siva for a hundred years he failed to see any outlet.

Taking recourse to the yoga of Siva he repeated the five-syllable Mantra and assumed the form of Siva's semen. He thus emerged out of the belly of Siva through his penis. Thereafter he bowed to Siva and was accepted as a son by Parvati. Lord Siva told him that since he has come out of his penis in the form of the semen he would be known as Sukra. Then Siva accepted him as his son.

Andhaka had secured boons he did not leave the battle ground although his body had been afflicted much by the lord of the gods by terrible blows and hits. Then by means of weapons and missiles, trees, mountains and waters he defeated the gods. Then he challenged the lord of Pramathas roaring loudly.

Then the Asura inflicted pain on Parvati and Siva by means of uprooted trees, serpents, thunderbolts and other weapons and by indulging in deceptive practices.

From each drop of Andhaka's blood many Andhakas originated, with hideous faces resembling his, pervaded the surface of the earth. Then, he was terribly pierced with the trident by Siva, the enemy of the Tripuras, the lord of Bhutas whose body blazed like fire at the end of a Kalpa.

When fresh army cropped up from the army slain by Siva from the hot drops of blood and cut pieces of flesh from the wounds of those killed, Visnu called away the lord of

Pramathas and intelligently assumed a fierce form of a hideous woman employing his Yogic knowledge.

The goddess stood high in the battlefield covering up the entire ground by her pair of feet. Induced by the lord, the hungry female form devoured the army, drank the hot blood of the Daityas and made the battle ground marshy. Then, only the chief of the Daityas was left.

The lord of Pramathas quietened him, his heart was pierced, and he was staked to the trident. He was held aloft in the sky like a long pole half of his body, the lower one, was dried up by the rays of the sun, the other half was drenched by clouds attended with gusts of wind and heavy downpour.

Shattered and scattered like flakes of snow in the rays of the sun, his limbs were torn as under. Yet the foremost of the Daitya did not die.

Andhka performed a penance courageously and meditated on hundred and eight forms of lord Siva. He was drenched with the divine shower of nectar by lord Siva who was perfectly satisfied. He was brought from the top of the trident and released.

Andhaka was then granted a boon by Siva and was given the position of the chieftain of his Ganas.

16. Story of Usa

Maraci was the mentally created eldest son of Brahma. His son Kasyapa was a noble soul and thirteen daughters of Daksa were his wives. The eldest of the wives was Diti and she had two heroic sons, Hiranyakasipu the elder and Hiranyaksa, the younger.

Hiranyakasipu had four sons. Out of them Prahlada was a great devotee of visnu. His son Virocana was the most excellent of donors. He gave even his head to Indra who requested for the same in the guise of a Brahmin.

His son was Bali who was a favourite of Siva and a liberal donor. His son Bana became a devotee of Siva. Staying in the Sonita town he ruled over the three worlds after defeating several rulers forcefully.

Inaccompaniment of the instrumental music played by his thousand arms, by means of the Tandava dance he propitiated Siva.

Siva favourably disposed to his devotees was highly delighted and asked the son of Bali to choose a boon. Asura Bana requested him to be his guardian forever. He requested him to stay with him as the lord of his city along with his sons and Ganas.

Siva granted him the boons and stayed there lovingly along with his sons and his Ganas. Once Siva performed divine sports in Sonita, the beautiful city of Bana, on the banks of a river. The season displayed its power and Kama struck Siva. He asked Nandin to bring Parvati from Kailasa.

Meanwhile, Usa, daughter of the Asura Bana efficient in divine Yoga, assumed the wonderfully auspicious and divine form of Parvati. Knowing that she wanted to indulge in love sport with Siva, the omniscient and omnipresent Parvati told her that since you have adopted her form, she would have the monthly course in the appropriate time in the Karttika month. On the twelfth day in the bright half of the Vaisakha she would undertake a fast. During the night while she would be asleep, a man would come and enjoy her.

Then the goddess Parvati decorated herself enthusiastically and went to Siva. She then sported with him.

In the meantime, in the month of Vaisakha, the daughter of Bana after worshipping Siva went to sleep, Krsna's grandson, Aniruddha, sent by Parvati of divine Maya, seized her. She began to cry helplessly. He enjoyed her forcibly.

Parvati's attendants carried him to Dvaraka. Usa decided to give her life; her friend then reminded her of the fault she had committed earlier.

Usa told her friend to bring Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna to her. Her friend went to Dvaraka and brought along with her, Aniruddha. They began their sexual dalliance but persons appointed on the doorway knew it. They went and told everything to Bana, son of Bali.

The infuriated Asura Bana went there and saw Aniruddha who was in the fresh years of youth. The evil minded Daitya ordered ten thousand men from his army for slaying him. On seeing the army of the enemy, Aniruddha seized the big iron club and came out of the apartment. He strengthened by Siva's splendour, with eyes turned red by anger, and killed all the ten thousand men of the army. Asura Bana furiously entered the fray taking with him Kumbhanda, expert in war.

Aniruddha seized a spear and hit him with that. Bana was hit with the spear and in a trice he vanished along with his horse. Remaining invisible Danava Bana practicing deceptive fight, hit him again and again with thousands of weapons. The powerful son of Bali then deceitfully bound him with serpent-nooses (Nagapasa).

Asura Bana told Kumbhanda to cut the head of Aniruddha who has defiled his family. Kumbhanda requested him that this was not the right thing. He then asked Aniruddha to bow to Bana with joined hands.

Aniruddha told him that for a Ksatriya, death while fighting face to face with the enemy is commendable than joining the palms in reverence, Aniruddha was bound by serpentine bodies emitting poison powerfully. He remembered Durga then.

Propitiated by him, Kali arrived there and with heavy blows of her fists she broke the cage. She reduced the serpentine arrow to ashes. She released Aniruddha and then vanished from the scene.

Securing success by means of Siva's energy, Aniruddha gained access to his beloved, the daughter of Bana and rejoiced. Meanwhile on hearing from Narada about the imprisonment and activities of Aniruddha, Krsna immediately called Garuda and went to the city of Sonita eagerly for fighting.

In order to help Bana, lord Rudra accompanied by his son and the Pramathas rode on the bull Nandin and arrived there to fight.

A tumultuous fight ensued between Krsna and his followers on the one hand and the supporters of Bana, Rudra etc on the other. Krsna routed the Bhutas, and Pramathas, the followers of Siva with sharp pointed arrows discharged from his bow.

On seeing his army being scattered, Siva became highly infuriated and roared terribly. Krsna discharged separate types of missiles from his bow towards the trident bearing lord Siva who without showing any dismay quelled them directly.

They then discharged Brahma missile, in counter to Brahma missile; the mountain missile to the wind missile; the cloud missile to the fire missile and Siva missile to the Narayana missile.

Defeated by the opponents, the army of Krsna fled. Lord Krsna then on his chariot went to lord Siva and eulogized and said at only at his bidding that he has come to cut off the hands of Bana, the haughty Bana was cursed by him.

Lord Siva replied that he cannot do anything, how can somebody chop Bana's arm while he was watching. Siva told Visnu that he should benumb him by means of his Jrbhana missile. Visnu went back to the battlefield and fixed the Jrbhana missile to the bow and discharged it at Siva.

Siva was benumbed and laid on the ground. Seeing him, Bana, the king of Daityas came out to fight with Krsna. Drawing the string of his bow upon the ear, the infuriated Visnu discharged sharp arrows, as furious as serpents on Bana. On seeing them coming, Bana, split them even before they reached him, by means of arrows discharged from his bow. Thus the tumultuous fight between the two strong armies went on for a long time.

Then, at the bidding of Siva, lord Krsna, the destroyer of heroic enemies, chopped off several arms of Bana by means of Sudarsana. When he was about to cut off the head of Bana, Siva got up. He told Krsna not to cut the head of Bana and to withdraw his weapon Sudarsana.

Saying this and uniting them in friendship, lord Siva returned to his abode along with his sons and Ganas. On hearing the words of Siva, Krsna withdrew Sudarsana and consoled Aniruddha and his wife.

After mentally bowing to Siva, Visnu took leave of Bana and returned to his city, Dvaraka along with his followers. Through the grace of Siva, Bana attained the immortality of the eternal time and became one of the attendants of Siva.

17. Story of Gajasura

The Goddess for the welfare of the Gods killed the Asura Mahisasura in battle. His son, the great hero Gajasura couldn't forget slaying of his father on request of the Gods, thus he went to the forest for undertaking penance. He performed a sever penance in a valley on the Himalayan mountain.

Brahma was pleased and went to the hermitage of Daitya and asked him to choose a boon. Gajasura requested to grant a boon that he shouldn't die from men or women overwhelmed by lust. He requested that he should be powerful and invincible to the Gods, the guardians of the worlds and others forever.

Brahma granted him the rare boon. Securing these boons, the Daitya Gajasura conquered all the quarters, the three worlds, the Gods, the Asuras, human beings, kings, Gandharvas, Garuda, serpents and others. He became the conqueror of the universe. After the lapse of some time he became evil-minded. The son of Mahisasura harassed the excellent Brahmins and the sages.

Once this Danava, Gajasura went to Kasi the capital city of Siva. Requested by the Gods, Siva desirous of protecting the devotees came there quickly with the desire of slaying him. On seeing that Siva had come roaring with the trident in his hand, Gajasura too roared. A wonderfully and terrible battle was fought.

The infuriated Gajasura rushed at the lord Siva roaring loudly with a sword in hand. Then the lord armed with the trident, realizing that anything else or any one else could not kill the Daitya, hit him with his trident. When the trident pierced through his body, the Daitya Gajasura thought that he was raised up like an umbrella. He then sang the glory of Siva.

Lord Siva was delighted and asked him to choose a boon. Gajasura requested Siva to wear his hide, which was sanctified by the fire of His trident. He told that even after being scorched by the flames of the fire of penance for a long time, the hide was not burnt. He asked for another boon that from that day Siva's name would be Krttivasas (one clad in elephant-hide).

Lord Siva granted him the boon and further said that Gajasura's body would become linga image in the holy city of Kasi. The same would be the foremost of all linga images yielding salvation, destroying sins and would be named "Krttivasesvara".

After saying this Siva, the lord of the Gods, accepted the hide and wore it. When Gajasura the son of Mahisasura was killed, the Gods returned to their original place and the universe-attained normalcy.

