

## KRISHNA'S PENANCE - HARIVAMSHA PURANA

### INTRODUCTION

In these five chapters of Harivamsha, which constitute a bit of a lengthy write-up, bhagavAn goes to the kailAsa mountain to pray for a son and perform a penance for that purpose on mahAdeva. It is replete with a beautiful description of the mAhAtmya of kailAsa, the greatness of mahAdeva and a lucid description of his various forms by bhagavAn, as well as the elucidation of para-tattva by mahAdeva himself. It is no exaggeration to say that this section covers every conceivable topic of shAstra.

Besides the request for a son, another reason for praying to mahAdeva is stated in the varAha purANa thus - mahAdeva asked bhagavAn to make him worship-worthy among all gods, as the propagator of knowledge. bhagavAn acceded to his request and said he would worship him as kR^iShNa, which would make him famous and hence worship-worthy.

Now, here is the irony. By the time bhagavAn set out for kailAsa, he already had kAmadeva as his son from Shiva. And by the time he worshipped Shiva, the latter had already become famous and celebrated as a loka-guru. So what really was the point then?

The point is very simple and is explained by mahAdeva himself in the anushAsana parva:

*vandito hi sa vandeta mAnito mAnayIta cha . arhitashchArhayennityaM pUjitaH pratipUjayet . dR^iShTaH pashyedaharahaH saMshritaH pratisaMshrayet. architashchArchayennityaM sa devo dvijasattamAH etattasyAnavadyasya viShNorvai paramaM vratam*

*[When praised with stotras, he praises the praiser. When honored by following his words (Veda), he reciprocates the honor by following the devotee's words. When worshipped via meditation, he worships by contemplating on the meditator in return. When worshipped with offerings, he makes offerings to the worshipper. If perceived (as sustenance) by the devotees, he sees them (as his sustenance). If one seeks his refuge, he seeks their refuge in return. When worshipped via loving services to him, he worships with loving service. This is ever the supreme vow of viShNu who is without blemishes - the vow to become dependent to his devotees who consider themselves dependent on him]*

The only reason is that bhagavAn likes to bow before his devotees and to imitate his devotees. As Shiva gained great fame by meditating on kailAsa, he wants to meditate on that very mountain

as well! This guNa is called "saushIlya" - descending to the level of his devotees and mingling with them.

As to how he worshipped mahAdeva, bhagavAn himself answers Arjuna that:

**ahamAtmA hi lokAnAM vishvAnAM pANDunandana tasmAdAtmAnamevAgre rudraM sampUjayAmyaham**

**[O Son of Pandu, I am indeed the innerself of all, the worlds (lokAnAm) and gods who are the rulers of those worlds (vishvAnAm). Therefore, I worship myself first when I worship Rudra.]**

So how does this work? Eg: When bhagavAn says, "namo pinAkin" - the term "namaH" is addressed to his antaryAmin, nArAyAnA. The attribute "pinAkin" belongs to Rudra, who is meditated as a symbol or "pratIka" of Brahman, being his body and AveshAvatAra rUpa.

This is called pratIkopAsaNa - meditation on symbols due to sharIrAtma bhAva. Let me explain how it works. To understand pratIkAs - we do this daily. I look at X & say, "you are wise" - in reality, it is the self of X who is wise. The body lacks intelligence. Yet, I'm looking at the body while saying "you are wise" -- the body is a pratIka or symbol of the self due to inseparability.

Similarly, Rishis look at or meditate on various gods and other objects which are bodies of Brahman as per the shruti and say, "You are all pervading, you are the supreme one" etc. Again, these qualities belong to their self, nArAyaNa, but they are his pratIkAs.

The vice-versa is also applied. One meditates on the antaryAmin bhagavAn (the self) by saying "namaH" and then considers him to be having pinAka, etc because Rudra is his body.

The brahma sUtra, "brahmadRRiShTirutkarShAt" says that the supreme brahman may be superimposed on any pure objects like the mind etc. brahma sUtrAs clarify impure objects which are his bodies like rAvaNa, are not to be used for such dRRshtis - it is not conducive to meditation. pratIka should have purity.

And bhagavAn says, Rudra has that purity by telling Arjuna,

**nArAyaNAtmako GYeyaH pANDaveya yuge yuge - O Arjuna, know Rudra as 'nArAyaNAtmaka' - one who is meditating on nArAyaNa at all times incessantly ("yuge yuge" means "sadA).**

bhagavAn also gives the reason for honoring Rudra thus:

*yadyahaM nArchayeyaM vai IshAnaM varadaM shivam AtmAnaM nArchayetkashchiditi me bhAvitaM manaH*

*[If I did not worship Rudra also called Ishana, Shiva, Varada -- some would not worship me (as the innerself of Rudra). This is my opinion.]*

The names "IshAna" - One who rules over all vidyAs, "Shiva" - Due to which, he is pure, "varada" - One who bestows the boon of his bhakti to bhagavAn, as the latter considers it a boon from his devotee - all indicate Rudra is a pratIka of bhagavAn.

Then bhagavAn uses sharIrAtma bhAva by saying, *"If I do not worship such a pure devotee of mine, nobody would be worship me as his indweller, meaning, nobody would worship Rudra who is my body"*. --- by "me", he is talking of himself as indweller of Rudra.

But this is a lie. In truth, Rudra has already gained a great reputation as a j~nAni and is worshipped. The sole reason bhagavAn wanted to worship him was for his sushIlya guNa of bowing to his devotees. He did not tell Arjuna this, because he wanted to be known as one who did a great penance, just like his bhakta mahAdeva!

Sometimes you will see qualities of Shiva or bhagavAn repeated many times. The repetition is not redundancy as each time, they intend to describe a different activity or form associated with those same qualities.

Lastly, one more point. I have taken the trouble to go deep into translation of names that each god is called by. This is because, the names always tell more than half of the story. One needs to know why a god is called "Hara" here, "Shiva" there, or "viShNu" here, "janArdana" there. Then only one understands the intent of the statements. Thus, there is a lot of exposition on names.

With this clarification, I will begin.

### KAILASA MAHATMYA

tataH sa bhagavAnviShNurmunibhyastattvamAditaH . kathayAmAsa yadvR^ittaM pishAchasya mahAtmanaH

**Meaning:** Then, bhagavAn vishNu described to the munis (in that place), the story that those noble minded piShAchAs had told him, from the beginning.

I had earlier written about ghaNTAkarNa's liberation here on twitter - <https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1389830437552283648>.

This incident is a continuation of those events.

It is the great guNa of bhagavAn that he cannot stop praising his devotees to everyone he sees, that's what he was doing.

**tachChrutvA munayaH sarve vismayaM paramaM gatAH . aho.asya karmaNaH pAkastava saMdarshanAditi**

**Meaning: Listening to that, all the munis were highly struck with wonder. "Oh! The endeavors (Yoga) of those piShAchAs have borne fruit by your darShaNa".**

**archito munibhiH sarvaiH prItaH prItimatAM priyaH . tataH prabhAte vimale sUrye chAbhyudite sati . Aruhya garuDaM viShNuryayau kailAsamuttamam . bhavadbhistatra gantavyamityuktva munisattamAn**

**Meaning: Worshipped by those munis, bhagavAn, who is the dearest object of love for those devotees who are dear to him became delighted. Then, in the spotless dawn, at sunrise, vishNu mounted on garuDa, and proceeded to that excellent among mountains, kailAsa. While leaving, he told those munIs to arrive there.**

bhagavAn knew that the munIs, being his devotees, would like to see his form as a tapasvI and also gain a better understanding from the encounter that was to happen with mahAdeva. Hence, he asked them come there.

Why did bhagavAn choose to perform penance towards Shiva on kailAsa itself? Because he likes to imitate his devotees. Shiva himself performs his best austerities on that mountain, so bhagavAn does it too. In bhagavAn's case, his best austerity is mingling with his devotees - soughIlya guNa.

Because of the purity of tapas, that entire mountain is very exalted and a superior vibhUti of bhagavAn. Hence, the greatness of kailAsa is explained in the subsequent shlokAs.

**yatra vishveshvarAH siddhAstapasyanti yatavratAH . yatra vaishravaNaH sAkShAdupAste sha~NkaraM sadA**

**Meaning: Where those who are "viShveshvarAs" and "siddhAs" are performing austerities (bhakti yoga), being firm in karma yoga.**

A preeminent glory of kailAsa is that j~nAnIs frequent it.

"vishveshvarAH" are those who are masters of all the shAstra like Vedas and their ancillaries, like nArada, sanatkumAra etc who resort to mahAdeva for knowledge. SiddhAs are those who are endowed with Yogic powers from birth.

"vratAH" - those who have taken a vow to perform actions prescribed by the Vedas and refrain from prohibited actions. Both are commands of bhagavAn. They are karma yogIs too.

**yatra vaishravaNaH sAkShAdupAste sha~NkaraM sadA**

**Meaning: Where, Kubera directly ever worships sha~Nkara, the doer of auspicious acts.**

There are three categories of bhagavad bhaktAs:

- Those who worship him with love considering him as the main goal.
- Those who worship him with love, but also desire other things like aiShvarya.
- Those who worship him recognizing him as supreme, but have no major love for him; they just want aiShvarya, they know he grants them and thus they seek that and no more from him. For them, worship of bhagavAn is just a request for their desires and nothing more.

To the third category, are bhaktAs like kubera, nandi, durvAsa and others. Thus, the sahasranAma calls him "**anarthaH**" - One who is not an object of attainment for them. What bhagavAn does is, he delivers such bhaktAs to mahAdeva, who is "**paShupati**" or "**bhUtapati**" - the master of embodied beings. mahAdeva takes these people under his wing, imparts them knowledge and slowly develops bhakti in them.

This is well evidenced in the dialogue between kR^iShNa and an amSha of umA who appeared to protect bANAsura from bhagavAn's wrath

**AsuraM darpamAshritya na cha mAM saMshrayishyati... provAcha devI bANo.ayaM devadtto bhavediti (~HarivamSha)**

**kR^iShNa told pArvati: "This asura will not resort to me even if he knows my nature because of his pride"...Then, pArvati told him, "Let him become one who is given to me, by the effulgent Lord of Lakshmi (Deva)**

This shows how umA and shiva take asurAs as well as some bhaktAs with less love for bhagavAn under their shelter.

Now, Kubera was one who knew bhagavAn's nature but wanted only wealth. Thus, he worshipped bhagavAn with mahAdeva as the pratIka. For those who desire aishvarya, freedom from danger,

mahAdeva is worshipped as symbol or pratIka of viShNu. I had written about what a pratIkopAsaNa in the introduction.

Thus, Kubera worshipped shaN~kara, who is the doer of good deeds to those like him, by giving them their desires and also inculcating knowledge. That Kubera worshipped bhagavAn only through Rudra for wealth is indicated in viShNu dharmā:

*dEvEndhras tribhuvanam arthamEka pinga: sarvardhitham tribhuvanagAm cha kArthavIryaH, vaidhEhaH paramapadam prasAdya vishNum samprApta: sakalapalapradhO hi vishNuH (~ viShNu dharmā)*

*[Worshipping vishNu, Indra obtained the three worlds, kubera obtained wealth, kArtavIrya obtained greatness in the three worlds and janaka attained paramapadham (SrIvaikuNtam)]*

Hence, the vaibhava of KailAsa is that Kubera acquired from bhagavAn, wealth and the companionship of Rudra who would impart knowledge to him, to foster love of Brahman.

**yatra tanmAnanasaM nAma saro haMsAlayaM mahat . yatra bhR^i~NgIriTirdevamupAste sha~NkaraM shivam . gANapatyamavApyAtha harapArshvacharaH sadA**

**Meaning: Where, that river mAnasarovar is the great abode of swans. Where, bhR^ingi worshipping the God who is sha~Nkara, shiva, attained the status of "gaNapati" and is ever one of Hara's attendants.**

"haMsa" can also refer to those yogIs with discriminative intellect, those who can separate the sArArtha of veda like a swan separates milk from water. It means, mAnasarovar is a place where great yogIs meditate on bhagavAn.

bhR^ingi is another of those like Kubera who had some desires and knowledge of bhagavAn but not enough love required for upAsaNa.

"sha~Nkara" - He is the doer of good acts to those who worship him as he made bhR^ingi his gaNa

"shiva" - He who is purified by the Ganga from Hari's feet and thus knows his own position. Though he is the master of kubera, bhR^ingi etc., he considers it his duty to deliver them to bhagavAn someday.

"hara" - Though they worshipped him for wealth, for becoming a gaNa, he imparts them with the knowledge that bhagavAn is alone to be attained. He is thus the remover of their desires.

yatra siMhA varAhAshcha dvipadvIpimR^igaiH saha . krIDanti vanyaratayaH parasparahite  
ratAH . yatra nadyaH samutpanna ga~NgAdyAH sAgaraMgamAH

**Meaning:** Where, lions, boars, elephants and deer sport together, delighting in the forest  
life and in wishing well for each other. Where rivers beginning with ga~NgA originate and  
flow into the Ocean.

Even the animals were sAttvika there and holy rivers originate from that place.

yatra vishveshvaraH shambhurachChinadbrahmaNaH shiraH . yatrotpanna mahAvetra  
bhUtAnAM daNDatAM yayuH

**Meaning:** Where, the Master of all the shAstra (Rudra), who is ever enjoying the bliss of  
Brahman (ShambhuH), cut off the head of brahma. Where, great bamboos have arisen,  
becoming staffs for the munis and others meditating on Brahman.

The cutting of brahma's head was an act of transgression, but it lead to mahAdeva becoming  
purified by surrender to nArAyaNa, strengthened his bond with his AchArya, brahma and  
embarking on his upAsaNa. Thus, it became the cause of his bhagavad bhakti and so he is called  
"shambhu" and "vishveshvara" here.

For more details, refer to kapAla mokSha incident I had written about here -  
<https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1394897926162321409>

umayA yatra sahitaH sha~Nkaro nIlalohitaH

**Meaning:** Where, the doer of auspicious acts like meditation (sha~Nkara), who is bluish-red  
in color, is ever with umA.

Obviously, the greatest glory of kailAsa is mahAdeva himself.

"sha~Nkara" - Doer of auspicious acts like meditation on bhagavAn, disseminating knowledge etc.

"nIlalohitaH" - This means one who has a blackish/bluish-red complexion. But "lohita" or red color  
also signifies anger. It means, "One who is hostile or angry towards ignorance. aj~nAna is also  
called "nIla" in shAstra

He is always with umA who helps him in his dissemination of knowledge, as evidenced in the  
kenopanishad. He also joins with her in one body when he wants to worship bhagavAn.

R<sup>^</sup>iShibhiH prArthitaH pUrvaM dadau yatra giriH sutAm . Sha~NkarAya jagaddhAtre  
shivAya jagatIpate

**Meaning:** She is the daughter of Himavan, who, upon the prayers of rishis, bestowed her to sha~Nkara, to shiva, who is the supporter of the Universe, who is the master of the Universe.

"sha~Nkara" - "He who does good acts to umA, as he is her guru and husband".

"shiva" - One who is purified by his austerities. Thus, he was deserving of marrying umA. It can also be taken to mean that umA's services to him enable him to maintain such austerities.

"jagaddhAtre" - dhA - One who imparts knowledge to the Universe and thus supports it, together with umA.

"jagatIpate" Thus, he rules over all embodied selves on account of disseminating knowledge to all  
.

yatra lebhe harishchakramupAsya bahubirdinaiH . puShkaraiH shatapatraishcha netreNa  
cha jagatpatim

**Meaning:** Where, Nandin whose form is like a monkey (Hari) acquired authority over the gaNAs by worshipping the master of the embodied selves for many days, by nourishers of the senses which are the 100 mantrAs (shatarudrIyaM), and by meditation (on bhagavAn).

This has been wrongly interpreted by some as referring to the story of Hari getting his Chakra by offering his eye and lotuses. This shloka actually refers to Nandi. Later on in the same section, the sudarShaNa is praised as a symbol of eternal sovereignty, so obviously this shloka cannot contradict that.

Nandi is Hari as he has the form of a monkey. "Chakram" means "Aj~nA" - he recieved the command over shiva-gaNAs. If someone has an appearance which he is ashamed of, would he not strive to become a leader or a powerful person so that nobody would dare talk down to him?

"pushkaraiH shaTapatraiH" - not lotuses. This means, "the nourishers of the senses (pushkaraiH), which are the 100 leaves, ie, mantrAs (shatapatraiH). For we have the pramANa, "chandAMSi yasya parNani" - "The Vedas are the leaves" (gIta 15.1)". These are the ShatarudrIya mantrAs.



The idea is, Nandi did not like his form. The root cause of it is seeing bheda. So he curbed his senses by worshipping sankarShaNa as the innerself of Rudra, the Lord of embodied selves (jagatpati) via the shatarudrIya which nourishes the senses (which again, I had commented on earlier in my pinned tweet). And he also worshipped Sankarshana as rudrAntaryAmin by "netra" - meditation which is the "eye". It is shivopAsaNa.

There is an UpabrahmaNa for this in Linga purANa. This is what Nandi is described to be doing as part of his upAsaNa.

***pradakShiNAkRtya cha taM rudrajApyatobhavaM . hRtpuNDarIke sushire dhyAtva devaM TryambakaM (~ Linga purANa)***

***[Nandi: I circumambulated my seemingly dead father, chanting the Rudram (for curbing the agitations of the senses and meditated on the God Tryambaka in the lotus of the heart]***

Because the Linga purANa is a fully authoritative purANa, it does not reveal the true motive behind Nandi's chanting the Rudram, which was to curb the senses and not focus on the physical appearances. And it also does not reveal that the one Nandi meditated on SankarShaNa, who was the innerself of Tryambaka, through Tryambaka.

Alternatively, one can take it as meditating on Shiva in the heart, because he possesses qualities of Yoga like anima, garima etc. and thus can enter small spaces, like air in a gap. He entered mArkandeya in this manner, as mentioned here in bhAgavata purANa - <https://www.srimadbhagavatamclass.com/srimad-bhagavatam-canto-12-chapter-10-text-10/>

But anyway, the desire of Nandi is indirectly reflected in the boon Shiva gives to Nandi when he says, "**vatsainatva dehaM ca loukikaM...**" - your body is worldly, and then gives him a deva-body.

These purANAs do not always give the full picture, but the reference to the Rudra-japa and meditation on the heart is very clearly an upabrahMaNa. Plus, it is clear from the rAmAyaNa (uttara kANDa) that Nandi cursed rAvaNa for mocking his monkey-like form, showing he (Nandi) was sensitive about it.

As to why the shatarudrIya is used for curbing the senses, the document in my pinned tweet explains the reason - <https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1332572162666872832>

Nandi, like Kubera, belongs to the third category of bhaktAs who were after specific benefits. He wears that form even now though, because his association with mahAdeva and shatarudrIya japa made him realize that such forms are temporary and not a cause for sorrow. By wearing a

monkey form even now at times, he is showing he has overcome such perceptions of dualities by the grace of mahAdeva.

Now, why is this shloka so confusingly constructed as though it is referring to the story of Hari worshipping Shiva for his Chakra? It is simple. That story was inspired from this shloka and not vice-versa. Lingodbhava is nothing but an inspired inversion of how garuDa strived to find the antaryAmin of viShNu and failed (anuShAsana parva, MB). The mental effort of searching for the antaryAmin was transformed into a physical effort for search of a top and bottom of a Linga. This story of Hari offering his eye to Shiva is an inversion of Nandi's upAsaNa. Consider this - Nandi who was unhappy with his appearance offered a mental eye of meditation and the leaves of veda mantras, which was inverted to a story of the most beautiful person in the world (Hari) who is ever happy with his appearance, offering real flowers and his physical eye. Thus, these purANic stories are merely arthavAdas inspired from real incidents.

That is why these stories in purANAs like these are merely arthavAdas. Had written about Lingodbhava here - <https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1404709626457726976>

**guhAM yatra samAshritya krIDante siddhakinnarAH . priyAbhiH saha modante pibante madhu chottamam**

**Meaning: Where siddhAs with yogic power to assume many forms and bodies and kinnarAs take refuge in the caves and play with their loved ones, becoming filled with delight and drinking excellent honey.**

**yamuddhR^itya bhujaiH sarvaiH paulastyo virarAma ha . tamAruhya mahAshailaM devakInandano hariH . mAnasasyottaraM tIraM jagAma yadunandanaH**

**Meaning: Which mountain, rAvaNa lifted with all his arms, and became exhausted. Devakinandana, Hari, ascended that great mountain. Yadunandana went across the mAnasarovar to it's shore.**

This mountain was the reason rAvaNa became cursed by Nandi, and it led to the birth of vAnarAs like hanuman and sugrIva who attained great fame. That is the intent behind referring to this incident of rAvaNa trying to lift the mountain.

**"devakInandana", "yadunandanaH" - He who delights devakI, the clan of yadus by being born at the request of their prayers. It signifies his saulabhya or easy accessibility. Thus, he was being easily accessible to mahAdeva too, acceding to his request to seek a boon.**

"Hari" - One who accepts the offerings of all in yaj~nAs according to Bhattar is "Hari" (iDopahuta geheshU harE). "yaj~na" also means worship. Thus, he is one who accepts his praise which is performed in the meditation of great ones like mahAdeva.

tapashchartuM kila harirviShNuH sarveshvaraH shivaH

**Meaning:** To perform austerities, he went there -- he who is Hari as he accepts the austerities of others , who is vishNu as he protects the performers of austerities from samsAra by his pervasion, who is "sarveShvaraH" as he reaches all those who perform austerities quickly to dispel their uneasiness in not attaining him, who is "shivaH" as he confers auspiciousness on those who perform austerities.

These are names occurring in the sahasranAma and this is how Bhattar interprets them. Notice how they fit. His guNa of soughIlya is being celebrated, whereby he who accepts and fulfils the tapas of others, is himself performing tapas as though he is one of them.

"mangalyaM mangalaM vishNuM" - He is the auspicious one and the object of our auspicious acts.

jaTI chIrI jagannAtha mAnuShaM vapurAsthitaH

**Meaning:** That one who is the master of all, was situated in a form similar to a human, was wearing matted hair and a strip of cloth.

"jagannAtha" - As the Universe is his body, he is the natural master of all. But more than that, according to Bhattar, he is the master because he honors his devotees and feels honored when others recognize him as one being affectionate to his devotees. Thus, he honors his devotee mahAdeva by worshipping him.

This signifies his saulabhya guNa or easy accessibility as well.

tapase dhR^itachittastu shuchau bhUmAvupAvishat . avaruhya tato  
yAnAdgaruDAdvedasaMmitAt

**Meaning:** Having resolved to perform austerities (for the sake of mahAdeva), he arrived at a pure spot of the Earth and descended from his vehicle garuDa, who is verily consisting of the Vedas as his body.

The reference to garuDa being vedAtma is to indicate that even when he is performing austerities, his natural state of being the receiver of all worship is not affected.

dvAdashAbdaM tapashchartuM mano dadhne tato hariH . phAlgunena tu mAsena samArebhe jagatpatiH .

**Meaning:** Hari had the resolve to perform austerities for 12 years. That master of the Universe commenced his austerities in the phalguNa month.

"Hari" - One who destroys the sins of all those who perform austerities directed at him.

"jagatpatiH" - One who is the master of the universe as he undertakes all efforts, whatever it may be, to protect his devotees, even if it means lowering his own status.

shAkabhakSho kR^itajapo vedAdhyayanatatparaH . kimuddishya jagannAthastapashcharati mAnavaH . taM na vidmo yathAkAmaM durj~neyeshvarachintana

**Meaning:** Subsisting on plants, he was performing praNava-japa and completely absorbed in vedAdhyAya. For what purpose was he performing austerities, he who is the Master of all Beings, who has assumed a form similar to a human? We do not know that. The thoughts (sankalpAs) of that Ruler, who acts as he pleases, are not understood (by the ignorant).

"jagannAtha" - Who being the natural master of the Universe, is very accessible to all by his simplicity.

The question is asked by vaiShampAyana in wonder at his souShIlya guNa, which is descending to a lower level to mingle with his devotees. The question is not asking the purpose of the tapas. It is well known he was performing it towards mahAdeva. The question is, *"For what purpose does he descend to such levels to mingle with his devotees? Nothing we do deserves it. Hence, his mercy is nirhetuka, or something that has no cause and cannot be understood. The ignorant will not understand his acts are due to his soughIlya guNa, and will think he really is inferior"*.

Next, the nitya-sUrIs aid bhagavAn in performing his penance.

tapasyati tadA viShNau parvate bhUtasevite . garuDaH kashyapasuta indhanAni samAchinot . homArthaM vAsudevasya charatastapa uttamam

**Meaning:** Then viShNu was performing austerities on that mountain frequented by the bhUtAs. garuDa, the son of kashyapa, was piling the kindling wood for the homAs to be conducted by the truthful son of vasudeva, who was performing the most excellent austerity.

The nitya sUrIs are concerned for bhagavAn undertaking a harsh tapas (sitting on hard floor, fasting etc), as they only see the tenderness of his body and not his invincible nature. Thus, out of love and concern like a mother, they help him.

"viShNu" - One who measured the worlds with his three steps. He blessed all alike with his feet that day. Such a bhagavAn has descended to this level out of his nirhetuka kripa for his bhakta, mahAdeva.

"vAsudeva" - His father, vasudeva, is renowned for being truthful and straightforward. Thus, his son was also very truthful in his actions of fulfilling the request of mahAdeva and honoring his devotee.

"tapa uttamam" - The great austerity seeking the welfare of others like mahAdeva. Same as "suvrata" in sahasranAma.

chakrarAjo.atha puShpANi sa~nchinoti tadA hareH . dikShu sarvAsu sarvatra rarakSha  
jaladastadA . khaDga AhR^itya yatnena kushAnsubahushastadA . gadA kaumodakI chaiva  
paricharyAM chakAra ha

Meaning: sudarShaNa, the king of weapons, was gathering flowers for Hari. The conch pAnchajanya, bestower of the pure water from the lips of bhagavAn, was protecting him in all directions. Nandaka, his sword, was fetching kuShA grass with great care (to ensure purity). The mace, Kaumodaki, was attending to his needs (of comfort).

Chakra signifies manas. Fragrant flowers delight the mind. "Hari" signifies that bhagavAn who accepts offerings of flowers from others, was offering flowers to another!

"jalada" is pAnchajanya, who gets the nectar of bhagavAn's saliva & bestows it to others like dhruva. He is thus the best of conches. As his sound scares Asuras, he protected bhagavAn. The sword stands for knowledge which is purifying. Naturally he gathers kuShA grass, which impart purity to the tapas. The mace stands for discriminative intellect. So, she was able to discern when bhagavAn needed services like getting his feet pressed, sweat due to agni wiped off etc

"paricharya" - means pAda-pIDaNAdi.

dhanuHpravaramatyugraM shAr~Ngam dAnavabhIShaNam . sthitaM hi puratastasya  
yatheShTaM bhR^ityavatsvayam

**Meaning:** The foremost bow shAr~Nga, which is extremely formidable to the enemies of bhagavAn's devotees, causing fear to dAnavAs, was situated at bhagavAn's front, himself being a dependent (to bhagavAn) in whatever way he desired.

The bow became a tool in the hands of bhagavAn, to be used however he wanted, like being used as a stick to kindle the fires, as a ladle for making oblations of ghee etc. As the destroyer of asurAs, it was the protector of the tapas.

