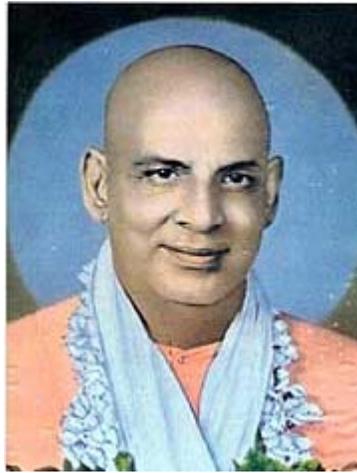


TEMPLES IN INDIA

By

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA



**Sri Swami Sivananda
Founder of
The Divine Life Society**



**SERVE, LOVE, GIVE,
PURIFY, MEDITATE,
REALIZE
So Says
Sri Swami Sivananda**

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

In these days life has become very complex. The different spheres of human activity have been multiplied. Practically speaking, there is hardly any time, nor the mood, even to think of God. An ideal temple serves the purpose well to make one entertain the divine thoughts, at least during the time he is in the temple. The sanctity of the place soothes and revitalizes his worn-out nerves with a unique spiritual aura. His entire being is sanctified by the divine vibrations, springing forth spontaneously. He enjoys the divine ecstasy. Only with this view our ancients have built temples all over this country.

Pilgrimage is indeed a religious, nay, a spiritual act, enjoined upon all sincere devotees of the Lord. It gives us a great scope for periodical drastic flushing of the worldliness and impure tendencies that are being accumulated in our day-to-day life through constantly living in the material atmosphere, filled with worldliness, greed, passion, malice and delusion. Our nature becomes regenerated, re-vitalized and ultimately spiritualized.

In this little volume, Sri Swami Sivanandaji, in his usual supra-poetic style, gives short descriptions of the prominent temples in India. They are in the first part of the book. Obviously, they are not merely an informative list of the various temples in India, but they are actually a garland of elevating hymns to the different deities, representing the Almighty Lord.

In the second part of the book, brief descriptions of the prominent places of pilgrimage in India, their location and the important spiritual legends that are connected with them, are given. They will be indeed a valuable guide to those who are interested in pilgrimage.

We sincerely hope that this volume will inspire more and more people of this great country to undertake pilgrimages and form the temple-going habit. Thus would the spirit of Bharatavarsha live for ever in the heart of the India; and thus would the culture of the land enshrined in the Temples be revived.

Shivananda Nagar,
11th July, 1957.
Holy Guru Purnima.

The Publishers.

‘शिव-अवतार शिवानन्द’

राग मधुवन्ती--तीनताल
(Sri Sivananda-Sushila, M.A., B. Mus.)

जय जय शिवानन्द सद्गुरु ।
‘शिव’ के अवतार शिवानन्द ॥
दीनन के तुम नाथ शिवानन्द ।
भक्तन के भगवान शिवा ॥१॥ जय-
दुखियन के आधार शिवानन्द
प्रेमि के तुम ‘प्रेम’ शिवा ॥२॥
त्याग राज के साक्षात्कार
संगीत के तुम नाद शिवा ॥३॥
तुमरी महीमा कोई न जाने
तुमरी महीमा बखानी न जाने,
तोरी लीला अमरम्पार ॥४॥
तुमतो कहते "शिवानन्द हूँ मैं",
तुम हो 'गिरीरूकैलाशरूशिवा' ॥५॥
‘शील’ के तुम प्राण शिवानन्द
चरण-कमल बलिहारी मैं ॥६॥

'śiva-avatāra śivānanda'
rāga madhuvantī-tinatāla
(Sri Sivananda-Sushila, M.A., B. Mus.)

jaya jaya śivānanda sadgurū .
'śiva' ke avatāra śivānanda ..
 dīnana ke tuma nātha śivānanda .
 bhaktana ke bhagavāna śivā || 1 || jaya-
dukhiyana ke ādhāra śivānanda
premi ke tuma 'prema' śivā || 2 ||
 tyāga rāja ke sāksātkāra
 saṃgīta ke tuma nāda śivā || 3 ||
tumarī mahīmā koī na jāne
tumarī mahīmā bakhānī na jāne,
torī līlā amarampāra || 4 ||
 tumato kahate "śivānanda hū.N mai",
 tuma ho 'girī-kailāśa-śivā' || 5 ||
'śīla' ke tuma prāṇa śivānanda
caraṇa-kamala balihārī maiṃ || 6 ||

SALUTATIONS TO SRI RAMA KRISHNA HARI

O Lord Krishna of Guruvayur
O Panduranga Vittal of Pandharpur
O Lord Jagannatha of Puri
O Bhadri Narayan of Bhadri
O Lord Rama of Ayodhya
O Lord Venkatesa of Tirupathi—
Salutations unto Thee.

O Lord Ranganathan of Srirangam
O Padmanabha of Trivandrum
O Dwarakesa of Muttra
O Sri Rama of Bhadrachalam
O Vatapatrasayi of Srivilliputtur
O Varadaraja of Conjeevaram—
Adorations unto Thee.

O Govindaraja of Chidambaram
O Banki Bihari of Brindavan
O Lord Vishnu of Vaikuntha
O Lord Krishna of Gokola
O Lord Rama of Saketpuri—
Prostrations unto Thee.

SIVANANDA.

OM

CLIMB THE HILL OF VEDANTA

(An Autobiography)

1. This is my story, my readers dear,
A naughty boy I was, a playful urchin,
With full of mischief and a spirit of fighting
Then slowly changed my nature, serious I became.
2. Old good samskaras revived, subha vasanas came,
Virtues I developed one by one!
Purity, patience, courage and control,
Kshama, Karuna, daya to boot.
3. I served the sick with Atma-bhav
This gave me soon Chitta-shuddi.
I shared with joy what I had with others,
The spirit of sannyasa was ingrained in me.
4. I ran to Mahatmas for satsang,
I served them too with bhav and prem,
I took sannyas and cut off all ties,
And moved in the world as free as a bird.
5. I acquired the four means of salvation,
Then I did sravana, manana, nididhyasan,
OM OM I roared in the thick Tehri hills,
Then the hill of Vedanta I climbed.
6. I tore the veils one by one,
I pierced the five sheaths with difficulty
The three voids I crossed with strenuous endeavour,
The seven steps of Jnana I ascended with care.

SWAMI SIVANANDA.

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PART ONE

HYMNS

Chapter One

LORD VISHNU'S TEMPLES

1. Badri Narayan

O Lord Narayana of Badri Hills!
O Preceptor of Nara !
Prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art my real Saviour.
Thou art in the heart of all beings.
Thou art the Supreme Deity.
Thou art the Highest Truth.
Thou art Infinite Bliss.
Thou art All-merciful.
Thou art All-bountiful.
Thou art one of the four Damas.
Thy door opens on Akshaya Trithiya in April
And closes in November.
Thy temple is on the banks of Alakananda.

Many years, very many years
Many billions of years unto Thee.
Many years to the charming Lakshmi.
Many years to Thy Shining Discus.
Many years to Thy conch.
O Lamp of Wisdom
That illumines the hearts of devotees!

O my Father, my King,
O Light of my life!
I have nothing but Thy Name,
Save me, guide me,
I am Thy slave,
Badri Vishal ki Jai!
Hail Badri Narayan!

2. Triyuginath

This is a Vishnu's temple
In the Himalayas

Below Kedarnath.

O Lord Hari!
Prostrations unto Thee.
Destroy the fear in my heart,
Place your lotus feet in my heart,
Cut asunder the veil of ignorance.

Give me Light and Wisdom,
Thou art my inner guide,
I act as you direct me.
Thou art the refuge of the helpless.

O Lord! You vainly boast
Of killing Hiranya Kasipu
And others of meagre strength,
If you really have power,
Slay quickly the demon
Of my egoism.
OM Namō Narayanaya.

3. Lord Jagannath

O Lord! Who dwells in Puri
Who was dear to Jeya Dev
The author of the Gita Govinda—
Who dwells in one of the four damas
Silent adorations unto Thee!
You ran after the woman in the forest
Who sang the Gita Govinda.

Thou art the glorious Vishnu
Thou art the sole refuge of mortals
Thou residest in the heart of all beings
Thy Grace is invincible
Thou art the meaning of the Vedas
Thou art all in all.

Thy name has saved me.
I have obtained Thy grace;
By the sword of Thy grace
I have cut off all my bonds.
Hail Jagannath! Hail Grace
Om Namō Kesavaya.

4. Mathura

There is a temple of Lord Krishna here.
Jumna flows in this sacred place.
Lord Krishna did various lilas here.
Mathura is Brij Bhumi.

O Destroyer of Dhenuka, Aristaka,
Kesi, Kamsa and Putana!
O Lord of Satyabhama,
Rukmani and Radha!
O Protector of Draupadi;
The joy of Devaki,
The son of Nanda,
Friend of Arjuna,
Who played with the Gopalas,
Who danced on the head of Kalinga!
Prostrations unto Thee!
Give me light and wisdom.

5. Brindawan

O Brindawan Bihari!
O Kesava, O Narayana!
Prostrations unto Thee!
O Lamp of Brindawan,
Friend of the cowherd boys,
Who kicked to death
The wicked Sakatasura!
Take this curd and butter.
Play upon Thy flute
Which is sweeter than nectar.
Om Sri Krishnaya namah.

6. Lord Dwarakanath

O mighty Lord of Dwaraka,
O Achuta, O Ananta, O Govinda,
Salutations unto Thee, My Lord!
I have lost my thoughts in Thee
Thou hast cut the chains of my Karma.
Thou hast made me Thine.
Thou hast entered into me
And possessed my entire being
Thou hast been very kind to me.
I have not done any hard tapas

For such a great blessing.
O sweet Madhava!
Who dwells in one of the four damas!
Thou art the path,
Thou art goal.
I shall do Thy will.
My tongue shall glorify Thee alone.
My hands shall salute Thee alone.
My eyes shall see Thee alone.
My ears shall listen to Thy lilas.
My mind shall think of Thee alone.
My heart shall feel Thee alone.
Om Namo Krishnaya:

7. Lord Pandarinath

O Lord Vittal of Pandharpur.
O Lord Vittobha.
Consort of Rukumai,
Prostrations unto Thee.
Thy temple is on the bank of the Chandrabhaga.
You ate the food of young Namdev.
You were the companion of Namdev.
Tukaram has sung Abhangas
In praise of Thee.
You dined with Barijan Choksee.
You were the water-carrier Sri Kanda.
You served Sri Ekanath.
You put on the form of Vittu,
Paid the money to the Nawab
And thus saved Dewan Damaji.
Thy glory is indescribable.
You were the charioteer of Arjuna.
We are all studying Thy Gita.
Thou dwellest in our hearts.
Thou art Murli Manohar,
In Viswanath Mandir.
Are you satisfied with our Kichadie-bhog?
It is hot, hot, nice and palatable,
Teach us Gita, O World-Teacher!

8. Lord Venkatesa

O Lord of Venkata Hill!
O Venkatesa, Venkatachalapathy,
O Venkataramana!

O Lord of Tirupathi Hills,
Consort of Alamelumangai:
Pratyaksha Devata of Kaliyuga:
O Glorious Vishnu!
Let me live up Thy golden Hill.
O coral-lipped Venkatesa!
Let me be a humble servitor
At Thy blessed Lotus Feet.
My heart melts
At the thought
Of Thy endless glory.
Om Nama Venkatesaya!

9. Lord Varadaraja

This is a Vishnu Temple
In little Conjeevaram.
It is two miles distant
From the Great Temple.
There is a hall of 96 pillows.
There is a tank.
Varadaraja is the deity.

O Kanchi Varadappa!
O Lord Narayana!
Sundara Varadha
O my only Saviour!
In Thee all is born,
All move and into Thee enter.
Thou art everywhere,
Like whiteness in the milk!
My heart is thy temple.
Hail Divine Grace.
Hail Vishnu, Hail Varada.

10. Lord Renganatha

O Lord Renganatha of Srirangam!
O Seshasayi, Sleeper on the couch of serpent!
Beloved consort of Renganayaki!
Salutations unto Thee, Hey Prabhu!
I am Thy humblest servant.
Installing Thy Holy Feet
In my heart, I move and work.
Let Thy will be done.
Reveal Thy true form to me.

