SADHANA MANDIRA
तत्त्वमेव त्वमेव तत्

लिङ्गाष्टकम् Liṅgāṣṭakam

ब्रह्ममुरारि-सुरार्चित-लिङ्गं
निर्मलभासित-शोभित-लिङ्गम् ।
जन्मजदुःख-विनाशक-लिङ्गं
तत् प्रणमामि सदाशिव-लिङ्गम् ॥

ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಮುರಾರಿ-ಸುರಾರ್ಚಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ನಿರ್ಮಲಭಾಸಿತ-ಶೋಭಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ।
ಜನ್ಮಜ-ದುಃಖ-ವಿನಾಶಕ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ತತ್ ಪ್ರಣಮಾಮಿ ಸದಾಶಿವ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ॥

Brahmamurāri-surārcita-liṅgaṁ
Nirmalabhāsita-śobhita-liṅgam ।
Janmajaduḥkha-vināśaka-liṅgaṁ
tatpraṇamāmisadāśiva-liṅgam ।। 1 ।।

ब्रह्ममुरारि-सुरार्चित-लिङ्गम् - That Lingam which is worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu and the other gods निर्मलभासित - Pure and resplendent; शोभित - beautified लिङ्गम् - Lingam जन्मजदुःख - Sorrows arising out of the cycle of birth and death तत् प्रणमामि - I bow before that सदाशिव - Ever auspicious लिङ्गम् - Lingam

I bow before that Sadashiva (ever auspicious) Lingam, which is worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu and other Gods, which is pure and resplendent, and which destroys sorrows arising out of birth and death.

Reflections:

The Shivalinga represents the Nirguṇa-Nirākāra-Tattva which is One without a second and hence is naturally pure! The entire creation finds its existence in this Tattva.

The Trimūrtis, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva being part of the creation, naturally worship the Tattva represented as the Shivalinga, just as the lump of gold, gold biscuits, gold coins, gold idols, earrings, chains bangles etc find their existence in gold!! This Tattva is of the nature of absolute knowledge, which is represented as light. It is the ajñāna of the Self that gives rise to the cycle of births and deaths along with all its sorrows!

However, to understand, imbibe and abide in that Tattva, as our own Svarūpa is possible only when we are tuned to the Grace of the Supreme and hence it is necessary that we bow down and surrender our ego, our individuality at the feet of the Lord!

देवमुनि-प्रवरार्चित-लिङ्गं
कामदहंकरुणाकर-लिङ्गम् ।
रावणदर्प-विनाशन-लिङ्गं
तत् प्रणमामि सदाशिव-लिङ्गम् ॥

ದೇವಮುನಿ-ಪ್ರವರಾರ್ಚಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ಕಾಮದಹಂಕರುಣಾಕರ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ।
ರಾವಣದರ್ಪ-ವಿನಾಶನ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ತತ್ ಪ್ರಣಮಾಮಿ ಸದಾಶಿವ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ॥

Devamuni-pravarārcita-liṅgaṁ
kāmadahaṁkaruṇākara-liṅgam ।
rāvaṇadarpa-vināśana-liṅgaṁ
tatpraṇamāmisadāśiva-liṅgam ।। 2 ।।

देवमुनि-प्रवरार्चित-लिङ्गं - Lingam that is worshipped by the gods, sages and brahmanas कामदहं - desytroyer of Kāma करुणाकर - the Compassionate One लिङ्गम् - Lingam रावणदर्प - Rāvaṇa's pride विनाशन - destroyer लिङ्गम् - Lingam; तत् प्रणमामि - I bow before that सदाशिव - Ever auspicious लिङ्गम् - Lingam

I bow before that Sadashiva Lingam, which is worshipped by great sages, brahmanas and devas, who is the destroyer of Kāma, the compassionate one who destroyed the pride of Rāvaṇa.

Reflections:

What stands between us and the Lord is our Ego (individuality), our desires and our pride! When we bow before the Lord, the Shivalinga, we offer our individuality to Him. The Lord's very nature is unconditional compassion. So, when we are constantly in His thoughts, He destroys our pride, purifies our desires directing them towards Him. It is just like when constantly add clean water to bucket of muddy water, at one point the bucket will be full of clean water! A pure mind alone can have pure desires and pure desire means the desire to know Him, to be with Him, at His feet and to be constantly engaged in His worship. Thus, the sages, devas and seekers constantly worship Him.

We are all aware of the story of how Kāma disrupts Shiva's meditation, invoking His wrath; Shiva then opens His third eye and burns Kāma to ashes! When we sit to meditate on the Lord, many desires come up in our mind distracting us repeatedly. It is only the grace of Lord Shiva that destroys these desires and helps us stay in that state of meditation.

