

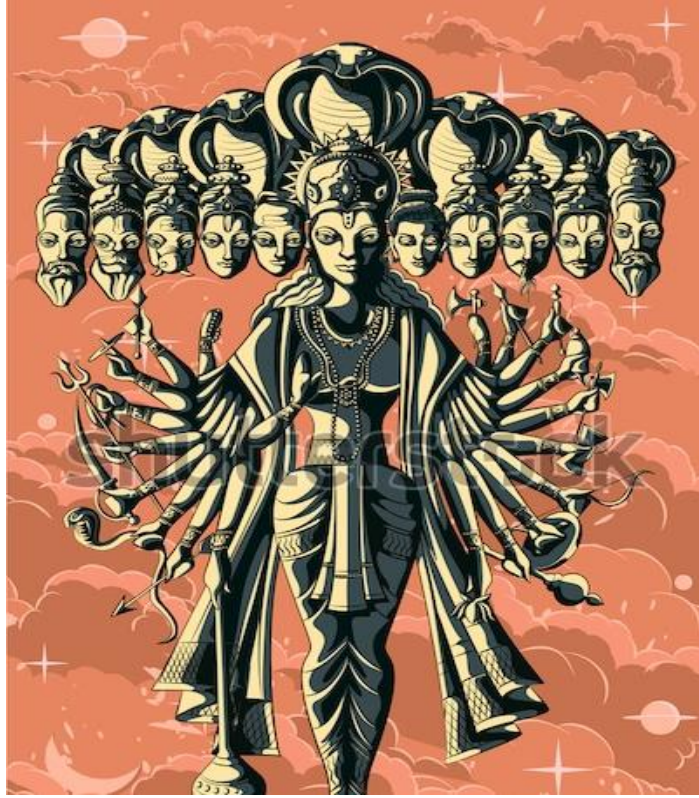
## Vaishnavism and Shaivism Explained

Dr Uday Dokras Ph D SWEDEN

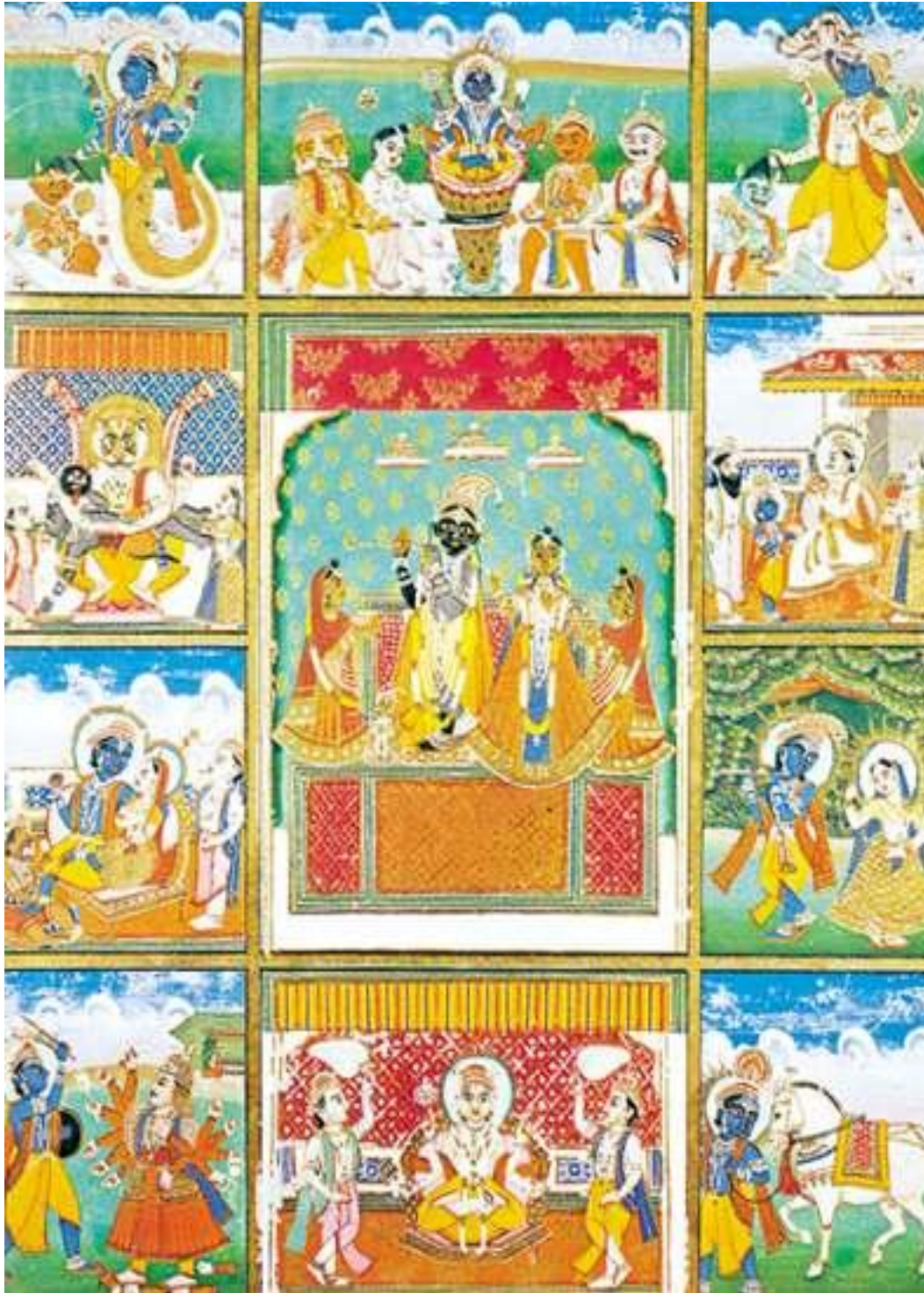
Chidambaram temple is one of the few temples where both the Shaivite and Vaishnavite deities are enshrined in one place. So let us explore what are the two grains of Hinduism- Vaishnavism and Shaivism