Andal merged herself in Thy light.
Thou art the husband of Andal
Daughter of Vishnuchitta
Avatar of Neela Devi.
Munivahana or Tiruppanalwar
Also vanished in Thy flame of splendour.
Let me also lose myself in Thy effulgence.
Hail Ranga! Wake up Ranga!
Wake up in my heart.
Om Namo Narayanaya.

11. Sriviliputur

This is in Ramnad District,
There is a big Temple of Vishnu,
Vatapatrasayi dwells here.
Vishnuchitta or Periyalvar
Served Vatapatrasayi!

Andal, daughter of Vishnuchitta
Was born here.
She converted Sriviliputur
Into Brindavan.
She collected some boys
And made them cowherds.
O Lord Vatapatrasayi,
O Lord Vishnu!
Prostrations unto Thee
I got Thy Grace
I know today
That redemption is
At Thy feet alone!
Hail Hari! Hail Govinda!
Om Namo Narayanaya!

12. Anantasayanam

This is a Vishnu Temple
In Trivandrum.
The Lord is Padmanabha
He sleeps on the couch
Of Serpent, Adishesha.
O Lord Hari!
I bow before Thee
I will sing Thy name

In holy company.
I shall do Thy will.
Cut off my mortal bonds.
Open the way to Thy feet.
Thou art my life-breath.
Thou art my soul.
Thou art vigilant,
While I sleep.
Om Namo Narayanaya.

13. Guruvayur Krishna

Guruvayur is in Malabar.
There is a famous temple here.
Krishna grants great boons.
May Krishna protect me,
Who shines with Rukmani,
Who destroyed Kamsa,
Who did Rasa lila with gopis,
Who taught Gita to Arjuna,
Who gave instructions to Uddhava.
Let us sing Krishna's name—
Yamuna theera vihari
Brindawana Chanchari
Govardhana Giridhari
Gopala Krishna Murari.

14. Udipi-Krishna

Udipi is in South Kanara.
This is one of the eight centres
Of Shri Yadava Sampradaya.
Lord Krishna is the presiding deity.
O Lord Krishna
Who uplifts all!
Prostrations unto Thee.
Make me Thy own,
Ignore my faults,
Make me Divine.
Who in this universe is flawless?
Let not the singing of Thy Glory
Ever cease on my tongue.
OM Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

15. Ayodhya Vasi Ram

Prostrations to Lord Rama,
The Jewel of kings,
Who is the Lord of Sita,
Who is the friend of Sugriva,
Who is the master of Hanuman,
Who is the Avatara of Vishnu.
Who is the Destroyer of Ravana.
O Lord Rama! O Raghava!
Thou art an ocean of mercy.
Thou art Mariyadha Purushottama.
Thou art the refuge of devotees.
I have filled my being,
With Thy love.
I installed Thee
In my heart.
Om Sri Ramaya Namah.

16. Bhadrachalam Ram

Here is a beautiful Rama's temple.
Ramdas had darshan of Rama here.
Salutations to Ramachandra,
Lord of Janaki,
Brother of Bharatha, Lakshman,
Hero of Valmiki Rishi,
Ishtam of Tulsidas,
Refuge of Visbhishana,
King of Ayodhya,
Disciple of Vashishta!

Let us sing Rama's name:-
Badrachalavasi Ram Ram
Dasarathanandana Ram Ram
Dasamuhamardhana Ram Ram
Papavimochana Ram Ram
Bhaktavatsala Ram Ram
Patitapavana Ram Ram
Bhaktaposhaka Ram Ram
Muktidayaka Ram Ram.

17. Hanuman Ghadi

This is a temple for Sri Hanuman
It is in Ayodhya.

O Lord Hanuman,
Servant of Lord Rama,
Son of Anjana Devi
And wind God!
O Mighty Hero!
O Learned Nawauyakara of Pandit!
O Wise Sage!
Prostrations unto Thee!

Let us sing His name:-
Anjaneya Veera,
Hanumantha Sura.
Jeya Jeya Sita Ramki,
Jeya Bolo Hanumanki.
Rama Lakshmana Janaki,
Jeya Bolo Hanumanki.
Jeya Shya Ram Jeya Jeya Shya Ram,
Jeya Hanuman Jeya Jeya Hanuman.

Let us recite Hanuman Gayatri:-
Tat purushaya Vidmahe
Vayu Putraya dheemahi
Tanno Hanumantha Prochodayat.
Vatatmajaya Vidmahe
Mahaveeraya dheemahi
Tanno Anjaneyah Prachodayat.

18. Alwar Tirunagari

There is a Vishnu temple here.
It is in the Tinnevelly District.
The image of Nammalwar
Is worshipped here.
O Lord Hari!
O Achuta, Govinda

O Protector of the helpless,
I bow to Thee again and again.
I meditate on Thee
As the inmost essence of all.
Thy presence is felt
Inside and outside.

Do thou increase my love
For all beings.
Save me from the ocean

Of worldly existence.
Om Namo Narayanaya.

19. Sri Vaikuntham

There is a Vishnu temple here.
It is in the Tinnevely district.
O Lord Vishnu!
Consort of Goddess Lakshmi,
Salutations unto Thee.
You exist in all beings
In the form of Peace.
Thou art the preservative aspect.
Thou art subtle
Thou art the immutable
Thou art the Supreme Light.
Thou art a great Giver:
Grant me unflinching devotion
Upto Thee.
This is the proper time
For making gifts.
Om Namo Narayanaya.

Chapter Two

LORD SIVA'S TEMPLES

20. Kedarnath

O Lord Kedarnath of Uttara Khand!
Thou art a Jyotir Linga.
Thy temple is on the banks of Mandakini.
Thou art as pure as the Himalayan snow.
Thou art the Source of Light and Life.
Thou art the Dispeller of Ignorance.
I have come pure in heart
To Thy Holy Presence.
Open your doors.
Direct towards me
Thy gracious look.

O Jyoti that burns the desires.
Thou art my Lord, my Saviour,
My all, my King, my Life.
Kindle the light of love

In my heart.
Prostrations unto Thee, O Lord.
OM Nama Sivaya.

21. Kashi Viswanath

O Lord Viswanath,
Who dwells in Varanasi,

Who whispers Rama Taraka-mantra
Into the ears of those who die in Benares,
Consort of Annapoorni and Visalakshi!
Salutations unto Thee.

I cling to Thy grace alone;
For I have no other hold.
I hold Thy lotus feet
And look for Thy grace.
My darling Siva, my nectar,
Pupil of my eye,
Solace of the miserable!
Who is there to save me
In this world except Thee, Sambo.

I am sure of Thy grace;
I cry for Thy grace;
I shall not leave Thy feet.
Surrender, Siva, surrender!
O my only Saviour!
OM Namo Mahadevaya!

22. Bheemsankar

There is a Siva's temple here.
It is one Of the 12 Jyotir lingas.
O Lord Siva, O Neelakanta
I bow to Thee
Thou art in the grass,
In the flowers and the heart.
Thou art the ocean.
Thou art the sky.
Fill me with energy.
Bestow strength and love,
Power and fortitude unto me.
Do Thou bring to me
What is auspicious.

Om Namo Bhagawate Rudraya.

23. Baijanath

This is near Almora Kangra.
There is a Siva's temple.
It is one of the 12 Jyotir Lingas.

O Lord Hara, O Sambhu,
Salutations unto Thee!
Nothing is beyond Thy ken;
But Thou art not perceived by any.
Thou art the eternal controller,
Guide and Redeemer.
Thou art the Ruler of the Devas.
Thou art the Lord of the Universe.
Have mercy upon me, O Lord.
Promptly grant me devotion
To Thy lotus feet.
Om Namo Mahadevaya.

24. Somanath

This is an ancient town
In the Junagarh State,
In the South of Kathiawar.
There is a Siva Temple.
It is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas.

O Lord Siva,
I take refuge in Thee.
Thou art unborn, formless.
Thou art the Supreme Brahman.
Thou art the Lord of Gods.
To Thee, O Lord,
I offer my worship.
Hail Siva! Hail Rudra!!
OM Namasivayah.

25. Ghusravesam

This is one of the Jyotir Lingas.
In Sivalaya.

O Lord Siva!
I bow to Thee

May I be free from impurity.
May I realise myself
As the light divine.
May my mind become pure.
Whither shall I turn?
What shall I do?
How can I support myself?
Where art Thou, O Lord?
I have taken refuge in Thee.
Save me, protect me.
Om Namasivaya.

26. Nageswaram

This is one of the Jyotir Lingas.
It is in Darukavanam.

O Lord Sankara!
Obeisance to Thee.
You have come within my sight.
So my eyes are blessed.
Drench me with the milk
Of highest wisdom.
Thou art beyond all duality.
Thou art the bestower of Bliss.
Thou art the ocean of compassion.
Hail to you, Lord of Parvathy.
Hail to you, Supreme Being.
Om Namasivaya.

27. Mahakal

Mahakal is one of the Jyotir Lingas.
In Ujjain.

O Lord Hara! O Sankara!
Prostration unto Thee.
Thy light alone illumines
The things of this Universe.
O Protector of the refugees,
O Treasure of Truth!
Thou art my Lord.
Dry up the ocean
Filled with water of desire.

There is none equal to Thee.

Thou art the wonderful flower
With such fragrance
Of Satchitananda!
Om Namasivaya.

28. Mallikarjun

This is one of the Jyotir Lingas.
It is in Srisailam
In the Andhra Province.

O Lord Siva!
Salutations unto Thee.
I know no invocation,
Or contemplation.
I know no stotras
In Thy Praise.
I know not Thy mantra,
Not even how to address Thee.
Protect me anyhow.
Thou art the support
And immanent Soul
Of everything—
The very basis of the world.
OM Namasivaya.

29. Omkar Ishwar

This is in Gujarat.
This is one of the 12 Jyotir Lingas.
Lord Siva abides here.

O Lord Sankar!
O Kailasapathy, Pasupathy,
Parvathypathy, Gauripathy,
Prostrations unto Thee!
Thy compassion makes
The mute eloquent
The cripple scales mountains.
Thou art the stay of the Vedas,
And the auxiliary branches.
Of the Vedanta
And all forms of learning.
Om Namasivaya.

30. Triambhakeshwar

This is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas.
Godavari takes its origin from here.
It is near Panchavati.

O Lord Siva, O Sambhu,
Who is the Lord of all beings,
Who is the source of happiness
To the distressed.
There is no other refuge but Thee.
O Lord, be propitious!
O All-merciful Lord,
Have mercy on me;
Else Thou wilt lose
Thy reputation of being gracious
Towards Thy devotees.
OM Namoh Mahadevayah.

31. Rameshwaram

Lord Rama worshipped Siva here—
So the Linga is called Ramalingeshwar.
People take the water, from Gangotri
For abhisheka for this Linga.
This is one of the four Damas.
This is a Jyotir linga.

I offer my praise to Ramalingeshwar,
The bestower of happiness,
The source of bliss,
Who is three-eyed,
Who is the Lord of all beings,
Who has a garland of skulls,
Who has matted hair,
Who is the Consort of Parvathy!
Om Namoh Baghavate Rudraya.

32. Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram

There is Akasa Lingam here.
Death in Benares gives Moksha;
Birth in Tiruvarur gives Moksha;
Smaran of Arunachalam gives Moksha;
Dashan of Nataraja gives bloksha.
All the Saiva Saints—

Appar, Sambhandar, Manickavasagar–
Have sung hymns on Nataraja.

O Lord Nataraja,
Consort of Sivakami,
O Master-Dancer of Tillai,
O Ponnambalam, O Chittrambalam,
O Sankara, O Sambhu,
O Mahakala, O Mritunjaya,
O Dweller in Mount Kailas,
O Rider on Bull!
Salutations unto Thee!
Let me Dwell in Thee for ever.
Om Namo Bhagawate Sadasivayah.

33. Kalahasti

Vayu lingam is here.
It is in the Andhra Province.
The Lord is Kalahasteeswarar.
Kannappa Nayanar
Attained Salvation here.

O Lord Siva!
Thou art unborn, eternal,
The cause of all causes.
Thou art the Supreme purifier.
Thou art the Indwelling Spirit.
Thou art beyond all reasoning.
Thou art the Innermost Atma.
Prostrations unto Thee.
OM Namasivaya.
OM Namu Mahadevaya.

OM Namu Bhagavate Rudraya.
OM Namu Bhagavate Sadasivaya.

34. Arunachalam

This is Tejas Lihgam
Of Tiruvannamalai.
Arunachal is the hill of fire.