IV. GLORY OF JYOTIRLINGAS

- 1.Somnatha
- 2.Mallikarjuna
- 3.Mahakala
- 4.Omkareswara
- 5.Kedareswara
- 6.Bimeswara
- 7.Visveswara
- 8.Trymbakeswara
- 9.Vaidyanatheswara
- 10.Nageswara
- 11.Rameswara
- 12.Ghusmesvara

A.The Glory of Jyotirlingas and their Upalingas

There is no limit to the number of linga images of lord Siva. The entire earth, the entire universe is in the form of a phallus. The holy centres are equipped with linga images and everything is founded on these images. There is no limit to their number. Whatever is seen, described or remembered is Siva's form. Nothing other than that has real existence. Siva is worshiped by the gods, Asuras and human beings. The three worlds earth, patala and heaven consisting of the gods, Asuras and human beings are pervaded by Siva in the form of linga image for the welfare of the worlds.

In order to bless the world, Lord Siva assumes different linga forms here in the holy centres as well as in other places.

Lord Siva incarnates in those places wherever he is devoutly remembered by the devotees. After carrying out their task he stations himself there.

He has assigned his linga form for the benefit of the worlds. The devotee attains perfection by worshipping that form.

There is no limit to the number of his linga images on the earth.

On hearing the tales of Siva's linga forms, a man gets rid of his sins instantly. The most important is of the Jyotirlingas on hearing that a person becomes sinless.

One who reads or recites the twelve names early in the morning is freed from all the sins and attains the fruits of all Siddhis.

The twelve Jyotirlingas are – Somanatha in Saurashtra, Mallikarjuna in Srisaila, Mahakala in Ujjayini, Parameswara in Omkara, Kedara on the Himavat, BhimaSankara in Dakini, Visvesa in Varanasi, Tryambaka on the bank of the Gautami, Vaidyanatha in the cremation ground, Nagesa in the Daruka forest, Ramesa at Setubandha and Ghusamesa at Sivalaya.

Such excellent men will attain those desires for which they recite the names. Those who recite them without any desire but with purity of mind will never have rebirth involving residence in the mother's womb. By worshipping these, people of all castes get their

miseries destroyed in this world and become liberated hereafter. The food offerings of these Jyotirlingas shall be taken and others be fed with the same. Such acts reduce the sins to ashes instantaneously.

The results of the worship of Jyotirlingas cannot be described adequately by Brahma and others. Even if one of them is worshipped continuously for six months, the misery of rebirth in the mother's womb will never recur. Even if a person of base birth happens to see Jyotirlinga, he will be born in a pure and good family. Being born in a good family, he will become rich and master of all Vedas. Then by performing auspicious rites, he shall attain liberation without any obstacle. Whoever he may be, an outcaste, a slave or a eunuch, he will be born as a Brahmin and become liberated. Hence one shall view the Jyotirlinga.

B.The Upalingas of the Jyotirlingas

The Upalinga of Somesvara is called Antakesa and it is installed at the confluence of the river Mahi and the ocean.

The Upalinga of Mallikarjuna is glorified as Rudresvara. It is pleasing and is stationed in Bhrgukaksa.

The Upalinga of Mahakala is well known as Dugdhesa. It is famous in the region of Narmada and is remembered as destructive of all sins.

The Upalinga of Omkara is famous as Kardamesa in the Bindu Lake and yields the fruits of all desires.

The Upalinga of Kedaresvara is Bhutesa on the banks of the Yamuna. It is destructive of sins of the visiting devotees.

The Upalinga of Bhimasankara is Bhimesvara. It is famous in the Sahya Mountain and it causes the increase of great strength.

The Upalinga of Nagesvara is Bhuteswara. Installed on the banks of Mallikaraswati, it quells sins by the very sight.

The Upalinga attached to Ramesvara is Guptesvara. The Upalinga attached to Ghumesa is Vyaghresvara.

Upalingas and the Jyotirlingas dispel sins by their sight and yield the fruit of all desires.

1.The origin of Jyotirlinga Somanatha

Somanatha had twenty-seven wives, Rohini and other twenty-six daughters, were given in marriage to the moon by Daksa, the great soul. On securing the moon as their lord, those daughters shone extraordinarily. The moon too, on securing them shone incessantly. Out of these twenty- seven wives, he did not love any one so much at any time as he loved Rohini. The others became distressed and sought refuge in their father. After going to him they mentioned their misery to him. On hearing this, Daksha too was struck with grief.

After requesting the moon, his son in law, thus, Daksha returned to his abode fully assured. He requested moon to take care of his wives. The moon did not act according to his advice being deluded by Siva's Maya, which deludes the universe. Being subjected to the force of destiny the moon did not accept his advice. Infatuated of Rohini, he neglected others. On hearing it, the skilful Daksha returned to the moon excessively distressed. He politely asked the moon to mend his ways.

After repeated requests, the moon still did not listen to Daksha, he was then forced to curse moon. Just as he cursed him, the moon contracted consumption within a trice. When he was wasted away there was a great hue and cry. The gods and the sages became

extremely agitated and felt miserable. Informed and implored by the moon, Indra and other gods, Vasistha and other sages sought refuge in Brahma and mentioned everything to him. On hearing their words, Brahma was much surprised. Brahma said moon was always wicked and defiled. The wicked moon had committed many unholy deeds.

The wicked moon went to Brahaspati's house and abducted his wife Tara. He then allied himself with the Daityas. Having sought refuge in the Daityas he fought against the god though forbidden by Brahma and Atri. Then the moon restored Tara to Brahaspati. Seeing her pregnant, Brahaspati refused to take her back. Induced by Brahma, he accepted her unwillingly on the condition that she would cast off the fetus. When she was asked, whose child she bore in the womb, she replied that the fetus grew out of the seed of the moon. Only after the fetus was removed by Brahma, that he accepted her. Brahma said that moon could never improve.

He then suggested the ways and means to be adopted. Moon was made to go the auspicious shrine at Prabhasa along with the gods. He was to propitiate Siva according to Mrtyunjaya rites. He was to perform the penance incessantly sitting before the lord. Siva could only cure him.

The gods and the sages consoled Daksha and took the moon to Prabhasa. They invoked the sacred waters of Saraswati and other rivers and performed the worship of the earthen linga image in accordance with the Mrtyunjaya rites.

The gods and the sages of pious mind left the moon at Prabhasa and joyously returned to their abodes. The moon performed the penance incessantly for six months. He worshiped the bull-bannered deity with the Mrtyunjaya mantra.

The moon repeated the Mrtyunjaya mantra a hundred million times. He meditated on the Lord Mrtyunjaya with his mind unruffled. Lord Siva, who is favorably disposed towards his devotees, was pleased by his devotion and manifestation himself there spoke to him. Siva talked of his welfare. He was told to choose his boon, whatever he desired in his mind, he shall be granted. Moon was delighted and said that he did not want his body to decay by consumption.

He told Siva to pardon his faults and be benevolent to him always. On this, Lord said that his digit would decline day by day in one fortnight and increase steadily in another. Moon was thus offered benedictory blessings by all the gods and sages. Moon then praise the lord with good devotion first in the Nirguna and then in the Saguna form.

Siva was delighted with the gods. For increasing the glory and greatness of the region and the moon, Siva stayed there in the name of Someswara. He became famous in the three worlds. A pond was established there itself by all the gods. Siva and Brahma shared that together. It is famous as the moon's pond on the earth. It is destructive of sins.

The man who takes the bath there get rids of his sins. A pious man attains the fruit of circumambulating the earth, if he circumambulates Prabhasa. After death he is honored in heaven by gods. On seeing a Somalinga, a person is relieved of all sins. After enjoying the fruits as desired, he attains heaven after death.

One who makes pilgrimage of this place attains the fruits of whatever he might have had in view. On seeing the fruits of that high order, the sages and the gods bowed to Siva and took the moon, freed from wastage. Thus moon resumed his former activity.

Somesvara was thus originated. He who listens to this origin or narrates it to others attains all desires and becomes rid of all sins.

2. The origin of second Jyotirlinga Mallikarjuna

On hearing the story of Mallikarjuna, the devotees become intelligent and rid of all sins. It is the story of Kumara. Kumara, the son of Siva and the powerful enemy of Taraka returned to Kailasa, the celestial sage Narada came there and told him all the news such as the marriage of Ganesvara and corrupted his mind. On hearing it, Kumara bowed to his parents and went to the mountain Kraunca, though forbidden by his parents.

Due to separation from her son, Parvati was distressed. Then Siva enlightened her saying that their son would certainly return. When Parvati could not be consoled, Siva sent the celestial sages to Karttika. The gods and the sages accompanied by their attendants went there joyously to bring back Kumara. They went there and bowed to Kumara and made several humble requests. Kumar did not care for the importunities of the gods and sages, intermingled with Siva's behest. They returned back to Siva after bowing to Kumara.

When he did not return both Parvati and Siva felt extremely miserable. Grief-stricken and distressed following the conventions of the world, out of affection they went to the place where their son was. When Kumara came to know of the arrival of his parents, from the top of the mountain, Kumara went thirty- six kilometers further out of disregard for their love. When he went further on to the Kraunca hill, Siva and Parvati stayed behind assuming the fiery form. Out of filial affection they used to visit Kumara on the concluding day of every fortnight. Siva goes there on the Amavasya day and Parvati on the Full moon day.

From that day onwards that linga image of Siva born on Mallikarjuna became famous in the three worlds. He who sees that linga image becomes rid of all sins and attains all desires. His misery disappears. He obtains supreme happiness. He never suffers from the distress of rebirth in mother's womb. There is no doubt that he attains flourishing wealth, food grains, fame, health and the fruits of cherished desires. Thus the second Jyotirlinga is the bestowed of happiness and the welfare to the world.

3. The greatness of Jyotirlinga Mahakala

There is a beautiful city Avanti now known as Ujjain, yielding liberation to all souls. It is a favourite of Siva, highly meritorious and sanctifying. An excellent Brahmin Vedapriya engrossed in the performance of auspicious rites lived there. He studies the Vedas and performed the Vedic rites. The Brahmin maintained sacrificial fires. He was the devotee of Siva.

