



Bharatha Samskruthi Prakashana

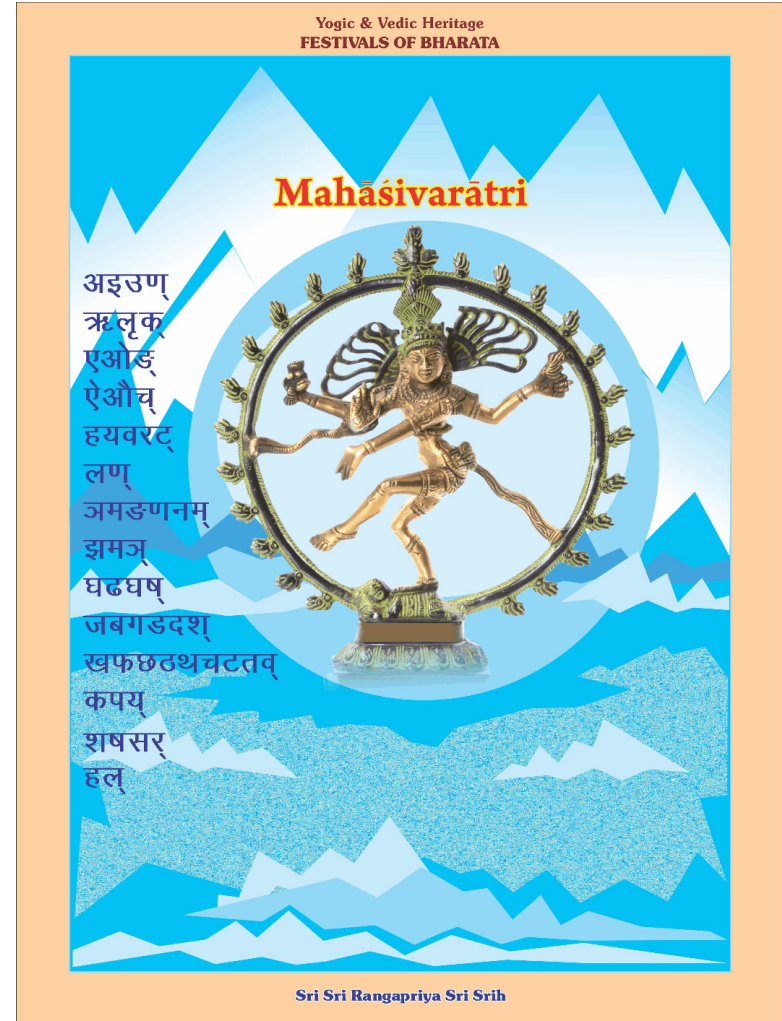
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We Dedicate this Sacred Treasure at the holy lotus feet of

Sriranga Mahaguru and SriMata

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अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ	ṝ	ḷ	ḹ	e	ai	o	au	am	ah
क	ख	ख	ग	ङ											
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa											
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ											
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña											
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण											
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa											
त	थ	द	ध	न											
ta	tha	da	dha	na											
प	फ	ब	भ	म											
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma											
य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह								
ya	ra	la	va	śa	sha	sa	ha								

Example:

क	का	कि	की	कु	कू	कृ	कृ	क्लृ	के	कै	को	कौ	कं	कः
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū	kṛ	kṛ	klṛ	ke	kai	ko	kau	kam	kah



Mahāśivarātri

Mahāśivarātri is one of the most important *parvas* among the festivals of *Bhārātīyas*. Just as *Prayāga* and *Pushkara* are called ‘*Tīrtharāja*’, *Mahāśivarātri* is called ‘*vratarāja*’. This *vrata* is observed in all parts of *Bhāratadeśa* with concern reverence and devotion.

Though this is a festival where the prominent deity is *Śiva* and a very special *parva* for *śaivites*, even *Vaishṇavas* and worshippers of other great *devatās* also should specially worship God (*Śiva*) on *Śivarātri*. *Śāstras* say that those who are indifferent to *Śivarātri* i.e. those who turn away from it without observing it, and those who abstain from doing worship in the *Antarmukha* state but remain *Bahirmukhas*, happen to lose all the benefits of worship and become unfortunate.

शैवो वा वैष्णवो वाऽपि यो वा स्यादन्यपूजकः ।
सर्वं पूजाफलं हन्ति शिवरात्रिबहिर्मुखः”

(Whether it is a *Śaiva* or a *Vaishṇava* or a devotee of any other God, if one keeps indifferent to *Śivarātri*, he will lose all the benefits of worship).

Every *Kṛṣṇa Caturdaśi* in the entire year is dear to Lord *Śiva* and is called ‘*Śivarātri*’. Among them, the *caturdaśi* of the month of *Māgha* is most special, and so it is called ‘*Mahāśivarātri*’. As in *Ekādaśī*, in the observance of this *vrata* also, fasting is an important part and so it is also called ‘The festival of fasting’. Generally, nights are not auspicious for the worship of *devatās*. But on *Śivarātri*, the whole night is specified as auspicious for God’s worship, and so the name ‘*Śivarātri*’ also suits this. All the four *yamas* of the night are very auspicious for the worship of God.

Śāstras and traditions loudly proclaim the great glory of the *Śivarātri vrata*.

This festival of observance of *Śivarātri* is the best among all the *yajnas*. None of these i.e. *dāna*, *yajna*, penance, a place of holywater, *vratas* and *karmas* can equal even a ten millionth part of the *Śivarātri vrata*.

शिवरात्रिरिति ख्याता सर्वयज्ञोत्तमोत्तमा ।

दानयज्ञतपस्तीर्थव्रतकर्माणि यानि च
शिवरात्रिव्रतस्यापि कोट्यंशे न समानि च॥

We come across such words of praise with regard to other *vratas* as well. They are called '*Arthavāda*' i.e. their purpose is only to emphasise the importance of those *vratas*. It should not be understood that other *vratas* are inferior and that this *vrata* alone is superior. Even then, prominence to *Śivarātri* is very much there, because of the significance of the distinct time and the superiority of the availability of abundant time for worship and *dhyāna*.

The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* proclaims that if one observes fast and keeps vigil during the night, and performs worship on this day of *Kṛṣṇa caturdaśī* that comes between the months of *Māgha* and *Phālguna*, *Rudradeva* will bestow both *bhukti* and *Mukti*, and redeems him from hell.

माघफाल्गुणयोर्मध्ये कृष्णा या तु चतुर्दशी ।
तस्यां जागरणाद्गुह्यः पूजितो भुक्तिमुक्तिदः ॥
उपोषितैः पूजितस्सनरकात्तारयेत्तथा'' (गरुड पुराण 1-124)

"It removes all sins. One who observes fast and keeps vigil through the night and worships *Śiva* with the leaves of *bilva* in all the four *yāmas* of the night will become equal to *Śiva* himself".

कृतोपवासा ये तस्यां शिवमर्चन्ति जाग्रताः।
बिल्वपत्रैश्चतुर्यामं ते यान्ति शिवतुल्यताम्''

Those who worship thus will have no rebirths..

मातुः पयोधररसं न पिबेत् स कदाचन''

Those who do not worship *Śiva* the Lord of the three worlds on that occasion, are poor creatures. They wander through thousands of lives.

न पूजयति भक्त्येशं रुद्रं त्रिभुवनेश्वरम् ।
जन्तुर्जन्मसहस्रेषु भ्रमते नात्र संशयः ॥

All people i.e. men, women and people belonging to all *varṇas* and all castes must observe this *vrata*.

वर्षे वर्षे महादेवि नरो नारी पतिव्रता ।
शिवरात्रौ महादेवं कामं भक्त्या प्रपूजयेत् ॥
शिवरात्रिव्रतं नाम सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ।
आचण्डालमनुष्याणां भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदायकम् ॥

Like *ŚrīKṛṣṇajayantī* and *Janmāśṭamī vratas*, *Mahāśivarātri* is also both a *nityavrata* and a *kāmyavrata*. It is stated that this may be observed by people who desire the four-fold values of life, and also that people who do not observe this *vrata* will be incurring sin. And so, this is both a *Nitya* and a *Kāmya vrata*.

This is a sacred *vrata* which should be instructed only to a person who is *ātmaguṇasampanna* and who is pure both in body

and mind. A preceptor) who initiates this *vrata* to a person who does not possess the above qualifications, will go to hell.

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधो ब्रह्मचर्यं दया क्षमा
शान्तात्मा क्रोधहीनश्च तपस्वी ह्यनसूयकः ।

तस्मै देयमिदं देवि गुरुपादानुगो यदि
अन्यथा यो ददातीदं स तदा नरकं व्रजेत्॥

If one observes the *vrata* on that day, all the sins committed in the entire year will get redeemed. On that day, all the *lingas* both moveable and immovable, will have the special *sānnidhya* of Lord *Śiva*.

लिङ्गेषु च समस्तेषु चलेषु स्थावरेषु च ।
सङ्क्रमिष्याम्यसान्द्रिधं वर्षपापविशुद्धये॥

The great glory of Mahāśivarātri

ŚivaPurāṇa describes the great glory of *Śivarātri* as follows:- "Mondays, *Kṛshṇapaksha*, *Ashṭamī* and *Caturdaśī* are the ones which undoubtedly cause delight to *Śiva*. Among these four, the *Śivarātri* (i.e. the *Kṛshṇa Caturdaśī*) is most auspicious. Those who desire *Bhukti* and *Mukti* must necessarily observe this *vrata*."

सोमवारः कृष्णपक्षः अष्टमी च चतुर्दशी ।
शिवतुष्टिकरं चैतन्नात्र कार्या विचारणा ॥
चतुर्ध्वपि बलिष्ठं शिवरात्रिव्रतं हरे ।
तस्मात्तदेव कर्तव्यं भुक्तिमुक्तिफलेप्सुभिः ॥

There is no other *vrata* which is better than this, that brings in great benefit to (human beings). This is an excellent *vrata* which may be observed by all for the attainment of *dharma*. All people, be it *nishkāmas* or *sakāmas*, should observe this *vrata*. This is a *vrata* that can be observed by people of all *Varṇas* and *Āśramas*, women, boys, servants and maids, *devatās* and all people who bear a body, for prosperity.

एतस्माच्च व्रतादन्यत् नास्ति नृणां हितावहम् ।
एतद्व्रतं तु सर्वेषां धर्मसाधनमुत्तमम् ।
निष्कामानां सकामानां सर्वेषां च नृणां तथा ।
वर्णानामाश्रमाणां च स्त्रीबालानां तथा हरे ।
दासानां दासिकादीनां देवादीनां तथैव च ।
शरीरिणां च सर्वेषां हितमेतद् व्रतं वरम् ॥
(कोटिरुद्रसंहिता,
अध्याय 38)

This is the great day when *Brahma* and *Vishṇu* worshipped *Śiva* in *Arunācala*. *Śiva* was pleased with the *pūja*, and named this day which became dear to him as '*Śivarātri*' and granted the following boon to this great day as follows:- "The one who on this day observes a fast, keeps vigil through the night, restrains the senses, and worships *Śiva* in an idol or a *Linga* honestly and to the best of his ability, will obtain the benefit equivalent to the worship performed for the whole year. Just as the time

of moonrise causes waxing of the sea, *Śivarātri* increases the *Śivadharmā* in a person"

तुष्टोऽहमद्य मां वत्स पूजयास्मिन् महादिने ।

दिनमेतत्ततः पुण्यं भविष्यति महत्तरम् ॥

शिवरात्रिरिति ख्याता तिथिरेषा मम प्रिया ।

एतत्काले तु यः कुर्यात्पूजां मल्लिङ्गबेरयोः ॥

कुर्यात्स जगतः कृत्यं स्थितिसर्गादिकं पुमान् ।

शिवरात्रावहोरात्रं निराहारो जितेन्द्रियः॥

अर्चयेद्वा यथान्यायं यथाबलमवञ्चकः ।

यत्फलं मम पूजायां वर्षमेकं निरन्तरम् ॥

तत्फलं लभते सद्यः शिवरात्रौ मदर्चनात्।

मद्धर्मवृद्धिकालोऽयं चन्द्रकाल इवाम्बुधेः ॥

(विद्येश्वरसंहिता - अध्याय 8)

If fast is observed on *Śivarātri* knowingly or unknowingly, or for any other reason, the mind gets purified. There are several stories which shower praises, say that if a person causes the *bilva* leaf to fall on *Śivaliṅga* and gives the *Śivaliṅga* a holy bath with pure water even unknowingly, he will obtain *mahāpurushārthasiddhi*. Among them, the story of *Beḍarakaṇṇappa* is very famous. The flood of devotion flowed in the *Śivānandalahari Stotra* composed by *Śrī Śāṅkarabhagavatpāda* based on the story below, is well known:-

"The footwear that has worn out after long walks may become a *kūrca* to wipe the divine body

of the Lord *Śiva*. The water gorgled in the mouth does the work of the divine holy bath to *Pururipu*. The left over of the mouthful of meat eaten a little bit, becomes a freshly prepared *navyanaivedya* fit to be used in worship. What is it that *Bhakti* cannot do? Even the hunter who dwells in the forest may be considered as an outstanding devotee! What a wonder!