Notice that everyone has been described except Adi Shesha. This is because there is no need to talk about him; he is always a shadow of bhagavAn doing such services constantly anyway. Azhwar says, "*sendrAl kudaiyAm..*" - When bhagavAn goes somewhere, Adi Shesha becomes his umbrella. When he walks, Adi Shesha is his sandals. When he sits, Adi Shesha is his seat. It is only for the others that such services were new, not for the great serpent!

**juhoti bhagavAnviShNuredhobhirbahubhiH sadA . AjyAdibhistadA havYairagniM saMpUjya mAdhavaH . saptArchiShaH samAptiM cha samastavyastataH kR^itI**

**Meaning:** bhagavAn vishNu, was constantly offering oblations with many kindling sticks. At that time, mAdhava, worshipped the sacrificial fire with offerings of clarified butter. He performed the completion (kindling) of the seven flames of Agni, both together and individually.

**bhagavAn** - He who shone with the six guNAs despite performing a harsh tapas that emaciates the body.

**vishNu** - Who pervades all the gods, making them the presiding deities of sacrifices. Such a one was himself performing a sacrifice.

**mAdhava** - One who is attained by mouna, dhyAna and yoga, was himself performing equivalent tapas.

**ekasminnekadA mAsE bhU~njAno niyatAtmavAn . dviTiyE tvatha paryAye bhU~njannekena keshavaH . ekasminvatsare bhU~njaMstathaivaikena kenachit**

**Meaning:** He of controlled mind ate just once in a month. Then, keshava ate just once in the course of two months. At some point, he likewise ate something just once in one year.

**"keshava"** - He who has lovely locks of hair. It signifies the beauty of his entire form. The idea is, even when fasting, his body appeared beautiful and attractive.

samApya tattapaH sarvamevameva jagatpatiH . dvAdashAbde tathA pUrNaM UnamAse jagatpatiH . juhvannagniM samAsthAya paThanmantraM janArdanaH .

**Meaning:** That Master of the Universe completed his all parts of his austerity. With one month left for the completion of twelve months, that Master of the Universe, janArdana, established the sacrificial fire and recited mantras.

"jagatpatiH" - Who honors his devotees as he is the master. Such a person completed the sacrifice. Again, he is the master of the Universe as he has everything as his property.

Hence, he is "janArdana" - worthy of worship by all people. Such a person was reciting mantras, etc. and performing worship.

AraNyakaM paThanviShNuH sAkShAtsarveshvaro hariH |Aste dhyAnaparastatra paThanpraNavamuttamam

**Meaning:** Hari, sarveshvara, viShNu, recited the AraNyaka. Reciting the praNava which is the most excellent japa, he became engrossed in meditation of the praNava vAchyA Brahman.

He is "Hari" as he accepts the offerings of all by recitation of mantras, He is "sarveshvara" as he is verily the one who reaches all who seek him in that manner quickly to dispel their doubts about attaining him, who is vishNu as by his pervasion, he showers his grace on such devotees.

As said earlier, even in such tapas, bhagavAn meditates on himself as the indweller of Rudra, the latter being his pratIka or symbol. Thus, he worshipped himself only, as the praNava vAchyA Brahman.

### APPEARANCE OF THE DEVAS AND MUNIS

tata indraH svayaM tatra AruhyA gajamuttamam . draShTuM sarveshvaraM viShNuM tapasyantaM samAyayau

**Meaning:** Then, Indra himself mounted on his excellent elephant, Airavata, arrived to behold that vishNu who is sarveshvara, perform penance by his sushIlya guNa.

As bhagavAn is "sarveShvara" or the ruler of all the gods. He is "viShNu" as he pervades these gods and installs them in their duties.

Thus the devAs were - 1) astonished by the sight of him doing tapas, and wanted to behold his sushIlya guNa, 2) they were also enamored of the unique form of bhagavAn as a tapasvI which was highly beautiful and wanted to have that darShaNa. Thus, they came.

tato yamastu bhagavAnAruhya mahiShaM varam . ki~Nkaraishcha svayaM sAkShAdAyayau nagamuttamam

Meaning: After that, verily the respected yama himself mounted on his most excellent bull along with his servants arrived.

prachetA haMsamAruhya vAruNaishcha samanvitaH . shvetachChatrasamAyuktaH shvetavyajanavIjitaH

Meaning: varuNa mounted on the swan, endowed with a white umbrella, was also there with the prachetAs, being fanned by a white fan.

yayau kailAsashikharaM draShTuM keshavama~njasA . anye chApi tathA devA AdityA vasavastathA . rudrAshchaiva tathA rajandraShTuM keshavamAyayuH

Meaning: He had arrived at the peak of kailAsa to behold Keshava, who has lovely locks of hair (even in his form as a tapasvI), directly. O rAJa who thinks he rules all, but bhagavAn is the true rAJa! Other gods also - the Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, came to behold Keshava.

vaiShampAyana addresses janamejaya as "rAJa" here to imply - "O King! You are proud of being a King and would never bow to anyone else. But look at bhagavAn, who is "rAjAdhirAJa", the ruler of these devas and yet he is bowing down to them!"

siddhAshcha munayashchaiva gandharvA yakShakinnarAH . sarvAshchApsaraso rAjannR^ityagItavishAradAH

Meaning: The Siddhas, Munis, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Kinnaras, all the Apsaras celebrated for their dance and song (arrived there).

tato devagaNAH sarve kailAsaM samapadyata . parvato nAradashchaiva tathAnye munisattamAH . vismyasthitalolAkShAH sarvadevagaNAstathA . AshcharyaM khalu pashyadvaM na bhUtaM na bhaviShyati

Meaning: Therefore, all the troops of gods reached kailAsa. Parvata and Narada, other great munis, as well as all the groups of gods were rolling their eyes in wonder (looking at every aspect of bhagavAn's form). "Look at this wonder, there has never been anything like this in the past nor will there be in the future".



The gods were drinking in bhagavAn's form and saying, "Take a good look at this form, there may be other equivalent forms of bhagavAn, but none like this beautiful tapasvI form in the past or future".

yogidhyeyaH svayaM kR^iShNo yattapyati guruHsvayam . ko nvatra samayo bhUyAditi te menire gaNAH

Meaning: "He who is the object of meditation by yogIs, who is "kR^iShNa" as he who sports in the bliss of creation etc., who is verily the Guru or the one who provides the gods their duties by teaching the Vedas to brahma --- is engaged in tapas. What is the circumstance (of this penance)", thus spoke the multitudes of gods, rishIs and others.

Everybody knew the reason for the penance. These questions are simply a statement of wonder at his sushIlya guNa.

Why hasn't mahAdeva arrived yet? Well, it may be bhagavAn's nature to bow to a bhakta, but a bhakta would be hesitant to accept it. mahAdeva was perplexed; he didn't like bhagavAn bowing to him when it came to it, though he had requested it for a cause. Just as samudra rAja refused to accept rAmA's surrender and appear, mahAdeva too, out of his own devotion, was tarrying in coming there.

How should a bhakta think? Should he think, "It is my duty to please bhagavAn; so if he is pleased by me if I accept his worship of me, I will do that". Or, "My nature is to serve him and not vice-versa, so I will not accept his worship." What is the dharma here? See how sukShma the nature of dharma is!

This is indeed a dharma-sankata that the likes of samudra rAja faced, and mahAdeva too had the same dilemma and thus was hesitant about his next move.

But he makes up his mind to communicate the reality of things, and appears next.

### APPEARANCE OF MAHADEVA

Lots of names are used to describe Hari's and Hara's qualities here, so my commentary will focus on the meanings of the names. These names tell half the story actually.

tataH samApte sakale jagatpate-rvrate samUle sakaleshvaraH shivaH . draShTuM hariM lokahitaiShiNaM prabhuM yayau bhavAnyA saha bhUtasa~NghaiH

**Meaning:** Thereafter, when the master of the Universe, had completed all the accessories to the penance, along with the meditation on praNava which is the root of the penance, that "Shiva", "Sakaleshvara" was beheld along with umA and the bhUtAs by Hari, who is the supreme master (prabhu), who seeks the welfare of the devotees in the world (lokahitaishinaM).

bhagavAn is "jagatpati" as he is accessible to all as their natural master. Such a bhagavAn who is called "Hari" - he who destroys sins by his darShaNa - himself had the darShaNa of another - mahAdeva.

This bhagavAn is also "prabhu" - One who is the powerful master of all beings despite his apparent show of subservience to another, and he is appearing as a worshipper only for the upliftment of the devotees in the world like mahAdeva (lokahitaishinaM).

For his part, mahAdeva is called "Shiva" because he is a bhakta of Hari, being purified by the ga~Nga and his meditations on bhagavAn, "sakaleshvara" as who is the Ruler of all embodied beings by the grace of bhagavAn.

"draShTuM" - bhagavAn beheld his devotee - he was bestowing his katAkSham on mahAdeva.

sArdhaM kubereNa saguhyakena sakhya priyeNa prabhurIshvaraH shivaH . svayaM jaTI bhUtapiAchaMvR^itAH sharI cha khaDgI shashikhaNDashekharAH

**Meaning:** Kubera, his dear friend, who is with the Guhaykas, was with Shiva, who is the master (prabhu) and the ruler of all shAstra (Ishvara)

A friend is one who acts without motivation for one's benefit according to Acharyas. Kubera was unconditionally worshipping mahAdeva for knowledge.

He is "Shiva" because he purifies others like Kubera. Thus, Sati tells dakSha in bhAgavatam, "yad dvya-akSharaM nAma gireritaM nRRiNAM sakRRit prasa~NgAd agham Ashu hanti" - "Those two syllables "Shi, Va" - purify all". Just as bhagavad nAma purifies all, so does bhAgavata nAma. That is why we recite the names of AchArya rAmAnuja. Shiva is the paramaguru for bhakti yogIs.

How does he purify others? He is "prabhu" or one who has the power of attracting the minds of others to bhagavAn. He has this power because he is an "Ishvara", the ruler of all shAstra.

svayaM jaTI bhUtapiShAchasaMvR^itAH sharI cha khaDgI shashikhaNDashekharah

**Meaning:** He himself (like bhagavAn) was wearing matted locks, was surrounded by bhUtAs and pishAchAs, equipped with sword and arrow (and hence bow - the pinAka) and crested with the crescent moon in his hair

He himself was wearing matted locks signifying his status as an upAsaka. The word "svayaM" indicates that he himself was a bhakta, one who performs the type of penances bhagavAn was doing!

He was surrounded by bhUtAs and pishAchAs who resort to him for such knowledge of Brahman. He doesn't just impart knowledge, as he is also equipped with sword and arrow (and hence bow - the pinAka) to cut down those haters of the gods. But since he does all these acts without ego and as a service to bhagavAn, he is crested with the crescent moon in his hair signifying he is ever in a state of joy, as he is meditating on bhagavAn's form which is called "*chandrAMShu*" in sahasranAma, as it is cool like the moon.

kareNa bibhratsaha dharbhakuNDikAM kareNa sAKShAdapareNa dIpikAm . anyena bibhranmahatIM sa DiNDimAM shUlaM cha bibhrannapareNa bAhuna

**Meaning:** In one hand, he held a pot with dharbha, in the other, he held the Agni. In his third hand, he held the damaru. In his fourth hand, he held the shUla.

The dharbha signifies he performs Vedic sacrifices - it signifies karma yoga. The agni in his hands signifies atonement. A person who is an upAsaka, performs various prAyaschittAs to curb his senses. Thus, the fire in his hands signifies he is ever carrying out the "prAyaschitta" of j~nAna yoga, which is control of the senses by not coveting anything, understanding the true nature of the jIvAtma. This is how Poigai Azhwar describes him, "*anaRku angai ERRAn*" (*fire in his beautiful hand*)

The drum is the object of enjoyment, the implement used to beat the drum are the senses and the sounds are the experiences according to brihadAraNyaka upanishad. Thus, it signifies he is a bhakti yogI, experiencing the guNAs of Brahman.

The shUla is a weapon used for killing. He is destroying the effects of karmas by such upAsaNa. Four arms according to Acharyas, signify the great strength of mahAdeva in performing upAsaNa. Thus, thirumangai azhwar refers to him as "*nAI thOL*" - one with four shoulders of great strength.

This description is because Rudra is a parama upAsaka and his nature is reflected in his form, being the "sAdhaka-rUpa" and AveShAvatAra of bhagavAn, who is the sAdhya rUpa.

**guNAnsa rudrAkShakR^itAn samudvaha-~njaTAbhirApi~NgalatAmramUrthiH . virAjamAnaH  
prabhurindushekhara vR^iSheNa yuktaH sa sitena sha~NkaraH**

**Meaning: He was possessing a string of beads which drive away attachments or which confer good (by japa). The gaNAs with matted locks, with tawny or yellow colored bodies, were accompanying sha~Nkara, who is their master, whose hair is crested by the moon, who is seated on the bull.**

"rudrAkSha" - This does not signify rudrAkSha beads because wearing them is avidika and inappropriate for moksha according to the brahma sUtra "**patyurasAma~njasyAt**". mahAdeva himself does not wear rudrAkSha, but only akShamAla as per bhAgavataM 4.6.38 - "**prakosthe akSha-mAlam**". Thus, "rudrAkSha" here means, "The beads that are "rudrAs" as they confer good (rud-ra) or drive away samsAra dukha as it is used for japa". "Rudra" here is an adjective for conferring good, or that which drives away samsAra dukha (by being used for japa).

He is "**sha~NkaraH**" as he is the doer of good services towards bhagavAn. One part of his service is to take under his control the gaNAs and impart knowledge to them. Thus he is their master (**prabhu**). Despite such mastery, he has no ego and is always meditating on the cool form of bhagavAn in bhakti yoga as signified by the moon (**indushekara**). And because of such meditation, he is seated on the bull which signifies "dharma" pertaining to supervision of all material realm.

**umAstanadvandvasamarpitAnana-stathA samAshliShya nipIDitAdharaH**

**Meaning: His face was delivered to the pair of umA's breasts, embracing her and pressing them down (to his face).**

In the Upanishads like atharvashiras, the gods themselves ask mahAdeva "Who are you" because mahAdeva hides his upAsaNa so well that they even get doubts about his behaviour. As bhagavad vishayam is a rahasya, Yogis protect it. This act of embracing umA is his outwardly guise of one lovestruck by his wife. But look what the next line says.

**ga~NgAmbhuvikShAlitachandrashekhara-stAM chApi vIkShanbahushastadA shivaH**

**Meaning: He is "Shiva", was bathed in the water of the Ganga (flowing from his head) which, adorned with the moon and indeed was then (even as he was seeing umA) perceiving abundantly, ie, Brahman who is abundant.**

He is "Shiva" as he is purified of sins causing attachments by his Yoga. Hence, he has no lust despite embracing umA. He was bathed in Ganga - HaripAda tIrtha - attesting to his bhakti. He adorns the cool moon signify he is always in a state of joy as he is perceiving the form of Brahman in Yoga everywhere.

Even as his face was pressed against umA's bosom, he was perceiving Brahman whose auspicious qualities are superior to all else. "bahushas" - refers to bhUma vidyA, where Brahman is "bhUma" or having an excellence of kalyaNa guNAs; excellence in the sense that they are superlative compared to all other things like women, wealth etc. A yogI thus always acts as though he is a worldly person, but he is actually not so. Hence Daksha thought he was a madman and failed to recognize his upAsaNa. What he really is, is stated next.

**bhasmA~NgarAgairanulepitAnano mahoragairbaddhajaTaH sanAtanaH . shiraHkapAlaiH  
parishobhitastadA draShTuM hariM keshavamabhyayAchChivaH**

**Meaning: He, who is ever the pratIka of viShNu (sanAtanaH) had a face smeared with the powder of ashes, matted locks bound by great snakes. He, who is "shiva" was adorned by a garland of skulls, approached that "Hari" - who accepts the offerings of worship from all - and who is "keshava" - the master of brahmA and rudra (Keshava).**

"sanAtanaH" - "sanA" means ancient or belonging to olden times. "tanA" means "tanu" - sharIra. One who is ever a form of Hari since ancient times, in the sense of being a pratIka or symbol for meditation on Hari due to his purity and being an AveshAvatArarUpa. I had explained what pratIkopAsaNa was in the introduction.

As per "*agnirIti bhasma..*" etc in the upanishads, smearing of ashes is required for pAshupata-vrata which enables control of senses. It signifies vairAgya, or lack of wealth. Those who are practitioners of this vidyA wear ashes. As bhagavAn says,

**atharvashirasA chaiva nityamAtharvANA dvijAH . stuvanti satataM ye mAM te vai  
bhAgavatAH smR^itAH (~ Ashvamedhika Parva, MB)**

**[Know that those AtharvaNa brAhmaNas who chant the atharvashiras daily as part of their worship of me by pAshupata vrata are bhAgavatas, my devotees]**

mahAdeva is a practitioner of this vidyA and so always wears ashes. It is to clarify that urdhva-puNDra is not mandated for them that bhagavAn said the above.

The great snakes and matted hair signify he is an upAsaka of great strength. Snakes, like his four shoulders, signify strength; for who else but a strong person can keep snakes about himself?

He is "shiva" as he is purified of all sins due to his upAsaNa. Thus, he wears a garland of skulls so that the bhUtAs recognize him as their leader and resort to him for knowledge. He does this as a service to Hari.

Because of such greatness, he is celebrated by the great seers.

**yamAhuragryaM puruShaM mahAntaM purAtanaM sA~NkhyanibaddhadR^iShTayaH . yasyApi devasya guNAnsamagrAM-stattvAMshchaturviMshatimAhureke**

**Meaning: He who is declared as the foremost among the sons of brahma (agryaM), who is the puruSha, the doer of great deeds (mahAntam), who has been doing all this since ancient times (purAtana) by those seers yoked to Brahman, the object of the Veda, by meditation. Which god's guNAs or "dharmAs" are spoken of by some to be 14 tattvAs (10 senses, 1 mind and 3 types of ahaMkAra) .**

Shruti hails him as "*brahmaNa putrAya jyeShThAya sreShThAya*", "*Sarvo vai rudro, puruSho vai rudro*" - He is the foremost of the sons of brahma due to his j~nAna. He is "puruSha" - meaning, he has all valor (sarva-vIrya-sampaNNa). Or, he is puruShAtmaka - one always immersed in nArAyaNa, the puruSha, or who is the AveShAvatAra of nArAyaNa.

He performs great deeds, and he has been doing all these deeds since ancient times, as bhagavAn himself says in sauptika parva, "*vedAhaM hi mahAdevaM tattvena bhatarShabha yAni chAsya purANAni karmANi*" - *I know mahAdeva truly, ie, his true extent of devotion to me, and I know all of his old acts which illustrated his j~nAna and vairAgya.*

He is the presiding deity of ahaMkAra-tattva as per bhAgavatam, and so is said to possess the 14 tattvAs which are "guNAs" or "dharmAs" - states of being.

"**sA~NkhyanibaddhadR^iShTayaH**" - "**sa~Nkhya**" means knowledge which is the Veda. "**sA~Nkhya**" is Brahman who arises from the Veda, ie, is known from it. These are seers of Brahman.

The above was a reference to his acts of valor as a service to bhagavAn. Next shloka describes his activities of propagating knowledge.

yamAhurekaM puruShaM purAtanaM kaNAdanAmAnamajaM maheshvaram . dakShasya  
yaj~naM vinihatya yo vai vinAshya devAnasurAnsanAtanaH

**Meaning:** He who is spoken of as the incomparable YogI (ekaM), the purifier of all (puruSha), who has been propagating the knowledge about Brahman since ancient time (purAtanaM), the great ruler of shAstra (maheshvaraM). That one who is ever a form of vishNu (sanAtana), who struck down the sacrifice of dakSha, who annihilates the gods and asurAs (during dissolution).

Earlier, "sanAtana" signified he is a pratIka for meditation on vishNu. Here, it signifies he is bhagavadAveShAvatAra rUpa, a partial manifestation of bhagavAn. It is because of his upAsaNa bala that he was able to destroy dakSha-yaj~na, and that incident has such inner meanings which we need not go into here for brevity.

Due to both valorous deeds and his knowledge, he is worshipping for bhakti yogIs as below.

yaM vidhurbhUtattvaj~naM bhUteShaM bhUtabhAvanam . vAmadevaM  
virUpAkShamAhustattvavido janaH

**Meaning:** He who is known by the learned people to be one who knows bhagavAn as the essence or antaryAmin of all beings (tattvaj~na), as the Ruler of the devotees of bhagavAn (bhUteSha), the nourisher of the devotees by leading them to bhagavAn (bhUtabhAvana). Who is a most agreeable god due to that (vAmadeva), who has dissimilar eyes, ie, a third eye signifying his knowledge (virUpAkSha).

The third eye signifies his knowledge of things beyond the senses. Next shloka describes exactly how he attained such an exalted state as an upAsaka.

mahAdevaM sahasrAkShaM kAlamUrtiM chaturbhujam . rudraM  
rodananAmAnamAhurvishveshvaram shivam

**Meaning:** He who is the great god (mahAdeva), who is omniscient, ie, knows all the branches of knowledge regarding Brahman (sahasrAkShaM), who is the form of bhagavAn called "kAla" or destroyer due to such penances, who has four arms signifying his strength of upAsaNa. Who is called Rudra, the Ruler of the Universe (by gaining the aShtamUrti), who is pure by his austerities (shivaM)

He is called "mahAdeva" as he performed the sarvamedha yAga as an offering to bhagavAn and acquired his greatness according to the mahAbhArata.

By virtue of such acts, he became a knower of all branches of knowledge.

The shatapatha brAhmaNa, vishNu and bhAgavata purANAs say that when he was born, he cried on account of such birth. Thus, he was a j~nAni by birth and was given the name of "Rudra" by brahmA, as well as the aShtamUrtIs for use in upAsaNa. This purified him, so he became "shiva".

Next shloka describes the nature of his upAsaNa.

**aprameyamanAdhAramAhurmAheshvarA janAH . nagnaM nagnaparItaM tu nAginam tvagnivarchasam**

**Meaning: He is the all-pervading self (aprameyaM), who does not have a support other than that antaryAmin - so say those people who are followers of maheshvara (bhagavAn or shiva).**

How is he the all-pervading self? It means, he has realized himself to be the body of Brahman, and since names of the body apply to the self, he is said to be the all-pervading self that is his innerself. It is nothing but "ahaM brahmAsmi". "aprameyaM" refers to bhagavAn as antaryAmin and thus, Shiva is called so as he has realized sharIrAtma bhAva.

Due to such meditation on the antaryAmin, he is "anAdhAra" as he has no support other than that antaryAmin - "vAsudevaH sarvaM iti".

"mAheshvarA janAH" - Those who follow Rudra for knowledge, or the devotees of bhagavAn who is "sarvaloka maheshvara". Either can be the meaning.

This bhakti yoga is supported by karma and j~nAna yogAs described below.

**nagnaM nagnaparItaM tu nAginam tvagnivarchasam**

**Meaning: He who is "barren" or devoid of desire as he is meditating on the self (nagna), who is surrounded or protected by karma yoga which is "barren" of desire for the fruit (nagnaprIta), surrounded by serpents signifying strength of Yoga, who shines like fire (due to his yoga).**

This can also be taken as being in a state of literal nakedness of form at the time. We know he performs austerities naked as well. Having described the nature of his upAsaNa, the next shloka describes the fruits of his upAsaNa.

**AhurvishveshvaraM shAntaM shivamAdiM sanAtanam . tasya mUrtirimAH sarva dharAdyAH sakalA nR^ipa**



**Meaning:** O Ruler of Men! They say he is the Ruler of all shAstra signifying all knowledge of Brahman (vishveshvara), who is thus tranquil as he has no desire for anything else (shAntam), who is purified of all sins causing ignorance (shivaM), who is the Cause, ie, sees himself as the Cause due to sharIrAtma bhAva (Adi), who has eternally been the body of nArAyaNa, ie, sees himself that way at all times (sanAtanaH)

"Adi" refers to bhagavAn as the Cause. Thus, one who meditates on the innerself which is the Cause can say, he is "Adi", by sharIrAtma bhAva. "sanAtana" - One who is a body (tana) of nArAyaNa eternally (sanA). Though all are eternally bodies of nArAyaNa, this is said to imply he continually meditates on himself as the body of nArAyaNa and has that knowledge. Just as a body is subservient to the self, he considers himself a sesha (servant) of bhagavAn who is the seshi (master).

vaiShampAyana calls janamejaya as "nR^ipa" to imply, *"You are the ruler of men only. But mahAdeva is the ruler of all shAstra, as he understands their goal!"*

The result of this is that he has extended dharma-bhUta-j~nAna which allows him to assume many forms. Hence, he has the ashtamUrtIs for upAsaNa.

**bhUmiraApo.analo vAyuH khaM sUryashcha tathA shashI . agnishcha yajamaNashcha prakR^itishchaivamaShTadhA**

**Meaning:** Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, Ether, Sun and Moon, as well as the sacrificial fire, the sacrificer and the nature or varNa (of brAhmaNatva) taken together, are his eightfold forms.

The last 3 can be clubbed into 1 - the form of the dIkSha brAhmaNa, which is Rudra's form as per viShNu purANa. He has these forms as he is the presiding deity of ahaMkAra-tattva.

Note that varNa of brAhmaNatva is called "prakR^iti" or innate nature - shows it is by birth only.

The next shloka is a summary of all that was said.

**mahAdevo mahAyogI girIsho nIlalohitaH**

**Meaning:** The god who is great on account of his austerities like the sarvamedha (mahAdeva), the great bhakti yogI on account of such austerities (mahAyogI), who is the ruler of kailASha or the Veda on account of that, who is bluish-red in color signifying he is hostile to ignorance (nilalohitaH).

All this is a summary of him being an upAsaka.

**AdikartA mahAbhartA shUlapANirumApatiH**

**Meaning: He who is the actor or agent for bhagavAn who is the Cause, ie, an AveshAvatAra (AdikartA), the great supporter of all beings due to that (mahAbhartA), who bears the shUla for taking lives as the Destroyer, who is the consort of umA imparting knowledge.**

This is a summary of the nature of his upAsaNa. "AdikartA" means one who is an actor for bhagavAn, the Cause who is "AdiH" - an AveShAvatAra who performs services to bhagavAn like destroying asurAs, imparting knowledge etc.

**draShTum vishveshvaraM viShNuM bhUtasa~NghaiH samAyayau**

**Meaning: He came there along with the bhUtagaNAs to behold that Ruler of all the gods (Vishveshvara), viShNu.**

This is the fruit of his upAsaNa - the sight of bhagavAn himself bowing to him, recognizing him as a great bhakta.

"vishveshvara" - bhagavAn is the ruler of all the gods including mahAdeva.

"viShNu" - Who pervades all gods and grants boons in the form of their duties. Such a bhagavAn was performing tapas.

### THE RETINUE OF MAHADEVA

The companions of mahAdeva are described next. Why such a long description? Nampillai explains - Just as the various people under a King like minister, guru etc have their own uniforms and identities of status, these gods are described as four-faced, riding a bull, having vajra, etc to signify that all their possessions are like "uniforms" or badges of identity in their service to bhagavAn. mahAdeva's "uniform" includes his companions too.

Also, he brought them along so that they could get the anugraha of bhagavAn too.