Everyday he worshipped the idol of Siva. The Brahmin Vedapriya was always interested in acquiring perfect knowledge. After securing the fruits of holy rites he attained the goal of good. He had four sons like him. They were not inferior to the parents and also were ever engaged in the worship of Siva. The eldest was Devapriya. The next was Priyamedhas. The third was Sukrta and the fourth was Dharmavahin of good rites. Because of the power of their merit, happiness increased on the earthen as the moon waxes incessantly in the bright half of the month. Their good qualities also flourished delighting and pleasing all.

There was a great Asura Dusana on the Ratnamala hill. He was very powerful. He was the king of the Daityas incessantly engaged in hating virtue and virtuous rites. Because of the grant of boons by Brahma, he considered the whole universe insignificant. The gods were defeated by him and ousted from their places and positions. He stopped whatever Vedic rites were there in the shrines and holy centres. Dharma was exiled to a distant place.

Asura also heard of the beautiful city “Avanti”. Accompanied by vast army, the Asura Dusana went there desiring to harm the Brahmins staying in the city. After reaching the place, the great knave, hater of Brahmins called four hefty Daityas and told them that the Brahmins engaged in Vedic rites and rituals are worthy of being punished by him. If he could defeat the gods and the kings, he could bring Brahmins under his control as well. If the Brahmins wanted to live peacefully, they had to abandon the rites of Siva and the rituals of Vedas. Otherwise they would be killed. On hearing this, the Brahmins were not at all distressed because they were engaged in meditating on Siva.

The Brahmins did not even move a line’s breadth, since Siva was with them. On the other hand, they overran the whole of the city. The people were harassed and they rushed against the Brahmins. People were tortured. The Brahmins believed that the general dishonor and insult reflects on Him who supported them. Moreover nothing could happen to Siva who was omnipotent. They believed that Lord Siva would protect them from the terror of the Asuras. Except Siva there was no other refuge.

They continued to perform the worship of Siva’s earthen idol. They became firm in their meditation. On seeing them, Dusana wanted to kill them, but the Brahmins, the sons of Vedapriya engrossed in meditation on Siva did not hear the shouts. When the wicked Daitya tried to kill the Brahmins, the spot near the Parthiva idol caved in with a loud report. Siva rose up assuming a hideous form from the chasm. He became famous as Mahakala, the slayer of the wicked and the goal of the good.

Mahakala was the great god of death risen up against the wicked like Dusana. After this, Siva reduced Dusana and his army to ashes immediately with a mere sound of Hum. Siva, the great soul, too killed Dusana and a portion of his army. Just as darkness is dispelled on seeing the sun, so also the army was destroyed on seeing Siva.

After bowing to the benefactor of the worlds, the Brahmins joined their palms in reverence and eulogized him with different hymns. After consoling the Brahmins the delighted Siva asked the Brahmins to choose the boons they wished. Brahmins asked for the liberation from the ocean of worldly existence. They wanted to Siva to stay there for the protection of the people.

The Brahmins attained Salvation. The supporting base of Siva in the form of Linga extended to three kilometers in each of the four directions. Siva became famous as Mahakaleswara. On seeing the image. No one would have misery even in the dreams.

4. The greatness of Jyotirlinga Omkaresvara

The linga image of lord Siva named Paramesa manifested from Omkara.

Once, the holy sage, Narada served with great devotion the linga form of Siva named Gokarna came to Vindhya, the lord of Mountains, other mountains with great honour duely worshiped him.

Vindhya thought, everything was present in him. On knowing his arrogance, Narada, the dispeller of pride heaved a sigh and stayed there. On hearing this, Vindhya asked Narada to point out any deficiency in him. Narada said, he had everything in him but Meru was loftier. Meru was classified among gods and he was not. On hearing this Vindhya was distressed.

He decided to propitiate Siva and perform penance and sought refuge in Siva. He went to the place where Omkara himself was present and made an earthen idol of Siva. He propitiated Siva for six months continuously and never moved from the place of penance. On seeing the penance of Vindhya, Siva, the delighted consort of Parvati, revealed to him

his real form inaccessible even to the Yogins. Siva asked Vindhya for any wish since he was delighted by his penance. Siva fulfilled the desires of all his devotees.

Vindhya asked for such intellect so that he may achieve his objectives. Siva thought that Vindhya of deluded intellect desired for a boon capable of harassing others. He decided to grant him a boon which being auspicious for him may not harass others. Siva therefore granted him an excellent boon. The gods and the sages then requested Siva to stay there and Siva stayed back with pleasure for the happiness of the worlds.

The phallus image of Siva known as Omkara is twofold. In the Pranava, Sadasiva came to be known as Omkara. What came out of the earthen idol became Paramesvara. The gods and the sages performed his worship then. After propitiating the bull-bannered deity, they attained many boons. Vindhya was much delighted. He realized his object and eschewed his despair.

The one who worships Siva in this manner will not stay in the mother's womb. He shall obtain all the fruits as desired.

5. The greatness of Jyotirlinga Kedareswara

The incarnations of Vishnu – Nara and Narayana performed their penance in the Bharata Khanda in the hermitage of Badarikasrama. Siva, being subservient to the devotees came every day to that earthen linga image.

A long time elapsed while these two incarnations of Vishnu, the spiritual sons of Siva, performed the worship of Siva. On one occasion the delighted Siva told them that since he was delighted, they could choose their boons from him. On hearing this Nara and Narayana requested Siva to stay there in his own form and accept the devotion of his devotees. Thus lord Siva himself stayed there in Kedara on the Himavat in the form of Jyotirlinga.

He was worshipped by them for helping the world and for appearing in the presence of the devotees. He destroyed their miseries and terrors. Siva himself stayed there in the name of Kedareswara. By his sight and worship he bestows the desires of the devotees. Since the residents of Badarikasrama derive their desires every day by worshipping him, he is called the bestower of the desires of his devotees ever.

From that day onwards anyone who worships Kedareswara with devotion, he will not suffer distress even in dreams. It was he on seeing the Pandavas assumed the form of buffalo, having recourse to his magical skill and began to run away.

When the Pandavas caught him he stood with his face bent down. They held his tail and implored him again and again. He remained in that form in the name Bhaktavatsala. His head portion went and remained fixed in the city of Nayapala, famous as Pashupati Nath temple of Kathmandu. The lord stood in that form there.

Siva asked Pandavas to worship him in that trunk less form. Worshipped by them, Siva remained there and granted boons. The Pandavas went away with joy after worshipping him.

There is a shrine of Kedara; the Indian people directly worship Siva. He who makes a gift of a ring or a bracelet after going there becomes a beloved of Siva. He comes very near in the form of Siva. He is endowed with the form of Siva. On seeing that form of Siva, a person gets rid of his sins. By going to Badri forest he becomes a living liberated soul.

On seeing the forms of Nara, Narayana and Kedaresa, undoubtedly he can achieve liberation. The devotees of Kedaresa who die on the way are released from rebirth.

Going there, with pleasure, worshiping Kedaresa and drinking the water, a person is released from re-birth. Therefore people in this country should worship with devotion Nara-Narayaneswara and Kedaresa. Although he is the lord of the universe, still he is particularly the lord of Bharata. There is no doubt that Siva Kedara is the bestower of all desires.

On hearing this narrative, the sins disappear at once.

6. The greatness of Jyotirlinga – Bhimeswara

On hearing the greatness of Bhimeswara, a man obtains all desires. With a desire to bless the world, Siva himself, the receptacle of welfare and happiness, took his incarnation in Kamarupa.

There was once a Raksasa of great virility named Bhima who harassed all living beings and who spoiled virtuous rites always. The powerful demon was born of Karkati from Kumbhakarna. He took up residence on the Sahya Mountain along with his mother. When Rama killed Kumbhakarna, the terror of the worlds, the ogress remained on the Sahya alone in the company of her son.

Once the boy asked his mother about his father and why did they live without his father. The mother replied that his father was Kumbhakarna, the younger brother of Ravana who was killed by Rama along with his brother. She further said that Kumbhakarna caught her forcefully and enjoyed her and left for Lanka. She had not visited Lanka yet.

She was the daughter of Karkata and Puskasi and her husband Viradha was killed by Rama. When her husband was killed, she stayed with her parents who were also reduced to ashes by a certain sage. When the sages were there for food, the infuriated disciple of Agastya, the noble Sutiksna of good penance reduced them to ashes. That was the reason why she lived alone on the mountain, miserable and helpless.

It was during this period that Kumbhakarna; the younger brother of Ravana came there and had his sexual intercourse with her. He went away leaving her alone. She further told her son that she was living only for him.

On hearing this Bhima, was angry and did not know what to do against Vishnu. He pledged, that if he were the true son of his mother, he would surely harass Vishnu. Thinking thus, Bhima went to perform a great penance. With Brahma as the goal of his meditation, he performed great penance for a thousand years. He kept his arm lifted up and stood on a single foot.

He fixed his vision at the sun. Bhima the son of Kumbhakarna remained in that position. A terrible fiery splendour arose from his head. Scorched by it the gods sought refuge in Brahma. The gods including Indra bowed to Brahma with devotion and eulogized him with different hymns and mentioned their miserable plight. The demon had risen to harass the worlds. They wanted Brahma to grant the boon to the wicked Raksasa in order to protect them from the fiery splendour of Bhima.

On hearing their words, Brahma told Bhima that he was delighted with him and would grant a boon to him. Bhima further said that he wanted to be granted with unequalled strength. The Raksasa acquired great strength from Brahma and returned to his house, puffed up with pride.

He bowed to his mother and said that he would create havoc among the gods including their chief Indra and also Vishnu who goes to help them. After this Bhima conquered the gods including Indra at the outset and ousted them from the respective positions. Later he conquered Vishnu and continued to conquer the earth.

At first he conquered Sudaksina, the king of Kamarupa, fighting a terrible battle with him. Because of the power of Brahma and that of the boon, the Asura Bhima conquered that great king though he was a great hero and had the support of Siva. After conquering the lord of Kamarupa, Bhima bound him and stuck him. Bhima seized all that belonged to that King who was a servant of Siva, including his kingdom and its adjuncts.

The virtuous king, favourite of Siva, was bound with fetters was imprisoned in an isolated cell. There the captive monarch made an excellent earthen idol of Siva and started its worship of earthen idols. He performed meditation duly in accordance with the rules prescribed for the worship of earthen idols. He joyously worshipped Siva after performing obeisance, prayers and the like with the mystic signs and poses.

