

6. श्री द्वादशज्योतिर्लिङ्ग स्तोत्रम् / Sri Dwadashajyotirlinga Stotram

Introduction:

Earlier in Dakshinamurthy Stotra, we saw the Himalayan heights of Gnana Marga, and now in Dwadasha Jyotirlinga Stotra we will see the peaks of Bhakti Marga. The essence of all these 12 Jyotirlingas is that Shiva has been so compassionate (Ashuthosha) that he has manifested himself in the form of Jyoti to those devotees, who reached out to him for Darshan and protection. They were 'Aarthas' (distressed). There are four types of devotees as mentioned in Bhagavad Gita in the following verse.

Bhagavad Gita Ch 7.16

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मांजनाः सुकृतिनोर्जुन।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ॥

chaturvidhaa bhajantE maaM janaaH sukRutinOrjuna |
aartO jignyaasurarthaarthee gnyaanee cha bharatarShabha ||

Oh descendant of Bharata, there are four kinds of persons who are privileged to worship me – those who are in distress, the inquisitive, those that seek wealth and those that desire self-realization.

All the 12 devotees here were 'Aarthas', including Sri Rama. They had some misery or the other and hence approached Shiva who immediately emanated from the Jyoti, and gave darshan and succour.

Our Kanchi Periyava, Sri H H Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal has emphasized Jyotirlinga yatra and he personally visited every Jyotirlinga Kshetram and installed Adi Shankara's idol in all the Kshetrams. In Kailash Manasarovar also, he has installed the idol.

Shiva is always worshipped in the form of a "Linga". Parabrahmam manifests in two forms – "Saguna" (assumes an "aakaara", form - Saakaara) and "Nirguna" (no "aakaara" i.e., Niraakaara). In general, all the images/ idols of God we worship are "Saakaara", whereas "Linga" comes in between – it is neither Saakaara nor Niraakaara. "Linga" actually means Symbol. It is the symbol of "Niraakaara Parabrahmam" – a great attribute and speciality of Shivalinga.

Shiva Linga represents all the four main Devatas of the Sanathana Dharma, i.e, "Brahma", "Vishnu", "Shiva" and "Devi". Bottom of the Linga represents "Brahma", middle portion of the Linga represents "Vishnu", top portion of the Linga represents "Shiva" and the base portion represents "Devi". For this very reason, Linga Abhishekam is done with the chanting of "Rudram", "Purusha Suktam", "Durga Suktam" etc.,

"Dwadasha Jyotirlinga" – as the name mentions are 12 in number and has references mentioned in Shiva Purana at the end of Shata Rudra Samhita and throughout the Koti

Rudra Samhita. Though every Linga is in form of a Jyoti (pure light), the speciality about these Jyotirlingas is that Shiva emanated in the form of Jyoti and then assumed residence at these locations at the prayers of devotees/Rishis/Devas. The devotee, to whom Shiva gave darshan, saw him first in the form of pure light (Jyoti); hence the name Jyotirlinga. Each of the shloka below represents a Jyotirlinga and associated story. Though there are many versions of stories found, we have taken here the version described in Shiva Purana.

**1.सौराष्ट्रदेशे विशदेऽतिरम्ये ज्योतिर्मयं चन्द्रकलावतंसम्।
भक्तिप्रदानाय कृपावतीर्णं तं सोमनाथं शरणंप्रपद्ये॥**

**1. saurāṣṭradēśē viśadē'tiramyē jyōtirmayaṃ chandrakalāvataṃsam
bhaktipradānāya kṛpāvātīrṇaṃ taṃ sōmanāthaṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadyē**

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to the “Somanatha” Jyotirlinga, located in Gujarat

Story:

Daksha Prajapathi had twentyseven daughters (who are Nakshatras - stars) and he wedded all his daughters to Moon (Chandra). Initially Chandra was equally affectionate to all his wives. But in due course, he only favoured Rohini and neglected the rest. Daksha Prajapathi warned Chandra of his wrong attitude upon his other daughters' complaint. Though Chandra agreed and gave a word to Daksha, he continued his favouritism towards Rohini. As this went on for a long time, Daksha was exasperated and cursed Chandra to suffer with “Kshaya roga” (disease of consumption). Because Chandra was getting emaciated, Devatas and Rishis were worried (as Chandra is needed for living beings) and reached out to Brahma for advice. Brahma advised them to take Chandra to “Prabhasa Kshetra” in Gujarat. “Bhasa” means light. So, the first ever Jyotirlinga (Somanatha) manifested at a place which indicated special Light. At this place, Chandra did penance for a period of six months and chanted “Mrutyunjaya Mantra” ten crore times. Then Shiva appeared before him and blessed him stating that he would wane for the first fifteen days and grow for the next fifteen days (this is the reason we have “Krishna Paksha” and “Shukla Paksha”). At the prayers of Chandra and other Devas/Rishis, Shiva agreed to reside in “Prabhasa Kshetra” and Devatas established “Chandra Kund” (Pond in the name of Chandra). If one takes bath in this “Chandra Kund” and worships Somanatha, he/she is believed to be relieved from any sort of severe diseases and will be blessed by Lord Shiva with Gnana and finally be relieved from Samsara (cycle of birth and death).

सौराष्ट्रदेशे विशदेऽतिरम्ये / saurāṣṭradēśē viśadē'tiramyē

सौराष्ट्रदेशे – saurāṣṭradēśē - area called Sourashtra (where this Jyotirlinga is located); विशदे – viśadē - pure and brilliant ; अतिरम्ये – atiramyē -very beautiful and attractive

In the location “Sourashtra” (where Shiva himself appeared as Jyotirlinga), which is pure, brilliant, beautiful, and attractive

ज्योतिर्मयं चन्द्रकलावतंसम् / jyōtirmayaṃ chandrakalāvataṃsam

ज्योतिर्मयं – jyōtirmayaṃ - form of “Jyoti” (Pure light); चन्द्रकला– chandrakalā - digit of the moon; वतंसम् – vataṃsam - crest

Emanated as Jyoti and is having digit of the moon (Chandrakala) as his crest

भक्तिप्रदानाय कृपावतीर्णं/bhaktipradānāya kṛupāvātīrṇaṃ

भक्तिप्रदानाय – bhaktipradānāya - instills bhakti ; कृपा - kṛupā -compassion ;अवतीर्णं - āvatīrṇaṃ - coming down

He descended down (Avatara) to earth from the state of Parabrahmam to the state of visible form for his bhakta (Chandra) with compassion and to instill bhakti to those who visit and pray to him.

Notes:

He descends from the state of “Parabrahmam” and takes the form of a human being, an animal etc. so that he is visible to the devotees’ eyes. The benefit or purpose of an Avatara is to enable a devotee to experience the presence of Parabrahmam closely. Here Lord Shiva has descended to reveal himself to Chandra out of Krupa (compassion).

Chandra has shown bhakti and reaped the fruit of his bhakti. For other devotees who visit and pray to him – he instills bhakti. It is difficult for a devotee to show devotion / bhakti towards “Nirakaara nirguna Parabrahmam” (Parabrahmam with no form) at initial stages. Devotee needs “Saakaara Sagunabrahmam” to have bhakti/devotion. For this very reason, Lord Shiva stayed as Jyotirlinga in Somnath after blessing Chandra, without going back to Kailasa.

तंसोमनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये / taṃ sōmanāthaṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadyē

तंसोमनाथं – taṃ sōmanāthaṃ - to that Somanatha; शरणं – śaraṇaṃ -in his protection; प्रपद्ये – prapadyē - I take refuge

I take refuge under the protection of that Somanatha. Sharanagatiis taking refuge under his protection.