### **Vaishnavism**

Vaishnavism is the worship and acceptance of Vishnu (Sanskrit: "The Pervader" or "The Immanent") or one of his various incarnations (avatars) as the supreme manifestation of the divine. During a long and complex development, many Vaishnava groups emerged with differing beliefs and aims. Some of the major Vaishnava groups include the Shrivaisnavas (also known as Vishishtadvaitins) and Madhvas (also known as Dvaitins) of South India; the followers of the teachings of Vallabha in western India; and several Vaishnava groups in Bengal in eastern India, who follow teachings derived from those of the saint Chaitanya. Most Vaishnava believers, however, draw from various traditions and blend worship of Vishnu with local practices.



VISHNU



**Vishnu with his 10 avatars (incarnations): Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf, Rama-with-the-Ax, King Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Kalkin. Painting from Jaipur, India, 19th century; in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. *Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London***

In the Vedas and Brahmanas, Vishnu is the god of far-extending motion and pervasiveness who, for humans in distress, penetrates and traverses the entire cosmos to make their existence

possible. All beings are said to dwell in his three strides or footsteps (*trivikrama*): his highest step, or abode, is beyond mortal ken in the realm of heaven. Vishnu is also the god of the pillar of the universe and is identified with the sacrifice. He imparts his all-pervading power to the sacrificer who imitates his strides and identifies himself with the god, thus conquering the universe and attaining “the goal, the safe foundation, the highest light” (Shatapatha Brahmana).

In the centuries before the Common Era, Vishnu became the Ishvara (supreme deity) of his worshipers, fusing with the Purusha-Prajapati figure; with Narayana, worship of whom discloses a prominent influence of ascetics; with Krishna, whom the *Bhagavadgita* identified with Vishnu in many forms; and with Vasudeva, who was worshipped by a group known as the Pancharattras.

The extensive mythology attached to Vishnu is largely that of his avatars. Although this notion is found elsewhere in Hinduism, it is basic to Vaishnavism. Each of his incarnations, especially Krishna and Rama, has a particular mythology and is the object of devotion (*bhakti*). The classical number of these incarnations is 10—the *dashavatara* (“ten avatars”)—ascending from theriomorphic (animal form) to fully anthropomorphic manifestations. They are Fish (Matsya), Tortoise (Kurma), Boar (Varaha), Man-Lion (Narasimha), Dwarf (Vamana), Rama-with-the-Ax (Parashurama), King Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and the future incarnation, Kalkin. This list varies, however, according to the text within which it appears and the devotional community that maintains it. For example, some *dashavatara* lists include Balarama, the brother of Krishna, instead of the Buddha. Moreover, the number of incarnations is not fixed across all texts or traditions; some texts list 24 incarnations of Vishnu. In addition, a particular *dashavatara* list popularized by the 13th-century poet Jayadeva in his song *Gita Govinda* names Krishna, not Vishnu, as the supreme deity who incarnates himself 10 times. In Jayadeva's list the first seven incarnations are the same as those found in other Vaishnava lists. Jayadeva then lists Balarama and Buddha as the eighth and ninth incarnations. One common element in all these lists is Kalkin, who is always the final incarnation.