मार्गवर्तितपादुका पशुपतेरङ्गस्य कूर्चायते ।

गण्डूषाम्बुनिषेचनं पुररिपोर्दिव्याभिषेकायते ॥

किञ्चिद् भक्षितमांसशेषकबलं नव्योपहारायते ।

भक्तिः किं न करोत्यहो! वनचरो भक्तावतंसायते॥ (śloka 63)

According to *Śiva Purāṇa* the hunter's name is *Gurudruha*. This most wicked and cruel hunter had to fast inevitably for the whole day on a *Śivarātri*, as he did not get any game. On that night, waiting for a game he was seated on a *bilva* tree, had kept by his side a dried gourd container filled with water. When he was just about to shoot an arrow at a doe that accidentally came there, the water from the gourd cup, and the *bilva* leaves happened to fall on a *Śivaliṅga* which was at the foot of the tree and (this sequence) turned out to be the *Śivapūja* of the first *yāma* without the knowledge of the hunter. And thus his sins were redeemed. He became compassionate and confident towards the doe and sent it to its

group to obtain their permission and return. Somehow the worship of Śiva was done during the remaining yāmas also of the night, unawares. At that period of time, it happened that this doe's sister and other deer came there to drink water, and he let them also to return after obtaining the permission of their group. And finally, by the virtue of the worship done by him in the last yāma, all his sins got burnt into ashes and jnāna dawned on him. Then he released all the deer that had come back as promised, and so Bhagavān Mahādeva appeared before him in personified form and named him 'Guha'. He also blessed him that when Śrīmannārāyaṇa in his divine incarnation as Śrīrāma comes to the forest he (i.e. guha) will have the yoga of friendship of Rāma, and by serving him, he will obtain Mukti which is hard to obtain. "Even those deer also will attain salvation." (says Lord Śiva)

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे ते तु कृत्वा शङ्करदर्शनम्
सर्वे प्रणम्य सन्मुक्तिं मृगयोनेः प्रपेदिरे ॥

(शिवपुराण, कोटिरुद्रसंहिता, अध्याय 40)

In *GaruḍaPurāṇa* and *AgniPurāṇa*, the name of the hunter is stated as 'Sundarasenaka'. The hunter returns to his home and does 'Pāraṇa'. At the time of his death, the servants of Lord Śiva drive away the servants of yama who had come

there to take him, and then they take him and also his dear dog to *Kailasa*. (*Garuḍa purāṇa*: I 111-24; *Agnipurāṇa*: 193-6)

According to *Skāndapurāṇa* the name of that hunter is 'Canda'. Unable to get any food, he and his wife who was also most sinful like him, fast on the night of Śivarātri. The next morning, some dog eats up the food she had brought for her husband. When she angrily rushes to kill the dog, her husband stops her. As he had unknowingly observed fasting and Śivapūja on the previous night, several ātmaguṇas such as compassion manifest in his mind. So he becomes most dear to Lord Śiva. On the *Amāvāsyā* which was the next day after that Śivarātri, in the afternoon, he along with his wife attains the divine world of Śiva itself.

एवमज्ञानतः पुण्यं ज्ञानात्पुण्यमथाभयम् (गरुड पु. I-124)

अज्ञानात्स व्रतं चैतत् कृत्वा सायुज्यमाप्तवान् ।

किंपुनर्भक्तिं सम्पन्ना यान्ति तन्मयतां शुभां॥

स्कोटिरुद्र संहिता - अध्याय 40)

Are these stories true or only imaginations? Even if all of them are true which story is the true one? To what extent? Questions such as these are not important to us. All these stories proclaim a single conclusion that when it has happened that because someone, without any devotion, faith or

knowledge and with no specific reason happened to fast on *Śivarātri* and offered bath and bilwa leaves to *Śiva* obtained such a great state, why can't one attain the supreme *purushārtha* if he worships *Śiva* with devotion, faith and knowledge, after fasting on that day?

Jnānis say—"We discussed all the *śāstras*. We critically assessed all the *dharmas*. We discussed and made the critical assessment several times. The conclusion drawn from all that is that the observance of *Śivarātri* is the best of all. None of all these viz many *vratas*, various pilgrimages, awesome *danas*, several kinds of *yajnas*, penances or *japas* can equal this *vrata* of *Śivarātri*. Those who desire happiness should observe this *Śivarātri vrata*, which is most auspicious, and which bestows *Bhukti* and *Mukti*. I have thus narrated the glory of this sacred *Śivarātri vrata*. This is called 'King of *vratas*'. What else you want to hear, Please ask".

विचार्य सर्वशास्त्राणि धर्माश्चैवाप्यनेकशः ।

शिवरात्रिव्रतमिदं सर्वोत्कृष्टं प्रकीर्तितम् ॥

व्रतानि विविधान्यत्र तीर्थानि विविधानि च ।

दानानि च विचित्राणि मखाश्च विविधास्तथा ॥

तपांसि विविधान्येव जपाश्चैवाप्यनेकशः ।

नैतेन समतां यान्ति शिवरात्रिव्रतेन च ॥

तस्माच्छुभतरं चैतत्कर्तव्यं हितमीप्सुभिः ।

शिवरात्रिव्रतमिदं भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदं सदा ॥

एतत्सर्वं समाख्यातं शिवरात्रिव्रतं शुभम् ।

व्रतराजेति विख्यातं किमन्यच्छ्रोतुमिच्छसि ॥

Śivarātri vrata should necessarily be observed by all. On that day *Śivā* should be worshipped by fasting, restraint of senses, meditation, *pūjā* and singing of his praises. By these, one attains all the four fold values. The purport of these stories is to drive home this *tattva* indeed.

When and at what time should this be observed

We have already noted that *Mahāśivarātri vrata* should be observed on the *caturdaśī* of the *Kṛṣṇapaksha* of the month of *māgha*. Now we shall explain the specific day of the *vrata* and the time of worship.

As the very name *Śivarātri* indicates, auspicious and the prescribed time for the observance is the night alone, and there can be no doubt about it. Though as a general rule the *yajnas* and *pūjas* related to *devatas* are prohibited during nights, it is special that the night time is highly auspicious for worship of *Śivarātri*.

Śāstras state that *Paraśiva* himself has proclaimed as follows:- "During '*kaliyuga*', I

travel on the earth only during the night of that *caturdaśī*, and I enter into all that is animate and inanimate things. I shall redeem the sins committed by *jīvas* during the whole year. This *Mahima* will not be there during the day time".

माघमासस्य कृष्णायां चतुर्दश्यां सुरेश्वर ।
अहं वत्स्यामि भूपृष्ठे रात्रौ नैव दिवा कलौ ॥

लिङ्गेषु च समस्तेषु चलेषु स्थावरेषु च ।

सङ्क्रमिष्याम्यसान्द्रिधं वर्षपापविशुद्धये ॥

(नागरखण्ड)

The following statement from *skandapurāṇa* also justifies that the night only is precious for the observation of the *vrata*.

As Lord *Śiva* with the trident held in his hand, and also his (forces) and the *Bhūtagaṇas* travel in the night of that *caturdaśī*, their worship should be done then only.

निशि भ्रमन्ति भूतानि शक्तयः शूलभृद्यतः ।

अतस्तस्यां चतुर्दश्यां निशि तत्पूजनं भवेत् ॥

We remember here with reverence the explanation bestowed upon us by *Śrīraṅgagurudeva* in this regard. He said:- "The *bhūtas* that have been stated here as attendants of *Śiva* are not beings that cause fear or disgust. They, are his retinue, and are devotees and *Jnānis*. They have the power to grant *jnāna* and other desires and prosperity to

those who worship them. They help *Rudradeva* in the work of destruction also".

One should not raise an objection here saying—"Will not there be the *sānnidhya* of the Lord during day time on that day? Why should HE the ever omnipresent should be worshipped specially only during the night"? It is true that *Jnānis* visualize God at all times, as evident from the words "सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः". Even then, the principle that should be noted here is, as per the *Saṅkalpa* of the almighty, in the body of the *Kālarūpa* of that God *Mahākāla*, the environs and the circumstances both inner and outer present on that day, will be highly congenial for both meditational worship of God and the accomplishment of the desires and prosperity of the devotees, during that night only.

Again we remember here the inspiring words by *Śrīraṅgamahāguru* which carry the following purport:- "The day is *Śivarātri*. It is a great night. It is a dark night for sins. But a night of happiness for *Siddhas* and *Sādhakas*. It is a strange night, which is dark for the spiritually poor, but daytime itself for the great souls with inner vision. Outside, it is a night with a clear sky bereft of clouds. Inside also, it is a clear sky of pure divine knowledge without the veil of the clouds of ignorance. Outside, the moon (is seen)

with only one *kalā*, and inside it is the *kalā* of pure *Caitanya*. The *Jnānis* having experienced the auspicious festival of *Jnānananda* inside, and calling it 'Śivarātri' for the external world, and merging the *Kālātīta* into the time, made him the object of worship. This is that 'Mahāśivarātri', which the *Jnānis* have brought forth to us."

What should be the extent of the *caturdaśi tithi* on that day? Some *śāstravākyas* say that it should prevail in the midnight. Some other *śāstravākyas* opine that it should prevail in the *pradosha samaya*.

निशीथा संयुता या तु कृष्णपक्षे चतुर्दशी ।

उपोष्या सा तिथिः श्रेष्ठा शिवसायुज्यकारिणी ॥ स्कान्द I-1-33

प्रदोषव्यापिनी ग्राह्या शिवरात्रिचतुर्दशी।

रात्रौ जागरणं यस्मात् तस्मात्तां समुपोषयेत् ॥ (हेमाद्रि)

The treatise *Īsāna samhita* says that *caturdaśi* should prevail even before midnight and also after midnight, and *Śivarātri* should be observed at that time only.

The conclusion in this regard is drawn as follows: There is no doubt that *Śivarātri* should be observed if *caturdaśi* prevails both in *Pradosha* and during night. If *caturdaśi* prevails on the nights of both the days, or, if it does not prevail on the nights of both the days then *Śivarātri* is

(to be observed) on the day of *Pradoshavyāpti*. If there is *Pradoshavyāpti* on both the days, or, if there is no *Pradoshavyāpti* on both the days then *Śivarātri* is to be observed on the day when it prevails in the night (midnight). If it prevails during the night on one day and during *pradosha* on the other day, then *Śivarātri* should be observed on the day, when there is *Jayāyoga* (*Trayodaśīyoga*)

In this regard, Śrīrangagurudeva had stated as follows:- "Trayodaśī is a form of Śakti. caturdaśi is a form of Śiva. Therefore if caturdaśi tithi is conjoined with trayodaśī, then the yoga of Śiva and Śakti occurs. If such a good time becomes available, it is precious for the observance of *Śivarātri*".

We had noted earlier that it is auspicious for the observance of *ŚrīKṛṣṇajayantī* if it happens to fall on a Wednesday or Monday. The *śāstras* say that it is best for the observance of *Śivarātri*, if it happens to fall on a Sunday or a Tuesday.

माघकृष्णचतुर्दश्यां रविवारो भवेद्यदि।

भौमो वापि भवेद्देवि कर्तव्यं व्रतमुत्तमम् ॥ (स्कान्द)

How should it be observed?