Another reason is to show that though he is surrounded by bhUtAs performing impure acts, he ever remains pure, which is only possible because of his devotion to bhagavAn.

**tasyAgre samapadyanta bhUtasa~NghAH sahasrashaH . ghaNTAkarNo virUpAkShaH  
kuNDadhAraH kumudvahaH . dIrgharoma dIrghabhujO dIrghabAhurnira~njanaH . urunetraH  
shatamukhaH shatagrIvaH shatodaraH . kuNDodaro mahAgrIvaH sthUlajihvo dvibAhukaH .**

pArshvavaktraH siMhamukha unnatAMso mahAhanuH . tribAhuH pa~nchabAhushcha  
vyAghravaktraH sitAnanaH . ete chAnye cha bahavo dIrghAsya dIrghalochanAH .  
nR^ityantaH prahasantashcha sphoTayantaH parasparam

Meaning: Innumerable groups of bhUtAs proceeded at the front of that god - ghaNTakarNa,  
virUpAkSha, kuNDadhAra, kumudvaha, dIrgharoma, dIrghabhujA, dIrghabAhu, nira~njana,  
urunetra, shatamukha, shatagrIva, shatodara, kuNDodara, mahAgrIva, sthUlajihva,  
dvibAhuka, pArshvavaktra, siMhamukha, unnatAMsa, mahAhanu, tribAhu, pa~chabAhu,  
vyAghravaktra, sitAnana - all these and others of cavernous mouths and long eyes. They  
were dancing, laughing and slapping each other.

tathAnye ghorarUpAshcha tathAnye vikR^itAnanAH . pretabhakShAH pretavAhA  
mAMsashoNitabhajanAH

Meaning: Like these, there were others of terrible forms, and similarly, still others who had  
misshapen faces, eating corpses, carrying corpses, those who partook of the flesh and blood  
of men.

shavAni subahUnyAshu bhakShayantastatastataH . pibanto rudhiraM ghoraM khaNDayantaH  
shavAnbahUn

Meaning: They feasted on many corpses which were brought from here and there. They  
drank blood which appeared terrible and tore many corpses to pieces (while ravaging them).

All this is mentioned to highlight how mahAdeva takes them under his wing and works for their  
welfare.

karAlA vitatA dIrghA dhamanishAyusaMtataH . nAnAvidhAH suvIrAshcha  
shUlAgraprotamAnuShAH shiromAlAvR^itAH kechidAntrapAshAvapAshitAH

Meaning: They had gaping mouths, were broad-bodied, long-limbed and covered with sinews  
and veins. They were extremely formidable warriors capable of fighting in many ways and  
had fixed the corpses of their victims on the points of their spears. They were covered with  
garlands of human skulls, and some had fettered themselves with nooses of entrails.

DiNDimairaTTahAsaishcha nAdayanto vasundharAm . kapAlino bhairavAshcha jaTilA  
muNDinastatha . evaM bahavidhA ghorAH pishAchA vikR^itAnanAH

**Meaning:** Some were beating drums, some were laughing raucously, others were making their voices echo off the Earth. Some were bearing skulls, some appeared like jackals, some had matted hair and some were of shaven heads. In this manner, were many types of terrible piShAchAs, of unnatural faces (and hence forms).

tathAnye munivIrAshcha dhyAyantaH parameshvaram . paThanto vedavAkyAni sA~NgAni  
vividhAni cha

**Meaning:** Also, there were others (of other nature), who were "munivIrAs" or unconquerable meditators (not subdued by kAma, krodha etc), meditating on parameShvara (rudra), the supreme amongst all rulers of shAstra. They were reciting the mantrAs of the Veda along with their various ancillaries.

kuNDikAsthakarAH kechitkechitkushavichAriNaH . kaupInavasanAH  
kechitkechitkArpAsasaMvR^itAH . stuvantaH sha~nkaraM bhaktyA  
stotrairmAshvaraistathA

**Meaning:** Some had their hands clasping water-pots, others were moving about with kusha, some were clad in loin-cloths, some were covered by cotton cloths. They who were followers of maheshvara, the great ruler of shAstra, were praising sha~Nkara with devotion and stotrAs.

"sha~Nkara" - One who performs good acts as a lokaguru.

ekatra te munigaNA aparatra gaNAstathA . anyatra siddhagandharvAH priyAbhiH saha  
sa~NgataH

**Meaning:** On one side, were the groups of munis and on the other side, were the bhUtagaNAs. Other than them, there were Siddhas, Gandharvas along with their consorts.

The j~nAnIs and the aj~nAnIs were segregated, but both of them resorted to mahAdeva for knowledge, who works for their welfare.

nR^ityanti nR^ityakushalA gAyanti sma cha kanyakAH . vidyAdharAstathAnyatra stuvantaH  
sha~NkaraM shivam

**Meaning:** Young girls skilled in the art of dance were dancing and singing. Besides them, Vidyadharas were eulogizing sha~Nkara, who is shiva.

**"sha~Nkara"** - One who does acts like dancing, etc which are pleasing to Hari. The viShNu dharmottara says that he dances in ecstasy of his bhagavad anubhava and Hari is pleased by watching it.

**"Shiva"** - As he dances in ecstasy of Yoga, he is purified by it. Such a great master of dance was entertained by other dancers here. After all, only one who has a perfect knowledge of that art can appreciate the talent of others!

nanR^itustasya purato gachChanto.apsarasAM gaNAH . evametairmahAghoraiH  
pishAchairbhUtakinnaraiH . munibishchaiva pramathaiH samaM sharvaH samAyayau . yatra  
vishveshvaro viShNustapastepe sudAruNam

**Meaning:** Going at their front, were multitudes of Apsaras who were dancing. In this manner, Sharva, the Destroyer arrived with all these ones of terrible forms - piShAchAs, bhUtAs, kinnarAs, munis, pramAthAs --- where the Ruler of all the gods, viShNu, was undertaking a very severe penance.

"viShveshvara" and "viShNu" have the same meanings as explained earlier.

**"sudAruNam"** - vaiShampAyana calls this a severe penance because he looked at the tender body of bhagavAn, who is pampered like a prince usually and thought, "I cannot bear to see this tender youth perform such a hard penance". Thus, he as the narrator was welling in parental love for bhagavAn.

yatra te lokapAlAshcha tiShThanti sma didR^ikShaya . umayA lokabhAvinyA ga~NgayA  
chandrashekharah

**Meaning:** They arrived where the gods who were the protectors of the world were situated, in desire to behold bhagavAn's souShIlya guNa. The one who has the crescent moon in his hair, arrived with umA who is worshipped by the world and with ga~Nga (in his hair).

He who has umA as his wife who imparts j~nAna to all, he has the crescent moon symbolizing his meditation on bhagavAn's form, he has the ga~Nga from the feet of Hari. Due to all this, he knows the beauty of bhagavAn's form and wanted to see his form as a tapasvI.

sa sarvalokaprabhavo bhavo vibhu-rjaTI cha sAkShAtpraNavAtmakaH kR^itI

**Meaning:** Rudra who is exalted above all the beings of the Universe (sarvalokaprabhava) because he exists in Brahman always, in meditation (Bhava), whose knowledge is all-pervasive

due to that (vibhu), who has matted locks signifying the fierceness of his upAsaNa (jaTi) and who is verily the embodiment of one immersed in the praNava (praNavAtmakah), who is most celebrated as a bhagavad bhakta (kR^iti) ---

draShTuM hariM viShNumudAravikramo yayau yatheShTaM pishitAshanairvR^itaH

Meaning: --- he arrived, surrounded by eaters of flesh, to see, as per his wish, to drink in the beauty of the form of that viShNu, who is of magnanimous deeds (udAravikrama)

viShNu - One who pervades and showers his grace on his devotees, by showing his form.

udAravikramaH - "vikramaH" means strength of acts. "udAra" means magnanimity. This refers to the great magnanimous act of bhagavAn bowing to his devotees, like he is doing now. Not just that, he even attributes all credit of his glories to his devotees, vide,

*vipra prasAdAt asurAn jayAmi (~vishNu dharma 52.23) - [I am victorious over the asurA-s because of the blessings of the wise.]*

Why does it say mahAdeva was surrounded by eaters of flesh when he came to see bhagavAn? We already know that. The idea is, mahAdeva is able to surround himself with such impure beings and yet remain pure, only because he is ever having a darShaNa of bhagavAn. That is the intent behind stating this.

### MANGALASASANAS OF BHAGAVAN BY THE GODS AND MUNIS

vaishampAyana uvAcha

evaM bahuvIdhairbhUtaiH piShAchairuragaiH saha . Agatya bhagavAnrudraH sha~Nkaro vR^ishavAhanaH

Meaning: In this manner, the venerable Rudra (who had j~nAna at birth), whose vehicle is the bull, arrived with many types of bhUtAs, piShAchAs and serpents.

BhagavAn - One who is worthy of worship, as he is a bhagavad bhakta.

Rudra - One who cried at birth, signifying his j~nAna at an early age.

sha~Nkara - Who performs auspicious deeds of service to bhagavAn.

vR^ishavAhanaH - Signifies his superintendency over dharma in the material realm.

The next few shlokas detail how mahAdeva enjoyed the form of bhagavAn.

dadarsha viShNuM deveshaM tapantaM tapa uttamam . juhvaNamagniM  
vidhivaddravyairmedhyairjagatpatim

Meaning: He beheld (as he wished, the beautiful form of) viShNu, the Ruler of Gods, performing the excellent tapas. The Master of the Universe, who is accessible to all by his simplicity, was offering sacrificial oblations and other ingredients in the sacrificial fire, according to Vedic injunctions.

garuDAhR^itakAShThaM tu jaTilaM chIraVAsasam . chakreNANItakusumaM  
khaDgANIItakushaM tathA . gadAkR^itasamAchAraM devadevaM janArdanam .  
indrAdyairdevasa~Nghaishcha vR^itaM munigaNaiH saha

Meaning: garuDa fetched samith sticks for him. He had matted hair and was clad in a strip of cloth. For that god of auspicious attributes (devadeva), who is worthy of worship by all (janArdana), SudarShaN brought flowers, Nandaka brought kusha grass and the mace was performing services like fanning him, etc. He was surrounded by Indra and other gods along with the hosts of munis.

"devadeva" - Nammazhwar says, "*manisharkut thevar pola thevarkku thevAvo*" - gods are those whose possess many excellent guNAs of manuShyAs and many guNAs manuShyAs lack. Similarly, bhagavAn possessess all the great guNAs of the gods and many guNAs they lack. This is exemplified by his current tapas.

"janArdana" - This makes him worthy of worship by all.

achintyaM sarvabhUtAnAM dhyAyantaM kimapi prabhum . avaruhya vR^iShAchCharvo  
bhagavAnbhUtabhAvaNaH

Meaning: He who is incomparable to all other gods (acintyaM sarvabhUtAnAm), that one who attracts the minds of all the gods and other beings when meditated upon (dhyAyantaM), was meditating on something indescribable --- meaning, only he knows what he is meditating on, being Supreme himself.

"kimapi" - This can also be taken as bhagavAn himself who is "kim" as he is shining as the innerself. In the introduction, words of bhagavAn were quoted where he said he was worshipping himself, and we know he meditated on the praNava.

avaruhya vR^iShAchCharvo bhagavAnbhUtabhAvaNaH

**Meaning:** bhagavAn Sharva, who nourishes his senses by meditation on the guNAs of bhagavAn, got down from his bull.

He is called "Sharva" as he has destroyed ignorance by upAsaNa. Thus he is bhagavAn - worthy of worship, or omniscient as he knows all branches of knowledge. He is "bhUtabhAvaNaH" - Who nourishes his own senses called "bhUtAs" by meditation on bhagavAn. It means, right now he was drinking in that sight of bhagavAn in joy.

**tataH prItaH prasannAtmA lalATAkSha umApatiH .**

**Meaning:** Then, he who is the consort of umA (who imparts j~nAna to all), who has a third eye signifying j~nAna, who is of clear mind, was delighted (by the darShaNa of bhagavAn).

"prasannAtmA" - One of clear mind. Means, he did not consider himself supreme or bhagavAn as someone dependent by seeing him bow down. He well knew who bhagavAn was.

Don't we all go to a temple and keep staring at his beauty to our heart's content? That's what Shiva did here. He drunk in the beauty of bhagavAn in that tapasvI attire.

**tato bhUtapiShAchAshcha rAkShasA guhyakAstathA . munayo vipravaryAshcha jayashabdaM prachakrire**

**Meaning:** Then, the bhUtAs, piShAchAs, rAkShasAs and guhyakAs, the munIs and the brahma-rishIs cried out words of "Jaya" (to bhagavAn).

Here follows a stuti of bhagavAn. All were celebrating this magnanimous act of soughIya. It simply sent shivers down their spines to see how this magnificent bhagavAn bows down to his devotees. Thus they said, "Jaya" (Victory), which is same as "jitante", "totrom", "paLLANDu" in tamil. It means, *"You are the victor. We have lost. You have conquered us, who think ourselves independent, by your great soughIya guNa. We, your servants, ever seek your welfare"*.

**jaya deva jagannAtha jaya rudra janArdana**

**Meaning:** May victory be to the God who binds and sports with pravRtti niShTAs (devaH), to the natural master of the Universe who is the protector of nivRtti niShTAs. May victory be to the one who makes his bhaktAs shed tears of joy at his deeds (rudra), to one who is the destroyer of their obstacles, ie, asurAs (janArdana).

pravR^itti niShTAs are those who follow fruitive actions. He binds them in samsAra. But to nivR^itti niShTAs who desire moksha, he is their protector due to his natural relationship as the



master of the Universe. The other 2 names signify his protection of devotees and destruction of asurAs.

Thus, he is the supreme among the gods, as declared next.

**jaya viShNo hR^iShIkesha nArAyaNa parAyaNa**

**Meaning: May victory be to viShNu - who pervades the gods and installs them as lokapAlakAs, to the controller of the senses of these gods, to he who is thus nArAyaNa, the Supreme Brahman and the Supreme Means for attaining bhakti to him.**

In what way is he the means? It is the way he descends in his avatArAs, so his qualities in his avatArAs are described next.

**jaya rudra purANAtma~njaya deva hareshvara**

**Meaning: Victory to the one who bestows good by showing his divine form in his avatArAs (Rudra), to one whose form is ancient but ever new to experience in his avatArAs (purANAtma). Victory to the Effulgent God whose form remains radiant with shuddha-sattva in his avatArAs (Deva), to the destroyer of sins by meditation on his form in his avatArAs (Hari), to he who has the supreme power of control even in his avatArAs (Ishvara)**

All this show his glory does not diminish during his avatArAs. Thus, he is the Supreme Brahman even as he is standing in front of them, which is declared next.

**Adideva jagannAtha jaya sha~Nkara bhAvana**

**Meaning: Victory to the Ancient God who is the Cause, to the one who is the natural master of the Universe, who is the nourisher of sha~Nkara who does good deeds of services to him.**

"sha~Nkara bhAvana" means he nourishes Rudra by being his antaryAmin. The gods are thus acknowledging that even when he performs tapas, it is directed to Rudra's antaryAmin, and thus Rudra is a vibhUti of bhagavAn.

Thus, the next few shlokAs praise bhagavAn as himself, and as the innerself of Rudra, thus bearing Rudra as his body. As peyAzhar also says, "*thAzhadaiyum neelmudIyumu*" - As Shiva is the body of bhagavAn and his AveShAvatAra, he is the sAdhaka rUpa of bhagavAn, while the normal form of bhagavAn is the sAdhya rUpa.

Thus bhISHma himself praises bhagavAn,

*shUline tridasheshAya tryambakAya mahAtmane . bhasmadigdhordhvali~NgAya tasma  
rudrAtmane namaH (~shAnti parva, mahAbhArata)*

*[You bear the shUla, are the lord of the gods beginning with Indra, who has 3 eyes, who has a great mind filled with viShNu-bhakti, who is smeared with ashes, whose is rising above the body, ie, seeing the self always -- Salutations to that Kri^ShNa, who are the innerself of Rudra (rudrAtma)!]*

By describing two forms of bhagavAn (As himself and as the innerself of rudra), the various sambandhAs between paramAtma and jIvAtma as understood by the praNava are declared.

**jaya kaustubhadIptA~Nga jaya bhasmavirAjita**

**Meaning: Victory to one whose body shines with the effulgence of the Kaustubha signifying the jIva is his property. Victory to the one who (as rudrAntaryAmin) shines with ashes signifying nothing is his property.**

The Kaustubha maNi signifies the pure jIvAtma. He wears it on his chest to denote the jIvAtma is his property. In the case of Rudra, the bhasma signifies vairAgya. Rudra wears it as part of the pAShupata vrata to signify he does not covet anything.

Thus, One is the owner of everything as the innerself, the other is owned by him, as the body. This is the **sharIra-sharIrI sambandha**, or sharIrAtma bhAva.

**jaya chakragadApANe jaya shUliMstrilochana**

**Meaning: Victory to the one with the discus and mace who is the protector. Victory to the one (as rudrAntaryAmin) who holds the shUla and has the third eye as the destroyer.**

As bhagavAn, he is performing the function of protection, appropriate to his supremacy. Mandodari says, "**tAmasa paramo dhAtA shaNkhachakragadAdhara!** - The mace and discus indicate he is the protector and hence the creator as well as the destroyer.

mahAdeva takes away the lives of all creatures with the shUla and destroys the worlds by the third eye. He is the destroyer, and hence a vibhUti of bhagavAn.

Thus, **AdhAra-Adheya sambandha** is mentioned here - One is the supporter (Adhara) and the other is the vibhUti, the supported (Adheya).

**jaya mauktikadIptA~Nga jaya nAgavibhUShaNa**

**Meaning:** Victory to the one whose head shines with the crown. Victory to the one (as rudrAntaryAmin) adorned by snakes.

The crown is an indication of supremacy. Thus, bhagavAn is the upAsya devata and hence the "seShI" - the controller and "svAmi" - the master. Snakes, as previously mentioned, signify strength of upAsaNa. So Rudra is the upAsaka and hence the "seSha" - the controlled, as well as the servant.

Both "sva-svAmi" and "seSha-seShi" sambandha can be considered to be mentioned here.

iti te munayaH sarve praNAmaM chakrire harim . tata utthAya bhagavAndR^iShTvA devamavasthitam .

**Meaning:** Praising Hari in this manner, all the munis prostrated before him. Then, having stood up, bhagavAn beheld (bestowed his katAkSha) the god (Rudra) who was standing there.

"Hari" - One who accepts the offerings of all, like the praise above. He also accepts them directly or through Rudra if directed to Rudra's innerself or Rudra himself, latter being his vibhUti.

vR^iShadvajaM virUpAkShaM sha~NkaraM nIlalohitam

He is the one with the banner of the bull signifying karma yoga, who has a dissimilar eye (signifying j~nAna yoga), who is sha~Nkara as he does good act of bhakti yoga, who is bluish-red (hostile to ignorance).

All this was explained earlier. This is mentioned again to indicate mahAdeva was in accord with what the gods and munIs just said and aware of the tattvAs.

tato hR^iShTamaNA viShNustuShTava haramIshvaram

**Meaning:** Then, being delighted (with mahAdeva's devotion), viShNu who pervades the gods as their innerself, gladdened the destroyer of kAma (Hara), the Ruler of all shAstra (Ishvara) by praising him (thus).

Seeing Rudra as an uttama-bhakta worthy of praise, bhagavAn commenced praising him. What follows next, is a stuti of bhagavAn to Rudra.

### SHIVA STUTI BY BHAGAVAN

bhagavAn's stuti to Shiva is based on what I had mentioned in the introduction - he performed the upAsaNa where he viewed Shiva as a pratIka of Brahman, which is himself. Thus, the "namaH"

refers to bhagavAn himself, as the innerself of Rudra, with Rudra being the pratIka (Symbol) of meditation, as his qualities are contemplated directly. The names refer to various qualities of Rudra which are vibhUtIs of bhagavAn.

In the stutI, bhagavAn uses all sorts of weird words and obscure etymologies like tuNDa, tutituta, ghaNta, aghaNta, ghaTighaTa etc. These names are not used anywhere else for Rudra. Nampillai says this is because bhagavAn was so unused to praising others, that he was stammering and his mouth was moving like a fish out of water due to inexperience!

Also, since bhagavAn has no experience composing stutIs for others, what he does is simple. He follows the exact pattern of the Rudra sUkta in the Rg Veda. This sUkta starts with "**kad rudrAya tavyase...**" and then the remaining mantras each take up one word of the first mantra "**kad**", "**rudra**" etc and elaborate on the meanings of those words.

Similarly, bhagavAn composes the first shloka and the remaining shlokAs are an elaboration of the meanings of the names in the first shloka. It makes sense for one unfamiliar in composing a stuti to look to the style of the Vedas for guidance!

With that understanding, here is the stuti.

### **shrIbhagavAnuvAcha**

**namaste shitikaNThAya nIagrIvAya vedhase . namaste shochiShe astu namaste upavAsine**

**Meaning: Salutations to the one who has a white throat (speech) signifying good actions, to the one who is the means to samsAra or the swallower of the adharmIs (nIagrIva), to the one who functions like a creator (vedhase). Salutations to the one who shines (with Yoga), salutations to the one fasts, ie, abstains from everything except experience of Brahman in all his forms.**

**"shitikaNTha"** - The term "**kaNTha**" means throat and hence speech associated with throat. Speech also signifies all actions of the senses. "**shiti**" means white. It means he who performs sAttvic deeds.

**"nIagrIva"** - "**grIva**" means "**nigaraNe**" - to cause to descend or to swallow. "**nIla**" means blackish/blue which is the color of tamo guNa in shAstra. As per the pramANa,

**ShADjIvavarNAH paramaM pramANaM kR^iShNo dhUmro nIlamathAsya madhyam . (~ shAnti parva, MB)**

[The jIva has six colors in various births based on the predominance of triguNAs, this is known from the Vedas which are the highest authority. These include black (kriShNa), smoky (dhUmra), dark blue (nIlAM), red (raktaM) etc.]

So "nIlagrIva" means, "he who causes those with tAmasIka buddhi to descend into samsAra by propagation of moha-shAstra/he who also swallows or destroys the asurAs."

Vedhase - sarvaj~na. "shochiShe" means to shine due to glory of Yoga.

"upavAsine" - He fasts, meaning, he abstains from enjoyment of everything except Brahman, by assuming numerous forms with the sole purpose being to enjoy bhagavad guNAs.

This is the mUla shloka or root for the entire stuti. The rest of the stuti explains the meanings of these names in detail. In this, bhagavAn, being inexperienced in praising others, is faithfully following the Rudra sUkta of Rg Veda which has a similar style in that succeeding mantrAs explain the different names of the 1<sup>st</sup> mantra.

### Explanation of "ShitikaNtha" - Doer of Sattvic Deeds

**namaste mIDhuShe astu namaste gadine hara**

**Meaning: Salutations to the bestower of boons (mIDhuShe). Salutations to the one who bears the Vedas which generate "speech" of the form of Vedic commands - karma yoga (gadin), to the remover of desire - j~nAna yoga (Hara).**

He bestows boons to all. How? Because he supports the Veda by performing the duties prescribed as karma yoga. "gada" means speech, ie, the Veda - **gadin** means he who possesses or holds the Veda by fulfilling it's commands/duties). By this, he gains a knowledge of the self and removes his desires and attachments, so he is "Hara" - the Remover.

This refers to him performing karma and j~nAna yogAs.

**namaste vishvatanave vR^iShAya vR^iSharUpiNe**

**Meaning: Salutations to the one whose form is full of the excellences of Yoga (vishvatanave), to the one who drenches others with the knowledge of Brahman (vR^iShA), to the one who is a symbol of bhagavAn who is "vR^iSha".**

"vishva" means full of perfections. Rudra's form (**tanu**) is full of all the signs of success in Yoga, so he is **vishvatanu**. As the shvetAsvatAra says, the perfect yogI has lightness of body, a radiance etc. and all these features are seen in him.

Because of his great knowledge due to Yoga, he provides this knowledge to others and hence, becomes a "pratIka" or symbol of bhagavAn. "vR^iSharUpiNe" - "bhagavAn is called "vR^iSha" as he drenches all those wandering in samsAra with his nectar like effulgence and speech. For him, mahAdeva is the "rUpa" - means pratIka.

Next, his prowess in Yoga is taken up. It was said he performs karma yoga, j~nAna yoga and bhakti yoga. What are the results of such Yogic prowess? As below.

**amUrtaAya cha devAya namaste.astu pinAkiNe**

**Meaning: Salutations to the one who is opposed to his body as he knows the self to be distinct from it (amUrta), to the one who shines out the nature of the self by meditation (devA). Salutations to the one with the pinAka, ie, he executes all acts as a service to bhagavAn.**

As he is ever situated in the knowledge of the self as distinct from the body and subservient to bhagavAn, he holds the pinAka bow symbolizing all the acts he performs like asura samhAra etc. which he performs as devotional services to bhagavAn, being empowered by the latter. Ie, he has no ego while performing these acts and considers himself an instrument of bhagavAn.

Next, the result of his prowess in bhakti yoga is explained.

**namaH kubjAya kUpAya shivAya shivarUpiNe**

**Meaning: Salutations to the one who is crooked to the ignorant ones (kubja), to the one who dwells in the cave of the heart (kUpa), to the one who is purified by his meditation (shiva), to the one who is a manifestation of bhagavAn that confers good to the world (shivarUpine).**

"kubja" means crooked. It means, "One whose actions and behavior appear contrarian or crooked to even the devas. The atharvaShiras indeed says that the gods did not know who he was, smearing himself with ashes, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying etc. mahAdeva hides his bhakti in various ways and adopts a particular form of upAsaNa that is not widely practiced.

But though his behavior seems crooked to them, in reality he is "kUpa" - One who is the cave of the heart - it means, he is dwelling in the paramAtma, nArAyaNa who is in the cave of the heart. Thus, he is one who is pure due to this meditation (shiva) and on account of that, he is "shivarUpI" - who is a manifestation or form of bhagavAn as an AveShAvatAra (rUpI) that does auspicious things for the Universe

## Explanation of "NilagrIva" - Deluder and Destroyer of the Unrighteous

**namastuShTaya tuNDaya namastuTituTaya cha .**

**Meaning:** Salutations to one who is happy in the bliss of Brahman (tuShta), the one who hurts the asurAs (tuNDa), who is hostile to those who are hostile to the devotees of bhagavAn (tuTituTa).

These are words not used for Shiva anywhere else and have obscure etymology. bhagavAn has struggled to come up with praise!

**tuDati** - means to tear, to strike, to kill etc. It means he hurts the asurAs.

**Tutati/tutota/tutum** - means to quarrel, to hurt or injure. Since "tuDati" already conveyed the meaning of hurting, here it means, "One who is hostile/quarrelsome to those who are similarly hostile to the gods". It means, he is always protecting the gods.

Does this mean he harbors hatred against the asurAs? Answered below.

**namaH shivAya shAntAya girishAya cha te namaH**

**Meaning:** Salutations to the one who is purified of all attachments like hatred, etc (shiva), who is tranquil (shAnta), to the ruler of the Vedas which are speech, ie, engaged in bhakti yoga (giriSha).

As he is purified of all attachments, he does not take delight in his killing of the asurAs and is merely an instrument on the behalf of bhagavAn. Thus, he is tranquil as he sees no-one as friend or foe due to j~nAna yoga or seeing the self everywhere in all beings. He is ever engaged in bhakti yoga too.