Like most other Hindu gods, Vishnu has his especial entourage: his wife is Lakshmi, or Shri, the lotus goddess—granter of success, wealth, and liberation—who came forth from the ocean when gods and demons churned it in order to recover from its depths the ambrosia or elixir of immortality, *amrita*. At the beginning of the commercial year, special worship is paid to her for

success in personal affairs. Vishnu's mount is the bird Garuda, archenemy of snakes, and in his four hands are his emblems: the lotus, conch shell, and his two weapons, the club and the discus. Devotees hold that, in addition to having many avatars, Vishnu also manifests himself in many temples. He may manifest himself within an iconic form (*archa avatara*) for worship. In many South Indian temples, the regional manifestations of Vishnu have distinct identities and are known by local names (e.g., as Venkateswara in Tirumala-Tirupati and in the Hindu diaspora). Each of these distinct forms has specific attributes and weapons, which are depicted in particular locations or poses. Elaborate treatises on iconography as well as on local custom and practice govern the carving and interpretation of these icons. In many temples in South India and Southeast Asia, Vishnu is depicted as standing, sitting, striding the universe, or reclining. He sometimes reclines on the serpent Ananta ("Without End," suggesting the deity's mastery over infinite time). He is frequently displayed in temple carvings and in calendar art with four arms (though occasional depictions provide him with as many as eight), three of which hold his conch shell, discus, and club. Although a few Vaishnava philosophical schools may consider the image in the temple to be a symbol pointing to the supreme being, most devotees perceive it as an actual manifestation of the deity, a form that he takes to make himself accessible to human beings.

Whatever justification the different Vaishnava groups (such as the Shrivaishnavas of South India or the worshipers of Vishnu Vithoba in Maharashtra) offer for their philosophical position, all of them believe in God as a person with distinctive qualities and worship him through his manifestations and representations. Many schools teach that it is through divine grace that the votary is lifted from transmigration to release. Much of Vaishnava faith is monotheistic, whether the object of adoration be Vishnu Narayana or one of his avatars. Preference for any one of these manifestations is largely a matter of tradition. Thus, most South Indian Shrivaishnavas worship Vishnu in one of his many local manifestations; the North Indian groups prefer Krishna.

### **Shaivism**

The character and position of the Vedic god Rudra—called Shiva, "the Auspicious One," when this aspect of his ambivalent nature is emphasized—remain clearly evident in some of the important features of the great god Shiva, who together with Vishnu came to dominate

Hinduism. Major groups such as the Lingayats of southern India and the Kashmiri Shaivas contributed the theological principles of Shaivism, and Shaiva worship became a complex amalgam of pan-Indian Shaiva philosophy and local or folk worship.



SHIVA

In the minds of the ancient Hindus, Shiva was the divine representative of the uncultivated, dangerous, and unpredictable aspects of nature. Shiva's character lent itself to being split into partial manifestations—each said to represent only an aspect of him—as well as to assimilating powers from other deities. Already in the Rigveda, appeals to him for help in case of disaster—of which he might be the originator—were combined with the confirmation of his great power. In the course of the Vedic period, Shiva—originally

a ritual and conceptual outsider, yet a mighty god whose benevolent aspects were readily emphasized—gradually gained access to the circle of prominent gods who preside over various spheres of human interest. Many characteristics of the Vedic Prajapati, the creator; of Indra, the god of rain and of the thunderbolt; and of Agni, the Vedic god of fire, have been integrated into the figure of Shiva.

In those circles that produced the Shvetashvatara Upanishad (c. 400 BCE), Shiva rose to the highest rank. Its author proposed a way of escape from samsara, proclaiming Shiva the sole eternal Lord. Rudra-Shiva developed into an ambivalent and many-sided lord and master. His many manifestations, however, were active among humankind: as Pashupati (“Lord of Cattle”), he took over the fetters of the Vedic Varuna; as Aghora (“To Whom Nothing Is Horrible”), he showed the uncanny traits of his nature (evil, death, punishment) and also their opposites.