Śivarātri vrata should be observed in such a manner that it pleases Lord *Śiva*. The bliss of meditation and the wealth of *ātmagūṇas* are

very dear to him. The eight famous *ātmaguṇas* are—kindness to all the living beings, absence of envy, purity, absence of exertion (difficulty), absence of greed, absence of stinginess, forgiveness and auspiciousness. One should possess both the external and the internal purities which are in accordance with the experience of *ātmānanda* and the expression of *ātmaguṇas*. The vows such as non-violence, truthfulness, absence of anger, *Brahmacarya* etc., which are common in all observances should be strictly followed in this *vrata* also. *Mānasapūja* of God is the best. It is also good to perform the external worship that fosters the mental worship, or as a form of expression of mental worship. The inner worship is in the form *dhyānasamādhī*. The external worship will be in the form of *Āvāhana*, *Āsana*, *Arghya*, *pādya*, *Ācamanīya*, *Abhisheka*, *Vastra*, *Upavīta*, *Gandha*, *Pushpa*, *Dhūpa*, *Dīpa*, *Arcana*, *Naivedya*, *Pradakṣiṇanamaskāra*, *stotra* and *Sangīta* (inclusive of dance, songs and instrumental music etc.) Among these services, *Abhisheka* is most dear to *Śiva*. The *śāstras* say:

“अलङ्कारप्रियो विष्णुः, अभिषेकप्रियः शिवः”. If this *abhisheka* is done through the horn of a cow, *Śiva* feels highly pleased. Among the flowers and leaves, *bilva* leaves, lotus flowers, and *tumbe* flowers make

Lord *Śiva* distinctly pleased. ***Śrīgurudeva* had told us that the red hibiscus is most dear to Lord *Śiva*.**

Śāstras mention two special means to make oneself *Śivamaya* during *Śivarātri*.—1. Fasting and 2. Keeping awake in the night. In this, *Śivarātri* may be compared to *Ekādaśī*. Both are festivals of fasting.

Which is more important in the observance of *Śivarātri*? Fasting or keeping awake? In the *purāṇas* and the works of *tantra śāstra*, we come across a discussion on this topic. The treatise ‘*Tithitattva*’ says that fasting itself is more important.

अस्यामुपवासः प्रधानं न स्नानेन न वस्त्रेण न धूपेन न चार्चया ।

तुष्ट्यामि न तथा पुष्पैः यथा तत्रोपवासतः

यो मां जागरयते रात्रिं मनुजः स्वर्गमारुहेत्”

These statements tell us the greatness of *Jāgaraṇa*. *Pūja* is indeed important. Some others give equal importance to all the three i.e.- fasting, vigil and worship.

वस्तुतस्तु त्रयाणामेव प्राधान्यमित्ययमेव पक्षः ।

वैश्वानरविद्योपासनन्यायेन समुदाय एव अत्र अनुष्ठेयः ।

There is no doubt that observing all the three i.e. *pūja*, fasting and *Jāgaraṇa* in keeping with one’s ability is excellent. But it is necessary for us to understand which one among these three

is most important. When one is not able to observe all the three, which two should be necessarily observed? If even those two cannot be observed, which one of the two should be observed? Of the three which is primary? Which are secondary? These should be understood with composure.

God should be worshipped for the attainment of the four fold values of life viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*. He should be worshipped both internally and externally. To facilitate such meditation and external worships, total fasting is prescribed. "If *dhyaṇa* and worship become affected as a result of such fasting, which of them should be given up? Is it *dhyaṇa* or fasting? The answer is, fasting should be considered unimportant. Those who are unable to fast for the whole day, may fast at least for a part of the day. Let them not consume such foods which produce *rajas* and *tamas*. Let them take such food permitted by the *śāstras* in a small quantity to keep the body light. Let them not consume foodstuffs which cause heaviness in the body and agitation to the senses, as evident from the saying "*Annakke Mūru Mānavādare Appaccige Āru māna*"

Now let us discuss the issue of *Jāgaraṇa*. The entire night of *Śivarātri* should be utilized for

meditation and worship of God. *Śāstras* say that one should keep vigil during the night so that he may not waste such an invaluable time of the night in indulging in sleep, which is the work of *tamoguṇa*. We can see that ordinary people forgetting this (*tattva*), merely think that it is meritorious to keep awake and indulge in undesirable activities through that night, such as stealing, quarrelling and viewing pictures (or films) which agitate the senses etc., In a certain village, some youth roaming about during the night of *Mahāśivarātri* went on pelting stones at houses. The householders were busy in protecting themselves and their houses from this rain of stones. Somebody asked—"Cannot this bad habit of these youth be stopped? Is it proper they indulge in such a sinful act on such a meritorious day?" Some foolish leaders said in reply "Whatever be it, did this not facilitate *Jāgaraṇa* by both i.e. the band of youth and the householders for the whole night? Both of them have obtained the *punya* by observing *Jāgaraṇa* of *Śivarātri* because of that only." This is shameful and ridiculous foolishness!

Jāgaraṇa on *Śivarātri* means only to keep oneself awake in meditation and worship of God. Keeping awake for worldly matters which are opposed to meditation and worship, and

that too keeping awake and indulging in undesirable things, is a *Jāgaraṇa* which is demonical in nature. It can never be a dear to Lord Śiva. The stories which render the glory of Śivarātri are only *arthavādas* which praise *Jāgaraṇa* and fasting for the purpose of worship; they are not *śāstras* which just preach the ideals of observances of devotees.

"What should be the observance of devotees of God at all times (especially on the days of festivals)? What should they not observe? What is the rule? What is forbidden? When such doubts arise, who (or what) should be the ordainer (or the ordaining factor)?" The answer is, one should always remember God and never forget HIM. All the dos and don'ts are dependent on these two only.

सर्वे विधिनिषेधाश्च एताभ्यामेव यन्त्रितौ॥

This ambrosial teaching of Śrīmad Anandatīrtha may be remembered here.

Now, based on the course of these arguments, what the *śāstras* and traditions tell us about the worship of God, is the next topic.

How should the *parva* be observed?

To the question how should the great Śivarātri *parva* be observed, the direct and the essential answer is "It should be observed in a manner that pleases Śiva". Śiva is the Lord who is an

embodiment of *jnāna* - *ānanda* and *amṛta*. As said in "यश्शिवो नामरूपाभ्याम्", HE is the one who has the most auspicious names, forms, attributes and deeds. If one immerses himself in such a God and fills up himself with that God in his mind, speech and acts, it will be a thing which pleases HIM.

"As the adage goes "*Sadāśivanige ade dhyāna*", meditation pleases HIM exceptionally. In the internal worship, meditation upon God is dearest to him. To facilitate that, *Japa*, singing of praises, worship, *dāna* and *Homa* etc. should be performed on that day. To the extent possible, fasting should be observed to facilitate mental purity, and vigil at night should be observed for the sake of special worship. As the words "अभिषेकप्रियः शिवः" states, *abhisheka* is very dear to Lord Śiva. During the *Jāgaraṇa* at night, as a part of the worship, one should listen to the sacred stories such as *Tripurāsura samhāra* which proclaim the great glory of Śiva, and by singing HIS praises and by listening to (the rendering of) music, one should get immersed in that *Paramēśvara* who loves the devotees and who is *āśutosha* (one who is pleased instantaneously). The custom of fasting, *Jāgaraṇa* and listening to the stories of Lord Śiva is there in all parts of the country. Some special regulations related to the worship etc may be abridged as follows:-

After observing fast on the previous night of *Śivarātri*, one should make a *saṅkalpa* that he is going to observe *Śivarātri* the next day, and should pray to the Lord for an obstacle free completion of the *vrata*. *Abhisheka* should be performed to *Śivaliṅga* using *pañcagavya* and *pañcāmṛta*, and chanting of vedic hymns related to *Rudra* such as *śatarudrīya* (*namaka*, *camaka*) and *Śivapañcākshari mahāmantra*. After offering *Shoḍaśopacāras* such as *Āvāhana*, *Arghya* etc., Lord *Śiva* should be invoked in the holy fire and the *naivedya* of mustard and *caru* should be offered. At the end of *Agnipūja*, *pūrṇāhuti* should be offered and then the stories of Lord *Śiva* should be relished by listening to his glories, songs of praise and music etc. God should be worshipped this way, through all the four *yāmas* of the night. *Dānas* should be done, keeping with one's ability. Gratitude should be offered to Lord *Śiva* for blessing with success in completing the *pūja* without any hurdles, and with humility and devotion, pardon should be begged for offences that might have been committed in the name of service, and for the redemption from all other sins. God should be prayed to grant suitably the fourfold values of life. It is best to observe this precept on all the

twelve *Śivarātris* of the year. It should be observed at least on the day of *Mahāśivarātri*.

Some *śāstras* say that *abhisheka* should be performed to *Śivaliṅga* with milk during the first *yāma*, with curds during the second *yāma*, with ghee during the third *yāma*, and with honey during the last *yāma*, and, *mantras* with the sacred names of gods viz - *Īśāna*, *Tatpurusha*, *Aghora*, *Vāmadeva* and *Sadyojāta* should be offered. In some *pūjākalpas*, we come across the following description:—"Devotees should wear the *rudrāksha* and *tripundra* with sacred ash and go should to the temple of *Śiva* in the evening and should offer prayers to God. With *aṅganyāsa* and *karanyāsa*, *Japa* of *SadāŚiva mantras* should be done and the holy *kalaśa* should be worshipped, *Praṇa Pratishṭhā* should be performed in the *Śivaliṅga* and *Shoḍaśopacāras* should be offered. If it is a *Sthiraliṅga*, or if it has been sanctified by *Jnānis*, there is no need for *praṇapratishṭha*. The Lord should be offered *abhisheka* with the chanting of individual *mantras* viz., 'Āpyāyasva' and 'Āpohishṭhā', and with the full hymns of 'Mahārudra', and 'Purusha sūkta'; and with *pañcamṛta*, sandal paste, vermillion, camphor, holy water and holy water mixed with turmeric. Instead of performing the holy bath with a conch, the horn of a cow should

be used. *Tarpaṇa* should be offered to the eight forms of *Śiva*- viz., ‘*Bhava*’, ‘*Śarva*’, ‘*Īśāna*’, ‘*Paśupati*’, ‘*Ugra*’, *Rudra*, ‘*Bhīma*’, and ‘*Mahādeva*’ and also to his respective divine consorts. God should be offered *bilva* leaves together with the chanting of *ashṭottarasahasranāmas* or *mūlamantra* (*Pañcakshara*) and then other services should be offered."

The flowers and leaves that are specially prescribed for the worship of *Śiva* are *Ekka*, *oleander*, *bilva*, *pagade*, *dhatthūrī* and *brhatī*.

चतुर्णां पुष्पजातीनां गन्धमाग्राति शङ्करः ।

अर्कस्य करवीरस्य बिल्वस्य वकुलस्य च ॥

धत्तुरैर्बृहतीपुष्पैश्च पूजने गोलक्षफलम् ।

Even among these, the most sacred is the *bilva* leaf. We respectfully remember here with gratitude the enlightenment bestowed upon us *Śrīraṅgamahāguru* with a demonstration, as to how the petals of *bilva* leaf are composed of the forms of *Brahma*, *Vishṇu* and *Rudra*, and what is the specialty of the aspect of *Rudra* among them, and how the sight, touch and offering of that leaf help us to get elevated to the place of *Śiva*. He had also commanded that *japākusuma* was also auspicious for the worship of *Śiva*.

Sāstras say that the observance of this ‘*Mahāśivarātri*’ for twelve or twenty four years,

and performing the (*Udyāpana*) will bring in the best of best benefits.

Though there are differences in the *pūjakalpas*, all of them prescribe meditation upon Lord *Mahādeva*, doing *Rudrābhisheka* either once or eleven times, worshipping of the Lord, *Jāgaraṇa* and fasting on that day.

The treatise *Dharmasindhu* expounds— "*Mahādeva* is shining like a silver mountain. His head is splendid with the lovely partial moon. He is adorned with jewels of gems. He is holding an axe, and a deer, and is sporting the *Varadābhayamudrā*. He is seated in *padmāsana*. He is wearing the skin of a tiger. He is the great Lord with five faces and three eyes. He is the original form of the universe and is surrounded by groups of *devas* who praise him. He is praised by the whole world. He removes the fear of all, and He is the one with a serene form. One should always meditate upon him, especially on the night of *Mahāśivarātri*."