He repeated japas of the five-syllabled mantra with the Pranava prefixed. He did not get any leisure to do anything else. The king's beloved wife, famous as Dakshina, performed the worship of the earthen idol with pleasure.

The couple, devoutly engaged in the propitiation of Siva worshipped the deity, the benefactor of the devotees with single-mindedness. But the Raksasa deluded by the arrogance due to the boon spoiled all sacrificial rites saying the offerings should be made to him. With a huge army of Raksasa he put the entire earth under his control.

Defiling the Vedic rites and sacred rituals of Sastras, Smritis and Puranas, the powerful demon enjoyed everything himself. He harassed the gods including Indra. The sages were subjected to misery; Brahmins were ousted from the world. Then all the dejected gods and sages including Indra, sought refuge in Siva, with Brahma and Vishnu at their head.

On the auspicious banks of Mahakosi, they delighted Siva, the benefactor of the worlds after eulogizing him with various prayers. They made the earthen idol and performed worship in accordance with the rules and eulogized him with different prayers and obeisance duly.

Thus, Siva was delighted and spoke to the gods and granted them with boons. On this the gods said that he was the creator of the universe and knew everything in the minds of others. They told Siva that he was the immanent soul and there was nothing unknown to him. They further told Lord that Raksasa, the powerful son of Karkati, begot by Kumbhakarna, harasses the gods always, with his strength enhanced by the boon granted by Brahma. They wanted Siva to kill the Raksasa who was the root cause of misery. They wanted lord to be merciful.

Thus requested by the gods, Siva favourably disposed to his devotees and promised to slay him. Siva said that the king of Kamarupa, the great king Sudakshina was his excellent devotee and so their requests shall be taken care by him.

Siva said that he would kill Bhima, who was wicked, whose power was enhanced by the boon granted by Brahma. After hearing this gods were highly delighted and the sages returned to their respective abodes.

7. The greatness of Visveswara, the arrival of Rudra at Kasi

Visveswara was the destructive of all sins. That which is seen as the substantive, as an entity in the form of knowledge and bliss, eternal and free from aberrations, desired for a second. That second, of the tree of salvation, was possessed of attributes. It is named Siva. That split itself into two, the male and the female forms. The male is known as Siva and the female Sakti.

The unseen Cit and Ananda created Prakriti and Purusa. On seeing their parents, Prakriti and Purusa were plunged in doubt. Then a voice aroused from the great attribute less Atman – “Penance shall be pursued by them for the generation of excellent creation.

Prakriti and Purusa replied to Siva that there was no place to sit and perform penance at His behest. Then a beautiful city endowed with the requisite articles, auspicious essence of brilliance extending to five Krosas, appeared, which was created and established by Siva, devoid of attributes, in the firmament near the Purusa.

Occupying it with a desire for creation and meditating, Vishnu performed the penance for a long time.

Due to his exertion, various currents of water began to flow. Vishnu liked the wonderful sight. Then a jewel fell in front from the ear of the lord. It became a great holy center named Manikarnika. When the holy center extending to five krosas began to float on the waters, Siva supported it on Trident, devoid of attributes. Vishnu slept there itself along his consort Prakriti. At the behest of Siva, Brahma was born of his umbilical lotus.

At the behest of Siva, he evolved a wonderful creation. The fourteen worlds were created in the Cosmic Egg, the extension of Cosmic Egg was fifty crore of Yojanas as glorified by the sages.

Siva released the holy center of Pancakrosi so that the beings in the cosmic egg, bound by action attain him. This Kasi is the bestower of auspiciousness in the world. It is destructive of action. It illuminates salvation. It is the bestower of knowledge.

The great Siva himself installs the linga image Avimukta. That holy center could never be abandoned; this was the blessing of lord Siva. After saying this, Siva himself brought Kasika from his Trident and released it in the mortal world. At the close of the day of Brahma (when all other objects perish) it certainly would not perish.

Siva upholds it by means of his Trident. When Brahma resumed the creation again, it would be replaced. It is called Kasi because it pulls out or destroys our actions. The linga image Avimuktesvara stays in Kasi always, yielding salvation to the people including even the great sinners. Sarupya and other types of salvations are attained elsewhere.

The excellent type of salvation Sayujya is attained there itself. Of those who do not attain salvation anywhere, the city of Varanasi is the resort. The meritous holy center Pancakrosi is destructive of sins of crores of slaughter. The immortal gods too desire death there. Thus this holy center yields worldly pleasures and salvation always. It is a favourite resort of Siva. Brahma has praised this city. So also do the Siddhas, yogins, sages and also the other people in the three worlds and Vishnu too.

The greatness of Kasi cannot be described in hundred years. The lord of Kailasa, who is Sattvaic within and Tamasaic without, who is famous in the name of Kalagni and who is the Supreme Being with and without attributes spoke after making many obeisance.

Rudras wanted god to stay there for the benefit of the worlds. Avimukta, of suppressed and controlled soul, shed tears from his eyes and imploring him again and again spoke to Siva. He told Siva that he was the lord of all gods and three worlds. He was worth of being worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu and others. They wanted lord to establish his capital in the city of Kasi and decided to stay in meditation for the sake of inconceivable pleasure.

Avimukta said Siva was alone the bestower of liberation and worldly desires. For rendering help to people, Siva would stay there always along with Uma. Thus requested

by Visvanatha, Siva the sovereign ruler of all, stayed there for rendering help to people. Kasi became the most excellent center for all since Siva came to Kasi.

8. The greatness of Gautama in the context of the greatness of Trymbakesvara

There was once an excellent sage named Gautama. His wife Ahalya was extremely virtuous. He performed a penance extending to ten thousand years on the Brahmagiri Mountain in the southern quarter. Once also a terrible drought lasting for a hundred years occurred there. All the people were put to great distress.

The sages, and other men, the beasts, birds and the deer of the forest went to the different quarters. The sages and the Brahmins spent horrible time in meditation and performing Pranayamas. Gautama himself performed an auspicious penance of Varuna for six months engrossed in Pranayama.

The Varuna then came there to grant him the boon since he was delighted with Gautama. Gautama then requested him for Rain. Varuna said that he could not countermand the behest of the gods and requested to ask for some other wish. On hearing this, Gautama said if Varuna was happy with him and a wish had to be granted, then it had to be according to his desire. Since Varuna was the god of water, he could give them water.

Requested thus by Gautama, Varuna told him to dig a ditch there. When this was said, he dug a ditch of hand's depth. Varuna filled it with Divine water. Varuna told Gautama that there would be a perennial supply of water in that ditch that became sacred. That would become famous on the earth in his name.

The rites performed there, sacrifices done; Sraddha offered all would be imperishable.

Thus man attains fruits in accordance with the nature of the man one serves. Loftiness is achieved by serving the great and meanness by serving the mean. Service in the abode of a lion is sure to yield pearls. This is the nature of the excellent people that they cannot bear other's misery. They consider other's misery their own and try to eradicate it. A kind man, a man unpudded by arrogance, a person habitually helping others and a person with perfect control over his sense organs, these are the four holy pillars that support the earth. Having secured rare water, Gautama performed his routine and ceremonial rites duly. Different food grains and barley were produced in plenty there. Many beasts, birds and other living beings flocked there. The forest became very beautiful, the most excellent on the surface of the world. The sages in the forest got engaged in auspicious rites. They stayed there along with their disciples, children and womenfolk. They sowed food grains for their livelihood. There was great joy and bliss in that forest, all because of the power of Gautama.

9. The glory of Jyotirlinga Vaidyanathesvara

Ravana, the arrogant and prestige-minded leader of Raksasas propitiated Siva on the excellent Mountain Kailasa. Thought the worship continued for a long time, Siva was not delighted. Then Ravana performed another penance to delight Siva. The glorious Ravana dug a deep ditch among the groves of trees on the southern side of Himavat, the Mountain that is usually the site of Siddhi. He then kindled fire within it. Near it he installed the idol of Siva and performed the sacrifice.

He performed three types of penance. During the summers, he stationed himself in the midst of five fires, during the rainy days he lay on the bare ground and in the winter he stood within water and performed his penance. Even then, Siva, the supreme soul, difficult to be propitiated by the wicked was not delighted.

Then the ambitious Ravana, lord of Daityas, began to worship Siva by cutting off his heads. In the due performance of his worship, he cut off his head one by one. When he had cut off his nine heads and one head remained, the delighted Siva favorably disposed towards his devotees, appeared in front of him. The lord reinstated the severed heads without causing pain and conferred on him his desire as well as unequalled excellent strength.

Raksasa then joined his palms in reverence and asked Siva that he wanted to take his image to his Lanka. He wanted this desire to be fulfilled. On hearing this Siva told Ravana that he could take the linga image and wherever the linga image would be placed on the ground, it will become stationary.

Thus warned by Siva, Ravana was taking the image to Lanka, when he was desirous of passing urine, while yet on his way, because of Siva's Maya. Lord Ravana, of the family of Pulastya could not stop this urge. He saw a cowherd there and requested him to hold the image. About an hour later when Ravana returned, the cowherd had left after placing it on the ground. The cowherd was Vishnu who wanted to prevent Ravana from taking the linga image to lankan. The linga image made of the essence of diamond remained fixed there. That linga image is known as Vaidyanathesvara.

It yields all the desires and dispels the sins at its very sight. It is famous in the three worlds. It grants worldly pleasure and salvation thereafter. This Jyotirlinga is the most excellent of all. The sight and worship of this Jyotirlinga, destroys sins. Lord Siva stood there for the benefit of the worlds.

Ravana returned back after securing the blissful boon. Brahma and other gods arrived there and devotedly performed the worship of Siva. The gods saw the deity personally and after consecrating the image, they called Vaidyanatha. They then bowed to the image and eulogized it and returned to heaven.

On the other hand, after securing the great and excellent boon, the great Asura Ravana returned to his abode and mentioned everything to his beloved wife.

Ravana has blessings of Siva, on hearing the same; Indra and other gods and sages became extremely dejected. The gods and sages said that Ravana was a wicked knave. Ravana was evil-minded and hater of gods and they thought that after receiving a boon from Siva, he would make their life miserable. This was the subject of worry among all the gods and sages.