The above was the physical destruction of shAstra. He has also propagated the ShaivAgamAs which are contrary to the Veda, to bind those who are ineligible for the truths to samsAra. That is also mentioned here.

**namo harAya hiprAya namo hariharAya cha .**

**Meaning:** Salutations to He who captures the minds of kudRShTIs to make them think he is supreme (Hara), to the one who purges or empties their knowledge of Brahman, or expels them from the path of the Vedas (hipra), who is the remover of Hari, ie, the means to attain bhagavAn, for the kudRShTIs.

He has propagated the pAshupata Agamas to attract the minds of those ineligible for the Vedic path to them. In this way, he captures their minds to himself, making them think he is Supreme.

"hipra" is another strange word used by bhagavAn and means "*rechaka*" - He who purges or empties. It means, he completely drains them of all true knowledge of Brahman by his teachings in those Agamas. Or, he expels them out of Veda-mArga. bhagavAn is really using a lot of unfamiliar words due to inexperience, "hipra" is never used for anyone anywhere else to my knowledge!

Thus, he is "*harihara*" - One who removes Hari for the kudRShTIs, ie, for them, he removes the means to attain Hari. The name "Hari" here signifies he is destroyer of the sins which leads to liberation, so by removing him or knowledge of him, Rudra keeps them in samsAra. Thus it is said in the rudra gIta of varAha purANa,

*tadvedabAhyaM karmoktaM mAmuddishyopasevyate . tadvai pAshupataM nAma kaniShThaM mohanaM nRRiNAm . mAM viShNuvyatirekeNa pUJayanti narAdhamAH | (~ Rudra gIta, varAha purANa)*

*[Rudra's words: "The said act of worship concerning me which is being observed is really outside the Veda. This doctrine called pAshupata is of low stature and deceives men. Only the "narAdhamAs" - those who have some knowledge of bhagavAn's deeds but no real knowledge of his true nature from the Upanishads - worship me as separate from Vishnu ie, worshipping me independently without seeing me as the body and viShNu as the innerself."]*

*AtmA tu gopitaH sadyaH prakAshyo.ahaM kRRitastadA || (~ Rudra gIta, varAha purANa)*

*[Rudra's words: The effulgent bhagavAn who resides in the Supreme Abode, concealing himself instantly, made me manifest or celebrated (for those people)]*

These Agamas were produced because of Gautama's curse on some who would need to spend a few births outside of the Vedic path. mahAdeva ensured they atleast followed these Agamas until such time they could revert back to the Vedic fold. Hence, the brahma sUtrAs, mahAbhArata and revered personalities like Rudra reject this path.

But then, these people worship Rudra as Supreme. Does he think himself as Supreme due to that? Answered next,



**namo.ghorAya ghorAya ghoraghorapriyAya cha**

**Meaning: Salutations to the one who is all forms that are not terrible, terrible or terribly terrible, ie, he sees himself equally in all beings.**

All forms in the world can be classed as not terrible, terrible or terribly terrible. mahAdeva sees himself in all, ie, he sees the jIvAtma's nature is identical in all, and thus sees himself (his nature) in all beings. Such a knower of the self is said to have become all beings in shAstra, as he no longer sees the difference in bodies.

It means, he well knows his true nature of subservience to bhagavAn and does not consider himself as paramAtma. As he knows his true nature, he propagates the pAShupata doctrine only for lokakshema and personally does not follow those veda-bAhya doctrines. That is stated below.

**namo.ghaNTAya ghaNTAya namo ghaTighaTAya cha .**

**Meaning: Salutations to one who is opposed to "source of harsh sound" which are the pAShupata Agamas, to one who is ever the embodiment of uninterrupted praNava-japa. Salutations to the one who is the mover or impeller of the embodied selves (to samsAra).**

A bell is something that makes a sound which can be harsh or unpleasant. The pAShupata Agamas are called "bell" as they make harsh sounds, ie, teachings opposed to the Veda. Since "ghaNta" signifies that it is "avicchinna" or uninterrupted, these harsh sounds are uninterrupted in the sense that there is nothing of value among them even if we search for it --- the teachings are one continuous stream of viparIta j~nAna only. He is "aghaNTa" or opposed to these Agamas though he propagates them, ie, he considers their teachings akin to a harsh sound.

At the same time, he is "ghaNta" - A bell is something that produces a unceasing, agreeable sound too. He is always doing praNava-japa incessantly, so he is the bell from which the praNava sound emanates. The bhAgavata purANa (11.14.34) says, "oMkAraM ghaNTAnAdaM". It is called "ghaNta" because it is "avicchina" - a continuous, uninterrupted japa.

The praNava teaches one the nature of subservience, as below,

**prANAn sarvAn paramAtmaNi praNAnayati etasmAt praNava (~ atharvashiras)**

**[OM is called "praNava" because it makes all beings bow to paramAtma]**

Thus, he does not consider himself as supreme and always bows down to paramAtma.

In this manner, he is "ghaTighaTa" - ghaTin are those with a water-pot. The pot is the body, the waters are the senses. They are the embodied selves who have ahaMkAra or tAmasIka buddhi. For them, he is "ghaTa" - the root is "ceShtaya" - the impeller towards samsAra.

This root is very obscure indeed, which shows only bhagavAn can construct something. More experienced praisers can probably think of better, easier to understand words!

Why is he uninfluenced by the Agamas he propagates and always meditates on the praNava? Explained next.

**namaH shivAya shAntAya girishAya cha te namaH**

**Meaning: Salutations to the one who is purified of all sins by receiving the Ganga on his head (Shiva), who is thus tranquil or clear-minded (shAnta), who is the one meditating on bhagavAn in kailAsa (girisha)**

He bears the HaripAda tIrtha on his head always. Thus, he is always tranquil - clear minded about his own status and that of bhagavAn, thus meditating on him in kailAsa.

#### **Explanation of "Vedhase" - The Creator**

Rudra is called a creator because he functions like a creator. These activities of his, which make him a "viShvasRja", are elaborated here.

**namo virUparUpAya purAya purahAriNe**

**Meaning: Salutations to the one who has manifold form characterised by freedom from hunger, thirst etc (virUparUpa), to one who is like an abode or refuge for the wise (pura), to the one who removes the body for others, ie, the dehAtmabhrama, or distress of the body (purahAri).**

By meditation on the self, he has many characteristics like freedom from hunger, thirst, extended dharma-bhUta-j~nAna, fearlessness of samsAra etc. Hence he is ever a refuge for those seeking a knowledge of the self and removes their misconceptions such as mistaking the body for the self, as well as the distresses caused by the body.

Because of such knowledge of the self, he can create offspring and remain detached, as below.

**nama AdyAya bIjAya shuchaye.aShTasvarUpiNe**

**Meaning: Salutations to the oldest (and most excellent) son of brahmA (Adi), who is the seed of other offspring (bIja), whose mind is pure despite having such offspring (shuchi), who is characterised by 8 attributes compatible with the true nature of the self (aShTasvarUpi)**

He has created many offspring at the orders of brahmA, but he remains unattached to them. As his mind is pure, it becomes a seat for bhagavAn to reside in (as paramAtma only resides in a mind filled with sattva).

On account of ever meditating on bhagavAn, he is also ever situated in the true nature of the self with the AtmaguNAShtaka - compassion for all beings (dayA sarvabhUteshu), tranquility of mind (kShAnti), lack of envy (anasUya), purity (shoucha), not rejoicing or despairing at anything (anAyAsa), kind words and noble thoughts (mangala), absence of covetousness (aspRha) and strength of mind (akArpanya). They are "svarUpAs" as they are compatible with the true nature of the self.

Because he is an upAsaka with such guNAs, the services he performs on behalf of bhagavAn and for the welfare of all beings are mentioned next.

**namaH pinAkaHastAya namaH shUlAsidhAriNe . namaH khaTvA~NgahastAya namaste kR^ittivAsase**

**Meaning: Salutations to one who bears the pinAka for the protection of the gods. Salutations to the one who has the shUla for taking away the lives of all beings as the destroyer. Salutations to the one who bears the khaTvA~Nga which is the rod of authority over shAstra. Salutations to the one who abides in skins, being ever absorbed in meditation on Brahman.**

Due to the above activities, he is the chief of gods beginning with Indra and is resorted to them, which is explained next.

**namaste devadevAya nama AkAshamUrtaye . harAya harirUpAya namaste tigmatejase**

**Meaning: Salutations to the God of Gods. Salutations to the one who has a shining form indicative of success in Yoga, hence resorted to by the gods (AkAshamUrTi). Salutations to the destroyer of the distress of the gods (Hara), who is a form or AveShAvatAra of Hari (harirUpa). Salutations to the one who is cruel to the asurAs.**

**"rudro vai kruraH"** – shruti says he is very keen on destroying the asurAs to protect the gods.

**"AkAshamUrti"** – His form shines out (akashati) due to Yoga.

The reason he favors the gods is because they are bhagavad-bhaktAs, and he being a bhakta himself, is ever well-disposed to other bhaktAs. That is mentioned next.

**bhaktapriyAya bhaktAya bhaktAnAM varadAyine**

**Meaning:** Salutations to one to whom the devotees of Hari are dear (bhaktapriya), to one who is a devotee of Hari himself (bhakta), to one who gives boons to such devotees who resort to him for knowledge.

He is able to do whatever was mentioned so far by his ashtamUrti form, as he is the presiding deity of ahaMkAra-tattva under which all these gods belong to. Hence, his ashtamUrti is described.

**namo.abhramUrtaye deva jagannUrtidharAya cha**

**Meaning:** Salutations to the one who has the ether as his form (abhramUrti), to the one who binds as prANa, to the one who in his form as "water" sustains the gross form of the Universe.

"deva" refers to his form as vAyu or prANa which binds all beings to life. The manifest or gross form of the Universe is sustained by water, so "jagannUrtidharA" is his form as water. These are 3 of the ashtamUrtIs, and is following the enumeration in bhAgavata purANa.

**namashchandrAya devAya sUryAya cha namo namaH . namaH pradhAnadevAya bhUtAnAM pataye namaH**

**Meaning:** Salutations to his form as the moon, to the one who shines out sense objects in the form of the senses (deva), to his form as the Sun. Salutations to the god presiding over "pradhAna" or prakrti – Earth which supports all. Salutations to the Master of the bhUtAs, as he is presiding over the hRdaya tattva.

"deva" here means he who shines out sense objects, in his form as the collective aggregate of the senses. These are the remaining 5 ashtamUrtIs of Moon, Senses, Sun, Earth and Heart.

**"bhUtAnAM pataye"** – Since he presides over hRdaya-tattva, he is master of all beings. Note that this does not signify antaryAmitvam in the heart as nArAyaNa resides; it only means he is

the presiding deity of the hRdaya-tattva, as he presides over ahaMkAra-tattva. This is clarified in bhAgavatam.

There is a difference in the enumeration of ashtamUrtIs in viShNu purANa and bhAgavata, and both have been mentioned in this section (previously, the VP version was mentioned). They can be reconciled, but we do not need to go into it too deeply here. Enough to know he has 8 forms.

### Explanation of "Shochise" - One who shines with Yoga

**karAIya cha muNDaya vikR^itaya kapardine**

**Meaning: Salutations to one who is formidable to kAma, krodha etc by sAnkhyā yoga (karAIya), to the one who is shorn of desire by karma yoga (muNDa), to the one who is altered in his perception compared to others in seeing the self everywhere by j~nAna yoga (vikR^ita), who is a great upAsaka in perceiving the self (kapardin).**

"sAnkhyā yoga" is the knowledge of the self as distinct from the body, which leads to karma and j~nAna yogas. "vikR^ita" means an altered perception of seeing his own identical nature in all beings, and not seeing differences of the body. The end result of j~nAna yoga is perceiving the self and "kapardin" - one who has matted locks due to that severe penance, signifies it.

**ajAya cha namastubhyaM bhUtabhAvanabhAvana**

**Meaning: Who is the remover of his sins obstructing bhakti by karma and j~nAna yogAs (ajaH), who makes bhagavAn, the nourisher of all beings, shine in his senses/mind (bhAvana - bhA - to shine).**

Karma and j~nAna yogAs remove sins obstructing bhakti yoga. This makes bhagavAn shine in his mind by meditation. **bhUtabhAvana - bhAvana - bhA - to shine**, "bhUta" refers to the senses-aggregate or the mind which are rejoicing in Brahman.

The state of abhyAsa yoga, which is constant contemplation of bhagavAn's deeds and guNAs, and is a prerequisite to developing the intense love needed for bhakti yoga, is described next. This abhyAsa yoga is not some ordinary love of bhagavAn by a bhakta. The love required is intense, extraordinary, uninterrupted to the extent that one can forego food and water and subsist on that love alone. It is not easy to develop that love, so bhagavAn has provided several means to achieve it.

namo.astu harikeshAya pi~NgalAya namo namaH . namaste.abhIShuhastAya  
bhIrubhIruharAya cha

**Meaning:** Salutations to one whose thoughts are always of Hari in abhyAsa yoga (harikeshA), Salutations to one who is yellow, ie, predominantly sattva due to that (pi~Ngala). Salutations to one whose intellect is full of love for bhagavAn (abhIShuhasta), who has acquired a mind which is extremely fearful (of slipping from performing services).

**"HarikeshA"** - keshAs are rays or thoughts. It means he is indulging in abhyAsa yoga which is remembrance of Hari's deeds, qualities, and performing services to him. **"Hari"** - the destroyer of sins for those who perform such abhyAsa.

**"pi~Ngala"** - Due to his, he is "yellow" or predominantly sattva. As noted earlier, yellow is a color that denotes predominance of sattva guNa in shAstra, over rajas and tamas.

**abhIShuhasta** - abhIShu means "love" (abhi-ish) and hasta means "vikasati" that which blossoms forth - the intellect.

**"bhIrubhIruharA"** - Because of that extreme love, he is ever afraid of slipping in his services to bhagavAn, meaning, he dutifully performs selfless devotional services. Remember the Upanishad quote, *"sUrya shines in fear of him..."* etc. - the fear is not some fear of a tyrant, but a love of bhagavAn leading to a fear of not being able to serve him or slipping in his duties.

AbhyAsa yoga leads to bhakti yoga.

harAya bhItirUpAya ghorANAM bhItidAyine .

**Meaning:** One who has "captured" bhagavAn by bhakti yoga (hara), who has the characteristic of "fear" (of slipping from meditation), who inspires fear in his terrible karmas by such meditation.

bhagavAn is conquered by bhakti. And such a bhakta is always ever engaged in Yoga out of fear, because there is a shAstra vAkya which says that if such a Yogi does not think of Achyuta for even a minute, a great fear envelops him, and he starts trembling.

In this manner, he inspires fear to his own karmas obstructing liberation, by such Yoga. The last name is just a metaphor to illustrate the greatness of his Yoga.

Because of his upAsaNa, he was empowered by bhagavAn to destroy dakSha-yaj~na.

namo dakShamakhagnAya bhaganetrApahAriNe

**Meaning: Salutations to one who destroyed the sacrifice of dakSha (due to such strength of upAsaNa), who tore the eyes of Bhaga.**

This dakSha-yaj~na incident has many inner meanings. Daksha is the wayward mind, vIrabhadra is the strength of upAsaNa and the two eyes of Bhaga are pain and pleasure. Shiva destroys them; thus, you can see the relevance of mentioning this here.

**Explanation of "UpavAsin" - One who abstains from everything other than Brahman**

Due to his strength of upAsaNa, mahAdeva assumes various forms, the purpose of those forms being to express his bhakti to bhagavAn to the exclusion of everything else. So those forms are described here. First, the **ardhanArIShvara** form is described.

**umApate namastubhyaM kailAsanilayAya cha .**

**Meaning: Salutations to ArdhanArIShvara (umApati) who is devoted to Brahman, to the one who resides in kailAsa, being resorted to by all sAttvikAs for j~nAna.**

In this form, he along with umA prays to bhagavAn in bhakti. Will be explained in the next section.

**AdidevAya devAya bhavAya bhavarUpiNe**

**Meaning: ArdhanArIShvara is the foremost among the sons of brahmA due to such j~nAna and bhakti (Adideva), the one who shines out Brahman in meditation (deva), who is ever existing in that experience of Brahman himself (bhava) and whose condition is bhagavAn who is existence for him (bhavarUpiNe).**

Only with umA, does his bhakti to bhagavAn truly fructify and thus his status as the greatest son of brahmA is attributed to this form.

**"bhavarUpiNe" - Whose characteristic or condition is bhagavAn, who is verily "Bhava" or existence for him in the manner of "vAsudevaH sarvaM iti". All this is possible because he has umA as his half, she helps him with his sAdhana.**

Because of such Yoga, he desires nothing but bhagavAn. Next, the way by which he attained this state of exclusively seeking only bhagavad anubhava is explained, by his form as **"kapAli"**.

**namaH kapAlahastAya namo.ajamathanAya cha**

**Meaning:** Salutations to kapAli, bearer of the skull due to which he was seeking bhagavAn, to one who churns or stirs up by meditation the bhagavAn denoted by "akAra" in praNava to understand his relationship with bhagavAn (ajamathana).

This is explaining the incident of kapAla moksha.

When Shiva acquired brahma-hatya dosha due to cutting off the skull, he was seeking bhagavAn to surrender to him for release from the curse, as the skull had stuck to his hand. Since he had cut off the skull of brahmA due to ahaMkAra (as he was young and inexperienced in Yoga at the time), he meditated on the praNava which signifies his subservience to bhagavAn, getting rid of that ahaMkAra.

Please refer to my kapAla moksha translation for more information on this, had linked to it earlier in this doc.

"ajamathana" - bhagavAn is "ajaH" as he is signified by "akAra" in praNava. That knowledge is stirred up using the Atman and the praNava as churning sticks according to the ShvetAsvatAra.

**tryambakAya namastubhyaM tryakShAya cha shivAya cha**

**Meaning:** Salutations to kapAli who knows the object of the three Vedas as bhagavAn when he sought him as his refuge (tryambaka), to the one who has three eyes signifying his knowledge of the self as he surrendered to him (tryAksha), to one who is purified of brahma-hatya on account of that (Shiva).

Due to praNavopAsaNa, he realized bhagavAn as the object of the Vedas, and his third eye signifies the perception of the nature of the self, as subservient to bhagavAn. Then, as he surrendered to bhagavAn via mahAlakShmi for shApa-vimochana, he became "Shiva" - not only free of brahma-hatya doSha, but also free of all sins obstructing Yoga and knowledge, free of gurupAtaka as brahmA became affectionate to him and became a great upAsaka.

All the above shlokAs were a **description of kapAlin**, the form with which Shiva first gained knowledge of bhagavAn and went on to become mahAdeva.

Because of what bhagavAn did for him as hara-shApa-vimochana-mUrti, that Hara is now a full-fledged upAsaka, ever meditating on bhagavAn to the exclusion of all other things, which is highlighted next by a **description of dakShiNAmUrti**.



varadAya vareNyAya namaste chandrashekhara .

**Meaning:** Salutations to dakShiNAmUrti who grants the "boon" of exclusive devotion to bhagavAn (varada), who is the most excellent among the devotees of bhagavAn (vareNya), who is adorned with the moon to display his joy of meditation on bhagavAn (chandrashekhara).

dakshiNAmUrti is "varada" because he bestows the boon of his loving devotion to bhagavAn. Vide,

*tadahaM bhaktyupahr^itaM mUrdhna gR^ihNAmi (~ Ashwamedhika Parva, MB)*

*[bhagavAn: I place that offering of bhakti on my head, as though I am getting something I would never get otherwise]*

Is this bhakti not a boon for bhagavAn then? Which makes mahAdeva, "varada". He who is "vaishnavAnAm yatha shambhuH" adorns himself with the moon to publicly show he is ever meditating on the cool form of bhagavAn which is called "chandrAMshu" in sahasranAma.

One who is delighting in Brahman will be eager to share that knowledge with others. After all, would he not love to find another to talk to about his glorious experience of Brahman? That is why he as dakShiNAmUrti also communicates this knowledge to others as a teacher, as explained below.

nama idhmAya haviShe dhruvAya cha kR^ishAya cha

**Meaning:** Salutations to dakShiNAmUrti who is the fuel or kindler of devotion to Brahman in agastya, daksha, pulastya and kashyapa (idhma), who is the one accepted as master by they who are seeking knowledge of Brahman (haviShe), who is steadfast in his silent contemplation of Brahman (dhruva), who has the quality of "littleness", or shorn of all desires other than Brahman (kR^iShA)

"havishe" - "ADiyatE" - Who is accepted as master or leader by these sages as he protected them.

"kR^iShA" means he is insignificant or little in the sense of not having any desires (alpatva in kAma, krodha etc.).

Thirumazhisai Azhwar clarifies in the pAsuram "*Ala nizhaRkIzh aRaneRiyai nAlvarkku...*"- That Rudra, who had performed such rare penances and to such an extent that one would say, "*there is no greater or true penance than this*" - became dakShiNAmUrti in the shadow of the banyan tree with the cool moon on his head signifying his joy in brahmAnubhava. He taught by silence,

the sages agastya, daksha, pulastya and kashyapa and protected them (some say it was mArkandeya instead of pulastya).

How did he protect them? By imparting them specifically, the following knowledge - shriman nArAyaNa who reclines in the milky ocean, takes avatArAs to protect his devotees. He is the one who later took an avatAra as trivikrama, and blessed all with his feet, regardless of whether he was vaShiShTa mahariShi or a chaNDAla. That same bhagavAn, rests on a tender banyan leaf during the dissolution, swallowing all sentient and insentient entities and protecting them.

This is the very specific knowledge that dakShiNAmUrti imparts to his disciples, thereby protecting them.

His other famous form as a teacher is Ahirbudhnya (exalted even above the dakShiNAmUrti form).

**namaste shaktiyuktAya nAgapAshapriyAya cha**

**Meaning: Salutations to he who is yoked to sudarShaNa chakra in meditation (shaktiyukta), who is Ahirbudhnya, fond of bhagavAn who is served by Adi Shesha (nAgapAShapriyA)**

"Shakti" refers to sudarShaNa chakra, which is the power or one form of bhagavAn. As Ahirbudhnya is a teacher of the vidyA regarding upAsaNa on sudarShaNa, he is ever yoked to the Chakra in meditation.

Because the Chakra is an amSha of sankarShaNa, he is thus fond of bhagavAn who is the "pASha" or fetter to Adi Shesha (nAga) who is also empowered by sankarShaNa --- it means, Adi Shesha ever obeys the commands of bhagavAn.

The term "Ahirbudhna" means "One who is the ground or support of the serpent Adi Sesha". It is a name of SankarShaNa who has invested Adi Sesha with his amSha. Thus, "Ahirbudhnya" means, "One who is belonging to, or arisen from SankarShaNa, the innerself of Adi Sesha" - As Shiva is also SankarShaNAmSha and is ever meditating on this particular vyUha mUrti as the innerself of Adi Sesha, it is an apt name.

This is the Ahirbudhnya rUpa of mahAdeva. The pAncharAtra has a good description of this form.

**virUpAya surUpAya madyapAnapriyAya cha**

**Meaning: Ahirbudhnya who is manifold in his knowledge of SudarShana (virUpa), who possesses the delightful vision of the excellent form of SudarShaNa (surUpa), who is fond of meditating**

on the auspicious attributes of SudarShaNa-rUpI bhagavAn which are like an intoxicating drink (madyapAnapriyA).

"virUpa" - Ahirbudhnya taught SudarShaNa ChakropAsaNa to nArada and this vidyA is disclosed in the Ahirbudhnya samhita of pAncharAtra. There are several branches of knowledge regarding the chakra - esoteric meditations, yantrAs, tantrAs and even the form of sudarShaNa is manifold with 16 sub-weapons, each having their significance. He knows them all, so his knowledge is manifold in this sense.

"surUpa" - One who possesses a delightful form (shobana-rUpa) - it means, he possesses the delightful form of sudarShaNa in his mind always, meditating on it.

Because of his delight in meditation on bhagavAn, he does not even want moksha and practices Yoga to tarry in samsAra. This he has explained himself in anuShAsana parva of MB - There, he tells pArvati that saying samsAra is loftier than sri vaikunta for two reasons: One, it is the place where bhagavAn resides in temples and graces his devotees by being subject to them. Also, some deeds like bowing down to his own devotees, being charioteer of Arjuna etc can only be seen in samsAra. Those who experience of these forms of bhagavAn in samsAra feel reluctant even to go to mokSha! The second reason Shiva gives is due to his compassion for all samsArIs. He feels that those who resort to him for knowledge, seeking him as a guru, need to be liberated along with him, and until that happens, he will tarry here.

This guNa is elaborated next, with a description of another form - Bhairava.

**shmashAnarataye nityaM jayashabdapriyAya cha .**

**Meaning: Salutations to bhairava who delights in samsAra which is a place of death due to such experience (shmashanarataya), who is always fond of "jaya" shabda used to praise bhagavAn (jayashabdapriyA).**

This is the form of bhairava/kAla-bhairava - both names refer to the same form. He literally stays in a cremation ground and also deliberately delays his moksha by literally staying in samsAra, which is called a crematorium as it is a place of death (and birth) with delight, because he can perceive so many unique forms of bhagavAn, such as the one of a tapasvI before him bowing down to his own devotees, which he cannot see in paramapada. He performs mangalAsAsanams of "jaya" to such forms.

The second reason is that he wants to uplift everyone before attaining moksha himself.

**kharapriyAya kharvAya kharAya khararUpiNe**

**Meaning: bhairava who is fond of the embodied beings which are cruel or tAmasa in nature (kharapriyAya), who is low or of base acts for their sake (kharva), who is very severe or strict in following shAstra (khara), whose form is dense or thick, ie, not known to the ignorant (khararUpin).**

The embodied beings are always acting in tamo guNa. To uplift even such bhUtAs and pretAs, he indulges in acts which relate to them - like drinking and bathing in blood, wearing skulls etc. By doing these, he earns their confidence and trust, and makes them follow him. Hence, he acquired the name of **bhairava** due to this terrible appearance.

But despite doing these acts which are contrary to shAstra, he is unaffected by their taints because he is very severe or strict in following shAstra. He only does it to help the bhUtAs. And because of this, bhairava's form is very "dense", ie, not comprehended by the ignorant who think he was impure or terrible because of these activities.

Thus, though he performs base acts for the welfare of those who are low born, he is not fond of those acts. Rather, he is fond of lofty acts like dance. Which brings up the description of **natarAja** next.

**bhadrapriyAya bhadrAya bhadrarUpadharAya cha**

**Meaning: natarAja who is fond of dance that confers bliss to him (bhadrapriya), to one confers good to others who view his dance (bhadra), who sustains the form of a dancer which gives happiness to bhagavAn (bhadrarUpadhara).**

He is called "**bhadrapriya**" because the divine dance, performed in ecstasy of bhagavad kalyANa guNAs, is "**bhadra**" as it confers bliss of Brahman to him. He as the dancer is "**bhadra**" since he stirs up the intellect of those who watch him dance, to gain a yearning for such brahmAnubhava.

He is "**bhadrarUpadhara**" because he sustains the form of a dancer which confers good in the form of pleasure to bhagavAn - vishNu dharmottara says that Hari originated the art of dance, and mahAdeva became a master at it to please Hari by his dancing.

