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Siva Purana

Siva Purana deals extensively with a number of subjects, such as the greatness of Bhagavan Paramasiva and his worship, the pilgrim centres dedicated to Siva, and stories of his *bhaktas* or devotees.

Among Siva *kshetras*, Banaras has a special greatness. It is called *avimukta kshetra*. Many sages did *upasana* on the Lord there and attained *mukti* or salvation. Maharshi Markandeya became immortal by the grace and blessings of Lord Siva.

Siva's name is highly auspicious.

शिवनामनि भावितेन्तरङ्गे महतिज्योतिषि मानिनीमयार्थे।

दुरितान्यपयान्ति दूरदूरे मुहुययान्ति महान्ति मङ्गलानि॥

Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada says in this sloka that the mere remembrance of Siva's name dispels all sins and bestows good. Devotees should read the *stotras* composed by

Sri Sankara. These include particularly *Sivananda Lahari*, *Siva Bhujangam* and *Siva Panchakshara stotras*.

Among the days specially auspicious for Siva *puja*, Sivaratri stands out most prominently. Sastras declare that if anyone keeps awake the whole night and performs Siva *puja*, he will attain salvation.

The *bilva leaf* is important in Siva *puja*. The *puja* done with devotion will fulfil all desires of the worshipper.

May all benefit by reading the *Siva Purana* which extols the greatness of the Lord.

नमश्शशिकलाकोटिकल्प्यमानाङ्कुरश्रिये।

प्रपन्न जनसंकल्प कल्पवृक्षाय शम्भवे॥

I bow down to the wish-fulfilling Lord Sambhu who spreads bliss and fulfills the desires of those who seek his refuge.

From the President and Chairman

Greetings.

As we get ready to enter into the New Millennium, we would like to reiterate our commitment and conviction to the mission of the Foundation. We begin with our prayers to Shri Sharadamba, and seek the blessings of His Holiness to guide us along in our spiritual journey. The inspiration that we derive from His Holiness and the support from the Sringeri Administrator, Sri. V. R. Gowrishankar, and the untiring efforts by our volunteers, have positioned us extremely well in our service to Sanatana Dharma among the global communities.

We would like to take this opportunity to appeal to our devotees to support the Foundation in whatever way they can, and would like to emphasize on our Community Mission Schemes – Sharada Seva (Life / Annual) and Sankara Seva (Life / Annual). Details of these schemes can be found inside the Journal or you may contact us.

We also have special schemes to support our Veda Patasala in Sringeri. Institution of special scholarships and grants to students desirous of pursuing advanced Vedic Education, and financial support to learned Vedic Pundits are some of the other schemes we plan to bring about during this year.

As was announced earlier, we invite regional volunteers from continental USA and other parts of the globe to help propagate the mission of the Foundation and seek support from their respective regions.

Ati Rudra Maha Yajna of 1997 was only a beginning of our saga mega events! We will strive to organize more of similar events in the future for the prosperity and well-being of the global communities, and, who knows, by the Grace of Shri Sharadamba and the blessings of His Holiness, there may be one down the road in the near future itself!!

With Pranams at the Lotus Feet of His Holiness,

S. Yagnasubramanian
President, SVBF

Ravi Subramanian
Chairman, SVBF

From the Editorial Board....

Greetings. We are pleased to bring the first number of the second volume of Paramaartha Tattvam! We are ambitious to include several novel ideas in the construct of the Journal and your input will be very valuable in that effort.

We would like to continue to keep the Journal as a complimentary copy, and your support to defray the cost of printing and postage through advertisements, contributions, and space sponsorship would be an immense help. If you would like a friend who might be interested in getting her/his own copy, please provide the mailing address, and we will be glad to include in our list.

As the timing of this Number coincides with the Maha Shivaratri celebrations, special articles on Lord Shiva are included from Tattvaloka.

We are also introducing a series of brief articles on our festivals and their significance. We start this series with Makara Sankranti in this Number.

We hope to enrich the contents of the Journal to bring more and more spiritual value to our fellow devotees as we progress. May the Grace of Shri Sharadamba and the blessings of His Holiness be with us always.

Jaya Jaya Shankara

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Dr. S. Yegnasubramanian

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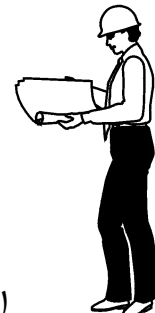
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॥ अर्धनारीश्वरस्तोत्रम् ॥
Ardhanarisvara Stotram
ADI SANKARACHARYA

चापेयगौरार्धशरीरकायै कर्पूरगौरार्धशरीरकाय ।

धम्मिल्लकायै च जटाधराय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय ॥१॥

1. To Her whose body shines as bright as polished gold, to Him whose body shines as brilliant as white camphor, to Her with a fitting head-dress and to Him with matted locks, that is, to Gauri and Lord Siva may our prostrations be.

कस्तूरिकाकुंकुमचर्चितायै चितारजःपुञ्जविचर्चिताय ।

कृतस्मरायै विकृतस्मराय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय ॥२॥

2. To Her of body smeared with musk and saffron, to Him of body smeared with ashes of the crematorium, to Her who radiates love through Her beauty, to Him who destroyed the god of love (Kamadeva), that is, to Gauri and Lord Siva may our prostrations be.

झलत्कणत्कङ्कणनूपुरायै पादाब्जराजत्फणिनूपुराय ।

हेमङ्गदायै भुजगाङ्गदाय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय ॥३॥

3. To Her adorned with tinkling beautiful anklets, to Him adorned with snake-anklets circled round His lotus-feet, to Her shining with golden bracelets, and to Him with snake-bracelets, that is, to Gauri and Lord Siva may our prostrations be.

विशालनीलोत्पललोचनायै विकासिपङ्केरुहलोचनाय ।

समेक्षणायै विषमेक्षणाय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय ॥४॥

4. To Her with eyes as broad as the petals of the blue lotus (Nilotpala), to Him with eyes as broad as the petals of the fully-blossomed lotus, to Her with an even number of eyes (two), to Him with an odd number of eyes (three), that is, to Gauri and Lord Siva may our prostrations be.

मन्दारमालाकलितालकायै कपालमालाङ्कितकन्धराय ।

दिव्याम्बरायै च दिगम्बराय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय ॥५॥

5. To Her whose hair is decorated with garlands of sweet-smelling divine flowers, to Him whose neck is adorned with a garland of skulls, to Her decorated with excellent divine garments, to Him clad with eight quarters, that is, to Gauri and Lord Siva may our prostrations be.

अम्भोधरश्यामलकुन्तलायै तडित्प्रभाताम्रजटाधराय ।

गिरीश्वरायै निखिलेश्वराय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय ॥६॥

6. To Her with hair as dark as the fresh rain clouds, to Him with matted hair resembling the colour of lightning, to Her who is the Supreme Goddess of the Mountains (Himalayas), to Him who is the Lord of the entire universe, that is, to Gauri and Lord Siva may our prostrations be.

प्रपञ्चसृष्ट्युन्मुखलास्यकायै समस्तसंहारकताण्डवाय ।

जगज्जनन्यै जगदेकपित्रे नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय ॥७॥

7. To Her whose dance marks the creation of the world, to Him whose dance indicates the total destruction of everything in this world, to Her who is the World-Mother and to Him who is the Father of this universe, that is, to Gauri and Siva may our prostrations be.

प्रदीप्तरत्नोज्ज्वलकुण्डलायै स्फुरन्महापद्मगभूषणाय ।

शिवान्वितायै च शिवान्विताय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय ॥८॥

8. To Her with bright shining ear-rings of gems, to Him who wears the great serpent as ornament, to Her who is ever united with Lord Siva, to Him who is ever in union with Gauri, that is, to Gauri and Lord Siva may our prostrations be.

*Extracted from "Lord Siva and His Worship", by Swami Sivananda,
published by the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh.*

Tattvaloka Feb./March 1993

On the Rudraksha

The devotee of Rudra shall wear the Rudraksha always. The number of faces on each signifies the following :

1. **One Face** : Symbolises Siva. Great sin is washed away on sight. Mantra : **Om Hrim.**
2. **Two Faces** : Isha. All desires are fulfilled. Mantra : **Om.**
3. **Three Faces** : Means of enjoyment. All lores become firmly established with its use. Mantra : **Klim.**
4. **Four Faces** : Brahma. It aids the achievement of all four aims of life. Mantra : **Om Hrim.**
5. **Five Faces** : Dispels all sorts of sins, particularly sensual ones. Mantra : **Om Hrim.**
6. **Six Faces** : Kartikeya. Worn on the right arm, it helps to absolve one of the sin of slaughter. Mantra : **Om Hrim Hum.**
7. **Seven Faces** : Ananga. Even a poor man becomes a great lord with its usage. Mantra : **Om Hum.**
8. **Eight Faces** : Vasumurti. Wearing this, a man lives his full span of life, and attains Sayujya. Mantra : **Om Hum.**
9. **Nine Faces** : Bhairava. Its sage is Kapila. Its presiding goddess is the nine-formed Durga. When worn on the left hand, it helps a man to become Sarvesvara. Mantra : **Om Hrim Hum.**
10. **Ten Faces** : Janardhana. Wearing it helps fulfil all desires. Mantra : **Om Hrim.**
11. **Eleven Faces** : Rudra. Wearing it helps one to be victorious everywhere. Mantra : **Om Hrim Hum.**
12. **Twelve Faces** : The Adityas. It is to be worn on the head. Mantra : **Om Kraum Ksaum Raum.**
13. **Thirteen Faces** : Visvadeva. Wearing it brings good fortune, auspiciousness and the realisation of all desires. Mantra : **Om Hrim.**
14. **Fourteen Faces** : The highest Siva. It should be worn on the head with great devotion. Mantra : **Om.**

- Sumitra Gautama

Ardha Narisvara

HAREESH RAJA

*This intriguing, enigmatic and yet most charming
half-male, half-female, form created by Siva is
indeed the progenitor of mankind.*

This is a story that goes back to genesis. In the beginning of time, Brahma, one of the divine trinity, created this earth as a part of the universe. Then there was the task of creating different species of creatures to populate the earth. He was able to create beings who would dwell in the waters, and those who would live on the land and those that could soar in the skies. Each species could in turn procreate its own progeny.

However, a time came to create a species of super beings, with a high quotient of intelligence and creativity, who could come up to the level of godhead with some effort, if they could rise above the shroud of Maya.

When Brahma attempted to create such beings, he could only produce duplicates of his own self, such as his *manas putras* (mental sons), known as Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara. They had long lives and were destined to be sages. He then requested Lord Siva to create something. Siva in turn created Rudras, who were but clones of himself.

Brahma then retired to penance in the worship of Mahadeva, the supreme Lord. He prayed for inspiration for the creation of a super species, visualised by him. Brahma requested that they should refrain from creating more sages and Rudras but to create a species with a limited life span who could produce its own progeny. Such a species could then live within the shroud of Maya created by Vishnu.

