



Glory of Bharath » Bharath Darshan

Dear Sai brothers and sisters,

In this auspicious month we shall make a pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Amarnath to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva on the day of Shivarathri.

Amarnath

Shiva means auspiciousness, and linga means a sign or a symbol. Hence, the Shivalinga is regarded as a "symbol of the great God of the universe who is all-auspiciousness". Shiva also means "one in whom the whole creation sleeps after dissolution". Linga also means the same thing—a place where created objects get dissolved during the disintegration of the created universe. According to Hinduism, it is the same god that creates, sustains and withdraws the universe, the Shivalinga represents symbolically God Himself. In India the worship of Lord Shiva dates back to pre-historic times. Among the plethora of temples that are his shrines Amarnath deserves a special mention.



Lord Amarnath

Legend:

This is the cave which was chosen by Lord Shankara for narrating the secrets of immortality and creation of Universe to Maa Parvati. The story goes like this: Centuries ago Maa Parvati asked the Lord to let her know why and when he started wearing the beads of heads (Mund Mala). Lord Shankara replied whenever you are born I add one more head in my beads. Maa Parvati said, "My Lord, my body is destroyed every time and I die again and again, but you are Immortal. Please let me know the secret of this". Finally, on consistent demand from Maa Parvati He made up his mind to tell the immortal secret. He started for lonely place where no living being could listen to it. He chose Amarnath Cave.



Amarnath Cave

In preparation to that He left His Nandi (The Bull which He used to ride) at **Pahalgam** (Bail gaon). At **Chandanwari** He released Moon from his hairs. At the banks of **Lake Sheshnag** He released the snakes. He decided to leave his Son Ganesha at **Mahagunas Parvat** (Mahaganesh Hill). At **Panjtarni**, Shiva left the Five Elements behind (Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Sky) which make a living being. He is the Lord of these elements. It is believed that as a symbol of sacrificing the earthly world, Lord Shiva and Maa Parvati had Tandav Dance.



Pahalgam



Chandanwari

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After leaving behind all these, Shankara entered the Holy Amarnath Cave along with Parvati Maa. Lord Shiva takes his Samadhi on the Deer Skin and concentrated. To ensure that no living being is able to hear the Immortal Tale, He created Rudra named Kalagni and ordered him to spread fire to eliminate every living thing in and around the Holy Cave. After this He started narrating the secret of immortality to Maa Parvati. But as a matter of chance one egg which was lying beneath the Deer skin remained protected. It is believed to be non living and more over it was protected by Shiva - Parvati Asan. The pair of pigeons which were born out of this egg became immortal having listened the secret of immortality (Amar Katha). Many pilgrims report seeing the pair of pigeons when they trek the arduous route to pay their obeisance before the Ice-Lingam.



Lake Sheshnag

Discovery of Holy Cave:

The story narrated by people about the discovery of this Holy Cave is of a Gujjar (shepherd) Buta Malik. He is given the credit of discovering this Holy Cave. Story goes like this, that a saint gave Buta Malik a bag full of Coal. On reaching his home when he opened the bag, to his utter surprise the bag was full of gold coins. This made him overwhelmed with joy. He ran to thank the Saint. But, what he found was that the Saint had disappeared. Instead, he found The Holy Cave and Shiv Lingam there in . He announced the discovery of this to the Villagers. Then onwards this has become the sacred place of Pilgrimage.

The ancient epics narrate another story which goes like this. The valley of Kashmir was under water. It was a big lake. Kashyap Rishi drained the water through number of rivers and rivulets. In those days, Bhrgu Rishi came that way on a visit to The Himalyas. He was the first to have Darshan of this Holy Cave. When people heard of the Lingam, Amarnath for them became Shiva's abode and a Centre of pilgrimage. The trek to Amarnath, in the month of sharavan (July-August) has the devout flock to this incredible shrine, where the image of Shiva, in the form of a Lingam, is formed naturally of an Ice Stalagmite, which waxes and wanes with the Moon's cycle. By its side are fascinating, two more Ice Lingams, that of Maa Parvati and of their son, Ganesha.

Har Har Mahadev



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