2.श्रीशैलशृङ्गे विबुधातिसङ्गे तुलाद्रितुङ्गेऽपि मुदा वसन्तम्।
तमर्जुनं मल्लिकपूर्वमेकं नमामि संसारसमुद्रसेतुम्॥

2. śrīśailaśṛṅgē vibudhathisaṅgē tulādrītruṅgē'pi mudā vasantam
tamArjunaṃ mallikapūrvamēkaṃ namāmi saṃsārasamudrasētum

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to the “Mallikarjuna” Jyotirlinga, located at Srishailam, Andhra Pradesh.

Story:

This story concerns Vinayaka and Subrahmanya. Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati set a competition between both of them, to determine who would be the first to go around the world among Vinayaka and Subrahmanya. Subrahmanya mounted on his peacock and went around the world. Vinayaka, on the other hand, went around his parents claiming that they were the world to him. So, he outwitted his brother and completed the terms of the contest prior to him. With the intervention of Sage Narada, Vinayaka was married to Siddhi and Buddhi the daughters of Brahma. By the time Subrahmanya came back, the wedding was over, and so he was upset. He angrily left for Krauncha Parvata and started living there. Both Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati waited for him in Kailasa Parvata and they sent many Devatas and Maharishis to convince Subrahmanya to return. But all efforts were in vain. At last, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati themselves visited the place called “Srishailam”. Lord Shiva assumed the form of “Arjuna” tree (known as “Marudha Maram” in Tamil) and Goddess Parvati assumed the form of “Mallika” which goes around the tree. Hence it is called “Mallikarjuna” kshetra. “Mallika” (Goddess Parvati) and “Arjuna” (Lord Shiva) waited in that Kshetra for Subrahmanya’s arrival. Subrahmanya returned after some persuasion.

As mentioned, the importance of Srishaila kshetra is that Goddess Parvati as “Mallika” goes around the “Arjuna” tree which is Lord Shiva himself. This “Arjuna” tree is associated mainly with three Kshetras namely - Mallikarjuna Kshetram (Srishailam), Madhyarjuna Kshetram (Tiruvidadaimarudur near Kumbakonam), and Putarjuna Kshetram (Tirupudaimarudur near Tirunelveli). In October 2018, Tamraparani Pushkaram was celebrated at this Putarjuna Kshetram, as chosen by Kanchi Acharya.

श्रीशैलशृङ्गे विबुधातिसङ्गे / śrīśailaśṛṅgē vibudhathisaṅgē

श्रीशैलशृङ्गे - śrīśailaśṛṅgē – on the peak of Srishailam mountain; विबुधा-vibudha – Devas, अतिसङ्गे- athisaṅgē - very close (to Devas)

Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati are shining on the peak of the hill Srishailam, which is frequently visited by Devas. बुधा-budha - means one who is wise. Vibudha is the name attributed to Devas because they possess the powers of knowledge which ordinary human being does not possess.

तुलाद्रिशृङ्गेऽपि मुदा वसन्तम् / tulādrīśṛṅgē’api mudā vasantam

तुला-tulā – comparison / balancing (just like picture of “balance” shown for Tula raasi); अद्रि-Adri –mountain; शृङ्गे-tuṅgē-peak of the mountain; अपि-api- in comparison; मुदा-mudā – happily; वसन्तम्- vasantam – living/residing

This peak – Srishaila Shringa (peak) is higher than the other comparable mountain peaks. Generally, the bhakti with which we approach a Devata is such that we praise him as the highest. Here, Adi Shankara praises the “Srishaila Shringa” as the highest among the surrounding mountain peaks.

On this highest peak, Lord Shiva, and Goddess Parvati are happily residing.

तमर्जुनं मल्लिकपूर्वमेकं /tam Arjunam mallikapūrvamēkaṃ

तम्-tam – that Arjuna ; अर्जुनं-Arjunam –that Lord Shiva who is in the form of Arjuna tree;
मल्लिकपूर्वम्-mallikapūrvam - the name whose first part is Mallika; एकं-ekam – only
(unique);

Lord Shiva who is in the form of Arjuna tree, who has the first part of his name as Mallika is unique.

नमामि संसारसमुद्रसेतुम् / namāmi saṃsārasamudrasētum

नमामि- namāmi- I prostate to him; संसारसमुद्र-saṃsārasamudra-ocean of Samsara; सेतुम्-
sētum-bridge;

Iprostate to that Mallikarjuna to cross over this ocean of Samsara.

Notes:

He is unique as we cannot find “Mallikarjuna” (Goddess Paravathi as Mallika around the Arjuna tree who is Shiva himself) anywhere else and this is also the place where they searched for their son Subrahmanya who came later and had darshan.

Bhagavad-Gita says that even a position in Deva loka is not permanent. Once the accumulated meritorious deeds (Punya) are exhausted, Devas will be sent to earth, the ocean of samsara. Hence, they frequently visit this highest peak, Srishaila.

3.अवन्तिकायां विहितावतारं मुक्तिप्रदानाय च सज्जनानाम्।

अकालमृत्योः परिरक्षणार्थं वन्दे महाकालमहासुरेशम् ॥

3.avantikāyāṃ vihitāvatāraṃ muktīpradānāya cha sajjanānām ।

akālamṛtyōḥ parirakṣaṇārthaṃ vandē mahākālamahāsūrēśam ॥

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to the “Mahakaleshwara” Jyotirlinga, located at Ujjain (ancient name: Avantika), Madhya Pradesh.

Story:

There was a powerful asura by name “Dushan”, who hated Vedic Dharmas and the brahmanas too, as they uphold Vedas, perform Yagnas and Poojas. As he came to Ujjain, all brahmanas were very worried on how to protect themselves from his attack. They came

under the leadership of a brahmana by name “Veda” who was the son of Vedapriya who had many sons, all of whom were virtuous. All the Brahmanas gathered around Veda and his brothers and performed Shiva puja. At that time, Dushan came to attack those brahmanas. Lord Shiva manifested himself from within a deep pit where that Linga was being worshipped, killed all the asuras just with “humkara” (by making a sound “hum”). Devatas and brahmanas prayed to him and requested him to reside permanently at that place as “Mahakaleshwara”.

There is another story associated with “Mahakaleshwara” – A gopa boy “Shrikara” worshipped “Mahakaleshwara” which resulted in a golden temple around “Mahakaleshwara” on its own. By seeing this, Lord Hanuman (Rudra avatara) was pleased and manifested himself before the boy and taught him how to perform Shiva pooja.

In yet another story, there was a King called Chandrasena of Ujjain who was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. Once his kingdom was surrounded by enemies who were ready to attack. Being not very powerful as compared to his enemies, King Chandrasena performed special pujas to “Mahakaleshwara” with the help of brahmanas. When enemies got to hear about “Mahakaleshwara” and special pujas performed, they ran away out of fear.

That is how “Kaala” also runs away with fear when one worships “Mahakaleshwara”- (अकालमृत्योःपरिरक्षणार्थं/ akālamṛtyōḥ parirakṣaṇārthaṃ). Having worshipped him, one will not face untimely death.

अवन्तिकायां विहितावतारं/avantikāyāṃ vihitāvatāraṃ

अवन्तिकायां – In the city of Avantika (Ujjain); विहित- vihitā- done / executed; अवतारं- āvatāraṃ - incarnation;

He incarnated in the city of Avantika (Ujjain).

Note:

Avantika is one of the seven mokshapuris (similar to Kashi, Kancheepuram etc). In general, all Jyotirlingas are connected with bhukti and mukti. This Jyotirlinga (“Mahakaleshwara”) is specially celebrated to grant mukti and prevent untimely death.