Genesis of Creation

Lord Mahadeva was indeed pleased with the penance of Brahma and in a gesture of divine grace, appeared before Brahma in the form of Ardha Narisvara--a unique form who was half-male on the right side and half-female on the left side. Brahma then saw his folly. He prayed to the Lord to create more males and to the Adya Shakti to create the female species who could then act as consorts to the human male.

Brahma then sang praises of the divine mother, the Adya Shakti, the primordial creative element, the ever vibrating source of all energy, the fountain head of all life who dwells in all living beings.

Thus was created the first human being named Manu in the male form, from the right side of Ardha Narisvara and the first female called Shatarupa from the left side. Both of them entered into creative meditation. Manu produced two males and named them Privart and Uttana. Devi Shatarupa produced two daughters and named them Akuti and Prasuti.

Bhagavan Manu then gave away Akuti in holy wedlock to Ruchi Prajapati and Prasuti to Daksha. The *Siva Purana* then goes on to describe four generations of lineages, where Prasuti was endowed with 24 daughters who were given away in marriage to different sages and kings. Thus started the procreation of the human race on earth which filled all the regions.

Legend One

There was a sage called Bhringi who was a great devotee of Siva. But somehow he refused to accept Parvati as a goddess and would not offer her oblations. This infuriated Parvati as she being Siva's female energy was really a part of him and naturally, therefore, expected to be also honoured along with him.

But her protests at *rishi* Bhringi's indifference towards her evoked no response from him. To teach him a lesson, she removed her *sakti* or power from the *rishi* and the sage deprived of her support, became thin and emaciated. Becoming skin and bone, he could not even stand.

Siva who is always benign towards his devotees, felt sorry for him and gave him a third leg as a prop so that the *rishi* could balance on his three skinny legs.

When Parvati found this out, she was infuriated both at Siva and Bhringi. Bhringi still circumbulated only Siva. To force him to circumbulate her also, Parvati joined herself permanently to Siva's body and thus Siva became Ardha Narisvara, half-man and half-woman.

By doing so, she thought that when the *rishi* next circumbulated her husband Siva, he would have no choice but to circumbulate her also, as now they were of one body. But Bhringi proved more crafty than she had realised. He took the form of a wasp and came out of their joined navels and thus cheated Parvati by only circumbulating Siva.

- SHAKTI GUPTA

The Philosophy

Many scholars have produced laudable works of philosophy on the entity of Ardha Narisvara. This form came to be recognised as the inspiration behind the origin of human race.

While the principle of godhead is recognised as unique and undivided in form, acceptance of duality exists in the human race. The inter-action of the duality is also accepted as the source of all creation. This is true under the illusion or the shroud of Maya. How does

a mere mortal, a human being, proceed to attain godhead?

This is explained by the spiritual teachings of Yoga. We come across references to the awakening of the inner vitality in the science of Kundalini Yoga. This vitality lies dormant in the *Mooladhara chakra* at the base of the spine. When awakened by the efforts of the yoga teacher and the seeker, the inner vitality rises upwards in the spine through a number of *chakras* or lotuses.

Legend Two

There is another version regarding the creation of half-man, half-woman form of Siva. Parvati grew jealous of Lakshmi because Vishnu, her husband, always carried the mark *Srivasta*, the symbol of Lakshmi, on his chest. Parvati one day complained about this to Siva and said that he neglected her. To appease Parvati, Siva gave half of his body to her and thus became Ardha Narisvara.

The two universal parents, the father and the mother, or the heaven and the earth, are symbolised in the half-male and half-female aspects of Siva. The male half is Agni and the female half is Soma. Heaven is father and earth is mother - *Dyava-Prithvi*. Heaven symbolises the immortal world of the *devas* and the earth, the mortal world of matter. These are the two eternal symbols of life and matter, the duality of life and death, without either of which creation cannot go on.

- SHAKTI GUPTA

The spine is a bundle of nerves which connects the brain with various limbs and organs of the body and each *chakra* is an important nerve junction. Each *chakra* has an element, a function and a presiding deity.

The Chakras or Lotuses

1. Thus the Mooladhara *chakra* has earth as its element. It is the store-house of a dormant spiritual vitality and its presiding deity is Brahma. When this lotus is awakened, spiritual awakening takes place. The vibrations of the inner vitality begin to rise and a state of meditation is experienced.

2. The second lotus is the *Swadhishtana* at the abdomen level in the spine. The element here is water. The nerves at this level regulate the circulation of all body fluids. When this lotus is awakened, the body experiences a cooling and soothing sensation. A sense of detachment and calmness prevails. The presiding deity here is Vishnu.

3. The third *chakra* or the lotus is the *Manipuraka* situated at the level of the midriff or the waist. The element here is fire. When the rising vibrations reach this lotus, a warm feeling is experienced and a slight rising in body heat is likely. The nerves here control the digestive fires and the presiding deity is Rudra, smeared with sacred ashes.

4. The fourth *chakra* is the *Anahata* at the level of the heart in the spine. The nerves here regulate the life sustaining automatic functions of the heart, lungs and the process of breathing. The element here is air which produces all the sounds in the body. The presiding deity is the Mahesvara aspect of Siva known as Isha or the invisible divine force. When the rising Shakti reaches this lotus all mantra sounds become alive and effective.

5. The fifth *chakra* is the *Vishuddhi* at the base of the throat in the spine. The nerves here regulate the intake of air, water or food and direct their flow to the right areas of the

body. The presiding deity here is the Sadasiva or the perpetual Siva, who has to remain active even when the body is sleeping. When the riding Shakti reaches this level, the seeker begins to understand the presence of *prana*, the source of life in all his thoughts and deeds. The element here is the heaven.

6. The sixth *chakra* is the *Ajna chakra* or the command post. It is at the level of the forehead where the spine is connected to the rear part of the brain. When the rising Shakti vibrations reach here, the seeker is in full control of his body functions. The element here is the entire universe containing all the five elements. The presiding deity is the Ardha Narisvara. It is at this stage the seeker rises above the shroud of Maya. It is here that all sense duality fades away and a sense of divine unification is experienced.

7. Beyond the *Ajna chakra* is the ever bright thousand - petal lotus where the realised soul dwells in godhead.

It is in this manner that we come to understand that Ardha Narisvara appeared at the source of all creation and the emergence of duality within the shroud of Maya. It also becomes the symbol of divine unification when a seeker achieves the ultimate realisation in a state of *samadhi*.

Hareesh Raja is a seeker on the path of knowledge--Jnana Marga. He was writer of "Sadhana Way" series of articles which appeared in the Times of India.

Tattvaloka Feb./March 1993



Ravana and Siva



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



- SWAMI SIVANANDA



Siva Purana - An Overview

SUMITRA M. GAUTAMA

The Siva Purana, an epic on the greatness of Lord Siva, deals with the basic philosophical principle which he embodies and with the various types of ritual and folklore associated with him.

The *Siva Purana* contains descriptions, sermons and dissertations on Siva's divinity, recounts his emblems, attributes, exploits and incarnations, narrates legends on the origin and importance of his *linga* image and the merits of installing and consecrating it.

It consists of seven Samhitas. The extant *Siva Purana* has been reduced from the previous 12 Samhitas to the present seven by Vyasa himself. They are a) Vidyeeswara (2000 *slokas*); b) Rudra (10,500); c) Satarudra (2180); d) Kotirudra (2240); e) Uma (1840); f) Kailasa (1240); g) Vayaviya (4000). The initial seven chapters on the *Siva Purana Mahatmyam* are taken from the *Skanda Purana*.

The narrator is Sage Suta, who is trained by Vyasa. He recites the *Purana* to a group of sages led by Saunaka, in the Naimisa forest, in the reign of Adisima Krishna, the great grandson of Janamejaya and sixth in the line of the Pauravas. Careful attention, it is stated, is the basic requirement for a reading of the *Siva Purana*. The reader should be "intelligent, pure in mind, delighted at heart, and a follower of conventions." If he is not, the reading makes him that way. *Bhakti*, *jnana* and *vairagya* are the three cornerstones of this *Purana*.

The Context

Sravana (listening), *kirtana* (praise) and *manana* (meditation) lead to Siva yoga, or unification with Siva. In the statement of gifts given in Siva worship, it is stated that

"anything done with no specific desire in view yields the region of Siva directly."

Though in essence Siva is timeless, nameless and formless, there are 1008 names of Siva which are also given.

It is said that Siva manifests as eight *Murtis* and five *Brahmans*. The eight *Murtis* are :
1. *Sarva* who presides over the earth, and controls all mobile and immobile beings.
2. *Bhava* who presides over water and enlivens the universe.
3. *Rudra* who presides over fire, both internal and external.
4. *Ugra* who presides over the wind and sustains all things as their pulse.
5. *Bhima* who presides over ether and is all-pervasive, the giver of space.
6. *Pasupati* who presides over the individual soul and snaps the cords of bondage.
7. *Isana*, the presiding diety of the sun which illumines the universe.
8. *Mahadeva*, the soul of all *Murtis*. The universe has Siva for its Atman.

The five *Brahmans* are 1. *Isana* who controls the ear, speech, sound and ether.
2. *Tatpurusha* who controls the skin, hand, touch, and air.
3. *Aghora* who controls the eye, legs, colour and fire.
4. *Vamadeva* who controls the tongue, arms, taste and the waters.
5. *Sadyojata* who controls the nose, sexual organ, smell and the earth.

The five *Shaktis* of Siva are activity, knowledge, completeness, eternality and pervasiveness. Siva oversees the five-fold duties of the universe namely, creation (*Brahma*), maintenance (*Vishnu*), annihilation

(Rudra), concealment (Mahesvara) and blessing (Sadasiva) which Siva alone can give.

On Pranava

The Pranava can be both gross and subtle. The gross form is the five-syllabled mantra, *Om Namah Sivaya*, and the subtle is divided yet again into short and long. The short one, which is repetitive, is *Pravriddhi*, and the long one, which is in the hearts of great souls alone, is *Nivridhi*.

The liberation which is achieved through the worship of Siva is the realisation of the indweller, the Atman. "It is a relaxation and resting in one's own soul. Among other things, it is based on knowledge, meditation and virtue." Bondage is seen as being tied by "the noose of eight-fold primary essences", namely, *prakriti* (cosmic nature), *buddhi* (cosmic intellect), *ahamkara* (cosmic ego) and the five *tanmatras* (the cosmic principles of earth, air, fire, water and ether). Perfect control over and "subjugation of *prakriti* and its offshoots" is said to be liberation.

Siva says, "To understand the meaning of the Pranava is to understand me". Pranava is split into *Pra* (*prakriti* evolves out of Pranava) and *Navam-Navam Varam* (an excellent being). Parvati on being united with Siva, says, "You are the cosmic soul, and I am cosmic nature."

Siva and Parvati

Himavan, pure soul, and Mena, who worshipped the Goddess Durga for 27 years, gave birth to Parvati. When she reaches the marriageable age, Siva comes by chance to Himavat to meditate. When Himavan offers him Parvati as handmaiden, Siva tells him, "A woman is a phase of illusion... a woman is the root of worldly attachment. She destroys all wisdom and detachment."