ध्यायेन्नित्यं महेशं रजतगिरिनिभं चारुचन्द्रावतंसम्

रत्नाकल्योज्ज्वलाङ्गं परशुमुगवराभीतिहस्तं प्रसन्नम् ।

पद्मासीनं समन्तात् स्तुतममरगणैर्व्याघ्रकृत्तिं वसानम्

विश्वाद्यं विश्ववन्द्यं निखिलभयहरं पञ्चवक्त्रं त्रिनेत्रम् ॥

When should the *Pāraṇa* be done by those who observe the *Śivarātri vrata*? *Pāraṇa* is only after the *caturdaśī tithi* ends".-“तिथ्यन्ते पारणं भवेत्”

say a few texts. According to *skandapurāṇa*, if *caturdaśī tithi* extends even beyond three *yāmas*, then *Pāraṇa* may be done during *caturdaśī tithi* itself. It is best to continue fasting till *caturdahsi tithi* ends and then *Pāraṇa* should be done". If it happens to be *Amāvāsyā* the next day, and the obligation of *tarpaṇa* remaining, those who are supposed to do *tarpaṇa*, should do it and only after that *Pāraṇa* should be done.

Now we shall discuss in brief, some important aspects regarding *Śiva* who is the worshipful deity of the great *parva* of *Mahāśivarātri*.

Why should we discuss *Śiva* here? All these i.e. his form, natural state, attributes, glory and sacred names are well known, isn't it? Are not the *Vedas*, *smṛtis*, *purāṇas*, history, *āgamas*, *kāvyas*, and literature full of abundant praise for HIM?

Some may even think "He is *Mahādeva*, *Maheśvara*, and Lord of all the *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajnās*. He is the Lord who is the repository of knowledge, power, wealth, valour, strength and effulgence. He has both frightful and benign forms and attributes. He is *Rudradeva* the destroyer; At the same time, He is a merciful God who protects his devotees and grants them their desires soon, and the one who is

instantaneously pleased, very pleasant, has a benign form, and especially a great teacher of the universe who bestows knowledge. Being the most auspicious in form, acts and mind etc., he is also the true form of auspiciousness even to *Gaurīdevī* who is *sarvamaṇagalā*. He shines with the appropriate name '*Śiva*'.

“तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरं तं देवतानां परमं च दैवतम्” “नमश्शिवाय च शिवतराय च” “नमश्शङ्कराय च मयस्कराय च” “या ते रुद्र शिवा तनूरघोराऽपापकाशिनी” “आद्यं पुरुषमीशानं पुरुहूतं पुरुष्टुतम्” “कल्याणगुणधाम्नेऽस्तु शिवाय विहिता नतिः” “ज्ञानं महेश्वरादिच्छेत्” “प्रधानपुरुषेशाय सर्गस्थित्यन्तहेतवे” “स हि देवः परञ्ज्योतिः तमसः परमुच्यते”

Divine statements such as these and the divine experiences of great *yogis* openly proclaim this opinion. The tradition of worshipping Lord *Śiva* on *Śivarātri* with devotion, faith and trust is also there in our country. "Why then the necessity of any discussion about him?"-Some may ask.

But we feel that there is such a need distinctly in these days. It is because, writings which shake the very foundation of devotion and faith basic for the worship of *Śiva*, are breeding both here and abroad. Therefore we feel it is necessary to discuss the matter here at least briefly, to bring to light the true meaning of these.

There are two categories of people who are engaged in balderdash. The first ones are the

traditionalists with a narrow mind, and the others are those who proclaim themselves as 'Rationalists' and declare that it is possible to explain spiritual truths by just expounding some points taken from linguistics and history. The first (category) of people raise three important objections regarding the worship of *Śiva*.

1) "Though *Śiva* is a deity, he is cruel, a destroyer of all, and a savage; He not only hands death to the living beings time to time, but also without kindness or pity kills all the living beings (except the liberated souls), at the time of deluge. As a mark of this cruelty, he also performs the ferocious *Tāṇḍava* Dance. "*Prapancasamhāratāṇḍavāya*". How can a God with such terrible acts and thought be worthy of worship by pious people who are kind and compassionate to living beings? Why should the virtuous people adore this *Rudra* who has given up kindness itself, which is the supreme among *dharma*s? Instead of him, why not worship godly great people who are *Dharmavīras* and *Mahavīras*, and who have sacrificed their body for the good of the world?" This is one objection.

2) "He lives in the cremation ground. He wears a garland of skulls. His body is smeared with the ashes of the cremation ground. He is either nude or wearing the fresh skin of a tiger or an elephant. He

wears inauspicious dress and has inauspicious practices. He roams about with groups of *Bhūtas* who are similar to him in form, conduct and behaviour which are ferocious. His names such as '*Bhīma*', '*Rudra*', '*Ugra*' etc are also ferocious. How can he be worshipful to the pious devotees with pure customs and conduct?" This is the second objection.

3) "*Rudra* is not qualified to receive important *havirbhāga* in *Vaidika yajnas*."

There is a rule that water should be touched for purification immediately after any *Havis* or *Bali* is offered to him. Therefore his worship causes blemish to *vaidik* purity".— This is the third objection.

Among these the first objection is related to *Rudra*'s job of destruction. Is not killing a cruelty? This may be answered by stating that the act of killing at distinct times can become an act of mercy only. For example, sometimes creatures writhing with pain due to major accidents are killed with a single blow to put an end to their suffering. This is called mercy killing. But God *Rudra* kills even those living beings who are happy. Such an act cannot be called mercy killing.

Killing the wicked that are a bane to the world

is also an act of mercy. By such a deed the world is helped and the killed *jīva* suffers here itself, and thus escapes the punishment in the next world. The *jīva* gets purified because of the due atonement for its sin committed. But *Rudra* kills even innocents at the time of deluge and kills even the *devatās* who work for the welfare of the world. How can this be mercy killing or a killing that causes the welfare of the world?

Then why does God *Rudra* carry out these acts of unrighteousness and injustice?" This is the question.

The *Jnānis* provide the right answer to this with the example of sleep in everyday life. Some may say - "Why should God give us sleep every day? Had he not given this sleep at all, some people could have enjoyed more happiness and pleasure. Not only this, they could have done much more for the welfare of the society. So, God is really unjust as he has denied them such good opportunities by giving them sleep"—Those who accuse God like this must be a fools only. Such fools will realize what a punishment it is, if they are unable to sleep even for just a day. During sleep all the organs of the body are withdrawn from activities. But people know by experience, how much of rest, peace and relief are obtained by sleep. Living

beings which are tired and weary after work for the whole day, obtain rest from sleep, and after rest, gain fresh energy and inspiration to get into their work. And God, who has created this thing called sleep which provides happiness and enthusiasm, should be called merciful indeed by the wise, isn't it? And it is *Rudra* who causes that sleep. He is the God of *Sushuptisthāna*.

In the same way the *jīvas* which have become tired after doing *karmas* for (several *yugas*) need a very long rest and deep and lengthy sleep and God *Rudra* provides such a long (enduring) rest for all the *jīvas* by destroying them by the slaying of their bodies at the time of deluge. As rest is needed for all the *jīvas*, the *Puṇyajīvis*, the *pāpajīvis* and the *Miśra jīvis* in the spate of *Karma*, He destroys them. After this long spell of rest, he pushes them into life, as is evident from the saying धाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत्'' By that time, they will have gained the required strength to complete their remaining *Karmas* and to attain the four fold values of life. It is Lord *Rudra* who bestows sleep everyday to provide rest. It is Lord *Rudra* who secures death to the *jeevas* whose bodies have become (worn out) and rendered impossible to perform their *Karmas* and makes them (the *jīvas*) to get new bodies. It is again Lord *Rudra* who, at the time

Mahāpralaya carries out total destruction and provides sleep-rest (to the *jīvas*) till the time of *Mahākāla*. Salutations again and again to such a supremely merciful *Rudradeva*. Lord *Rudra* is as merciful as Lord *Brahma* the creator and as merciful as Lord *Vishṇu* the sustainer, Even though the three *mūrtīs* share and perform these three functions, actually it is only one *paramātmā* who carries out all the three. These three are indeed his own incarnations. The *Brahmasūtra* “ओं जन्माद्यस्य यतः” proclaims this purport only. *Vishṇu purāṇa* also expresses the same purport.

सृष्टिस्थित्यन्तकरिणीं ब्रह्मविष्णुविशक्तिं ।

स संज्ञां याति भगवान् एक एव जनार्दनः ॥

2) It is nothing but calumny to call *Rudra* ‘inauspicious’ just because he wears a (garland) of human skulls, puts on a raw hide and smears his body with the ashes from the cremation grounds, as all of them are inauspicious things. Generally *mangaladravyas* are used for the purpose of warding off misfortune or attainment of desired wealth. *Śiva*, by his mere will can rout out misfortunes. He is the refuge for the (whole) world itself. And the one whose all wishes (desired) have been gained (satisfied) leaving no desire to be fulfilled. What is the need of auspicious things to Him? Our national

poet *Kālidāsa* gives a fitting reply to this (objection) (in his composition.) —

विपत्प्रतीकारपरेण मङ्गलं निषेव्यते भूतिसमुत्सकेन वा ।

जगच्छरण्यस्य निराशिषस्सतः किमेभिराशोपहतात्मवृत्तिभिः ॥

(कुमारसम्भव-सर्ग 5)

By his mere touch even the ashes of cremation pyre become sacred and becomes a form of *prasāda* for the great sages. To HIM who is omnipresent, both a garland of skulls and a necklace of gems are one and the same, and both a house of wedding and a cremation ground are just the same, as is evident from the words “तस्मात् सर्वगतश्चिवः” He is the omniscient who is untouched by anything. And he is a *śuddhacaitanyasvarūpa*.

So also, his appearance either as naked person, or as a frantic (mad) person adorned by serpents is only because of the absence of worldly desires and interests. and not at all because of either poverty or lack of handsomeness. A story may be recalled here. He who was *Bhīmeśvara* in the work of destruction, is also described as ‘*Sundareśvara*’ at the time of his wedding, surpassing even *Manmatha* in handsomeness.

Śrīraṅgamahāguru had enlightened us as follows: "His companions, the *bhūtagaṇas* are also the glories of Lord *Rudra* who help him in his work of dissolution. They are pure *Jnānis*,

holy souls and like Lord Śiva himself, can assume any form at will. They are endowed with the power to grant boons or punish. They must be worshipped at the time of the worshipping of Lord Śiva who is (*jnānamaya*). Even during auspicious religious functions, the devotees of Śiva should remember them for warding off misfortunes. Lord Śiva who shines in the association of such great souls, also happens to be the Lord of great souls."

3) Why is that Lord Śiva is not offered more *havirbhāgas* in the sacrifices of the *VaidikaKarmakāṇḍa*?

It is because he belongs to the *jnānakāṇḍa* which is above *karmakāṇḍa*. In the *jnānakāṇḍa*, it is clear that he receives a special worship which is evident from the saying “ज्ञानमिच्छेन्महेश्वरात्” And in the *Rudra* and *Atirudra* (sacrifices) etc., he is the main deity. In the other *Karmakāṇḍa yajnas* also, he is given a stipulated part of the *havis*. *Dakshaprajāpati* was subjected to punishment because he committed the offence of averting it.

Śrīraṅgagurudeva had told us a yogarahasya regarding one aspect here—“Śāstras say that after offering the oblation to Śiva one should touch water. But this is not for removing any impurity. If it were

to be so, the atonement *vidhi* would be like "Hands should be washed well, Bath should be had" etc. Here it has been ordained that water should just be touched. The purpose is not purification. While offering *havis* to Śiva the Lord of dissolution, the person offering the oblation should be in the state of *dhyānasamādhi* specially. The touch of water helps him to return from that state to the state of wakefulness, for performing *Karmas*. So, water is to be touched for that purpose only and not for the purpose of purification. Though meditation is necessary for offering *havis* to any *devatā*, the mind gets dissolved in the Lord of dissolution (Śiva), who is always immersed in *dhyānasamādhi* as the saying goes ‘*Śadāśivanige ade dhyāna*’ To return from that state to the state of wakefulness, one has to touch water".

No doubt it is a great *kalpa* to worship *Nārāyaṇa* as *Paradevatā*. But making offensive accusations against *Rudra* is not a part of that worship. Similarly, speaking contemptuously of *Nārāyaṇa* by the *Upāsakas* of Śiva who single mindedly worship him, does not become a part of Śiva's worship. Here we would like to remind that it is auspicious for both to worship their chosen deity with single minded devotion, by

remaining truthful, peaceful and by exercising restraint.

We wish to present clarification to some wrong notions regarding Lord Śiva, in the format of questions and answers.

Question 1: Śiva is a God of *tamoguṇa*. It is for this reason the *purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* state that it is mostly the *Asuras* and *Rākshasas* who worship him. For example, *Bhasmāsura*, *Vṛkāśura*, *Bāṇāsura*, *Rāvaṇa* and others are well known as great devotees of Śiva. Therefore is it not improper for *sattvikas* to worship the *tamomaya Rudra-Śiva* who is *Raudrarasapradhāna*?

