

Maha Shri Shivamahimna Stotram

1.O, Lord Shiva, remover of all types of miseries, what wonder is there, if the prayer to you, chanted by one who is ignorant about your greatness, is worthless! Because, even the utterance ( speech ) of Brahmaa and other gods is not able to fathom your merits ( ie, greatness ).

Hence, if persons with very limited intellect ( and I am one of them ) try to offer you a prayer, their attempt deserve your special favour . If it is so, I should not be an exception . Hence, (thinking like this ) I begin this prayer .

2.O, Great God, so great is your majesty that it cannot be reached by speech and mind . Even the Vedas also, having become surprised, confirm your greatness by only saying `Neti', `Neti' (not this, not this) while describing you . Who can praise this type of greatness of yours? With how many qualities is it composed? Whose subject of description can it be ? And yet even then whose mind and speech are not attached to your this new Saguna form ?

3. Paramaatmaa (Greatest Soul), as you are the very creator of speech of the Vedas, which is like highest type of nectar and as sweet as honey, how can even the speech of Brahaspati (Guru, or spiritual guide of gods) (ie, the speech of even Brahaspati is worthless before you).  
O, Destroyer of Three Cities of the demons, thinking that my speech may become purified by this act, my intellect (Buddhi) has become prepared to sing your greatness .

4. O Giver of Boons, your greatness is the cause of creation, maintenance, and destruction of the whole universe; this is supported by three Vedas (ie, Rigveda, Yajurveda, and Saamaveda); it is distributed in the three qualities (ie, Satva, Rajas and Tamas) and three bodies (of Brahmaa, VishhNu and Mahesha). Such is your greatness but certain stupid persons in this world are trying to destroy it by slander, which may be delightful to them but is really undelightful .

5. If the Paramaatmaa (the Greatest Soul) creates the three worlds (ie, the whole Universe), what is his gesture ? What is his body ? What is his plan ? What is his basis (support)? What are his means (instruments,resources) ? These are the useless questions raised by some stupid critics, in order to mislead people, against one (i.e., you) who always remains incompatible to senses .

6. O, Best Of The Gods, are the seven Lokas (It is believed that there are seven worlds in this Universe, namely, Bhooloka, Bhuvarkala, Svargaloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka, and Satyaloka) unborn ? Was the birth of the Universe independent of its Lord (ie, You) ? If it was so, then what were the means by which it was created that the stupid critics are creating doubts about you? (ie, you are the only creator of the whole Universe).

7. The different practices based on the three Vedas, SaMkhya, Yoga, Pashupata-mata, VaishhNava-mata etc . are but different paths (to reach to the Greatest Truth) and people on account of their different aptitude choose from them whatever they think best and deserved to be accepted . But as the sea is the final resting place for all types of streams , You are the only reaching place for all people whichever path, straight or zigzag, they may accept .

8.O, Giver of the Boons, the bull, the parts of a cot, chisel, the elephant-skin, Ashes, the serpent, the skull : these are the articles of your house-hold . And yet gods get all their riches merely by the movement of your eye-brows . Really, false desires for worldly things do not deceive (

mislead ) one who is always is absorbed in his soul ( ie, the Yogi- in fact You ).

9. O, Destroyer Of ( Three ) Cities, some persons call this Universe eternal ( ever lasting), others call it temporary, and yet others call it both eternal and temporary . Hence, being surprised ( perplexed ) by these contradictory opinions on this subject, I am really becoming immodest in loquaciously praising You .

10. Brahma and VishhNu wanted to measure your wealth i.e.greatness . You took the form of Fire and your whole body was a column of fire extending over space . While Brahma took the form of a swan and flew high to see the top(head), VishhNu took the form of a boar and dug up downwards to see the bottom (feet).Neither could succeed.(While VishhNu confessed the truth, Brahma falsely claimed that he had found the top and persuaded the Ketaki flower to bear false witness.Shiva punished Brahma by removing one of his 5 heads and ordered that henceforth the Ketaki flower should not be used for his worship).When ultimately both praised you with full devotion and faith, you stood before them revealing your normal form . O, mountain-dweller, does not toeing your line always bear fruit?

11. Oh,destroyer of the three cities! The effortless achievement of the ten-headed Ravana in making the three worlds enemyless( having conquered) and his arrant eagerness for further fight by stretching his arms,are but the result of his constant devotion to your lotus feet at which he ever laid the lotus garland consisting of his 10 heads!

12.Having obtained all his prowess through worshipping you, RavaNa once dared to test the power of his arms at your own dwelling place(Kailas Mountain). When he tried to lift it up, you just moved a toe of your foot on a head of his and lo! Ravana could not find rest or peace even in the nether-world . Surely, power maddens the wicked . Finally RavaNa reestablished his faith in you

13.Oh boon-giver! BaaNa, the demon king made all the three worlds serve him with all their attendants and even the greatest wealth of Indra was a trifle for him . It was not a surprise at all, since he `dwelt' in your feet; who does not rise in life by bowing his head to you?