Parvati says, "You, O Siva, are worthy of worship, respect and meditation, only thanks to *prakriti*. Thinking of this in your heart, please reply." Siva replies, "I am in reality, without *prakriti*. I destroy *prakriti* with my penance."

Parvati then tries to clinch the argument by saying, "What you hear, what you eat, what you see and what you do - all these are essentially activities of *prakriti*. You are *purusha* and I am *prakriti* - this is the truth. With me, you become full of qualities and embodied. Without me, you are attributeless and incompetent to perform any activity. If you are really superior to *prakriti*, if what you say is true, you need not be afraid to be near me, O Siva."

But Siva has the last word, though he allows her in his penance grove to be his handmaiden. He says, "If I am Brahman, the supreme Lord and master of illusion, what will you do then?!"

On Lingas

It is said that he who has not mastered the subtle *linga* of the mind must worship the gross *linga*, the body, and not otherwise. thus the attainment of Nirguna through Saguna is possible.

There are five types of *lingas*. The *Svayambhu* or the self-generated *linga*, sprouts from the earth as the seed sprouts. The *Pratishtha linga* is that which is consecrated by kings with the help of brahmins. The *Guru linga* is the physical body of the preceptor. The other two types of *linga* are called the *Cara* and the *Bindu*.

The earthen *linga* image of Siva, when worshipped, rids one of all hindrances, which are of three types - *Adyatmika*, or ailments of

the body, *Adibhautika*, or the physical hindrances outside of oneself which affect and influence one's life and *Adidaivika* or divine calamities. The Purana says that there is no sin which cannot be destroyed by *pradakshina* of a *linga*.

On Bilva

There is a chapter on the greatness of the *bilva* tree. It is seen as the symbol of Siva, which is adored even by the gods. Its greatness is shrouded in mystery.

The root of the *bilva* tree contains the essence of all the holy centres in the world. It is said that he who worships Mahadeva at the root of the *bilva* tree becomes a purified soul.

He who pours water on his head at the root of *bilva* tree is considered to have bathed in all the sacred waters of the earth. Siva is pleased with a well-preserved *bilva* tree.

On Bhasma

The value of the *bhasma* and the *rudraksha* are likewise described. *Bhasma* is said to be of three types:

- a) *Srauta*--that obtained from Vedic rites,
- b) *Smarta*--that obtained from Smriti rites, and
- c) *Laukiki*--that obtained from ordinary fire. Cowdung reduced to ashes is called *Agneya*. The *sloka* to be recited when ashes are put on the forehead is also given. *Uddhulana* or dusting, is also practised. It is considered good to do *japa* after applying ash to all the prescribed parts of the body.

Incarnations of Siva

The 19 incarnations of Siva through the ages are mentioned. Kala Bhairava is the primordial form of Siva. He is called Kala Bhairava since even Kala is afraid of him. He rules over Varanasi (Benaras).

Siva as Sarabha, a great bird, quells the anger of Narasimha after the destruction of Hiranyakashipu, and wears his hide. The head of Narasimha is the leading bead in his necklace of skulls.

The sage Vishwanara marries the daughter of Yama (god of death) and is blessed by having Siva as his son. This son becomes, through *tapas*, the lord of Agniloka.

There is the story of Siva as Yakshesvara, an incarnation to subdue the arrogance of the gods after the churning of nectar.

Ten other incarnations of Siva are mentioned as also the incarnation of the 11 Rudras, born to Surabhi.

The penance of Anusuya and sage Atri, and the bringing of the Ganga as a small pond to the drought-stricken Vindhya is described, and how Siva as Atrisvara blessed Atri and the peerless Anusuya.

Legends

The story of Sandhya is pregnant with metaphor, and very evocative. Sandhya, born of Brahma, is desired by him and his sons, her brothers. Sandhya flees and casts off her body, after great expiation to Lord Siva, in the sacrificial altar of Medatithi, a great sage. She is born as his daughter Arundati and is given in marriage to sage Vasishtha, her preceptor in her previous birth.

Brahma, thwarted in his desire, decides to obstruct Siva's penance in revenge and tempts Siva with Sati, daughter of Daksha. Sati's penance to win Siva is described in detail, and her prayers are answered.

But Sati is handicapped by the enmity of her father to Siva and therefore commits self-immolation as an act of self-purification. The

well-known legend of the destruction of Daksha's *yajna* is described in great detail. The advent of the *asura* Taraka, grandson of Diti, forces the gods to request Siva to marry Sati's reincarnation as Parvati. The *asura* has a boon from Brahma that only Siva's son can kill him.

The stories of Parvati's penance, her grand marriage to Siva, the birth of Ganesa and Kartikeya, the slaying of Taraka, the burning of Tripura and the killing of Taraka's sons, and the destruction of the *asuras* Jalandhara and Andhaka are given in intricate detail.

The story of Tulasi is also related in connection with the slaying of Sankhachuda. Legends of the planets Mars and Sukra are also given. It is said that Sukra "washed off the dirt of fickleness from his mind by the waters of pure contemplation many times", and offered it to Lord Siva. Later, Uma's conversion into the fair complexioned Gowri is also related.

On the Body

The *Purana* says that men cannot attain Sivaloka by punishing the body alone. Lord Siva says, "O beloved, the devotee who is wise burns the physical body in a trice with the fire of knowledge". The hymn to Siva which liberates one from rebirth is given below:

"O Siva, the merciful, I am thine. Thy attributes are my vital breath. My mind is ever fixed in thee. Knowing this, O Lord of goblins, be pleased with me. Consciously or unconsciously, whatever I have performed by way of *japa* or adoration, may that, O Siva, be fruitful by your favour. I am the greatest sinner, O Siva, and you are the greatest sanctifier. O Lord of Gowri, knowing this do whatsoever you wish. O great God, you are not known by Vedas, *Puranas*, systems of philosophy or by the different sages. O Sadasiva, how can I know you?

In whatever manner, I belong to you, O Siva, by all my thought-forms. I am to be saved by you. Be pleased with me, O Siva!"

On Vratas and Yoga

Discrimination builds the need to be free of the body, and yoga and *vrata* are seen as tools to this end. Siva has said, "Disciplining the mind is far more excellent than many a horse-sacrifice."

Yoga is said to be of five types- *Mantra yoga*, *Sparsa yoga*, *Bhava yoga*, *Abhava yoga* and *Maha yoga*.

Meditation of the mind, without disturbances, on the expressed meaning of the *mantra* along with the practice of the *mantra* is *Mantra yoga*.

The same thing, coupled with *pranayama*, is *Sparsa yoga*.

The meditation and *pranayama* without contact with a *mantra* is called *Bhava yoga*.

When the universe itself is meditated upon, it is called *Abhava yoga*, since the living object is lost to view.

When the nature of Siva is contemplated without any conditioning or restricting factor, the concentration of the mind on Siva is called *Maha yoga*.

The *vratas* observed by Sati and Parvati to obtain Siva and the other modes of worship delineated throughout the *Purana* indicate without ambiguity the importance of continuing *tapas* in one's life. The power of *tapas* is supreme.

"The earth, united with *mantras*, penances, *vratas*, restraints, medicinal herbs and yogic practices, becomes lovable to men with humility, polity and sacred virtues."

But it is also said, "O sage, the fruit is the same, whether one performs penance in a forest, restricting his diet to roots and fruits there, or studies a single Vedic verse".

The Sivaratri *vrata* is seen as the best and greatest of *vratas*. Powerful stories related to it are told, to emphasise its importance.

Types of Sin

There are interesting facts in the *Vidyeshwara Samhita* on physical, verbal and mental sins. Physical sins are removed by forcefully causing physical emaciation of the body. Verbal sins are removed through *japa*. Mental sins are removed through meditation.

Merits and demerits are decided according to whether a sin is in the seed stage, the flourishing stage or the enjoyment stage. If it is in the seed stage, perfect knowledge quells it. If it flourishes, expiation removes it. But enjoyment is quelled through experience alone.

There are many rituals described to ward off bad *karma*. The propitiation of deities is said to be five-fold:- a) Repeated recitation of mantras b) sacrifice c) charitable gifts d) austerities, and e) propitiation through the altar, idol, fire or a brahmin.

On Lust and Redemption

The operation of Siva Maya, even in enlightened souls such as Narada and Brahma, is described in terms of their experience with condor and clarity. There are many stories of men and women given to evil ways who go to Sivaloka through conscious and unconscious worship of Siva on auspicious days, or through a chance hearing of the *Siva Purana*.

It is said, "There is nowhere greater misery than staying within the womb." The Purana

says that of the many bondages in the world, association with women is toughest of all to break. The *apsara* Panchachuda, when questioned by sage Narada on the nature of women, says, among other things, "Women love only those persons who solicit their company, who approach them intimately and who render them a little bit of service."

The emphasis throughout seems to be a constant and serious reminder of the terrible ill-effects of lust and the paramount necessity for one on the spiritual path to eschew all temptation entirely. Perhaps there is a lesson for today in the Purana's attitude to women - not factually, but metaphorically, not in the letter of the message but in its inherent direction. In spiritual surrender lies release both for men and women. "Devotion to Siva, characterized by sprouting pure love, is the mother of perfect knowledge."

On Devotion

It is said, "From devotion there arises love; from love, the desire to hear about the Lord; from this desire, association with the good; and from this association, a competent preceptor is attained."

Devotion is either with or without attributes, natural or conventional, greater or lesser, perpetual or temporary. In Kaliyuga, there are said to be immediate and visible benefits of devotion.

Dedicating all to god and retaining nothing for oneself are seen as true devotion. Siva says, "I cannot be enticed either by holy rites or penance or *japas* or postures or knowledge or by any other means except faith."

The different kinds of devotion have nine adjuncts--listening, praising, remembering, serving, surrendering, worshipping, invoking, friendliness and dedication. The belief-

'whatever god bestows upon me, good or bad, is for my welfare'- is the characteristic sign of friendliness.

Chastity

The ideal woman is seen as one who is conscious of her husband even in her dreams. "The husband is the high tone and the wife is the quarter tone. The husband is austerity and the wife is forbearance. The husband is the fruit and the wife is a sacred rite."

After Parvati's marriage to Siva, a chaste brahmin lady instructs Parvati thus on the value of chastity. "A chaste lady sanctifies the worlds, destroys sins, and is blessed."

On Creation

It is said, "When there is pitch darkness which cannot be pierced by a needle, the existent Brahman alone is present." Isvara then creates Shakti. "Lord Hiranyagarbha, the self-born, the golden egg, created the heavens and the earth (the earth floating in the waters), the ten quarters, the firmament, the 14 worlds and the intervening spaces, filled with ether. He also created the mind, speech, love, anger and sexual delight."

The metaphorical nature of the creation of the world is exemplified by the marriage of 13 daughters of Daksha to Dharma. They are *Sraddha* (faith), *Lakshmi* (fortune), *Dhriti* (fortitude), *Tushti* (Satiety), *Pushti* (nourishment), *Medha* (intelligence), *Kriya* (rite, activity), *Buddhi* (intellect), *Lajja* (bashfulness), *Vasu* (wealth), *Santi* (peace), *Siddhi* (accomplishment) and *Kirti* (fame).