Answer: The above conclusion does not conform to *śāstras*. Lord Śiva in the form of *Rudra* is the presiding deity of *tamoguṇa*. As per the will of God, he was appointed as the presiding deity of *tamoguṇa*. Lord *Rudra* is a deity who controls it, and is not a deity under its control. He has the radiance of both *tāmasa* and *sāttvika guṇas*. The *asuras* with *tāmasa* propensities worship the *tāmasa* radiance in him, and obtain terrible occult powers accordingly. Likewise the (*sattvik*) pious and gentle devotees -i.e. the *devatās*, sages and human beings, worship the *sāttvika* radiance

and obtain *Siddhis* like divine knowledge etc. The examples for this are *Kubera* the king of *yakshas*, great sage *Mārkaṇḍeya*, sage *Vyaghrapāda* and the hunter *Bedara Kaṇṇappa* and others. There is neither any proof in the *śāstras* to state that all the devotees of Śiva are *tāmasa*, nor there are any clearly decided examples.

In HIS divine bodies, both the forms ie. *Ghōra* and *Aghōra* are there. The *Asuras* and *Rākshasas* etc. worship the *ghōra* form and obtaining *siddhis* accordingly, cause torment to the world. Then God himself subjugates them assuming a different form. For example, we learn from the *purāṇas* that *MahāVishṇu* killed demons like *Bhasmāsura*, *Vṛkāśura* and *Rāvaṇa* and *Vishṇu* broke the (arrogance) of *Baṇasura* etc.

Question 2: Is there any proof in the *śāstras* to state that Lord Śiva has a benign peaceful form also?

Answer: There is a very clear proof. The very name Śiva says that he is the embodiment of auspicious forms, *guṇas* and power. Even in his form of *Rudra* there are two modes viz *Ghōra* and *Aghōra*. The *śatarudrīya śruti* clearly states that devotees obtain auspiciousness from the form *Aghōra*, which is not *pāpaprakaśaka*.

“या ते रुद्र शिवा तनूरघोराऽपापकाशिनी ।
तयानस्तनुवा शन्तमया ।”

When there is a benign, peaceful mode even in his *Rudra* form itself, there is no need to state separately that the *Śiva* form of his is tranquil and exceptionally auspicious.

Question 3: Modern commentators say "*RudraŚiva* is really a ferocious form. To be violent is his nature. As he makes people cry by his violence he is called *Rudra*. He is named *Śiva* for pretention to escape his cruelty as he is (by nature) violent. For example the *samvatsara* by name *Kshaya* is called *akshya samvatsara* preferring atleast a good name for it. The inauspicious day (i.e Tuesday) is called *Maṅgalavāra*! Likewise, the custom of calling the inauspicious *Rudra* by the peaceful name *Śiva* has come into vogue from ancient times. In linguistics this is called euphemism (i.e., a gentle word, a gracious word, a mild word). Basically *Rudra* was a God of terror and wickedness". Is this opinion of the modern critics correct?

Answer: It is certainly not correct. If *RudraŚiva* were to be a deity full of *tāmas* which inspires wickedness, he would not have been described vividly as Lord *SadaŚiva*

immersed in deep meditation. It would not have been stated that one should desire divine knowledge from him. “ज्ञानमिच्छेन्महेश्वरात्”. Had it been so, *śāstras* would have rather stated—"Learn *tāmas* from him," instead of "Learn *tapas* from him". This is not the view of the *śāstras*.

Question 4: According to the *Māhābhārata*, *Brahma* and *Rudra* were respectively born from the tranquility and anger of *Parabrahman* “तावुभौ विबुधश्रेष्ठौ प्रसाद-क्रोधसम्भवौ” How can *Rudra* born of anger grant *Dhātuprasannatā* and divine knowledge?

Answer: The purport of that sentence is, he kills the wicked by invoking anger; At the time of the great deluge he destroys all beings for the welfare of all the *jīvas*. and that *Rudra* is the form of God who blesses the *jīvas* in the form of a punisher, and not that he is a *prakṛtapuruṣa* who is overcome by the force of anger. One should understand that anger is an attribute which he has accepted out of volition.

Question 5: *Śāstras* state that '*Ekādaśarudras*' are forms of *Rudradeva* and the form of *Śankara* among them is prominent. “रुद्राणामस्मि शङ्करः” Also it is mentioned that they are *devatās* who help *Indra* and are under his

control. So, How can this group of *Rudras* who are under the control of *Indra*, and *Śankara* the prominent among them be called *Bhagavanmūrti*?

Answer: Even though Lord *Rudra* himself has incarnated in that form out of his own will to help *Indra* for the completion of *tattvas*, there is no doubt that he is naturally the all controlling divine form. For example, God *MahāVishṇu* incarnated in the form of *Upendra* i.e. as the younger brother of *Indra* for the protection of *Indra* and for the completion of *tattvas*. But in reality, *Upendra* is the auspicious form of God. So also is God *Rudra*.

Question 6: There are only three full *sūktas* which refer to *Rudra* in the *R̥gveda*. There is only one *sūkta* for *Soma*. It is found in bits in other places. The name of *Rudra* appears only seventy five times in all. But there are 250 on *Indra*. No other *devatā* has the prominence or glory as that of *Indra*. He alone is the popular national *devatā* of the ancient Aryan. *Rudra* is a very secondary deity. So also is *Vishṇu*. The modern scholars state that both of them obtained paramount importance only in later times. Is it correct?

Answer: When we placed this question before

Śrīraṅgagurudeva he had graced a kind reply as follows:- "It is true that the praises of *Indra* outnumber the praises of *Rudra* and *Vishṇu* which appear in the portions of *vaidikasamhitābrāhmaṇa*. It is proper also. It is because the *samhitābrāhmaṇas* are related to *Karmakāṇḍa*. The importance in *Karmakāṇḍas* is for *Indra* and others only. But in the *Upanishads* which are *jñānakāṇḍa*, the paramount supremacy of *Vishṇu* and *Rudra* has been clearly proclaimed. *Rudra* is eulogized as 'The supreme Lord of all the Lords. He is the supreme *devatā* of all the *devatas*'. (तमिश्चराणां परमं महेश्वरं तं देवतानां परमं च दैवतम्). The *kāthopanishat* declares the place of *Vishṇu* as '*Parama pāda*'. 'सोऽध्वनः पारमाज्जोति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम्' There is no need for the mention of *Rudra* in *Karmakāṇḍa* to a greater extent."

Even in the parts of *Samhitas*, in the prayers made for *ojas* (power), *tejas*, strength and protection from *dasyus*, there are sentences that clearly proclaim the purport that *Śiva* and *Vishṇu* are supreme *devatās* and Gods. For example, the *Aitareya brahmaṇa* states—'Agni is placed very low among *devatas*. But *Vishṇu* is the most supreme *devatā*'. 'अग्निर्वै देवानामवमो विष्णुपरमः'. One can note *samhita mantras* here (which proclaim the supremacy of *Vishṇu*)—"He is ancient to all

devatās. He is the doer of everything. Though ever ancient, he is ever new. He is accompanied by his divine consort. One should praise his glory in the state of incarnation also". "यः पूर्व्याय वेधसे नवीयसे सुमज्जानये विष्णवे ददाशति। यो जातमस्य महतो महिब्रवात्" etc. So also, there are *Vedic hymns* that proclaim the total supremacy of *Rudra* in abundance. As this is a chapter related to *Rudradevatā*, we shall quote some of those *Vedic hymns*." Rudra is the Lord of this great universe"

ईशानादस्य भुवनस्य भूरेः (2-33-91)

"Śrī Rudra is the father of the entire world."

भुवनस्य पितरं गीर्भिराभी रुद्रम् (6-49-10)

"There is no one else who is more effulgent than *Rudra*."

न वा ओजीयो रुद्र त्वदस्ति (ऋ 2-33-10)

Rudra is famous. He is hidden in the cave.

स्तुहि श्रुतं गर्तसदं युवानम् (ऋ2-33-11)

"He is a God who pervades fire, water, herbs and creepers. He can create this universe and the world. Salutations to such a *Rudra*"

यो रुद्रो अग्नौ यो अप्सु अन्तर्योषधीर्वीरुध आविवेश।

य इमा विश्वा भुवनानि चकृपे तस्मै रुद्राय नमो अस्तु" ॥

(अथर्व सं. 7-92-1)

"*Rudra* is only one, he has no equal"

एक एव रुद्रो न द्वितीयाय तस्थे

(He himself is *aryamā*, *varuṇa*, and he alone is the *Mahādevavarudra*)

“सोऽर्यमा स वरुणः स रुद्रः स महादेवः (अथर्व 13-41)

"O *Rudra*! we have heard that you are the best physician even among physicians."

भिषक्तमं त्वा भिषजां शृणोमि (ऋग्वेद सं ॥ 33-11)

"I take refuge in *Rudra* like the one who takes shelter under a tree in a hot sun".

घृणीव छायामरपा अशीय (यजु, ॥-33-7)

Moreover, the famous part of *Yajurvedasamhitā* viz *Śatarudrīya* expounds the purport that *Rudra* is the omnipresent God and the whole universe is filled with *Rudra*, And it has been clearly proclaimed in the *samhitā*, *brahmaṇa* and *Upanishads* that *Rudra* is God himself. Only in the *Karmakāṇḍa* it is stated that he is the helping deity of *Indra*. It should be understood that all (unique) words such as - "विश्वरूप" "गर्तसद" "पुलिस्ति" "अधिवक्ता" "प्रथमो दैव्यो भिषक्" "देवानां हृदयः" etc that appear in the *Vedas*, expound his divine true form only.

Question 7: "*Rudra* was the *devatā* of *Bhāratiya Ārya* race, *Śiva* was the *devata* of *Dravidians*. When the cultures of *Āryas* and *Drāviḍas* got merged in course of time, *Śiva-Rudra* was conceived as one God and was consequently established in *vaidik* culture" is

the opinion of some people. The reason for this is, in the *R̥gveda mantras*, this *devatā* is called only by the name 'Rudra'. The name *Śiva* is not to be found anywhere there. Therefore the Aryans must have received this name from the Dravidians. Dravidians were worshipping 'Śiva' since ancient times. Even now the population of Saivites is more in the *Drāvida* country only. Dravidians did not know the name 'Rudra'. They took it from Aryans and in the end, combined both these *devatās*, and both Aryans and Dravidians started worshipping it. Basically speaking it is evident that *Rudra* is a *devatā* of Northern (Aryan) people and *Śiva* is a *devatā* of Southern (Dravidian) people."—Some opine like this, Is it correct?

Answer: It is true that the western (Christian) priests have spread the notion in the east (*i.e.* in *Bhārata*) that *Rudra* is the god of northerners and *Śiva* is the god of the southerners. But this opinion is wrong. This concept of north-south deity is as ridiculous as distinguishing (the sun as) "Sun of North India and Sun of South India". Actually, from times immemorial, both the names viz. *Rudra* and *Śiva* are used to refer to the same God in our culture, and this is the definite opinion of the *Vedas*, *Smṛtis*, *Itihāsas* and traditions and also the *Mahā yogis*. There is

no proof in any of the *śāstras* to say that both *Śiva* and *Rudra* were originally different. Though the name *Śiva* has not been used for *Rudra* in the *R̥gveda mantras* that are currently available, he has been clearly called *Śiva* and *Śivatara* in *Yajurveda mantras*. "नमश्शिवाय च शिवतराय च" (*Śatarudrīya*). In the *R̥gveda mantras* also we see the words such as *śantama*, *mīdhusṣṭama*, *mṛḷa* and *mayaskara* which give the sense of *Śiva* i.e., (auspicious) only.

कद्रुद्राय प्रचेतसे मीलुष्टमाय तव्यसे वोचेम शन्तमं हदे (ऋग्वेद 143/1-2, 4-6)

“मृळा नो रुद्रोत नो मयस्कृधिः (ऋग्वेद 1-114/1-11)

That the word 'Śiva' signifies auspiciousness is clear from the following *hymn*:—

‘शिवा नस्सुमना भव’ शिवापतिभ्यः सुमनास्सुवचा’ (*R̥gveda—Vivāha-mantra*). Therefore we have no doubt in the fact that the word *Śiva* denotes *Bhagavān Śiva* which is *Maṅgalātmaka* and which is acceptable to the ancient *Vedas*. There is no question of division as *Arya-Drāviḍa*, Language, race etc. here.