मुक्तिप्रदानाय च सज्जनानाम् / muktipradānāya cha sajjanānām

मुक्तिप्रदानाय- muktipradānāya- to grant Mukti; च- cha – and; सज्जनानाम्- sajjanānām : good people;

To grant “Mukti” to the good people - people who are eligible/qualified for Mukti.

Notes:

The qualification for Mukti has been listed by Adi Shankara in various “Prakarana Granthas”. The path for Mukti starts with Viveka (discrimination), Vairagya (dispassion), Shamaadi Shatkasampatti (namely Shama, Dama, Titiksha, Uparati, Shraddha and Samadhana), and

Mumukshutvam (desire for liberation). Unless one develops / acquires gnana, one cannot attain Mukti. One should develop dispassion towards worldly allurements and attach themselves to Bhagavan.

Bhagavan says in Gita – (Chapter 8 – verse 7)

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युद्ध्य च / tasmāt sarveshu kaleshu mamanusmara yuddhya ca

You should always think of me and at the same time carry out your prescribed duty. That is the essential quality of “good people” – who are eligible for Mukti.

अकालमृत्योः परिरक्षणार्थं / akālamṛtyōḥ parirakṣaṇārthaṃ

अकालमृत्योः- akālamṛtyōḥ- from untimely death; परिरक्षणार्थं -parirakṣaṇārthaṃ- protecting extremely well;

वन्दे महाकालमहासुरेशम् / vandē mahākālamahāsūrēśam

वन्दे- vandē - worship/pray; महाकाल- mahākāla- *The Great Kala (time)*; महासुरेशम् - mahākālamahāsūrēśam- The great Eshwara of Devas

I worship Mahakaleshwara, who is the great Eshwara of Devas to protect me from untimely death. Lord Shiva is beyond time and space and rather commands Kala to bless his devotees who want to overcome the concept of Kala. So, he is called MahaKala.

**4. कावेरिकानर्मदयोः पवित्रे समागमे सज्जनतारणाय ।
सदैव मान्धातृपुरे वसन्तम् ओङ्कारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे ॥**

**4. kāvērikānarmadayōḥ pavitrē samāgamē sajjanatāraṇāya ।
sadaiva māndhātṛpurē vasantaṃ ōṅkāramīśaṃ śivamēkamīḍē ॥**

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to the “Omkareshwara” Jyotirlinga, located in Madhya Pradesh. This place is very sacred to followers of Adi Shankara. Adi Shankara met his Guru, Govinda Bhagavatpada close to this kshetra on the banks of river Narmada.

Story:

Once sage Narada went to Vindhya Mountains and found that he was arrogant. He decided to subdue the arrogance of Vindhya and so he provoked him. He compared him with Meru Mountain and mentioned that Meru is comparably taller, is the abode of Devatas, and all the Grahas circumambulate him. On hearing this, Vindhya got provoked and went to do penance on the banks of river Narmada where he established a yantra – “Omkareshwara” and a Parthiva Shivalinga (made of Earth). After about six months, Lord Shiva appeared before him and was ready to grant a boon. Vindhya, instead of asking for Gnana / Moksha,

asked for intellect which will help him in the fulfillment of his desire. Though Shiva was not in favour of fulfilling his desire, he had to grant the boon as Vindhya had done penance. On the prayer of Devatas, Lord Shiva stayed there to fulfill the desires of devotees. This place is an “Omkaara” shaped island in the river Narmada. The Yantra which also became a Linga is known as Omkareshwara and the Parthiva Linga is known as “Amalleshwara / Parameshwara”. Both together are known as “Omkareshwara” Jyotirlinga and grant bhukti / mukti to devotees who pray sincerely. This island is called “Mandhatha Island” – named after King Mandhatha, a predecessor of Lord Rama in the Solar dynasty. He visited this island and prayed to Lord Shiva here. “Kaverika” (Not the river “Kaveri” of the south) and “Narmada” are the two streams which flow around this island.

कावेरिकानर्मदयोः पवित्रे समागमे सज्जनतारणाय / kāvērikānarmadayōḥ pavitrē samāgamē sajjanatāraṇāya

कावेरिकानर्मदयोः- kāvērikānarmadayōḥ - The two streams Kaverika and Narmada (which flow around the Mandhatha island); पवित्रे- pavitrē- pure/ which purifies ; समागमे - samāgamē – join together; सज्जनतारणाय -sajjanatāraṇāya- to rescue good people from the ocean of Samsara.

This place where the two streams (Narmada and Kaveri rivers) join together is pure and holy. This is not only pure, but also purifies one who takes bath in this holy river and rescues him from the ocean of Samsara.

“Narma” means shanti and sukha. Narmada is one of the important rivers in India that blesses one, who bathes in it, with peace and happiness.

Notes:

Tāraṇā means getting one to cross the river. Rama Nama is called Taraka Mantra; chanting this will make us cross this ocean of Samsara. All these are connected with the word “Tarana”.

As part of Rudram also we read –

नमस्ताराय नमः शम्भवे च मयोभवेच/Namastaraya namah shambhave cha mayobhave cha – here also “ताराय / taraya” comes before शम्भु/ Shambhu – He is the one who can rescue us from the ocean of Samsara.

सदैव मान्धातृपुरे वसन्तम् ओङ्कारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे / sadaiva māndhātṛpurē vasantaṃ ōṅkāramīśaṃ śivamēkamīḍē

सदैव - sadaiva- always (he doesn't leave that place); मान्धातृपुरे- māndhātṛpurē - the city of Mandhata (Omkareshwara island); वसन्तम्-vasantaṃ- resides/lives; ओङ्कारम्-ōṅkāram- Omkareshwara; ईशं - īśaṃ - Lord; शिवम् śivam- Shiva; एकम्- ēkam- unique ईडे- īḍē – I pray with affection to him;

I pray affectionately to the unique Shiva who blesses with Gnana and Moksha, the Omkareshwara who resides forever in the Mandhata Island.

5. पूर्वोत्तरे प्रज्वलिकानिधाने सदा वसन्तं गिरिजासमेतम्।
सुरासुराराधितपादपद्मं श्रीवैद्यनाथं तमहं नमामि ॥

5. pūrvōttarē prajvalikānidhānē sadā vasaṃtaṃ girijāsamētam |
surāsūrārādhitapādapadmam śrīvaidyanātham tamahaṃ namāmi ||

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to Sri “Vaidyanatha” located at Parli in Deogarh, Jharkhand

Story:

Ravana performed severe penance- Panchaagni (keeping fire in all four directions and burning Surya on the top as the fifth one) in summer, exposing to severe rain in the rainy season and in deep waters during winter. In spite of his severe penance, Lord Shiva did not appear. Then he started cutting off his heads one after the other and offered as “aahuti” to Agni. When he was about to cut off his last head, the tenth, Lord Shiva appeared before him and cured Ravana by attaching his lost nine heads. Hence Lord Shiva is called “Vaidyanatha” the greatest Vaidya (doctor). Then Ravana prayed to Lord Shiva to come along with him physically to Lanka. The Lord could not accept that but said that he would come in the form of Shiva Linga and imposed a condition that the Linga must not be placed on the ground anywhere on the way to Lanka. However, Ravana had to answer the call of nature and so handed over the Shiva Linga to a gopa boy who kept it on the earth. Ravana could not do anything about it and returned to Lanka empty handed.