Eternal Questions

The Purana itself asks many questions:

"Why does one who is immortal and self-complete, create at all? Having created, why

does he cause turmoil, suffering and death? Can he who creates all this be truly self-complete? If god is in all of us, how then can he be untouched by fear or desire? How can he be purposeless?"

"The assuming of physical bodies out of wish is not consistent with freedom".

"They say that Siva, the supreme cause, blesses all. But he even curbs and kills the gods. How then can he be a blesser of all?"

The god Vayu, in the *Vayaviya Samhita*, gives answers which must suffice.

"If someone says, 'Bring fire,' only the burning twig is brought. The fire by itself is not brought."

"The state of being understood through testimonies alone, indicates his nature".

"The wickedness of the wicked is due to the absence of the grace of the Lord."

And finally, "No blessing can be independent of one who is blessed".

Siva does not create the universe of our confusions. We each create it, through forces within and beyond our control. The eternal light sometimes shines through and illumines the path to this uncreated source.

The *Siva Purana* is a compendium of ways to invite this source into our lives. It says, ultimately- "Life passes all too quickly. Youth passes rapidly away. Sickness approaches all too suddenly. Hence the Lord shall be worshipped."

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All this is Siva

M.V.B.S. SARMA

The entire universe is Siva. No one knows him. He alone knows all. He creates the universe, enters it, but stands far off. Siva being pure knowledge does not really enter it. Just as luminary beings are reflected in water but do not enter them, Siva too appears to enter the universe. Though in other philosophical systems there is the concept of duality, the Vedantins call Siva eternal and nondualistic.

The individual soul though a part of Siva becomes deluded by avidya or nescience. He erroneously thinks he is different. When he overcomes his nescience he becomes Siva.

Siva pervades the sentient and the insentient. Fire is latent in every block of wood. When churned it manifests. So also a devotee using expedients such as devotion and philosophical enquiry realises that all is Siva. He is everywhere. Due to our illusion, he appears as different forms.

Where is manifoldness when all is Siva? The all pervading sky is not bound. The all pervading lord also is not bound. The individual soul experiences fruits of action, but the great Siva is not contaminated. A consecrated soul attains purity like the gold alloy purified by chemical means.

At the outset, an aspirant should seek a competent preceptor with reverence and worship him as Siva. By his unswerving devotion, all the impurities are removed and he ultimately gains knowledge of Reality, oneness with Siva.

The body is begot by *prarabdha karma*. The perfectly wise consider themselves different from the body. The wise are not elated if good happens and depressed if bad occurs. By practice of yoga of discrimination, one is released from the notion of the body and is blessed with devotion to Siva.

From such devotion, arises love and desire for association with the wise. He will then realise the supremacy of Siva and the ultimate knowledge that all this is Siva and there is nothing else.

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Rudraksha

Dr. VANAMALA PARTHASARATHY

Highly sanctified in the Siva Purana, rudraksha can be worn by people of all classes, and even devotees of other dieties, with beneficial effects.

The term 'Rudraksha' (*Elaco carpus* seeds) literally means 'the eye of Rudra'. They are worn especially by the devotees of Siva and also strung in the form of a rosary to aid in the recitation of *japa*.

The *Vidyeshvara Samhita* of *Siva Purana* gives an elaborate treatment to the various aspects of the worship of Siva. In so doing it takes into consideration Siva's name, the holy ashes (*vibhuti*) and the *rudraksha* beads. The three are very holy and are on a par with Triveni, the confluence of the three holy rivers (*Vidyeshvara Samhita* 23.10). Thus they are integral.

Origin of Rudraksha

Sage Suta addresses Saunaka and describes the glory of *rudraksha* saying that it was propounded formerly by Siva himself to the goddess in order to help the worlds. According to this account, Siva had been performing penance for thousands of years. Out of sport (*lila*), he opened his eyes, wanting to help the worlds, and then drops of tears (*asrubindu*) fell from his half-closed eyes. It was from these tear drops that the *rudraksha* plants came into existence and they became 'immobile' (*Vidyeshvara Samhita* 25.5-7).

Padma Purana has a slight variation about the origin (1.59.131-135). Tripura a demon in *Kritayuga* after having killed the gods and destroyed the worlds stayed firm in the intermediate region (*antariksapuri*).

Siva heard the pleas of gods and stringing his bow with an arrow he killed the demon whom he saw with his divine eye. Drops of perspiration (*svedabindu*) fell from (the body of) Siva who was tired with exhaustion (*vyakula*). The great *rudraksha* was produced from these drops.

The third version is from the *Devi Bhagavata* (Skanda 11). Here it is said that Siva sat with open eyes thinking as to how he should kill Tripura. He sat for thousands of years and after a long time winked and tears dropped down from which the *rudraksha* tree originated.

Twelve types of *rudrakshas* came from the sun-eye of Siva, 16 from the moon-eye and 10 from the fire-eye. The first ones were blood-coloured, the second white and the third black.

Where are the *rudrakshas* grown? According to *Siva Purana*, those that are grown in Gauda are the favourites of Siva. They are also grown in Mathura, Lanka, Malaya (a mountain range in the west of Malabar), Sahya (a mountain range), Kasi and other places (*Vidyeshvara Samhita* 25.9-10).

Sanctity of Rudraksha

Puranas extol the sanctity of *rudraksha*. *Siva Purana* states that it is a favourite bead of Siva and all sins are removed by its sight and contact (*Vidyeshvara Samhita* 25.2). He who wears it on his hands, arms and over the

head, cannot be killed by any living being and such a person would be always respected by gods and *asuras*. A *mantra* repeated with *rudraksha* is a crore times more effective. Even premature death does not affect the wearer in the least.

Padma Purana adds that a man obtains a lakhfold merit by seeing it and a crore-fold merit by touching it and ten crores of merit by wearing it. Further, even if a beast of prey taking a *rudraksha* in his throat dies, it would also obtain *rudra-hood* (*rudratvam*).

Agni Purana, while discussing the benefits of using the different kinds of rosaries, says that the one made of *rudraksha* bestows emancipation (*mukti*).

Categories of Rudraksha

Siva Purana classifies *rudrakshas* as per colour and the number of faces (*vaktra*) possessed by them. In the former, they are white (*sveta*), red (*rakta*), yellow (*pita*) and black (*krsna*). These correspond to the four *varnas*, such as brahmins, kshatriyas, vaisyas and sudras respectively and are to be worn accordingly (*Vidyeshvara Samhita* 25, 12, 11, 44).

Agni Purana divides the *rudrakshas* into four classes. They are *Siva*, *Sikha*, *Jyoti* and *Savitra*. And further division of four varieties in each of these is also indicated.

The second type of classification, suggested by *Siva Purana*, is dependent on the number of faces present in the *rudraksha*. Both *Siva Purana* (*Vidyeshvara Samhita*) and *Padma Purana* allot even merits to each one of these 14 varieties.

Faces of Rudraksha

The single-faced one is *Siva* and it removes the sins of brahmin-slaughter (*brahmahatya*).

The two-faced one is god of gods (*devadevo*), fulfills all desires and removes the sin of cow-slaughter. The three-faced one confers means of enjoyment. *Padma Purana* calls it fire (*anala*) and it destroys even the sins of the past births. The wearer will not be sick and will never be defeated.

The four-faced one is called *Brahma*. *Siva Purana* says that its mere vision and contact would bestow the achievement of four aims of life.

Padma Purana adds that a man who wears it would come to possess knowledge in all branches of studies. The five-faced one is called *Rudra* and destroys even the sins caused by eating forbidden food or sex with a forbidden woman.

The six-faced one is referred to as *Kartikeya* and the one who wears it on the right arm is rid of sins, such as killing of brahmins. *Padma Purana* ensures that the six-faced *rudraksha* would make a *brahmin* honoured by the king, a *kshatriya* assured of victory and *vaisyas* and *sudras* of prosperity.

The seven-faced one is called *Ananga* and even a poor man becomes a lord by wearing it. This is called *Ananta* by *Padma Purana* and by wearing it, poison does not spread in the body.

The eight-faced one is called *Vasumurti* and *Bhairava*. It promises a full life, and after death the wearer becomes the trident-bearer (*Siva*). *Padma Purana* refers to this as *Vinayaka* himself. Besides various other merits the wearer acquires skill in writing as well as in other undertakings.

The nine-faced one is named as *Bhairava*. *Siva Purana* also adds that *Durga* of nine forms is its presiding diety.

The ten-faced one is referred to as Janardhana by *Siva Purana*. The devotee who wears it has his desires fulfilled. An added merit is quoted by *Padma Purana* namely that the serpents would perish. The 11-faced one is called Rudra. *Padma Purana* says that 11 *rudras* reside in the 11 faces and that one should wear it on the top knot (*sikhaya*). The wearer acquires the benefit of thousands of horse sacrifices and also the merit of donating thousand cows (to a brahmin).

The 12 Adityas are supposed to be present in the 12-faced one. *Padma Purana* indicates that it should be worn round the neck. *Siva Purana* calls the 13-faced one Visvadeva as auspicious. Lastly the 14-faced one is the highest Siva. *Padma Purana* prescribes the wearing of it on the head or arm.

Choice of Rudraksha

Siva Purana (Vidyeshvara Samhita) and *Agni Purana* state that the *rudraksha* of the size of emblic *myrobalan (dhartiphala)* is excellent. *Siva Purana* says those that are even glossy, firm and thick with the thorn-like protrusions yield worldly pleasures (*Vidyeshvara Samhita*).

Further, the lighter the *rudraksha* the more fruitful it is. Six types are to be discarded, especially those defiled by worms, cut, broken, cracked, with no thorn-like protrusions, and

not circular. An excellent example is one with a natural hole from one end to the other and that which is made by humans is a middling one (*madhyama*) (*Vidyeshvara Samhita*).

How to wear Rudraksha

Siva Purana has details as to the number of *rudrakshas* to be worn on the different parts of the body and the *mantras* that are to be uttered while wearing them on the head, ears, neck and on the chest. It is imperative to utter the *mantra*.

In short, *rudrakshas* are highly glorified. *Siva Purana* says that people of all *varnas*, *asramas* and women and *sudras* can wear them. So also ascetics with *Pranava* at the command of Siva (*Vidyeshvara Samhita*). The most interesting fact is that even the devotees of Vishnu and other deities may wear the *rudraksha* unhesitatingly, though a devotee of Rudra should wear it always. Thus the sanctity and significance of *rudraksha* can well be comprehended.