Like Vishnu, Shiva is held by devotees to be the entire universe, yet he is worshipped in various manifestations and in hundreds of local temples. Although it is not always clear whether Shiva is invoked as a great god of frightful aspect, capable of conquering demonic power, or as the boon-giving lord and protector, Hindus continue to invoke him in magical rites.

Shiva reconciles in his person semantically opposite though complementary aspects: he is both terrifying and mild, destroyer and restorer, eternal rest and ceaseless activity. These seeming contradictions make him a paradoxical figure, transcending humanity and assuming a mysterious sublimity of his own. From the standpoint of his devotees, his character is so complicated and his interests are so widely divergent as to seem incomprehensible. Yet, although Brahman philosophers like to emphasize his ascetic aspects and the ritualists of the Tantric tradition his sexuality, the seemingly opposite strands of his nature are generally accepted as two sides of one character.

Shiva temporarily interrupts his austerity and asceticism (*tapas*) to marry Parvati, and he combines the roles of lover and ascetic to such a degree that his wife must be an ascetic (yogi) when he devotes himself to austerities and a loving companion when he is in his erotic mode. This dual character finds its explanation in the ancient belief that, by his very chastity, an ascetic accumulates (sexual) power that can be discharged suddenly and completely, resulting in the fecundation of the soil. Various mythical tales reveal that both chastity and the loss of chastity are necessary for fertility and the intermittent process of regeneration in nature. The erotic and

creative experiences portrayed in these narratives are a familiar feature in Hinduism, and they counterbalance the Hindu bent for asceticism. Such sexuality, while rather idyllic in Krishna, assumes a mystical aspect in Shiva, which is why the devotee can see in him the realization of the possibilities of both the ascetic life and the householder state. His marriage with Parvati is then a model of conjugal love, the divine prototype of human marriage, sanctifying the forces that carry on the human race.

Shiva's many poses express various aspects of his nature. The cosmic dancer, he is the originator of the eternal rhythm of the universe, dancing through its creation and destruction. He also catches, in his thickly matted hair, the waters of the heavenly Ganges River, which destroy all sin. He wears in his headdress the crescent moon, which drips the nectar of everlasting life.



Thanjavur, Brihadishvara Temple, Lingodabhava



Shiva Nataraja at the Brihadishvara Temple, Thanjavur (Tanjore). *Frederick M. Asher*

Shiva is the master of both *tandava*, the fierce, violent dance that gives rise to energy, and *lasya*, the gentle, lyric dance representing tenderness and grace. Holding a drum upon which he beats the rhythm of creation, he dances within a circle of flames that depicts the arc of dissolution. He holds up the palm of one hand in a gesture of protection; with another he points to his foot to indicate the refuge of his followers. The image of the dancing Shiva is said by Shaivites to portray five cosmic activities: creation, maintenance, destruction, concealing his true form from adversaries, and, finally, the grace through which he saves his devotees. The outer form of the



dance, however, is only one aspect of the divine flow of energy; followers of Shiva say that the dance is in the heart of every devotee.

Yet while the dancing Shiva is an important and popular representation, the abstract form of Shiva is perhaps the most commonly seen portrayal throughout India. Shiva is depicted as a conical shaft (lingam) of fire within a womb (yoni), illustrating the creative powers of Shiva and Parvati. In temples the lingam, which literally means “distinguishing symbol,” is an upright structure that is often made of stone. It is placed in a stone yoni that represents both the womb and the abode of all creation. The union between the lingam and the yoni serves as a reminder that male and female forces are united in generating the universe.

Shiva also represents the unpredictability of divinity. He is the hunter who slays and skins his prey and dances a wild dance while covered with its hide. Far from society and the ordered world, he sits on the inaccessible Himalayan plateau of Mount Kailasa, an austere ascetic, averse to love, who burns Kama, the god of love, to ashes with a glance from the third eye—the eye of insight beyond duality—in the middle of his forehead. And at the end of the eon, he will dance the universe to destruction. He is nevertheless invoked as Shiva, Shambhu, Shankara (“Benignant” and “Beneficent”), for the god that can strike down can also spare. Snakes seek his company and twine themselves around his body. He wears a necklace of skulls. He sits in meditation, with his hair braided like a hermit’s, his body smeared white with ashes. These ashes recall the burning pyres on which the *sannyasis* (renouncers) take leave of the social order of the world and set out on a lonely course toward release, carrying with them a human skull.