The reason for his dancing is more explicitly revealed next, which states what he visualizes as he dances in a beautiful frenzy, matted locks moving everywhere.

**virUpAya surUpAya mahAghorAya te namaH**

**Meaning:** Salutations to natarAja who during the act of dance is altered in perception compared to others as he sees Brahman by meditation (virUpa), who looks lovely during his dance due to his experience of the bliss of Brahman (surUpa), who is extremely formidable to his sins by such experience of Brahman (mahAghora).

"virUpa" - Some may think his dancing is strange, but his perception is totally different to them. He is not seeing them at all as he is only seeing Brahman.

"surUpa" - His form is very agreeable or beautiful as he is experiencing the bliss of Brahman during dancing, which makes him radiant.

"mahAghora" - His dancing pleases bhagavAn and gives him experience of Brahman, which is the means to destroy sins. Thus, it is formidable to his own sins as it is an accessory to his Yoga.

Because of his bhakti, he is ever bearing the ga~Nga which is shrI haripAda tIrtha on his head. So, ga~NgAdhara mUrta is described next.

The next 3 forms are only described in half-shlokAs. This is because they are not so much "forms", as "characteristics".

**ghaNtAya ghaNTabhUShAya ghaNTabhUShaNabhUShiNe**

**Meaning:** gaN~gAdhara who is OmkArAtmaka or absorbed in praNava-japa (ghaNtA), who is adorned with the incessantly flowing gaN~ga (ghaNTabhUSha), who is adorned by the ornament of incessant meditation on Brahman (ghaNTabhUShaNabhUShiNe).

More strange words by bhagavAn. Nampillai actually quoted this verse indirectly implying, "Who but someone unfamiliar in composing a stotra uses words like "ghaNta" to describe such things?" Would it not have been clearer if he had actually used "gaN~ga" here!

"ghaNta" is anything that is in a incessant flow, and is connected with praNava as was previously shown. praNavOpAsaNa is an accessory to j~nAna yoga, since Brahman is meditated to attain the perception of the self. This is described next.

"ghaNTabhUSha" - Here, Ga~Nga itself is referred to "ghaNta" because it flows incessantly. Due to meditation on OmkAra which shows one is subservient to Brahman, he recognizes ga~Nga as haripAda tIrtha and himself as fit to adorn it. Hence, he is adorned by it.

“ghaNTabhUShaNabhUShiNe” - Because of that, he is cleansed of all sins obstructing meditation and is adorned by the ornament of bhakti yoga, which is incessant meditation on Brahman.

Thus, it is said in Ishvara Samhita of pAncharAtra,

*hravibhUthas thadhA dharmO haribhakthYA mahAmunE . gruhIthvA dharmA pAnIyam padham  
nAthasya thushtayE . kshAlitham parayA bhakthYA pAdhyArghyAdhibhir Architham  
.thadhambu pathitham dhrushtvA dhadhAra SirasA hara: . pAvanArththam jatA madhyE  
yOgyOsmIthya vadhAraNath . varshAyuthAnyatha bahUn na mumOcha thadhA hara:  
(~Ishvara Samhita, pAncharAtra)*

*[brahmA said: Oh great rishi! During that time when bhagavAn measured the worlds, dharmA  
(ga~Nga devI) out of devotion to hari became a flowing water. Using that divine water,  
which is dharmA, in order to make jagannAtha happy, his divine feet were washed by me.  
He was worshipped with pAdhyam (washing the divine feet), argyam (washing the divine  
hands) etc. Looking at the water which was falling off his divine feet, Shiva determined that  
he is apt (to be purified) and bore that water on his head in order to purify himself. After  
that, for ten thousand years (as a metaphor for always), Hara did not let go of that water.]*

The next half-shloka describes the outcome of his great bhakti - he was able to swallow the hAlahAla poison. Thus, ViShApaharaNa mUrthi is described now.

**tIvrAya tIvraUpAya tIvraUpapriyAya cha**

**Meaning: ViShApaharaNa mUrthi who is very fierce in his meditation on garuDadhvaja while  
consuming the poison (tIvra), who has the form with the mark of the fierce poison on the  
neck (tIvraUpa), who is fond of garuDa of fierce form (tIvraUpapriya).**

“tIvra” - Means he was very fierce or fixed in his meditation on bhagavAn as being flanked by  
garuDa while consuming the hAla-hAla viSha. That is explained by pramANAs such as the one  
below,

*taMdR^iShTvA ghora saN^kAshaM prAdurbhUtaM mahAviSham.h | dhyAtvA nArAyaNaM  
devaM hR^idaye garuDadhvajam.h || (~BrahmAndapurANa)*

*[Seeing that terrible poison emerging, (Shiva) meditated on the Lord Vishnu, Garudadhvaja,  
residing in his heart.]*

He focused his meditation on garuDa who is the destroyer of poisons, hence bhagavAn is mentioned as garuDadhvaja. There are also many other shlokas like this referencing garuDa, as well as a reference in keshi sUkta which is on garuDa.

Because of that, he became "**tIvrrarUpa**" - One who has a form with the mark of the fierce poison on his neck. It has become an ornament for him.

This is because he is "**tIvrrarUpaprIya**" - One who is fond of garuDa who has a form that is fierce to snakes and poisons, because he became **nIlakaNTha** by meditating on garuDa.

He is extremely devoted to Brahman because of his knowledge of the true nature of the self. That is clarified by the next half-shloka, as highlighted by **bhikShATana mUrTi**.

**nagnAya nagnarUpAya nagnarUpapriyAya cha**

**Meaning: bhikShATana who is "barren" or is devoid of all desires due to knowledge of the self (nagna), who is possessing a naked form to signify this (nagnarUpa), who is fond of the form of the self which is "barren" or devoid of the blemishes of prakrti (nagnarUpapriya).**

"nagna" means barren or devoid of any desire other than the self. Thus, he is "nagnarUpa" as he possesses a naked form to convey this. Hence, he is fond of the form of the self called "nagna" as it has no blemishes of prakrti, ie, he perceives it's true nature by meditation and is free of hunger, thirst, desires etc.

The form of bhikShATana is very closely linked with meanings of j~nAna yoga or realization of the self. I had written about it here :

<https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1318837724908986369>

The last 3 forms received only half-shlokAs because they are not unique forms like kapAli, bhairava, Ahirbudhnya etc. Shiva bears the ga~Nga and has a dark mark on his neck from the poison whether he is naTarAja or bhairava, and also can be naked in the other forms as well. So they are more general characteristics than specific forms.

Whatever form he assumes, that is only for the sake of expressing devotion to bhagavAn. This is highlighted next.

**bhUtAvAsa namastubhyaM sarvAvAsa namo namaH**

**Meaning: Salutations to one who is the abode of many forms for the sake of expressing devotion to Brahman (bhUtAvAsa), to the one who is the abode of auspicious qualities of Yoga in whatever form he assumes, be it terrible or tranquil (sarvAvAsa)**

The Upanishads hint that the purpose of him assuming so many forms is to express devotion to bhagavAn in various ways. Thus, whether he is wearing a garland of skulls and drinking blood, or he is situated in peaceful meditation on KailAsa or dancing in ecstasy, he is ever the abode of great qualities like sama, dama etc.

But only bhagavAn can be more in one place at once as he is all-pervading by nature. So how can mahAdeva assume so many forms? Because his intellect (dharma-bhUta-j~nAna) is extended and he performs good deeds with that power. One with extended dharma-bhUta-j~nAna is technically in one body, but by his j~nAna, he pervades the other bodies and controls them. This is in contrast to bhagavAn who literally is present in many bodies at once, being vibhU svarUpa.

That is clarified next.

**namaH sarvAtmane tubhyam namaste bhUtIdAyaka . namaste vAmadevAya mahAdevAya te namaH .**

**Meaning: Salutations to one whose intellect pervades everywhere due to extended knowledge (sarvAtma), Salutations to one who grants the wealth of knowledge to others (bhUtIdAyaka). Salutations to the god who is agreeable or worshippable to all on account of that (vAmadeva), who is himself the great god on account of his own devotion to bhagavAn (mahAdeva).**

The next few shlokAs form the conclusion of the stuti by bhagavAn.

**kA nu vAkstutirUpA te ko nu stotuM prashaknuyAt . kasya vA sphurate jihvA stutau stutimatAM vara**

**Meaning: What speech of the form of your praise is there, ie, is the medium of speech sufficient to praise you who have so many glories? Who is capable of praising you in a manner fit to your stature? Whose tongue is fit to praise you, who are foremost among those devotees who deserve praise?**

Just as bhagavAn's glories are unlimited, so are the glories of his devotees. Next, bhagavAn makes a prArthana.



**kShamasva bhagavandeva bhakto.ahaM trAhi mAM hara.**

**Meaning: One worthy of worship (bhagavan)! One who is sAttvika and hence worthy of worship (deva)! Forgive me (for my inability in praising you adequately). I am your "bhakta", ever devoted to your welfare. O Hara, who captures me by your devotion! Kindly protect me, ie, protect my vow to protect my devotees, by accepting this stuti.**

mahAdeva is one worthy of worship by bhagavAn, which is the general meaning of "bhagavan" when applied to anyone other than viShNu. Because he is a "sAttvika" or a devotee, as signified by the term "Deva". He is "Hara" as he captures bhagavAn by his devotion.

bhagavAn is a "bhakta" - one who is ever devoted to the welfare of his devotees. It can also mean he is a literal devotee of his devotees. He asks mahAdeva for protection in the sense of, "protect my vow to bow before devotees like you, by accepting this stuti of mine".

**sarvAtmansarvabhUtesha trAhi mAM satatam hara**

**Meaning: O one who sees himself as the self of all (sarvAtma)! O Ruler of all my devotees (sarvabhUteSha)! O Hara, who removes the ignorance of all beings! Always protect me, by protecting my devotees.**

"trAhi mAM" - Protect me. What is "me" the nature of bhagavAn? It is "upAyatva" according to Bhattar - to be the means to protect his devotees. And only if mahAdeva grants knowledge to such embodied beings, will they be attracted to bhagavAn. Thus, when bhagavAn says, "protect me", he means, "protect my nature of being the means to my devotees, by bringing them to me upon imparting knowledge".

As pillai lokAchArya says, if he does not protect someone, he considers it a destruction of his very nature which is actually indestructible. Hence, that meaning is implied here, he wants mahAdeva to help his bhaktAs.

Why would mahAdeva do this for bhagavAn? Because he is "sarvAtma" - he sees his own nature of the self in all beings and rises above differences of body. Thus, he is a well-wisher for all, seeing no one as his enemy. In this manner, he is the controller of the devotees of bhagavAn - "sarvabhUteSha". Thus, he removes their ignorance and brings them to bhagavAn, so he is "Hara".

rakSha deva jagannAtha lokAnsarvAtmanA hara .

**Meaning:** O deva, who are empowered by me! Master of the Universe! Remover of the sufferings of all beings! Protect all the worlds in every way (by imparting knowledge of me).

He is called "deva" here as he is a god, empowered by bhagavAn - bhagavad AveShAvatAra. Thus he is the master of the Universe and capable of removing sufferings of all.

trAhi bhaktAnsadA deva bhaktapriya sadA hara

**Meaning:** O deva, who are my devotee! O One who is ever fond of my devotees! O Hara, who attracts my devotees to you for knowledge! Protect all devotees of mine always.

Here "deva" means "sAttvika" - a devotee. With this, bhagavAn concludes his stuti.

### MAHADEVA'S RECOGNITION OF PARA-TATTVA

tato vR^iShadhvaajo devaH shUII sAkShAdumApatiH . karaM kareNa saMspR^ishya viShNoshchakradharasya ha

**Meaning:** Then, the god with the banner of a bull, who holds the shUla, who is verily the consort of umA, touched the hand of vishNu, the bearer of the Chakra with his hand.

mahAdeva is a "Deva" - One who is a sAttvika. Thus, he was overcome with emotion by the simplicity of bhagavAn. The one who should be worshipped by all, was bowing down to him! Any bhakta would be overcome.

The bull signifies all the dharmas in the material realm. It means, mahAdeva is the master of embodied beings. The chakra however, signifies sovereignty over all beings. It means bhagavAn is the master of all beings in both material and liberated realms. Thus, Shiva, knowing this, touched the hand of bhagavAn marked with the Chakra, symbolizing his inquiry to him, "**O viShNu, pervader of all including myself! What do you think you are doing bowing to me when you are marked with the supreme sovereignty of the Chakra?**"

He bears the shUla by which he is the destroyer of all beings - hence a vibhUti of bhagavAn. Not just that, he is verily the consort of umA and with her help, he provides knowledge of bhagavAn to all. All these attributes of his made him touch the hand of bhagavAn in emotion, asking him the reason for this penance when he bears the symbol of the Chakra signifying his supremacy.

provAcha bhagavAnrudraH keshavaM garuDadhvajam . shR^iNvatAM sarvadevAnAM munInAM  
bhAvitAtmanAm

**Meaning:** The worshippable Rudra, spoke to Keshava, who has vedAtma garuDa as his banner, while being listened to by all the gods and munIs who were of purified mind.

"bhAvitAtmanAm" - All the gods and munIs had purified minds and knew the relative positions of Hari and Hara. There was no doubt in their minds as to why bhagavAn was doing this tapas, as they had praised his sushIlya guNa and declared mahAdeva to be his great devotee with "jaya" earlier.

But there was some doubt created in their minds as to whether mahAdeva wanted bhagavAn to bow to him.

Recall that Shiva is said to have a form that is confusing to all. This has been stated many times. Many do not know the extent of his devotion and wrongly see his outward activities, thinking him to be ignorant. Thus, many munIs and some gods (not all though) there harbored the doubt as to whether Shiva was in perfect knowledge.

Rudra was highly agitated by this penance of bhagavAn, because no bhakta likes bhagavAn bowing to him. He also knew some munIs and gods had this doubt about him. Thus, he wanted to announce himself as a bhagavad bhakta to all of them. A bhakta always fears for his reputation when bhagavAn bows down to him.

When rAma performed sharanAgati to samudra rAja, the latter did not appear because he did not want to accept it. That is the way of bhagavAn - he will bow to all his devotees. But there is also the way of the bhakta, who will never accept it and become afraid of such an act.

Thus he spoke to the one called "keshava" - the master of brahmA and rudra, who rides the embodiment of the Veda - garuDa. It means he knew the reality of bhagavAn.

kimidaM devadevesha chakrapANe janArdana . tapashcharyA kimarthaM te prArthana tava  
kA vibho

**Meaning:** (mahAdeva said:) Lord of brahmA! Bearer of the SudarShaNa Chakra! One worthy of worship by all (janArdana)! What is this drama? What is the purpose of you performing these austerities? What is your request, O Master?

As said earlier, he bears the Chakra which marks his sovereignty over all. Hence he is "janArdana", who is worthy of worship by all!

"tapashcharyA kimarthaM" - What is the purpose of penance when you are avApta-samastakAman, one whose desires are all satisfied.

"prArthana tava kA vibhO" - "You are my master and I am your servant. By worshipping me, have you decided to completely destroy my reputation in front of these watching gods and munIs? Is that your prArthana?" -- mahAdeva is asking this in a sarcastic or jocular manner.

svayaM viShNurbhavAnnityastapastvaM tapasAM hare .

**Meaning:** Thief who captivates the mind (Hari)! You are verily viShNu, who showers his grace on all scorched by samsAra by his pervasion. You are ever the "knowledge" or object of perception for bhakti yogIs.

Acharyas explain the usage of "Hari" here as "mischief-maker/thief" (Azhwar says "kalvA!" - thief - instead of "Hari" when describing this, implying that is the meaning). He captivates the mind of his bhaktas by his form. How? He uses that form in his avatArAs to bow before his own devotees. Thus, he who is independent (svatantra), the one who showers his grace on others, who is the object of perception for yogIs, feigns dependence (paratantra) using the form in his avatArAs. This is the mischief, and he is called a thief because of cheating in this way. Thus "Hari" here means he is the captivating thief.

putrArthaM yadi te deva tapashcharyA janArdana . putro datto mayA deva pUrvameva jagatpate . shR^iNu tatrApi bhagavankAraNaM kAraNAtmaka

**Meaning:** One who is worthy of worship by all including me (janArdana)! One who is the natural master of all (jagatpati)! If your penance is for getting a son, I have already given a son to you long back (when you resolved for it). Hey bhagavAn! You who are constituting the cause of good deeds! Listen to the reason for that.

This whole exercise in "tapas" is actually exposed by the fact that Rudra had granted him the son when bhagavAn had merely resolved for it. So he already had the son when he was doing this tapas! Then why did he do the tapas? The reason is given in the names, "janArdana! jagatpati!" - The one who is worthy of worship by all, is also the natural master of the Universe and thus extremely accessible by his simplicity.

**"kAraNAtmaka"** - One who constitutes the cause of good deeds of all, like Shiva giving him a Son. The name **"kRti"** in sahasranAma is a cognate of this. It was the bhakti of Shiva to him that made him immediately give a son, when bhagavAn resolved for it.

Next, Rudra explains how kAmadeva became bhagavAn's son.

**tapashchartuM pravR^itto.ahaM kutashchitkAraNAddhare . varShAyutaM mahAghoraM purA  
kR^itayuge tadA**

**Meaning: In kR^itayuga, for some particular reason (perceiving the self), I was performing a formidable penance (of j~nAna yoga) for ten thousand years.**

Here, **"kutashchitkAraNAd"** is used. Normally, no tapasvI would say "I am meditating for some unknown reason". What it means is, mahAdeva was meditating on the self, which is "unknown" or "unmanifest" to the senses and hence, "an unknown reason" of meditation to everyone.

As gIta 2.29 describes the self as "Ascharyavat", mahAdeva describes it as "some unfathomable reason hard to describe". Ultimately, he didn't perceive the self by that route as kAma interrupted him, hence again it is something undescribable

Recall gIta 12.1, when Arjuna asks bhagavAn, "which yogI attains his goal speedily, the one meditating on bhagavAn? Or the individual self?" The self is called **"avyaktaM"** there - not easily manifest to the senses. That is what Shiva means by **"kutashchitkAraNAd"**

bhagavAn replies in gIta 12.2 one meditating on him is superior. Since the individual self is beyond the range of the senses, meditating on it by controlling the senses is difficult. bhagavAn says in gIta 12.4 that this path of meditation on the self is fraught with hardship - **"klesho adhikataras teShAm"** - that is what mahAdeva means by **"mahAghoram"**.

mahAdeva had the prowess of Yoga and thus attempted it. But here is the downside to it - a j~nAna yogI needs to completely cease all activities. This means giving up all activities like married life, his duties of destruction, protection of IndrAdi devatAs against the asurAs, disseminating knowledge etc.

A J~nAna yogI would be like someone inside a deep hole to whom no echo can reach. Thus, Shiva would not be able to do any activity and would never remove himself from that perception of the self. There is also a danger of becoming completely lost in that bliss, which is called "kaivalya gati"

bhavAnI tatra me deva parichartuM tadAbhavat . pitrA niyukTA devesha umaiShA  
varavarNinI

**Meaning:** At that time, bhavAnI was performing services to me. This umA of beautiful complexion was sent there by her father.

Note that Rudra calls her "varavarNinI". shAstrAs say that a beautiful wife brings good fortune. Shiva thinks kAma interrupting his penance worked out for the good. And he is highlighting how umA, despite being newly wed, was willing to sacrifice her company with him, if he wanted to pursue j~nAna yoga.

"She is umA, one who had to be stopped from doing penances to attain me as a husband, thus she was devoted to me. She was also sent by her father, so she was newly wed. Yet, she was attending me dutifully without any complaint about me ceasing all activities, even with her. This is her great guNa" - this was what mahAdeva intended to convey.

bhIta indrastadA deva mAraM mAM praiShayattadA . madhuna saha saMyukte mAro  
mAmAgatastadA

**Meaning:** Indra, who was then afraid on account of my penance, sent manmatha to me, who came to where I was, with his consort, Vasanta.

Indra was thinking about lokakshema. mahAdeva is a lokapAlaka and a jagat-nirvAhaka. Thus, he is indispensable and cannot be allowed to sink into j~nAna yoga, since he will then cease all activities. The universe cannot function without him. Thus, Indra acted via manmatha.

lakShyaM mAkarottatra bANasya preShitasya ha . eShA mAM sevate tatra  
dAnAtpuShpAdinAM hare

**Meaning"** Hari! He then shot an arrow aimed at me. She (umA) was serving me with offerings of flowers (and thus, the intent of kAma was to agitate me).

"Hari" - This path of meditation I was doing is very difficult and senses cannot be quelled easily. In comparison, meditation on you is easier, as you are "Hari" - one who destroys all desires by mere remembrance of him --- this is what Shiva wanted to say.

tataH kruddho.ahamabhavaM dR^iShTvA mAraM tathAvidham . kruddhyato mama devesha  
netrAdagniH papAta ha

**Then, At that time, I became angry, seeing kAmadeva (act) in that manner. Because of that, fire emerged from my third eye and fell (on kAmadeva), O Ruler of Gods!**

When kAma struck him, he was rudely awoken from his Yoga. Such a violent removal from a complex yoga like j~nAna yoga was the cause for his anger at kAma.

bhagavAn is the ruler of gods and thus protects his devotees from gods like yama, kama, etc. By this name, mahAdeva wanted to convey, "You are more effective in quelling kAma than the meditation I was doing!"

**so.ayamagnistadA mArAm bhasmasAtkR^itavAnhare . achintayaM tadA viShNo shakrasyaitachchikIrShitam**

**Meaning" That fire burned manmatha and turned him into ashes. Then, I deliberated about this act of Indra, Oh vishNu!**

All of the merit accrued by mahAdeva's penance was also spent in burning kAma, so there was no further point of pursuing this path. Initially he was angry, but later he thought about how Indra had only acted for the good of the world.

kAmadeva only acted because he was sent by Indra. Indra too was acting out of fear that mahAdeva would become a renunciate via j~nAna yoga and cease all activities like protection of the gods which is part of karma yoga. This episode shows that it is better to be a karma yogI than a j~nAna yogI.

"vishNu" - "You pervade all to shower your grace by reducing the heat of samsAra for them. Then why should I perform j~nAna yoga and meditate on the self to reduce the heat of samsAra, when I have you to meditate on by bhakti yoga? I realize that"

**tataH prabhR^iti devesha dayA taM prati vartate . brahmaNA cha niyukto.asmi prItastatra janArdana**

**Meaning: janArdana! From then on, I started having compassion towards him (kAmadeva or indra). I am also directed by brahma (to cease j~nAna yoga), then I became appeased (by bhakti yoga).**

There is no real need to pursue j~nAna yoga for a perception of the self. Karma yoga has the same knowledge component in it, because desireless actions require contemplation on the self as distinct from the body

Thus, a yogI can skip j~nAna yoga and move directly from karma yoga to bhakti yoga. Because Karma Yoga provides the same result as j~nAna yoga . Only reason a yogI would pursue j~nAna yoga is curiosity to experience the bliss of the self.

Thus, he became compassionate towards kAma; or Indra - but it means both, since it was Indra who sent kAma anyway. Then, commanded by his guru, brahmA, he ceased j~nAna yoga and progressed to bhakti yoga via karma yoga. He found that meditation on bhagavAn is infinitely sweeter than the limited bliss of the self as well, so he says he was pleased by it.

He calls bhagavAn "**janArdana**" because, it means, "***You who destroy the janAs like kAma, krodha etc. are sweeter and more efficient to meditate on as compared to meditation on the self***". It also means, "***One who is worthy of worship by all, as a superior object of contemplation in comparison to the self***".

Though it is said mahAdeva ceased j~nAna yoga here, it does not mean he abandoned it completely. J~nAna yoga can be completed by meditating on bhagavAn to attain a perception of the self, as opposed to meditating on the self. So this does not contradict various other statements in this section which depict him as adept in j~nAna yoga too. He only gave up the path of directly meditating on the self to achieve a sight of the self, and switched to meditating on bhagavAn to perceive the similar nature of the self, and proceeded to bhakti yoga.

**niyuktaH putrarUpeNa sa te deva jagatpate . jyeShThastava suto deva pradyumnetyabhivishrutaH**

**Meaning: He has been delegated to be your son (by brahmA's boon), O Master of the Universe! He is your eldest son, celebrated as pradyumna. O Effulgent God!**

**"jagatpati"** - One who is the natural master of the Universe and thus protects all, including kAmadeva whose body was restored as his son.

**"deva"** - One whose form is effulgent, made of shuddha-sattva and hence more charming than kAmadeva, as well as a dispeller of loukika kAma!

Matsya purANa says brahmA cursed kAma to be burnt by Rudra, but later felt pity and gave him a boon saying he will become kR^iShNa's son. kAma was invested with vyUhamSha of bhagavAn.



smaraM taM viddhi devesha nAtra kAryA vichAraNA

**Meaning:** O Ruler of Gods! Know that he indeed is Smara, there is no further need for inquiry on this matter.

"Devesha" - who is the ruler of all gods including kAmadeva, and so protects him too.

"taM viddhi" - Know him, ie, perceive him as an offering from me to you, out of love. No need to inquire further into my bhakti to you.

The whole episode also has an inner meaning - An upAsaka burns up lust for sense objects and presents that lust to bhagavAn in a "new body" - a new form, in the form of kR^iShNa kAma - love of bhagavAn. And bhagavAn receives that love for him from the bhakta as though he is receiving a great boon. That's why he had to get kAma from Shiva.

#### **MAHADEVA'S DECLARATION OF PARA-TATTVA TO THE GODS AND MUNIS**

ityuktvA punarAhedaM yAthAtmyaM darshayanniva . munInAM shrotukAmAnAM yathAtmyaM tatra sattamaH

**Meaning:** Having spoken thus so far, that one who is excellent among the devotees of bhagavAn spoke again as follows, displaying the reality (of his devotion) to the sages who were desirous of listening.

There were some who had doubts about mahAdeva's devotion to bhagavAn, as mentioned earlier. To dispel their doubts, mahAdeva acted in the following manner.

a~njaliM saMpuTaM kR^itvA viShNumuddishya sha~NkaraH . umayA sArdhamIshAno yathAtmyaM vaktumaihata

**Meaning:** sha~Nkara doer of auspicious services to vishNu, held his palms together to propitiate Vishnu in anjali mudra. umA was occupying one half of the body of IshAna, who was desirous of explaining the reality (of his devotion).

Whenever there is a danger to someone and he wishes to surrender to bhagavAn, he is always accompanied by his wife who supports him and imparts him clarity of mind. I had explained in this thread earlier - <https://twitter.com/DefiledGod/status/1412312106637004800>

For that purpose, Shiva asked umA to join him here. The danger he was facing was the doubt in the minds of some devotees, and the fact that a bhakta does not like the idea of bhagavAn bowing to him.

There is also a tAtparya to the ardhanArIshvara form. Rudra is "sha~Nkara" - the doer of auspicious services to vishNu, ie, karma yoga. umA is a beautiful woman and in shAstra, such a strI signifies experience of anything desirable - thus, she signifies the knowledge of the self which is desirable - j~nAna yoga, or it is an outcome of karma yoga itself. As **ArdhanArIshvara** with her, he is **IshAna** - the Ruler of all vidyAs.