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Dharma



❖ *It is dharma and dharma alone which saves man in this world and in Paraloka, the other world. Dharma alone can give peace and happiness. Many a man does not know what exactly dharma is and what "practicing dharma" means. That which gives eternal peace and happiness is dharma, and all actions which contribute towards that end comprise dharma.*



- HIS HOLINESS SRI BHARATI TIRTHA MAHA SWAMIJI



Om, Sri Gurubhyo Namaha

Upanishads

DR. S. YEGNASUBRAMANIAN

The term "*upa* (near) - *ni* (down) - *shada*-(sit)" means "to sit by the side". The knowledge that was imparted by the teacher by keeping the student closely by his side, is dealt with in the Upanishads. This implies that the subject that is taught is of the nature of a secret personal advice that could be imparted only to the "eligible" (*adhikaari*), who is conditioned to absorb the teaching! It also means, "that knowledge that makes one reach near *Brahman*" similar to the term "*upanayana*" (leading to the *Paramaatman*). The upanishads give the spiritual vision and philosophical arguments and contain the ultimate message and purpose of the Vedas. They are known as "*vedanta*". The term "*anta*" means "end". Upanishads are the "end" of the Vedas in two senses: 1. Physical location of the Upanishads in the scriptures - first *Samhita*, then *Braahmana*, followed by *Aaranyaka*, at the concluding portion of which is the upanishads; 2. The ultimate goal or aim of the Vedas is contained in the Upanishads beyond which there is nothing more to go further!

Upanishads expound the direct method of realization through *jnaana maarga* (the path of knowledge), the *abhedha* (non-duality) of the Supreme Being and the *Jiva*. Even though Upanishads contain information about rituals (*yajnas*), worship of deities etc., the focus is on the philosophical analysis and deals with a state of free mind with all its attachments (bondage) removed. The karma kaanda portion

of the scriptures conditions the mind to develop an internal discipline at the summit of which experience, analysis of the non-duality of the *Jiva* (soul) and *Brahman* becomes clearer! At this stage (of removal from all physical bondage), one gets initiated to the "*mahaa vaakhyas*" (the great sayings) ! If one meditates intensely on these, scholars say, that the non-duality could be actually experienced. Four *mahaa vaakhyas* are considered most important and are contained in four upanishads. They are:

1. *prajnaanam brahma* (प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म) - the actual experience alone is *Brahman* - Aitareya Upanishad : Rig Veda.

2. *aham brhamaasmi* (अहं ब्रह्मस्मि) - I am *Brahman* - Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad: Sukla Yajur Veda. The fourth chapter of Taittiriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda has a slightly different *mahaa vaakhya* - *ahamasmi brahmaahamasmi* (अहं अस्मि ब्रह्माहमस्मि)

3. *tat tvam asi* (तत् त्वं असि) - that you are - Chaandogya Upanishad: Saama Veda.

4. *ayamaatmaa brahma* (अयमात्मा ब्रह्म) - the *Atman* (soul) is *Brahman* - Maandukya Upanishad : Atharva Veda.

As one would understand, these are instructions which can be given only to a spiritual aspirant who is highly qualified (*adhikaari*) to receive them, and so are treated like a *rahasya* (secret) !

There are several upanishads (over two hundreds!) and Sri Adi Sankara chose to write commentaries (*bhaashya*) upon ten of them, known as *dasopanishads*. Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhva also wrote commentaries on the same ten upanishads. Whereas Adi Sankara highlighted the non-dual (*advaita*) philosophy propounded in them, Sri Ramanuja emphasised *visishta-advaita* (qualified non-dual) and Sri Madhva, the *dvaita* (dual) philosophies. The ten upanishads are given in the sloka :

ईश केनकथाप्रश्न मुण्ड माण्डूक्य तैत्तिरी ।
ऐतरेयंच छान्दोग्यं ब्रह्दारण्यकंदशा ॥

They are *Isa, kena, kathaa, praSna, muNda, maandukya, taittiriya, aitarEya, chaandogya and brahadaraanyaka Upanishads*. Adi Sankara's commentary is written in the same order as above.

1. Isaavaasya (ईशावास्य) or Isa Upanishad

It is placed at the end of Sukla Yajur Veda's *Samhita* portion. It begins with the words "*Isaa vaasyam*" and hence the name. The upanishad begins by saying that *Iswara* pervades the whole cosmic makeup and one should attain the state of realization of this "*paramaatma tattva*" by dedicating one's fruit of all *karmas* to That Divinity alone !

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेनत्यक्तेन भुंजीथा मागृधःकस्य स्वध्दनम् ॥

2. Kenopanishad केनोपनिषत्

This Upanishad starts with the word "*kena*" and so the name. It is also called *talavakaara upanishad* since it appears in the *talavakaara braahmaNa* of the *Jaimini saakha*

of *Saama veda*. This describes how the Mother Herself enlightened Indra with divine wisdom to understand the nature of *paramaatman*. It is glorified with a saying "search for whatever is lost in *Kena*"! The Upanishad starts with a set of questions, "Willed by whom does the directed mind go towards its object? Being directed by whom does the vital force that precedes all, proceed (towards its duty)? By whom is this speech willed that people utter? Who is the effulgent being who directs the eyes and the ears?" . The Upanishad proceeds to declare that "*It (Brahman)* is known to him to whom It is unknown; he does not know to whom It is known. It is unknown to those who know well, and known to those who do not know" - an intense and minute analysis!

3. Kathopanishad कठोपनिषत्

This upanishad occurs in the "kathaka Saakha" of *Krishana Yajur Veda*. It contains the dialog between the Lord of Death and *Nachiketas*, a young boy who demanded to know the answer for the question, "what happens to the soul after death?" Although it begins with a story, it expounds a great truth that the *Atma* is different from the body and all afflictions of the body (like anger, hatred, likes, passion, etc.) and so one should train the mind to view the body as an external object to *Atman*.

4-6 Prasna (प्रश्न) Mundaka (मुण्ड) and Maandukya (माण्डूक्य) Upanishads

These three belong to *Atharva Veda*. *Prasnopanishad* deals with the analysis of six questions (*praSna* means question) and they are: 1. How creation began ? 2. Devas are

whom? 3. How body and life are connected? 4. What are three states - wakefulness, dream and deep sleep? 5. What is the benefit of worshipping the *Pranava*? 6. What is the relation between *Purusha* and *Jiva*?

Mundaka Upanishad is believed to be followed by Sannyasins with detached disposition of the phenomenal world. The term *mundaka* means "fully shaven-head" or "tonsure". The upanishad deals with 'akshara brahman' which may mean either as the one which is free from dissolution (decay) or as "syllable". The imagery of the *Jivaatma* and *Paramaatma* as two birds perched on the tree of *sareera* (body) where the *Jiva* bird eats the fruits of action and the *paramaatma* bird remains a mere witness, is given in this Upanishad the motto of India, "Truth alone triumphs" is also derived from this upanishad!

सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः

The smallest of all upanishads is Maandukya upanishad (contains only twelve mantras!). Manduka (मण्डुक) means "frog". As a frog can leap from the first to the fourth step of a stairs without having to climb each stair, this upanishad gives the way to transcend the three stages of awakening (*jaagrati*), dream (*swapna*), and sleep (*susupti*) and reach the fourth stage of *turiya* through the worship of *Pranava*.

7. Taittiriya (तैत्तिरीय) upanishad

This belongs to the Krishna Yajur Veda. This has three chapters: Seekshaa valli deals with aspects of studies and teaching, various *upaasanas* including that of *pranava*, *aavahanti*

homa mantras, fundamental duties and values etc. The famous statements that "mother, father, teacher and guest are personifications of divinities" occur in this chapter.

मातृ देवो भव। पितृ देवो भव।
आचार्य देवो भव। अतिथि देवो भव ।

The second chapter, *brahmaananda valli*, deals with an unique analysis of five sheaths - *panca kosas* namely, *annamaya* (food), *praana maya* (life), *mano maya* (mind), *vijnaana maya* (knowledge) and *aananda maya* (bliss) sheaths. The popular inquiry of "bliss" in an ascending order culminating with '*brahmaananda*' is expounded at the end of this chapter.

The third chapter, *brighu valli*, is the teaching (*upadesa*) of Varuna to his son Brighu where he enables his son to go through an intense enquiry of the Self through the stages of the *panca kosas*, and the son finally achieves the results. The value of food - "do not abuse food, grow more food; do not waste food"- is given in detail. The chapter ends with the proclamation that the Realized *Jiva* thinks that he alone is the food, the one who eats it, the one who generated link between the food and the eater. He sings in bliss where himself and divinity are One.

8. Aitareya (ऐतरेय) Upanishad

This is placed at the end of the Aitareya Aranyaka of Rig veda and is so called because it came through the revelation of the rishi Aitareya. This expounds the cycle of life and death according to one's own merits (*punya*) and demerits (*paapa*) and how freedom from

this cycle is possible through knowledge (*jnaana*) of the nature of *aatma*. This contains the great saying "*prajnaanam brahma*".

9. Chaandogya (छान्दोग्य) Upanishad

This is placed in the *chaandogya braahmana* portion of *saama veda*. The term '*chaandoga*' means 'the one who sings the *saama gaana*'. This Upanishad deals with several disciplines (*vidya*) like *akshi vidya*, *aakaasa vidya*, *saandilya vidya*, *praana vidya*, *panchaagni vidya* etc. The most important *vidya* is *dahara vidya* which deals with the realization of the limitless spatial expanse of the *Paramaatman* within the small space (*aakaasa*) of the *Jiva*. It contains several popular stories such as that of *Satyakaama*, *Uddalaka Aaruni* etc. This also gives the famous *mahaavaakhya* "*tat tvam asi*"!

10. Brahadaaranyka (ब्रह्दारण्यक) Upanishad

This is the biggest of all the Upanishads and occurs as the entire *aaranyaka* portion of *sukla yajur veda* ! There are two versions of this, the *Maadhyandina* version and the *Kaanva* version. *Adi Sankara's* commentary is on the *Kaanva* version only. It contains 3 *kaandas* (*Madhu*, *Muni* and *Khila kaandas*) divided in to six chapters. In this Upanishad, the *Atman* is described through a series of negations as "not this, not this", known as *neti neti* (नेति नेति - न + इति) *vaada* . According to this argument, the world, the body and the mind have to be negated and the *Atman* is realized

as transcending any description through words! It starts with the famous saying,

असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।
मूर्ख्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ॥

(lead me (by giving knowledge) from unreal to real; from darkness (ignorance) to light; from death (limitation) to immortality (limitless))

This Upanishad relates stories of *brahma jnanis* like kings *Ajaata Satru* and *Janaka*; that women were also *brahma vaadins*, in the story of *Gargi* ! *Madhu kaanda* gives the message that everything is the manifestation of *Paramaatman* and that a realized *Jiva* will feel that the entire creation is as sweet as honey! *Muni kaanda* relates the advaitic philosophic discussions of Sage *Yaajnavalkya* with King *Janaka*, and his council of scholars, the sage's *vedantic* instructions to his wife *Maitreyi* etc. *Khila kaanda* consolidates many messages that lie scattered at various places (*khila - scattered*)!

If the *samhita* is like a tree, the *braahmanas* are its flowers, the *aaranyakas* are the fruits in the unripened state and the *upanishads* are the ripe fruits. They being the most important part of the *vedas*, they are rightly known as "*sruti siras*" or the head of the *vedas*!!

Ref. "*The Vedas*", *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan*, *Bombay 1988*.