Shiva’s consort is Parvati (“Daughter of the Mountain [Himalaya]”), a goddess who is an auspicious and powerful wife. She is also personified as the Goddess (Devi), Mother (Amba), black and destructive (Kali), fierce (Chandika), and inaccessible (Durga). As Shiva’s female counterpart, she inherits some of Shiva’s more fearful aspects. She comes to be regarded as the power (*shakti*) of Shiva, without which Shiva is helpless. Shakti is in turn personified in the form of many different goddesses, often said to be aspects of her.

Shiva and his family at the burning ground. Parvati, Shiva's wife, holds Skanda while watching Ganesha, and Shiva strings together the skulls of the dead. Kangra painting, 18th century;

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. *Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; photograph A.C. Cooper*

### **Narratives of culture heroes**

A culture hero can easily be assimilated to a god by identifying him with an incarnation of a god. Thus, great religious teachers are considered manifestations of the god of their devotional preaching, and stories of their lives have become part of a very rich storehouse of narratives. Practically gods on earth, these ascetics, according to mythology, have amassed tremendous powers that they do not hesitate to use. The sage Kapila, meditating in the netherworld, burned to ashes 60,000 princes who had dug their way to him. Another sage, Bhagiratha, brought the Ganges River down from heaven to sanctify their ashes and, in the process, created the ocean. Agastya, revered as the Brahman who brought Sanskrit-speaking civilization to South India, drank and digested the ocean. When the Vindhya mountain range would not stop growing, Agastya crossed it to the south and commanded it to cease growing until his return; he still has not returned. Vishvamitra, a king who became a Brahman, created a new universe with its own galaxies to spite the gods.

Moving from myth to hagiography (biography of venerated persons), there are also stories told of the great teachers, and every founder of a sect is soon deified as an incarnation of a god: the philosopher Shankara (c. 788–820) as an incarnation of Shiva; the religious leader Ramanuja (d. 1137) as that of Ananta, the sacred serpent of Vishnu; and the Bengal teacher Chaitanya (1485–1533) simultaneously as that of Krishna and his beloved Radha.

### **Myths of holy rivers and holy places**

Of particular sanctity in India are the rivers, among which the Ganges stands first. This river, personified as a goddess, originally flowed only in heaven until she was brought down by Bhagiratha to purify the ashes of his ancestors. She came down reluctantly, cascading first on the head of Shiva in order to break her fall, which would have shattered the Earth. Confluences are particularly holy, and the confluence of the Ganges with the Yamuna at Allahabad is the most sacred spot in India. Another river of importance is the Sarasvati, which loses itself in desert; it was personified as a goddess of eloquence and learning.

All major and many minor temples and sanctuaries have their own myths of how they were founded and what miracles were wrought there. The same is true of famous places of pilgrimage, usually at sacred spots near and in rivers; important among these are Vrindavana (Brindaban) on the Yamuna, which is held to be the scene of the youthful adventures of Krishna and the cowherd wives. Another such centre with its own myths is Gaya, especially sacred for the funerary rites that are held there. And there is no spot in Varanasi (Benares), along the Ganges, that is without its own mythical history. Srirangam, a temple town set in an island in the Kaveri River in Tamil Nadu, is considered to be heaven on earth (*bhuloka vaikuntham*). There are also many places sacred to followers of Vishnu, Shiva, or other deities.

### **Philosophical texts**

Although the details of Indian philosophy, as it has been developed by professional philosophers, may be treated as a subject separate from Hinduism (*see* Indian philosophy), certain broad philosophical concepts were absorbed into the myths and rituals of Hindus and are best viewed as a component of the religious tradition.

here have been plenty of answers available for this question , some answering it nicely others deviating but I shall try to refute the claims made in one of the answers . The gentleman has tried to compare Shaivism and vaishnavism by presenting points for both. I , however , will try to speak only regarding the points made against Shaivism . **This is a really long answer .**

### **PURVAPAKSHIN :**

1. In shaivism , there is no particular focus on any person and no ultimate aim/goal.
2. Shiva, his wife Parvati, their children Ganapati, Kumaraswamy (Murugan) and Ayyappa are all considered as Gods.The entire *family* is considered as Gods. Entire family is worshipped.Ganapati, Murugan, Ayyappa are worshiped independently as Gods. Special preference is given to children of their family.
3. Parvati and her other forms are worshipped independently and considered as supreme God by herself. There is no compulsion that she must be worshiped along with Shiva.There are separate temples for Durga, Kali and Parvati without Shiva being accompanied.

