

**Pushpadanta's Shivamahimna Stotram**  
(A Free Rendering into English)  
**A Paean to Lord Shiva's Power and Glory**  
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## Acknowledgements

*I remember with gratitude the blessings of His  
Holiness Mahamandaleswar,  
Parama Poojya Vidyanandagiri Maharaj of  
hallowed memory,  
of Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh,  
He made available to devotees an excellent  
exegeesis of the great paeon in Hindi.  
But for His Divine blessing, I could not have  
attempted this arduous task.*

*A good deal of credit for the production of this  
work must rightfully go to my better half  
Srimati Ramani.*

*Rendering a Sanskrit Classic relating to faith and  
devotion can only be possible with the blessings  
of the Supreme Being.*

*This work is a pooja pushpa, a flower offered in  
devout prayer to the parama para, paramaatma,  
Bholanth Shiv Shankerji.*

*I cannot claim any credit for this rendering but if  
there are any short-comings, inadequacies or  
inaccuracies,  
I take the entire blame.*

**V.V.B.Rama Rao**

## Introduction

Pushpadanta was a king of the divine species of *Gandharvas*, renowned for their powers of delectable singing. This *Gandharva* used to steal flowers for his daily worship of the Supreme Being, Lord Shiva from the flower gardens of a king's flower gardens. Once, the king came to know about this. He caused 'nirmalya' to be thrown in the *Gandharva's* way in order to spell ruin on him. It is believed that 'nirmalya' flowers used once in worship, when crossed on the way, would render the transgressor lose all his brilliance. Unknowingly, Pushpadanta walked over the strewn flowers and suffered the loss of his brilliance. He was shocked, but being a blessed devotee, he realized why that happened. He composed his monumental *Shivamahimna Stotram* in expiation of his sin. Pleased, Lord Shiva blessed him and Pushpadanta regained his brilliance. The recitation of this great paean, or listening to it sung by a devotee would absolve the listener of his sins and lead him to the refuge of the Supreme Being, Lord Shiva.

### Sloka.1

Mahadeva! The Supreme Lord! The one who would destroy all grief arising out of ignorance! Even Brahma is quite incapable of praising all Your attributes and qualities adequately. This is not surprising. None can ever exhaustively describe Your innumerable infinite qualities. .Since that is so, if it is found that this work is incomplete or inadequate, readers may condone its deficiencies.. Compositions describing the glory of Lord Shiva can never be exhaustive for His Power and Glory are impossible to describe in all their infinite variety. Even angels and deities would find it a baffling task. Still composers like me (Pushpadanta) are not to blame for attempting to do the impossible. In devotion inspired by the Supreme Being, I offer this at His feet.

### Sloka 2

Your power and glory transcend all limits of expression and imagination. The Vedas themselves are unequal to describe in entirety the nature and qualities of the formless divine and the

divine with form, *nirguna* and *saguna*. But the devout and the blessed, learned or lay, who contemplate and realize the Supreme Being, cannot desist from singing Your praises in humility, which pleases You.

Sloka 3.

Mahadeva! O Lord! Form of Brahman! The creator of the treasure of Vedas, the most sublime, musical and nectar-like, Your power and glory would strike even Brihaspati, the preceptor of the deities with wonder. With Your blessing I venture to attempt to sing Your manifold powers and glory. My attempt itself is inspired by Your Divine grace. It is only my desire and intention to sanctify my expression. It is only my devotion and Your grace that inspired me to sing Your praises.

Sloka. 4

O Shambhu! The ever auspicious and doer of good, giver of all! You are the splendid combination of the three attributes, *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamo gunas* and the unique one combining in Your self the three deities entrusted with the three acts of Creation, Sustenance and Destruction. The thickheaded and the faithless attempt with their foolish garrulity to mislead people around presenting the glorious and the most beautiful things about You as disagreeable ones.

Sloka. 5

Atheists and the dull-witted with their garrulousness and devious logic doubt and question as to how it would be possible for one without a body, substance or equipment to create sustain and destroy all the worlds. With no understanding, they prattle and mislead the gullible, ignorant mobs.

Sloka. 6

O Mahadeva! The Lord of all and everything! With Your enormous powers You create, sustain and destroy the worlds. The

atheists argue, discuss and try to convince the ignorant mob asking silly questions. They say that You are without any devices, instruments, personnel or implements. They question as to how You could create fourteen worlds without either implements or substance.

