

शिवस्तोत्रं

A Shivastotra by ShankarAchArya

by Anand Hudli¹

The term Shiva means “auspicious.” The God Shiva is all-auspiciousness. The mantra namaH ShivAya, used to offer salutations to Shiva, is an effective prayer to propitiate Shiva. This mantra appears in many places in Vedic and Puranic literature. For example, the famous shrI Rudram hymn from the Yajur Veda, commonly employed to perform the worship of the Shiva linga, says: नमः शिवाय च । The dArIdrya dahana stotra of VasishhTha says: दारिद्र्यदुहृष-दहनाय नमः शिवाय ।

Salutations to Shiva who burns up the grief caused by poverty! Here poverty does not necessarily mean material poverty; it also means spiritual poverty. This pa.nchAkshara (five syllabled) mantra namaH ShivAya is sometimes called the mUla mantra or basic mantra of Shiva. Each of the five syllables, na, ma, shi, vA, and ya, is held to be so sacred that it represents Shiva even by itself.

The following is the ShivapanchAkshara stotra composed by Adi SankarAchArya. One may worship the Shiva linga by reciting this stotra and offering bilva leaves.

शिवपंचाक्षरस्तोत्र

नागेन्द्रहाराय त्रिलोचनाय भस्माङ्गरागाय महेश्वराय ।
नित्याय शुद्धाय दिग्म्बराय तस्मै नकाराय नमः शिवाय ॥ १ ॥

Salutations to Shiva, who wears the King of snakes as a garland, the Three-eyed God, whose body is smeared with ashes, the great Lord, the eternal and pure One, who wears the directions as His garment, and who is represented by the “na” kAra (term).

मन्दाकिनि-सलिलचन्दन-चर्चिताय
नन्दीश्वर-प्रमथनाथ- महेश्वराय ।
मन्दारपुष्प-बहुपुष्प-सुपूजिताय
तस्मै मकाराय नमः शिवाय ॥ २ ॥

I bow to Shiva, who has been worshipped with water from the gangA (mandAkini) and anointed with sandalwood paste, the Lord of

nandI, the Lord of the host of goblins and ghosts, the great Lord, who is worshiped with mandAra and many other kinds of flowers, and who is represented by the syllable “ma.”

शिवाय गौरीवदनाब्ज-वृन्द-
सूर्याय दक्षाध्वरनाशकाय ।
श्रीनीलकण्ठाय वृषध्वजाय
तस्मै शिकाराय नमः शिवाय ॥ ३ ॥

Salutations to Shiva, who is all-auspiciousness, Who is the sun that causes the lotus face of GaurI (PARvatI) to blossom, Who is the destroyer of the Yajna of daksha, whose throat is blue (nIlakaNTha), whose flag bears the emblem of the bull, and who is represented by the syllable “shi.”

वसिष्ठ-कुम्भोद्भव-गौतमार्यमुनीन्द्र-देवार्चितशेखराय ।
चन्द्रार्क-वैश्वानरलोचनाय तस्मै वकाराय नमः शिवाय ॥ ४ ॥

VasishhTha, agastya, Gautama, and other venerable sages, and Indra and other Gods have worshipped the head of (Shiva’s linga). I bow to that Shiva whose three eyes are the moon, sun and fire, and who is represented by the syllable “va.”

यक्षस्वरूपाय जटाधराय पिनाकहस्ताय सनातनाय ।
दिव्याय देवाय दिग्म्बराय तस्मै यकाराय नमः शिवाय ॥ ५ ॥

Salutations to Shiva, who bears the form of a Yaksha, who has matted hair on His head, Who bears the pinAka bow in His hand, the Primeval Lord, the brilliant God, who is digambara (naked), and who is represented by the syllable “ya.”

पंचाक्षरमिदं पुण्यं यः पठेच्छिवसन्निधौ ।
शिवलोकमवाप्नोति शिवेन सह मोदते ॥

Anyone who recites this sacred five-syllabled mantra, (namaH shivAya) near the Shiva (linga), attains the abode of Shiva and rejoices there with Shiva.

॥ इति श्रीमच्छंकराचार्यविरचित शिवपञ्चाक्षर स्तोत्रं समाप्तं ॥

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