

# SHIVA: EMBODIMENT OF CREATION AND ANNIHILATION OF DUALITY

Harshit Sharma

graduated with an honours degree in English Literature and holds a Diploma in Paralegal Practice and a Postgraduate Diploma in Comparative Mythology. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in English literature at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College, Chandigarh and a Diploma in Indian Aesthetics from Department of Philosophy, University of Mumbai. His research interests include Postcolonial Literature, Indian Mythology and media, gender and sexuality discourses in Literature.  
sharmaharshiiit@gmail.com . Phone No: +91-8295949799

## Abstract

*The obsession with compartmentalising and defining in binaries is an amnesia that the West will never recover from, whether it was their first binary divisions of West/East, Self/Other, Center/Periphery, or now when the entirety of oneself is constantly dissected into binaries and sub binaries, and sexual orientations are compartmentalised. Famous 20th-century English writer and philosopher Aldous Huxley shared his thoughts about Shiva in his Natraja manifestation. 'No, we are very, very poor in it.' A few Christian emblems may be found among our possessions. The cross is a fine symbol, but it overlooks the cosmic dimension of existence. It ignores the four most fundamental dimensions—mass, energy, space, and time—as Huxley put it. Shiva has an unrestrained, erratic, and destructive quality. As a cosmic dancer, he performs the Tandava, a violent dance, on occasion. He dances with such ferocity with a war axe that the whole universe is destroyed. In contrast, Parvati is represented as a calm builder who soothes and restrains her husband's volcanic outbursts. The purpose of this study is to investigate the concept of duality in relation to Shiva's meaning and importance. The paper uses contemplation and meditation to probe the various faces of this multifaceted deity. The many incarnations of Shiva and the meanings behind them are discussed, along with Shiva's history as an idea and anthropomorphic figure. In his anthropomorphic androgynous form, Shiva is often represented in literature and art as the deity who is half woman. This dualistic depiction offers the required internal consistency to share in the cosmogony's original role and purpose. The study's overarching goal is to demonstrate how Shiva, as practised in the postmodern era, is not limited by the strict binaries and classifications of dominate Western thought. There is no better illustration of this than the Hindu deity Shiva-Shakti Ardhanarishvara.*

**Keywords:** Shiva, Ardhanarishvara, Shakti, Androgyne, Duality, Vishnu

## INTRODUCTION:

Shiva, the most mysterious and alluring of the Hindu gods, is also an unconventional figure who lives on the periphery of Hinduism's established religious practises while also being an essential component of the religion's trinity and, by extension, the supreme deity Mahadev, who defies and surpasses all human conceptions of the divine. Shiva is beyond human definitions and customs in his omnipotence. As Bhairava and Rudra, the personifications of wrath and terror, he is also Pashupati and Ashutosh, the personifications of good fortune and kindness. Like a misfit, he questions the boundaries between holy and profane, high and low, and good and wrong. He embodies the archetypes of the great yogi, the ascetic-turned-householder, and the nomad. Lord of the endless cosmic dance of disintegration, creation, and rebirth.

'Lo, the God is dancing

-Shiva the all-destroyer and Lord of creation,  
The Master of Yoga and the wielder of Pinaka.

His flaming locks have filled the sky,  
Seven worlds play the rhythm

As the trembling earth sways almost to dissolution,

Lo, the Great God Shiva is dancing' (Swami Vivekananda, 18)

Nataraja, Lord of Dancers or King of Actors, is one of Shiva's most revered titles. The universe is His stage; His repertoire includes a wide variety of acts; He is both performer and audience. No negation exists. Everything is in accord. As Lord Krishna in Bhagavad-gita says, mayadhyaksenaprakrithisuyatesa-caracaram: (you are seeing the energy displayed in the wonderful actions and reactions of this material cosmic manifestation, but don't think that they are working independently. No, I am behind them.). Krishna further says:

'Maya tatamidamsarvam

Jagad avyakta-murtina

Mat-sthani sarva-bhutani

Na cahamtesvavasthitah' (155)

“By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them.” (Bg. 9.4) That which is avyakta, unmanifested, also has murti, a form. The sky, for instance, is avyakta, or unmanifest, yet possesses a form: the universe's spherical shape. If we go to the ocean, we will also discover a shape like a huge circle there. Nothing exists outside of form; even the most abstract concepts have concrete manifestations. It is ludicrous to think that there is no world outside of zero, negation, or the impersonal. Krishna, the highest form, is hidden behind the seeming absence of a persona and the so-called voidness, negativity, or zero. The Vishnudharmottara, written by the sage Markandeya, emphasises the connection between the murti, or idol, depicting a god and the meditator's transcendental experience. Therefore, Shiva may be seen as a representation of this same harmony, resolution, and balance of the cosmos, in unity, because of the importance placed on form and the fact that meditation on the murti takes the adept closer to an experience of non-dual reality. It may be argued that Shiva is projecting Shakti, or that Shakti is projecting Shiva.