Sloka. 7

The faithless unbelievers wonder as to how to choose among the various *darshanas* (systems of philosophy like Sankhya, Yoga etc) and doctrines like *Paashupata* in Shaivism and *Pananchraatra* in Vaishnavism, little realizing that all paths lead to the one and only ultimate goal, the absolute peace which You are! Don't the sacred Ganga and all the rivers run to the same destination, the ocean?

Sloka. 8

Wouldn't You strike all the angels and deities aghast with Your extraordinary richness and limitless divine powers! The wealth of Your powers is in Your persona: an old bull for your mount, an axe, tiger hide, sacred ash, serpents, cot-leg and skull-cup for your appurtenances. You bless deities like Indra with treasures of divine powers! But, You are free from all *moha*, the enticements and illusions of all luxury or comfort. Creating *maya* Yourself, You are free from it. Such is your splendid quality. Those with devotion to You are not enticed by or attracted to the mirage of affluence and comfort.

Sloka.9

O Slayer of Tripura Demons! Some call the world one without beginning and end. Some say it is transient; some say it real, some say it is unreal. All these surprise me but amidst all these very beliefs I sing Your praises without any hesitation or shyness. Aren't the garrulous always stubborn!

Sloka 10

O Shankar, the one ever in contemplation on the Himalayas! Your form with effulgent brilliance, Your pervasive light and inconceivably limitless hugeness could not be assessed or seen even by Brahma and Vishnu who once tried to see the top and the bottom of Your form. They could find neither the end nor the beginning. But, when once they sent up ardent prayers, didn't You in Your infinite love for the devout manifest Yourself! For those who seek refuge in You wholeheartedly and with a sense of total surrender there could never be any dearth of Your blessings!

Sloka. 11

Lord of the Mountain! Ravana conquered all the three worlds and acquired powers and capacity to be ever invincible, with no enemies or contenders. With his thirst for battles and victories, he had twenty shoulders and ten heads. With intense and unwavering faith he offered his own heads as offering to you. Was not that the very reason for his prowess and courage!

Sloka 12

With his extraordinary devotion and worship and the powers You bestowed on him, Ravana could shake Your abode, the Kailash mountain. But didn't You, with a little movement of the tip of Your big toe, crush him! Then he could not find shelter anywhere. The one ungrateful cannot escape being enticed in *moha*, the undesirable sinful attachment.

Sloka 13

O Wish fulfilling Deity! It was with Your grace that the demon Banasura could subdue even Devendra, who had limitless wealth and power. Being devout and obedient to You would lead anyone to sublimity and height of glory.

Sloka 14

O, The Three-eyed Supreme! The Sun, Moon and Fire are Your three eyes. While the deities and demons were churning the ocean,

up came *kalaakoota*, the dire and deadly poison that would have burnt all the three worlds. With Your compassion for all, You swallowed it in and retaining the poison in Your throat You saved the creation. The *garaLa*, poison turned Your throat blue and left a stain there. For this reason, You were given the appellation of Neelakanth, the blue-throated one. That very stain marks You out as the greatest, the most powerful and noble. That very stain is extremely praiseworthy for it could dispel the fears of all the deities and save all the worlds.

Sloka 15

O the Lord of the Universe! Manmadha, the love deity, the one who for the victory of the universe could shoot his arrows on anyone, remained just a memory for You burnt him down by opening Your third eye for belittling You by misjudging that You could be won over by his proud arrow. Little did he realize that You were *jitendriya*, the one who conquers his own sensory organs. Trying to tempt anyone who has won all desire for sense gratification does not yield any thing good.

Sloka 16:

While You are at Your cosmic dance, *Tandava Nritya*, with the tread of Your feet, suddenly the earth and the sky fall into utter befuddlement. In Vishnu's realm, space, the stars and planets break down when Your huge club-like shoulders hit them. With the strokes of Your matted plaits of hair, the borders of Indra's kingdom, heaven, suffer often. Saviour of the Universe! The *Tandava nritya* You perform for welfare surprisingly creates the contrary effect.

Sloka 17:

The effulgence of the flow of the Holy Ganga pervades and is reflected as little flakes of foam exceedingly brighter than the very stars. Those little droplets on Your matted plaits in the shape of the oceans built the world as a circular group of islands. This is proof of Your Divinity, Your extra-ordinary power and glory.

Sloka 18:

With Earth as chariot, Brahma as charioteer, Sumeru Mountain as Your bow, the Sun and the Moon as wheels and Vishnu as arrow You charged to kill the demons Tripurasura. Was any help or any appurtenances really necessary for You to blow away those demon as mere straws! Was it not just Your whim to play giving Your obedient followers a sense of participation!