On the other hand, Devas were worried with the immense powers Ravana attained through his penance. Sage Narada agreed to help Devas and provoked Ravana to test the powers granted to him by shaking the Kailasa. By doing this he became the object of Shiva’s anger who pressed down Kailasa with his toe and cursed Ravana that one day his powers and arrogance will be crushed. Later on, that happened in the Ramayana time. The place where that gopa boy left the Linga is in the North East (पूर्वोत्तरे pūrvōttarē) which is Parli in Jharkhand. The other stotra in Shivapurana which explains the sequence of Jyotirlingas also says –परल्यांवैद्यनाथंच / Paralyam Vaidyanatham Cha – Vaidyanatha located in Parli.

पूर्वोत्तरे प्रज्वलिकानिधाने सदा वसन्तं गिरिजासमेतम् /pūrvōttarē prajvalikānidhānē sadā vasaṃtaṃ girijāsamētam

पूर्वोत्तरे- pūrvōttarē – North East direction; प्रज्वलिका- prajvalikā- cremation ground; निधाने- nidhānē- location; सदाsadā-always; वसन्तं –vasantaṃ-residing; गिरिजासमेतम् –girijāsamētam -along with Girija (Parvati).

He is always residing in the Cremation ground in the North east direction, along with the Goddess Girija/Parvati.

Giri means mountain and Girija means daughter of mountain, which is same as Parvata, meaning mountain and Parvati, the daughter of mountain.

**सुरासुराराधितपादपद्मं श्रीवैद्यनाथं तमहं नमामि /surāsurārādhitapādapadmam
śrīvaidyanātham tamahaṃ namāmi**

सुरा- surā - Devatas; असुरा- āsurārā – demons; आराधित-ārādhitā – worship;
पादपद्मं- pādapadmam- lotus feet; श्रीवैद्यनाथं- śrīvaidyanātham - Vaidyanatha along with
Girija; तम् - tam -to that ; अहम्- aham - myself; नमामि – namāmi-pray

I prostrate to the lotus feet of Sri Vaidyanatha who is always residing in the cremation ground along with Girija, worshipped by Devas and Asuras and who shines in the city Parli in Jharkhand.

Notes:

From the Puranas we know that both Devas and Asuras go to Shiva and get boons whereas in the case of Vishnu, mainly Devas get boons. Vishnu is the Protector of Devas – hence Asuras are reluctant to pray to Vishnu for boons. The emphasis here is that Lord Shiva grants boons to anyone who did penance on his lotus feet. Also, similar to Dakshinamurthy Stotra (श्रीदक्षिणामूर्त्ये नमः Sree Dakshinamoorthaye Namaha), here also we see श्रीवैद्यनाथं / śrīvaidyanātham - “Sri” here represents the association with Shakti (Girija). Shakti is the ability to do anything. Without Shakti, Shiva cannot even move, as we see in the first shloka of Soundarya Lahari. Along with Girija Devi only, he gains power to grant boons to the people who worship him.

6. याम्ये सदङ्गे नगरेऽतिरम्ये विभूषिताङ्गं विविधैश्च भोगैः।
सद्भक्तिमुक्तिप्रदमीशमेकं श्रीनागनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

6. Yāmyē sadāṅgē nagarē'tiramyē vibhūṣitāṅgaṃ vividhaiścha bhōgaiḥ ।
sadbhaktimuktipradamīśamekaṃ śrīnāganātham śaraṇam prapadyē ॥

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to “Naganatha” located in Gujarat.

Story:

This is a strange and completely different type of story. The story starts with a demon named “Daruka” and his wife “Daruki”. Both were taking care of a forest (referred to as “Darukavanam”) given to them as a boon by Goddess Parvati. Daruki was a favorite disciple of Goddess Parvati. With the arrogance caused by the boons, they started torturing the Sadhus. All those Sadhus took refuge in the great sage “Aurva” (who took birth from thighs /”uru” of his mother and hence the name Aurva). To save the Sadhus, the sage Aurva cursed the demons, and this caused the demons to lose their power and become weak. On the

other hand, Daruki countered this with a plan of hiding the entire “Darukavanam” along with the demons in an ocean. Then they used to attack the humans by coming to the shore. At one point of time, a Vaisya called “Supriya” became a victim of these attacks and was imprisoned inside the Darukavanam in the ocean by these demons. He did intense Shiva puja to save himself. When these demons were about to kill him, Lord Shiva appeared and killed all demons except Daruka and Daruki with the intervention of Goddess Parvati (as they were her ardent devotees). Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati stayed at the Darukavanam upon prayer by the Devas & Sadhus. Daruka and Daruki, along with left over demons again started torturing people after a while. This time they attacked a king named “Veera Sena”, an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva. He also did intense Shiva Pooja and Lord Shiva was pleased and appeared before Veera Sena. He advised the King to go down in a pit and worship “Nageshwara” (who emerged from the pit), to obtain “Pashupathastra” (a missile) from him to kill all demons. This “Naganatha” is currently located in Gujarat and is also referred to in Shivapurana as “Nagesam Daarukavane”.

याम्ये सदङ्गे नगरेऽतिरम्ये विभूषिताङ्गं विविधैश्च भोगैः / yāmyē sadaṅgē nagarē'tiramyē vibhūṣitāṅgaṃ vividhaischa bhōgaiḥ

याम्ये- yāmyē – In the direction of Yama - south; सदङ्गेनगरे - sadaṅgē nagarē – In the city of Sadanga; अतिरम्ये- atiramyē – very beautiful (refers to the city); विभूषित vibhūṣita- shining ornaments ; अङ्गं āṅgam- limbs; (shining with Ornaments); विविधैश्च vividhaischa- different types; भोगैः- bhōgaiḥ- pleasures.

In the very beautiful city of “Sadange, which is located in the southern direction, Lord Shiva with all his limbs shining with ornaments, is enjoying different types of pleasures.

Notes:

Whenever we pray to Devatas, we associate them with all ornaments and pleasures so that we are also blessed with those treasures and pleasures and finally we get “Saayujyam” (merger with him). A “Gnani” does not care for the worldly pleasures, but ordinary humans crave for those pleasures and hence we ascribe Bhogas to the Lord.

सद्भक्तिमुक्तिप्रदमीशमेकं श्रीनागनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये /sadbhaktimukti pradamiśamēkaṃ śrīnāganāthaṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadyē

सद्भक्ति - sadbhakti – good bhakti; मुक्ति-mukti – liberation; प्रदम-pradam – grants; ईशम्- eesham – Shiva ; एकम्-ēkaṃ - unique; श्रीनागनाथं- śrīnāganāthaṃ - “Naganatha” – One wearing snake as a jewel; शरणंप्रपद्ये-śaraṇaṃ prapadyē – take unconditional refuge/surrender;

I take complete refuge unconditionally, with all thoughts, deeds and actions, under the protection of that unique Shiva – Sri Naganatha (Naganatha, along with Shakti) who grants good bhakti and liberation.

Naganatha is the name given by Lord Shiva himself to “Veerasena” for the Jyotirlinga to be worshipped in the pit. He wears Nagabharana (Snakes as a jewel) including Aadisesha.

Notes:

Good Bhakti means praying for the welfare of the entire world. In everything one should see Shiva as part of “Ashtamoorthi Tatvam” (Eight forms) and perform all transactions keeping that in mind. There is also an Evil Bhakti as described by Bhagavan in “Bhagavad Gita” – Worshipping evil spirits like (dakini, shakini etc) for torturing others.

**7.महाद्रिपार्श्वे च तटे रमन्तं सम्पूज्यमानं सततं मुनीन्द्रैः ।
सुरासुरैर्यक्ष महोरगाद्यैः केदारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे ॥**

**7.mahādrīpārśvē cha taṭē ramantaṃ sampūjyamānaṃ satataṃ munīndraiḥ ।
surāsuiryākṣamahoragādyaiḥ kēdāramīśaṃ śivamēkamīḍē ॥**

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to “Kedareshwara” located in Kedarath.