Question 8: There may not be evidence in the *Vedas* and *śāstras* to say that 'Śiva' is a *devatā* of Dravidians. But according to the modern linguistics the word 'Śiva' has come from the group of Dravidian languages only. In the

original Dravidian language there is a seed word 'Śin'. Śin means red. Words 'cin', 'cen' and 'ken' belong to this category. As Śiva was a red coloured *kencanna*, Dravidians gave him the name 'Śiva'. Therefore this does not give the sense of an Aryan deity. Is it not true?

Answer: Certainly it is not true. It is because in the *samskr̥ta* language, the word Śiva is derived from the root 'sī' which means to sleep, and there is brevity in saying so. Everyone who has experienced the bliss of sleep knows that there is no other state which is more blissful. Experts say that *Rudra* is the presiding deity for deep sleep. There is no harm in understanding that just as the word 'Śam' is the origin for the words *śānti* (peace), and *Śama* (*nemmadī*-serenity), the word 'sī' is the source for the word 'Śiva'. This is not a round about meaning, but a direct meaning.

Moreover, there is no evidence at all to say that Śiva is pure red complexioned.

Question 9: There is not doubt that Śiva's form appeared as a red complexioned one to the eyes of the Vedic seers. He is a form of *Agni*. "रुद्रो अग्निः स्विष्टकृत्" The color of *Agni* is red. Also, the *R̥gveda* describes *Rudra* as *Babhruh*, *Prababhruh* (2-33, 2, 8, and 15), i.e., yellow colored,

closer to Red (brown), and the one who shines like gold. "हिरण्यमिव रोचते." Therefore", says a modern scholar by name Śam bā Joshi "the word Śiva denotes one who is red coloured", isn't it?

Answer: His explanation is against the *vaidika* description. The *R̥gveda mantras* have not at all stated that he is of pure red complexion as he puts it. They describe HIM as brown complexioned and white complexioned only. "प्रबभ्रुवे वृषभाय श्रितीचे". The word *Babhru* means both yellow coloured and brown colored. There is no nearness to red colour even while describing *Rudra* as shining like gold 'हिरण्यमिव रोचते' Because in the description "शुक्र इव सूर्यः हिरण्यमिव रोचते" (1-43, 1-2, 4-6) the comparison of the white complexioned sun is given with gold. The word 'śvitīce' makes clear that he is of white complexion only. Śāstras state that he is. So the word 'Śiva' does not mean *kenchanna*". Śiva is white complexioned, or shining like pure gold.

Question 10: In the *Rudra mantra*, since *Rudra* deva is called as "Tāmra, Aruṇa, Babhru and *Sumaṅgala*" (असौ यस्ताम्रो अरुण उत बभ्रुस्सुमङ्गलः) can there remain any doubt in the fact that he is red complexioned?

Answer: That *mantra* appears in the *yajurveda*. We are happy to note that you have

taken this *mantra* as a proof similar to the one of *R̥gveda*. But the words *tāmra* and *babhru* appearing there, do not directly apply to the divine auspicious form of *Rudradeva*. This is made clear by the sentence next to it. (In fact) it is the description of *Sūryadeva*. He appears as *tāmra* followed by *aruṇavarṇa* [these are variants of red color] and *babhru varṇa* (brown colored), by changing colors at distinct times. He is seen even by the cowherds. "The women carrying water also see him." (उतैनं गोपा अदृशन्तदृशन्तुदहार्यः) This sentence applies to the Sun only, isn't it? It is only the *Sūryadeva* who appears clearly to the (external) eyes not only of the *Jnānis* but also of the ordinary people. This *Sūrya* also is a form of *Rudra* visible to even ordinary people when he changes over to red and brown colours. Even *Agni* is the external form of that *Rudra*. Nowhere in the *Vedas* has it been described that all the colours of visible *Śiva* as pure red. It is not the true form of *Rudra*; but the form of *Sūrya* which is the abode of his worship, This is but the natural purport. The opinion of *Sayaṇa* and other commentators is also the same.

Question 11: "Ancient commentators have interpreted the word *Rudra* as the one who makes everyone cry during deluge, the one who gives the speech of spiritual knowledge, the one who

gives darkness or the one who cried witnessing the torment of 'Prajāpati', and the one who destroys the grief of the wordly life etc., But it is not right. The correct meaning is 'the one who is red complexioned. And that word (*Rudra*) is closer to the words *rudhira*, red and ruddy. Therefore *Rudra* also is a Dravidian *devatā*. The Aryans translated the pure Kannada word 'Śiva' *kencanna* into Sanskrit word as 'Rudra'."—This is the argument of some modern scholars. Is this correct?

Answer: It won't be correct. Because, the word 'Rudra' is closer to *rud* (To cry) and not to the word 'Rudhira' (blood). Even from the view point of linguistics, the meanings viz, 'the one who makes the sinners cry', 'the one who makes everyone cry during the time of destruction', 'the one who also cries beholding the grief of the *jīvas* and the one who makes sounds etc. are closer to the word 'Rudra'. It also matches the description of *Rudradeva* described in the *śāstras*.

Question 12: "The concept that *Rudra* is a destroyer is of recent origin. According to *R̥gveda* the God of death is only *yama* and not *Rudra*". This is the exposition by some scholars. Is it acceptable to the *śāstras*?

Answer: It is not acceptable to the *śāstras*. Even though *yama* is the *devatā* of death, it is only *Rudradeva* who is the great destroyer. This is the definite opinion of the *Vedas* and *śāstras*. That is why he is prayed -as follows:—"O God, do not separate us from seeing *Sūryadeva*" (मा नः सूर्यस्य सन्दृशो युयोथाः २-३३-१-१५ ऋग्वेद)

"Do not destroy our elders, children, our cattle, parents and the dear body of ours people."

मा नो महान्तमुत मा नो अर्भकं मा न उक्षन्तमुत मा न उक्षितम् ।
मा नो वधीः पितरं मोत मातरं मा नः प्रियास्तन्वो रुद्र रीरिषः ॥ (ऋग्वेद १-११४/१-१११)

"When destroying thus, he makes everyone cry, and so he is '*Rudra*'. "रोदयतीति रुद्रः", or because he cried, he is *Rudra*. "यदरोदीत्तद्रुद्रस्य रुद्रत्वं." This explanation itself is acceptable to the science of grammar and the science of language. Interpretation of words should conform to the *pramāṇagranthas* like the *Vedas*, *śāstras*, *purāṇas*, *Itihāsas* etc, and *vedāṅgas* like grammar, *nirukta*, and to the experience of the great *yogis*, and not just according to linguistics. The modern theories of linguistics can not be definite evidences. "Philological laws work blindly".

Question 13: *Śiva* is called as *Hāṭakeśvara* also in some holy places of pilgrimage. Here the word '*Hāṭaka*' is derived from the word

'*Hāṭṭikāra*'. *Haṭṭikāras* are Dravidians. Therefore *Śiva* must be originally a Dravidian god only, isn't it?

Answer: The word *Haṭaka* has not originated from the word *Haṭṭikāra*. It gives the sense of gold only, and not a *Haṭṭikāra* (a cowherd). Gold is called '*hāṭaka*' because it is effulgent. It is derived from the root "*Haṭa dīptau*". As *Śiva* shines like gold "*Hiraṇyamiva Rocate*," he is called '*hāṭakeśvara*'. This is clear from the word-sense relationship and it leaves little doubt here. So it is most incoherent to relate '*Hāṭakeśvara*' with the word '*Haṭṭikāra*'. It is as ridiculous as saying that the word 'cottage' in "English has originated from the Kannada word '*Kottige*, and like saying "Englishmen changed the word '*tamasā*' which is the name of a river of our country to 'Thames'. The word '*Hāṭakeśvara*' as the *Vedas* describe, makes us understand the golden effulgence, immutability and great preciousness of *Śiva*.

Question14: *Śiva devatā* was prodminently a worshipful deity for the *yaduturvasus*. The *yaduturcasus* are *haṭṭikāras*, (cowherds) who were Dravidians. So, at least the theory that *Śiva* is a god of *Drāviḍas* is correct, isn't it?

Answer: It is certainly not correct, and there is

no doubt that this argument is wrong. "Yaduturvasus" were the *kshatriyaputras* of the great king *Yayāti* who was a supreme *kshatriya* born in *Devayāni*, the daughter of sage *Śukracārya*. It is very clearly said in *Itihāsas* and *purāṇas* that they lost (the right to rule) the kingdom because of their disobedience to their father. They were *kshatriyas* only and not cowherds. *Yādavas* became kings of *Madhurā* in course of time. *Kauravas* and *Pāṇḍavas* had (marital) relationship with them. How can they be cowherds?

Question 15: But *Yādava Śrī Kṛṣṇa* belongs to the *Gopālaka* (cowherds) caste, Isn't it?

Answer: *Nanda* and *Yashoda*, were *Vaiśyas* (by birth) but *gopālaks* by profession, and brought him up in his childhood. But his parents, *Vasudeva* and *Devaki* were *Kshatriyas* only. After killing *Kamsa*, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* also followed the *Kshatriya* profession only, which was natural to his caste.

Question 16: In Karnataka, *Śiva* is also called by such names as *Mallayya*, *Malleśa*, and *Parvatappa* etc. The word *Mallāri* means *Indra* the *vaidika devatā* who is the enemy of mountains. *Śiva* the Lord of mountains being his challenger and referred to as '*Malleśa*' must be a god of Dravidians Isn't it ?

Answer: There is no substance at all in this interpretation. It is associated with an imagination of a wrong meaning. Calling *Śiva* as '*Mallayya*' and '*Malleśa*' is based on the famous meanings of *samskr̥ta* words viz., '*Girīśa*' and '*Giriśa*'. While the word '*malleśa*' appears in Kannada language, the words '*Girīśa*' and '*Giriśa*' appear in *Vedic* literature itself, considered by scholars to be the oldest known literature in the world. The opinion that the word '*Mallāri*' denotes *Indra* is also not correct. It only denotes *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, the enemy of *Mallas* (wrestlers). It is well known that *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* defeated and killed *Chāṇuramalla* and got the name '*Mallamardana*'. Though *Indra* is famous as the enemy of mountains, he becomes their friend, after he broke their arrogance. In the *Vedas* we come across the name '*Indrāparvata*', which is related to two deities. As per the *Vedas*, *Vishṇu* has Lordship over the mountains. "*Vishṇuh parvatānām adhipatih*". Both *Indra* and *Vishṇu* are friends of *Śiva*, and not his enemies. The word *Mallāri* is in usage to denote *Śiva* also. It is because *Śiva* is the enemy of demon wrestlers such as *Andhakāsura*, *Tripurāsura* etc. In this way the words *Mallāri* and *Giriśa* match both *Śiva* and *Vishṇu*. And, it is indeed a foolish adventure to prove that *Śiva* is a *drāviḍa devatā*

basing the argument merely on the word 'malleśa'.

Question 17: The *Vedas* have called *Rudra* as the father of *Maruts*. “आ ते पितर्मरुतां सुममेतु” The ‘*Maruts*’ were forest dwellers who were giving *marundu* i.e. medicines to people. They are also called ‘*Kaḷḷas*’ (thieves). It is stated in the *Rudramantra* that *Śiva* is “स्तेनानां पतिः” i.e. ‘Lord of thieves’. Therefore *Śiva-Rudra* is the god of Dravidians only, isn’t it?

Answer: *Śiva* is not the Lord of the thieves only. He is also the Lord of pious tradesmen and also *sthapatis* (carpenters). “स्थपतये वृक्षाणां पतये नमः नमो मन्त्रिणे वाणिजाय”. This says that *Śiva* is indeed *Viśvarūpi Bhagavān* and does not mean to say that he is just the Lord of the tribe of thieves. It is also wrong to interpret that all Dravidians are thieves and cheats stated by the words ‘*štena*’ and “*Vancate parivancate*” It won’t be a matter of pride for Dravidians either. As in the words of *Śruti* “सर्वो वै रुद्रः तस्मै रुद्राय नमो अस्तु”, this also tells the expansion of universal form of *Śiva*. Like the *purushasūkta* which praises the glory of the omnipresence of *Purusha Nārāyaṇa* in “पुरुष एवेदं सर्वम्”. this *Rudrādhyāya* praises the grandeur of the omnipresence of *Rudra*.