Just as umA and shiva are one form, karma and j~nAna yield the same result - the knowledge of the self. Just as they are separate, karma and j~nAna yogAs are distinct paths. Just as ArdhanArIshvara offered his palms in anjali mudrA, propitiating bhagavAn, bhakti yoga is supported by karma and j~nAna yogAs.

**hare kurvati tatraivama~njaliM kurusattama . munayo devagandharvAH siddhAshcha sahakinnarAH . a~njaliM chakrire viShNordevadeveshvare harau**

**Meaning: O best of Kurus! When Hara acted thus, the munis, devas, gandharvas, siddhas, and kinnaras joined him with palms together in a~njali mudra, propitiating the one who measured the three steps (vishNu), the destroyer of the sins for rudra (Hari), hence the master of brahmA and rudra (Keshava).**

He is **Hara** because by his actions, he is removing the doubts about him in the minds of the watching munIs.

bhagavAn is **viShNu** - One who measured the three worlds with his three steps as Trivikrama. What happened during this avatArA? brahmA washed his feet, and the water (ga~Nga) landed on Rudra's head. Thus he is "**Hari**" or one who destroyed sins for Rudra by giving his shrIpAda tIrtha.

That is why he is "**keshava**" - The master of brahmA and rudra. As AchAryAs say, "**One held out his feet, another washed it, and made yet another one bear it on his head. Reflect on this and decide for yourselves.**"

**Kurusattama** - "**You are the best of Kurus. But bhagavAn is the best of gods, as he is worshipped by Rudra**" --- this vaishampAyana intends to convey by calling Janamejaya by this name.

Now, mahAdeva begins to explain the para-tattva. Unlike bhagavAn, he uses very familiar words and his stuti flows better. Because, they are well-used to praising bhagavAn as thirumangai azhwar says, "**nAththazhumba nAnmuganum ISanumAy muRaiyAl Eththa**" - "**With great emotions, brahmA and rudra praised bhagavAn properly**"

maheshvara uvAcha

yattatkAraNamAhustatsA~NkhyAH prakR^itisaMj~nakam . tato mahAnsamutpannaH  
prakR^itiryasya kAraNam .

**Meaning:** Maheshvara spoke as follows: "That which the sAMkhyasor those versed in the knowledge of the self, speak of as the agent is known as "Prakriti" – the jIvAtma. From it, the principle called Mahan, whose cause is the unmanifest Prakriti, is born.

The tattvAs are three - cit (Sentients), acit (insentients) and Ishvara (nArAyaNa). mahAdeva starts with acit tattva first.

tridhA bhUtaM jagadyoniM pradhAnaM kAraNAtmakam .

**Meaning:** The pradhAna or Mahat which is the primary evolute, that is forming the nature of reason or intellect (kAraNAtmaka) is threefold (sAttvika, rAjasIka and tAmasIka mahat producing buddhi and ahaMkAra). It is the source of the Universe (which are further evolutes).

sattvaM rajastamo viShNo jagadaNDaM janArdanaH

**Meaning:** O vishNu! That cosmic egg is of three qualities are sattva, rajas, and tamas and is verily you, O janArdana!

When Rudra says, "It is you", he means that it is body of bhagavAn. Acit and Cit are bodies of bhagavAn (shruti says, "*yasya prithvI sharIraM, yasya Atma sharIraM*"). Just as "Jack" denotes both Jack's body and Jack's self, "cosmic egg" denotes bhagavAn as the innerself of that egg, having it as his body.

By saying, "You are that cosmic egg", Rudra says, "*You who are standing before me, are non-different from the innerself of the cosmic egg, which has the cosmic egg as it's body*".

Because of this, he is "viShNu" - one who pervades the insentients and thus has the insentients as his wealth. Hence he is "janArdana" - worthy of worship by all.

Next, Rudra says that cit (sentient - jIvAtma) is also similarly his body.

tasya kAraNamAhustvaM sA~NkhyaprakR^itisa~j~nakam . tadrUpeNa bhavAnviShNo  
pariNamyAdhitiShThati

**Meaning:** What (jIvAtma) those with knowledge of the self, declare as the Agent of that Universe, those who are perceiving Brahman by Yoga, speak of as you! By that jIvAtma which is your body, O vishNu, you undergo transformation (from subtle to gross forms), becoming the supervisor of the body.

He undergoes transformation from subtle to gross forms. How? By being the innerself of the jIvAtma. It is actually the jIva which is undergoing such transformation, but by sharIrAtma bhAva as explained previously, it can be said he is undergoing it, when he has the jIva as his body.

The jIva being his body is mentioned as "tadrUpeNa".

Because of this, he is "viShNu" - one who pervades the sentient and thus has the sentient as his wealth.

From now, on Rudra talks about the embodied self (cit associated with acit) by transformations of prakrti.

**tasmAttu mahato ghorAdaha~NkAro mahAnabhUt . sa tvamAdau jagannAtha pariNAmastathA hi saH**

**Meaning:** Indeed, from that (mUlaprakR^iti) which is of the nature of tamas (mahato ghora), the great principle called "aha~NkAra" was born. That aha~NkAra which was formed at the beginning (prior to the evolution of senses) and its modifications are indeed You, Master of the Universe!

**jagannAtha** - As the master of the Universe which is his body, he is the protector of all. Thus, he enables the modifications of prakrti to give bodies to jIvAs so that they can attain him.

**aha~NkArAtprabho deva kArANani mahAnti cha . tanmAtrANI tathA pa~ncha bhUtAni prabhavantyuta**

**Meaning:** O deva! prabhu! From aha~NkAra, the great agents known as the "tanmAtras" (five in number) and the panchabhUtas were born (from the tanmAtrAs).

"Deva" - God who binds and sports with jIvAs.

"Prabhu" - Even though he has come down as kR^iShNa and is bowing down to Rudra like some dependent, he is the all-powerful, independent one who created the Universe and is highly capable of bestowing moksha.

tAni tvAmAhurIshAnaM bhUtAnIha jagatpate . pR^ithivI vAyurAkAshamApo jyotishcha pa~nchamam

**Meaning:** O Controller of the Bound Souls! You indeed, are those panchabhUtAs, O Master of the Universe! The bhUtAs are Earth, Wind, Sky, Water, and Fire.

chakShurghrANaM tathA sparsho rasanaM shrotrameva cha . manaH ShaShThaM tathA deva prerakaM tatra tatra ha

**Meaning:** The tanmAttras are sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound. O Effulgent God, who is not affected by impurities despite pervasion in them! The sixth, which is the mind, is the impeller of the senses leading to various experiences

karmendriyANi chAnyAni vAgAdIni janArdana . tvameva tAni sarvAni karoShi niyatAtmavAn

**Meaning:** janArdana! The karmendrIyAs and j~nAnendrIyAs are those beginning with vAk, etc. You indeed direct all those senses to their tasks, O one who has a controlled mind!

He is janArdana as he is worthy of being worshipped by all with their senses, ie, that is the purpose of the senses. He has a controlled mind, free of all desires, despite directing the senses of others.

sveShu sveShu jagannAtha viShayeShu tathA hare . niveshayasi devesha yogyAmindriyapaddhatiM

**Meaning:** O Hari! Master of the Universe! Directed by you, those senses abide in their respective objects of enjoyment. O Ruler of the Gods! You have given fitness (the mind capable of directing the senses), which is the means leading the indriyas into in their respective objects of enjoyment.

He is "Hari" as he accepts the offerings of worship made by the senses. Because he is "jagannAtha" - the natural master of the Universe. And hence, he is "devesha" - Who rules over the gods presiding over the senses.

He is the one who has created all this, he is the jagatKArana, which is explained below.

yadA tvAm rajasA yuktastadA bhUtAni sR^iShTavAn . yadA cha sattvayukto.asi tadA pAtA jagattrayam . yadA tvAm tamasa.a.akR^iShTastadA saMharase jagat . tribhireva guNairyuktaH sR^iShTirakShAvinAshane

**Meaning:** When you are connected with rajas (as brahmA), you are creating all the beings. When you are connected with sattva (as vishNu), you become the protector of the three worlds. When you are connected with tamas, you annihilate the universe (as Rudra). You are connected with the three gunas for the purpose of creation, preservation, and annihilation.

BrahmA and rudra are his bodies. When it is said he is connected with rajas and tamas, it means he is like that, as the innerself of brahmA and rudra. It is merely sharIrAtma bhAva. He himself is connected with sattva as vishNu.

Because he is the jagatKArANa, he is both the binder of those inclined to fruitive actions (pravR^itti niShTAs) and liberator of those seeking moksha (nivR^itti niShTAs). That is explained in the next 2 shlokAs.

**vartase trividhAM bhUtimAdAya nitatAtmavAn . indriyANIndriyArtheShu niyojayasi mAdhava**

**Meaning:** O one whose mind is controlled from all desires! Being present along with the threefold prakrti which is your wealth, you bind all the pravR^itti niShTAs to the objects of the senses.

Though he binds them to desires, he is ever free of desires himself, being opposed to all blemishes.

**prANinAmupabhogArthamantaH sthitvA jagadguro . tasmAtsarvatra bhUteShu vartate sarvabhogavAn**

**Meaning:** O Lord who provided the Vedas to brahmA (jagadguru)! You reside within the Universe for the sake of the enjoyment of your devotees, the nivR^itti niShTAs. Therefore, you stay in all your forms (bhUteShu) as one possessing all enjoyable auspicious qualities.

The devotees are "prANis" because they are subsisting on him, considering him as their food, water, life (vAsudevaH sarvaM iti).

As he is the jagatKArANa, he alone is the creator, preserver and destroyer. This is explained below.

brahmA tvam sR^iShTikAle tu sthitaU viShNurasi prabho . saMhAre rudranAmAsi tridhAmA  
tvamasi prabho

**Meaning:** You are brahmA at the time of creation. You are vishNu at the time of protection.  
You possess the name (ie, form) of Rudra at the time of destruction. You, O Powerful  
Master, are these three forms.

But brahmA and rudra are jIvAs. Why are they his forms? It is because they are his bodies and  
thus, his forms. Besides them, he has a unique divya mangala vighraha he abides in, by the name of  
viShNu.

Therefore, prakrti itself is under his possession.

bhUmiraPo.analo vAyuh kham mano buddhireva cha . etAH prakR^itayo deva bhinnAH  
sarvatra te hare

**Meaning:** Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, Ether, mind and Mahat (called buddhi; hence ahaMkAra  
also included) – which are declared to be divided into various objects, means and abodes of  
enjoyment – all are subordinate to you, O Hari! Deva!

Deva - One who binds the jIvAs to this prakrti, Hari - One who destroys sins binding his devotees  
to this prakrti by his remembrance.

All of prakrti is his property. Why? Because it is his body, as is the jIvAtma. That is explained  
next, in the form of an upabrahmaNa to the puruSha sUkta.

sahasrashIrSha puruShaH sahasrAkShaH sahasrapAt . sahasradhAraH sAhasrI sahasrAtmA  
divaspatiH

**Meaning:** You are the Purusha with a thousand heads, thousand eyes and thousand feet. You  
are the omniscient one with a thousand streams (of knowledge), you are he who manifests  
from the Vedas possessing thousand branches, you are the possessor of thousand forms (for  
your devotees).

Being the innerself of all and having everything as his bodies, he is said to have uncountable heads,  
eyes and feet (thousand means innumerable or beyond count). "sahasradhAraH" means he is  
omniscient ("sahasrAmShuH" in sahasranAma). "sAhasrI" means he arises from the Vedas which  
have thousands (innumerable) branches.

Because of this, he is supporting everything and surpassing it, as explained next.

bHUmIM sarvAmimAM prApya saptadvIpAM sasAgarAm . aNuH sarvatrago bhUtvA  
atyatiShThaddashA~Ngulam

**Meaning:** This Universe along with all the seven dvIpAs and oceans is reached by you, ie, supported. Becoming the subtle (jIvAtma) in the gross state and being omnipresent, ie, penetrating everywhere, you surpass this brahmANDa of ten AvaraNAs or avayavas by residing in the Supreme abode.

“prApya” means he is reaching all by pervasion, as everything is his body and supporting it (sarvagaH in sahasranAma). Being devoid of karmas, defects of the body do not affect him as the self, so he is residing in paramapada, as well, above this brahmANDa.

This is the same as “sa bhUmim vishvato vRtvA . atyatishTad dashA~Ngulam” of puruSha sUkta.

Thus, he is the innerself of all, and due to that relationship, he creates all . Explained next.

tvamevedaM jagatsarvaM yadbhUtaM yadbhaviShyati . tvatto  
virATprAdurabhUtsamrATchaiva janArdana

**Meaning:** You indeed are all this Universe which is the past, (present) and future as the innerself of all entities. janArdana! From you the virATpuruSha (of the form of the fourfold vyUhas) who shine out by themselves and the masters of the world like brahmA and others are born.

When it is said he is the past, present and future, it means he is the innerself of all entities which are his body. As a self protects the body, he has the same concern for everyone’s welfare. Hence he indulges in creation.

That creative act is being described in the second half of the shloka and in the next few shlokAs. “virAT” are the vyUha forms, while “samrAT” are masters of the Universe like brahmA and others.

“janArdana” - One who is worthy of worship as everything is his body.

tava vaktrAjJagannAtha brAhmaNo lokarakShakaH .  
prAdurAsItpurANAtmanShaTkarmAnirataH sadA

**Meaning:** O Master of the Universe! From your face, the brAhmaNAs who are protectors of the Veda are born and remain engaged in the six karmas which are learning veda, teaching



veda, performing sacrifice for oneself, performing sacrifice for others, giving gifts and accepting gifts, with minds absorbed in Brahman whose qualities are ancient but ever new.

All this is as per the puruSha sUKta's account of creation of chatur-varNAs. "jagannAtha" - Who is the natural master of the Universe- and hence worshipped by learned brAhmaNAs.

rAjanyastu tathA bAhvorAsItsaMrakShaNe rataH . UrvorvaishyastathA vishNoH  
pAdAchChUdra udAhR^itaH

**Meaning:** kShatriyas who delight in protection of the world arose from your arms. O viShNu!  
From your thighs, vaishyAs were born, and shUdrAs were born from your feet.

"viShNu" - One who measured the three worlds as Trivikrama and blessed all, hence he makes no distinction of varNa as he blesses all kshatrIyAs, vaiShyAs and shUdrAs too.

evaM varNA jagannAtha tava dehAjjanArdana . manasastava devesha chandramAH  
samapadyata

**Meaning:** O Master of the Universe! janArdana! In this manner, the varNAs arose from your body. From your mind, O Ruler of Gods, arose the moon.

"jagannAtha" - As the natural master of the Universe, he is accessible to all varNAs. Thus he is  
"janArdana" - One who is fit to be worshipped by all 4 varNAs for protection.

sukhakR^itsarvabhUtAnAM shItAMshuramitaprabhaH . akShNoH sUryaH samutpannaH  
sarvaprANivilochanaH

**Meaning:** The moon of boundless luster gives bliss to all beings by being the nourisher. From your eye, the Sun was born, which is the eye of all living beings as it illumines the world.

yasya bhAsA jagatsarvaM bhAsate bhAnumAnasau . mukhAdindrashcha agnishcha  
prANAdvAyurajAyata

**Meaning:** By whose illumination, the entire Universe shines out as perceptible, that is the luminous Sun. From your mouth, Indra and Agni were born, and vAyu was born from your vital breath.

nAbherabhUdantarikShaM tava deva janArdana . dyaurAsIttu mahAghora shirasastava  
gopate

**Meaning:** The intermediate region arose from your navel, O deva! janArdana! The celestial region which is highly formidable to the asurAs, was born from your head, O Master of Speech!

By his navel, one realizes he is the Cause as the master of brahmA. Thus he is "deva" - the supreme god. Hence, he is "janArdana" - worthy of worship by all gods and "gopati" - the master of the Vedas, as the propagator of Vedas to brahmA.

padbhyAM bhUmiH samutpanna dishaH shrotrAjjagatpate . evaM sR^iShTvA jagatsarvaM vyApya sarvam vyavAsthitaH

**Meaning:** The Earth arose from your feet and the directions from your ears, O protector of the Earth! In this manner, having created the entire Universe, you are situated pervading all objects of prakrti (as the jIvAtma).

"jagatpate" - The Earth is the jagat and he is her protector as varAha. He pervades all objects of prakrti, meaning, he is the innerself of the jIvAs who have completely penetrated prakrti.

He not only is the innerself of the jIvAs, but also directly pervades prakrti as it's innerself. That is clarified next.

vyApya sarvaNimANilokAnsthitah sarvatra keshava . tatashcha viShNunAmAsi dhAtorvyApteshcha darshanAt

**Meaning:** Pervading all these worlds, you are situated everywhere, O Master of brahmA and rudra (keshava)! Therefore, by the root "viSh" which indicates pervasion, you are having the name of "viShNu".

As he pervades everything, he is "nArAyaNa", the supreme brahman.

nArA ApaH samAkhyAtAstAsAmayanamAditaH . yatastvaM bhUtabhavyesha tannArAyaNashabditaH

**Meaning:** One who rules over the past, present and future as the innerself (bhUtabhavyesha)! The waters (panchabhUtAs) are called Nara. As they are your refuge in the beginning (during praLaya), therefore, you are called nArAyaNa.

"nArAyaNa" is the asAdhArA Na nAma which is not used to denote anything but the Supreme Reality in shAstra. As it is exclusively used for vishNu, he is identified as Parabrahman.

As he is the supreme brahman, he is the refuge of his devotees and their means as well.

harasi prANino deva tato haririti smr^itaH . sha~Nkaro.asi sadA deva tataH sha~NkaratAM  
gataH

**Meaning:** You steal or take away the minds of your devotees who subsist on you. Therefore you are called Hari. O Effulgent God! You ever exist as "sha~Nkara", one performing many auspicious things for your devotees, therefore, you are celebrated as "sha~Nkara".

As he is the means and refuge of his devotees, he alone is "vast" as he owns everything as his body. Only an owner would be concerned about his properties in the way bhagavAn cares for the jIvAs. This is explained next.

br^ihattvAdbr^iMhaNatvAchcha tasmAdbrahmeti shabditaH

**Meaning:** Because you are vast on account of you guNAs, nature and possessions and you also make the others grow (from subtle to gross states, augmenting their knowledge etc), you are called "brahma".

As he makes the baddha jIvAs grow from subtle to gross states, he provides them with sense organs and gives them a route to moksha, where they experience him as the object of worship by the nitya sUrIs (*sadA paShyanti surayaH*). Hence, that enjoyment of nitya sUrIs is mentioned next.

madhurindriyanAmeti tato madhuniShUdanaH

**Meaning:** The senses of nitya sUrIs like Adi Shesha, GaruDa, etc are called "madhus" as they carry "sweet" objects of enjoyment which is bhagavad anubhava - therefore you, who draws them to yourself, are called "madhuniShudhanaH"

"niShUdanaH" means to "remove" and is called "upasamhRta" by Bhattar who interprets it as "drawing to oneself after removing obstacles". But in the supreme abode, what obstacles does he remove considering the muktAs and nityAs are freed of karmas? Well, in the experience of bhagavad anubhava, one may think, "I am serving him to enjoy this bliss of Brahman" - but he removes that thought and makes them think, "I am serving him for his pleasure, not for my pleasure."

The senses of the nitya sUrIs are joyful as they enjoy his auspicious guNAs. In contrast, the senses of the gods are joyful as they enjoy the power he gives them, commensurate to their positions.

hR^iShIkANIndriyANYAhusteShAmIsho yato bhavAn . hR^iShIkeshastato viShNo khyAto  
deveShu keshava

**Meaning:** The senses of the gods are called "hR^iShIkAs" as they carry joy of the form of power. You are the controller of the senses of these gods. O viShNu who pervades these gods and grants them boons! O master of brahmA and rudra (keshava)! You are thus called "hR^iShIksha" as the inner controller of the gods.

As he makes the gods grow, he is the master of those gods.

ka iti brahmaNo nAma Isho.ahaM sarvadehinAm . AvAm tavA~NgasaMbhUtau  
tasmAtkeshavanAmavAn

**Meaning:** "Ka" is the name of brahmA. I am "Isha", the controller of all embodied beings. As we have arisen from your limbs, you are called "keShava" - the master of brahmA and rudra.

Rudra is the controller of all embodied beings because he presides over the ahaMkAra tattva.

Being the master of the gods, bhagavAn was the one who propagated the knowledge which is received through brahmA, which is acknowledged next.

mA vidyA cha hare proktA tasyA Isho yato bhavAn . tasmAnmAdhavanAmAsi dhavaH svAmIti  
shabditaH

**Meaning:** O Hari, destroyer of sins! "mA" refers to para-vidyA. You are the controller of that knowledge, as it's propagator. Therefore, you are called "mAdhava", the master of knowledge about yourself. It has been stated (by Acharyas of the past) that "dhavaH" means "svAmi".

As he taught the knowledge of himself to those gods, he is praised by them.

gaureShA tu yato vANI tAM cha veda yato bhavAn . govindastu tato deva munibhiH kathyate  
bhavAn

**Meaning:** Words or speech that are celebrated by the name of "Go". Therefore, O Lord of ShrI (Deva)! You are called "Govinda" by the munIs, as one who is praised by the gods (with such words of praise) for his help.

When gods seek his help, they do so through shrI, who augments his dayA guNa (*ShraddhAya devo devatvaM ashnute* - he becomes a "deva" because of shrI - so says the shruti).

As he is praised by them, he is the object of the Vedas.

trirityeva trayo devAH kIrtita munisattamaiH . kramate tAMstathA sarvAstrivikrama iti  
shrutaH

**Meaning:** The three Vedas are celebrated as "Tri" by the excellent munIs. As you traverse them by your greatness, you are known as "Trivikrama" (atIndraH).

As he is the object of the Vedas, he alone is the refuge of the devotees.

aNurvAmananAmAsi yatastvaM vAmanAkhyaya . mananAnmunirevAsi yamanAdyatiruchyase

**Meaning:** You are called "vAmana" as you are subtle in the space of the heart, having a form which delights those who see it (by meditation). Because you are always contemplating on ways to save your devotees, you are "muni". Because you restrain or bind to samsAra the enemies of your devotees, you are "yati".

As he is the protector, he takes avatArAs to give the devotees his darShaNa and remove their obstacles which are the asurAs.

tapashcharasi yasmAttvaM tapasvIti cha shabditaH . vasanti tvayi bhUtani bhUtAvAsastato  
hare

**Meaning:** You perform "tapas" which is of the form of delightful deeds (knowledge) in your avatArAs, you are called "tapasvI". As all beings reside in you even in your avatArAs, you are called "bhUtAvAsa".

"bhUtAvAsa" means that even in forms like rAma, kR^iShNa, he does not undergo diminishment and is the abode of all creatures.

As he takes avatArA, his Ishvaratvam is more useful here than in the supreme abode. After all, disobedient people (samsArIs) need to see his "Ishvaratva" more than the obedient ones (muktAs)! That is highlighted next.

IshastvaM sarvabhUtAnAmIshvaro.asi tato hare . praNavaH sarvavedAnAM gAyatrI  
ChandasAM prabho

**Meaning:** You are the controller of all beings even in your avatArAs, hence you are "Ishvara". You are praNava among all the Vedas and gAyatrI among all Chandas, O One who captures the minds of all by such meditation on praNava (prabhu)!

What follows next, is a description of vibhUti yoga. The idea is, all are his wealth even in his avatArAs. Thus, I will club the next few shlokAs together as they are very self-explanatory.

akSharANAmakArastvaM sphoTastvaM varNasaMshrayaH . rudrANAmahamevAsi vasUnAM  
pAvako bhavAn . ashvattho vR^ikShajAtInAM brahma lokagururbhavAn . merustvaM  
parvatendrANAM devarShINAM cha nAradaH . dAnavAnAM bhavAndaityaH prahrAdo  
bhaktavatsalaH . sarpANameva sarveShAM bhavAnvAsukisaMj~nitaH . guhyakAnAM cha  
sarveShAM bhavAndhanada eva cha . varuNo yAdasAM rAjA ga~NgA tripathabhAgbhavAn

**Meaning:** You are "akAra" among letters. Among "varNAs" or syllables, you are "sphoTa" - the sound that conveys the meaning. You are myself among the Rudras and Agni among the Vasus. You are ashvattha among tree and brahma among the propagators of the Vedas in this world. You are meru among mountains and nArada among devarishIs. O bhagavAn who is affectionate to devotees! You are the Daitya prahlAda among dAnavAs. Among all the serpents, you are termed as vAsuki.

Among all the guhyakAs, you are the bestower of wealth, Kubera. You are varuNa who is the King of all water bodies. (Among rivers), you are the river Ganga which flows in three paths (devaloka, manuShyaloka and pAtAla loka)

AdistvaM sarvabhUtAnAM madhyamantastathA bhavAn . tvattaH samabhavadvishvaM tvayi  
sarvaM pralIyate

**Meaning:** You are the beginning, middle and end of all beings as their innerself. From you was the Universe produced and all attain dissolution in you.

The realization of the vibhUti yoga is, all are his wealth because they are his bodies, which is a wealth of the self, which is him. And thus, the realization extends to the fact that oneself is also a body of his. That is expressed by Shiva here.

ahaM tvaM sarvago deva tvamevAham janArdana .

**Meaning:** O deva! janArdana! I am you, who are reaching everywhere and supporting all as your bodies by your pervasion. You indeed, are me (my innerself).

This is not a statement of identity, but a realization from vibhUti yoga that just as everything is his body, so is oneself.

**"ahaM tvam"** - This means, **"My innerself, denoted by "ahaM", for whom I am the body, is the same as you. Ie, I recognize you as my innerself. And I am subservient to you, just as a body exists for the sake of the self"**.

Just as "Jack" denotes Jack's body and extends to Jack's self, "ahaM" extends to the innerself of Rudra, which is nArAyaNa.

**"sarvago"** - The reason you are my innerself, is because you are reaching everywhere by your pervasion. Thus, this establishes the reason for saying, **"ahaM tvam"** as opposed to identity.

**"deva"** - You who shine brightly with purity despite having even impure objects like matter as your body.

**"tvamevAham"** - You, standing before me, are indeed my innerself. This is repeated for emphasis, due to wonder. After all, is not a wonder that mahAdeva's antaryAmin, not visible to the senses, is standing before him as kR^iShNa?

**"janArdana"** - You are worthy of worship by all, as the body exists for the sake of serving the self.

The brahma sUtra explains this sharIrAtma bhAva as the proper interpretation under the sUtra, **"shAstradR^iShTyA tUpadesho vAmadevavat.h"**. Note the words of prahlAda too in the vishNu purANa,

**mattaH sarvam ahaM sarvaM mayi sarvaM sanAtane (~ vishNu purANa)**

**[Prahlada said, "All things are from me. I am all things. All things are in me, who am everlasting"]**.

Just as prahlAda said this, so does mahAdeva say it.

Before he says this, he clarifies, **"sarvagatvAd anantasya"** - **As bhagavan is pervading everywhere, I am him (ie, my innerself is him)**. Note also Arjuna's statement in the gIta - **"sarvaM samApnoShhi tato 'si sarvaH"** - **"You pervade everything, thus you are everything"**

Because of that, bhagavan is sarva-shabda vAchyA, as explained next.

**AvayorantaraM nAsti shabdairarthairjagatpate**

**Meaning: Between us, ie, yourself, and my innerself, there is no difference in terms of words and the meaning of those words.**

By "us", Rudra refers to his antaryAmin for whom he is the body, and kR^iShNa who is identical to that antaryAmin.