There is the story of how Rāvaṇa was unable to fly in the Pushpaka Vimāna stolen from Kubera and on enquiry he found that it was because Lord Shiva and Parvati were relaxing in that place. Rāvaṇa, in his arrogance, tried to lift the

whole place, Mount Kailash which shook and scared Parvati. Shiva realized that Rāvaṇa was the culprit and with His big toe He pushed the mountain and Rāvaṇa was trapped beneath. Rāvaṇa, having realized his pride had brought him to that state, sang hymns in praise of Lord Shiva for 1000 years! Shiva then pardoned him and also gave him a special sword. When seen subjectively, as long as the strong individuality and pride exists, we are unable to recognize the Lord; we question His very existence and even insult the Lord! It is then, out of unconditional compassion that the Lord punishes us and destroys our pride, thus turning our mind towards Him and He even blesses us with His grace!

I bow down to that Shivalinga who is of the nature of Unconditional Compassion.

सर्वसुगन्धि-सुलेपित-लिङ्गं
बुद्धिविवर्धन-कारण-लिङ्गम् ।
सिद्धसुरासुर-वन्दित-लिङ्गं
तत् प्रणमामि सदाशिवलिङ्गम् ॥

ಸರ್ವಸುಗಂಧಿ-ಸುಲೇಪಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ಬುದ್ಧಿ-ವಿವರ್ಧನ-ಕಾರಣ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ।
ಸಿದ್ಧಸುರಾಸುರ-ವಂದಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ತತ್ ಪ್ರಣಮಾಮಿ ಸದಾಶಿವ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ॥

Sarvasugandhi-sulepita-liṅgaṁ
buddhivivardhana-kāraṇa-liṅgam ।
siddhasurāsura-vandita-liṅgaṁ
tatpraṇamāmisadāśiva-liṅgam ।। 3 ।।

सर्वसुगन्धि - fragrances सुलेपित - well-annointed लिङ्गम् - Lingam बुद्धिविवर्धनकारण - which enhances wisdom लिङ्गम् - Lingam सिद्धसुरासुर - Siddhas, Gods and Asuras वन्दित - worshipped लिङ्गम् - Lingam तत् प्रणमामि - I bow before that सदाशिव - Ever auspicious लिङ्गम् - Lingam

I bow before that Sadashiva Lingam, which is well anointed with all fragrances, which leads to growth of wisdom, and which is worshipped by sages, devās and asurās.

Reflections:

The bee collects nectar from various flowers and makes honey. We all know how sweet and nourishing that honey is! Similarly, when we sincerely and with devotion take up various means of worship, various Shāstras for study, we grow wiser and wiser. We are then prepared to understand the essence of all the study and worship and come to realize that the essence is none other than The Lord Himself! The sages in their contemplation come to understand that the Lord is

none other than the Self. The Siddhās attain the siddhīs that was their goal. The devās and asurās too attain what they want, by worshipping Lord Shiva. Shiva in the Upaniṣads is described as Shivam Shāntam. Thus, on worshipping Him one attains Supreme Peace!

कनकमहामणि-भूषित-लिङ्गं
फणिपतिवेष्टित-शोभित-लिङ्गम् ।
दक्षसुयज्ञ-विनाशन-लिङ्गं
तत् प्रणमामि सदाशिव-लिङ्गम् ॥

ಕನಕಮಹಾಮಣಿ-ಭೂಷಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ಫಣಿಪತಿ-ವೇಷ್ಟಿತ-ಶೋಭಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ।
ದಕ್ಷಸುಯಜ್ಞ-ವಿನಾಶನ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ತತ್ ಪ್ರಣಮಾಮಿ ಸದಾಶಿವ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ॥

Kanakamahāmaṇi-bhūṣita-liṅgaṁ
phaṇipativeṣṭita-śobhita-liṅgam ।
dakṣasuyajña-vināśana-liṅgaṁ
tatpraṇamāmisadāśivaliṅgam ।। 4 ।।

कनकमहामणि - Gold and precious gems भूषित - ornamented लिङ्गम् - Lingam फणिपतिवेष्टित - who is adorned by the King of Serpents शोभित - resplendent लङ्गम् - Lingam दक्षसुयज्ञ - the Yajña of Prajäpati Daksha विनाशन - Destroyer लिङ्गम् - Lingam तत् प्रणमामि - I bow before that सदाशिव - Ever auspicious लिङ्गम् - Lingam

I bow before that Sadashiva Lingam, which is ornamented by gold and jewels, which is radiant and who has the king of serpents, coiled around him, and which destroyed the Yajña of Daksha.