Thus distressed, Indra and other gods and sages invited Narada and requested him to find out the means to dispel the grief of the gods. Narada then told them to give up their sorrow and decided to visit to Ravana. Narada went to Ravana and told him that he was a blessed sage, a great devotee of Siva and was delighted to see him. Narada asked Ravana to narrate the details as to how he propitiated Siva.

Ravana said that he performed a severe penance at Kailasa for a long time. When Siva was not pleased still, he returned from there to the grove and resumed penance. Standing in the midst of five fires during the summer, lying on the bare ground during rains and staying inside water during the winter, he performed three-fold penance.

Still Siva was not even slightly pleased with him. He then became angry and dug a ditch in the ground and kindled fire and made earthen idols of Siva. He worshipped Siva with scents, sandal paste, and incense and food offerings. He propitiated Siva by obeisance, eulogies, songs, dances, musical instruments and mystic gestures of faces and fingers according to the rules laid down in the Sastras.

When lord Siva was still not pleased and did not appear, he was distressed and could not obtain the fruits of penance. Then he thought of casting off his body into fire. Thereafter he cut off his head one by one, purified them and offered them to fire. Thus he offered nine heads to Siva. When he was about to cut off his tenth head, Siva appeared before him as a mass of splendor.

Siva was then delighted and asked him to wish for a boon. On this Ravana asked for unequal strength. Ravana's heads were reinstated like a physician.

His body regained its former state and all benefits were derived by him.

On hearing this, Narada told Ravana, that he should not take all that was blessed by Siva for granted. He told Ravana to lift up Kailasa and everything would come out to be fruitful only if he lifted up the Kailasa and replace it as before and return back. Ravana, deluded by fate, considered it a beneficial advice. Believing in the advice of sage, he went to Kailasa and lifted up the mountain. Every thing on the mountain became topsy-turvy and mixed up with one another.

On seeing this, Siva said laughingly, that he had got the return of favoring his disciple. Lord Siva therefore considered Ravana as ungrateful. He cursed him for being arrogant of his strength and cursed him saying that a destroyer of his arrogance would come soon. The mighty Ravana, deluded of his own strength, destroyed the arrogance of his enemies and brought the whole universe under his control. Due to the divine weapons and great strength secured at the behest of Siva, there was none to counter challenge Ravana in fight.

By listening to this glory of lord Vaidyanatha, the sinners get their sins reduced to ashes.

10. The existence of Nageswara, the extremely excellent Jyotirlinga

There was once an ogress Daruka who became arrogant by the boon granted by Parvati. Her husband Daruka was also very powerful. Along with many Raksasa, he tormented the good. He destroyed their sacrifices and spoiled their rites. His fertile and flourishing forest was on the shores of the Western ocean. It extended to sixteen Yojanas in every direction.

Wherever Daruka went in that forest for her sportive pleasure, the land in that spot acquired all requisites and became full of trees. The goddess had entrusted Daruka with the supervision of that forest. Staying there, the raksasa Daruka and his wife Daruka terrorized the people. The harassed people sought the refuge in Aurva the great son Urva and grand son of the famous sage Bhrgu.

They paid homage to him in reverence and with their head bent down with pleasure; they requested him to grant them shelter, lest Daruka would kill them. They believed that he was competent and brilliant with his splendor. He was the one in whom; they could seek refuge and stay happy.

The Raksasa's run off on seeing Aurva. The splendor of Siva always shined in him like fire. Aurva said, if the Raksasa tortured the living beings on the earth, they would die themselves although they were powerful. The truth remained, that whenever the people are killed, Raksasa's too die. After promising this to the people, Aurva continued with the various types of penance, conferring happiness on the people.

Realizing the cause for the curse, the gods made attempts to fight with the demons. With multifarious efforts and weapons, Indra and the other gods arrived there for the battle. On seeing them, the Raksasas began to ponder since it was a difficult situation for them. The

Raksasas were fighting and dying but the gods continued to fight. A great misery had befallen the Raksasas.

Raksasas started thinking of the ways and means they could protect themselves. The demoness Daruka then spoke of the boon granted to her by Parvati. The demoness said that they could go to the forest along with their people and make use of the boon granted by Parvati since she secured it. The demoness further stated that they could take their people to the island and stay there happily.

On hearing the words of Raksasi, the Raksasa's were delighted. They bowed to her respectfully and asked for her permission to leave. They decided to stay in the waters permanently. In the meantime, the people who had been tortured by the Raksasa's formerly came there for fighting, accompanied by the gods.

In their dilemma, Raksasa's resorted to the boon granted by Parvati. They took their belongings to the city in the ocean. The demoness shouted cries of victory to the goddess and flew like the winged king of Mountains. She then stayed fearlessly in the middle of the ocean. Staying in the city inside the ocean, the sportive Raksasa's became happy and fearless. They moved about in the waters only.

They abducted the travelers in the boats and imprisoned them in the city. They even killed some of them. Staying there fearlessly, because of the boon granted by Parvati, Raksasas continued their havoc as before. People had the terror in the water instead of land. Sometimes the Raksasas came out of their city in the water and blocked the path to the land in order to harass the people. In the meantime several beautiful boats arrived there, all full of people. On seeing this, the wicked Raksasas were delighted and bound them forcefully and fettered them and put them in prisons. The people thus became unhappy.

Their leader was a certain Vaisya named Supriya. His conduct was auspicious and pleasing to Siva. He was a permanent devotee of Siva. He never remained without the worship of Siva. Bhasma and Rudraksha were his ornaments. If on any day he could not worship Siva, he would not take his food. The Vaisya performed the worship of Siva in the prison also. He taught the mantra of Siva and the mode of worshipping the earthen linga image to several of his fellow – prisoners.

They performed there the worship of Siva duly in the manner they saw and heard. Some of them stayed in meditation taking up excellent postures. Some of them joyously performed the mental worship of Siva. Those who did not know the great rite remained meditating on Siva with the five-syllable mantra "Namah Sivaya". Vaisya Supriya continued the worship of Siva by mental meditation for six months without any hindrance.

11. The greatness of Ramesvara

Formerly Vishnu, the favorite of the good, took his incarnation as Rama on the earth. Rama's wife Sita, the daughter of Janaka, was kidnapped by Ravana the wielder of great Maya and taken to his abode in Lanka.

Searching for her, Rama went to the city called Kiskindha. Having alliance with Sugriva for his benefit, he killed Bali. After staying there for sometime, Rama held consultations with Lakshmana, Sugriva and others to find out about Sita. The Prince Rama sent Monkeys, the chief of whom was Hanuman, to various directions in order to find out Sita. On getting the crest-jewel of Sita, Rama came to know from monkeys that Sita was in Lanka. Accompanied by Hanuman, the chief of monkeys, Lakshmana, Sugriva and other

monkey chiefs of great might and a vast army of monkeys, eighteen thousand billion in number, Rama reached the shores of the Southern salt ocean.

Reaching there, Rama, the favorite of Siva, stationed himself on the shore, being served by monkeys and his brother, Laksmana. They had to cross the ocean knowing the fact that Raksasa of great strength and valour Ravana, up lifter of the Mountain Kailasa had resorted to his strong hold in Lanka. His son was Indrajeet, the conqueror of Indra.

Rama then told his brother Laksmana that he was desirous of having water and told him to get some water quickly through some monkeys. Monkeys got sweet, cool and refreshing water for Rama. Just as Rama was about to have water, he realized that he had not yet had the sight of Siva and drinking water without his sight was not possible for him.

He then drank water and performed the worship of Siva's earthen image. He worshipped Siva performing all the sixteen ancillary services like invocation etc. with devotion according to the rules. After propitiating him with obeisance, divine eulogies etc. strenuously, Rama joyously prayed to Siva with great devotion. Addressing Siva as Bhavaratna (one who takes devotees across the ocean of worldly existence), Rama expressed that ocean was very deep and Raksasa Ravana was heroic and mighty.

The army of monkeys was a very fickle instrument of war. He believed that it was difficult for him to achieve his tasks resulting in pleasing acquisition. He admitted that without Siva's help, his purpose was difficult to be achieved. Ravana too was his devotee. Ravana was invincible in every respect to everyone. He was haughty due to boons granted by Siva. Ravana was a great hero and conquered the three worlds.

He begged to Sadasiva that he too was Siva's slave and considering this Siva would not be partial to him. After praying and bowing to Siva again and again, Rama shouted loudly of victory and continued to eulogise Siva. Repeating the mantras and performing the worship again and again, he danced before the lord. With the heart drenched with devotional love, he produced the throat-sound.

Lord Siva was much delighted. Assuming his pure form, lord Siva of brilliant form appeared before him immediately. Satisfied in his heart with Rama's devotion, lord Siva talked of Rama's welfare and decided to grant him a boon too. Rama became sanctified and interested in Siva's cult, performed the worship. Eulogizing in diverse ways and bowing to Siva joyously, Rama requested for his victory in the imminent fight with Ravana.

Delighted in his heart at Rama's devotion, lord Siva granted him the boon. Securing the blessing of victory granted by Siva and receiving the permission of the lord, he prayed again with palms joined in reverence and head bent down. Rama told Siva that if he were pleased, he would stay there to sanctify the world and render help to others. Thus implored, Siva took up the linga image named Ramesvara, which is now famous on the surface of the world. It was by Siva's favour that Rama crossed the ocean soon, killed Ravana and other Raksasa and regained his beloved Sita.

The greatness of Ramesvara became wonderful and unequalled in the world. It yields worldly pleasures and salvation and bestows all desires on the devotees always. One who performs the ablution of Siva with the waters of the Divine Ganga and worships Ramesvara with great devotion becomes a living liberated soul. After enjoying all pleasures there, rare even to the gods and deriving perfect knowledge in the end, one

certainly achieves salvation. Ramesvara is thus divine. It destroys the sins of the devotees who listen to it.

12. The origin and glory of Jyotirlinga Ghusmesvara

There is an excellent mountain in the southern region, named Deva. It shines with great splendor and is very wonderful to view. A Brahmin Sudharma, who was the most excellent among the knower of Brahman and who was born of Bharadvaja family lived near it. His beloved Sudeha was interested in Saiva's cult and sacred rites.