This is because it is bhagavAn only who can be denoted by various words since names of body denote the self. He is sarva-shabda vAchyA. This is explained in the pAsuram, "**epporutkum sollAnai**" by Thirumazhisai Azhwar as follows,

**Epporutkum sollAnai** - For both the words and the meaning of the words, bhagavAn is the referent. Take the word "shiva" which is a name of a god. It denotes bhagavAn as the innerself of shiva who is his body. Thus, the word denotes bhagavAn as shivAntaryAmin. Alternatively, the name "shiva" indicates purity which is a guNa of bhagavAn. Thus, the sense of meaning in the word indicates him only. In all ways words denote him, either directly or as the innerself of some entity.

"For both words and meanings of words, there is no difference between us - meaning, you who are standing in front of me, and my antaryAmin, for whom I am the body."

He explains that this leads him to meditate on his own self as the self of all.

**nAmAni tava govinda yAni loke mahAnti cha . tAnyeva mama nAmAni nAtra kAryA vichAraNA**

**Meaning: What forms of yours exist in this Universe, which are great, O Govinda who protected the Earth thus, Those are my forms as well (as my innerself is identical to you). There needs be no further inquiry to this (that you support everything as your body).**

"nAmAni" does not just mean names and refers to all gross forms having names. Having realized the essential identity of his antaryAmin with kR^iShNa, Shiva next says that all forms in the Universe which belong to that bhagavAn, are his as well. This means:

**"My antaryAmin is identical to you. You are identical to the antaryAmin in all the forms of the Universe. Thus, I meditate on the identity of my antaryAmin with the antaryAmin of all those forms".**

This is the essence of "**neha nAnAsti kiMchana**" - *The paramAtma in rock, stone, wood, is identical to paramAtma in plant, deva, manuShya etc.*

Because of this sharIrAtma bhAva, when kR^iShNa is worshipped, it can be considered that all the antaryAmin forms in various gods are worshipped as well. And since when the self is pleased, the body is also pleased, one can say the gods who form the body of bhagavAn are also pleased. That is explained by Shiva next.



**tvadupAsA jagannAtha saivAstu mama gopate .**

**Meaning: What worship is directed to you, O Master of the Universe, O Master of Speech, is as if mine (as you are my innerself).**

When one worships kR^iShNa, he is worshipping the bhagavAn who is identical to the antaryAmin of Shiva. When the antaryAmin of Shiva is pleased, it means Shiva is pleased.

He uses the term "**jagannAtha**" - One who is the master of the Universe due to having it as his body, and "gopati" - The Master of all Speech, as all speech is used to denote only him as the innerself.

For example, if you garland someone, what happens? The self, abiding in that body, is the one who is honored by it and feels happy. But the body is also decorated with the garland and looks beautiful. Similarly, when you worship kR^iShNa, you have worshipped Shiva's antaryAmin. And the side benefit is that Shiva who is the body is also pleased. That is why he says it is as if he is worshipped.

To bring this out, Rudra says that those who hate bhagavAn are actually hating his (Rudra's) innerself and Rudra, the body by default.

**yashcha tvAM dveShTi devesha sa mAM dveShTi na saMshayaH**

**Meaning: O Ruler of Gods! Who hates you, hates me (since you are my innerself). There is no doubt (regarding my dependence on you).**

When one hates bhagavAn, one hates the antaryAmin of Rudra. Thus, Rudra, the body, also feels hated. If you hurt someone, the pain is felt by the self in the body, but the body also becomes disfigured (shows wounds etc). Thus if someone abuses vishNu, the antaryAmi of rudra identical to vishNu is abused, and hence Rudra, the body, feels that abuse.

To show this is not talking of identity, see that bhagavAn says something similar to Arjuna as well:

**yastvAM dveShTi sa mAM dveShTi yastvAmanu sa mAmanu (~vana parva, MB)**

**[bhagavAn says, "Arjuna! He who hates you, hates me. He who is agreeable to you, is agreeable to me"]**

Just as Arjuna is not paramAtma, neither is Rudra. Just as Arjuna is an exalted bhakta and empowered by bhagavAn, so is Rudra. These statements are made by and spoken to Arjuna and Rudra because they are both pure enough to be pratIkAs, symbols of Hari.

That is why Rudra says, "Ruler of Gods! You rule me, a God, as your body, and you being the innerself".

Because a body is ever dependent on the will of the self to act, Rudra next says it is only the will of bhagavAn that makes him great.

All this is not said to offend or hurt anybody's sentiments. But when shAstra says something, the meaning has to be brought out impartially. These are the words of Shiva himself.

**tvadvistAro yato deva ahaM bhUtapatistataH .**

**Meaning: O Lord of Lakshmi (deva)! By which will of yours that spreads out unimpeded, I am therefore the Master of Gods.**

Rudra is saying that, his will which is called "vistAra" as it spreads everywhere unimpeded and always true, made Rudra the master of gods. He attributes his glories to the unfathomable will of bhagavAn rather than his own Yoga prowess. This is called "naichyAnusandhAnam" - never attributing glory to oneself and attributing it to paramAtma.

**na tadasti vinA deva yatte virahitaM hare**

**Meaning: There is nothing that exists without you (as their innerself) and that is separated (independent) from you, O Hari!**

This is an encapsulation of sharIrAtma bhAva. Nothing exists without him as the self. Nothing is separate from him, because a body is inseparable to the self. Thus he is "Hari", the destroyer of the sins of those who are aware of this sharIrAtma bhAva.

Compared to bhagavAn's stuti, mahAdeva's stuti is so much more clear!

**yadAsIdvartate yachcha yachcha bhAvi jagatpate . sarvaM tvameva devesha vinA kiMchittvayA na hi**

**Meaning: O Master of the Universe! As the innerself of all entities, whatever exists, what existed and what will exist is you. (Therefore) O Ruler of Gods! All gods are you, ie, having you as their innerself. There is no god that exists without you (ie, independently).**

Whenever it is said, past, present and future are you, it means sarvAntaryAmitvam. Thus he is the master of the Universe. As the Ruler of Gods, he is the innerself of all the gods too, and every god is his body and hence has no separate (independent) existence.

This is why a study of vedAnta is called "shariraka mimAmsa".

Due to this, the gods praise him always.

**stuvanti devAH satataM bhavantaM svairguNaiH prabho . R^ikcha tvaM yajurevAsi sAmAsi satataM prabho**

**Meaning:** O one who has the power to attract all by his form (prabhu)! The gods ever praise you, of auspicious qualities which are unique to your nature. You are ever the R^ik, yajur and sAma veda, ie, you pervade them as their main object.

**kimuchyate mayA deva sarvaM tvaM bhUtabhAvana . namaH sarvAtmanA deva viShNo mAdhava keshava**

**Meaning:** What can be said by me, O Effulgent God (deva)!. All are you, O nourisher of all beings who are your bodies (bhUtabhAvana).

"sarvaM tvaM" is the same as "ahaM tvaM" he said earlier. Shows there is no special identity here, since everything has the same relationship. This knowledge leads to total surrender to bhagavAn, as a body is subservient to the self.

He is called "Deva" as impurities of the body don't affect him. He has an effulgent form made of shuddha-sattva.

As everything that exists is his body, and his own attributes and forms are infinite, what can be said? No matter how much is said, it would still be incomplete knowledge, as it is not possible to know bhagavAn's glories fully.

**namaH sarvAtmanA deva viShNo mAdhava keshava**

**Meaning:** With all of my being, salutations to you, O Lord of Lakshmi (deva)! O vishNu! O One who provides knowledge of himself to attain him!

Rudra salutes him through lakShmi. "sarvAtmanA" is the same as "sarvabhAvena" in gIta 18.62. It means, "with full force of mind, or by considering you as my all- life, food, water etc (vAsudevaH sarvaM iti).

"vishNu" - Who pervades all as the self and makes them his wealth/possessions.

"mAdhava" - As mentioned earlier, this name indicates he provides knowledge of himself to attain him - he himself is the means to attain him.

namaskaromi sarvAtmannamaste.astu sadA hare

**Meaning:** Salutations always to you, Innerself of all (sarvAtma)! Hari!

“hari” - He ever accepts the offerings of worship, like fruits, flowers, leaves etc with love no matter how trivial they are, as though they are of great value to them

namaH puShkaranAbhAya vande tvAmahamIshvara

**Meaning:** Salutations to the one who has the lotus in his navel!. I offer my praise (of benedictions) to you, O Hari! Ruler of all!

“puShkaranAbha” - He has the lotus in his navel indicating he is the Cause of brahmA and hence the Supreme Being.

“Ishvara” - Even in his avatArAs, even as he was worshipping mahAdeva, he retains the power of Ishvaratva.

#### UPADESHA BY MAHADEVA

Having cleared the doubt that the munIs had regarding him, mahAdeva, being a lokaguru, now advises them.

vaishampAyana uvAcha

ityuktvA devadeveshaM munInAha punaH shivaH . evaM jAnIta he viprA ye bhaktA draShTumAgatAH

**Meaning:** Speaking thus to the Master of Rudra (devadeveSha), Shiva spoke to the munis again, “O brAhmaNAs! Those who are devotees of bhagavAn, who have come to see his accessibility, know (contemplate on) this!”

“shivaH” - He who is purified by his austerities and hence is in perfect knowledge.

etadeva paraM vastu naitasmAtparamasti vaH . etadeva vijAnIdhvametadvaH paramaM tapaH

**Meaning:** This one is the highest object of the Veda, there is nothing higher than this. This one is to be known by you, ie, by bhakti yoga is the means to attain him. This one is the highest knowledge, ie, he possesses the knowledge to lead one out of samsAra.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF ETAD:** “etad” is used everywhere to denote bhagavAn from here on. It is an outpouring of bhagavad guNAnubhava by mahAdeva. According to AchArya rAmAnuja in

another context, the implication is, " *Worship THIS ONE - the one in front of you which means you need not seek far away forms like in the milky ocean or in the sun - This one, who creates/preserves/destroys in sport, who is filled with objects of enjoyment, places of enjoyment and the instruments of enjoyment, who is untouched by any blemishes, who liberates all his devotees from their sins, who is the repository of innumerable auspicious guNAs like svAmitvam, vAtsalyam, soughIyam, soulabhyam, Arjavam, mArdavam, souhArtam, chAturyam, sthairyam, dhairyam, shouryam, parAkramam, satya-kAmatvam, satya-sankalpatvam, krititvam, kritaj~natvam and many others, whose divine form is again exhibiting the guNAs of beauty, effulgence, tenderness, youthfulness, sweetness etc, whose essential nature and qualities cannot be fully expressed by mind and speech, who is the refuge of all without partiality, who relieves the distress of his devotees and is the ocean of affection for his devotees, who has taken avatAra as the son of vasudeva by his will, who illuminates the entire Universe by his greatness and satisfies all beings by his glories.*

Such a person, is indicated by "etad" - "this one", as I am unable to speak about him fully, due to experiencing a sheer torrent of bliss.

This "etad" is an expression of all the lofty devotion of mahAdeva. He was so thrilled with the experience of Brahman, who mind and speech cannot fully know or describe, that all he could say was "etad" to convey all this, struggling for speech. This is as per gIta bhAShya which has a similar occurrence.

Because of the above, he alone is to be meditated on.

**etadeva sadA viprA dhyeyaM satatamAnasaiH . etadvaH paramaM shreya etadvaH paramaM dhanam**

**Meaning: brahmaNAs! This one is to ever to be meditated by those whose follow the true nature of the self (mAnasaiH). This one is the supreme good of the form of auspiciousness (subhAShaya). This one is the supreme wealth for his devotees who consider him his all.**

Because he is to be meditated on and considered as all, the purpose of one's birth and activities is verily him.

etadvo janmanaH kR^ityametadvastapasaH phalam . eSha vaH puNyaniLaya eSha dharmAH  
sanAtanaH

**Meaning:** This one is the purpose of your birth (as your purpose is to serve him). This one is the fruit of karma yoga which are services to him (tapasaH phalam). This one is the abode of a form which is purifying all by meditation on it (bhakti yoga). This one is the eternal means for all ends (dharmAH sanAtanaH).

Because he is the eternal means, he bestows all the fruits desired.

eSha vo mokShadAtA cha eSha mArga udAhR^itaH . eSha puNyapradaH sAkShAdetadvaH  
karmaNAM phalam

**Meaning:** This one is the bestower of moksha, this one is also called "mArga" as he is sought after as the end or object by the worshippers. This one is the bestower of "puNya" or the perception of the self which is purifying. This one is verily the fruit of Vedic karmas, ie, all actions are done to please him.

Because he bestows the fruits, he is ever praised by karma and j~nAna yogIs seeking a knowledge of the self.

etadeva prashaMsanti vidvAMso brahmavAdinaH . eSha trayIgatirviprAH prArthyo  
brahmaVIDAM sadA

**Meaning:** This one is ever praised by those learned in the Veda who propagate knowledge of the self by karma yoga. This one is the self that is the goal of the three Vedas, ever prayed to by knowers of the self (for such a vision).

Because karma and j~nAna yogAs are ancillaries to bhakti, he is the object of praise for bhakti yogIs.

etadeva prashaMsanti sA~NkhyayogasamAshritAH . eSha brahmaVIDAM mArgaH kathito  
vedavAdibhiH

**Meaning:** This one is ever praised by those bhakti yogIs, who are fixed in j~nAna yoga (sAnkhyA) and karma yoga (yoga). The knowers of the Veda call this one as he who shows the faultless path (archirAdi gati - devAyana) to the knowers of Brahman.

evameSha vijANIta nAtra kAryA vichARA NA . harirekaH sadA dhyeyo bhavadbhiH  
sattvamAsthitaiH

**Meaning:** In this manner, you must meditate on him, there is no room for inquiry here. Hari alone is to be ever meditated by you all, who are established in sattva guNa.

What about other gods? Is not mahAdeva himself worshippingable?

**nAnyo jagati devo.asti viShNornArAyatNParaH . omityevaM sadA viprA paThata dhyAta keshavam**

**Meaning:** There is no other god in this Universe who is superior to viShNu, who is nArAyaNa. O brAhmaNAs! Always recite OM, meditate on the master of brahmA and rudra (keshava)!

The praNava imparts the knowledge that one is subservient to the akAra vAchya Brahman, nArAyaNa, who is the master.

The purpose of a servant is to please his master. Hence, result of such meditation is declared to be the pleasure of Hari.

**tato niHshreyasaprAptirbhavishyati na saMshayaH . evam dhyAto hariH sAKShAtprasanno vo bhavishyati .**

**Meaning:** Then by doing this, you will acquire good of the form of mukti, there is no doubt regarding this. By meditating in this manner, verily that Hari, who accepts the offerings of all, will be pleased with you.

His pleasure is the only goal. Not even mukti. But since mukti is a place where one can please him continuously, he bestows that too. Hence, mukti is referred to as the supreme goal.

Though we only seek his pleasure, he would want to do good to his devotees. Thus, what he does when he becomes pleased is mentioned next.

**bhavanAshamayaM devaH karishyati dR^iDhaM hariH . sadA dhyAta hariM viprA yadIchChA prAptumachyutam**

**Meaning:** That god with an effulgent form, that Hari, the destroyer of sins, will destroy samsAra, firmly - in the sense of not just stopping with removing the distress of samsAra, but also providing eternal bliss. O brahmAnAs! If you wish to attain whatever you desire of bhagavAn who never lets his devotees slip, constantly meditate on "Hari" -- who captivates the mind by his form and removes desires for other things.

He not only destroys samsAra, but provides all that they desire. But even meditating on him is not the means. He himself is to be regarded as the means to attain him. That is clarified next.

eSha saMsAravibhavaM vinAshayati vo guruH . smaradhvaM satataM viShNuM paThadhvaM  
trisharIriNam

**Meaning:** This one is the propagator of the Vedas to even brahmA and hence all knowledge comes from him (guru), who destroys the power of samsAra that is ignorance. Always meditated on "viShNu" -- who pervades all to shower his grace from the heat of samsAra -- and recite the praNava which has the three Vedas as it's body (understanding the master-servant relationship from it).

"trisharIriNam" is the praNava vAchya Brahman who has the 3 Vedas as his body.

As he is the master who owns everything and hence is the means for all, one should not covet anything as mentioned in IshAvAsya Upanishad (*IshAvAsya idaM sarvaM*) and understand one's subservience to him, for him to appear in the mind.

manaHsaMyamanaM vipraH kurudhvaM yatnataH sadA . shuddhe.antaHkaraNe viShNuH  
prasIdati tapodhanAH

**Meaning:** O brAhmaNAs! By karma yoga (yatnataH), always control your minds, making it free from desires or covetousness. Ones endowed with the wealth of penances! When the mind is purified by understanding one's subservience, viShNu, who pervades to protect all beings, settles down (in the mind).

The role of a guru is important in praNavopAsaNa in purifying the mind, as it is not easy. For that, mahAdeva himself is to be worshipped.

dhyAtva mAM sarvayatnena tato jAnIta keshavam . upAsyo.ahaM sadA vipra upAyo.asmi  
hareH smR^itau

**Meaning:** Having meditated upon me using all the means prescribed in the shAstra, you must then know (meditate on) Keshava, the master of brahmA and rudra, by bhakti yoga. I am always to be worshipped, as I am the means for (attaining) Hari, the destroyer of sins, in the Vedas which are remembered by rishIs.

"sarvayatnena" - Use all means prescribed in the Vedas to meditate on me, and not the means prescribed in the pAShupata AgamAs which are veda-virodha. That's what he means here.

One can meditate on Shiva as a pratIka of Brahman, surrender to him as a guru, offer him praise, etc.



"j~nAnam icchet IshvarAt" - "Get knowledge from Shiva". Thus it is said in the mahAnArAyaNa upanishad,

*puruShasya vidmahe sahasrAkShasya mahAdevasya dhImahi . tanno rudraH prachodayAt*

*[We meditate on the Purusha, nArAyaNa. For that purpose, we meditate on the God mahAdeva, the omniscient one. May that Rudra prompt us to that meditation on the Purusha.]*

Some recensions have "upAsyo.ahaM sadA viprA upAsyo.asminharau smR^itaH" - It has the same meaning, as it is translated as, "I am proclaimed to be worshipped in (as in, abiding in or dependent on) Hari". our AchArya, shrutaprakAshika bhaTTar, in the Tatparya Dipika commentary to Sri Ramanuja's Vedartha Sangraha, has taken the version I have mentioned in the shloka above, so that is likely the authentic version. Makes no difference though.

But he himself is the propagator of those pAShupata Agamas which describe him differently. What should one believe then? He clarifies that next.

*upAyo.ayaM mayA prokto nAtra saMdeha ityapi . ayaM mAyI sadA viprA yatadhvamaghanAshane*

**Meaning:** What is declared by me, is the means (for attaining bhagavAn), there is no doubt regarding this. O brAhmANAs! He is the possessor of a bewitching form made of shuddha-sattva (mAYI), you constantly strive for destruction of sins (by yoga).

"nAtra saMdeha" - "Do not be deluded by the other teachings I propagated for a lower class of people. What I say here, now, as a foremost knower of Brahman, amongst so many munIs and gods, in the very presence of nArAyaNa, is the truth, as it is completely in accordance to the Veda" - that is what he is saying.

Again, as a duty to honestly interpret shAstra as it should be, I am not leaving anything out just for the sake of being diplomatic. shAstra is what it is.

At the same time, there is leeway in shAstra for flexibility. Hence, the next shloka.

*yathA vo buddhirakhila shuddhA bhavati yatnataH .tathA kuruta viprendrA yathA devaH prasIdati*

**Meaning:** In whatever manner (of karma yoga), all your minds become purified (with knowledge of the self), endeavor for that. And in whatever manner (brahma vidyA) that Effulgent God settles in your mind, perform that (mode of upAsaNa).

There are many parts of karma yoga, many sacrifices etc. There are many brahma vidyAs in bhakti yoga for meditation on Brahman. So the choice is left to the liking of the upAsaka, he can pick whatever he likes.

**vaishampAyana uvAcha**

**evamuktAstataH sarve munayaH puNyashIlnaH . yathAvadupagR^ihNAna nirasansamshayaM nR^ipa**

**Meaning: Then, when mahAdeva had spoken thus, all the munIs who were of a purified disposition of mind, duly understood his teachings and were without doubt, O King!**

The munIs now finally understood the parama-j~nAna and bhakti of mahAdeva, and their doubts regarding him were cleared and they revered him as a guru.

**nR^ipa** - "You janamejAya, are a protector of people by your strength of arms. But viShNu is a protector by a mere remembrance of him!" - This is the intention behind vaishampAyana calling janamejaya this.

**evameveti taM vipraH prAhuH prA~njalayo haram . Chinno naH saMshayaH sarve gR^ihItO.arthaH sa tAdR^ishaH**

**Meaning: Those brahmaNAs spoke, with their hands supplicated in anjali mudrA, to Hara, the remover of ignorance, "It is as you said. All our doubts have been destroyed and we have comprehended all the imports of what you said."**

Knowing very clearly about mahAdeva's bhakti, they worship him with anjali mudrA. All those who were clear minded from the start, as well as those who had doubts but were now completely freed of such thoughts, worshipped Rudra.

**etadarthaM samAyAtA vayamadya tavAlayam . sa~NgamAdyuvayoH sarvo naShTo moho mahAniha**

**Meaning: For this purpose, we came to your abode. The meeting of you two has destroyed all our delusions regarding you (ie, we understand that you are a parama-upAsaka).**

**yathA vadasi devesha tathA naH shreyase param . yathA.a.aha bhagavAnrudro yatAmah satataM harau . iti te munayaH prItAH praNemuH keshavaM harim**

**Meaning: "O Ruler of Gods! What you have spoken, that is the highest good for us. In what manner bhagavAn Rudra has spoken, we will endeavor in that way, O Hara, who is the**

remover of sins obstructing knowledge." Speaking thus, those munIs of gladdened minds, prostrated before the master of brahmA and rudra (keshava), who is the destroyer of sins (hari).

### BHAGAVAD STUTI BY MAHADEVA

All this was said thus far by mahAdeva to show the nature of bhagavAn and his own nature as an upAsaka to the sages. That having been accomplished, he now composes a real stuti of bhagavAn, for no motive other than the pure pleasure of it.

vaishampAyana uvAcha

tataH sa bhagavAnrudraH sarvAnvismApayanniva . stutyA prachakrame stotuM viShNuM  
vishveshvaraM harim . arthyAbhistu tadA vAgbhirmunInAM shR^iNvatAM tathA

Meaning: Then, the worshippable Rudra, to the wonder of all, started praising vishNu, the Ruler of a form replete with all excellences (Vishveshvara), Hari. Using apt words, he then praised bhagavAn as the munIs listened.

"vishNu" - He who pervades all to shower his grace. How? As he is "vishveshvara" - Possessor of a form that is "vishva" or full of all perfections. Then, he is "Hari" as he destroys sins by that form.

The sages were struck with wonder because they had never experienced the intense devotion of mahAdeva, who is usually deep in meditation, brought to the fore in the form of such abundant expression. He could not stop praising bhagavAn.

When bhagavAn praised mahAdeva, he was using the essence of **bheda shrutIs** like "**dvA suparNa**" to visualize his antaryAmin in Shiva, and thus see Shiva as his bhakta, distinct to him. When mahAdeva praised Hari previously, he was using the essence of **ghataka shruti** like "**yasya AtmA sharIraM**", evidenced by statements like "**ahaM tvaM sarvago**" to show he was the body of Hari and hence inseparable to him.

This stuti coming up now, is the essence of "**abheda shruti**" - likes of "**ahaM brahmAsmi, tat tvaM asi**" etc. - Which is because names denoting the body denote the self.

As such this stuti is very much devoted to explaining that everything is him. This makes him the object of meditation, and since, the shAstra says one should always be meditating on the para,

vyUha and vibhava forms of bhagavAn (antaryAMi and archa are sometimes grouped under vibhava). So mahAdeva dedicates his stuti to these forms of bhagavAn too.

**maheshvara uvAcha**

**namo bhagavate tubhyaM vAsudevAya dhImate .**

**Meaning:** Salutations to bhagavAn who possesses 6 guNAs, who resides in this world and goes to his devotees upon being praised (vAsudeva), who is intelligent and hence can be relied on for help by all.

"dhImate" is the same as "udAradhIh" in sahasranAma.

**yasya bhAsA jagatsarvaM bhAsate nityamachyuta . namo bhagavate deva nityaM sUryAtmane namaH**

**Meaning:** Who never lets his devotees slip (achyuta), by whose light as the sun, the entire Universe shines. Salutations to he who is worthy of worship as he is endowed with all auspicious qualities (bhagavate), who is the god with an effulgent form that shines out is highly celebrated (devaH). Salutations to he who is ever having the Sun as his body.

"yasya bhAsA" - By whose light as the Sun, is using the logic of abheda-shruti. "abheda" means "not separate" because of sharIrAtma bhAva.

"sUryAtmane" - "Atma" means "sharIra" or body. One who has the Sun as his body.

He is "devaH" since the form in the Sun shines out in the shAstra as highly celebrated as "Aditya varNam", "tasya yathA kapyAsa pundarIkaM evaM akShiNi" etc. and as the object of gAyatri mantra.

**yaH shItayati shItAMshurlokAnsarvAnimAnvibhuH . namaste viShNave deva nityaM somAtmane namaH**

**Meaning:** By whose cool luster, the lustrous rayed moon pervades all these worlds with it's rays. Salutations to viShNu who pervades all showering his grace from the scorching heat of samsAra, who is the god with an effulgent form that shines out to remove the distress of meditators (devaH). Salutations to he who is ever having the moon as his body.

Here, the abheda is with the luster of the moon.

He is "DevaH" as his form has cool, effulgent rays like the moon ("ChandrAmShu" in sahasranAma). Such a bhagavAn also has the moon as his body.

yaH prajAH prINayatyeKo vishvAtmA bhUtabhAvaNaH . namaH sarvAtmane deva namo vAgAtmane hare

**Meaning:** Who as the incomparable one, the innerself of the Universe, the nourisher or all beings that are his bodies, satisfies all the created beings by fulfilling their desires. Salutations to the inner controller of all (sarvAtma), who possess an effulgent form that shines out by meditation (devaH). Salutations to he who is ever having the Vedas as his body.

He is "devaH" because his form shines out to seekers by para-vidyA of the Vedas which is bhakti yoga.

Having described Sun, Moon and the Vedas as his body, brahmA is described as his body next.

yo dadhAra kareNASau kushachIrAdi yatsadA . dadhAra vedAnsarvAMshcha tubhyaM brahmAtmane namaH

**Meaning:** Who always bears in his hands the kusha grass, the piece of cloth (used to tie up rice). Who is the supporter of all the Vedas, Salutations to he (Pradyumna) who has brahmA as his body.

Besides describing the gods like brahmA, etc as his bodies, this is also an elaboration of his vyUha forms. The abheda here is describing brahmA's form as his, because brahmA is his body.

sarvAnsaMharate yastu saMhAre vishvadR^iksadA . krodhAtmAsi virUpo.asi tubhyaM rudrAtmane namaH

**Meaning:** Who is ever the supporter of the Universe (as he is carrying on the affairs of the Universe), who destroys all beings in the time of dissolution. Who is the embodiment of anger of bhagavAn (krodhAtma), who is of a manifold form consisting of the ekAdasha rudrAs (virUpa). Salutations to he (sankarShaNa) who has Rudra as his body.

sR^iShTau sraShTA samastAnAM prANinAM prANadAyine .