Reflections:
The saguṇa-sākāra-rūpa of the Supreme is always depicted with a lot of beauty and ornamentation. This is to attract the mind that is running after the objects of the outer world and orient it towards the Supreme. Lord Shiva is depicted as a God with least embellishments! He rather has the King of snakes around His neck as His ornament! In our philosophy, all the Gods are symbolic and lead us to the Supreme alone. The snake is a symbol of the Ego. Shiva is one who has kept the ego in His control and this is depicted as the snake coiled around His neck. The snake neither strangles Him nor bites Him as the Lord controls the snake. The ego now is His ornament in His play called the Jagat!

We are all aware of the story of Sati and her marriage with Lord Shiva. Prajāpati Daksha, father of Sati was a very proud being. He could not bear the fact that his son in law did not respect him like all the others did. He failed to see who his son in law is in reality!! He once conducted a Yajña only to insult Lord Shiva by not inviting Him to the Yajña. However, Sati felt that since it was her father's place they didn't need an invitation. Lord Shiva being trikalajnani, knew what was in Daksha's mind and said they should not go to this Yajña. However, Sati insisted on going and Shiva sent her with Nandi and other Gana escorts. When she saw all except Shiva at the Yajña, she was angered and hurt. On asking her father, she realized that it was done on purpose and as an insult to her Lord. An enraged Sati gave up her body right there in the sacred fire of the Yajña. When Shiva heard of this, He destroyed the Yajña of Daksha, Daksha himself and upon requests from the other gods He brought Daksha to his senses. When seen symbolically, as long as one has an uncontrolled ego, one cannot recognize the Lord and the true devotees of the Lord! When such an individual takes up any task in the Yajña spirit, pride will come in the way, leading to the destruction of the endeavor itself! This fall will act as a blessing of the Lord, destroying that ego which is a barrier between us and the Supreme.

कुङ्कुम-चन्दन-लेपित-लिङ्गं
पङ्कज-हार-सुशोभित-लिङ्गम् ।
सञ्चित-पाप-विनाशन-लिङ्गं
तत् प्रणमामि सदाशिव-लिङ्गम् ॥

ಕುಂಕುಮ-ಚಂದನ-ಲೇಪಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ಪಂಕಜಹಾರ-ಸುಶೋಭಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ।
ಸಂಚಿತಪಾಪ-ವಿನಾಶನ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ತತ್ ಪ್ರಣಮಾಮಿ ಸದಾಶಿವ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ॥

Kuṅkuma-candana-lepita-liṅgaṁ
paṅkaja-hāra-suśobhita-liṅgam ।
sañcita-pāpa-vināśana-liṅgaṁ
tatpraṇamāmisadāśiva-liṅgam ।। 5 ।।

कुङ्कुम - Kumkum चन्दन - Sandal paste लेपित - Annointed लिङ्गम् - Lingam पङ्कज-हार - Lotus Garland सुशोभित - adorned लिङ्गम् - Lingam सञ्चित-पाप - Accumulated sins विनाशन - destroyer लिङ्गम् - Lingam तत् प्रणमामि - I bow before that सदाशिव - Ever auspicious लिङ्गम् - Lingam

I bow before that Sadashiva Lingam, which is smeared with kumkum and sandal paste, which is decorated with garland of lotus flowers, and which can destroy accumulated sins.

Reflections:
Shiva is said to be Abhisheka-priya. Once the abhisheka is done, the Shivalinga is beautifully anointed with sandal paste and kumkum and decorated with a garland of lotus flowers. While sandal gives beautiful fragrance, it is also symbolic of the essence got by rubbing of the sandal wood bark, symbolic of the fragrance of goodness (inner strength) that comes from all our learning got from the day to day frictions (experience) in the realm of vyavahāra. The lotus flower is symbolic of being asaṅga. The lotus flower grows in lakes or ponds full of dirt, murky water. Yet, it is unaffected by all that dirt; it rather remains in its own beauty giving joy to its surroundings! Shiva itself means Auspiciousness. Without Shiva, there is no world, yet Shiva is not tainted by the world! Bowing down to Lord Shiva, may we also remain in our true nature, untainted by the world around us. When, by His Grace, we remain in our nature which is the state of absolute purity, there can be no punya or papa. Thus worshipping Lord Shiva destroys all our baggage of sins. *(AdiShankara makes it clear that puṇya is also pāpa alone as it becomes the cause for rebirth).*

देवगणार्चित सेवित-लिङ्गं
भावैर्भक्तिभिरेव च लिङ्गम् ।
दिनकर-कोटि-प्रभाकर-लिङ्गं
तत् प्रणमामि सदाशिव-लिङ्गम् ॥

