

LEGALFOXES LAW TIMES

7 SECRETS OF SHIVA

-DevduttPattanaik

BOOK REVIEW

- By Sakshi

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Dr.DevduttPattanaik the author of this book is a mythologist by passion. He has written many books discussing the Hindu religion in great detail. So, this book comes no less. You sure will be amazed by the extend of insight, the author has provided. This book discusses Shiva, one of the three main gods of Hindu religion in great detail. The author has chosen a few avatars to emphasis about the God's nature, consorts and children. He also strikes differences between Shiva and Vishnu at appropriate places. It is rather good that he does not choose to pick on any God but just comes around saying that each of them works in their own ways uniquely.

Lingeshwara: The basic form of Shiva worshipped everywhere is this Linga form. He elaborates about the creation of this linga form. The author describes a story about Shiva emerging from an infinite beam of fire, burning without any fuel. It is thus a representation that god is formless, limitless and is omnipresent. The term "AhamBrahmasmi" is also explained, pushing the mankind from finite to infinite, from mortality to moksha or immortality

Bhairava: There are two kinds of fear of the mankind, the predator and the prey. The fear of such thing makes us Pashu or with animal instinct. Shiva becomes Pashupathi who destroys this fear and leads us towards Moksha. It is said that Brahma also fears Prakriti or nature and attempts to tame her. This fear sprouts as a fifth head for Brahma and an enraged Shiva (because of Brahma's ignorance) slays his head. Thus he becomes the Kapalika. The child form seen with the dogs at his feet is the Bhairava who removes such fear.

Shankara: This is the most interesting part where Shiva turns from the hermit to a house holder. It is with the help of Sakthi that Shiva opens his eyes and looks at mankind with mercy. The lonely, celibate, blissful hermit, insensitive God becomes caring and patient towards humans. The marriage of Shiva and Shakthi is explained in great details. Shakthi through her never ending tiring efforts makes Shankara indulge in Prakriti (nature) and Sanskriti (Culture and Society) of humans. It is described that Yoni, the pot dripping water on linga, is Sakthi who helps Shiva to reflect on humans.

Bholenath: This part discusses Shiva to be ignorant or rather innocent about the society and culture. It describes him to be pure and blissful like a child he never discriminates between good and bad. It is due to this fact that he never discriminates between Asura and Deva and grants all the boons. It is also due to this fact that he never follows the basic rules of the society, such as eating, need for a house, children etc. We often hear about Aghoris and their uncouth practises. It is due to this reason that they too hate to discriminate in the eyes of the society.

Ganesha / Muruga: The two sons of Shiva who helped him to empathise and embrace the humankind. The births of these gods are discussed thoroughly. Ganesha who is more attached to Shakti is the god of prosperity and Muruga is the war lord who wards away all fear of predator. In other words they help mankind from the fear of prey and predator, thus paving the path to attain moksha

Nataraja: There are teacher forms of Shiva, one is the Dakshinamurthy who sits under the Banyan tree and preaches the rishis and scholars. The other is the Nataraja, who through his

dance forms evokes thought and demands attention. The final pose of the Shiva tandav is the wisdom of the Vedas.

The 7 secrets of Shiva is a book with so much information that even after this exhaustive review I feel that I could have included more. A special note goes to the photos of Shiva. It is astonishing to see so many photos that substantiate his writing. The book definitely has a lot of Tension between the genders going, without which the author could not have given such in-depth details. A few stories which I had heard already and a lot of them which were so refreshingly new got me look at the Shaiva cult with a new meaning. It is not an end to end light read, but something to, relate to and think about our Hindu religion.

Since the book is a work of nonfiction, at some places I found the book a bit slow and repetitive. Along with this, few things were confusing probably because the events were not in a chronological order.

Lord Shiva's stories are not time-bound, unlike other Gods' who took '*avatars*' throughout various *kaal*'s.

So no time and space factors make the events a bit complicated to understand but

DevduttPattanaik has done his best to make things easier for the readers to understand.

Mythology has always been an interesting genre for me. I haven't read many books in mythology even though I find the genre interesting. It is hard to find an engaging book which will keep me hooked throughout. If you like to read mythology, you should go for this book. It has some really fascinating theories.

The book also tends to stagger a bit into spirituality, but then, we are dealing with God here.

Through the various stories, pictures, forms depicted, the author eventually tries to convey what life is all about. However, while dealing with topics like immortality, soul etc. I did tend to get a bit lost, and once again I would blame it on the genre. Apart from the pictures, I also liked the stories that made an appearance throughout the book, making it interesting for a person like me, who like I said, thrives on stories.

I would not go beyond this to give my opinions. The language is easy to read and follow, and hence it possible for anyone to pick it up for a read. Howeverif you were to ask me if I would venture into this genre again, probably not. But for someone who likes factual books, with a

mythological bent, this is a must read, and perhaps even the other books in the same set. For me, I think I have had my dosage of spirituality for now!