**Meaning:** At the time of sHr^iShTi, he (as Aniruddha) becomes the creator of brahmA and thereby gives bodies called "prANAs" to all beings that live in samsAra.

This Aniruddha is a direct manifestation and so is described next in detail.

ajAya viShNave tubhyaM sraShTre vishvasR^ije namaH

**Meaning:** Salutations to he who is signified by the letter "A" (aja), who is vishNu among the gods, who grants the desires of both bubukShus and mumukkShus (sraShTR) and who creates the Universe out of his kindness, while being indifferent to the doshAs (vishvasR^ija)

"vishvasR^ija" occurs in the sahasranAma. It means the cause of him creating the Universe is kindness, to allow the jIVAs to perform sAdhana. He is not to blame for the inequalities as he satisfies the desires of both bubukShus and mumukkShUs equally (hence, called "sraShTR" - another name occurring in the sahasranAma).

Next, from the vyUhas, comes the antarAtma, which has the entire Universe as his body. That is described next.

Adau prakR^itimUIAya bhUtAnAM prabhavAya cha . namaste devadevesha pradhAnAya namo namaH

**Meaning:** Who prior to creation, was the root or the Cause of prakR^iti and the birthplace of the modifications of prakR^iti . Salutations to the Master of brahma, who (as antarAtma) is the innerself of the Universe of prakR^iti.

Next, is the form of the antaryAmin, which is present individually as the innerself in all beings, having each as his body (as opposed to antarAtma, which is present as having the entire Universe as one body). Thus, mahAdeva picks each of the panchabhUtAs, and describes the antaryAmin in the heart lotus as having that bhUta as his vibhUti.

pr^ithivyAM gandharUpeNa saMsthitaH prANinAM hare . dR^iDhAya dR^iDharUpAya tubhyaM gandhAtmane namaH

**Meaning:** In Earth, you abide as the quality of fragrance, as one captivating all embodied beings. Salutations to you (in the heart) who are firm or unchanging (dR^iDha), who has a firm or concretely visible form (dR^iDharUpAya), who has a form that is full of fragrances (gandhAtma).

This is all following gIta 7.8. The first half of the shloka talks about him, who as antaryAmin, has the quality of the panchabhUta (fragrance of Earth) as his body and so by the logic of the abheda shrutis, is described as that quality. The second half says that this one is the same as the antaryAmin in the heart lotus.

In the heart, he is as firm as Earth in the sense of being unchanging, has a firm or concrete form as it is visible by meditation, and whose form is full of fragrances (*sarva gandhaH sarva rasaH*, as Upanishads say). Thus, the quality of Earth, ie, fragrance is his vibhUti.

When we say he abides as fragrance, it implies difference. Just as "Blue pot" means that blueness is an attribute of the pot, "He is fragrance" simply means fragrance is an inseparable attribute and hence his body, as per "*yasya prithvI sharIraM*". Earth is also his body, but the vibhUti under focus are the qualities of the panchabhUtAs, which are likened to the form in the heart.

**apAM rasAya sarvatra prANinAM sukhahetave . namaste vishvarUpAya rasAya cha namo namaH**

**Meaning: In water, you are the sapidity, as one who is the cause of comfort to all beings. Salutations to you (in the heart) who has a form full of excellences, whose form is verily bliss (rasA).**

"vishvarUpa" means his form in the heart is full of all perfections, and he is the embodiment of bliss (rasa). Hence, the quality of "rasa" or sapidity in water is also his vibhUti.

**tejasA bhAskaro yastu ghR^iNo jantuhitaH sadA . tasmai deva jagannAtha namo bhAskararUpiNe**

**Meaning: As Fire, resembling the Sun, by whose warmth, you are well-disposed to all beings (as their nourisher). Therefore, O Master of the Universe who are accessible to all by your form in the heart! O Lord of Lakshmi (Deva)! Salutations to you whose form is verily like the Sun (Aditya-varNaM).**

Since gastric fire is a form of the fire element, mahAdeva takes it up and links it with the one in the heart. This gastric fire is like the sun in it's warmth, and is well-disposed to all beings as it digests the food and nourishes them.

This is a vibhUti of the antaryAmin in the heart, which has a form accessible to all, who has mahAlakshmi on his chest and whose form is radiant like the Sun due to her effulgence spreading all over his body.

**vAyoH sparshaguNo yatra shItoShNasukhaduHkhadaH . namaste vAyurUpAya namoH sparshAtmana hare**

**Meaning:** Which (Brahman) is the tanmAttra of touch in vAyu, providing all sensations like cold, heat, joy and sorrow (on account of that). Salutations, to one (in the heart) who has the transmigrating jIvAtma as his body (vAyurUpa), whose nature is verily meditated upon by yogIs (sparShAtma)

"vAyurUpa" - "vAyu" is the jIvAtma as it is moving ceaselessly in samsAra like wind which is never in one place. Such a jIva is his "rUpa" - body.

"sparshAtma" - "sparsha" or touch is interpreted as "perceiving" by Bhattar. Yogis meditate on his nature characterised by satyaM, j~nAnam, anantaM, AnandaM and amalaM. Hence, he is "sparShAtma".

**AkAsho.avasthitaH shabdaH sarvashrotraniveshanaH . namaste bhagavanviShNo tubhyaM sarvAtmane namaH**

**Meaning:** You as sound (shabdaH), are situated in AkASha, enter the ears of all. Salutations to the One in the heart worthy of worship (bhagavAn), who pervades the mind (viShNu). with a form full of all weapons and ornaments (sarvAtma).

"Bhagavan" - One who is worthy of worship using "sound" which signifies all actions of the senses.

"viShNu" - Being worshipped, he who pervades all spaces, pervades the mind of the worshipper too, showing his form in the heart to quell the heat of samsAra.

"sarvAtma" - "Atma" means body here. His form is characterized by all ornaments and weapons. Each of them stand for a tattva, which is explained in the astra-bhUShaNa adhyAya of viShNu purANa.

That concludes the section on antaryAmin. Next, mahAdeva describes the vibhava forms.

**yo dadhAra jagatsarvaM mAyAmAnuShadehavAn . namastubhyaM jagannAtha mAyine.amAyadAyine**

**Meaning:** He who supports the entire Universe by his form which resembles a human and enchants others. Salutations to the accessible master of the Universe, who is the possessor of prakR^iti even in his avatArAs (mAyin), who is bestowing his grace in the form of acts without deceit (amAyadAyine).

"mAyin" - Even in his avatArAs, he is the master of mAyA (prakrti) and thus deludes the ignorant to make him think he is a human.



**"amAyadAyine"** - But to his devotees, he bestows his grace in the form of actions without deceit. He tells the gopIs, "Do not think of me as anything but one of you" - and he means it. He tells devakI, "I am your son" and he means it. He really felt he belonged to them and did not outwardly put an act of being a cowherd etc. The name "Satya-medha" in sahasranAma is the cognate.

If he really feels he belongs to his devotees, does that really make him a human? Answered next.

**nama AdyAya bIjAya nirguNAya guNAtmane . achintyAya suchintyAya tasmai chintyAtmane namaH**

**Meaning:** Salutations to the one who in his avatArAs is the Ancient Cause (Adi), the Seed of Dharma (bIja), who is devoid of blemishes (nirguNa) and whose form is full of auspicious attributes like tenderness, youth, beauty etc (guNAtmane). Who is incomparable to others including muktAs (achintya), who is easily conceivable, ie, directly manifest in a pleasing form for his devotees (Suchintya). Salutations to the one who possesses a form which is to be meditated upon by his devotees (chintyAtma).

This explains that in his avatArAs, he always retains all his excellences and does not undergo diminishment.

Why does he possess a form that is to be meditated on in his avatArAs? Explained.

**harAya harirUpAya brahmane brahmadAyine .**

**Meaning:** Who captivates the minds of all by his form (hara), whose form is "Hari" as it destroys the sins of the meditators (harirUpa), who is vast in terms of the auspicious qualities exhibited through his form (brahma), who bestows vast experiences of bliss by his form (brahmadAyine).

Because of all this, even in his avatArAs, when he takes birth, he is verily the Supreme Brahman only.

**namo brahmavide tubhyaM brahmabrahmAtmane namaH |**

**Meaning:** Salutations to he who (in his avatArAs) is the knower of the endless Vedas, to the Supreme Brahman, to the one who has as his body everything that goes by the term "brahma" - prakR^iti, puruSha, etc.

**"brahmAtmane"** - Who has everything called "brahma" as his body - the jIvAtma which is vast in knowledge, prakrti which is vast, the Vedas which are vast etc.

By perceiving his form via meditation, one gains knowledge of him as the Supreme Brahman. With that, comes the vision of the Cosmic Form. This is included among vibhavAs and described next.

**namaH sahasrashirase sahasrakiraNAya cha . namaH sahasravaktrAya sahasranayanAya cha**

**Meaning: Salutations to the One (of Cosmic Form) who has a thousand heads, thousand rays of knowledge (ie, omniscient). Salutations to the one who has a thousand mouths and a thousand eyes.**

As all forms are his, the Universe is his body, which is the realization one gains from the cosmic form.

**vishvAya vishvarUpAya vishvakartre namo namaH .**

**Meaning: Salutations to he who is full of all perfections (vishva), who has the Universe as his body (vishvarUpa), who is the independent agent of all the actions (vishvakartre).**

"vishvA" means he is perfect by nature, by form and by guNAs as well as by his possessions. Thus, he has the Universe as his body. And because of this, he is "vishvakartR" - the independent agent of all actions. This means - Just as a self cares for it's body and feels it's joys and sorrows, bhagavAn feels happy when the jIvAs, his bodies, are happy and feels sorrow when the jIvAs are unhappy. But this is not brought on by karma unlike a common jIva in a body; it is assumed out of his own will, due to his love for the jIva. Thus it is said,

**vyasaneShu manuShyANAM bhRRishaM bhavati duHkhitaH . utsaveShu cha sarveShu piteva parituShyati (~ vAlmiki rAmAyaNa)**

*[When the subjects of his Kingdom felt distress, rAma feels more distressed than them. And in all their joys during festivities, he rejoices like a father at the joy of his child]*

The nAma "kArta" in sahasranAma conveys the same meaning.

**vishvavaktre namo nityaM bhUtAvAsa namo namaH |**

**Meaning: Salutations to one for whom there are ways of approach from all sides (vishvavaktre), Salutations to one who is ever the abode of all creatures even in his vibhava forms (bhUtAvAsa).**

As everything is his body and his object of love, he is "vishvavaktR" or has openings on all sides - he can be approached easily by any means, even trivial ones. The name "sarvatomukhaH" in

sahasranAma has the same meaning. In this manner, he is ever the refuge of all creatures even in his avatArAs, without dimunition.

With the above explanation of the nature of the vibhava forms, mahAdeva focuses on specific forms now.

**indriyAyendrarUpAya viShayAya sadA hare . namo.ashvashirase tubhyaM  
vedAbharaNarUpiNe**

**Meaning: O One who destroys sins! You are hayagrIva, the strength or the support of Yoga (indrIya), whose form is "Indra" or possessing all wealth of weapons and ornaments in Yoga (IndrarUpa) and who is ever the subject matter or field of the senses engaged in such meditation in Yoga to the exclusion of desires (viShaya). Salutations to HayagrIva, whose form is ornamented by the Vedas as ornaments.**

This is about hayagrIva. He is not just the supporter of the means but the actual means and end as well. That is explained by the example of another avatAra, kR^iShNa.

**agnaye.agnipate tubhyaM jyotiShAM pataye namaH . sUryAya sUryaputrAya tejasAM pataye  
namaH**

**Meaning: Salutations to kR^iShNa who leads the yogIs to moksha (agni), who is the master of the archirAdi gati that leads one to shrI vaikunta (agnipati), who is the master of the luminous nitya sUrIs in paramapada (jyotiShAM pati). Who moves towards his devotees in love (sUrya) who is the offspring of vasudeva and others who move towards him in devotion (sUryaputra), who is the master of his devotees who become resplendent with auspicious guNAs due to his association (tejasAm pati)**

"agni" - agre nayati - He leads the yogIs to their goal - "yoga vidAm neta" in sahasranAma. This means he is the means.

"agni-pati" - "Agni" is "Archis" or the first devata in the path of devAyana to moksha. Thus, it signifies archirAdi gati, the path to moksha for which he is the master. The name "jyoti" in sahasranAma indicates this. Again, this signifies he is the means.

"jyotiShAM pataye" - The name "jyotir-gaNeShvara" in sahasranAma indicates the host of nitya sUrIs in paramapada like adi shesha, garuDa etc. He is visualized being surrounded by them by the mukta. This implies he is the object of attainment.

Such a bhagavAn is "sUrya" as he moves towards his devotees seeking them. (sR - to move).

He is "sUrya-putra" as he is born to devotees who move towards him in devotion. The name "medhaja" in sahasranAma indicates this. Here, this is a name of kR^iShNa as he was born at the prayers of devakI, of yaduvaMSha and thus is called devakInandana or yadunandana. Thus, this avatAra is described here.

"tejasAM pati" - By being born to them, he makes them shine with greatness. Hence, they are "tejasvIs". The name "sishta-krt" in sahasranAma explains this.

Why do his devotees become so great by his association? Explained next with the example of rAmAvatAra.

namaH somAya saumyAya namaH shItAtmane hare . namo vaShatkR^ite tubhyaM  
svAhAsvadhAsvarUpiNe

**Meaning:** Salutations to rAma who is the nectar for himself and his devotees (Soma), to one who is very pleasant disposition (saumya). Salutations to one whose form is like the cool-rayed moon in dispelling the heat of samsAra (shItAtman), to the one who captivates the minds by his form (Hari). Salutations to one who performed sacrifices using vaShatkAra (vaShatkR^ite), to one who is having speech of the Vedas - svAhA- and svadhAkAra as his true form (svAhAsvadhAsvarUpiNe).

rAma's very name shows he is nectar for himself and his devotees. The rAmAyaNa describes him as "Saumya", having a very pleasing disposition. His form is indeed cool like the moon, and he captivates all by his form, as per the shloka "dhRishti chittapahari" (*he steals the looks and intellect of all by his beauty*)

As per "somapa" in sahasranAma, he performed many sacrifices. Yet, his true condition is being the very embodiment of sacrifice - yaj~no vai viShNuH - and thus he is said to have svAhA and svadhA as his form.

This segues into a description of yaj~na purusha next.

namo yaj~nAya iJyAya haviShe havyasaMskR^ite |

**Meaning:** Salutations to yaj~na puruSha who is the means, goal and bestower of the fruits of sacrifice (yaj~na), to one who is the only worthy object of worship for sacrifices done through Indra and other gods (iJya), who is worshipped with great oblations that do not

involve hiMsa (haviShe), who is completed or feels perfected by such oblation such as nAma-sankIrtaNa etc (havyasaMskR^ite).

He is the means, goal and giver of fruits of sacrifice and is the only one worshipped through indra.

The term "haviSha" is synonymous with "mahAhaviH" in sahasranAma and means he is worshipped with oblations that do not involve killing, vide,

*"na tat paShughAtobhUt" - There was no killing of any animal (~ shAnti parva, mahAbhArata)*

*"AraNyakapadodgItA bhAgastatra anurbaNitAH" - There were only recitations of mantras from the AraNyakAs (~ shAnti parva, mahAbhArata)*

When someone worships him even by mere recitation of his names, he feels truly complete, as though his existence has meaning. Such is his great guNa and so he is called "havya-saMskR^ita".

namaH sruvAya pAtrAya yaj~nA~NgAya parAya cha ||

**Meaning:** Salutations to the sacrificial ladle, the vessel, who has the sacrifices of others as accessories (yaj~nA~NgA), who is himself the highest goal of the sacrifice (yajnAnta krt - sahasranAma).

"yaj~nA~NgA" means he has the sacrifices of others as accessories to his own performance of sacrifice on behalf of his devotees who are unable to do it. Vide,

*Tesham tu pavanaya aham nityameva YudhiShthira! . Ubhesandhye anutishthami hi askannam tad-vratam mama*

*[Yudhishtira! For purification of those who are unable to observe daily rites, I am myself doing Yaj~na at both dawn & dusk every day. I never fail in carrying out this vow of mine.]*

This name occurs in the sahasranAma and along with him being called ladle, vessel etc. shows he is the means.

He is also the end as signified by "parA" - the true goal of the sacrifice. Same as "yaj~nAnta kRt" in sahasranAma.

The true knowledge of sacrifice is that he is the means and end. This is embodied by the praNava. The praNava-rUpa is another form of bhagavAn which is counted as vibhava, as it is assumed for upAsakAs.

namaH praNavadehAya kSharAyApyakSharAya cha

**Meaning:** Salutations to the OmkAra Brahman whose body is the praNava (praNavadeha), to the one who is the innerself of the embodied self and the liberated self (kSharAyApyakSharAya).

Because of that, the Vedas are verily his commands of prescriptions and prohibitions.

vedAya vedarUpAya shastrine shastrarUpine

**Meaning:** He who is the propounder of the Vedas (Veda), who is having the Veda as his body as it reveals the great secrets related to him (vedAnga), who is the bearer of weapons in the form of Kings to punish those who do not follow his commands (ShastriNe), who himself has the form of the chastiser (shastrarUpine).

**Shastrin** - Means He bears a weapon of chastisement. This means he chastises the wicked through Kings who are his "weapons". By kings, we mean, gods like rudra, indra, etc.

**ShastrarUpa** - He is also the chastiser himself as rAma, etc.

To illustrate that, he is described as such next in two vibhava forms - viShNu (pUrNAvatAra) and rudra (AveshAvatAra).

gadine khaDgine tubhyaM sha~Nkhine chakriNe namaH . shUline charmiNe nityaM varadAya namo namaH ||

**Meaning:** Salutations to vishNu bears the weapons as a sign of his supreme rulership - the mace which gives him great happiness, the sword which he prays to for victory, the conch who he nourishes with his lips, the discus which is smeared with the blood of the asurAs. Salutations to he who as Rudra bears the shUla which indulges in killing asurAs, who resides in the hide (performing meditation), who is ever the bestower of the boon of bhakti to bhagavAn.

Rudra is "charmine" indicating he is an upAsaka, one who resides in cloth of skin meditating on bhagavAn.

As bhagavAn chastises the wicked by himself and also through mahAdeva, the latter, being the author of the stuti, references himself as his AveShAvatAra rUpa.

He chastises the asurAs, but he is also the protector of his devotees. Explained next.

buddhipriyAya buddhAya prabuddhAya sukhAya cha .

**Meaning:** Who is fond of knowledge of the form of dharma practiced by his devotees (vR^ishapriya), who is ever awake or alert to protect that dharma for his devotees (buddha), who comes forth or manifests at the prayer of his devotees (prabuddha), who is the happiness or pride of his devotees (sukha).

"sukha" means his devotees feel great pride or joy by their association with him, so he is their bliss. The name "darpa-da" in sahasranAma illustrates this.

Next shloka shows how he protects his devotees having gained their association in his avatArAs.

haraye viShNave tubhyaM namaH sarvAtmane guro

**Meaning:** Salutations to the captivator of the minds of his devotees by his loveliness (Hara), who showers his grace on his devotees by removing the distress of samsAra through his pervasion (viShNu), who are "everything" for your devotees (sarvAtma), who bestows knowledge to his devotees (guru).

"sarvAtma" - Whose form (Atma) is "all" - food, water, everything for his devotees (vAsudevaH sarvaM iti)

"guru" - As he says in gIta 10.10, "dadAmi buddhi-yogaM tam" - he is their preceptor.

Next shloka summarizes that even in his avatArAs, he is replete with all excellences. That is perfectly visualized in the varAha avatAra, which is the last form taken up for discussion.

namaste sarvalokesha sarvakartre namo namaH .

**Meaning:** Salutations to one who is the Ruler of all the worlds in his avatArAs (trilokesha), Salutations to one who performs good actions for all, even evil ones (sarvakartre).

The idea is that even in his avatArAs, when he is born as the son of somebody, he is still trilokesha. His greatness does not diminish; rather it increases when he is born.

He killed people like rAvaNa only to stop him committing sins in that body. Why does he even try to help even rAvaNa who intended him harm? Explained next.

namaH svabhAvashuddhAya namaste yaj~nasUkara

**Meaning:** Salutations to one whose innate disposition is pure as he does not expect anything in return (svabhAvashuddha). Salutations to yaj~na varAha.

The name "shuchiH" in sahasranAma indicates that he does everything without expecting anything in return for all his help and hence is pure. The best example is yaj~na varAha, who out of his own volition, came as a boar, a lowly animal that is fond of dirt, because he felt bhUmi devI was feeling ashamed and dirty due to being kidnapped by hiraNyAkSha. And yet, even in that form, he was the embodiment of yaj~na, being the means. He also gave the varAha charama shloka eliminating the need to meditate on him at the time of death which shows his selflessness in aiding his devotees.

With this, follows the conclusion of the stuti.

**namo viShNo namo viShNo namo viShNo namo hare**

**Meaning: viShNu! Salutations to you! viShNu! Salutations to you. vishNu! Salutations to you, O Hari, Destroyer of Sins of those who say "namaH".**

Saying "namaH" to bhagavAn is so sweet that a j~nAni like mahAdeva cannot help repeating it.

**namaste vAsudevAya vAsudevAya dhImate**

**Meaning: Salutations to vAsudeva, who who resides in this world and goes to his devotees upon being praised. I pray to vAsudeva, the son of vasudeva who is always truthful and hence can be relied upon (dhImate).**

Vasudeva is renowned for being truthful and honest. Hence his son, vAsudeva, inherited his truthfulness and straight-forwardness. So mahAdeva invokes that name to show he can always be relied upon. This is based on kulashekara azhwar's pAsuram, "vAsudeva! Un varavu pArthen".

**namaH kR^iShNaya kR^iShNaya sarvAvAsa namo namaH**

**Meaning: Salutations to kR^iShNa, who enjoys the sport of creation, Salutations again and again to kR^iShNa who has a blackish complexion, who is "SarvAvAsa", the abode of all beings in that form.**

**namo bhUyo namaste.astu pAhi lokA~njanArdana**

**Salutations again and again. O one who is worthy of worship by all (janArdana)! Protect the worlds!**

**iti stutvA jagannathamuvAcha munisattamAn . idaM stotramadhIyAnA nityaM vrajata keshavam**



**Meaning:** Praising the Master of the Universe (jagannAtha), Rudra spoke to those excellent munis, "Studying the meanings of this stotra, always focus your intellect on Keshava, the master of brahma and rudra (as the means).

"jagannAtha" - As the natural master of the Universe, he was easily accessible and present right in front of them.

Rudra tells them bhagavAn is the means. Why?

sharaNyaM sarvabhUtAnAM tatra shreyo vidhAsyati . ye chemaM dhArayishyanti stavaM pApavimochanam

**Meaning:** He is the refuge of all the beings, therefore you will attain the highest good. Those who bear this stotra in their minds, they will be delivered of all sins.

teShAM prItaH prasannAtmA paThatAM shR^iNvatAM hariH . shreyo dAsyati dharmAtmA nAtra kAryA vichArANA

**Meaning:** Those who recite and listen to this stotra, they will become dear to one called "Hari" as he destroys sins by remembrance of his name, who does all good to his devotees as he is very clear minded (prasannAtma) etc. The one whose nature is to be the means (dharmAtma) will bestow the highest good, there is no need for further inquiry about this.

"prasannAtma" - He is avApta-samasta-kAman, possessed of all desirable things. So he is free of desire or want himself. Hence he is impartial and will definitely overlook the sins of even the worst sinners. Did he not say, "yadi vA rAvaNa svayaM" - "I will even offer protection to rAvaNa if he surrenders to me, or even feigns surrender."

avashyaM manasA dhyAtvA keshavaM bhaktavatsalam . shreyaH prAptuM yadIchChanti bhavantaH shaMsitavrataH

**Meaning:** You must at all times meditate on the one with lovely hair and form (Keshava), who is affectionate to his devotees that he feels great joy on attaining them, with the mind steadfast in Yoga. If you desire to attain the supreme good, you who are celebrated in your vows and are of auspicious deeds.

"keshava" means he has lovely hair, which signifies his entire form as nitya-yuva, so he is pleasing to meditate on.

"shaMsitavratAH" means the munIs are celebrated in their vows to abide by the commands of bhagavAn - the duties of the Vedas.

ityuktvA bhagavAnrudrastatraivAntaradhIyata . sagaNaH sha~NkaraH sAkShAdumayA bhUtabhAvanaH

Meaning: Speaking thus, the venerable rudra, who is verily the nourisher of all beings along with umA by providing knowledge, who is sha~Nkara as he performs good acts for bhagavAn, then disappeared along with his gaNAs.

nemustaM munayaH sarve parAM nirvR^itimAyayuH . tameva paramaM tattvaM matva nArAyaNaM harim

Meaning: All the munIs performed namaskArAs (to Hari) and gained the highest satisfaction. They fully regarded nArAyaNa, hari the destroyer of sins, as the highest reality -- the innerself (and hence the refuge)

It is not that they didn't know this before. But the knowledge even if already known, only becomes useful when learned from a guru. Their knowledge which was strong, was made unshakeable by the great lokaguru, Hara.

vismayaM paramaM gatvA menire svakR^itArthatAm . lokapAIastada viShNuM namaskR^itya hariM mudA

Meaning: They became highly astonished by contemplating the acts of bhagavAn which cause wonder and considered themselves as those who had done what is to be done due to surrendering to him. The gods who are protectors of the Universe then also worshipped vishNu, Hari.

The name "*visrutatma*" in sahasranAma shows his exploits are always a cause for wonder.

He is viShNu as the pervader of the gods, and Hari as he accepts offerings of their worship.

jagmuH svAnyatha veshmAni gaNaiH sarvairnR^ipottama . Aruhya bhagavAnviShNurgaruDaM pakShipu~Ngavam

Meaning: They with their associates, all went back to their own abodes (having worshipped Hari), O Best of Kings! bhagavAn viShNu then mounted garuDa, the foremost of birds.

nR^ipottama - VaishampAyana is telling janamejaya - "You are the best of men. But Hari is sarvottama!"

Sha~NkhI chakrI gadI khaDgI shAr~NgI tUNI tanutravAn . yathAgataM jagannAtho yayau badarikAmanu

Meaning: Bearing the conch, discus, mace, sword, bow, quiver and armor (since his tapas was completed), that master of the universe went back to badari just as he came (never changing in his beauty, youth, tejas etc despite the hard tapas he undertook).

sAyAhne puNDarIkAkSho nityaM muninishevitAm . tatra gatvA yathAyogaM vinamya harirIshvaraH . archito munibhiH sarvairniShasAda sukhasane

Meaning: The One who is the eye of the residents of shrI vaikunta (pundarIkAksha), arrived in the evening at badarI which is ever frequented by munIs. Reaching there, He who is the Supreme Ruler (Ishvara), who accepts the worship of all (Hari), bowed down to them suitably in accordance to his nature (of worshipping his devotees). Being worshipped by the munIs, he sat down in a comfortable seat.

Even after all this, bhagavAn never stops bowing to his devotees!

With this, the section on kailAsa yAtra of bhagavAn is concluded.