Sloka 19:

O Destroyer of Tripura Demons! While Sri Mahavishnu was worshipping Your feet as usual with a thousand lotuses, he suddenly found that he was short of one lotus. That very moment, in his sublime and unparalleled devotion he plucked the lotus of his own eye and offered it to complete the worship. Was it not for that, pleased as You were, You had given him the charge of the sustenance of all the three worlds and blessed him with the Sacred Discus, the powerful weapon, Sudarshana Chakra!

Sloka 20:

Parameshwara! You are ever ready and eager to bestow the fruit for performing fire rituals like Yagnas and Yagas as soon they come to completion: not the one who leads the performance or presides over the ritual. All those who have faith and all those true believers intensely believe that You are the giver, the Supreme Being, You. Without worshipping You nothing can be gained by the mere performance of a *jad*, lifeless, ritual. With the knowledge and understanding of the Vedas and *shastras*, performing fire rituals following the procedures laid in the agama *shastras* with a firm, unwavering faith in You alone would get Your blessing.

Sloka 21:

Parama Shiva! You are the one who gives refuge to those without any other hope for the mere asking. Prajapati is the lord of those wearing the body performing fire rituals with competence and



skill. With sages and seers as the conductors with strict adherence to the scriptures, with Brahma and other deities as audience and spectators, the performance by Daksha came to nothing. The simple reason is that the ancient lawmaker, Daksha Prajapati failed in his duty of offering worship to You, the Supreme Being. When the basic duty of obedience and devotion to the Supreme Deity is neglected, would any performance ever succeed! Would it not lead even to utter destruction!

Sloka 22:

O the Supreme Maintainer of the Holy Law! Once Brahma was enamoured by his own creation Sandhya and wanted union with her. The damsel with a sense of shame transformed herself into an animal. When Brahma himself took the form of an animal, did You not in Your frightful ire take a bow and arrow to discipline him? This led to Brahma taking the form of the star Mrigashira in the firmament. You as a skilled marksman still stand close to him as the star Arudra observing him.

Sloka 23:

Paragon of discipline and acme of self-control! Believing that he was helping Paravati, naturally the most beautiful, when Manmadha shot his arrow, in a trice, You reduced him to ashes. Later, impressed by her devotion, You made Parvati, *arthangini*, Your half. What if the unknowing think that You are uxorious!

Sloka 24:

O Destroyer of desires foul! Playing blissfully in a graveyard with souls unearthly, ash-smearred, wearing an elephant hide, a mendicant with a skull in Your hands, You are seemingly inauspicious. But are You not the one who fulfills all the desires of the devotees and bless them with the fruit they pray for! For Your devotees, Your appearance and appurtenances are ever auspicious and welfare giving.

Sloka 25:

O Mahadeva! I realize that You are the form of **that** very bliss, which those performing *praanaayaama*, as laid down in the scriptures, restraining the movement of life force get. They enjoy the universal soul's experience personally. Those who experience that bliss have their eyes filled with tears and their bodies have divinely caused goosebumps. In such a blessed state of mind they would be taking dips continuously in the lake of nectar with inward bliss.

Sloka 26:

O Deva! The learned see in You the eight forms of divinity (*ashtha moorti*). You are the Sun and the Moon; You are Wind; You are Water; You are Sky; You are Earth; You are Fire, You are the Soul. This is how the knowing ones conceive and express themselves in the limited vocabulary at their disposal. It can be more appropriately declared that there is absolutely nothing in this vast universe that is not You, Your creation or Your manifestation.

Sloka 27:

Oh Mahadeva the one granting asylum to all those who seek it in devotion!! *Omkara*, the *pranava naada* inheres the three sounds 'a' 'u' and 'm'; the three Vedas, Rig, Yaju and Sama and the three states of Wakefulness, Dream and Sleep as also Creation, Being, and Dissolution. The sound also includes in itself the Creator Brahma, the Sustainer Vishnu and the Destroyer Shiva. Thus perceived OM represents YOU in all Your effulgence and power.

Sloka 28:

O Mahadeva! Only the Holy Scriptures and the Vedas can describe You fully. You are the base of all creation, *bhava*, destroyer *sarva*, the and one who punishes and disciplines, *rudra*, the lord of the beings, *pashupati*, the annihilator of ignorance and sin ferociously, *ugra*, the one dealing out strong and frightful punishments, *mahaan*, *bheemaa* and *eesaana*. The learned devout

described You thus by the eight names. I am too small and insignificant to describe You exhaustively. I prostrate before You and offer my salutations to You as the form of effulgent light.

