



Siva: The Siva Purana Retold

Ramesh Menon

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There are eighteen Mahapuranas, great Puranas, and the Siva Purana is one of them. Siva is a vivid retelling of the Siva Purana for today's reader. The book contains all the major legends of Siva, bringing them alive again for a new generation.

Siva: The Siva Purana Retold Details

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From Reader Review Siva: The Siva Purana Retold for online ebook

Anand Prakash says

Shiva - the ultimate God

Book Review for Shiva by Ramesh Menon

This book encompasses the myth of Shiva-Sati, Shiva-Parvati, origin stories of Ganesha and Kartikeya, stories about all twelve Jyotirlingas, and demons which Shiva kills, which can't be killed by other Gods. Stories here make one believe why is Shiva the biggest of Gods, not the Vishnu, Sustainer of God trinity, (one might get a different feeling if one reads some other Puranas), as there are some stories where Vishnu has accepted the defeat and either went to Shiva or sent Indra, King of Heaven, perpetually troubled by Asuras, to Shiva for help.

I learned that many characters like Rudra, Virabhadra and Kirtimukha (he who eats himself, Google it!) emerge from Shiva, and are actually essence Shiva. I previously thought Shiva reincarnated themselves into them but not Shiva sent them out while he was busy doing meditation or sex. His stories with Sati and Parvati (both reincarnation of Mother Goddess Kali) shows the human side of God we know not much off. Story of Sati, as it is told here, seemed like a warning story for parents of a female child. It is essentially a story of girl who wasn't loved by her parents at all and ended up self-immolating herself. Of course, she would be born again: what would Shiva without her? But one must have a strong reason for the Goddess to be reborn and her marriage with Shiva. So thanks to Brahma, creator of God trinity, who gave a boon to Tarakasura that he will die only at the hands of Shiva's son. So, that's why Kartikeya/Murugan, was born, who has mysterious birth (read can't explain scientifically! Same goes for Shiva's other son, Ganesha) and unique childhood. Third son Shiva which is not well known in northern India is Ayyappan or Ayyappa Swamy, who originated from lusty union of Shiva with Mohini (Vishnu), in presence of Parvati. (One might read the reasons like some asura will only be killed by the union of two males, which seems like a later addition to me. I could be wrong!)

The two villains who turned out to be almost invincible until, of course, Shiva Showed up to the fight (yes they weren't even killed by Shiva's positive essences: Rudra, Virabhadra etc.) are Jalandhara and Andhaka (both originated from Shiva's essence. Surprise!). Their birth and their childhood once again demonstrate the inability of Shiva to really take parenting seriously (Remember Kartikeya was abandoned too! Nope, I haven't heard that they raise him either.) as he abandoned Jalandhara or given Andhaka for foster parenting to asuras. They were tough villains and had to be killed using Oedipus complex, when these asuras have taken a liking to their own mother, Parvati, unknowingly, of course. Shiva used this glitch in the boon to kill two of his sons.

Though I thoroughly enjoyed the stories narrated in this book but Shiva, being the biggest God, granted these stories an inevitability that by the end everything will be alright (no surprise), of happiness. In addition, the author had often ended the stories, with religious warnings and morals.

Overall, author has curated interesting stories from Shiva Purana which paints the picture of ultra cool, aloof, meditative, and destructive Shiva. He had also narrated stories about his family and his villains. I only wish that the author had told them with complete abandon, without the baggage of religiousness, as he did in his book, Krishna.

Monty desai says

OM NAMA SHIVAY ???...This is a pretty good book to have an idea of importance of Lord Shiva and

his major legends in Hindu Mythology...

it is an abridged version of Siva Purana one of 18 important puranas in Hindu faith and religion...If someone Want to know deeper stuff about Lord Siva it's better to read the 2000+ pages book which covers everything...but I recommend this book to anyone who want to have a great reading experience of Lord Siva legends and have a life changing experience...