संस्कृत भाषा परिचयः An Introduction to Sanskrit : Unit – IV

M. R. DWARAKANATH

१) श्लोक (Sloka)

शुक्लाम्बरधरं विष्णुं शशिवर्णं चतुर्भुजम् ।
प्रसन्नवदनं ध्यायेत् सर्वविघ्नोपशान्तये ॥

पदच्छेद (Word decomposition)

शुक्ल-अम्बर-धरं विष्णुं शशि-वर्णं चतुः-भुजं
प्रसन्न-वदनं ध्यायेत् सर्वं विघ्न उपशान्तये ॥

अर्थ (Meaning)

For the resolution (उपशान्तये) of all (सर्वं) obstacles (विघ्न) one should meditate (ध्यायेत्) on the one wearing pure white clothes (शुक्लाम्बरधरं), the all pervader (विष्णुं), the one with the complexion of moon (शशिवर्णं), the one with four hands (चतुर्भुजं) and the one who has a pleasant countenance (प्रसन्नवदनं).

२) सम्भाषण (Conversation)

भो: अधुना समयः कः	What is the time now?
पादोन त्रिवादनं जायते	It will be 2:45
तथा वा । तर्हि गृहं गच्छेयम्	Is that so! Then, I should go home
कः विशेषः	What is special?
मम भ्राता ग्रामत् आगच्छेत्	My brother should be arriving from the village
ज्येष्ठ भ्राता किल	The eldest brother?
सः ज्यायस् न ज्येष्ठः	He is elder not eldest
केन रूपेण आगमिष्यति	How is he coming?
धूम्रशकटे पञ्चवादने आगच्छेत्	He should arrive by train at 5:00
बहुशः विलम्बः स्यात्	It is likely to be late
अपि सपाद द्विघण्टा समयः अस्ति	There is still 2 and a quarter hours
उपविशतु च उपाहारः स्वीकरोतु तर्हि गच्छतु	Please sit, have some refreshments, then go
अद्य मा अस्तु । श्वः आवाम् आयायाव	Let it not be today. We will both come tomorrow
अवश्यं आयाहि	Come definitely
त्वम् कार्यालयात् कदा प्रत्यागच्छसि	When do you return from work?

३) शब्द कोशः (Vocabulary)

३-अ) सुबन्ताः (Nouns, Adjectives, etc.)

अग्रिः	Elbow	मुष्टिः	Fist
मणिबन्धः	Wrist	नाभिः	Navel
श्मश्रु	Beard	हनुः	Jaw
ओष्ठः	Lip	पक्ष्मन्	Eyelash
पक्षः	Wing	पक्षिन्	Bird
लाङ्गूलं	Tail	लाङ्गूलिन्	Monkey
शुगालः	Fox	वृकः	Wolf
मक्षिका	Fly	अलिः	Bee
कदली	Banana	नास्केलः	Coconut
अञ्जीरं	Fig	नारङ्गः	Orange
पिङ्गलः	Brown	पाटलः	Pink
नीललोहित	Purple	धूसरः	Gray
ह्रस्व	Short	दीर्घ	Long
शान्त	Calm	चण्ड	Fierce

३-इ) तिङन्ताः (Verbs) : The roots and (stems) of more Sanskrit verbs:

अर्ह (अर्ह)	deserve	ऊह (ऊह)	guess
कृष् (कर्ष)	attract	खन् (खन)	dig
इष् (इच्छ)	wish	कुप् (कुप्य)	angry
खिद् (खिद्य)	suffer	कथ् (कथय)	narrate
क्षल् (क्षालय)	wash	खाद् (खाद)	eat
जप् (जप)	mutter	जन् (जन्य)	be born
चिन्त् (चिन्तय)	think	चुद् (चोदय)	inspire
डी (डय)	fly	तक्ष् (तक्ष)	cut
त्रै (त्राय)	protect	तुद् (तुद)	strike
तुष् (तुष्य)	please	तद् (ताडय)	beat
तुल् (तोलय)	weigh	दिव् (दिव्य)	play
नट् (नट)	act	पच् (पच)	cook

३-उ) अव्ययपदानि (Indeclinables)

अन्तः	Inside	बहिः	Outside
पुस्तात्	Before	परस्तात्	After
विरलं	Rarely	मुहुः	Often
साकं	With	विना	Without

प्रातर्	Early	पश्चात्	Later
चेत्	If	नाना	Various
धिक्	Fie	पृथक्	Separate

४) सरलानि वाक्यानि (Simple Sentences)

हरिः गृहे स्यात्	Hari should be at home
जलमलं पिबेत्	One should drink enough water
वेदाध्ययनं कुर्याम्	I should study the Vedas
पादौ क्षालयेथाः	You should wash your feet
यथा ते तत्र वर्तेरन्	As they would act there
अलक्ष्ण धर्मकामाः स्युः	They should be dharmic and not too harsh
तथा तत्र वर्तेथाः	You should act there like that
सत्यं ब्रूयातम् (भाषेयाथाम्)	You two should speak the truth
अन्नं बहु कुर्वीत	One should make food plenty
रज्जुं सर्पं न विसम्भ्रमेत	You all should not confuse rope for snake
न निष्ठीवेत्	One should not spit
आत्मानं तोलयेयम्	I should weigh myself
उद्यमात् धनं लभेध्वम्	From effort, you should earn wealth
शरदः शतं पश्येम	May we see a hundred autumns
शुभ्रवस्त्राणि दधीमहि	We should wear clean clothes
अरण्ये धीयीरन्	They should study in the forest
अथ तमग्निमिन्धीत	Now that fire should be kindled

५) सन्धिः Sandhi

५-अ) हल् सन्धिः Consonant Sandhi

The consonant (व्यञ्जन) sandhi rules are best understood by reference to the alphabet table [vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 13.] The harsh (कर्कश) consonants are: क्, ख्, च्, छ्, ट्, ठ्, त्, थ्, प्, फ् । the soft (मृदु) consonants are: ग्, घ्, ज्, झ्, ड्, ढ्, द्, ध्, ब्, भ् । The nasals (अनुनासिकाः) are: ङ्, ञ्, ण्, न्, म् । These 25 consonants are called वर्गीय ।

The 5 classes are guttural - क वर्ग - कण्ठ्य, palatal - च वर्ग - तालव्य, cerebral - ट वर्ग - मूर्धन्य, dental - त वर्ग - दन्त्य, and labial - प वर्ग - ओष्ठ्य ।

हल् सन्धिः

पूर्व	पर	आदेशः	दृष्टान्तः
कर्कश	मृदु, स्वर	मृदु मृदु, स्वर	वाक् देवी - वादेवी
मृदु	कर्कश	कर्कश कर्कश	अद् ति - अन्ति
दन्त्य	तालव्य	तालव्य तालव्य	तत् जुहोति - तज्जुहोति
दन्त्य	मूर्धन्य	मूर्धन्य मूर्धन्य	तत् टीका - तट्टीका
दन्त्य	ल्	ल्ल्	तत् लयः - तल्लयः
न्	ल्	ल्ल्	त्रीन् लोकान्- त्री ल्लोकान्
न्	(च, छ, ट, ठ, त्, थ्) अम्	अनुस्वर विसर्ग () अम्	कस्मिन् चित् -कस्मिंश्चित्
वर्गीय व्यञ्जन	अनुनासिक	व अनुनासिक अनुनासिक	षट् मुख - षण्मुख
अनुस्वर	वर्गीय व्यञ्जन	व अनुनासिक व्यञ्जन	शं करः - शङ्करः
व्यञ्जन	श्	व्यञ्जन छ्	तत् शं-तच्छं
ह्रस्वस्वर	ङ्, ण्, न्	ह्रस्वस्वर ङङ्, ण्, न्	वदन् एव - वदन्नेव
ह्रस्वस्वर	छ्	ह्रस्वस्वर च् छ्	पद छेद - पदच्छेद
ऋ,र,ष्, न्	(अट्,कुप्) न्	ऋ,र,ष् ()ण्	राम अयन- रामायण
(इ,उ,ऋ, र्,कुप्)	स्	() ष्	ब्रू से - ब्रूषे
क्,त्	ह्	(ग्,द्)ध्	विद्युत् हेति- विद्युद्धेति

६ सुबन्तप्रकरणम् - Declension

The declension of a Sanskrit nominal is governed by its gender and the final sound of the primitive or प्रातिपदिक । Even for a given gender and final sound, there are variations. Adjectives do not possess an inherent gender, but they take on the gender of the nouns they

modify. Thus, adjectives come in all 3 genders! There are 8 cases and the case endings depend on the case and number.

६-१ विभक्तयः - Cases

विभक्ति	कारक	Case
प्रथमा	कर्तृ	Nominative
द्वितीया	कर्म	Accusative
तृतीया	करण	Instrumental
चतुर्थी	संप्रदान	Dative
पञ्चमी	अपादान	Ablative
षष्ठी		Genitive
सप्तमी	अधिकरण	Locative
सं प्रथमा	संबोधन	Vocative

The various cases precisely relate the role of the noun to the action. In English this relationship is expressed through either prepositions or through word order as seen in the table below:

Case	Relationship to verb	Preposition Used
Nom.	Agent - doer	Syntax
Acc.	Direct object	Syntax
Inst.	Implement	By, with
Dative	Indirect object	For
Ablative	Separation	From
Genitive	Possession	's, of
Locative	Place	In, on, over,...
Vocative	Address	(Hey!)

Consider the following sentences:

कृष्णः पचति ।

कृष्णः ओदनं पचति ।

कृष्णः अग्निना ओदनं पचति

कृष्णः अग्निना ओदनं पुत्राय पचति ।

कृष्णः अग्निना ओदनं पुत्राय वात्सल्यात् पचति ।

कृष्णः अग्निना ओदनं रामस्य पुत्राय वात्सल्यात् पचति ।

कृष्णः अग्निना ओदनं रामस्य पुत्राय वात्सल्यात् गृहे पचति ।

Now the meaning:

Krishna cooks.

Krishna cooks rice.

Krishna cooks rice with fire.

Krishna cooks rice with fire, for son.

Krishna cooks rice with fire, for son, out of (from) love.

Krishna cooks rice with fire, for Rama's son, out of love.

Krishna cooks rice with fire, at home, for Rama's son, out of love.

In the above sentences, the action is cooking. The agent is Krishna. In active voice, the agent and the action have to agree in their common grammatical attributes, viz. number and person. Krishna is singular, third person.

पचति is also third person singular! **None of the other cases have to agree with the verb in this respect.** Indeed this is generally not possible as we shall see.

The object being cooked is rice which is placed in the accusative case. As the object being cooked can be many, the direct object need not be singular and thus cannot be in agreement with the singular verb. The implement for cooking is fire and fire is placed in the instrumental case. Cooking is to benefit the son who is placed in dative. Cooking is done out of love, thus, love is in ablative.

The son is Rama's son. Rama has no relationship the action - to cook. **The genitive relates not to the verb but to another noun and therefore it is not a कारक ।** Finally the place of cooking is the house which is in locative.