4. Some south Indians consider Shiva, Murugan as their ancestors and native God to their own state. What is this concept of regional God? How can God be restricted to a place, should not he be universal?

**UTTARPAKSHIN :**

1. Thinking that there is no ultimate goal or aim in Shaivism is highly inaccurate logically ( I am also not quoting verses ). **There is no work without any cause** . This has been used by all the previous Bhasyakartas to prove atheism to be wrong. So , how come Shaivism be without any cause ?
2. So , the purvpakshin has seen the Shiv temples house Shivling along with Gauri , Ganpati etc . Similarly , pictures has been viewed by him in puja place of people. But , he definitely forgot the concept of parivar devta . In any temple , beside the Main deity , the deities considered family members are also housed.

For example , in the famous vaishnav shrine of Lord Venkateswar on Seshachalam , a temple dedicated to Vakula Mata is located . Similarly , the Srivaishnava temples house the 12 Alvars alongside other previous Acharyas .

But someone might say that the purvpakshin by using the word God wants to convey the meaning of Brahman and wants to imply that Shaivas consider Shiv with his Parivar devta to be Brahman .

This is again a wrong notion derived in context of no true knowledge of Shaiv Sampradayas . Shiv worship mainly has 4 divisions Shaiv , Pashupat , Bhairav Aagamas and karalmukh as mentioned in Varah puran and also by Bhasyakartas . In modern context there are different schools of Shiv worship namely Shaiv-advait of Smartas , Shrout Shaivism of Srikant Acharya , Lingayat of Basvanna , Shaiv Siddhant of Shaiv-Acharyas , and Trika of Abhinav gupta ( kashmir Shaivism ). {Some also consider Aghoris , kapaliks to be in Shaivism. Others consider Nath sampraday also. } The division is quite cumbersome but I tried to present a general picture of all modern day available ancient sampradays of Shaivism.

Leaving aside Smartas , the rest namely Shrout , Lingayat , Siddhant and Trika consider only Shiv to be the Brahman and Parvati to be his Shakti and not their children.

Smartas Following Advait theology see the 5 deities , Ganapati , Surya , Vishnu , Shiv and Shakti to be one same Brahman personified. But Shaiv siddhant considers SadaShiv to manifest

in 5 different forms for fivefold function while other creatures are born from them and Only Sadashiv is taken as ultimate reality and not the other forms .

I have not got much information regarding other sampradayas , hence cannot comment.

The person has equated Shaivism with Advait and applied a general lens but there are different subjects adhering to various philosophies in the Shaivism.

3. Regarding various forms of Shakti being worshipped. There is another popular Sampradaya called Shakta to worship Shakti . However , in Shaiv Siddhant too Shakti can be independently worshipped because the karmas of jeeva are under control of ShivShakti , the power of Shiv. Similarly , Independent Lakshmi temples are too found under srivaishnavism ( Tiruchanur Padmavati temple )

4. As far as concept of Shiv and Murga being considered ancestors by south indians . Following counterpoints need to be mentioned . Many Kshatriyas of north trace themselves to Ramchandra and Krishnachandra. Bhumiars trace themselves from Parshuram. Narasimha is considered to be son in law by chenchu tribes. Bibi nachiyar is a consort of Sri Rnganath.

In this regard , just like Ramchandra murthy's lineage as king passed on . Similarly , the lineage of Madurai Pandyas which had Shiv incarnate as Somasundar to marry Meenakshi , is traced by many. Here , regional connections are established by Bhava and not by scriptural evidence .

Hence these points have been nullified thereby .

#### **PURVAPAKSHIN :**

1. Shaivism is not a religion. It is just a *sentimental fan following* towards a *particular family* which is still being continued. Just like there is a fan following for actors', celebrity's family in present days.
2. It clearly shows Shiva and his children are not Gods but just great personalities in those times and their followers equated him to a God. Like we equate actors, politicians to Gods and build temples for them.
3. Vaishnavism is a proper religion, it is somewhat a monotheistic religion, where Narayan (Vishnu) is *literally* considered as a God and devotees believe that he really exist as a person in Vaikuntha which is outside all material universes.