ದೇವಗಣಾರ್ಚಿತ-ಸೇವಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ಭಾವೈರ್ಭಕ್ತಿಭಿರೇವ ಚ ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ।
ದಿನಕರ-ಕೋಟಿ-ಪ್ರಭಾಕರ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ತತ್ ಪ್ರಣಮಾಮಿ ಸದಾಶಿವ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ॥

Devagaṇārcitasevita-liṅgaṁ
bhāvairbhaktibhireva ca liṅgam ।
dinakara-koṭi-prabhākara-liṅgaṁ
tatpraṇamāmisadāśiva-liṅgam ।। 6 ।।

देवगणार्चित - worshipped by Gods and Ganas सेवित - served by लिङ्गम् - Lingam भावैः - with emotions भक्तिभिः - with devotion च - and लिङ्गम् - Lingam दिनकर-कोटि - million suns प्रभाकर - effulgence लिङ्गम् - Lingam तत् प्रणमामि - I bow before that सदाशिव - Ever auspicious लिङ्गम् - Lingam

I bow before that Sadashiva Lingam, which is worshipped and served with devotion and deep emotions by gods and gaṇās, and whose effulgence is like that of millions of Suns put together.

Reflections:

Lord Shiva is the Paramātma, the life principle in all beings. Everything in creation functions only due to His presence. Hence, whatever happens in creation is in reality an offering unto Him! When one understands this, naturally all the worshipped offered will be to Him alone! When the mind is engaged in the thoughts of the Higher, the Lord, naturally all emotions are filled with Bhakti, which effortlessly flows out of such a mind towards Him. Thus, the gods in the heavens and the guṇās in Kailash are devoted deeply in the service and worship of the Lord alone!

The Supreme Lord is illumination itself whose splendor is incomparable! In our experience and understanding of the outer world, the Sun seems to be the Self-illumined, one whose splendor seems indescribable!! When this is the case, how can one describe the splendor of the Lord? Lord Shiva, being the source of all illumination, is the very illumination that makes the illumination of the sun possible! Hence, His effulgence is incomprehensible to the mind! However, in trying to describe His effulgence, the hymn compares it to the effulgence of a million suns put together!

अष्टदलोपरिवेष्टित-लिङ्गं
सर्वसमुद्भव-कारण-लिङ्गम् ।
अष्टदरिद्र-विनाशन-लिङ्गं
तत् प्रणमामि सदाशिव-लिङ्गम् ॥

ಅಷ್ಟದಲೋಪರಿವೇಷ್ಟಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ಸರ್ವ-ಸಮುದ್ಭವ-ಕಾರಣ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ।
ಅಷ್ಟದರಿದ್ರ-ವಿನಾಶನ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ತತ್ ಪ್ರಣಮಾಮಿ ಸದಾಶಿವ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ॥

Aṣṭadalopariveṣṭita-liṅgaṁ
sarvasamudbhava-kāraṇa-liṅgam ।
aṣṭadaridra-vināśana-liṅgaṁ
tatpraṇamāmisadāśiva-liṅgam ।। 7 ।।

अष्टदलोपरिवेष्टित - Enveloped by eight fold petals **लिङ्गम्** - Lingam **सर्वसमुद्भव** - All creation **कारण** - cause **लिङ्गम्** - Lingam **अष्टदरिद्र** - eight types of poverty **विनाशन** - destroyer **लिङ्गम्** - Lingam **तत् प्रणमामि** - I bow before that **सदाशिव** - Ever auspicious **लिङ्गम्** - Lingam

I bow before that Sadashiva Lingam, which is enveloped with eight-fold petals, which is the cause of all creation, and which destroys eight types of poverty.

Reflections:

The Lord is the cause of this jagat and the cause is always independent of the effect! Hence, the Lord is above the jagat and is also not affected by the various vyavahāras of the jagat! The jagat is made of the pañcabhūtās and 3 guṇās (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) and the Lord is the essence, the rasa in the jagat. This is picturized as the Lord being enveloped by the 8 fold petals of the lotus! The Lingam which symbolizes the ever-pure, eternal Supreme that is Absolute existence-Absolute awareness-Absolute bliss!! Just as darkness disappears when there is light, the eight types of poverty also get destroyed when one is in communion with the Lord!