Story:

Kedarath is one of the “Char Dhams”. Nara and Narayana are two forms of Lord Vishnu, who came to earth as sons of Prajapati Dharma (the son of Lord Brahma). Nara and Narayana did severe penance for a very long time in Badrinath. Shiva appeared to them as a Jyoti and as prayed by them, he agreed to reside there permanently as Kedareshwara, to give darshan and succour to all devotees.

The word “Kedara” means “Rice Field” in Samskrit. In those days there were perhaps rice fields in Kedar. The word “Field” refers to “Kshetra” in Samskrit, which has a wider connotation in Aadhyathmik literature. “Kshetra Kshetragna Vibagha Yoga”, one of the 18 Yogas of Bhagavad Gita explains that Kshetra is the human body and Kshetragna is the Atma residing in the human body. In the context of Kedarath, he is the Kshetragna of Kedar who pulls the “Jeevathma” out of the morass of samsara and takes him to Moksha.

Another story is associated with Pandavas who, after the “Kurukshetra war” felt sad as they feared that they had committed “Brahma Hatya” (killing of Brahmanas such as Drona, Krupa etc, and also their own cousins Kauravas), which is a severe sin as per shastras. They were praying to Shiva for pardoning them, as they had to commit this sin for the sake of establishing dharma. They went to many places including that of Kashi. However, the Lord did not appear before them. While moving about in the Himalayas, they witnessed Shiva in the form of a buffalo (Mahisha) who was hiding himself in the ground. Bhima caught hold of his tail and pulled him out of the ground. Shiva then appeared in several places, the head appeared in Nepal, as “Pashupathi Natha” (with five heads). The hump portion as “Kedarath” (the Lingam appears in the form of the Hump of a buffalo), the remaining parts tail etc. of the buffalo are found in four other places around Kedar. They are together called “Pancha Kedars”.

The Shiva Purana speaks very highly of “Kedaranath”. It is mentioned that anyone who sets out to have darshan of Kedaranath, and if for any reason could not make it up to Kedaranath and meets his end enroute, still attains Moksha (ultimate liberation). This stands out as the ultimate compassion shown by Kedareshwara.

महाद्रिपार्श्वे च तटे रमन्तं सम्पूज्यमानं सततं मुनीन्द्रैः / mahādrīpārsvē cha taṭē ramantaṃ sampūjyamānaṃ satataṃ munīndraiḥ

महाद्रि-mahādri – the great mountain / the Himalayas; पार्श्वे-pārsvē – by the side ; च-cha - and ; तटे-taṭē – on the banks (plateau); रमन्तं-ramantaṃ - who is enjoying himself in eternal bliss ; सम्पूज्यमानं-sampūjyamānaṃ - being worshipped; सततं-satataṃ - always; मुनीन्द्रैः - munīndraiḥ - by the greatest of Sages;

On the side on the plateau of the great mountain Himalayas, Shiva, who is enjoying himself in eternal bliss, is always being worshiped by the greatest of sages.

सुरासुरैर्यक्ष महोरगाद्यैः केदारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे / surāsuraīryakṣa mahoragādyaiḥ kēdāramīśaṃ śivamēkamīḍē ||

सुरासुरैः- surāsurai: – by Devas and the asuras ; यक्ष- yakṣa- a clan called “Yakshas”; महा -Maha -great; उरगाद्यैः -Uragādyaiḥ –serpents; केदारमीशं-kēdāramīśaṃ - the Lord of the place Kedara; शिवम्- śivam – that Shiva; एकम् - ēkam – the only one/Unique; ईडे -īḍē- I adore.

I adore that one Shiva, the Kedareshwara who is worshipped by Devas, Asuras, Yakshas & the great serpents of the Patala Loka.

Notes:

Yakshas are led by Kubera, who is an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva. He has a space allotted in one corner of Kailasa, and is given the status of friend of Shiva which is mentioned in Sri Suktam (Deva Sakhaah).

There are seven great serpents in Patala Loka/Nagaloka namely Karkotaka, Vasuki etc. The Patala is also described in Puranas as having pleasures that are equal to that of Swarga or the Heaven. The Patala loka, despite not having the Sun or the Moon, is well lit, due to the shining gems adorning the Nagas/ Serpents, who got them by worshipping Shiva.

**8. सह्याद्रिशीर्षे विमले वसन्तं गोदावरीतीरपवित्रदेशे ।
यद्दर्शनात्पातकमाशुनाशं प्रयाति तं त्र्यम्बकमीशमीडे ॥**

8. sahyādrīśīrṣē vimalē vasantaṃ gōdāvarītirapavitradēśē |

yaddarśanātpātakamaśunāśaṃ prayāti taṃ tryambakamīśamīḍē ||

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to “Trayambakeshwara” located in Nashik, Maharashtra

Story:

This story is as per Shiva purana and is different from those found in Devi Bhagavatham and Mahabharata. This story is associated with Sage Gowthama. Once there was a very severe famine lasting for more than 12 years which resulted in severe scarcity of food and water and the whole earth was parched. Sage Gowthama performed penance to please Varuna Deva (Lord of the Rains) who appeared and filled a small pit with divine water, which is inexhaustible like “Akshaya Patra” (manifestation of deep source of water). Then thousands of rishis and their families took refuge in Gowthama’s ashrama because of availability of water and food and with that they could perform their daily ablutions and rituals. This happened for a long time. For no reason, the rishi patnis (wives of the rishis) got jealous of sage Gowthama and his wife Ahalya. They picked up a quarrel with Ahalya and became enemies. The Rishi patnis instigated the rishis to harm sage Gowthama. Though the rishis were reluctant initially, they fell prey to that later and hatched a plan against sage Gowthama. With their power (out of Maya) they created a lean, weak cow which was about to die and placed it on the path of Gowthama while he was going towards his Agnishala. Gowthama happened to touch the cow and it died, which resulted in a “Go hatya patakam” (sin of killing a cow) for the sage. With this reason, the rishis expelled sage Gowthama out of his own ashrama and asked him to do expiation of sin (Prayaschitta). The sages recommended bringing Ganga and pleasing Shiva as the expiation.

Sage Gowthama went to a nearby place called “Brahmagiri” - circumambulated 11 times and worshipped Shiva Linga. Lord Shiva appeared along with Goddess Parvati and his Ganas, before sage Gowthama, acquitted him of faults and revealed the evil plan of rishis. Also, he told Gowthama that he would right away punish them for hatching evil plans against him. But the great sage Gowthama prayed to Lord Shiva to pardon their ignorance and grant him “Ganga” to fulfill his expiation (Prayaschitta) as ordained by rishis (though there was no sin committed by him in truth). Out of compassion, Lord Shiva granted “Ganga” to sage Gowthama and hence “Ganga” takes the name – “Gowthami”/ “Gowthama Ganga/Godavari”. As prayed by rishis and devas, Lord Shiva took abode in that place as “Trayambakeshwara” – meaning three (Traya) eyed (ambaka), the three eyes being the Sun, Moon and Fire.

**सहाद्रिशीर्षे विमले वसन्तं गोदावरीतीरपवित्रदेशे । / sahyādrīśīrṣē vimalē vasantaṃ
gōdāvarītīrapavitrādēśē**

सह्य- sahya - (The Sahyas); अद्रि- adri - (mountain)- Sahyadri Mountains – the western ghats; शीर्षे- śīrṣē - at the peak; विमले- vimalē- pure; वसन्तं-vasantaṃ - Residing ; गोदावरीतीर-gōdāvarītīra- on the banks of river Godavari/ Gowthami; पवित्रदेशे-pavitrādēśē - purifying place;

He resides at the peak of the Pure Sahyadri Mountain, on the banks of river Godavari, at a purifying place (“Tryambakeshwaram”). This place itself purifies one even before worshipping “Tryambakeshwara”.