O auspicious Lord,
O Bearer of little drum,
O Sulapani with Trident,

O Dakshinamoorthy,
O Rudra, O Mahadeva
O Parvathi Natha, Salutations unto Thee!
Have mercy on me, O Lord
Let me be consumed
In Thy divine Flame,
Fire of wisdom.
Hail Haro Hara.
Hail Haro Hara.
Haro Hara Haro Hara.
Haro Hara Haro Hara.

35. Jambukeswaram

This is near Trichnopoly–
There is a big Siva Temple.
Lord Jambukeswara dwells here.
He is Appu lingam.
He ever remains underneath water.

O Lord Siva,
Consort of Akhilandeswari,
Who wears Ganges on the head,
Who is the Lord of the five elements,
Who is gracious and sweet,
Who assumed the form of Jyoti
Who dwells in the crematorium,
Who wears Serpent as ornament,
Who has a blue neck,
Who drank the poison!
Salutations unto Thee!
Open my Third Eye.
OM Namasivaya.

36. Ekambareswar

This is Prithvi Lingam
In Big Conjeevaram,
Fortysix miles
South-West of Madras.
The Siva's temple is huge.
There are big towers,
The thousand pillowed hall,
And some five tanks.
The Gopura is 188 feet.

O Lord Ekambareswar!
Thou art the Supreme Truth,
Self-effulgent, Infinite
And primeval.
Thou verily art Time.
Thou abideth in all.
Thou art the origin of all.
Prostrations unto Thee!
Om Namasivaya.

37. Amarnath

There is an ice-lingam here.
Yatra begins in June:
Go to Srinagar, in Kashmir,
Then go to Pyalgaon
In motor car,
Then walk or go on horse-back.
The State makes arrangements.

O Lord Amarnath!
O Immortal Lord,
Obeisance unto Thee.
O Supporter and nurse
Of this vast universe!
In seeking of Thee,
Even miseries become joys,
Poison becomes nectar.
OM Namah Sivaya.

38. Muktinath

This is in Nepal.
There is a Siva's temple.
The path is difficult.
But if you want Mukti,—
If you want Muktinath,—
The path will become very easy.

O Lord Siva! O Muktinath!
Thou art the one Brahman
Without a second.
Thou art the destroyer
Of three Taapaas.
I take refuge in Thee.
Thou art the Father and mother

Of all Beings.
Salutations unto Thee.
Om Namasivaya.

39. Pasupathinath

This is Lord Siva's shrine
At Kathmandu, Nepal.
People from all parts of India
Assemble here during Sivaratri.
The festival is unparalleled.
The State makes grand arrangements.
O Lord Siva,
Lord of Patus or Jivas,
O Blue-necked Lord,
The Destroyer of Daksha's sacrifice,
The beloved of Uma,
The five-faced Ishwara,
Holder of Trident,
Swallower of Poison!
Prostrations unto Thee.
Through Thy grace
I realised oneness with Thee.
Sivoham, Siva kevaloham.
Chidanandarupa Sivoham.

40. Tunganath

This is near Kedarnath
In the Himalayas,
On the way of Chamoli.
There is a Siva's temple.
There is a steep ascent.
O Lord Siva!
I bow to Thee.
Thou art the thunderbolt,
In destroying the sins.
Thou art a panacea
For the disease of rebirth.
Thou art the Sun,
That dispels the darkness
Of ignorance.

Thou art the gateway
To the mansion of bliss.
Thou art a bonfire

To the tree of Maya.
OM Nama Sivasya.

41. Gopeshwar

Lord Siva assumed the form
Of a Gopi,
And witnessed the Raslila
In Brindavan.

Lord Krishna found Him out
And worshipped Lord Siva
As Gopeshwar.
Gopeshwar temple
Is in Brindavan.
There is another Gopeshwar
Near Chamoli
In the Himalayas.

O Gopeshwar!
Salutations unto Thee.
This is Thy another Maya.
Salutations to Thee before
And to Thee behind;
Salutations to Thee
On every side.
On Thee, the One
Alone I meditate.
OM Nama Sivaya.

42. Sitakund

This is near Chittagong,
Siva is the presiding deity.
There is a Kunda
The fire emanates from earth
Along with water.

Sita took bath in the Kunda.
A big fair is held
During 'Maghi-poornima'.

O Lord Siva !
To follow Thee
Is to remove all sufferings.
I take shelter

At Thy blessed feet.

Thou art my all in all.
Bless me with the touch
Of Thy benign grace,
Beaming from Thy glance.
OM Namah Sivaya.

43. Gokaran

There is a Siva temple here
Ravana got the Prana Linga
From Lord Siva.
It was installed in the temple.
The name of the Lord
Is Mahabaleshwar

O Lord Mahabaleshwar!
O Atma Linga!
Prana of pranas,
Soul of Souls,
Prostrations unto Thee.

The wise cross this ocean of Samsara
Through Thy grace alone
Thou hast no form
No colour, no weapons,
No particular abode;
Yet Thou revealest Thyself
Unto Thy devotees
In a personal Form.
Om Namasivaya.

44. Madyarjuna

This is near Kumbakonam.
It is known by the name
Tiruvadamarudur also.
There is a reputed
Siva's temple here.

O Lord Siva !
I bow to Thee.
Thou art the One to be known
Thou art the most ancient Being.
O Lover of Thy devotees,

Redeemer of Pushpadanta,
Saviour of Manickavachakar,
O Teacher of the universe,
Save me, guide me,
Mahadeva, Mahalinga
Madyarjunesa mam pahi.

45. Madura Temple

Madura is on the banks
Of Vaigai River,
This was the capital of Pandya Kings.
This is a magnificent temple,
The Deity is Sundaresa,
Consort of Meenakshi!
O Lord Sundaresa!
You carried earth on your head
For the sake of *Puttu*
Of the old lady.

You were beaten by the king
When you did not do you your allotted work,
To please and serve thy devotees;
You had to suffer a lot!

Thou art all-merciful!
Thou art Bhaktavatsala!
Thou art Ocean of Mercy,
Prostrations unto Thee,
OM Namah Sivaya!

46. Tiruvaniappan

In Shiyali, South India,
There is a Siva's temple.
This is the name for Lord Siva.
Parvati gave a cup of milk
To Tirugyana Sambhandar,
The greatest Tamil Saint.
It was the cup of milk of Wisdom.
O Lord Siva,
Prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Bliss Eternal.
Thou art beyond all darkness.
I take shelter
At Thy blessed Feet.

Thou art my Master,
I am Thy servant.
Do Thou maintain
This relationship.
OM Namah Sivaya.

47. Vaikkam

This is in Cochin.
There is a famous Siva's temple.
Lord Siva is known
By the name, Vaikkamappa.

O Lord Mahadeva!
I do not beg for a Kingdom,
Nor for gold and jewels.
Nor intellectual attainments.

Do Thou reveal Thyself
Unto me.
Do Thou grant me
Intense devotion unto Thee.
Free my mind
From passions and impurities.
OM Namah Sivaya.

48. Tiruvalur

This is in Tanjore district,
Lord Tyagaraja dwells here
Birth in Tiruvalur gives Moksha
Just as death in Benaras gives Mukti.

O Lord Tyagesa!
O Sankara, O Sambhu,
O Lord of Mercy,
Who kept the poison in the throat
To Save the world.
O Neela Kantha, O blue-necked one!
Prostrations unto Thee.

Give me that third eye of wisdom
To behold Thee everywhere;
Give me that soft heart
Which will melt easily
When I see the suffering of others;

Let me ever recite Thy Name—
OM Namō Sivaya.

Chapter Three

LORD SUBRAMANIA'S TEMPLES

49. Rockfort Temple

This is a beautiful rock.
It is in Trichinopoly.
Ganesh resides at the Top.
Below is Mathrubhuteshwar.

Remover of all obstacles,
Pranava Swaroopi,
Embodiment of wisdom,
Devata of Muladhara Chakra,
O Lord Vinayaka,
The bestower of happiness,
Who has Modaka in hand;
O Elephant-headed Lord!
Salutations unto Thee.
Om Gam Ganapataye Namah—
Om Ekadantaya Vidmahe
Vakratundaya dheemahi
Tanno Dantee prachodayat.

50. Kathirgama Murugha

Kathirgama is in Jaffna, Ceylon.
It is a Subramanya Kshetra.
Manicka Gangai flows here.
The Priest is a Singalese.

No one has seen what is inside,
There are only seven screens.
The deity is a powerful one.
He gives Adesh to a sincere devotee
If he remains there for three days.
Maunds of camphor are burnt
During Skanda Sashti.

O Murugha, O Skanda,
Salutations unto Thee.

You had six separate bodies
Parvati embraced you.
You assumed one form
With six heads.

Save me, protect me
Haro Hara, Haro Hara
Haro Hara, Haro Hara.

51. Palani Andava

O Lord of Palani Hills!
O Thandayutha Pani!

O Kartikeya, O Murugha!
Salutations unto Thee.

Thou art younger brother of Ganesh.
Thou art Nirguna Brahman.
You Blessed Pornaigri.
Thou art Siva's six sparks of Light Divine
Thou art the great General
Of celestial forces
Thou art the Destroyer
Of Tarakasura and Singhamukha
Sura Padma became
Thy vehicle and flag
The six Kartikeya girls nursed you
So you are named Kartikeya.

Come, come O Lord Subramania!
Bless me, O Skhanda,
I am Thine, all is Thine my Lord!

52. Swami Malai

This is near Kumbakonam.
There is a famous temple
For Lord Subramanya.
This is the Upadesha Sthala.
Lord Subramanya became
The Guru of Lord Siva.
He initiated Omkara,
Or the sacred Pranava,
In Siva's ears.

O Holder of 'Vel' of power
O Vellayudha! Velmuruha
Thy Vel and Hari's discus are one.
Thy Vel is the granter of boons.
Salutations unto Thee
And Thy mighty Vel.
Om Saravanabhavaya Namah.

53. Tiruthani

It is near Tirupathy.
There is a temple of Skandha.

O Subramanya!
O General of Deva's forces!
O Destroyer of evil
O Kartikeya, Siva's son;
Six sparks from Sankara's fire!
O God of War!
Salutations unto Thee.
Thy Mother Parvathy
Embraced six babies.
You assumed one body
And six heads.
Thou art the power of Wisdom,
Truth, Good and Grace.
All powers of manhood
Are Thy power.
Saravanabhava Paahimam
Kartikeya Rakshamam.

54. Tirupparan Gundram

Subramanya dwells here
The temple is on a hill
It is in the district of Madura.
There is a railway station.

The Lord likes to dwell on a hill
Sura Padma became a peacock
And the vehicle of the Lord.
How fortunate he is!
He was the Lord's enemy
And yet the Lord blessed him.
How kind Subramania is!
He is an ocean of mercy.

Glory to Lord Kartikeya!
Hail Skanda!
Hail Murugha!
Hail Guha!

55. Tiruchendur

This in the Tinnevelly District.
There is a famous temple
Of Lord Subramania.

O Lord Kartikeya!
Consort of Valli, Deivanai,
Prostrations unto Thee.
Let thy 'Vel' protect me.

You killed the Asuras:
Sura Padma and Tarakasura
In the days of yore.
This is not creditable.
Show thy strength now
In killing the asuras—
Lust, anger and greed,—
That are tormenting me.
OM Saravanabhavaya namah.

56. Tiruchendur II

This is a Subramanya Kshetra,
It is in the Tinnevelly district
It is on the sea shore.
The Lord is with His two Shaktis,
Valli and Deivanai,
Iccha shakti and Jnana shakti.
He is holding Vel,
An Emblem of Power and Royalty.

O Subramania,
The second son of Parvati,
Younger brother of Ganesh,
O Vel Murugha, O Velapati,
Prostrations unto Thee.
Let me abide in Thee for ever.
Skandam Vande lokesam
Gouri putram valleesam.

57. Ghand Kapur

This is in Maharashtra.
A celebrated Temple
Of Dattatreya is here.

O Lord Dattatreya,
Son of Atri-Anusuya,
Salutations unto Thee.
Thou art the only refuge,
The only object of adoration.
Thou art the light of knowledge,
Thou art resplendent,
Thou art the One to be known
Through the Vedanta.

To Thee, the One alone
I offer my worship.
Thou art the witness
Of the universe.
Dattatreya namah OM
Dattatreya Saranam OM.

58. Girnar

Girnar is in Kathiawar.
On the summit of Girnar Hills
Are the footprints of Lord Dattatreya.
Nearby stands the temple of Ambaji.
Ambaji is Mother of Anusuya.
A sincere devotee
Can meet Him here even now.
The Sound of His sandals is heard.
He gives Darshan
To the faithful and the devoted.

