

# SHIVA

Shiva is the God of dissolution and part of the Trimurti (holy trinity). He is also the master of Yoga and meditation and He transfers the soul from birth, death and re-birth

- Often called Yogeshwar, He is the master of Yoga and is depicted in deep meditation, sitting in the mountains of the Himalayas.
- His Damru (drum) produced the first sound (nada, the source of creation) and is said to have started beating the first sound in the universe. Through this initial movement of atoms in an immobile universe, creation began.
- Often called “Lord of the Dance”, Shiva performed the Tandav Dance in the form of Nataraja. **Shiva’s Nataraja dance represents both the destruction and the creation of the universe and reveals the cycles of death, birth and rebirth.**
- The most sacred mantra for Lord Shiva is “Aum Namah Shivaya” and is made up of:-
  - Aum, the most sacred syllable in Hinduism and is said to be the sound of the universe.
  - Na-mah Shi-va-ya is called Panch-akshara, (having five syllables).
  - It means “I bow to Shiva, the auspicious One.”
- Shiva is responsible for change both in the form of death and destruction and in the positive sense of the shedding of old habits.
- One of Shiva's main attributes is the trident which represents the three *gunas* (qualities) and the snakes He adorns show He is beyond the power of death and poison.
- The vehicle of Shiva is the white bull called Nandi (the joyful).
- He is often seated on a tiger skin or wears a tiger skin, with the tiger representing the mind. He has controlled all animalistic tendencies.
- When Ganga (the Ganges) incarnated on Earth, Shiva captured Her in His hair to avoid her flooding the Earth.
- Shiva worshippers are among India's most ascetic yogis, their body smeared with ashes, dressed in saffron colours and wearing Rudraksha beads.
- There are 12 famous Jyotirlingas (sacred Shiva Lingams) all over India where Lord Shiva appeared in the form of light. By reciting the name of 12 Jyotirlinga a devotee can eliminate all the sins and become pure. It is believed that he becomes illuminated and enlightened with supreme and divine knowledge.