

Shiva:

Among, the Hindu Trinity of Gods, Lord Shiva is the destroyer of the Universe. The material world is a balance of good and evil. When evil increases, Lord Shiva assists in the destruction of the material creation in order to protect souls from pain and suffering.

Lord Shiva is often shown as a young man with long hair with Mother Ganga and the crescent moon in his hair. He has a third eye between the eyebrows on the forehead. The third eye is the eye of wisdom or knowledge. The third eye burns evil and so evil-doers fear it. He is usually shown with four arms - one holding Trishula (a spear), another holding Damru (an hour-glass shaped hand-drum), and the other two hands in dance position. The right hand is always in a blessing pose. He has the Vasuki Naga, a snake, around his neck. He is dressed in tiger skin and has a tilak made of ashes on his forehead.

When the ocean of milk was churned, one of the things to come out of it was poison which could destroy the world. Lord Shiva drank the poison to save the world. Since then his throat is blue colored giving him the name – Nilkantha.

Nataraja, the God of Dance, is the dancing posture of Lord Shiva. In this pose, he holds a damru in his right hand, fire in his left and the other two hands are in dance positions. The left leg is raised and balancing over a demon. This divine dance is performed at the time of creation and destruction. The damru produces sound symbolizing creation and the fire is a symbol of destruction.

Shiva's vahana: Nandi the bull. Nandi can always be found at the entrance to Lord Shiva's temples, waiting patiently, gazing at Lord Shiva.

Shiva's Astra: Trishul

Shiva's Mantra: Om Namah Shivay

Shiva's abode: Snowy Mount Kailash

Parvati

Shakti, the feminine power of the Universe, was born as **Parvati**, the daughter of Himavan the Lord of the mountains. Parvata in Sanskrit means mountain, Parvati translates to "She of the mountains" and is believed to be the personification of the Himalayas.

Consort: Shiva

Names: Uma, Kanya Kumari, Kaali, Durga, Mahasakti, Gauri

As Durga, Parvati Maa destroyed Mahishasura. As Kaali, she destroyed Raktabeej. Apart from these fearful forms, she is the mother of Ganesha and Kartikeya. She portrays motherhood and love and devotion to her Ishwara.