O Lord Dattatreya,
Trimurti Avatara,
Child of Anusuya and Atri.
Prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art the Adi Guru
Of Sannyasins.
Thou art an embodiment of Tyag.
Thou act an Avathootha.
Dattatreya Dattatreya Paahimam
Datta Guru Datta Guru Rakshamam.

59. Pushkar

This is near Ajmere.
This is the only place in India.
Which has a temple for Brahma.

O Lord Brahma!
Consort of Saraswati,
Creator of this world,
Salutations unto Thee.

Thou art Hiranyagarbha.
Thou art the Creative aspect.
Thou art the Vishnu and Siva.
Thou art the past, present and future.

Thou art the All.
Thou art the first-born.
Thou art the golden egg.
Thou art Karya Brahman.
I take refuge in Thee,
Save me, protect me.

Chapter Four

DEVI'S TEMPLES

60. Gangotri

This is in Himalayas
In the Tehri-Garhwal State.
The Ganges' Source is here.
Ganges flows out of a cow's mouth—
It is called Gomukh.
It is actually an ice cave.
The temple contains
Images of Ganga, Bhagirati.
Sadhus stay here
And practise meditation.
It is full of spiritual vibrations.

O Mother Bhagirathi, O Ganga,
Thou givest boons to all.
Thou art the remover of all miseries.
Thou art the purifier of all sinners.

Thou art the mistress of this world.
Thou art the nourisher of all.
Prostrations unto Thee, O Mother.
OM Namō Bhagavati Ganga Rani.

61. Jwalamukhi

This is near Kangra,
In the Punjab.
Durga is the Presiding Deity,
Seven flames emanate
From the earth.

O Durga Devi, Mother Divine,
Prostrations unto Thee.
If you become gracious
What is here
Which is not attainable?

May all my mental activity
Be your thought!
May all my vocal activity
Be your praise!
May all my physical activity
Be your obeisance!
OM Durgayai Namah.

62. Vishnu Devi

Mother dwells here in a cave,
Near Jammu, Kashmir State.
Mahakali, Maha Lakshmi.
Maha Saraswati are here.
This is a famous place
Of pilgrimage.
O Devi, O Goddess,
Salutations unto Thee.
Thou art the bestower
Of Divine Wisdom.
Thou art the embodiment
Of spiritual love.
Thou art the Manifest
And the Unmanifest.
Thou art the earth, water,
Fire and air.
OM Parashaktiyai Namah.

63. Kalighat-Kali

Calcutta derives its name
From Kalighat,
The shrine of Goddess Kali,
Close to Adi Ganga.
She has two Forms—
One mild, the other fierce.
In her mild form She is Uma, Parvati;
In her terrible form
She is Durga, Chandika, Bhairavi.
She has four arms.
She wears a necklace of skulls.
Her tongue protrudes.
Her eyes are red.
She stands on Lord Siva.

Her only clothing is a girdle
Made of dead men's hands.
O Mother Kali, O Mother Divine,
Thou art the bestower
Of success and intelligence.
Mantras constitute thy form.
Salutations unto Thee.
Hail Kali, the black.
OM Krim Kalikayai Namah.

64. Dakshineswar

This is in Calcutta
On the bank of the Ganges.
The presiding deity is Kali.
There are twelve Lingas here.
They represent
The twelve Jyotir-lingas.

O Lord Siva, O divine Guru,
Prostrations unto Thee.
O Mother Kali,
Shakti of Rudra,
Adorations unto Thee.

Thou art my only refuge.
I possess no devotion,
Nor have I observed
Any vows even.

Bless me, Mother
OM Kalikayai namah.

65. Kamakshi

This is a temple
Near Gauhati, in Assam.
The temple is on a hillock
In the centre of Brahmaputra.

When Durga's body was cut
Into fifty-two pieces,
One piece fell here.
The Goddess is very powerful.

O Mahasakti, O Mother Divine,
Who exists in all beings
In the form of beauty,
Salutations unto Thee.

Prostrations to the Divine Mother
Who exists in all beings
In the form of mercy.
OM Durgam Deveem
Saranamaham Prapadye.

66. Chamundi

This is the Devi
Who resides in Mysore.
She dwells on a Hill.

O Mother Divine,
Thou art the Supreme Creatrix.
Thou art Maha Maya, Maha Vidya.
Thou art Para Sakti.
Thou art Kundalini Sakti.
Thou art faith and intelligence.
Thou art vasana and Buddhi.
Thou art Effulgence and power.
Thou pervadest all forms.
Thou art Avyaktam.
Thou bestowest Salvation.
Prostration unto Thee, Mother.
Hail Chamundi, Hail Chamundi
OM Aim Hrim Kleem

Chamundayai Vicche.

67. Mukhambhi

This is in a forest
Near Mangalore.
If anyone does tapas here
For forty days,
He will obtain the Grace of Saraswati.
There is a temple here.
There are Murtis of
Brahma, Vishnu, Siva
Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Parvathy.

O Mukambi Devi!
O Goddess of learning.
Beauty's Grace
Shines in Thy face.
Dwell always in my tongue.
Give me Tushti, Pushti, Vidya.
Thou art the only refuge,
The only object of adoration.
Thou art Brahma Sakti.
Adorations unto Thee
OM Aim Saraswatiyai Namah.

68. Ranganayaki

O Mother Divine,
O Goddess Lakshmi,
Consort of Ranganath,
Who dwells in Srirangam,
Salutations unto Thee.

O Auspicious Mother!
A bad son may be born,
But there is no bad mother anywhere.
Is a mother indifferent
Towards her child,
Who is desirous of jumping
Into a well?

Are you not the Mother
Of this universe?
Take me to Moksha Dhama
Or to perdition.

It is left to you
To earn fame or infamy.
OM Sri Maha Lakshmiyai Namah.

69. Kasi Visalakshi

O adorable Mother of Compassion!
Consort of Kasi Viswanath,
Salutations unto Thee.
Thou art Tripurasundari.
Thou art Raja Raieswari.
Thou art Ambal Devi.
Thou art Durga Kali,
Chandi and Chamundi.
Thou art 'Om Hrim OM'.
Thou art Maha Maya.
Thou art Adi Siva Sakti.
Thou art symbol of womanhood.
Thou art Jagad Janani.
Thou art the Support of this world.
Save me, bless me.
Hail Mother! Hail Visalakshi.

70. Kanchi Kamakshi

O Mother Kamakshi,
Consort of Ekambareshwara,
Who dwells in Conjeevaram.
Prostrations unto Thee.
Thou alone createst this world.
Thou art Maha Vidya, Maha Maya.
Thou art Bhavani.
Thou art Prakriti with three gunas.
Thou art Sri Vidya.

Thou art Mahamoha.
Thou art Parasakthi.
Shower Thy blessings on me.
Hail, hail O Rider on the lion.
Hail Devi, hail Baghawath.

71. Madurai Meenakshi

O sweet Mother, Meenakshi!
Consort of Sundaresa
Who dwells in Madura

DEVI'S TEMPLES

Thou art Gauri, Uma
Sankari and Savitry
Thou art Mother of Ganesh and Skanda.

Thou art the destroyer
Of Mahishasura, Rhaktabhij,
And Dhumralochana
Shumba and Nishumba.

O Devi! be pleased!
Protect me, guide me,
Remove the veil of ignorance.
Introduce me to Lord Sundaresa.
Make me rest in Samadhi.
Let me unite with Thy Lord.
Hail Hrim, Hail Ambika

72. Kanya Kumari

This is the Devi
Who dwells in Cape Comorin.

O Devi, O mother auspicious.
Thou art the Lord's Maya.
Thou art His inscrutable form.
Thou art the Mother of this world.
Thou art the great primal energy.
Thou art the seed of this world.
Thou art the Light of Knowledge.
Thou art the giver of refuge.
Thou art beauty, love and mercy.
Thou art Prakriti, Durga.
Salutations unto Thee.
Om Katyayanaya Vidmahe
Kanya Kumari Dheemahi
Tanno Durga Prachodayat.

Chapter Five

BUDDHIST AND JAIN TEMPLES

73. Buddha Gaya.

There is a magnificent temple here.
Lord Buddha is seated here.

It is the most sacred spot
For the Buddhists.
Lord Buddha attained Buddhahood
Under a Bo tree here.

O Lord Buddha!
Apostle of Ahimsa,
O Enlightened Teacher.
Salutations unto Thee.
Hail Buddha:
Buddham saranam Gachchami.

74. Saranath

It is next in Sanctity
To Buddha Gaya.
It is near Benaras.
Asoka built a large Stupa
On this spot,
Where Buddha first taught
His doctrines.
There is a beautiful temple here.
Glory to Lord Buddha,
The Avatara of Lord Hari.

75. Mount Abu Jain Temple

Abu is a mountain
In the South of Rajputana.
The temple stands on the top
Of Aravalli hills.
There are five temples.
Vimalasah is dedicated
To Rishabha,
The first Tirtamkara.
Vastepala dedicated to Neminath,
The twenty-second Tirtamkara.
The temples are made
Of white marble.

Tirtamkaras are liberated sages.
They are Jain teachers.
Prostrations to the teachers.
Glory to Tirtamkaras.

76. The Golden Temple, Amritsar.

The fourth Guru, Ram Das,
Erected the Temple.
His son completed it.

It is sometimes called Darbar Saheb.
It stands in the centre
Of a large, square tank,
Bordered by marble pavements;
And is approached
By a marble causeway.
Granth Sahib is recited here daily.
There is kirtan and Bhajan.

77. Nagore Anadava

Nagore is near Negapatam.
This is a Samadhi Temple
Of a great Muslim Saint.
Hindus also do worship.
The Saint still plays siddhis.
Many diseases are cured.
The Prasad is black sugar.
There is a big Kandri Festival.

O Nagore Andava!
Salutations unto Thee
Saint and Lord are one.
Allah and God are one.
Ram and Rahim are one.
Behold unity, friends!
Have broad tolerance.
All religions are one in essence.
Rest peacefully in the One.

PART TWO

DESCRIPTIONS

1. Amarnath

This is a sacred place in the Himalayas. It is at a distance of 80 miles from Srinagar, Kashmir. There is a huge cave here, sacred to Lord Mahadeva. There is a Siva Linga here naturally formed of ice.

The scenery is extremely beautiful. The snowclad hills captivate the heart. Springs and streams are delightful.

The Yatra to this holy cave is usually performed in July-August. The Kashmir State does help to the pilgrims. The State provides a moving dispensary, a doctor and a Magistrate.

Pahalgam is the first stage. It is 61 miles from Srinagar. Motor Car runs up to this. It is 7200 feet above sea level. Two rivers Kolahal and Seshanag join here. The next resting place is Chandanwan, 9 miles from Pahalgam. After walking a distance of 6 miles you reach the big Seshanag lake, which is five miles long and 2 miles broad. Panchatarani lies a little further up. Five rivers flow here. Hence the significant name. Thereupon you will have to walk on ice for two miles. Now you will reach your destination, the sacred cave of Amarnath, which is 50 ft. long, 55 ft. broad and 45 ft. high at the centre.

2. Ayodhya

Ayodhya is six miles from Fyzabad station. There is a railway station in Ayodhya also. Ayodhya is situated in Uttar Pradesh. It is the birth place of Lord Rama. It is the most sacred place of pilgrimage. It is on the banks of Sarayu.

Janmasthan, the place where Lord Rama was born is an important spot. There was a beautiful temple. Babar destroyed this temple in 1520 A.D. and built a mosque on the site. The mosque still exists.

Hanuman Garh (or Gadi) is another important place of worship. There is a very big murti of Lord Hanuman here.

There is another temple known as Kanak Bhavan (house of gold). The crowns of the images of Rama and Sita are made of gold.

Mani Parbat in Ayodhya is sacred to the Buddhists. Buddha preached his gospel here.

3. Alwar Tirunagari

It is the birth-place of Nammalwar. It is in the district of Tinnevely, South India. Festivals in his honour are performed every year. This is also one of the sacred places of pilgrimage in Southern India.

4. Badrinath

Badrinath is situated in the Tehri-Garhwal in Uttar Pradesh. It is 10140 feet above the sea level. It is on the banks of Alakananda. The Nara and Narayana, Lakshmi, Narad and Kuver are there. Sri Sankaracharya built this Vishnu temple. The presiding deity is Narayana.