14. When the ocean was being churned by the gods and demons for `amRit.h'(nectar),various objects came forth: at one point, there emerged the `kAlakUTa' poison which threatened to consume everything . The gods as well as the demons were stunned at the prospect of the entire universe coming to an end, O, three-eyed lord, who is ever compassionate and engaged in removing the fear of the world, you took it(poison) on yourself by consuming it . (On Parvati's holding Shiva's throat at that point, the poison froze blue there itself and Shiva became `neelakanTha'). It is strange that this stain in your neck, though appearing to be a deformity, actually adds to your richness and personality .

15.The cupid's(love-god `manmatha's) (flower) arrows never return unaccomplished whether the victims were gods or demons or men . However O, master! he has now become just a remembered soul (without body),since he looked upon you as any other ordinary god, shot his arrow and got burnt to ashes,in no time . Insulting, masters (who have controlled their senses), does one no good .

16. You dance for protecting the world, but strangely, your glorious act appears to produce the opposite result in that the earth suddenly struck by your dancing feet doubts that it is coming to an end; even VishhNu's domain is shaken in fear when your mace like arms bruise the planets; the godly region feels miserable when its banks are struck by your agitated matted locks (of hair)!

17. The divine river flows extensively through the sky and its charm is enhanced by the illumination of the foam by the groups of stars . (Brought down to the earth by the King Bhagiratha by propitiating Lord Shiva and known as Ganga) it creates many islands and whirlpools on the earth . The same turbulent river appears like a mere droplet of water on your head. This itself shows how lofty and divine your body(form) is!

18. When you wanted to burn the three cities, you had the earth as the chariot, Brahma as the charioteer, the Meru mountain as the bow, the sun and the moon as the parts of the chariot and VishhNu himself(who holds the chariot-wheel in his hand -Sudarshan chakra?), as the arrow . Why this demonstrative show when you as the dictator of everything, could have done the job as a trifle? The Lord's greatness is not dependent on anybody or anything . ( Incidentally there is a view that the burning of the three cities would refer to the burning of three kinds of bodies of man i.e. `sthUla sharIra', `sUkshma sharIra' and `kArana sharIra'

19. VishhNu once brought 1000 lotuses and was placing them at your feet; after placing 999 flowers he found that one was missing; he plucked out one of his own eyes and offered it as a lotus; this supreme exemplification of devotion on his part was transformed into the wheel (sudarshana chakra) in his hand, which he uses for protecting the world .

20. You ensure that there is a connection between cause and effect and hence when men perform a sacrifice they obtain good results . Otherwise how can there be future result for a past action? Thus on seeing your power in rewarding people performing sacrificial worship, with good results, men believe in Vedas and firmly engage themselves in various worshipful acts

21. All the same, O Protector . though you exert to reward all sacrifices . those done without faith in you become counter-productive, as exemplified in the case of the sacrifice performed by Daksha; Daksha was well-versed in the art of sacrifices and himself the Lord of Creation; besides, he was the chief performer: the great maharishis were the priests and the various gods were the participants! (Daksha did not invite Shiva and insulted him greatly; thus enraged, Shiva destroyed the sacrifice and Daksha too).

22. O, Protector! Once Brahma became infatuated with his own daughter . When she fled taking the form of a female deer he also took the form of a male deer and chased her . You took the form of a hunter and went after him, with a bow in hand . Struck by your arrow and very much frightened, Brahma fled to the sky taking the form of a star . Even today he stands frightened by you .

23. O, destroyer of the three cities! Boon-giver! Practitioner of austerities! Before the very eyes of Parvati, you reduced Manmatha (the god of love) to ashes, the moment he tried to arouse passion in you for Parvati, by shooting his famous flower arrows . Even after witnessing this, if Parvati, thinks that you are attracted by her physical charm, on the basis of your sharing half the body with her, certainly women are under self-delusion.

**24.**O,boon giver! O,destroyer of Cupid! You play in the burning ghats . your friends are the ghosts . Your body is smeared with the ashes of the dead bodies . Your garland is of human skulls . Every aspect of your character is thus inauspicious . Let it be . It does not matter . Because, with all these known oddness, you are quick to grant all auspicious things to the people who just think of you . (It is interesting to note here that in his Devi aparadha kshama stotra Shankaracharya says that,despite his poor and deficient possessions,Shiva got the power to grant boons entirely because because of his having taken the hand of Parvathi in marriage; in the previous shloka, Pushhpadanta calls it naive on the part of Parvati, if she thinks that Shiva is attracted by her charm simply because he is sharing half the body with her.This dichotomy etc . is due to the custom that when a particular lord is to be extolled, the other gods are to be belittled to some extent).