Nikhil says

What a powerful and a surreal depiction of Siva ! Very different style of writing compared to Menon's previous books I've read.

Not to be mistaken as one of the 'Modern rendition'; its ancient, antiquated but awe-inspiring nonetheless.

Siva and Vishnu's depiction and their incarnates are spell-binding.

Aditya H says

Really helps one understand Lord Mahadev better.

Rupa Joshi says

A very complicated text made simple to understand especially for a generation that tends to question religion. An easy and amazing read.

Shobana says

Loved the book. Learnt so much about Hindu Gods. There are places that a reader could get confused. Like when Indra calls Vishnu his brother but a little bit of googling really help while reading this.

As one reviewer already mentioned, u will be surprised by the similarities u will see between Indian and Greek mythology.

Yuvaraj says

Very nice Prose Writing... However I felt the sequence of stories should have been maintained for better grip in reading...

Indira says

"As I see images of solar prominences,
Have I glimpsed the opening of another eye?
The unifying third that perceives and destroys it all?

In a trance I watch those dancing flames;
Looping onto themselves at times,
Jumping up with sheer abandon at others.

In the darkness that surrounds this brilliance,
I have seen the blue-throated one
And his consort wrapped in red too.

Melded in their eternal dance;
Balancing conception with annihilation,
and blending sustenance with genesis.

It is Him surely, is it not?"

This is how I saw Him while reading this amazing rendition of the shiva purana.

Bran Burne says

True must read

Easy to understand, flows well. Enlightened. It really helped my understanding of the hindu faiths. It was the first book of hindu tales I've read, and I'm absolutely looking forward to more.

Surya Pandian says

This book is too literal that the true essence and beauty is lost.
Can't blame the author, the original is too ancient that I guess it requires tremendous amount of dedication and effort and research to truly be able to translate such work.

Ayan Sen says

A must read...

For me the best part of the book is getting to know so many Siva stories in details which I always wanted bcz I am a ardent devotee of the Mahadeva. The way major stories are transformed in English from Sanskrit, is really commendable. For some stories I have heard different versions from other folklores but I believe the version told by Mr. Menon in Siva Purana is the true one. Out of curiosity I want to ask Mr. Menon that in almost all the chapters (barring few) you mentioned different incidents of explicit sexual acts between Gods and Goddesses and other mortal beings, were all of them actually told in the Sanskrit version? as no chapter/page/lines/verses was referred from the original piece. Rather it is applicable in all stories as neither of them was mentioned with reference. Would love to get a reply on this?

Mahesh Nakka says

5 stars

AUM Namah Shivaya....

Shivani Sheopory says

Thanks to the author, a very powerful and complicated text has been made available to the English-speaking new generation of India. He does not dilute or twist the content to fit today's context. This is also potentially where I struggled- simply reading a story, and then in the chapter's end, being told that the reader is blessed for all his/her lives and achieves Moksha, failed to create that feeling of spiritual elevation.

Again, the book -potentially like the Puran itself- was very interesting, but at times promising effects like Moksha to the reader which I find difficult to comprehend, judging purely by the moral learnings from the book - for example, reading it in a non-religious context, I found it strange that reading about how, to stop a raging war, Vishnu would use sexual deceit on an asura's wife, and then once the Asura was vanquished, I read that reading this story will cleanse my past sins. I missed the 'why'.

Christine says

I love this book, it is my favorite book of all time. I adore Siva!

The stories are amazing, the settings, the creatures, the love, all of it. This was the first book by Ramesh Menon I read, and my first ancient Indian text. I was delighted with space ships, pleiadians, fairies, demons and on and on. I never imagined that a book so old could contain so much. I also enjoyed the relationships between Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. I laughed and cried. Excellent!

Govind says

The story of Shiva, the Adiyogi is always fascinating and when the stories are told describing the Adiyogi as Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent and the ultimate God, it gets even more interesting. For the ones who have not read the Shiva Purana, this is a faithful adaption of the same and a comfortable gateway into the entry of the mighty world of Shiva.