There is a very sacred tank below this temple which is supplied with water from a hot spring. The chief priest of the temple is known as the Raval. He is always a Brahmin of the Nambudiri caste of Malabar.

The door of the temple opens in May. It is closed in November. The priest comes to Joshi Mutt or Jyotirmath below Badrinath.

In the days of yore the reputed Badrikashram was in Badrinath. Uddhava practised tapas and meditation here. Lord Krishna and Arjun lived here for a long time.

Brahmakapal were pinda or oblations are offered to the departed forefathers is near Badrinath.

5. Benares

Benares is the most sacred city of India. It is the centre of Hinduism and Sanskrit learning. Many Sannyasins live here. It is also known by the name Varanashi, a place between the two rivers, Varana and Ashi, springing from the right and left feet of Lord Siva. Lord Buddha preached his new gospel here.

The temple of Lord Vishwanath is the most important one. The Mohammedans destroyed the old Vishwanath temple, and threw the image in the holy well, Gyanavapi.

The next important temple is the Annapurna temple. Lord Siva deputed Annapurna to feed the world. The most popular festival is celebrated here. A big Annakut is held here during Deepavali. The golden image is taken out in procession.

Another important temple is the temple of Sakshi Vinayak. Every pilgrim should visit this temple after visiting Vishwanath and Annapurna temples. The feet and hands of Lord Ganesh are made up of silver.

There are 365 Chatras in Benares where food is freely distributed. Asi Ghat, the Dasaswamedha ghat, the Manikarnika, Panchaganga are the famous ghats. The Manikarnika is the most sacred ghat. It is the central ghat of Benares.

6. Bhadrachalam

Bhadrachalam is situated on the banks of the river Godavari. It is a sacred place of pilgrimage. It is 24 miles from Bhadrachalam road, the end of a branch line from Dornakal in the Andhra Pradesh. Lord Rama lost his wife, Sita here.

Lord Rama's temple is situated at Bhadrachalam. Pilgrims do their Yatra in April. The jungle near Bhadrachalam is the Dandaka forest.

Gopanna, nephew of Akkanna Minister, was the Tahsildar of the place. Gopanna got initiation from Kabirdas and became Ramdas. He spent six lakh of the revenue of the Sultan for the construction of the temple. Ramdas was incarcerated in the fort of Golconda. Lord Rama paid the amount to the Sultan and set Ramdas free.

7. Brindawan

Brindawan signifies the sacred forest, the forest of Brinda where Lord Krishna sported. It is six miles above Muttra on the same side of the river Jumna. It is regarded as one of the holiest towns of the Hindus. It contains a large number of temples. It is connected with Muttra by a branch railway. Lord Krishna did his Bala-ilas here. Brindawan is the scene of Lord Krishna's child life, his sport among the cowherds, his marvellous music with his flute, his various miracles.

The most famous of the present temples of Brindawan is the Govinda Deva Mandir, erected about 1590 A.D. by Raja Man Singh of Amber. Another important temple is the Ranganath Mandir. It is in South Indian Style. The temple authorities conduct a car festival.

Other important temples are Gopinath Mandir, Madan Mohan Mandir, Banki Bihari Mandir, Seva Kunj Mandir, Shahji Mandir, built in Muslim style, and Radha Mohan Mandir, built by the followers of Lord Gouranga.

There is a Siva temple also in Brindawan, known as Gopeshwar Mahadev. Lord Siva came to witness the Raslila by assuming the form of a Gopi. Lord Krishna recognized Him and adored Him as Gopeshwar or the Lord of the Gopis. It is said that no Hindu should leave Brindawan without worshipping Gopeshwar.

A big Jhoola Utsav or swinging festival is held in the month of Sravan. Pilgrims from all parts of India visit Brindavan.

8. Bombay

There are about 400 temples in Bombay. The most important temples of Bombay are that of Babulnath, Mumba Devi, Maha Lakshmi, Walkeshwar, Prabhadevi and Sri Venkateswar.

Mumbadevi is the guardian deity of Bombay. Bombay derives its name from her. Babulnath is a temple dedicated to Lord Siva.

9. Bhuvaneshvar

Bhuvaneshwar is an inland town about 20 miles south of Cuttack. It is a Railway station on the mainline between Calcutta and Madras. Once it was the proud capital of a large and flourishing kingdom. The founder was Yayati Kesari who expelled the Buddhists and established the Kesari or Lion dynasty of Orissa.

The chief temple is the Lingaraja temple. The name of the presiding deity is Tribhuvaneswara or the Lord of the three worlds. Siva is worshipped in the form of a large uncarved block of granite about 8 feet long. It is a Svayambhu linga.

The other temples are the Raja Rani temple, Brahmeswara temple, dedicated to Brahma and the Vasudev temple dedicated to Vishnu.

There are many rock-cut caves in the Udayagiri and Khandagiri. The Hathi Guha or the elephant cave, the Ravi Guha and the Ganesha Guha are found in the Udayagiri.

The Latghara Guha in the Khandagiri hill contains the figures of the Jain Tirthankaras. The figure of Rishaba Deva is beautiful.

There are many sacred tanks. The most sacred is Vindusagara. "Whatever merits may be acquired by annual pilgrimages to the source of the Ganges, the Prayaga or the Ganga Sagar, repeated for 60 years, may be acquired by a single bath in the Vindu Sagara."

Drops from all the sacred pools on earth, in heaven, in the lower regions and also nectar constantly fall into it. Hence the significant name, Vindu Sagara. It is celebrated to possess the combined sacredness of all the sacred rivers and tanks of India. Therefore, it is largely resorted to by pilgrims.

10. Chamundi Hill, Mysore City

There is a beautiful temple of the Goddess Chamundi, the Consort of Lord Siva, on the summit of this hill. There is an excellent road which leads up to the top of the hill, which can be reached in about half-an hour. Two-third of the way up Chamundi, sits a giant Nandi, the sacred bull of Lord Siva, hewn out of a single rock. It is 16 feet high.

Sri Chamundeswari is the tutelary deity of the Mysore Royal family.

The hill is 3490 ft. above the sea-level. The road up the hill is lighted by electric lights. There is a residence of His Highness the Maharajah at the top of the hill.

Dasera festival in September-October is very grand in Mysore. Huge crowds from all parts of India are attracted to the city.

11. Cape Comorin

Cape Comorin or Kanya Kumari is one of the most beautiful places of pilgrimage in India. It has a picturesque scenery. It is a lovely place where continent and ocean meet. There is sea on the three sides. The sacred temple is dedicated to the Goddess Parvathy. The Indian ocean with its two arms, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal washes and worships the holy feet of Mother Parvati.

Once upon a time the Asuras Baha and Mukha oppressed the Devas. The Devas approached Lord Siva who dwells at Benaras. Lord Siva created two Goddesses out of His Sakti. The one Goddess manifested as Kali at Kalighat and the other as Kanya Kumari or Virgin Goddess at Cape Comorin. They destroyed the wicked demons. The warlike festival called Ambuchashi is celebrated in the temple in the second month of the Malayalam year.

There are several beautiful bathing ghats. Those who go on pilgrimage to Benares should also visit Cape Comorin to fulfil their pious wish.

12. Chidambaram

Chidambaram or more correctly—Chittambalam (the atmosphere of wisdom) is about 150 miles south of Madras and seven miles from the coast. It is in the South Arcot district. It is a Railway station on Southern Railway on the main line. It is chiefly noted for the most sacred and celebrated temple of Lord Nataraja.

The temple is in the midway between the Vellar river on the north and the Coleroon on the South, the sea on the east and the Viranam lake on the West. In days of yore the Pandya Kings, the Chola Kings and the Pallava Kings patronized the temple. All the Tamil saints have sung praises of the Lord. The temple was the chosen abode of saints and poets.

There is Akasa lingam in Chidambaram. Lord Nataraja, the presiding Deity of the temple is in dancing pose. His left leg is raised. The idol of Nataraja is enshrined in the Holy Sanctum, known as the Chit Sabha. There is a curtain behind the idol of Nataraja. This is removed on special occasions of worship. There is mere space which represents Nirguna Brahman, devoid of all names and forms. This is the Chidambara Rahasya. Lord Nataraja has come out of the attributeless Brahman. There is a chakra (Chidambara Chakra) which contains the Panchakshara or five-letters of Lord Siva—Nama Sivaya—on the wall to the back of this idol.

There are five courts or Sabhas in the temple viz., the Chit Sabha, Kanaka Sabha, Raja Sabha or Durbar, the Nritta Sabha and the Deva Sabha.

Lord Nataraja danced in the Chit Sabha or the Hall within the temple. The five steps that lead to the Golden pillared hall or Kanaka Sabha represent the five letters—Nama Sivaya. The Raja Sabha is located within the thousand-pillared Hall. The Nritta Sabha demonstrates the Oordha Tandava dance of Lord Nataraja.

Govindaraja, the presiding deity of a Vishnu temple also dwells within this temple. The image of Nandanar, the Pariah saint is in a corner near the Nritta Sabha.

The Dikshatar Brahmins do worship in the temple. There are 250 families of Dikshatars.

Darshan of Lord Nataraja with intense bhav gives Mukti.

13. Conjeevaram

Conjeevaram or Kanchipuram is in the Chingleput district. It is 46 miles south-west of Madras on the Chingleput-Arkonam line. It was an important city of the Chola Kingdom. It was the capital of Tonda-mandalam in the fourteenth century. It was originally the capital of the Pallavas who ruled over South India between 4th and 8th centuries A.D. It consists of two divisions—Saiva or Big Conjeevaram (Siva-Kanchi) and Vishnu or Little Conjeevaram (Vishnu-Kanchi).

The Vijaynagar kings conquered the Town. After the fall of the Vijaynagar family in 1644, it was subject to the Muhammedan kings of Golconda. In 1751 Clive took the town from the French.

Conjeevaram is one of the seven sacred cities of India, the others being Ayodhya, Muttra, Hardwar, Benares, Dwaraka, and Avantika (Ujjain). A pilgrimage to Conjeevaram confers happiness in heaven.

Kamakshi Amman temple, dedicated to the Goddess Kamakshi, the consort of Lord Siva is the most important one. A Yantra is placed in front of the idol. There is an image of Sri Sankaracharya in this temple.

Sri Ekambaranatha temple is another important shrine of Lord Siva. It has great Gopuras, large Mandapas, the 1000 pillared hall and fine tanks. The largest Gopura has ten stories, its height being 188 feet.

Kachchapeswaram temple, Kailasanathar temple are other Saiva temples. There is a temple for Chitragupta also. This is the only place where there is a temple for the lieutenant of Lord Yama, recorder of Jiva's deeds.

The most important Vishnu temple is that of Varadaraja. The sanctum is built on a hillock. Vaikuntaperumal temple is another Vaishnava temple.

14. Calcutta

Kalighat temple is three miles from Howrah railway station. The name Calcutta is a corrupted form of the name 'Kalighatta'.

At Dakshineshwara on the eastern bank of the Ganges, there is a temple dedicated to Goddess Kali. It is four miles from Calcutta. It was built by a rich Bengali lady Rani Rasmani. There are twelve temples dedicated to Lord Siva.

15. Dwaraka

Dwaraka is one of the four dharmas or abodes of the Lord, the other three being Rameshwaram in the South, Puri in the East and Badrinath in the North. It is one of the greatest pilgrim cities of India. Lord Krishna founded the city of Dwaraka.

There are 30 temples and 10 kundas or tanks in and about Dwaraka. The most important temple is the temple of Dwarakanath or Sri Krishna temple. It is also known by the name Sri Ranchodraju.

The Gomati kunda is the most important tank. All pilgrims who visit Dwaraka must take a bath in this sacred Kunda.

Sri Sankaracharya established a mutt or Pitam here.

16. Delhi

The Lakshmi Narayan temple built by Seth Raja Baldeo Das Birla is a magnificent one. The inscriptions of verses and sayings from Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, Ramayana, poets and saints are indeed beautiful. This is a quite novel feature

17. Gauhati

Gauhati is the headquarters of the Kamrup district in Assam. It is the terminous station of the Bengal and Assam Railway. The town lies on both sides of the Brahmaputra river.

The most celebrated Kamakhya temple is situated on the sacred hill of Nilachala, three miles west of the town. Siva carried the dead body of Sati and wandered from place to place. He went to 51 places. A portion of Sati's body fell in each place. One piece fell in Kamakhya also. Hence the place is very sacred.