The word ‘*Maruttaru*’ is not related to the word

‘*marundu*’ which denotes medicine. The narrative of ‘*Saptamāruta*’ which appears in *Itihāsas* and *purāṇas* makes it clear that the word means “Those who should not cry”. And, there is no proof at all to say that the story of “*Sapthamāruta*’ is of recent origin, and ‘*marundu*’ and ‘*Maruta*’ are ancient.

Question 18: Then how did the relationship of father and son come to pass between *Rudradeva* and *Maruddevatās*?

Answer: *Maruts* are *Vāyudevatās*. They are the presiding deity of even the vital life breaths (*prāṇa vāyu*). *Rudra-Śiva* is “प्राणाधिपः कृत्तिवासाः पिनाकी” and in the words of *Śruti*, he is “प्राणस्य प्राणम्” i.e. the Lord of all these (vital life breaths) too.

Question 19: In the Dravida (country) the tradition of *trishasṭīmaruts* i.e. the sixty-three ancient great *Śaiva* devotees is still in practice. But, as the tradition of ‘त्रिषष्टिः मरुतर’ त्रिषष्टिः त्वा मरुतः (*R̥gveda* 8-96-8) has not continued among the *vaidikas*, those *maruts* must be Dravidians only, isn’t it?

Answer: Those sixty three ancients have continued even in the *vaidika* class. The *Kenopanishat* tells us that they are the sixty three *vidyādevatās* who preside over each of

these sixty three branches of (knowledge). The deity of *Brahma Vidya* (which is the sixty fourth) is Goddess ‘*Umāhaimavatī*’ herself. The *Kālikā Purāṇa* states "The sixty three *vidyās*, if taken independently, give trivial benefits. The sixty fourth, the *Brahmavidya* bestows *Amṛtattva*

क्षुद्राः त्रिषष्टिविद्याःस्युः तत्फलं नश्वरं भवेत् ।

चतुष्षष्टितमी ब्रह्मविद्यात्वमृतदायिनी ॥

Therefore the argument that it was Dravidians who continued the tradition of sixty three ancients, and that their God is *Śiva-Rudra*, is without any substance. Even though the *prāṇas* have been divided into five, seven, ten and twenty one etc., the sixty three *devatas* of *vidyā* are the *śaktis* and *upaśaktis* only of ‘*Praṇadeva*’.

Question 20: Dravidians normally wear *Rumālu* (a particular type of headgear). In *Rgveda*, *Maruts* and *Rudradeva* have been described as *ushṇīshī*. (A person who wears a turban) Therefore *Maruts* and *Rudradeva* must be Dravidians only, isn’t it?

Answer: Even North Indians regard the wearing of a turban as a mark of honor. Even the *vaidikas* there do not perform auspicious rituals without wearing the turban. *Mahābhārata* says that when the arrow of *Karṇa* spirited away *Arjuna*’s crown, *Arjuna* immediately wrapped a

white turban around his head. The *Vedic literature* also says “‘लोहितोष्णीषा ऋत्विजः प्रचरन्ति’” meaning “*Rtviks* wearing red colored turbans are walking around”. Therefore the wearing of turbans is not the distinctiveness of Dravidians only. Thus, it is not correct to argue that *Maruts* and *Rudra-Śiva* are the exclusive gods of Dravidians.

Question 21: In the *Vedas* the worshippers of *Linga* (the god of *phallus*) are called enemies of *Aryans*.

“मा शिश्रदेवाः असिशुः ऋतं नः (ऋग्वेद 7-21-5)

“वेदघ्नान् शिश्रदेवान् अभिवर्षसा भूत्”

But Dravidians have been worshipping *Śiva* in the form of *Linga* for ages. Even in Harappa and Mohenjadarō cultures, we see the marks of the worship of *Linga*. Therefore is it not justified to say that the *phallus* shaped *Śiva-Rudra* was the god of *anaryas* (i.e. Dravidians) earlier, and later was accepted by the *Aryans*?

Answer: The condemnation of god of phallus in the *Vedas* is not the condemnation of the worship of *Śivalinga*. It is only the libidinous who are always attached to the pleasures of the procreating organs, who think that those organs are the ultimate goal in life who are censured here, and it is not the worship of *Śiva* in the form of *Linga* that is condemned here. Even in

the *Upanishats*, *Śiva* is referred to as a form of *Linga*.

Question 22: Though it is true that *Śiva* is praised in '*MahāNārāyaṇaopaniṣhat*' as "ऊर्ध्वलिङ्गाय नमः, हिरण्यलिङ्गाय नमः", it cannot be held as authentic, as that *upanishad* is of recent origin.

Q: Is there any evidence to claim that *upanishat* is modern?

Answer: It is considered modern because ancient *ācāryas* like *Śankara Bhagavatpāda* and others have not written commentaries on it.

The answer of the Siddhanti:- This argument is not correct. Even though *Śrī Śankaracārya* and others have not written a gloss on '*Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣhat*', ancient sages like *Āpastamba*, *Bodhāyana* and others have honored it. They have called it 'याज्ञिकी उपनिषत्' and there is the practice of giving libations to its Gods in their *sūtra* treatises. This is also included in the '*Navakāṇḍarṣhitarpaṇa*'. The custom of studying and teaching this *upaniṣhat* with intonation is also there. *Sandhyāvandana*, *Vaiṣṇaveya* and *baliharāṇa mantras* have also adorned this *upanishat*. Therefore it is one among the ancient *upanishats* which are honored by great sages such as *Bodhāyana*, *Āpastamba* and others.

"Then why is the praise of *Śivalinga* appearing

in *upanishats* not authentic? The answer is 'Because it is modern'. Why is it modern? The answer is 'It is because the praise of *Śivalinga* is there which is a modern concept. This type of an answer is called *anyoynāyāśrayadushta*.

Question 23: May be that God *Rudra -Śiva* is an honourable deity in the *Vedas*. But since god *Lingadeva* is clearly condemned in the *Rgveda*, can we not say that the worship of *Linga* has come from the class of *anāryas*?

Answer: It is not correct to say so. As we have expounded earlier, it is not the worshippers of *Śivalinga* that are condemned in the *Vedas*, but the worshippers of the sense organs.

One may ask—"Is there any evidence in the *samskr̥ta* language where the word "*śiśnadevāh*" is interpreted to mean the worshippers of sense organs (and not the worshippers of *Śivalinga*)?" The answer is, 'yes and without any doubt'. Our spiritual treatises call those who are sheer seekers of sensual pleasures as '*śiśnodaraparāyanās*', and consider them inferior.

Question 24: Just as the word '*Linga*' in *samskr̥ta* denotes the procreative organ, it also has other meanings, such as "a mark" and "a subtle form." In *Śvetāśvatharopaniṣhad*, in the

usage "*Naiva ca liṅganāśah*" the meaning of the word *Liṅga* is "subtle form" only. Śrīśankarācārya has commented that the word "*liṅgasya* stands for *sūkshmarūpasya*". Not only this. The word '*Liṅga śarīra*', stands for subtle body only, in our spiritual treatises. Again, "*Na liṅgam dharma kāraṇam*" means, an external mark will not be a reason for *dharma*. When it is so, why should the word *Liṅga* be interpreted to mean only the procreative organ? It is possible that the custom of worshipping Śiva has come to indicate that Śiva is subtle in form, and he is minuter than the minute. Or, that he is formless, isn't it? The word 'Lī' in Sanskrit also means to go and unite with, and to hide. As the whole universe merges in Śiva, or as Rudra-Śiva is the god of dissolution, the custom of worshipping Śiva as the form of '*Liṅga*' might have come; isn't it? What all this means is that, all these meanings for the word '*Liṅga*' were given at later times. Originally it meant the procreative organ only.

The argument that the *Liṅga* that is worshipped is not the phallus, is dismissed by the shape of the *Liṅga* itself. From the time of mohenjodaro, *Liṅgas* in the shape (form) of phallus are available. In the Śiva temple of '*Gudimallāpura*' which belongs to to the second

century AD, the *Liṅga* is completely in the shape of the phallus. Devotees of Śiva say that it is not auspicious to worship the *Liṅga* only and, only the *Liṅga* along with the *śakti pīṭha* (*prakṛti pīṭha*, *yoni pīṭha*) is fit for worship. Though the exalted *tattvik* feeling that *Liṅga* and *śakti pīṭhas* are symbolic of the united form of '*Purusha* and-*Prakṛti* the creators of the universe came later, fundamentally the words *Liṅga* and *yoni* mean the physical organs of procreation.

The original concept of this *liṅgadevatā* existed in the *Astroasiatic* tribe. Those who belonged to that tribe used to wear the *Liṅga* as a sign of protection. The people of Śākta sect in Bengal took that concept from them. Then the Śaiva Drāviḍas sect took that concept also from them into their religion and brought harmony between Śivadeva and *Liṅgadeva*".—So says a recent critical work by name '*Śiva rahasya*'. Is not this argument of this book correct?

Answer: There is no doubt that in *samskṛta* the meaning "procreative organ" for the word '*Liṅga*' is very much there.

One can agree that it is only in a special sense the relation of oneness between God and that sense organ has been conceived. But there is no evidence

whatsoever to state that it was borrowed from the Astroasiatic race by the *Śāktas* and *Śaivas*.

Question 25: It is disgusting to imagine the sameness between God the formless, and the procreative organ. And therefore it would be correct to interpret *Śivaliṅga* as the symbol of God who is formless God or who is subtle in form, isn't it?

Answer: The *śāstras* propound the worship of many such symbols of god. But there is no *moksha* for the worshippers of symbols. As is evident from the words “अप्रतीकोपासकान्यतीति बादरायणः” (*Brahmasūtra* 4.3.15) *śāstras* declare that the worship of symbols does not give the benefit of permanent *Mukti*. The *Śaiva purāṇas* proclaim that if the worship of *Śivaliṅga* is performed in accordance with the precepts, *jnāna* is obtained and from that *moksha* will be accomplished. Therefore, the meaning of *Śivaliṅga* is conceived as a *pratīka*, only recently. Such commentaries have emerged with the feeling that it is disgusting to imagine the sameness between *Śiva* and the organ of procreation.

Question 26: In that case, how is it appropriate to equate the never changing and the pure *Paramātman* with the procreative organ? What is wrong in understanding him that the never

changing and pure is a symbol of God who is subtle and has no form?

Answer: There is no doubt that God is very subtle and is the form of divine bliss and knowledge. But the *Liṅga* which the *Jnānis* have recommended to worship is one of the divine forms clearly beheld in the inner vision by the pure souled *yogis*. *Yogis* see that divine *Liṅga* in the inner spiritual centers viz- *Mūlādhāra*, *Hṛdaya*, *Bhrūmadhya* etc., and shed all the common blemishes and attain divine knowledge.

मध्यमे च हृदयस्य ललाटे

स्थाणुवज्ज्वलति लिङ्गमदृश्यम् ।

अस्ति गार्गी परमार्थमिदं तत्

पश्य पश्य मनसा शिवरूपम् ॥

When the treatises on *Yoga* clearly state—‘Behold! Behold! Lord *Śiva* in the form of *Liṅga*’ which is evident from the above *sloka*, why interpret it only as a symbol? Why should one imagine a thing which is directly seen, as only a *pratīka* of that? It is a form of *Liṅga* which is full of effulgence. It is most sacred. There is not even an iota of *samskāra* in that (*Liṅga*) which make the senses to plummet. Those whose senses have a downward tendency will never be able to see that. **We humbly remember here with gratitude one of the**

teachings of *Śrīraṅgamahāguru*, a supreme *Yogi* who had enlightened us on *Sāligrama* and *Śiva Liṅgas* in a session. He had said-"observe that the *Śiva Liṅga* which the *Jnānis* have asked us to worship is always facing upwards. This is related to the path of salvation. As evident from the *śloka* “ज्ञानिनां ऊर्ध्वगो भवति अज्ञानिनां अधोमुखः । एवं वै प्रणवस्तिष्ठेत् यस्तं वेद स वेदवित्”, It is the *Śivaliṅga* which has the deportment of the upward *praṇava*. As said in “ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्थाः”, it provides the upward movement for the *śuddha sāttvikas* who keep spiritually moving up. It is a divine form that takes the devotees towards the most high deportment, like the eye on the forehead of *Śivanaṭarāja* and the *Ūrdhvapundra* of *MahāVishṇu*. The *Mahābhārata* proclaims its upward movement only. “भस्मदग्धोर्ध्वलिङ्गाय” (*Mahābhārata- Bhīshmastavarāja*). It is the divine *Liṅga* of *Mahādeva*. When the *Liṅga* move downwards, it leads to the growth of *samsāra* and when *yogis* get upward in deep meditation, it leads to liberation from *samsāra*. Though the worship of *Liṅga* is prescribed in the worship of *Śiva*, in reality it is composed of *Brahma*, *Vishṇu* and *Rudra*. And the great *yogis* worship such an upward *liṅga* which consists of the trinity and which is full of effulgence. Don't join the group of *Pāmaras* who measure that divine form which is *Śuddhabuddha* and which is seen naturally in a divine state that has no touch of

the *samskāras* of both *punya* and *pāpa*, with their unrefined knowledge. Don't descend to the life of a beast by looking at *Pashupati* with a beastly mindset. There are of course other paths other than this worship of *Śivaliṅga* to attain the state of *Parabrahma* that are supremely high. But there is no doubt that this too, i.e. the *upāsana* of *Śivaliṅga* is also a *yogamārga*". We wish to declare that it is not wise to interpret matters which have emerged from the *tattvabhūmi* of *Jnānis*, merely from the level of *manobhūmi* which is an abode of *Saṅkalpa*, *Vikalpa* and *āgrahas*.

