

Shiva is one of the most revered gods in Hinduism and he embodies both destruction and transformation.

- **Shiva's destruction isn't simply an act of chaos.** It's the process of clearing space for new beginnings. Unlike typical ideas of destruction, Shiva serves the purpose of regeneration and renewal.
- **While other gods are depicted in lavish surroundings, Shiva is dressed in simple animal skin and in austere settings, usually in a yogic position.** His wife Parvati, whenever she is present, is always at the side of Shiva. Their relationship is one of equality.
- **Even though Shiva is the destroyer, he is usually represented as smiling and tranquil.**
- **Shiva always has a blue face and throat.** Strictly speaking his body is white, but images often show him with a blue body too.
- **Shiva is known to have untamed passion,** which leads him to extremes in behavior. Sometimes he is an ascetic, abstaining from all worldly pleasures. At others he is a hedonist.
- **It is Shiva's relationship with his wife, Parvati which brings him balance.** Their union allows him to be an ascetic and a lover, but within the bounds of marriage.

Lord Shiva

Trident represents the three powers of knowledge, desire and implementation

Drum symbolizes sound which represents the words of the Vedas, the holy scriptures given by the Lord to guide us through life.

Serpents on neck signify the ego which once mastered can be worn as an ornament

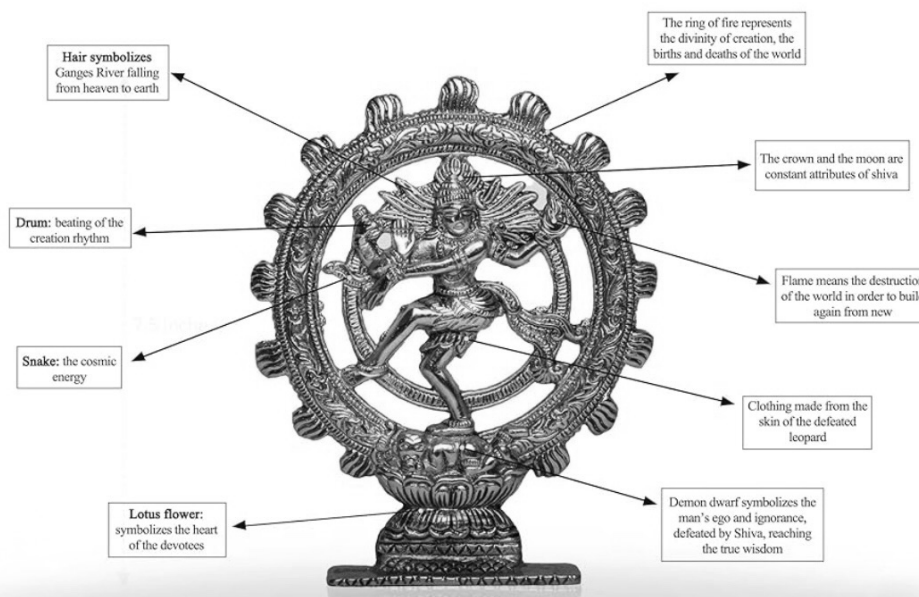
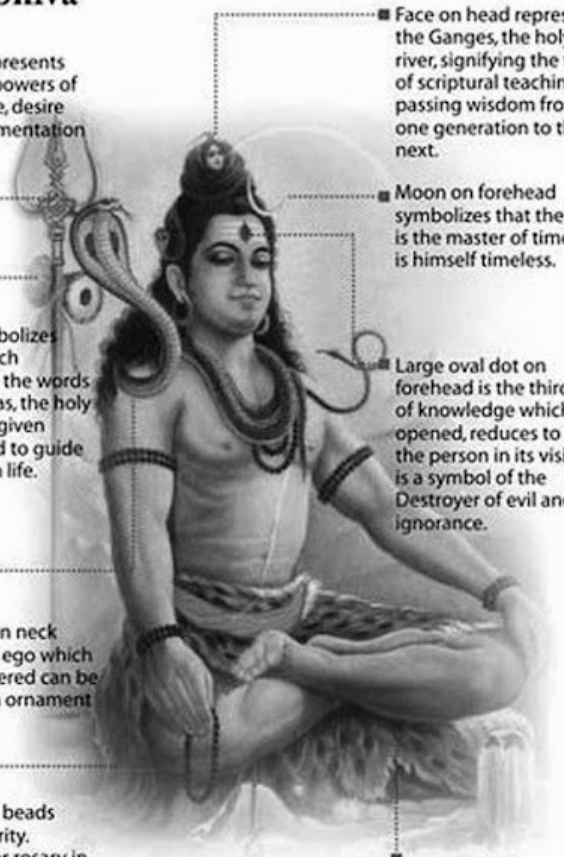
Rudraksha beads denote purity. The mala or rosary in the right hand symbolizes concentration.

Face on head represents the Ganges, the holy river, signifying the flow of scriptural teachings passing wisdom from one generation to the next.

Moon on forehead symbolizes that the Lord is the master of time and is himself timeless.

Large oval dot on forehead is the third eye of knowledge which, if opened, reduces to ashes the person in its vision. It is a symbol of the Destroyer of evil and ignorance.

Wearing a tiger skin Shiva is said to be fearless.



- **Shiva is often called Nataraj or Nataraja,** the King (raja) of the Dance "nata".

The rhythm of dance is a metaphor for the balance in the universe which Shiva is believed to hold so masterfully.

Shiva's Mantra : *Om Namah Shivaya*

This Hindu mantra is calling upon the higher self (Shiva) with qualities of Prayer, Divine-Love, Grace, Truth, & Blissfulness

Om Namah Shivaya: "Hail to the Supreme Lord, Auspicious One who brings Happiness & Joy, and who Dwells in the Hearts of All"

Shiva's Mantra contains **Om**, *the eternal source-sound-vibration of creation*, and the 5 elements of universal oneness...

- **Na** sound represents earth.
- **Ma** sound represents water.
- **Śi** sound represents fire.
- **Vā** sound represents Pranic air.
- **Ya** sound represents the ether, emptiness - space