There is a temple dedicated to the nine planets (navagraha) near Gauhati. There is a temple dedicated to Lord Siva in the Peacock island of Woomananda which lies in the midst of the Brahmaputra. The Maha Sivaratri festival is performed here with great splendour. The Aswakranta and the temple dedicated to Narasimha at Hajo are other beautiful temples which are situated in the vicinity of Gauhati. Vashishtasram where Vashishta performed tapas is nine miles from Gauhati.

18. Gaya

Gaya is one of the most sacred cities of India, 57 miles by rail from Bankipore, near Patna. Old Gaya contains the resilience of the priests. The new Sahibganj is the trading quarter where the civil offices and residences are situated. The town is on the left bank of the Phalgu or Nairanjana river.

DESCRIPTIONS

The Vishnupada temple is situated in old Gaya or Gaya proper. It is the largest and most important temple in Gaya. The Vishnu Pada temple is built over the foot-print of Lord Vishnu on a solid block of stone.

Gaya derives its name from an asura by name Gaya, a demon of giant size. The Asura practised rigorous austerities and obtained a boon from the gods that whosoever saw or touched him should be at once taken to the heaven. Countless people touched his body and attained heaven. Yama thought that he would soon lose his office as his Kingdom soon emptied.

The gods devised a plan to overcome Gayasura. They asked him to lend his pure body as a place of Sacrifice. Gayasura agreed to this request of the gods. Gayasura laid himself down. When the sacrifice was performed the asura tried to rise up. Yama placed a big rock on his head. All the gods sat upon his body and tried to crush him.

Gayasura said, “O Gods! I will not try to rise up again. Be pleased to grant me this boon that this spot shall be named after me and that whosoever offers pindas here shall reach heaven with his ancestors and offsprings.”

Lord Vishnu agreed. He placed His feet on a pedestal that rested on the body of Gayasura. This is the origin of the Vishnupada temple. This legend comes in Vayu Purana. Pindas are offered on the silver-encrusted pedestal marked with the foot-print of Lord Hari. Pilgrims offer pindas in Akshaya Bat, Pretasila and Ramasila also. The offering of pindas at the Vishnu Pada confers long life, wealth, wisdom and final release on the performer.

Buddha Gaya

This is at a distance of 7 miles from Gaya. Motor cars run. This is the holy place where Lord Buddha attained his enlightenment.

There is a magnificent temple here. The erection of the original temple is attributed to Ashoka. There is a big murty of Lord Buddha in a sitting pose. The place of enlightenment is on the north side of the temple. Here stood the “Tree of wisdom” Boa tree. Here Buddha sat down in Padma-pose or cross-legged posture.

19. Hardwar

Hardwar literally means the doorway to reach Lord Hari. It is a railway station on the Northern Railway. It is situated in the Saharanpur district, Uttar Pradesh. Those who wish to go to Kedarnath and Badrinath should come to Hardwar. It is a beautiful place situated on the bank of the Ganges. It is a pilgrim centre for all Hindus.

There is the hill Chandi-Pahar on the opposite side. There is the temple of Chandi on the summit of the hill. The bathing ghat, Hari-ka-charan (Hari-ka-paudi) is the most sacred place for taking bath. The adjoining temple of Gangadwara is another centre of attraction.

A great fair, the Kumbha Mela is held once in twelve years. Ardha Kumbha falls once in six years. Lakhs of pilgrims assemble here.

20. Jambukeshwaram

Jambukeshwaram is known by the name Tiruvanaikaval or the sacred elephant grove. It is to the east of Srirangam. There is a big temple dedicated to Lord Siva. The Linga represents Apas tattwa or element water. It is always under water.

21. Jamunotri

This is the source of the river Jamuna. It is 180 miles distant from Rikhikesh. Go to Tehri in the Tehri-Garhwal district. From Tehri you can proceed to Jamunotri. Tehri is 44 miles from Rishikesh. There are 4 hot water Kunds in Jamunotri. Rice is boiled here in the hot water kunds. The scenery is picturesque. There are ice-clad peaks all around.

There are resting places throughout your journey. You can get milk and other food-stuffs.

22. Kaladi

Kaladi is the birth place of Sri Sankaracharya, the avatara of Lord Siva, the master exponent of Kevala Adwaita Philosophy and the greatest genius the world has ever produced. It is a small village situated at a distance of 6 miles from Alwaye Railway Station on the Cochin-Shoranur line. There are two temples on the banks of the river Alwaye. The image of Adi Sankaracharya is enshrined in one temple. The other temple contains the image of Saradamba. There is a temple dedicated to Lord Krishna.

The important festival connected with the place is Sankara Jayanti, the birth-day of Sri Sankara, which begins on the 5th day after New Moon in April-May.

23. Kalahasti

Kalahasti is a town in the Chittoor District. It is a Railway Station on the Katpadi-Renigunta Section. The river Suvarnamukhi flows on one side of the town. It is bounded by hills on the other side.

There is a celebrated temple here dedicated to Lord Siva. It is a Swayambhu (natural) Linga. It is one of the five great Lingas which represent the five great elements, Pancha Bhutas. This Linga represents Vayu or Air. There is a legend that the Linga was worshipped jointly by a spider, a cobra and an elephant. Hence the significant name Sri Kalahasti, (Sri—Spider, kala—serpent and hasti—elephant). Their marks are still visible on the Linga.

The great Tamil Saint Kannappa worshipped this Linga and attained salvation. Maha-Sivaratli is the most important festival in this temple. It lasts for 10 days. The Diety is taken in a palanquin round the Kalahasti hills, a circuit of twenty miles on third day of Sankranthi in January.

24. Kumbakonam

Kumbakonam is in the Tanjore district, Madras State. It is a Railway station on the main line of the Southern Railway.

There are many temples in Kumbakonam. Kumbheshwar is the oldest among all Siva temples. It is located on the spot where the divine pot, broken by Siva's arrow, touched the ground. The deity is, therefore, called Kumbheshwara or Lord of the pot. The temple is intimately associated with the famous Maha-makham legend and festival. The Sumeshwar temple and the Nageswara temple are other important temples dedicated to Lord Siva.

The Sarangapani temple, the Ramaswami temple and the Chakrapani temple are the Vaishnava temples.

The Mahamakham festival which comes once in twelve years like the Kumbha Melas of Prayag and Hardwar is the most celebrated one. Lakhs of pilgrims from all parts of India visit Kumbhakonam to take bath in the holy tank. The last festival took place in 1945. The nine sacred rivers of India, viz., The Ganesh, the Jumna, the Godavari, the Saraswati, the Narmada, the Indus, the Kaveri, the Sarayu and the Payoshni appear on the Maha-makham day in this tank. He who takes a bath in this tank on that day realizes the benefits or merits of a combined pilgrimage to all those nine holy rivers.

The following is the legend connected with Maha Makham festival. Brahma prayed to Lord Siva to grant a boon to the suffering humanity. Siva broke with an arrow the pot which was full of divine nectar and was floating on the waters after the deluge when it reached Kumbakonam. The contents fell at Kumbakonam.

Hence, the significant name—Kumbakonam from Kumbha (pot). Lord Siva said that the nine rivers would appear in the holy tank and help the people to cleanse their sins.

25. Kurukshetra

Kurukshetra is situated on Delhi-Ambala line, at a distance of 95 miles north of Delhi.

Big melas (fairs) are held at the time of solar eclipses. A bath in the tanks of Kurukshetra is considered holy. Huge crowds of pilgrims gather here on this occasion.

The various sacred bathing places are Thaneswar, Banaganga, Saraswati, Tirtha, Sthunusaram etc.

The great Mahabharata war was fought in Kurukshetra for 18 days over 5000 years ago. Lord Krishna taught His Gita to Arjuna here. So great sanctity is attached to this place and the place has become very famous.

26. Konarak, The Black Pagoda

Konarak (Kona: 'Corner' and arka: 'the sun') is situated on the coast, 19 miles north-east of Puri. The temple of Konarak is dedicated to Sun God (Surya). Konarak means the corner of Orissa dedicated to the Sun.

Samba, one of the sons of Lord Krishna, once incurred the wrath of Rishi Narada. Narada wanted to take vengeance on Samba. He lured Samba to a bathing ghat, where Sri Krishna's wives were sporting themselves. He poisoned the ears of Lord Krishna, that Samba was amidst his wives with evil intention. Lord Krishna cursed Samba with leprosy without waiting to know the truth. Lord Krishna came to know that Samba was not guilty and repented for his action. He asked Samba to propitiate Surya. Samba did rigorous austerity and pleased Surya. One day Samba took a bath in the Chandrabhaga river He found an image of Surya thrown there by Viswakarma. Samba built a magnificent temple for the image. He was cured of leprosy.

27. Kedarnath

Kedarnath is in the Himalayas 11,753 feet above sea level. It is an important centre of pilgrimage. It is surrounded by ice-clad peaks. It is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. The actual pilgrimage begins from Rikhikesh, about 14 miles from Hardwar. Rikhikesh is a Railway station.

There are chatties or halting places throughout the journey. You can hire dandies which are carried by four men or kandies which are baskets in which one can sit and is carried by a man on his back. You can hire horses.

28. Madras

There is the reputed Parthasarathi temple in Triplicane. It is a temple dedicated to Lord Krishna as Divine Charioteer or Partha Sarathi. It is the only one of its kind in South India. There is a tank in front of the temple. Fish cannot live in this tank on account of a curse from a Rishi.

The Kapaliswara temple is another celebrated temple dedicated to Lord Siva. It is in Mylapore. The name of the Lord is Kapaliswara. There is a beautiful tank. The name of the town is connected with a legend. Uma, consort of Lord Siva incarnated in Mylapore as a peacock (mayura) and adored Lord Siva.

A famous annual festival in honour of the 63 Saiva Nayanmars is celebrated in this temple in the spring.

There is the image of Sambandar in this temple. He brought back to life a cremated *chetti* girl by singing a hymn in praise of Kapaliswara.

Avvayar the great poetess-saint was a devotee of Lord Ganesh. Lord Ganesh raised Avvayar to heaven with his uplifted trunk. There is an image of Lord Ganesh with his trunk uplifted. The memory of Avvayar is commemorated in association with this image of Ganesh.

DESCRIPTIONS

Peyalwar was born in a well in Mylapore.

Saint Tiruvalluvar, in author of Kural spent his last days in Mylapore. A temple dedicated to this great saint who is regarded as an avatara of Brahman is in the vicinity of Kapaliswara temple.

In George Town there is the Kanda Swami temple dedicated to Lord Subramania. Kachaleswar temple and Mallekeswar temple are other beautiful temples in George Town.

Tiruvottyur is a reputed place of pilgrimage. It is five miles to the North of Madras. There is a beautiful temple here. Adipuriswara is the name of the deity. The Samadhi of the great sage Pattinathar Pillayar is in Tiruvottyur. Sundara Murthi Nayanar fell in love with Sangili in this temple and married her.

29. Madura

Madura is a junction on the Southern Railway. It is one of the most famous of the holy places in Southern India. It is situated on the banks of the river Vaigai. It was the capital of Pandyan Kings and the seat of learning. The reputed Tamil Sangam was here. Celebrated Tamil poets lived here and were patronized by the Pandyan Kings. Tirumala Naik who reigned between 1620 and 1660 A.D. built a magnificent palace here.

The chief temple of Madura is the reputed temple of Goddess Minakshi. This is situated in the very heart of the town. The presiding deity is Sundareswar.

The Chittrai festival which is celebrated in April-May is very grand. It lasts for 10 days. Various feastings and processions are held for 9 days and on the tenth day Meenakshi and Sundareswar are united in marriage at the Kalyana Mantapam. On the eleventh day there is the car-festival. Meenakshi and Sundareswar are gorgeously dressed and taken in huge cars round the four streets of Madura City.

There is a large Teppakulam (tank) in Madura.

30. Mount Abu

Mount Abu has a magnificent scenery. It is 5000 feet above sea-level. The Railway runs along the foot of the foot of the hill. A motor road connects it with Abu Road Railway station.

The marble temples were built by Jains in honour of Admatte, the first Jain teacher and of Neminath, the twenty-second Tirthankara. The other temples are the temples of Vimala Shah, the Vastupala and Tejpala.

There is a small Siva temple in Hermits peak, the highest point in Mount Abu.

There is the imprint of Siva's toe in Achaleswar which is in the vicinity of Dilwara.