#### **UTTARPAKSHIN :**

The second point has been nullified above and since the first point is derived by swimming second itself . Hence , the second point also gets nullified since the base is itself illogical and derived of proper information.

Since the purvapakshin has mixed western in indian context , it is quite difficult to understand the motive with respect to monotheism = religion.

Shaiv siddhant too believes in existence of one singularity called SadaShiv and itself qualified as a religion by the logic of purvapakshin.

Since the assumption by purvapakshin and it's implication cuts the basic assumption itself. We see the assumption given is again flawed.

**PURVAPAKSHIN :** with respect to worship system of Shaivism ,

1. Extremely polytheistic and *nature worshipping pagan religion*. It is not a *God* based religion, rather it is just a *GOOD culture*. ***This is what Shiva Bhakt Sadhguru says.***
2. No one strongly believes that Shiva is a God. Shiva is a great yogi, tantric and an occultist who used to stay with group of aghoris. He wears a garland of skulls.
3. Shiva holds a trident (which is normal), has snakes around his neck (which is normal), has Bull as a vehicle (which is again normal). So Shiva was a normal respectable human being and anyone can mimic these things.
4. Shaivas mostly follow Advaita, which says “Aham Brahmasmi” (I am God, everyone is God and everything is God). Which means there is no God.

**UTTARPAKSHIN :**

1. The flawed view of polytheism is again implied which has been duly refuted above . And the purvapakshin makes it clear that his knowledge of Shaivism is basically from the talks of Sadguru ( whose highest reading ability has been asterix ) by dhum-vahani nyaya.
2. The purvapakshin is again taking one person's view as view of all. Only so called highly educated people who get their info via Modern day gurus like Sri Sri , Sadguru would say. If purvapakshin wants to take the view of majority in consideration for this regard , roaming in villages of India will reveal how People see Lord Shiv as a god and not as a yogi which is a modern day fishing interpretation of some elite gurus .
3. Purvapakshin takes the appearance of Lord Shiv in popular culture to prove that he is ordinary and with respect to Narayan , he uses the symbols to tell him extraordinary.

Now that is being clarified. Purvapakshin has definitely got no knowledge of Lord Shiv . Otherwise he would have known that in Sadashiv form he holds ten arms of arrays of aayudhas. In maheshvar form he holds A deer and in Natraj form he has fire on his hand , for Jalandhar sanghar , he used a chakra too. None of these are ordinary things. Wearing snakes is ordinary for purvapakshin which shows the lack of logic again.

4. Here , purvapakshin accepts that Shaivas mainly follow advait . Well and good . But then he uses one of the Mahavakyas and misinterprets it . Aham brahmashmi . I am god , everything is god . Accurate interpretation as per advait until now . But then from now where does he jump to say that there is no god. When everything is considered god , how can there be no god. When everything is considered beautiful , how come there be no beauty . This might be the base for interpreting Shaivism as atheist in further narrations given elsewhere

#### **PURVPAKSHIN :**

- Shaivism is an atheistic and nature worshipping religion. This is why Ravan was considered as an atheist in Valmiki Ramayan even though he was Shiva bhakt. How is a Shiva bhakt theist when Shiva is not a God in *literal* sense. *(Now a days people have their own definition of God, so Shiva and his family are Gods in that sense).*

#### **UTTAR PAKSHIN :**

- It has been duly mentioned why Shaivism was considered atheist and since there is misinterpretation by purvapakshin , the first line itself gets nullified. Atheist is someone who does not believe in God , Brahman in indian context . Ancient india had a school of philosophy called Charvaka that denied the existence of Brahman and hence vedas. But Ravan studied and mastered the Vedas . He also worshipped and pleased Brahma and Shiv . He also wrote Shiv tandav stotram wherein he mentions meditation upon Lord Shankar to be cause of liberation ( this is in accordance to shvetashvatara and Brihadaranyak which mention constant mediation upon Brhman to be path to liberation ) , so Ravan being atheist is disproved. Since there is no definition of god as per se quoted by purvapakshin. It is better to leave it.

#### **PURVPAKSHIN :**

- Shaivism has no Varna system and is not given much importance as it is not part of Vedic civilization.

#### UTTARPAKSHIN :

- This is again a baseless assumption by the purvpakshin . The shaiv aagamas extensively talk of 4 varnas and also of avarnas . “Not being part of vedic civilisation” must be cleared from the ancient commentators of vedas like Shayan and Bhaskar who to give the meaning of word Pashupati have resorted to the aagamas. ( Shayan clears takes a verse from aagamas ) Certainly these vedic commentators were more vedic than most people of Modern day who can even hardly name the angas / organs of vedas .