Question 27: Then what is the fate of the opinions based on the study of linguistics and the history of the Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic race?

Answer: Such opinions which evolve in that field, develop there, and after projecting the agitations and cleverness as some (new) light, play some deranged games and finally (die and) get buried there itself. And, now and then, they raise their heads and later meet the same fate again and again. The *Śivaliṅga* which the *Jnānis* have asked us to worship belongs to the realm which is beyond the senses and so, any description pertaining to that realm should be obtained there in the suprasensory field itself. It should be visualized there itself, and bliss should be experienced. Any person belonging to any race

of any time period, can experience it with the light of his own self, when he ascends to the realm of divine knowledge. It will be nothing but unofficiousness to attribute it to any one particular race belonging to a particular period.

The conclusions based on anthropology, linguistics, material sciences and intellectual knowledge which only lead to increase in doubts and (ever) changing opinions.

Question 28: "In *Rudrādhyāya* it has been stated that *Rudra* is the Lord of the thieves. "*Stenānām patih*", The thieves that are mentioned here are not the ordinary thieves who loot from houses, but an ancient race by name '*kaḷavara*'. These people are from the Kannada Country. They were opposed to *yajnas* and used to steal the cows belonging to the Aryans performing the *yajnas*. They were *Anāryas*. As these people were *kaḷavaras* (thieves), their God also was called '*Stenānām pathih*' i.e. the Lord of thieves. So, *Rudra* must be basically a non-Aryan God"-This is the argument of some ultramodern (scholars). Is this argument correct?

Answer: It is totally wrong. *Rudra* is not called the Lord of thieves only. कुलालेभ्यः कमरिभ्यश्च वो नमः''. Even the potters and blacksmiths are called as the *gaṇas* of *Rudra*. *Rudra* is the Lord of these

also. If the above said '*kaḷavaru*' belong to the Kannada country, then to which country these potters and black smiths belong? Are they Telugus? Or Tamils? This has to be explained. Actually speaking, thieves or potters or blacksmiths do not belong to a particular area only. They are found in all regions. All people of all classes of all the countries are the forms of *Rudra* only. Here the natural meaning is that *Rudra* is indeed the omnipresent Lord. The question of *Ārya-Drāviḍa* does not arise here at all. People practicing the above said occupations are found in all races and in all the countries.

Question 29: The concept that *Śiva* is omnipresent is of recent origin. Therefore it should be interpreted that he is the *devatā* of 'Kaḷḷar', a non-Aryan race isn't it?

Answer: That *Rudra* is omnipresent is an eternal truth. In *ŚrīRudrādhyāya*, not only *Rudra* but also his attendants who can assume any form at (will), are called 'विरूपेभ्यो विश्वरूपेभ्यश्च वो नमः' The *Rudragāṇas* of various forms are '*ghora*', '*Aghora*' and '*Ghoratara*' etc.

Question 30: In Kannada language, the saying "*Avanu Rudra Helidanu*" (He recited *Rudra*) means "He committed a theft". So, can we interpret the word *Rudra* to mean 'God of

thieves' and 'God of Kannadigas' and "*Stenānām patih*"?

Answer: It is neither an honest meaning of that nor a serious interpretation. No doubt the name of theft appears in the *Rudramantra*. *Rudra* is called the Lord of thieves. Therefore to interpret the word '*Rudrapārāyaṇa*' to mean stealing amounts to a derisive interpretation only, and cannot be an honest meaning. For example: Virtuous people do '*Gītāpārāyaṇa*' in the morning. And people who are addicted to play the game of cards may play cards in the morning also. Therefore in the derisive sense, the words 'doing *Gītāpārāyaṇa*', have come to mean 'Playing cards'. Why should one associate the supremely pious Lord whom the *Vedas* praise as *Viśvādhika* and *Rudramaharshi* with theft?" Thieves, torturers, robbers and potters are all forms of *Rudra* only. It just means that *Rudra* is indeed omnipresent.

Question 31: We shall present a strong reason to state that *Rudra* was a God of Non-Aryans. The devotees of *Rudra* are called '*kannaru*' also. *Kaṇṇaru* is another form of '*Kaḷḷaru*' '*kaḷavaru*'. Is not *Kaṇṇappa* a very great devotee of *Śiva*? He indeed belongs to the '*kaḷavara*', group i.e. the group of '*Kaḷḷas*' (thieves) i.e. the group of the devotees of *Śiva* of the Kannada country.

Rāvaṇa an outstanding devotee of *Śiva*, was also a great thief. He justifies as correct his kidnapping of *Sita*. He was also opposed to the *yajnas* that were being performed by *Ārya-maharshis*. All these are *Anāryas*. Therefore we establish that basically *Śiva* was the God of *Anāryas* only. How will you oppose this argument?

Answer: It is not at all a *Siddhānta*. It is only a weak argument. There is no rule that the word '*Kaṇṇaru*' must be the other form of the word '*Kaḷḷaru*'. In the Tamil (*Drāviḍa*) language, the word '*Kaṇṇa*' is derived from the word '*Kṛshṇa*'. It may mean a dark complexioned person. We hear the story that, the famous devotee of *Śiva* by name *Kaṇṇappa*, offered his eyes (*kaṇṇu*) to Lord *Śiva* and so he came to be called *Kaṇṇappa*. Even if you do not accept this story, it is possible that *Kaṇṇappa* is the other form of *Kṛshṇappa*. One cannot prove that *Bedara Kannappa* was from Kannada Country only. He is treated as one among the great devotees of *Śiva* in the Tamil Country also. The word '*Kaḷ*' in Tamil means "Liquor". Therefore the word '*Kaḷḷappa*' can also mean an alcoholic, or one who sells liquor. Instead of this, it is better to interpret it as 'the one who offered his '*Kaṇṇu*', or the one who is of a dark complexion. In Telugu, *La* (ల) replaces

ṇa(᳚) n *Sandhi*. So, the word ‘*Kaḷḷajodu*’ is used in the Telugu language for spectacles. Therefore even if he is called ‘*Kaḷḷappa*’, it means a great man who gave the *kaṇṇu* (eyes). Thus, giving up the natural meaning and saying that ‘*Kaḷḷa*’ (thief) is the basic meaning for the word *Kaṇṇu* amounts to a mean adventure indulged by you.

"Your interpretation that *Rāvaṇa* was a devotee of *Rudra* and was a thief, and therefore all the devotees of *Rudra* were only thieves earlier who stole the cattle of Aryans and were opposed to *yajnas* is not correct. Because there is no mention in the *purāṇas* that *Bāṇāsura*, and *Candikeśvara* who are considered *Mahā pāśupatas*, like *Rāvaṇa*, had committed theft. They are also not ill famed as the ones opposed to *yajnas*. Even though *Rāvaṇa* was creating troubles for the *yajnas* of the sages, he himself was performing *tāmasa yajnas*. He was learned in the *Vedas* which are a treasure of knowledge of the *aryamaharshīs*. And, above it *Śiva* was never opposed to *yajnas*. In temples of *Śiva*, the deer in the hand of the *utsavamūrti*, is the form of ‘*Yajna*’ only. *Śiva* is indeed its protector. *Śiva* destroyed the *yajna* of *Dakshaprajāpati* only because it was *Aśāstrīya* and was performed with arrogance, and not that *Śiva* was opposed to all *yajnas*. Therefore your argument that all

the devotees of *Śiva* were thieves earlier, were opposed to *yajnas*, and *Rudra-Śiva* also is the king of Non-Aryan thieves, is absurd. The outstanding devotees of *Śiva*, such as *Mārkaṇḍeya*, *Vyāghrapāda*, and *Upamanyu*- were neither thieves or Non-Aryans.

Macdonold and some others say that the word ‘*Marut*’ which means ‘to shine’ has been derived from ‘*Mar*’. They are called ‘*Pavamāna*’ as they have the ability to produce sound in air. There is no evidence to say that they are non-Aryans. Because, they help *Indra*, the great god of Aryans, in the slaying of *vr̥ttrāsura*. There is a mention that without joining *Indra*, they on their own tore open the tissues of joints of the demon ‘*Vṛttra*’ and released the cows. How can the non-Aryan tribes accomplish this work of the *devatās*? They are called ‘*asuras*’ (*asūnrānti*, *asushu ramante*, *śatrūṇām nirasitārah*) because they protect the (*prāṇas*) or because they are strong or enjoy in the *prāṇas* or because they drive away the enemies. God *varuṇa* has been called ‘*Asura Pracetaḥ*’. He is not a non-Aryan *devata* at all. Why then should the ‘*Maruddevatās*’ be crowned as non-Aryan?

Question 32: In the *R̥gveda* it is seen that the number of *Maruts* has been considered as sixty three ‘त्रिषष्टिः त्वामस्तः’ Actually speaking, the word

Trishashṭi is not a Sanskrit word that gives the sense of the number 63. The words ‘*Tirasata*’, ‘*Trisatṭi*’ and ‘*Tirasatṭi*’ mean those who are irritable (short tempered), strange, and a set of people of the third path which is different from others. This suggests that they belong to a peculiar path of the non-Aryans as different from the path of Aryans. Therefore, the *Maruts* and their father *Rudra*, who have these attributives, must be non-Aryans only, isn’t it?

Answer: This is nothing but the method of squeezing with difficulty a meaning from a word rather than taking the meaning which naturally arises from a word. The word *Trishashṭi* is only a numeral and not (at all) an adjective. The number of the *Rudra gaṇa* is stated as ‘*Ekavimsati*’ (21) in one place and ‘*trishashṭi*’ (63), in another place in the *Vedas*, and so it is a word denoting only a number. Therefore, mistaking it for a Kannada word and interpreting it to mean people of strange nature is untenable here. The Jains also refer to 63 great men in their community called ‘ancient *śalākāpurshas*’. Among ancient *Śaivas*, there is a reference to 63 ancients. *Maruts* are also 63 in number. This vedic number 63 of the *Maruts* has been adopted by *Jains* as well. Here 63 is the number of persons whereas there, they are the representatives of

sixty-three (*vidyās*). They are the (attendants) of the sixty fourth (*vidyā*) i.e. the *Brahmavidya*. All the sixty-three *vidyās* will lead to *Śiva* only who is the sixty-fourth and the form of spiritual knowledge which is the sixtyfourth. All of them are his progeny only.

क्षुद्राः त्रिषष्टिविद्याः स्युः तत्फलं नश्वरं भवेत् ।

चतुष्षष्टितमी ब्रह्मविद्यात्वमृतदायिनी ॥

As evident from the words ‘ईशानस्सर्वविद्यानां’ *Śiva* is the Lord of all these *vidyās*.

Thus the word *trishashṭi* here is just the number 63 and certainly is not an adjective standing for the meanings viz. ‘*tirasata*’, strange, or the one whose path is *anārya* as different from the path of the *Āryas*.

After making a study of all the accounts mentioned above, a natural conclusion that can be drawn is that *Rudra-Śiva* is *Mahādeva*. He is not just a god of some race, but is *Īshvara* who is the Lord of all the living beings, He is the Lord who is expounded in the *Vedas*, *smṛtis*, *Itihāsas* and *Āgamas* and worshipped by the *vaidika*, *Tāntrika* and *vaidik-Tāntrika* and many other paths, and fortunate persons who specially worship him on the day of *Mahāśivarātri* as per precepts, will obtain all the *Purushārthas*.