She was skilful in all household activities and devotedly served her husband. The excellent Brahmin Sudharma worshipped gods and guests. He was devotedly attached to the Vedic path and scrupulously maintained the sacrificial fires. He had the brilliance of the Sun and performed Sandhya prayers thrice a day. He taught disciples and was an expert in the Vedas and Sastras both.

He had the qualities of gentlemanliness. He was also a liberal donor, a devotee of Siva, a favorite of his followers and engaged himself in the sacred rites of Siva-cult. A long period thus passed when he continued his religious rites but no son was born to him. He did not grieve over this because he realized the reality of different things. He knew that the soul was the up lifter and sanctifier of the soul. Thinking thus he did not feel aggrieved even mentally but Sudeha was distressed for not having a son.

Everyday she used to implore her husband to strive for the acquisition of a son. On this he used to tell his wife that there was no son, no daughter, no father, no mother, no lover, everyone was selfishly inclined in the world. After enlightening her, he continued with his worship of the lord. He was perfectly contented.

Once Sudeha went to the neighbor's house for a friendly chat but a quarrel arose there. The neighbour's wife as natural to women reproached her. She was called a sonless women and that she had no son to inherit her wealth and property. They also told her that the king would confiscate her property. She narrated the story to her husband, but the intelligent Brahmin was not grieved by hearing it since he believed in destiny.

She was pacified and consoled by her husband. She then told her husband if he did not beget a son, she would caste off her body. On this, Sudharma, harassed by her importunities, mentally remembered Siva. The alert Brahmin offered two flowers to the sacrificial fire. He thought that the right side flower would yield a son. Making this condition, he told his wife that she would have to take one of the flowers to decide about the acquisition of a son.

She was definite to have a son and waited for the insignia flower to come to her. She then bowed to Siva and the sacrificial fire. After praying again, she picked up one of the flowers.

She missed the insignia flower due to delusion caused by Siva's desire. On seeing this, the husband sighed deeply and spoke to his beloved again. He told her to cast off her vain hopes and render service to lord. After saying so and giving up hope himself, the Brahmin became engaged in sacred rites and meditation on Siva.

Yearning for a son, Sudeha did not leave off her pleadings. She then pleaded her husband to remarry. Sudharma then told her that their miseries had gone off and requested her not to put obstacles in his holy rites. She then bought her sister and offered her to Sudharma. Sudharma told Sudeha that if her sister gave birth to a son, Sudeha would feel jealous of her. Sudeha folded her hands to her husband and told her that she would not feel jealous of her own sister and requested him to marry her sister.

Sudeha served her sister like a hired wench eschewing all oppositions and lovingly nurtures her. The junior wife with the consent of her sister would make hundred and one earthen idols everyday. According to the sacred rules Ghusma the younger sister rendered devotional services to these images and threw them in the neighboring lake. She then performed the wish yielding worship of Siva everyday leaving them off and invoking them again in accordance with the rules of devotional service.

Performing the worship of Siva thus regularly, she completed a hundred thousand images and their worship, which would yield the benefits of all desires. By the mercy of Siva, a son was born to her. He was beautiful, fortunate and endowed with all auspicious qualities. Sudeha then grew fiercely jealous of her. Her heart was cool and quiet before and began to blaze like fire later.

The Spiritual Importance of Lord Bhavanatha and the Tale of Mrugi-Kund

Devarshi, the divine hermit, 'Narada' has recited the spiritual importance of the sacred Girnar mount and the tale of how lord Siva appeared there in the form of lord Bhavnatha one of the 'Jyotirlingas.'

Sage Narada Says, Saurashtra is the best of all places in India, Girnar is the best of all forests. And also, the sacred place of 'RadhaDamodar' and 'Suvarnarekha' area is the holy of holiest as the trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha resides here. 'RadhaDamodar ji' – The creator of universe has deified this place in the form of "Giri Narayana".

Various Deities like Sri Dattatreya, DeviKalikai, DeviSaraswati, 'Yaksha' and 'Gandharva' (half god half humans) have also made this sacred place their favored home. Elephant Foot, Gaumukhi, Ganga in this holy place is believed to have been originated from the 'Pataala' (From the depths of the earth). As a promise given to Kartikeya Swami (son of Siva), Goddess Parvati also stays here at the summit of the Girnar, in the form of Ambe-Mataji.

Lord Siva has declared this place as the holy of holiest, as its being the favored home of all these deities. Any person who performs 'Shraddha' (ritual performed for dead people) after taking bath in holy water with presenting offerings and meals to the priest certainly finds place in 'Vaikuntha' (home of 'Vishnu') after death.

He who worships the almighty Bhavnatha Mahadeva with divine flowers and with chanting of 'Om Namah Sivay' – incantation, finds place at 'Kailasa' the sacred home of Lord Siva.

In ancient times, at the end of the Brahma's day, (One day of Brahma equals to million of centuries of humans) whole world was swept by 'Pralaya' (Destruction of the world) and when again it was Brahma's dawn, the trinity of Brahma (Sattvik) the creator, Vishnu (Rajasik) the controller and Rudra (Tamasik) the destroyer, emerged out and started living in the Aadi-Satya loka of the world.

Once in the Devasabha (Meeting of deities), a discussion was held on the process of creation and destruction of the world.

Brahma obviously had a proud of his importance as a creator, so he cleared his egoistic stand in the meet by saying, "I am the father of every mobile (Chara) and immobile (Achara) creature. The world exists due to me".

Vishnu could not tolerate this and challenged Brahma that "I am the greatest of them of all whole world will get destroyed, if I stop nourishing and supporting the creatures of this world".

As the dispute between Brahma and Vishnu became increasingly serious all other deities started thinking of ways to settle down the dispute, as otherwise, the process of creation and destruction of the world will get disrupted. Finally they decided to seek the shelter of Lord Siva. They worshiped 'Mahadeva, listening to their prayers Lord Siva, gave his appearance immediately and calmly advised to both Brahma and Vishnu that "Maheshwara has given birth to Vishnu and gave him the responsibility of nourishing and controlling the world. Similarly Brahma was produced by the Maheshwara to bear the responsibility of creating the world."

"Lord Mahesha is called as the 'Adya Maheshwara' – the inceptor of this universe – as he is omni-present in this universe, and remains neutral to all such processes of the world. So better, we forget all such fruitless issues and duly carry the responsibilities conferred to us by the Lord Mahesha."

Divine voice of Lord Siva led Brahma and Vishnu realizing their errors. Both of them repented much and apologized to Lord Siva, for their mistakes.

Pleased by their modesty Lord Siva asked them for a 'boon'. Brahma requested, Lord Siva to appear in form of 'Bhavnatha, the lord of the world, and thus, to establish his image as the creator.

Lord Siva kindly gave his consent to the request of Brahma and departed towards the 'prithvi-loka'. While travelling on the earth Lord Siva entered into the sacred zone of Saurashtra and saw the divine mountain, the 'Revatachal Girnar' and was instantly attracted by its natural abundance and serene atmosphere. Lord Mahesha decided to stay forever at the base of the Revatachal Girnar – and sat there meditating.

When goddess Parvati did not find the Maheshwara at Kailasa, she got filled with rage on other deities, to prevent Brahma from her curse, Indra and all other deities went in search of lord Siva. They searched in whole universe, but failed to find Maheshwara's traces, finally they sought the advice of Vishnu, who suggested to search with the help of Parvati in the direction of Mahesha's travel.

All deities with Parvati arrived at Girnar and started searching in different directions on the sacred mount. Parvati remained on the Girnar, Vishnu resided at Revatachal in form of Damodar ji and Indra found place in Indrachal. Brahma ji made his home on Muchkund mount. All other deities selected their own appropriate places surrounding the Girnar. Holy River Ganga also started her sacred flow on Girnar. All these deities started praying to Lord Siva to give the sacred appearance for the well being of the world. Melted by their urgings Lord Siva appeared on 'Baisakhi Poornima' in the form of 'Bhavnatha' at the base of the Girnar.

Brahma and all gods requested Maheshwara to return to 'Kailasa,' Lord Siva told them that he has decided to stay at Girnar in the form of 'Bhavnatha' jyotirlinga and advised all of them to live there as their virtual incarnation forever.

Narada, Brahma and all other deities worshipped lord Bhavnatha with Vedic rituals and since then lord Siva is there in the form of 'Bhavnatha' blessing all the creative of the world for their well being.

All the sins of people get cremated when they go to the sacred Girnar and worship lord Bhavnatha. And they all find place at 'Kailasa' forever. By worshipping lord Bhavnatha on 'Mahashivratri' with 'Bilvapatra' (the triclustered leaves) people attain salvation.

All holy rivers are accumulated in Suvarnarekha River. Hence, bathing in holy Suvarnarekha River, all sins of mortals get vanished and they attain salvation.

One should first pray to the 'Kapildeva', who gives success and then should worship 'Vastrapatheshwar', the sacred land deity after drinking 'Siddha Jal', the Holy water, then should offer prayers to the 'Chavan' the kshetrapal Bhairava, situated in the south of the Vastrapatheshwar.

On the bank of Suvarnarekha, there are some holy step wells named Buddhida. Ruddhida. Aghorvar and Gomati-Vaa. Pilgrims are also advised to visit the 'Mrugi-kund', which is the holy of holiest.

One should offer 'Pinda-dan' (funeral ritual offering balls of rice to one's ancestors) and should offer small miniatures Doe and a lion in gold, with the chanting of the incantation Om Namah Sivay.

Pilgrims should also worship the 'Kalmegh Bhairava' and Virbhadra Gana' – established there by lord Siva, after getting involved in the destruction of Daksha – Yagna.

V.SIVA'S MANIFESTATIONS AND INCARNATIONS

1. Leela, Pastime of the Gods
2. Ashtamurti, the Eightfold Manifestation
3. Shiva Manifests
4. Panchamukha -the Fivefold Manifestation
5. The Colours of Life
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10. The Climb to Power
11. Shiva Takes Over
12. Congregation of Faithfuls
13. The Triad Is Established -Shiva Has To Marry

Rudra stands alone, the Only One, none other stands, no Second One;
The Maker he, of all these worlds, controlling all with powers great,
He stands with each, Protector too, and in the end he stands, reducing all.
Shvetashvattara Upanishad, Chapter III Verse 2.