**यद्दर्शनात्पातकमाशुनाशं प्रयाति तं त्र्यम्बकमीशमीडे / yaddarśanātpātakamāśunāśaṃ
prayāti taṃ tryambakamīśamīḍē**

यत्- yat – that Shiva ; दर्शनात्-darśanāt – By having darshan ; पातकं- pātakam – All kinds of sins; आशु- āśu – very quickly ; नाशम्- nāśam - destruction; प्रयाति -prayāti – reaches; तं- taṃ - that; त्र्यम्बकम्-tryambakam – the one at the “Tryambaka Kshetra”; ईश – īśam - Shiva; ईडे - īḍē- I worship.

I worship that Shiva who is at “Tryambaka Kshetra”, upon whose darshan, all kinds of sins get destroyed immediately.

**9. सुताम्रपर्णीजलराशियोगे निबध्य सेतुं विशिखैरसंख्यैः ।
श्रीरामचन्द्रेण समर्पितं तं रामेश्वराख्यं नियतं नमामि ॥**

9. śutāmraparṇījalarāśiyōgē nibadhya sētuṃ viśikhairasaṅkhyaiḥ ।

śrīrāmachandrēṇa samarpitaṃ taṃ rāmēśvarākhyam niyataṃ namāmi ॥

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to “Rameshwara” located in Tamilnadu.

Story:

Lord Rama, along with Lakshmana and Vanara Sena (Monkey army under the leadership of Sugreeva) came to the seashore to reach Lanka. He was worried on seeing the huge ocean and prayed to ocean God (Samudra Deva). Upon his prayers, the pleased ocean God appeared and advised him on how to construct the bridge and cross. Before he started praying to ocean God, the following story happened as per Shiva Purana (which is an authentic reference for all the Jyotirlingas).

Lord Rama felt very thirsty and was about to drink water to quench his thirst. He suddenly realized that he did not worship Lord Shiva. Then he immediately established a Shivalinga and worshipped him known as “Rameshwara”. It is described very elaborately in Shiva Purana as to how Lord Rama prayed to Shiva. He sang many songs, chanted stotras and danced to please Shiva. Lord Shiva, pleased with his intense prayers, appeared from the Linga and blessed Rama with success in constructing the bridge over the ocean and also victory over Ravana. Upon Rama’s prayer, Shiva resided in the Shivalinga there as “Rameshwara” – Eshwara of Rama and said, one who does abhishekam to “Rameshwara” with Ganga water will attain Moksha. For this very reason, we have a practice of visiting Rameshwara first, then bringing Ganga waters by visiting Kashi / Prayag, and finally completing the cycle by performing abhishekam with those Ganga waters to Rameshwara - Ramanatha.

सुताम्रपर्णीजलराशियोगे निबध्य सेतुं विशिखैरसंख्यैः / śutāmrparṇījalarāśīyōgē nibadhya sētum viśikhairasaṅkhyaiḥ

सुताम्रपर्णी- śu tāmrparṇī – The great Tamraparni river; जलराशि- jalarāśī – large quantity of water (the ocean); योगे-yōgē- at the junction; निबध्य- nibadhya- having constructed; सेतुं - sētum- Bridge; विशिखैः -viśikhaiah- blunt rock/Reeds असंख्यैः-asāṅkhyaiḥ- innumerable;

At the junction where the great Tamraparni waters join the ocean, having constructed the bridge with innumerable blunt rocks and reeds.

Notes:

The “Tamraparni Mahatmyam” describes the greatness of Tamraparni waters in 6400 shlokas.

विशिखैः -viśikhaiah - rocks without sharp edges and special kind of plants without the top part like reeds which are like sticks; These materials were used to construct the bridge

श्रीरामचन्द्रेण समर्पितं तं रामेश्वराख्यं नियतं नमामि / śrīrāmachandrēṇa samarpitaṁ taṁ rāmēśvarākhyam niyataṁ namāmi

श्रीरामचन्द्रेण- śrīrāmachandrēṇa- by Lord Rama ; समर्पितं- samarpitaṁ- Dedicated; तं-taṁ - that Shiva; रामेश्वराख्यं- rāmēśvarākhyam- who is named “Rameshwara”; नियतं- niyataṁ- In a disciplined manner as per rules; नमामि- namāmi- I worship

Lord Rama dedicated the Linga to that Shiva named “Rameshwara”. I pray to that “Rameshwara” with discipline by following all the rules.

Notes:

There are set of rules/procedures for the Rameshwara Yatra - One should do abhishekam to Rameshwara with Ganga waters and take bath from the 22 wells around Rameshwara.

Samarpitam / Dedication can also be understood that the Shiva Linga at Rameshwara is dedicated to the world as Rama prayed to Shiva to reside in the Linga for the good of the world.

**10. यं डाकिनिशाकिनिकासमाजे निषेव्यमाणं पिशिताशनैश्च ।
सदैव भीमादिपदप्रसिद्धं तं शङ्करं भक्तहितं नमामि ॥**

10.yaṁ ḍākinīśākinīkāsamājē niṣēvyamāṇaṁ piśitāśanaishcha |

sadaiva bhīmādīpadaprasiddhaṁ taṁ śaṅkaraṁ bhaktahitaṁ namāmi ||

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to “Bhima Shankar” located in Brahmapuri Hill in Kamarupa near Guwahati, Assam. This does not refer to Bhima Shankaram located in Maharashtra near Pune.

Story:

After the death of Kumbhakarna the rakshasa, his son “Bhima”, lived with his mother “Karkati” at Kamarupa, in Brahmapuri hill. Bhima developed hatred against Lord Vishnu, since he came in the form of Lord Rama and killed his father. He did severe penance to Brahma and got the boon of incomparable strength. Like other demons, he defeated Indra and even Vishnu with his strength and imprisoned the king of Kamarupa, “Kamaroopeshwara”. The King, who was a Shiva Bhakta, did intense Shiva pooja inside the prison and Lord Shiva appeared in the form of Jyotirlinga and gave him protection by killing “Bhima” and other demons with a mere “humkara” (just by making sound of hum). As per the prayers of Rishis and Devas, he resided there as “Bhima Shankara” at a place called “Dakini” in Kamarupa.

Bhima Shankar in Maharashtra has a different story, which is not in Shiva purana, but found in local puranas. As per this story, Shiva was taking rest on the banks of river Bhima, after killing Tripurasura. A king called Bhimaka, of solar dynasty, the dynasty of Rama did intense penance and Shiva appeared to him as Jyoti and resided there as Jyotirlinga. But this is not referred in this shloka.

**यं डाकिनिशाकिनिकासमाजे निषेव्यमाणं पिशिताशनैश्च /yam ḍākinīśākinikāsamājē
niṣēvyamāṇaṃ piśitāśanaiścha**

यं - yam - one who; डाकिनिशाकिनिकासमाजे- ḍākinīśākinikāsamājē – Society of Dakinis and Shakinis; निषेव्यमाणं- niṣēvyamāṇaṃ- Specially worshipped; पिशित-piśitā – Meat;
अशन- aśana-food ; च- ca - and

One who is surrounded by Dakinis and Shakinis and specially worshipped by meat eaters

Notes:

Kamakhya temple in Kamarupa was known for animal sacrifice. The Dakinis and Shakinis are evil spirits associated with Devi, but they are not to be worshipped. The tribal people of those days were perhaps pleasing the Dakinis and Shakinis for their own selfish reasons. So, this place was for Dakinis and Shakinis associated with Kamakhya Devi like the way Shiva is surrounded with Bhuta, preta and pisachas.