31. Muttra

Muttra (Mathura) is situated on the western bank of the Jumna about 30 miles above Agra. The circuit of 84 Kos around Gokula and Brindavan bears the name of the Brij Mandal. Here Lord Krishna and Balarama are said to have fed their cattle.

Muttra lies on the railway line between Agra and Delhi. The city is associated with the birth and exploits of Lord Krishna.

Dwarakadhish templa is the largest temple in Muttra. A great festival is held in the month of Sravana (June-July). Thousands of pilgrims gather here. There are 24 sacred bathing ghats. Vishram ghat and Dhruva ghat are the important ones.

Gokul is a village on the east bank of the Jumna six miles below Muttra, celebrated as the scene of Sri Krishna's childhood. Near Gokul is Mahaban.

Govardhan Hill lies 18 miles from Muttra. There Lord Krishna performed the miracle of lifting the mountain to protect the cowherds and the cattle. Haridev temple is located here.

32. Mahabalipuram

Mahabalipuram is 45 miles by road from Madras via Chengleput. It is the birth place Of Bhutattalvar. There are beautiful rock-cut temples and cave-temples here.

33. Nasik

Nasik is a holy place of pilgrimage. It lies 5 miles north-west of Nasik Road station. The old Panchavati where Lord Rama lived with his consort Sita and his brother Lakshmana is here. The river Godavari flows here. Hence the place is most sacred.

The most important Kund or sacred thirtha is the Rama Kund. In the vicinity of Panchavati is the Tapovan. There is a temple here dedicated to Sri Rama.

Trimbak lies 20 miles west of Nasik. There is a big Siva temple here. The linga, Trimbakeswara is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. The temple is built on the base of Brahmagiri mountain. The source of the river Godavari lies near Trimbak.

34. Nathdwara

Nathdwara is a sacred place of pilgrimage. It is situated in the Mewar hills in Rajputana. It is the seat of the head of the Vaishnava cult, Vallabha Sampradaya, Shuddhadwaita or Pushtimarga. The presiding deity of the temple is Lord Krishna or Sri Nathji.

Sri Vallabhacharya, the founder of Shuddhadwaita philosophy installed Sri Nathji at Nathdwara in 1520 A.D.

DESCRIPTIONS

This is a very rich temple. The rich merchants of Bhatia and Bania communities of Gujrat and Kathiawar belong to this cult.

35. Nepal

Nepal is the land of Gurkhas. Kathmandu is the present capital. Nepal is the birth place of Lord Buddha.

The most famous Siva temple is the temple of Pasupatinath near Kathmandu. People gather in large numbers during Maha Sivaratri.

The Devi Bhawani temple at Bhatgaon is very beautiful.

36. Palani

Palani is situated on the Railway line from Dindugal. There is a famous temple dedicated to Lord Subramania or Dandapani who stands alone with Vel or spear in His hand without Saktis, Deivani and Valli. The temple is situated on a majestic hill, 500 feet high

Some of the pilgrims take bath in the adjoining river Shanmuganadi, take the Kavadi on their shoulders to the temple and do abhisheka over the image with panchamritam (a mixture of honey, sugar, crushed plantain, fruits etc.).

The deity is a powerful one. He has infinite saving-power. Many diseases are cured. Many miracles are said to be performed in the temple.

37. Pandharpur

Pandharpur is one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage in Maharashtra. What Puri is to Bengal and Orissa, what Chidambaram is to South India, so is Pandharpur to the Maharashtra. It is a small town on the banks of the Bhima river or Chandrabhaga, a tributary of the Krishna. It is situated in the Sholapur district of the Bombay State. It is 30 miles from the Barsi Road Railway Station. It is connected with the main line by a light railway.

The most celebrated temple is the temple of Vittobha or Lord Krishna. Pundalik, a devotee was serving his parents. Lord Krishna and Rukmini visited the cottage of Pundalik. Pundalik threw a brick for the Divine Visitor to stand upon. Pundalik finished his service to the parents and then came out and prostrated himself before the Lord who was standing on the brick. Pundalik built a temple on the spot in which Lord Krishna was standing with Rukmini.

Nam Dev, Tukaram, Chokamela were all great devotees of Lord Krishna. They had direct darshan of the Lord.

38. Prayag

Prayag is modern Allahabad. Allahabad means the city of Allah or God. Prayag is one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage. It is the meeting place of the three great rivers, the Ganges, the Jamuna and the Saraswati. Saraswati meets the Ganges at this point as a subterranean stream. The point of junction of the three rivers is called Triveni.

A big festival called Poorna Kumbha Mela or full Mela is held once in twelve years. More than a million pilgrims gather around the Triveni. Ardhha-Kumbha Mela is held once in six years.

39. Puri

Puri is situated on the coast, separated from the sea by low sandy ridges. It is one of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage. It is one of the four dharmas, the three other dharmas being Remeswar, Dwaraka and Badrinath. It is called Swarga Dwara or the gate of Heaven.

The presiding deity of the temple is Jagannath, "the Lord of the world". The other images are those of Balaram, brother of Lord Krishna and Subhadra, sister of Sri Krishna.

The following is a legend with regard to the origin of image. When Lord Krishna was shot, his bones were left lying under the tree till some pious person placed them in a box. Raja Indradyumna was directed to form an image and place in it these bones. The King prayed to Viswakarma to assist him in making the image. Viswakarma promised to make the image on condition that he was not disturbed. Though the King consented he tried to see Viswakarma at work after fifteen days. There was only one ugly image without hands or feet.

The image of Jagannath has circular eyes, a straight head-line, a square knob on the top and black colour. The nose is large and hooked. The mouth is crescent shaped. The height is about 6 feet.

All pilgrims eat together in one place the holy food (prasad). There is no barrier of caste while eating the Prasad in the courts of the temple and outside the Lion Gate. A Puri priest will receive prasad even from a low-caste Hindu. Lord Jagannath teaches here the gospel of equality and equal vision (sama drishti).

Twenty-four festivals such as warm clothing festival, the Holi, the Birth festival, the Bathing festival (snana yatra) are held every year. The car festival (ratha yatra) is the great event of the year. It takes place in June or July and is the most important one. The great car is 45 feet in height and provided with 16 wheels. The brother and sister of Jagannath have separate cars, a little smaller. The procession takes several days to end. The distance from the temple to the Garden House is 4 miles.

40. Pushkar

Pushkar is a reputed place of pilgrimage, situated in the Ajmer district in Rajputana. It contains a beautiful lake and a temple dedicated to Brahma. It is the only place in India which has a temple dedicated to Brahma. There are temples dedicated to Savitri, Varaha, Badri Narain and Siva.

A big Mela is held in October. Thousands of pilgrims take bath in the holy lake.

41. Rameswaram

This is a place which contains one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. It is one of the four dhamas. It is one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage. It is in the district of Madura. It is a small island, in the Bay of Bengal. It is separated from the coast by the Pamban channel.

Sri Rama worshipped Siva here in the form of a linga to cleanse himself of the sin caused by killing Ravana. Hanuman did not bring the linga from the Himalayas in time. So Sri Rama worshipped the image of Linga made out of sea-sand by Sita. Hanuman arrived with his linga and tried to pull out the sand-made linga, but all his endeavours were of no avail.

The Rameswaram temple is a large and magnificent one. There are eleven lingas in the temple which were installed by Sri Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanuman, Sugriva, Nala, Nila, Angada, Jambuvan, Vibhishana and Indra. The temple of Setu Madhava is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. He who visits Rameswaram must worship the Setu Madhava in the end.

The important annual festivals of the temple are Maha Sivaratri, Ramanatha Swami's marriage in July and Pratishtanga in June. The Palli-arai procession is very grand.

Dhanushkoti is about 15 miles to the south of Rameswaram. It is the terminus of the Railway line. The Bay of Bengal meets the Indian ocean here. A bath is considered very sacred.

Darbhasayanam, 6 miles South of Ramnad is the place where Lord Rama lay on a bed of Kusa grass, awaiting the God of ocean.

Sadhus and the people of North India take water from the Gangotri or the origin of the Ganges or from Hardwar for doing abhisheka over the linga of Rameswaram. In olden days they carried the water in Kavadi.

42. Saranath

Saranath is three miles from Benares. Lord Buddha preached his first sermon here 2500 years ago after his enlightenment. King Asoka erected here a great memorial pillar with a finely carved huge lion capital.

The Mahabodhi Society have built a Buddhist temple here.

43. Sringeri

The name of the place Sringeri is derived from an old legend connected with Ramayana. Sringeri was originally the giri or the mountain of Rishya Sringa, the one horned saint. Once there was a terrible famine in Ayodhya. King Dasaratha brought the saint to his capital. At once there was abundant rain.

Sringeri is a mutt founded by Sri Sankaracharya. It is situated in the Mysore state on a spur of the Western Ghats. It is 50 miles from Shimoga, a railway station on the Mysore State Railways.

Sri Sankara was moving from place to place to establish a great centre of Vedantic learning. He reached the place where now Sringeri stands. He went to the river Tunga to take his bath in the hot noon. He saw a frog in labour on a piece of rock under the scorching heat. He witnessed a cobra covering the frog with its out-spread hood. He thought that the place was quite a peaceful one and decided to make it as the seat of his monastery and Vedantic University. Mandana Misra (Sureswara Acharya) became his successor. A temple was erected for Bharati, wife of Mandana Misra, incarnation of Saraswati.

Swami Vidyananda built a Sri Chakra tower over the Samadhi of his Guru. There is a pillared hall in front with 12 pillars, dedicated to the 12 signs of the Zodiac. When the sun moves every month, he shines against the pillar bearing the month's name.

44. Suchindram

Suchindram is in the Kerala State. This is one of the very few places where the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva is adored. The town and the temple are situated at the foot of the Ghats. There is a beautiful tank by the side of the temple. Indra himself worships every night the Trimurtis of the temple.

Atri lived with his wife Anusuya in the forest of Jnanaranya which was round about Suchindram. The Trimurtis came to this spot to test the chastity of Anusuya and became babies on account of the power of the chastity of Anusuya. Hence the worship of the Trimurtis in this place where they appeared.

Indra who was hiding himself in Himalayas on account of the curse of Gautama came to Suchindram, did severe penance and propitiated the Trimurtis. He was completely cured of his curse and shone forth with a thousand eyes. Indra visits the temple even today at night and performs the last puja in token of his gratitude to the Trinity.

45. Suryanar Koil

There is a temple here dedicated to the Sun. It is two miles away from Tiruvadamarudar in the district of Tanjore, South India.

46. Swamimalai

Swamimalai is near Kumbakonum. There is a reputed temple dedicated to Lord Kartikeya who is locally called Swaminatha. It is built on a hillock. Lord Murugha initiated here his own father Siva into the significance of Pranava or OMkara.

47. Srirangam

This is a railway station next to Trichy Fort station on the Erode Line. Coleroon and Kaveri encircle this town. The temple to Sri Ranganatha is the most celebrated one. Andal became one with Sri Ranganatha in this temple. The temple is a magnificent one. Many Vaishnava Acharyas lived here.

48. Srivilliputtur

This is a railway station on Southern Railway. It is in the Ramnad district. There is a beautiful temple here dedicated to Lord Vishnu, Vatapatrasayi. Periyalwar lived here. A temple has been built to Andal in her place of birth.

49. Srivaikuntam

It is in the district of Tinnevely, South India. There is a temple dedicated to Vishnu. It is a sacred place of pilgrimage.

50. Tirupati

Tirupati is the most holy Vaishnava temple-town of South India. It lies in the midst of the Seshachalam hills at a distance of seven miles from Tirupati East, a railway station on the Renigunta-Katpadi section.

The scenery of Tirupati is very picturesque. The temple is 2500 feet above sea level. The North Indians call Tirupati as Bala Jee.

The temple of Venkateswara is situated on one (Tirumalai) of the group of seven hills. There is a thousand pillared mantapa in the temple. The pilgrim making his way to the hill-temple at Tirumalai rests and refreshes himself in the Kapila Thirtham, named after the Sage Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya system of Hindu philosophy. The way up the hill is provided with electric lights.

The idol has four arms, two in the rear one carrying the Sankha (conch) and the other the Chakra (discus), and two in the front one pointing to the feet and the other by the side of the thigh. On both the front arms is to be seen the "Bhujanga Valaya" or the girdle of serpent. This is the only temple where His consort is absent from His side.

There are morning darshans of God known as Shuddin, Tomala and Archana followed by a free darshan. This is repeated in the evening. There are Ekanta Seva, Poolangi darshan (flower-garment darshan), Abhiseka darshan, etc.