A meaningful sentence can be had with the कर्तृ, क्रिया and any number of कारक ।

However, the sentence कृष्णः रामस्य पचति does not make sense because the genitive relates to another noun and the only other noun is Krishna. Thus the sentence translates to - Rama's Krishna cooks!

७ तिङन्तप्रकरणम् Verbs - Conjugation

७-अ) विद्यर्थे विधिलिङ् Potential Mood

This mode is used to express that a certain action should or ought to be carried out. This is similar to the imperative except that it is not a direct command but rather a broad

directive. It is also used to express possibility (doubt) or a hypothesis (what if?) or to express a wish, invitation, etc.

All the terminations for this mode start with ई followed by essentially the लङ् terminations. However, there are some exceptions.

परस्मैपद (आत्मनेपद) विद्यर्थे लिङ् तिङन्ताः

	एक वचन	द्वि वचन	बहु वचन
प्रथम पुरुष	ईत् (ईत)	ईताम् (ईयाताम्)	ईयुः (ईरन्)
मध्यम पुरुष	ईः (ईथाः)	ईतम् (ईयाथाम्)	ईत (ईध्वम्)
उत्तम पुरुष	ईयम् (ईय)	ईव (ईवहि)	ईम (ईमहि)

The sloka at the beginning of this lesson uses the potential mood which is a broad injunction to meditate on ... for ...

Exercises

1. Combine these using सन्धि rules :

ग्र अनः, षट् नवतिः, जगत् शासक, तस्मिन् उदकम्, चित् मयः, उत् हरति, तरु छाया, प्राक् मुखः, अस्मिन् लोके, जगत् लीला, आकाशात् डयते, वाक् झरी, विद् तः, वाक् होता, तत् रूप, अरीन् जयति, बालान् ताडयति ।

2. Do पदच्छेद in the following :

सत्यान् प्रमदितव्यम्, आकाशाद्वायुः, अन्नाद्धयेव, यस्मिन्निदं, उद्धरति, तरुच्छाया, वाङ्मय, तच्छ्रुत्वा, तज्जुहोति, अस्माल्लोकात्, षड्विंशति, बहूञ्छिल्पिनः, सँलक्ष्मीहीनं, पितृस्तर्पय, भगवद्गीता ।

3. Identify the tense/mood/pada :

लकार, पद चरेत्, अभवाव, लभध्वम्, कम्पते, वद, क्षमस्व, भाषेरन्, भिक्षावहै, अवतु, करोषि, गच्छामि, वर्तेथाः, पश्यत, अत्यजन्, जीवेयम्, गायाम, अयतावहि, मोदावहे, रोचध्वे, पठताम्, जीवामः, बोधथ, सरानि, पिब, जिघ्रन्ति, सहेय ।

Sanskrit Crossword #3 (One syllable per box)

Clues Across :

- 1 Quick
- 4 Today, now
- 5 Main Bridgewater diety

- 6 Gold
- 8 Sandal paste
- 10 May he protect
- 11 Written (past participle)
- 12 Secret
- 13 Clove

Clues Down :

- 2 Entrance
- 3 Siva - Lord of dance
- 4 Lotus
- 6 Siva - Wearer of skulls
- 7 Palm of the hand
- 8 Consisting of four parts, Chess
- 9 He will salute

१	२		३		४	
	५					
६		७		८		९
		१०				
११				१२		
		१३				

Solutions to Exercises from Unit - 3

1. शान्तिरस्तु । आर्यपुत्रो जयतु । अयुर्वर्धताम् । देवास्तृप्यन्ताम् । हे छात्रा धर्मं चरत ।
2. रामः वनं गच्छति । बुधाः वदन्ति । गुरुः विष्णुः । देवाः तुष्टाः अभवन् । रामः च लक्ष्मणः च द्वौ वीरौ । सः नृपः अजयत् । रविः राजति ॥
3. Solutions to Crossword #3 :
१ कवि । ४ अरि । ५ चन्द्रवदन । ६ प्रणव । ८ परशु । १० चतुर । ११ जननी । १२ मातृक । १३ यथार्थ ॥
२ विचक्षण । ३ सुवर्ण । ४ अनन्तर । ६ प्रयोजन । ७ वचनीय । ८ परमार्थ । ९ शुभकर ॥

A TREK TO HILLS

RAMAA SUBRAMANIAN

The school authorities made arrangements to take students trekking. Those who wanted to go trekking were required to deposit an amount within a stipulated time period.

Mohit and Rakesh were friends and Mohit went to Rakesh's house to find out if Rakesh was going to trek. Only Rakesh's mother was home.

"Are you going for trekking?" she asked Mohit.

"Yes, aunty, I want to take along Rakesh too this time," said Mohit.

"Yes, he was also insisting, but we refused," said Rakesh's mother.

"Aunty, please allow him to go with us. Our other friends will also be there," said Mohit.

Just then Rakesh came. His father too came home from the office. Seeing an eager Rakesh, he gave permission.

"Stay together and climb the mountain with caution," said their parents. Rakesh was very excited since this was his first trekking trip.

"Look, take care of your things and don't leave anything behind," instructed the teacher while they were taking their seats on the bus. All the boys were enthusiastic. The boys who had gone for trekking before were full of fond memories of their past experiences, while the ones who were going for the first time were getting excited to think of the fun they all would have there.

The bus halted at their destination. There they took their breakfast and then got ready for trekking. All the boys were carrying ropes, sticks, torches, and knives in their bags. The teachers asked them to start climbing.

Two boys slipped on the hill in the beginning itself. The teachers asked them to be confident and followed the two students to enthruse them.

The entire group was climbing on merrily. Since the weather was clear, they did not have any difficulty. Mohit asked, "Rakesh how are you feeling?" Rakesh replied, "Wow! It's fun and enjoyable to climb on the mountain with ropes". Mohit was following him in the beginning. Soon the boys chose to go up in different groups on different paths.

All of a sudden, the weather changed. It became overcast and began to drizzle. Soon it began to SNOW. It was very windy and the weather became worse. Mohit looked around and found Rakesh missing. He called his name loudly and repeatedly. Anxious for the well being of his friend, Mohit began to look for him. Due to fog, nothing was visible. He could not even see the teacher. He and the other boys had perhaps gone in different directions. Mohit lit a torch and had just moved aside to search when; suddenly he slipped and rolled down into a ditch on the right side.

As soon as Mohit fell down, he fainted. On the other hand, though it was a first time experience for Rakesh, he did not lose courage

in adverse circumstances. He also began to look for Mohit. He called out his name repeatedly but could not find him. "Has he met with an accident?" wondered Rakesh. The next moment, he heard the sound of a mouth organ being played.

"Mohit is fond of playing this tune!" thought Rakesh, and he started moving in the direction from which the sound was coming. The sound was indeed coming from the ditch, and it was indeed the sound of the mouth organ being played by Mohit who regained consciousness by this time. It was a deep ditch and the falling snow had made visibility poor. Suddenly Rakesh noticed a ray of light, that came from Mohit's torch.

"He must be there in this ditch," thought Rakesh as he peered into it.

"Take me out, friend, I am here." Mohit saw Rakesh and called out to him. Rakesh began to find a way to save his friend. Seeing a tree nearby, he thought of a plan. He tied a rope

which he already had in his bag, to the tree and hung its other end inside the ditch.

"Hold on to this rope tightly. Mohit, I will try to pull you out." Mohit gripped the rope and Rakesh succeeded in pulling him out. As soon as Mohit came out safe and sound, he hugged Rakesh affectionately. He thanked Rakesh profusely for saving his life. It was my duty friend, said Rakesh. Both the friends began to wait for the weather to become clear.

Later when the teachers and the other boys came to know of it, they applauded Rakesh for his courage. "You did wonders today. This was your first experience of trekking, yet you not only acted boldly, but also saved your friend's life," said the teacher.

Later Rakesh was also declared the "BEST TREKKING BOY." On coming home when Rakesh described his feat to his parents, they were very happy and proud !!

Moral : A friend in need is a friend indeed.



ESSAY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR YOUNG READERS.....

Ages: Upto 13: "Our Festivals - Deepavali"

Neeta Chandrashekhar (13)

Deepavali. What is that? I think and ask myself about that all the time. Most kids, including me think it is an Indian holiday where we play with fireworks and take a day off from school. But that isn't the whole meaning to this holiday. There is a lot more to it.

Deepavali is celebrated in many ways in different parts of India. In the Northern part, it is called "The Festival of Lights." Deepavali is celebrated in the north because of the return of Rama along with Sita and Lakshmana from fourteen years of exile after killing Ravana. Everyone takes sweets and visits friend's houses. Also, most people light firecrackers at night time for fun. Some people celebrate Lakshmi Pooja. It is also a New Year's day for many people.

In the eastern part of India, it's time for the Bengalis to worship goddess Kali or Durga. The Goddess Durga continued her "Vilaya Tandava" after killing the demon Mahishasura. On that day, the Bengali's celebrate Kali pooja with firecrackers, sweets, and special foods.

In the south, Deepavali marks the killing of the demon Narakasuran by Lord Krishna and his wife Satyabhama. Narakasuran received a blessing from Lord Brahma after lots of prayers. He then terrorized people and had to be killed to save the people from his torture. They also celebrate Deepavali with firecrackers, special foods, and by visiting friends and family.

Isn't it amazing how one country celebrates one festival in so many ways? Well, now we know that Deepavali isn't all about new clothes and firecrackers. It does have a lot of meaning behind it, and it is always nice to learn as much as you can about your culture.

Neeta is an 8th grader from Somerville Middle School, Somerville, NJ. In addition to being a high honor roll student, she is the treasurer of the student council, a peer mediator, a band member, a basketball player and a carnatic music student.

Aparna Yenamandra (12)

We sat around the glowing fire on the late October day. That day was Deepavali, and my grandmother was about to tell us the beginning of this holiday....

Deepavali, also known as the "festival of lights" is celebrated 20 days after Dassera. It is a well-known holiday that is celebrated in Indian communities around the world. During this holiday, small oil lamps called diyas are placed around the home, in courtyards, verandahs, and gardens as well as on rooftops. Decorative designs called rangolis are painted on the floors. New clothes are bought, and family members gather together to offer prayers, distribute sweets, and light their homes. Displays of fireworks follow after that.

Deepavali signifies many different things to Indian people across the globe. In North

India, Deepavali celebrates Rama's homecoming after 14 years of exile. In Gujarat and Maharashtra, this festival commemorates goddess Lakshmi and marks the start of the Hindu New Year. Deepavali in Bengal is associated with the goddess Kali. This holiday in South India signifies the day the demon Narkasura was slain to death. Throughout the world the celebration of Deepavali means the renewal of life. It heralds the beginning of winter and the beginning of sowing season.

After her story, my family and I got up to do some of the many things that Deepavali celebrates. My sister and I lit the glowing diyas all over our home. After this was done, we went into the backyard and set off sparkling fireworks into the glittering night sky. After we finished, we leaned back in our chairs and thought about the "festival of lights" that means so many things to so many people.

Aparna is a 7th grader in Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Edison, NJ. In addition to academic excellence, she learns carnatic music, piano and is a tennis player.