Piśitāśanaiścha- meat eaters - interpreted as “Pretas”- the dead people who could not get Sadhgati (rather get Durgathi) as rituals (Aparakriyas) were not performed to them after their death. If the ordained rituals are not performed by a son to his parents after their death, they turn into Pretas, meat eaters and will not get Sadgathi. Hence these rituals should be done with great fervour and bhakti.

**सदैव भीमादिपदप्रसिद्धं तं शङ्करं भक्तहितं नमामि / sadaiva bhīmādipadaprasiddham taṃ
śaṅkaraṃ bhaktahitaṃ namāmi ||**

सदैव- sadaiva - always; भीम-bhīma- Name Bhima , आदिपद -ādipada - First word; प्रसिद्धं-
prasiddham - famous; तं-taṃ- that ; शङ्करं śaṅkaraṃ -Shankara; भक्तहितं -bhaktahitaṃ-
benevolent to devotees (hitam means – whatever is good for one and not whatever one
likes); नमामि- namāmi – I pray;

I pray to that Shankara whose first word is Bhima – Bhima Shankara, who is always
benevolent to his devotees (and specially worshipped by Dakhinis, Shakinis and Pretas)

Notes:

*Kathopanishad talks about Preyas and Shreyas in detail. Shreyas is what is good for one and
Preyas is what is liked by one. Shreyas may not be always Preyas to one. Lord Bhīma
Shankara blesses his devotees always with Shreyas and not Preyas.*

**11. सानन्दमानन्दवने वसन्तम् आनन्दकन्दं हतपापवृन्दम् ।
वाराणसीनाथमनाथनाथं श्रीविश्वनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥**

**11.sānandamānandavanē vasantaṃ ānandakandaṃ hatapāpabṛndam ।
vārāṇasīnāthamanāthanāthaṃ śrīviśvanāthaṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadyē ||**

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to “Vishwanatha” located at Kashi.

Story:

Kashi is supposedly the greatest Punya Kshetra (holy place) in Sanatana Dharma. There is no
Kshetra (place) greater than Kashi, and no teertha (holy water body) greater than river
Ganga. At Kashi, both these (kshetra and teertha) are present together.

The story goes like this - Shiva split himself into Shiva and Shakti with the help of Maya and
they in turn created Purusha and Prakruthi to start the worldly creation. (Purusha is referred
to as Vishnu and Prakruti is the power of Vishnu for the creation). They were asked by
Akasha Vani / Ashariri (no-form voice) to do tapas to start the creation. However, after the
Pralaya there was no place to create anything (the entire universe is supposed to be
submerged in waters at the time of Pralaya). So, Shiva created Kashi, which spans Pancha
Krosha. Krosha is a measure of distance in early days and the area of Kashi measures five
Krosha, (one krosha is about three kilometers). Shiva held this city on the tip of his Trishul
(the Trident of Shiva) so that the city is not inundated into the waters of Pralaya. This is the
speciality of Kashi which is described in several puranas.

On that land, Vishnu and Prakruti did penance. Then a lotus emerged from Vishnu's navel, and Brahma (the creator) emerged from that Lotus. He then started the creation of the world as it was existing before the Pralaya.

Lord Shiva after creating Kashi, made his presence eternal there, as Avimukta (never leaves) Linga, and the place Kashi is known as Avimukta Kshetra (Shiva never leaves the holy place). The greatness of Kashi is that any living being that dies at Kashi gets liberated from the cycle of birth and death. At the time of Jiva leaving the body, both Parvati and Shiva go to the Jiva (the living being); while Parvati keeps the body of the Jiva in her lap, Shiva chants the Taraka Mantra (Rama Nama) in the right ear of the Jiva which enables the Jiva to attain Moksha / liberation.

Many of us may have the question, how the sinners could attain Moksha (ultimate liberation) just by dying at Kashi? First of all, everyone may not get a chance to die at Kashi. There are numerous examples of people, who wanted to die at Kashi, but could die only after leaving Kashi for various reasons. Secondly, not all sins of the Jiva are pardoned by Shiva and Parvati at the time of death. If one has to attain the ultimate liberation, both the Punya (the good deeds) and the Papa (the bad deeds) should have been nullified and nothing should be left out. So, at the time of death, Lord Kalabhairava (the Kshetra Palaka-guard of Kashi) provides experiences to the Jiva. A Jiva has to take multiple births (Janmas) after this life due to the good deeds and bad deeds acquired by him. However, Kalabhairava compresses those experiences and makes the Jiva experience them intensely in a short period which is the blessing of dying in Kashi. So, it should be understood that torture for sins committed cannot be avoided but it will be very intense as it has to be experienced in a very short time. Similarly experience for good deeds also will be there. After this nullification of good and bad deeds, Lord Shiva's chant of Taraka Mantra will provide the ultimate Liberation (Moksha) to that Jiva.

In "Adhyatma Ramayanam" Shiva himself mentions about this (Taraka Mantra Upadesha in Kashi) during his prayer to Rama at his Coronation (Pattabhishekam). The mention of Taraka Mantra upadesha by Shiva during the last moments of the Jiva in Kashi can also be found in "Sri Rama Bhujanga" stotra by Adi Shankara.

The verse from Rama Bhujanga Stotra (Verse 3) is as below:

यदा वर्णयत्कर्णमूलेऽन्तकाले शिवो राम रामेति रामेतिकाश्याम्।
तदेकं परं तारकं ब्रह्मरूपं भजेऽहं भजेऽहं भजेऽहं भजेऽहम्॥

Yadha Varnyathkarnamoolenthakale | Shivo Rama Ramethi Ramethikashyam |
Thadhekam Param Tharaka Bhrama Roopam | Bhajeham Bhajeham Bhajeham Bhajeham ||

"I worship that supreme lord, Rama, who is the manifestation of the Taraka Mantra uttered by Lord Shiva in the right ear of the Jiva, at the time of death in Kashi".

**सानन्दमानन्दवने वसन्तम् आनन्दकन्दं हतपापवृन्दम् / sānandamānandavanē vasantaṃ
ānandakandaṃ hatapāpavṛndam**

सानन्दम्- sānandam- ever blissful; आनंदवने- ānandavanē – in Anandavana (place where Shiva lives in Kashi); वसन्तम् - vasantaṃ - residing; आनन्दकन्दं - ānandakandaṃ - solidified bliss; हतपापवृन्दम् - hatapāpavṛndam- destroys heaps of accumulated sins;

He is ever blissful, residing in Anandavana; he himself is solidified bliss and he destroys heaps of accumulated sins.

Sachitananda swarupa the greatest blissful form is to be seen in Kashi. It is his own creation, and he is holding it on Trishula and grants mukti.

Notes:

Kashi has many names – Avimukta Kshetra, Varanasi, Anandavanam etc.; Kashi means full of light, the light of gnana.

**वाराणसीनाथमनाथनाथं श्रीविश्वनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये /vārāṇasīnāthamanāthanātham
śrīviśvanātham śaraṇam prapadyē**

वाराणसीनाथम-vārāṇasīnātham- Lord of Varanasi ; अनाथनाथं- anāthanātham - Lord of destitute and orphans; श्रीविश्वनाथं- śrīviśvanātham - Lord of the universe (Vishwanatha at Kashi) along with Sri (Shakti – Visalakshi and Annapoorneshwari at Kashi are his two powers); शरणं-śaraṇam – under his protection; प्रपद्ये- prapadyē – I take refuge

I take refuge in Vishwanatha who is the Lord of Varanasi; Lord of destitute and orphans (every Jiva is an orphan, as he does not know how to attain moksha) and Lord of the universe residing along with Shakti.