The principal annual festival is the Brahmotsavam which lasts for 10 days. The wedding of the deity with Padmavati Devi is celebrated in September-October. The most popular procession is the Garuda Utsavam on the fifth day. Ratha saptami (January-February), the floating festival (March-April) and the Mukkoti Ekadasi (December-January) and other minor festivals.

The temple Hundi i.e., vessel in which pilgrims drop their offerings to the Lord is perhaps the largest of the kind. It is five feet high.

The Deity has great saving power. Many incurable diseases are cured by darshan and Sankalpa of offerings.

Sri Govinda Raja Sam's temple at Tirupati and golden Padmavati's temple at Tiruchanur, a village 3 miles from Tirupati are also sacred temples.

Glory to Lord Venkateswara and Mother Alamalemanga!

51. Trivandrum

The Ananta-Padmanabha temple here is one of the most famous temples in South India. It is one of the 108 Tirupathis or sacred places for Vaishnavite.

52. Tirukkalikunram

Tirukkalikunram is 10 miles south-east of Chengleput, Madras State. It is one of the most reputed places of pilgrimage in Tamil India. Vedagiriswarar is the presiding deity of the Siva temple which is situated on the top of a hill and which is built of three huge blocks of stone. The beautiful tank, Sankhatirtham is at the foot of the hill. Moovar Kovil, the temple of the three saints; Appar, Sundaramurthi and Gnanasambadar is also at the foot of the hill.

The Vedas were originally intact and one, but the Rishis divided them. The vedas wished to be one and undivided. Hence they approached Lord Siva and prayed. Lord Siva said, "O Vedas! assume the form of the hills at Tirukkalikunram. I would dwell on your tops as a Linga and would radiate spiritual effulgence to the world."

The four Vedas assumed the form of the hills at Tirukkalikunram according to the behests of Lord Siva. Hence the significant name Vedagiri.

In days long gone by there lived two brothers. The elder brother was a devotee of Lord Siva. The younger worshipped Sakti. They began to fight on one occasion as to the relative superiority of the deities. Lord Siva Himself appeared and told them that He and Sakti were equal and co-ordinate and that they should not quarrel in future. But the brothers continued their quarrel. Siva cursed them to become vultures. The two-brothers fell at the feet of Lord Siva in true repentance. Lord Siva

promised them salvation at the end of the Kali Yuga. The two Rishis were born as vultures named Adi and Sambu. They daily visit the sacred hill to worship Siva and are fed.

53. Tirupparan Kunram

Tirupparankunram lies 5 miles south-west of Madura. It is the next railway station. There is a temple on the high rock dedicated to Lord Subramania. Lord Subramania obtained here the hand of Daivayanai, the daughter of Indra.

Suran and Padma two mighty asuras were oppressing the Devas. Indra, the King of the gods promised his daughter's hand to any one who could defeat the asuras. Lord Subramania obtained victory over them and married Daivayanai.

Nakkirar the reputed Tamil scholar sang Tirumurugarrupadai here, propitiated Lord Subramania and released the 999 captives shut up in a cave in the hills by a demon for a big sacrifice.

54. Tiruttani

Tiruttani is a town in the Chittoor district, South India. There is a temple on a hill dedicated to Lord Subramania. It is surrounded by beautiful hills and valleys. The scenery is lovely.

Lord Kartikeya killed the asura Sura Padma and others in this place. Indra being highly pleased with Lord Murugha; gave him his daughter Devayana in marriage.

There are many sacred pools and springs in and around the place.

55. Tiruvadaimarudoor

Tiruvadaimarudoor is in the district of Tanjore. It is a few miles east of Kumbakonam. It is known by the name Madyarjunam also. The river Kaveri flows through this town. There is a temple dedicated to Lord Siva. The deity is known by the name Maha Linga.

56. Tiruvannamalai

Tiruvannamalai is a celebrated place of pilgrimage in South India. It is a Railway station on the Villupuram-Katpadi line. The Arunachala hill is 3000 feet above the sea level. The temple lies at the foot of the hill. It is dedicated to Lord Siva. The Linga represents the element fire. It is a Tejo Lingam.

In days long gone by there was a dispute between Brahma and Vishnu as to their relative superiority. Siva became a huge column of limitless flame and said to them that he who succeeded first to find out the limits of His form would really be the superior one. Brahma took the form of a swan and flew upwards to find out the top of the column of flame, while Vishnu assumed the form of a boar and penetrated into the earth to find out the base of the column of light. Both of them failed in their attempts. This legend intimates about the greatness of Lord Siva.

Arunagirinathar, author of Tiruppugal lived here.

The Karttikai lightning festival is the most famous one. It attracts a large number of pilgrims.

57. Trivadi

Trivadi, Tiruvayar or Tiru-ayyaru is seven miles north of Tanjore. It is situated on the banks of Kaveri. There is a temple dedicated to Lord Siva—Panchanadiswara.

The samadhi of Saint Tyagaraja is here on the banks of the river. All the Tamil songsters and Bhagavatars assemble here and celebrate his birthday anniversary.

58. Tiruchendur

It is situated on the sea-shore at the far end of the Tinnevely district. There is a temple dedicated to Lord Subramania. The temple is built on a rock which is very close to the sea.

59. Ujjain

In days long gone by Ujjain was known by the name Avantika. It is one of the seven sacred cities of India, the other six cities being, Benares, Ayodhya, Muttra, Conjeevaram, Dwaraka and Maya [Hardwar].

The reputed temple of Mahakal is dedicated to Lord Siva. The linga is one of the twelve jyotir-lingas. The pilgrims take a bath in the river Sipra at the Ramghat.

A big Kumbha Mela is held once in twelve years. There is a huge gathering of pilgrims. Ardha Kumbha Mela is held once in six years.

60. Varkala

There is a famous temple here dedicated to Janaradhana. The temple and the town are near the sea-shore.

61. Vaikom

There is a famous temple here dedicated to Lord Siva. Countless Brahmins are fed every day. The Ashtami festival is a very important one. Lord Siva is known by the name Vaikattu-Appa (Father of Vaikom).

STORY OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Today I received as your generous gift to me the two books “*All about Sivananda*” and “*Day-to-Day*” volumes. For this I want to express my very cordial thanks. Thanks for your generosity and many kind regards.

Ernst Hiebasch, jun,
Austria.

May your brightening-heart, Swami Sivananda, be attached to my father and the Divinity in Thy Heart will be source of recovery to him. Mighty Good is in your prayers. Powerfulness of Light in them has recovered my son. It certainly will help my father, too.

Spirit of Great Love-Sivananda, be fastened with your Love upon me and my father. In great thanks-giving to the Greatest Might and to You,

Anna Gottwaldora,
Czechoslovakia Prague.

Kindly bestow Thy Grace and Blessings upon us, so that the Divine Life Society here may flourish and prosper. My beloved Gurudev, I feel rather lonely and sad without Thy regular letters. They are everything to me. Please forgive me. I am Thy Little Child. I want nothing in the world except to rely on Thee. Please always guide me. I have taken refuge at Thy Lotus Feet.

T. Kanayo, Hong Kong.

Dandavat Pranams at the Lotus Feet of KARUNA-SWAROOP of Ananda Kutir. Praying Lord Viswanath to have Karuna on me so that with firm faith and unchangeable devotion the recitation of Your Loving NAME can go with my tongue all the time. O Lord, Gift me Your Nama-Samaran in such a way that all my births will vanish. Oh, my Pyara Paramathma, make me yours ever. Gift me a virtuous life.

Viswanath Mukhia, Bahrein, P. Gulf.

Gurudev, daily I am waiting for a line from you. Are you angry with me, Gurudev? My head reels at the very thought. Kindest Gurudev, have mercy on thy poor child and favour me with a gracious line. I have no prop but Thee, O Merciful Master.

How can I thank you for the parcel of books, Gurudev? Bhagavan Sivananda, How I miss Thy Lotus Feet! Every second I am there. Day and night You occupy my thoughts.

Sivananda-Sobha, Dehra Dun.

I have great pleasure of reading Your book: *Yoga Samhita*. It is a source of consolation and happiness. Whenever I am in mental uneasiness, I take it in my hand and read. I am very proud to mention that I forget all my worries and uneasiness then. I bow at Your Lotus Feet for Your kindness. I have always heard of the worth and importance of Your gramophone records. Let Thy records inspire me. I hope Your records will help me to stick to Sankirtan Yoga.

I think I have every right to request at Your Lotus Feet, as You are the only source of guidance for me on the Path of Yoga.

N.W. Saraf, Hamburg, W. Germany.

I pray Thy, give me courage, patience, wisdom. I earnestly pray Thee, O Bhagavan Sivananda, the Sage-God of Sri Ananda Kutir, give me courage, help me and guide me, protect me. By uttering Your Holy Name I get rid of perplexity and worries. O God, help me and guide me. I am very sorry for not receiving any communication from Ananda Kutir. This is unusual for me. I was always getting some printed lesson, sometime Prasad, magazine, sometime books. With pranams at Thy Lotus Feet.

28/6/57

Pashupati Nath Misra, Instructor,
Hindi T.T., Muzaffarpur (Bihar).

I was overjoyed to receive Thy kind letter, which I was looking forward to. I really couldn't express my gratitude for the special prayer You conducted for my health and for the children's welfare. Your Prayers being so wonderful, through Your Blessings, I was saved from all dangers and was blessed with a little baby girl. Swamiji, I would be overjoyed if You would suggest a name for the baby.

Kalyani, Durban, South Africa.

Thy words in Thy letter of the April 2nd:

“Whatever Path you choose to follow, so long as you do not swerve from the Path of God, from the Life Divine, so long as you do not wander away from God and His Light, it is Divine Life”.—These words are engraved in my heart and I feel I shall return to the Theosophical Society all the richer, with a deeper understanding of the spiritual life. This is due to Thy Grace, to Thy unfailing Help and kindness, which has been bestowed on me in full measure and for which I am and shall ever be deeply grateful I take comfort from the fact that You in Your wisdom and understanding, give perfect freedom and that Your only concern would be that I try to live my life divine. Once again I thank You most sincerely for Your kind help and guidance which has been of more benefit than I can express in words. I am all the better for the time spent under Thy care and have learnt many lessons.

Lorna Retif,
Johannesburg, SA.

I found Your welcome letter with its loving greetings and the very valuable suggestions you have made to keep me in my studies. I am also grateful for the books sent I hope to meet you whenever you may visit Europe.

Jack Cathchpool,
Meadow Cottage, Herts.

STORY OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

My gratitude for your kind and enlightening letter. Those few lines have been such a help—I only seek solace and comfort. I want your blessings to be able to overcome this—Your Grace to make a better, more tolerant person, who should keep doing one's duty. Bless me, Swamiji and think of us in your prayers. I can often feel myself in Thy Presence. I wish to a little more. God Bless you and keep you for millions of us that need you. Charana Bandana.

Yours affectionately, Kanta,
Punjab Engineer College, Chandigarh.

I thank God I have had the good pleasure of knowing how to get in touch with you and we shall continue our mutual good relations for ever... We shall attach your name to our Academy work so that your blessings may go forth to mankind.

Archbishop The Most Reverend
Dr. William F. Wolsey, Canada,
S. Burnaby.

Thanks for your so very kind letter. My husband was so full of very great goodness. Thanks also for the presents. Many here take pleasure and enjoy your *Voice of The Himalayas*. It is so interesting that I have all this translated into German. My husband has a desire to read this profound Truth and Knowledge. Since I wrote to you last time, all became so simple as before. I thank you very much for this, Swami Sivananda.

Frieda Maria Simon Weltin, Germany.

I am very happy to receive your affectionate letter and I give you my best acknowledgements. You know all. Please guide me. I am very glad to be permitted to write to you. Monday 17, Tuesday 18, and Saturday 22 of June I felt a union with you. Many thanks for all your goodness.

Eva Rabot, Hannover, Germany.

I am thanking you for your service to us and to humanity. I request of You more of Your Light, Understanding and Inspiration. We are all babes in the study of Truth and are tied down by environments. Kindly lead us all. Praises be unto Thee.

OK-Udoh Asata-Enugu—Nigeria.

I stick to Your prescriptions and especially. I found enlightenment and uplifting in your expression in your letter. Especially your Teachings on where to find God, in my own heart, which also is the Bible's Teaching, I am very fond of. My thanks to you and may God's Blessings be with you and your great work.

Rinz Andersen, Denmark.