#### PURVPAKSHIN :

1. As I explained above, *Shiva and his family* were never considered as Gods and their *fan followers* never identified themselves with any religion **UNTIL** the theistic religion started in the name of Narayan (Vishnu) through his avatars.
2. Associating body parts of Vishnu and his avatars with *Lotus (Padma)* for eg: Lotus eyed, Lotus feet, Lotus hands, Lotus face. Putting *Sri (Lakshmi)* as prefix to the names for eg: Sriman Narayana, Sri Hari, Sri Maha Vishnu, Sri Ram, Srinivas, Sri Krishna. Terminologies like Purushottam, Adi Purusha, Ved Purusha, *4 hands (Chaturbhuj)*. Idea of giving *Blue color (Neeli Megha Shyam)* to Vishnu, Rama and Krishna body. All these things originally came from Vishnu only.
3. Vishnu *Sahasranama*, *Vishwaroop*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Garuda puran* which talks about punishments in *Narak* (hell), *Vaikuntha* (heaven), *Swarga* (materialistic heaven), *Padma puran*, *Paramatma*, *Jivatmata* (soul), *rebirth*, *moksha*, *yuga* all such notions and thoughts originally came from Narayan (Vishnu).
4. Later on people who were against these things started giving the same to Shiva. Like Shiva Sahasranama, Shiva Vishwaroop in Shiva/Ishwar Gita where Shiva showed his *imaginary* Vishwaroopam to Bhagavan Ram. After seeing the imaginary Vishwaroop of Shiva, *Sri Ram trembled with fear and fainted!* These things are not mentioned in Valmiki Ramayan.



5. All the Acharyas (including Shankaracharya), Pandits, Philosophers used to go behind Vishnu only. They were interested in giving commentaries only to Vishnu Sahasranama, Bhagavad Gita etc. No great acharyas (even Shankaracharya) gave importance or showed any interest in writing commentaries on Shiva Sahasranamam or Shiva/Isvar Gita. **BECAUSE THESE ARE NOT ORIGINAL.**

**UTTARPAKSH :**

- The first assumption has already been nullified .
- In points 2 , 3 , 4 , the purvpakshin tries to put a blame on Shaivas to have robbed things from Vaishnavism. This is wrong considered that one of the source of many Shiv centric ideas is Shiv puran , mentioned alongside Vishnu puran in the Bhagvatam while discussing verse numbers. And if the views of Indologists ( this was taken from this etc ) , is dear to purvpakshin , he may give a look to pashupati seal of Indus valley to document the antiquity . I will resort to shastra.
- The views of Shayan etc Acharyas who consider The three eyed one to give liberation has been not considered . Shiv-acharyas of Shaiv siddhant have not been considered . But a general all acharya tag has been used . Many Acharyas did not present commentary on Puranas too , so are they faulty and unauthentic ? This counter question is to nullify the illogic in line.

**PURVPAKSHIN : \*QUOTES SOME QUESTIONS\***

**UTTARPAKSHIN :** these have puranic backgrounds .

**PURVPAKSHIN :**

1. Narayan is all the 3 Original Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Narayan is the source of all Brahmas and Rudras.
2. Rudra suktam in Vedas is referred as Sri Rudram which means Rudra is none other than Vishnu himself as “Sri (Laksmi)” in Vedas is used as prefix only for Vishnu. We call Shri Ram, Shri Krishna, Sriman Narayan, Shri Hari, Shri Maha Vishnu etc. Have your ever heard Sri Shiva? It sounds weird though.
3. Now people on Quora ignorantly using the phrases of Vishnu to Shiva for eg: Sri Shiva, Lotus feet of Shiva, Lotus eyed Shiva.

**UTTARPAKSHIN :**

1. The purvpakshin forgets the thirteenth anuvak of ttaitreya aaranayak , naryanopanishad . Narayan is Brahama , Shiv , Hari and Indra.
2. This notion of purvpakshin lacks historic and practical background. Commentators like Shayan has ascribed SriRudram to Shiv and also practically the panch suktas of Vaishnavas donot contain SriRudram ( but that of Shaivas contain Purush Suktam ) . Sri is used in meaning of shreya or greatness as used by Shayan .
3. Again puranic references .