Notes:

Varanasi – There are two rivers called Varana and Asi and Kashi kshetra is in between these two rivers and hence the name.

12. इलापुरे रम्यविशालकेऽस्मिन् समुल्लसन्तं च जगद्वरेण्यम्।

वन्दे महोदारतरस्वभावं घृष्णेश्वराख्यं शरणम् प्रपद्ये ॥

12.ilāpurē ramyaviśālakē'smin samullasantam cha jagadvarēṇyam |

vandē mahōdāratarasvabhāvaṃ ghr̥ṣṇēśvarākhyam śaraṇam prapadyē ||

Meaning and Explanation:

This shloka refers to “Ghrushneshwar” located in Maharashtra.

Story:

This story happened in a place called “Devagiri hills” in the south which is identified as “Ghrushneshwar” near Aurangabad. There was a virtuous brahmana named Sudharma, who

lived with his wife Sudeha in the Devagiri hills. The couple did not have progeny and prayed to Lord Shiva. Despite their protracted prayers, they were not blessed with a child. So Sudeha persuaded Sudharma and got her younger sister Ghushma married to him. Ghushma an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva used to make 101 earthen (clay) Lingas every day, worship them, and immerse them in the pond nearby. In due course, she was blessed with a baby boy.

Over the time, Sudeha became extremely jealous of her sister and one night he killed Ghushma's son, cut him into pieces and threw those pieces into the very lake where her sister would immerse the earthen Lingas every day. Next day morning, Sudeha too, searched for Ghushma's son everywhere along with them, acting innocently. In spite of everyone being saddened and agitated with the son missing, Sudharma and Ghushma remained calm and got into their daily rituals believing totally in Lord's mercy. True to her beliefs, as she returned after immersing the 101 earthen Lingas, Ghushma saw her son walking towards her as if he woke up from sleep. At that moment, Lord Shiva appeared as Jyotirlinga before her and told her of her sister's heinous deed and was ready to punish Sudeha. Ghushma prayed to the Lord to forgive her sister. Pleased, the Lord granted her a boon. She prayed to him to reside in that place, which is why he manifested himself as a Jyotirlinga called "Ghushneshwara (appeared for Ghushma and hence the name) and in course of time the name changed to "Ghrushneshwar". The lake in which Ghushma immersed the 101 earthen Lingas is called "Shivalaya". Further, Lord Shiva blessed Ghushma that for 101 generations of her lineage there will be only virtuous sons born, who too will be Shiva bhaktas. Needless to say, all three – Sudharma, Sudeha and Ghushma attained mukti (liberation) upon Lord Shiva's darshan. Sudeha had of course to do expiatory rites before attaining moksha as no one can escape from the results of the sins committed.

**इलापुरे रम्यविशालकेऽस्मिन् समुल्लसन्तं च जगद्वरेण्यम् /ilāpurē ramyaviśālakē'smin
samullasantam ca jagadvarēnyam**

इलापुरे- ilāpurē – Place named Ilapura (in Devagiri hills); / (Ila also means earth) ; रम्य-
ramya - very beautiful; विशालके- viśālakē'- very large and wide ; अस्मिन्- asmin- In this
Ilapura ; समुल्लसन्तं -samullasantam- Shiva is manifesting with bliss and Joy (Ullasam –
meaning bliss); च- ca – and; जगत् -jagat- by the entire world/universe ; वरेण्यम् -
varēnyam- Someone who is respected and ever worshipped.

In this Ilapura which is very beautiful and large, Lord Shiva – by name "Ghrushneshwar" is manifesting himself with bliss and joy and he is respected and worshipped by the entire Universe.

**वन्दे महोदारतरस्वभावं घृष्णेश्वराख्यं शरणम् प्रपद्ये /vandē mahōdāratarasvabhāvaṃ
ghṛṣṇēśvarākhyam śaraṇam prapadyē**

वन्दे- vandē- I worship ; महा- maha – very much ; उदारतर- Udāratara - generous;; स्वभावं -
svabhāvaṃ - nature; घृष्णेश्वराख्यं- ghṛṣṇēśvarākhyam - Shiva whose name is
"Ghrushneshwara" ;शरणम् -śaraṇam - In his protection; प्रपद्ये-prapadyē - I take refuge

I take refuge under “Ghrushneshwar” who is very generous and benevolent in granting boons in comparison to other Devatas.

**13. ज्योतिर्मयद्वादशलिंगकानां शिवात्मनां प्रोक्तमिदं क्रमेण ।
स्तोत्रं पठित्वा मनुजोतिभक्त्या फलं तदालोक्य निजं भजेच्च ॥**

**13.Jyotirmayadwadasalingakaanaam shivaatmanaam proktamidam kramena |
Stotram pathitva manujotibhaktyaa phalam tadalokya nijam bhajechha |**

This shloka is “Phalasaruthi” (Benefits) verse of the Dwadashalinga Stotra. Adi Shankara always refers to the highest of the benefits (i.e, Moksha) and emphasizes gnana in the “Phalasaruti” of his stotras.

**ज्योतिर्मयद्वादशलिंगकानां शिवात्मनां प्रोक्तमिदं क्रमेण / Jyotirmayadwadasalingakaanaam
shivaatmanaam proktamidam kramena**

ज्योतिर्मय- Jyotirmaya–full of light appearing as Linga; द्वादशलिंगकानां -
dwadashalingakaanaam – the 12 Jyotirlingas; शिवात्मनां- shivaatmanaam – Lord Shiva is
present in those Lingas; प्रोक्तं- proktam – has been explained; इदं- idam – this Stotra; क्रमेण -
kramena – In order;

These 12 Jyotirlingas are actually pure light but appearing as stone; To the naked eye, Linga
might look like a stone, but actually it is light; Shiva is present in the Lingas as the soul of the
Lingas; Linga is not a mere representation here like other places. This Stotra of the Lingas
has been narrated in due order.

**स्तोत्रं पठित्वा मनुजोतिभक्त्या फलं तदालोक्य निजं भजेच्च / Stotram pathitva
manujotibhaktyaa phalam tadalokya nijam bhajechha**

स्तोत्रं- Stotra- this stotra; पठित्वा- pathitva – having read ; मनुजः- manujah – human being;
अतिभक्त्या- atibhaktyaa- with great devotion ; फलं- phalam – the fruit; तत्- tat - of that
stotra; आलोक्य- aalokya – having realized; निजं- nijam – on your own / inside yourself;
भजेच्च- bhajechha - will attain.

Whoever reads this stotra with great devotion, will attain the desired / realized fruit on his
own. The “desired / realized fruit” here has a deeper meaning. If one is looking / desiring for
petty materialistic things, Shiva will grant them. But these are transient. But if one is looking
for Gnana and Moksha, Lord Shiva grants it to be realized within oneself. In case of Gnana
and Moksha, the ‘nijam’ should be interpreted as within oneself, which is the greatest
benefit of having darshan of these twelve Jyotirlingas.

All the twelve Jyotirlinga stories are explained to instill bhakti in ordinary devotees like us.
With this bhakti, we should realize what to ask for from Jyotirlinga(s).

इति श्रीमद्दशङ्कराचार्यविरचितम् द्वादशज्योतिर्लिंग स्तोत्रम् सम्पूर्णम्