Rudra's appearances and births were, in the main, over. The ground pattern of his nativity had been laid out on the looms of Vedic and post-Vedic myth but a few more birth motifs were to embellish it as legend seized upon the growing concept of Rudra in Epic and Puranic times. The god at first appeared- and reappeared- if one is to accept his pre-Aryan existence, then took birth in ways that advanced his image and status.

Rudra also showed himself in two or three other ways. He chose to manifest, to incarnate and to reveal aspects of his divine personality while he indulged in leela, the traditional sport and pastime of the Hindu gods. Leela shows the gods in a playful mood. They put themselves and others in curious situations and as these unravel, the deity provides tantalizing glimpses of his nature and qualities.

1. Leela, Pastime of the Gods

There is an element of mystery in all divine leela which keeps us guessing even while we grasp what the god is trying to convey. The veil lifts but only partially. Leela is maya, the illusory nature of the world at play, providing lightning flashes of insight while the show is on.

Learning should be fun, or alternatively, spell-binding. The Hindu always knew this. The story is a powerful means of communicating the eternal verities and the story-play of leela was an established practice of the sages and celestials in their dealings with the universe.

Shiva's Puranic births are instances of his leela, a hint at his deepening mystery. The Skanda Purana tells how he was born of a drop of blood which oozed from Brahma's forehead as he wiped the sweat off his brow. The creator had been bending over a sacrificial fire, fanned into a blaze by self-glorification. It was a case of pride generating its own fall, for in a well-known myth, Brahma's fifth head is snipped off with the tip of Shiva's little finger.

In the Linga Purana, Shiva and Brahma get involved in a mutual regeneration episode. Brahma had just created mind-born sons and was not too pleased with his work.

They were ascetics by choice. One them, Sanatkumara, had even wanted to remain five years old forever so that the sins of the world, particularly carnal ones, would never affect him. There seemed no hope for the regeneration of the human race. So Brahma performed severe penance, dwelling on the thought of Shiva. Pleased with these attentions, Shiva emerged from his forehead saying, 'I am your son'. He then assumed the half-female (Ardhanari) form and burnt up Brahma in order to make him start afresh. Uniting with his female half, he then created Brahma and Vishnu. The son now became the father, just as in a much earlier birth, he was the grandchild because he arose from the combined regenerative powers of Prajapati's four children, Fire, Wind, Sun and Moon. Establishing direct descent from him in more ways than one and also by siring the Creator, he was preparing for the unique role he was to play in creation- that of renewal after destruction. What he ended never finished. It was destined to begin all over again.

The births of Rudra, Brahma and Vishnu begin to get mutually triggered in a dizzying merry-go-round of birth myths. Indra, chief of the Vedic gods, whose powers were beings eroded while the triad was establishing itself as prime movers, was a close and interested observer of the process. He recorded their creative exchanges very succinctly, 'Lord Vishnu split his body into two and then created Brahma, who in turn created Rudra in another kalpa (aeon), Vishnu created Brahma, then Brahma created Vishnu, then the lord (Shiva) created Brahma'.

That was a regular round-robin of births sending the triad into a spin that ceased only when the three had presumably begun to grant one another equal status. The spin-off, when this wheel of fortune stopped turning, was one of Rudra's most charming births.

2.Ashtamurti, the Eightfold Manifestation

Brahma, in a fit of divine dissatisfaction, ceased to create and went into deep and steady contemplation. He merged his individuality with the Supreme Brahman, the Absolute. He held all his vital breaths and sat rock-still, conserving his energies, brimful of quiet ecstasy. The divine lotus which hung head down, in the center of his heart, filled out with the creator's rarefied inhalation, and stood erect, facing upwards. It opened out and expanded in fragrant welcome, ready to receive a new birth. Brahma then installed Shiva in its very center on a miniscule pinpoint of pure bliss.

3.Shiva Manifests

Brahma held him close, wrapped in the soul-stirring hum of the mystic syllable Om, till Shiva, sensing the need of the hour, chose to come out of Brahma's forehead. Brahma

gave him eight names. These linked him with the five elements and their related sensations, to the sun, the moon and to the sacrificer or the individual soul, jiva.

Shiva stood, displaying all his eight forms with their emanating powers as Ashtamurti (the eight-formed). And is personified in an obvious image. It has the heaven as head, the quarters as ears; the sun, moon and fire as eyes; the sky as umbilicus. The winds blow netherworlds are his feet. He is clothed in the oceans and ornamented with the constellations. Shiva is now the whole universe-ouspread, upstanding and colossal.

4.Panchamukha -the Fivefold Manifestation

In another manifestation he assumes five major forms through five successive aeons, beginning with the Shveta (white) Kalpa.

The first was Sadyojata (Sudden One. White haired, clothed in white and wearing white garlands, even the blood that coursed through his veins was white. Next came Vamadeva (Beautiful God), red, with the aeon also taking its name from the prevailing warm redness-Lohita (red). Then followed the Pita (yellow) Kalpa, yellow through and through, when Shiva appeared as Tatpurusha (That Male). He wore tranquil yellow. Yellow gave place to black in the Krishna (black) Kalpa and he assumed a terrible form as the deadly Kala (Time), black and forbidding (bhora); but to those who knew and recognized him, the terror ceased to be and he became Aghore (not terrible)- which was the name of the manifestation in that kalpa. The last was Vishvarupa (universal form), crystal clear and transparent, presiding supreme over the other four.

Shiva anchored the form, drew it together and brought it down to earth with a simple device. He pronounced the four (excluding the Vishvarupa) to be his sons, and simultaneously established them as the basis for human life, since the social norms proceeded in sets of four. These were the four castes - brahmachari (student), grihastha (householder), vanaprastha (forest-dweller) and sannyasi (ascetic); the four goals -dharma (duty), artha (wealth) kama (desire), moksha (liberation); the four groups of beings -egg-born, womb-born, seed born and sweat-born (insects). It was a neat summation, a construct that led simply and directly to Shiva as the source of life, its wellsprings.

5.The Colours of Life

In the Shiva Purana, the manifestation is mounted as a tableau and a processional, with additional figures who act as props, extending the powerful aura of the deity. Shiva goes through each aeon, colouring it with his chosen hue, with a retinue to match.

Brahma is the bystander, a divine medium, a receiver. He first ushered in Shiva as Sadyojata, white and resplendent. The effect on Brahma himself was immediate. He generated four sons, all white, unblemished, full of wisdom and valour. Sadyojata, pleased with his induction, blessed Brahma with the power to create well and wisely.

The next aeon, was coloured red with the flush of Brahma's passion and from that was born a son, Vamadeva. Four beings clad in red, sons of a great sage, stood by, heightening the moment and celebrating it. Brahma was blessed with the wisdom and the power to create in that aeon as well. Red turned to yellow with the onset of the Pita Kalpa. Brahma clad in yellow, in a yogic trance, received Shiva as Tatpurusha. As Before, Brahma had four sons, also yellow, to match the protagonist. They were all inclined to the yogic way of life.

Yellow gave way to the menace of black in the next kalpa, as Aghora arrived, terrible to behold but not fearful to those who could face him. Brahma, on this ominous occasion,

had four sons fitted out in black to harmonise with the aura of lustrous black that Shiva emanated.

The last to arrive was Ishana, clear and transcendent. He appeared with his shakti, Sarasvati, speech. They created four sons. Ishana is the all-prevading Unmanifest, the Supreme Brahman who in this form, provides a glimpse of himself to Brahma and a chosen few. It was symbolic colour-trail of Nature's tendencies. The translucence of a white beginning breaks out into the vibrancy of red in action. That in turn, levels out to the equipoise of yellow, before we reach the deadweight of black. Its downward pull into deep descent is countered by the sheer up thrust of Ishana in transparent light ascent. It is here that the veil lifts to reveal the Unmanifest. He is the closest we can get the Supreme Brahman.

The five-form concept later took shape as the five faced Shiva with each given a direction- the dimension of space had been added to the dimension of time. Sadyojata faced East; Vamadeva, North; Tatpurusha, West; Aghora, South. Ishana, also known as Sadashiva, (Eternal Shiva) was allocated an upward direction. He was above and beyond the four cardinal points. He is very often not represented in images, his presence being taken for granted as the intangible but powerful fifth head.

6.The Rising Pillar of Shiva

These five forms were also linked to the five element and their related sensation. This ramified, outspread form mapped a varied spiritual terrain with more than adequate sign-posting. In one of Vishnu's visions of Sadashiva in the Linga Purana, he constructs a mental icon that puts all five together vertically, identifying them with the body of Shiva. This helps to uplift the spiritual aspirant and direct him, form by rising form, to the higher realms of contemplation. Vishnu recalls, 'Shiva had Ishana for his crown, Tatpurusha for his face, Aghora for his heart, Vamadeva for his sex organs, Sadyojata for his feet. The metaphor had been gathered in and compacted, pressed into service as a manageable symbol. It was the classic transformation of sound as mantra into form as icon. Shiva was fast gaining round as an essential part of the triad. He was not just necessary, he was vital, he made a difference. And he was just necessary, he was vital, he made a difference. And he was different.

7.Shiva Incarnates

Shiva did not incarnate in the way that Vishnu did - as towering, monolithic figures who either dominated the scene or single-handedly extricated the universe from the clutches of a particular person or situation. Vishnu was a rescuer, a saviour, a preserver.

Shiva entered the scene when things were beyond repair. He was a destroyer and his function was to end an aeon when it wound down and, to keep the spiritual fires burning through the ages.

For that, he needed to appear in the company of enlightened souls and gurus who would, by precept and example, spread knowledge, mainly of Shiva. Shiva incarnated twenty-eight times in succession along with illustrious sons, pupils, sages and seers. They were all, adepts at yoga, specially the Maheshwara Yoga, one of the Shaivite cults. This cult could be the Pashupata Yoga attributed to Lakuli, a teacher who lived probably around the second century B.C. the twenty-eighth incarnation, as mentioned in the Puranas, was Lakuli, led up to by twenty-seven others, each with his own caucus of learned beings.

8. Embodiment as Lakuli

Shiva's embodiment as Lakuli was unorthodox to say the least. He found and abandoned corpse and entering it, emerged as young celibate holding a Vataru club, a lakula - hence the name, lakuli. The place where this happened is in Gujarat and is called Kayavarohana or Kayavatara (literally, descent into a body). Karnataka too, has a Lakuli with four pupils. The Pashupata cult survives as a strong tradition and is marked by heterodox rites and practices.