Yashasvini Rajeswar (6)

We celebrate Deepavali in October or November. On Deepavali day in 1999 I took oil bath, wore a new dress and took blessings from elders. I don't remember what I did in 1998. Here's the story of how Deepavali came: Once there was a bad man named Naragasura, Everyone were praying to Lord Krishna to kill Naragasura. One fine day Lord Krishna killed that bad Naragasura. We celebrate that day as Deepavali. In some parts of North India Deepavali is the first day of the year. There it

is known as "the festival of lights". They also pray to Goddess Lakshmi for wealth and prosperity. Deepavali is celebrated by all Hindus from all over the world. I am looking forward to this year's Deepavali. In India they fire crackers in all houses. But here it is not possible. Last year I was in Stroudsburg and I saw the fireworks there. When my dad was a little boy they used to buy lots of crackers and the next day it would take a lot of time to clean. I have never been in India during Deepavali. I would love to go there sometime and have fun with my grand parents and fire a lot of crackers too.

Yashasvini is a 1st grader in Dallington Public School in Toronto, Canada. In addition to excellence in her school curriculum, she learns carnatic vocal music.

Essay Contributions:

Ages 13 – 19:

"The Book I would like all my friends to read"

Ashok Chandrashekhhar (16)

A book that I am in the process of reading and would like my friends to read is The Mahabharata by Sri. C. Rajagopalachari. Even though I am only in the middle of the book, what I have read so far is a very precise narration of the epic Mahabharata.

This book is excellent for young people due to the fact that it is very easy to read and can be understood without difficulty. It is filled with various stories and characters that teach about different aspects of life. Some of these characters are Bishma, the perfect knight, the honorable Drona, the courageous Karna, and the great Lord Krishna. They all teach different

lessons with their actions during different stages in their lives. The author really uses his writing skills to allow the reader to let his/her imagination "roll" with the story and makes it a very exciting journey.

An example of a lesson that we can learn from one of the chapters in the book relates to the story of how Lord Krishna became Arjuna's charioteer. As the story states, Arjuna and Duryodhana were at Lord Krishna's bedside to ask for his aid in the battle. When Lord Krishna woke up from his sleep, he saw Arjuna standing near his feet and then saw Duryodhana sitting near the head of the bed. Lord Krishna gave Arjuna the first choice, since he saw him first, of choosing between himself unarmed and his entire army. Without hesitation, Arjuna chose Lord Krishna and Duryodhana got Krishna's army. When Lord Krishna asked Arjuna why he chose him, Arjuna replied, "My ambition is to achieve great glory even like yours. You have the power to face all princes of the land single-handed. I too feel I can do it. So, I desire that I should win the battle with you driving my chariot unarmed. I have desired this for a long time and you have today fulfilled my wish."

This story taught me the value of making the right decision at crucial times. It's not the quantity, but it is the quality that truly matters. As Arjuna saw, the large number of men in Lord Krishna's army was no match to the valor of Lord Krishna himself.

There are many similar stories, and each story has a theme that we can apply to our daily lives. I would strongly recommend this book to all youngsters.

Ashok Chandrashekhar is a 11th grader in Somerville High School in Somerville, NJ. Other than being in the honor roll academically, he is a varsity cross country and track member. He also is part of the marching band program in the school.

"A Doll House"

Radha Shivagiri (16)

Hinduism: Most people think of it as a religion, I like to think of it as a way of living. While some may consider their religion one hour every day while praying in the morning, I run into many of the basic aspects of Hinduism in my every day living: from school work to extra curriculums. In fact, in much of what I discuss, read, and analyze in class or even what I accomplish outside of my scholastic life, I find myself immersed in the ideas of the Hinduism faith. In fact, a prime illustration of the principles Hinduism has to offer in our every day existence comes from a play titled A Doll House by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen.

For those who have never seen or read the play, a brief synopsis follows: Nora Helmer, wife of Torvald Helmer, feels trapped in her existence. On one hand, her husband treats her like a doll, one he can play with, dress, and control for his own enjoyment. On the other hand, she saves his life by forging a bank note; an act she must keep secret for fear it will destroy Torvald's honor. In the end; however, he acquires knowledge of her business matters, and displays disgust rather than thankfulness admitting he treasures his honor before his love. Subsequently, she

leaves a lifestyle she once thought of as "perfect" realizing she has other duties; "duties to herself...duties just as sacred".

Unquestionably, the themes Ibsen presents to the reader parallel the meaning of our Hinduism faith. A Case in point, Nora's act of leaving her husband, after realizing her disillusionment, in order to fulfill her own expectations and face the truth hiding beneath what she thought was a flawless life represents dharma, achieving one's purpose without the expectation of results. Torvald Helmer, nevertheless, provides the reader with an example of one whom puts his honor before his duties to his wife, and furthermore, when performing his duties he expects gratitude from Nora. The ending depicts the outcome if one does not attend to his or her own dharma and find the truth behind his or her own mortality.

Overall, rather than end with a flaky conclusion, I'd rather leave you with a quotation I feel best sums up the meaning of the play: "I must stand quite alone if I am to understand myself and everything about me."

Radha is a 11th grader in South Brunswick High School; a Honors student in English and Algebra; Soccer player; learns western and carnatic music. Participates in social / community volunteer activities like Soup Kitchens. Likes Travel / Photography.

Correction :
Vol. 1.4, P.46 Left Column : Box entry :
Rati is a 9th grader & not a 7th grader.
The typo error is regretted.

Children Writers !
(Ages: under 12)

This section features contributions from our children. We invite short stories, anecdotes, poems etc. on a given theme.

Theme for next issue of Journal:

**Who is My Role Model
and Why ?**

(Length: Max. 250 words)

Youth Writers !
(Age: 13-19)

This section will feature articles from our young adults on a suggested theme.

Theme for next issue:

**" Non-Violence in
Thought & Action"**

(Write about a book that you recently read on Hindu Culture/ Mythologies /Parables.

Express the theme and its values to all youngsters)

(Length: 400 words)

Each selected entry will be published !!

Dead-line for submission of articles

April 15, 2000

Send articles by email to
svbf@silverline.com

OR Mail to:

**SVBF,
Silverline Plaza
53 Knightsbridge Road,
Piscataway, NJ 08854**

प्रश्नोत्तर रत्न मालिका
Prasnottara Ratna MALikA
Sankara Bhagavatpada
(The Gem-Garland of
Questions and Answers)

(In this work, Adi Sankara enlightens and clears our doubts about various issues, in the form of simple question-answers. We will include some selections in each issue of the Journal.) - Ed.

- Q. किं मरणम् kim maraNam: ?)
What is death?
- A. मूर्खत्वम्। (moorkhatvam)
Unintelligence.
- Q. किं च अनर्घम्? (kim ca anargham ?)
What is priceless?
- A. यदस्वरे दत्तम् । (yadasvarE dattam)
That which is given at the right moment.
- Q. आमरणात् किं शाल्यम् ?
(AamaraNaat kim Saalyam?)
What pains like a shaft till death?
- A. प्रच्छन्नम् यत् कृतं पापम्।
(pracchannam yat kritam paapam |)
The sin committed in secrecy.
- Q. कुत्र विधेयो यत्नः ?
(kutra vedhEyO yatna: ?)
Where is the effort ordained?
- A. विद्याभ्यासे, सदौषदे, दाने।
(vidyaabhyaasE, sadaushadE, daanE)
In learning, good medicine, charity.

- Q. अवधीरणा क्र कार्या ?
(avadhIraNA kva kaaryaa: ?)
Where is indifference to be shown?
- A. खलु, परयोषितु, परधनेषु।
(khalu, prayOshitu, paradhanEshu.)
Towards bad people, another's wife,
another's property.

सु भाषितानि
(SubhAshitAs)

हस्तस्य भूषणम् दानं
सत्यं कंठस्य भूषणम् ।
श्रोतस्य भूषणम् शास्त्रं
नेत्रस्य भूषणम् समदर्शिता ॥

hastasya bhooshNam daanam
satyam kaNthasya bhooshaNam |
SrOtasya bhooshaNam Saastram
NEtrasya samadarSitaa ||

Giving (donation) is the ornament of hands
Speaking truth is the ornament of voice
Listening to scriptures and words of
knowledge is the ornament of ears
Seeing everyone equally is the
ornament of eyes !

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in the SVBF Journal.

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Book Reviews

"What We Can Learn from the East", Beatrice Bruteau (Crossroad Publishing Company, October 1997)

Since the early 1960s Christians have been showing increasing eagerness to become acquainted with spiritual traditions of the East, which though sometimes present in nascent form in Christianity, really come to a full flowering in Hinduism and Buddhism. What may have looked like a transient fad seems to be evolving into mainstream activity. The impetus for this book was a request from a group of Christian retreat directors who wanted to know what they could learn from Eastern spiritual traditions.

In this book Bruteau, an influential philosopher, sheds light on the truth, beauty, and wisdom of Christianity through insights and stories from Buddhist, Hindu, and other Eastern spiritual traditions. Bruteau offers perspectives and practices from Eastern wisdom sources that have parallels in Christianity so that Christians can adapt or adopt them and deepen their own experiences. She also presents challenging ideas from the East that are at variance with usual Christian beliefs in order to stimulate fresh thinking and new insights. Throughout, she interweaves views and techniques from the East with familiar Christian stories and worship to turn the Christian jewel to new angles of brilliance and glow. Bruteau delivers the goods, elucidating Eastern concepts and drawing insightful parallels with Biblical passages. Her thorough grasp of Christianity as well as the Eastern traditions inspires confidence and attention.

The Freedom Writers Diary : "How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them" by Freedom Writers & Erin Gruwell, Doubleday (1999)

This is a book I would strongly recommend for all our teenage children (and

their parents) to not just read, but internalize it and reflect upon its relevance to their own life in the U.S.A. The factual story revolves around an idealistic young English teacher, Erin Gruwell, who banks on a formidable task of confronting a room filled with rambunctious, unteachable students with deep-rooted scars. The teacher quickly discerns that these kids are the victims of the war in America — the war of violence, racial hatred and destruction that is becoming increasingly apparent all over the United States. Undaunted, the teacher sets out on a journey with the students, using treasured books *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and *A Child's Life in Sarajevo* as the spring board. Encouraged by the teacher, in their own voices and in beautifully crafted prose, teenagers tell stories of their daily lives: the physical and emotional war zones they inhabit become real to the reader. With the help of the inspirational teacher, these students read other teenagers' stories and learn to see their lives in historical context. Erin Gruwell empowers these young people to transform their realities through the power of the "word". This book should serve as an inspiration for every individual. The fact that one strong and courageous teacher could inspire 150 students to graduate from high school and go onto college should prove what each and every one of us can do if we are willing to help. This book is what life is all about: Courage, commitment, strength, acceptance, love, hope, faith and the willingness to help. This book captures the reality of today's youth living in America — whether you are white, brown, black, or yellow. The resounding message of the book is that every child of every color, shape, and background has the potential "to make a difference" in their life and in the life of others, and is valuable to our world.

Dr. Ravi Subramanyam