सुरगुरु-सुरवर-पूजित-लिङ्गं
सुरवन-पुष्प-सदार्चित-लिङ्गम् ।
परात्परं परमात्मक-लिङ्गं
तत् प्रणमामि सदाशिव-लिङ्गम् ॥

ಸುರಗುರು-ಸುರವರ-ಪೂಜಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ಸುರವನಪುಷ್ಪ-ಸದಾರ್ಚಿತ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ।
ಪರಾತ್ಪರಂ ಪರಮಾತ್ಮಕ-ಲಿಂಗಂ
ತತ್ ಪ್ರಣಮಾಮಿ ಸದಾಶಿವ-ಲಿಂಗಮ್ ॥

Suraguru-suravara-pūjita-liṅgaṁ
suRāvana-puṣpa-sadārcita-liṅgm ।
parātparaṁparamātmaka-liṅgaṁ
tatpraṇamāmisadāśiva-liṅgam ।। 8 ।।

सुरगुरु - Guru of the Gods Brihaspati **सुरवर** - best of gods **पूजित** - worshipped **लिङ्गम्** - Lingam **सुरवन-पुष्प** - flowers from the garden of the gods **सदार्चित** - worshipped all the time **लिङ्गम्** - Lingam **तत् प्रणमामि** - I bow before that **सदाशिव** - auspicious **लिङ्गम्** - Lingam

I bow before that Sadashiva Lingam, which is worshipped by the gurus of gods, which is worshipped by the best of gods, which is always worshipped by the flowers, from the garden of Gods, which is the eternal abode, and which is the ultimate truth.

Reflections:

The Supreme Lord is divinity itself and hence the best of the best is offered in worship. The worship of the Lord is such that the worshipper and all the material used for worship become divine in that process!

The Guru of the Gods, Brihaspati worships Lord Shiva and there is an episode in the Shivapurāna where Indra and Brihaspati were going to Kailash to see Lord Shiva and on the way they encountered a yogi sleeping in their way. Indra repeatedly requested the yogi to move but to no avail. Finally, Indra, in his arrogance took his thunderbolt to strike the yogi, who was Lord Shiva Himself in disguise. Shiva opened His third eye to burn Indra, when Sage Brihaspati prays to Shiva, begging Him to spare Indra.

All the Gods, including Indra worship Lord Shiva as the Lingam with the divine flowers from the gardens of the heavens!

The Shivalinga is the Eternal abode, the final goal for all seekers. He alone is the Paramātmā worthy of all worship!

लिंगाष्टकमिदं पुण्यं यःपठेत् शिवसन्निधौ ।
शिवलोकमवाप्नोति शिवेन सह मोदते ॥

ಲಿಂಗಾಷ್ಟಕಮಿದಂ ಪುಣ್ಯಂ ಯಃಪಠೇತ್ ಶಿವಸನ್ನಿದೌ ।
ಶಿವಲೋಕಮವಾಪ್ನೋತಿ ಶಿವೇನ ಸಹ ಮೋದತೆ ॥

Liṅgāṣṭakamidaṁ puṇyaṁ yaḥ paṭhet śivasannidhau ।
Śivalokamavāpnoti śivena saha modate ।।

लिङ्गाष्टकमिदम् - This Lingashtakam पुण्यं - holy यः - who पठेत् – chants शिवसन्निधौ– in the Holy presence of Lord Shiva शिवलोकम् - world of Shiva अवाप्नोति - reach शिवेनसह – with Lord Shiva मोदते - enjoys

Anyone who chants the holy octet of the Lingam, in the holy presence of Lord Shiva, would in the end reach the world of Shiva, and enjoy His presence.

Reflections:

Any Hymn, stotram or śloka is aimed at taking our mind higher, beyond the realm of the worlds and its objects. The chants render the mind pure and

focused on the Higher, thus preparing the seeker for the highest goal of human life – Liberation! However, there is one condition here – the one who is chanting must keep the mind along with the chant.

Thus, keeping the mind in the Lord (referred to here as Shivasannidhi) while chanting Liṅgāṣṭakam purifies the mind which is then easily focused on the Lord. The reward of such a sadhana is attaining the world of Lord Shiva and reveling in Him! The world of Shiva is the state of inner peace (Shivam Shāntam-declare the Upaniṣads!) and reveling in Him is to abide in that state of Supreme peace!

Conclusion:

The word Lingam in Sanskrit refers to a pratīka, a symbol. Thus, the Shivalinga is symbolic of Lord Shiva- Supreme Peace, Auspiciousness! The only obstacle to experience Shiva is the presence of our individuality. When we bow down at this symbol, surrendering our individuality at this altar, reveling in Him alone through this hymn called Liṅgāṣṭakam, naturally we too attain that Supreme Peace!

May we all chant the Lingashtakam with our mind soaked in the Shivalinga and attain that state of Supreme Peace, Shiva!

Om Namah Shivāya! Jai Jagadeeshwara!

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