



OUR
NURTURED
SOUL
Twelve Odes to Shiva

ॐ नमः शिवाय

BY DEREK IAN CANTWELL





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About the author

Introduction

I am not a poet. I'm barely a writer. Full disclosure.

What I am is fascinated by history, culture, religion, spirituality, philosophy, science, and just about everything in this vast cosmos. Not a fan of people hurting others people for any reason, but I'm always willing to learn about someone's worldview and their philosophy of life.

These twelve odes are named and inspired by the twelve holiest temples of Lord Shiva in India. Each temple is a Jyotirlinga shrine. *Jyotir* meaning radiance and *linga* meaning sign or image of Shiva. Each temple is named after the residing manifestation of Shiva.

This little book is merely an expression of my appreciation for one of the oldest living cultures on the planet. I wish I could say this was the result of an epic trip or a cultural immersion experience, but it is not.

I've done research with English editions of the Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas. The temple research was conducted nearly entirely online and the philosophical analysis is the result of a mixed bag of influences. All I know is that it came pouring out of my heart and now it's on a page.

I only hope you can enjoy it. Thanks for reading!

1

Somnath

Crystal tides embrace the shore
Cosmic potential in waning flight
Seven silver waves break evermore
Seismic collapse in waxing sight

High above midnight Soma in crest
From Charioteer's bold last step
Conchs capture the ocean's breath
Until Reborn with our past kept

2

Mallikārjuna

Lord Shiva burns before the river.
Prideful flowers earn no boons.
Lavish gates adorn the holiest giver.
The power of truth is everlasting.

Seven orbits around Siv-Sakti brought Ganesha wives.
Circling the world filled Skanda with jealousy.
Creators lose their face in the jaws of ego.
Sivalinga is the silence of mind.

3

Mahakaleshwar

Southward-facing Lord concealed below,
High Yantra adorns the ceiling above.

Burned down with a warrior's bellow,
Kali's upper lip falls with the grace of a dove.

Ganesha the enormous self-born seer,
Kartikeya frees all from downpression.

Parvati served her eternal penance here,
Nandi awaits Lord Shiva's direction.

4

Omkareshwar

An island of Om nestled in the breast of Rewa,
Igniting jealousy in Mount Vindhya over Mount Meru,
These waters tame even the fierce followers of Kalika.

Narmada flows from the giver of pleasure,
Tripuri kshetra stands as a model of modesty,
Banalinga are lifted out of the holy sweat.

Crocodiles, monkeys and birds clamor for proximity,
Bring forth thy mind and offer Naivedyam Bhog.

5

Kedernath

From Kashi to Swarga, a thumb joins soil.
Brothers chase Shankara to serve penance.

Snow capped mountains rule over the sky.
Nandi holding the shore of Mandakini.

Five Pandava brothers stand with Five Priests.
No road runs hither, no pilgrims in winter.

The triangular Sivalinga is offered this holy ghee.
Mantras rise to heaven on ancient Kannada tongues.

6

Bhimashankar

Bhima grew up under the Dakini forest's canopy.
Karkati, his mother, revealed that Bhima was the son of
Kumabhakarna, the mighty warrior felled by Rama.
After severe penance, Brahma granted him a boon.

He launched a war against heaven, seeking revenge.

Even Indra could not stop him from downpressing all.
The tyrant demanded devotion from Kamarupeshwara.
Siva arose from that which Bhima's blade would strike.
Bhimarathi witnessed the end of Bhima's arrogance.

7

Vishwanath

Kashi holds the western shore of Goddess Ganga,
Earth's oldest living city holds unbroken light.
Neta and Ganga purify the ashes of the dead,
Sati's Manikarna fell when Shiva danced angrily.

Jnana Vapi protected the Linga from invaders,
An altar of black stone and Shakti's silver Yoni.
Gold dome and Shiva's trident stand resolute,
Water and earth carried home with devoted hands.

8

Trimbakeshwar

Black stone built to the sky, Brahmagiri on the horizon.
Kusavarta the sacred pond holds love eternally.
Whose water erodes the linga as man does the Earth.

Grass became blades through Indra's jealousy and
struck Parvati's friend Jaya in her cow incarnation.
Godavari, Dakshina Ganga, was brought to cleanse all.

The goddesses observed the penance of Parashuram
and stayed in the temple by his request.
Granted weapons and the art of war from Lord Shiva, he
defeated the whole world's warriors.

Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva command equal reverence
bearing the jeweled crown of the Pandavas.
The golden mask of Tridev looks out at the world with
endless compassion and boundless generosity.

9

Vaidyanath

Resting lands of Jai Durga's Heart,
Place of funeral rituals old and new.
Where Ravana gave up his ten heads as penance,
Therefore Lord Siva descended as a doctor with herbs.
Twenty two temples honor many threads of heaven,
Seat of the Sadhakas, whose bodies become ash.

10

Nagesh

The first temple amongst twelve,
The forests follow Parvati's devotee.
Protected from poisons, snakes and demons,
Supriya was freed from prison through his faith.

Vasuki and Krishna worshipped the lotus feet,
Aurangzeb's army was sent home by honeyed bees.
Pilgrims seek the heavenly city of opulent Dwarka, with
A black stoned tri-mukhi rudraksh and seven chakras.

Rameshwar

Established on an island by the seventh avatar of Vishnu, Rama summoned the lingam as penance for the war against Ravana in Sri Lanka.

Sita made a small lingam in the sand as it remains in the sanctum. Hanuman brought the giant rock lingam from Mount Kailash.

Twenty two tirthas are within the temple, one for each of Rama's arrows in his quiver. What began as a thatched shed has become a sandstone spectacle with the world's longest corridor with 1212 pillars.

12

Grishneshwar

Red rock five tiers high,
Mahashivaratri,
Linga faces east.

Smallest temple here,
Not far from Ellora caves,
Twenty four pillars.

Ghushma's restored son,
Lake Shivalaya, her boon,
Lord of Compassion.

About the author

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I found this **idea**

It belongs to us *all*

The idea is **to be**

The order is *love*

Every **science** and *spirituality*

Looks up into the **sky**

Sees the same *moon*

Mind measures the same *divine*

Perspectives vary in *human* fashion

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