The great yogis regulate their breath, control and still their mind, look inward and enjoy the bliss with their hair standing on edge and eyes filled with tears of joy . It looks as though they are immersed in nectar . That bliss which they see in their heart and exult thus, is verily you Yourself!

**26.** You are the sun, the moon, the air, the fire, the water, the sky(ether/space), and the earth (the five elements or `bhUtA's). You are the Self which is omnipresent . Thus people describe in words every attribute as yours . On the other hand, I do not know any fundamental principle or thing or substance, which you are not!

**27.**O, grantor of refuge and protection! The word `OM' consists of the three letters `a', `u' and `m'. It refers to the three Vedas(Rik, YajuH and SAma), the three states (Jaagrat.h, Swapna, and sushhupti-awakened, dreaming and sleeping),the three worlds(BhUH, bhuvah and suvah) and the three gods (Brahma, VishhNu amd Mahesha).It refers to you yourself both through the individual letters as well as collectively; in the latter form (i.e . the total word `OM') it refers to your omnipresent absolute nature, as the fourth state of existence i.e `turIyaM' (sleep-like yet awakened and alert state, as a fully- drawn bow).

**28.**I salute you as the dear abode of the following 8 names:bhava, sharva, rudra, pashupati, ugra, sahamahAn.h, bhiima, and Ishaana; the `Vedas' also discusses individually about these names .

**29.**O, destroyer of Cupid! O, the three-eyed one! Salutations to you, who is the forest-lover, the nearest and the farthest; the minutest and the biggest, the oldest and the youngest; salutations to you who is everything and beyond everything!

**30.**Salutations to you in the name of'Bhava' in as much as you create the world by taking the `rajas' as the dominant quality; salutations to you in the name of `Hara' in as much as you destroy the world by taking the `tamas' as the dominant quality; salutations to you in the name of `MRiDa', in as much as you maintain and protect the world by taking `satva' as the dominant quality . Again salutations to you in the name of Shiva in as much as you are beyond the above-mentioned three qualities and are the seat of the supreme bliss .

**31.**O, boon-giver! I was very perplexed to sing your praise considering my little awareness and afflicted mind vis-a-vis your ever increasing limitless quality; however, my devotion to you made me set aside this diffidence and place these floral lines at your feet

**32.**O, great master! Even, if one were to assume that the blue mountain , the ocean, the heavenly tree and the earth are the ink,the ink-pot, the pen and the paper respectively and the goddess of learning (Saraswati) herself is the writer,she will not be able to reach the frontiers of your greatness,however long she were to write!

**33.**The best one among all groups(Gandharva?), Pushhpadanta by name, composed this charming hymn in none too short metres, in praise of the great lord who wears the moon in his head(Shiva), who is worshipped and glorified by all demons, gods and sages and who is beyond all attributes and forms. (33)

**34.**Whoever reads this faultless hymn of Shiva daily, with pure mind and great devotion, ultimately reaches Shiva's domain and becomes equal to him; in this world, he is endowed with children, great wealth, long life and fame .

**35.**There is no God higher than Mahesha; there is no hymn better than this one. There is no `mantra' greater than `OM' and there is no truth or principle beyond one's teacher/spiritual guide .

**36.** Initiation(into spiritual development), charity, penance, pilgrimage,spiritual knowledge and religious acts like sacrifices are not capable of yielding even one-sixteenth of the return that will result from the reading of this hymn

**37.**Kusumadanta(equivalent of Pushhpadanta) was the king of all Gandharvas and he was a devotee of the Lord of lords, Shiva, who wears the baby moon (with a few digits only) in his head . He fell from his glorious position due to Shiva's wrath at his misconduct . It was then that the Gandharva composed this hymn which is the most divine .

**38.** If an aspirant for heaven and liberation, worships Shiva,the teacher of gods, at first and then reads this unfailling hymn, composed by Pushhpadanta, with folded hands and single-mindedness, he attains Shiva's abode, being praised by `kinnaras'(a group of semi-gods known for their singing talent).

**39.** Here ends this meritorious,charming and incomparable hymn, uttered by the Gandharva, all in description of the great master . (39)

**40.**Thus, this worship in the form of words, is dedicated at the feet of Shri Shankara; may the ever-auspicious lord of the gods be pleased with this .

**41.**I do not know the truth of your nature and how you are . O, great God! My Salutations are to that nature of yours of which you really are

**42..**

Whoever reads this once, twice or thrice (in a day) revels in the domain of Shiva, bereft of all sins . (42)

**43.**This hymn which is dear to Shiva, has emerged out of the lotus-like mouth of Pushhpadanta and is capable of removing all sins . May the lord of all beings become greatly pleased with anyone who has learnt this by heart and/or reads or recalls this with single-mindedness! (43)