Sloka 29:

O Lord! My salutations to You. You are very near and very far too: near to the knowing ones, *jnaanis* and far, far away to the ignorant and faithless, pervading the entire universe. You are the tiniest among the tiny and the most voluminous among the voluminous: I offer salutations to You again and again. O Three-eyed one! O, The most pristine! O, The one without beginning or end! I salute You again and again, the One and All; the Present and the Non-present; the Complete and Perfect and the Supreme too!

Sloka 30:

O Deva Deva! Again and again I salute You who creates as Brahma all the animate, those with *chaitnaya* (live awareness) and those without it becoming a personification of *rajo guna*, the attribute of passion. Again and again I salute You who blessed all creation as Vishnu with Your *satwa guna*, the attribute of kindness and compassion. Again and again I salute You who as Rudra becomes a personification of *tamo guna*, the attribute of Darkness. I salute You, the Perfect and the Greatest, becoming one or the other at will, going beyond the *tri gunas*, the three attributes (*gunas*) mentioned above. You are both the One with attributes and the One without any attribute (*nirguna*).

Sloka 31:

O Bountiful One! I am susceptible to disease; just a bubble to burst any moment, weak, subject to various kinds of affliction (*aadi vyaadhis*), one utterly poor in deserts and ineligible for anything, Meekly I prostrate before You, the One transcending *gunas* and the One with limitless powers and effulgence. Utterly scared, I seek solace in devotion to You by submitting this paean as a flower at Your glorious feet.

Sloka 32:

O Maheswara! The goddess of Saraswati would be scripting ever without let up Your delectable divine qualities using the ink obtained by mixing the blackness of the Anjanadri (Black Mount Anjana), in the oceans (*abdhi*), with the earth as the ink container, the branches of the Wish-fulfilling (*Kalpa taru*) tree as the quill.

Sloka 33:

The emperor of Gandharvas, the consummate poet Pushpadanta, described in this venerable song of praise, *shiva mahimna stotra*, Chandrasekhara, Chandramouli (the deity who wears the crescent moon on His head) in Sanskrit, in a metre (*chandasa*) called *laghu vritta*. His song was lauded extensively by sacred sages and seers.

Sloka 34:

The one who reads this paean to the pristine and flawless Being every day with devotion, with a clean conscience, would be blessed with health, wealth, fine offspring, fame and long life in this life and in proximity with the Supreme Being in the life to come.

Sloka 35:

The recital of this paean in a devout frame of mind gives the devotees manifold blessings and several fruits. One gets affluence and wealth and the merit of performing arduous *tapas* (contemplation) or performing elaborate fire rituals. Even *shodashi kaLa upasana* (contemplation and worship of the sixteen forms of 'divine radiance') does not stand comparison with a recital or repetition of this paean.

Sloka 36:

Pushpadanta's devout song-offering extolling Parama Shiva's power and glory and descriptions of His form, nature and

attributes are replete with incomparable beauty. The recital ensures peace and welfare all around.

Sloka 37:

Sankara is the deity incomparable, with none above Him. There is no song of praise greater or more welfare-bestowing than this. There is no chant or hymn, no incantation, which excels *AUM*. There is no principle (*Tattwa*) which can excel *guru*, the preceptor.

Sloka 38:

O Mahadeva! Wearing the Crescent Moon on Your crown You are at the top of the list of deities! The king of Gandharvas, Kusumadashana, also called Pushpadanta, incurred Your wrath for treading on *nirmalya*. Thereby he forfeited his powers of withdrawing using his gift of vanishing. Caught in a tight corner, in a moment he composed this paean in devotion asking for Your forgiveness. You in Your infinite mercy restored his earlier power of disappearing at will. .

Sloka 39:

Those who recite or read the song of praise, extolled by the sacred seers and sages, with folded hands in supplication as a gesture of salutation wholeheartedly, from the depths of *manas*, heart-mind-feeling would obtain salvation and get the greatest good fortune of staying in proximity to the Divine Supreme.

Sloka 40

His devotees would delight *Sarvabhootapati*, the Lord of All Beings, by singing every day this hymn in complete devotion.

Sloka 42:

Listening to our prayers and recitals of His praise in paeans sonorously in powerful syllables, may *Sadaashiva*, the ever

auspicious and the ever desire-fulfilling, be compassionately inclined towards us all!

***AUM TAT SAT***

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