The Lakuli incarnation is worth nothing only because of its association with a major Shiva cult and mentions Krishna and Vyasa as part of the core group. It could have been a counter-thrust to Krishna and the Bhagavad Gita, a parting of the ways of Hara (Vishnu and Shiva), leading to two distinct devotional schools.

9. The Rudras

Another tradition includes the eleven chief Rudras among the twenty-eight incarnations of Shiva. The Rudras are a class of beings whom Shiva seems to have either created, or caused to be created under varying and conflicting conditions. In one myth, he willed them into existence just before he went into a state of utter quiescence as Sthanu (pillar). Brahma rejected these creations of Rudra-myriads of them, all equal to Rudra and resembling him, superhuman and supernatural. They had sublimated their sexuality and spread all over, becoming part of the universe, its living and supernatural. They had sublimated their sexuality and spread all over, becoming part of the universe, its living rhythms, invisible but ever active. They seem to reflect one of the etymologies of the word Rudra- 'ever-moving'. Then eleven chief Rudras are sometimes included among the twenty-eight incarnations of Shiva, and according to one tradition, these eleven Rudras were the sons of the sage Kashyapa and his wife Aditi, mother of the gods. The Shiva Purana mentions the eleven Rudras sired by Kashyapa, father of the gods, through Surabhi, the divine cow in a roundabout manner. Kashyapa worshipped Shiva at Kashi with penance and austerities. Shiva appeared and promised to enter Surabhi. The Rudras were born as a result and fought for the gods in one of their eternal clashes with the demons.

Yet another myth shows Brahma in a fit of disgust scrutinising his own revolting creations-ghosts, goblins, snakes. He decided to end his life. The eleven Rudras, an expression of Shiva's mercy, emerged from Brahma's mouth as his vital breaths and revived the desperate Creator. The Rudras are really manifestations, powers, insights, not regular incarnations.

The Rudras have been given names in separate and slightly inconsistent lists. They were, as their generic name indicates, parts or particles of Rudra, complementing rather than imitating him, and assisting him in the intervals between world dissolutions in the miscellaneous activities he chose to engage in.

These incarnations of Shiva were perhaps, an attempt to match the Vaishnavite system of saviours and messiahs, for the Shiva Purana mentions a series of ten incarnations beginning with Mahakala, accompanied by their respective energies or shaktis.

10. The Climb to Power

Shiva had gone through life and manifestation alone. Only once, in a revelatory vision had he provided Brahma and Vishnu with glimpses of his primal, female energy, his shakti. He had confined his activities to the higher reaches of the cosmos, concentrating on evolving into a full-fledged deity with far-reaching powers. He had been identified

forces-and deities Fire, Air, Wind, Water, the Sun, Moon and stars. He moved quick as lightning, struck like the thunderbolt, and stormed into situation like a cloudburst, cleansing the air and making a clean and total sweep. He was the gathering storm of ancient skies in the mind of early man, with its recurrent rumbling mystery, the sound and howling fury signifying something other-than and beyond. He had already, in one of his births, taken up the bow of Indra, making it his own, but the real turning point in his career can be seen in two other myths.

11.Shiva Takes Over

Indra, Vayu and Agni sat exchanging notes on their recent war against the gods. They had an unqualified victory and were gloating over their success. They had managed to beat back the demons with no help - or so they thought. It was time to remind them of the Supreme Power whose functionaries they really were.

As they sat discussing their exploits, they noticed a towering figure in the distance. A yaksha (a powerful spirit of nature), was moving towards them with the majestic gait of a lion. They quailed at the sight of him and what kind of power he exercised and Vayu replied, 'I lift things, I blow them away'. The yaksha threw a blade of grass in front of him. Vayu tried to blow it away, but could not even shift it. He went back chastened, but full of wonder and curiosity and told the others. Agni tried next. He blazed and crackled and roared with all his might. The tiny blade of grass remained unscathed. Agni gave up and sent Indra- surely, as chief of the gods, he should be able to do something. Indra strode up, full of confidence and asked him who he was. The yaksha vanished. In his place stood a radiant woman. 'Who was he? Indra asked her. 'The yaksha is invisible', was her reply, and then explained. 'I am the Prakriti (Nature Manifest) of that Purusha (Cosmic male) who is Yaksha. From him all beings originate - even the Cosmic Egg.' The gods were thus made to realise the power behind the throne that was Indra- the Supreme Shiva, Unborn and Unmanifest.

In an even more expressive myth, Shiva disguised as an avadhuta (a naked ascetic), stood in Indra's path as he was on his way to see Shiva. 'Who are you?' Indra asked, looking at him with inborn arrogance. He did not see the inner radiance of the ascetic, his air of contained fire. The avadhuta said nothing. 'Is Shiva at home? Do you know?' Indra said irritably. Again, the silence. This time the insolence was unmistakable.

Indra kept repeating his questions only to be met with stubborn silence. He lost his temper. Raising his vajra (thunderbolt), he threatened to kill him if he did not reply. The hand with the weapon, poised to strike, froze like a charmed serpent as the avadhuta's eyes blazed like a forest fire.

Brihaspati, guru of the gods, who was with Indra, recognised Shiva and fell at his feet, begging for Indra's life. The third eye had begun to spark and flame. 'Spare him, O lord, your third eye is open blazing'. He made Indra fall at his feet, this is fire that once released, even I cannot withdraw.' Brihaspati continued to plead and Shiva relented. 'I shall throw it into the sea, so that Indra and the gods are not destroyed.' And Shiva, vanished. He had established his supremacy.

12.Congregation of Faithfuls

Shiva had also gathered his own band of unswerving devotees- a prerequisite for every established god. Upamanyu was one such. As a child he had gone to his wealthy uncle's house and tasted milk for the first time. When he returned he cried for milk. His mother powdered some grain and mixing it with water, gave it to Upamanyu. The child was not

fooled and demanded the real thing. His mother could only advise him to worship Shiva, which he did. Shiva, disguised as Indra, came to test him and tried to divert his loyalties by deriding Shiva. Upamanyu was prepared to give up his penance for milk, was even ready to kill Indra to defend the honor of his beloved god. Shiva was pleased and blessed him with the sight of a thousand milk oceans and other delectable waters besides- seas of curd, ghee, honey, sugracane juice, sweet and salt water- the seven oceans of myth. It was this same Upamanyu who became a great sage, learned in the ways of Shiva. It was he who advised Krishna to go to Shiva when his wife Jambavati wanted a son.

His most beloved devotee was Vishnu himself. In a puranic story, Vishnu worshipped him with a thousand lotuses, one for each of Shiva's thousand names. One day, Shiva removed a lotus. While offering the flowers, Vishnu missed the thousandth and last lotus. Without a moment's hesitation, he plucked out one of his own lotus eyes to replace it and received his discus, Sudarshana, as a reward

Markandeya, son of Rishi Mrikandu was an exceptional child, destined to die at sixteen. He was a great Shiva devotee. When the messengers of Yama, the god of death, arrived to take him, he clasped the linga he was worshipping and Shiva appeared, defeating Kala, Death as the irrevocable march of Time.

Brahma was no devotee but was forced to acknowledge Shiva's superior powers. They represented antagonistic urges, destruction and creation, but functioned in unison as equally indispensable forces.

13. The Triad Is Established -Shiva Has To Marry

Brahma and Vishnu, with Shiva as the odd god in, had set up a workable world-system. The system and Shiva, as part of the governing triad, would have to conform. He would have to marry. The others had already done so. The perfect yogi and the perfect husband- only he could be both, for he was a god in whom incompatibles came to rest and resolved into positive forces. The early avenging archer was also the healer and renewer. The Cosmic Male had manifested as half-female, Ardhanari; the destroyer had embraced the Preserver in the Harihara form- and now, the unrelenting yogi was about to accommodate the householder. Shiva's marriage took much arranging and considerable manipulation. A whole conglomerate of inimical forces were to impel the god towards his goddess. He was probably legend's most reluctant husband.

Some of the Thousand Names of Siva

Visnu eulogized Siva with the thousand names, which Siva was prayed to and worshipped with lotuses.

Siva – Pure,

Hara – Destroyer,

Mrda – Gracious,

Rudra – Terrible,

Puskara – Nourisher,

Puspalocana – Of flowery eyes,

Arthigamyā – Accessible to the suppliants,

Sadacara – Of noble conduct,

Sarva – All-in-all,

Mahesvara – Great Lord,

Candrapida – With moon for the diadem,

Candramauli – With moon for its crest-jewel,

Visva – Universe,
 Visvambhavesvara – Lord of the earth,
 Vedantasarasandoha – The essence of Vedanta philosophy,
 Kapalin – With a skull in the hand,
 Nilalohita –Blue-blooded,
 Dhyanadhara – Object of meditation,
 Apariccheya – Inexplicable,
 Gauribhartr – Husband of Gauri,
 Ganesvara – Lord of Ganas,
 Astamurti – Having eight cosmic bodies,
 Visvamurti –Universe-bodied,
 Trivarga – Bestower of virtue, wealth, and love,
 Sargasadhana – Achiever of creation,
 Jnanagamy – Accessible to perfect knowledge,
 Drdhaprajna – Of steady intellect,
 Devadeva –Lord of gods,
 Trilocana –Three-eyed,
 Vamadeva –Lovely god,
 Mahadeva – Great god,
 Patu – Efficient,
 Parivrdha – Chief,
 Drdha – Firm,
 Visvarupa – Multifomed,
 Virupaksa – Odd-eyed,
 Vagisa – Lord of speech,
 Surassattama – The most excellent god,
 Sarvapramanasamvadin – In whom all authorities and proof agree,
 Vrsanka – Bull-bannered,
 Vrsavahana – Bull-vehicled,
 Isa –Lord,
 Pinakin – Holding bow,
 Khatvangin – Holding missile Khatvanga,
 Citravesa – Of variegated dress.

Meditate upon Siva each day

He is lustrous like the snowy mountain.
 He is adorned by the beautiful moon.
 As pure as jewels and fire.
 He has fearful weapons.
 He is pleasing to the eyes.
 Seated on a lotus.
 He is dressed in tiger skins.
 The first in the universe.
 He is saluted by the whole universe.
 He is the remover of fear.