‘Isvarahparamahkrshnah sac-cid-ananda-vigrahah.’ (156)

Isvara means "controller" in Sanskrit. Krishna is the true master, not nature. Prakrti, also known as Durga, is the goddess of material nature, and according to the Brahmasamhita (5.44), she works under the supervision of Govinda. (Krishna). There is an idea behind everything we see in the world. Sri Krishna is the one who first set everything in motion. All the gods of the Hindu pantheon—Vishnu, Krishna, and Shiva—are united in the dance of Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance. In Heraclitus's words, "everything in its proper place," and "every being performing its proper function," contribute to the most exquisite harmony possible. India is continually conscious of the differences in souls and philosophies and is effective to blend them into each other, re-creating the complete unity in its fullest perfection, whereas the West, guided by cold, hard logic, compartmentalises the unusual, shutting it off from the rest of life into a distinct and definite compartment of the spirits. The genuine rhythm of life is created by the matching of opposites.

Holstein and Guberium argue that, considering the proliferation of sites and scenes of identity work, the self has become an institutional project, something that individuals must continuously exhibit in order to provide a foundation for understanding their actions and the actions of others around them. The ego remains crucial to daily life precisely because it is conceived of as the principal actor (and audience) in our daily social dramas. Skilfully crafting oneself in socially recognisable words is essential in today's culture and institutions. The obsession with compartmentalising and defining in binaries is an amnesia that the West will never recover from, whether it was their first binary divisions of West/East, Self/Other, Center/Periphery, or now when the entirety of oneself is constantly dissected into binaries and sub binaries, and sexual orientations are compartmentalised. The current study aims to annihilate the binaries or dualities with the form of Shiva-Shakti. As Romain Rolland lays out clearly in the Forward of the book 'The Dance of Shiva,' the Western races are locked in a dead end and are brutally exterminating one another. When it came to plundering, extorting, or exploiting the material wealth of her lands under the flag of Christ or of civilization, Europe never shunned the paths of Asia. The spoils of the robberies have been hidden away in archives and archaeological institutions for a long time. Academy members and other intellectual visitors have nibbled at its remnants, but Europe's spiritual life has gained nothing from this. Whom, amid the chaos with which the West's troubled conscience is grappling. The West is cut off from the rest of the world by a barrier of artificial dichotomies it has erected. (Pande, Alka) The whole basis of mankind relies on the complementary union of the masculine and female. From the Western story of creation centred on Adam and Eve to the Indian notion of Purusha and Prakriti, to the Chinese concept of Yin and Yang, this is true of all civilizations.

In her essay 'A room of one's own', Virginia Woolf discusses the idea in detail, first being used by Coleridge.

'If one is a man, still the woman part of his brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her, Coleridge perhaps meant this when said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties.' (Pg 87)

Woolf's views would be interesting to take into account when considering the fluidity of the brain itself or the concept of 'Ardhanarishwar' found in Indian mythology. According to Virginia Woolf, Coleridge's statement about an androgynous mind does not mean a mind that is sympathetic to women. It does not mean a mind that takes on their causes or devotes itself to their interpretation. Virginia Woolf's says,

'Androgynous mind is resonant and porous; that it transmits emotions without impediment; that it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided. In fact, one goes back to Shakespeare's mind as the type of the androgynous, of the man-womanly mind.' (Pg 88)

The Hindu notion of God as the singhata or sammisrana, the coalescence of male and female elements, delves even further into this glorious Oneness. Ardhhanarishvara, or isvara, Lord, who is half woman and from whom arose all srishti creation, is the result of this conception of God as being both ardha-nara, half man, and ardhanai, half woman.

'Kasturikacandanlepanayyei,  
Shamshanbhasmangvilepanaya  
Satkundalayyei phanikundalayyei  
Nam Shivayyei cha namo Shivaya  
-Hargauryashtakam' (Adi Shankaracharya, 171)

The one who ( in the form of Gauri) has covered one half of her body till the navel in sandalwood paste and the other half (in the form of Har) with ashes from the Shamshan, the one who has worn a manohar kundal ( beautiful earring ) in one ear and wrapped a sarpakundal (snake) around another ear, to that Shiva (female-shivani) and to that Shiva (male-Har) I bow.

Shiva has an unrestrained, erratic, and destructive quality. As a cosmic dancer, he performs the Tandava, a violent dance, on occasion. He dances with such ferocity with a war axe that the whole universe is destroyed. In contrast, Parvati is represented as a calm builder who soothes and restrains her husband's volcanic outbursts. She is a powerful force for nurturing and rebuilding the planet, and as such, she balances Shiva's aggression. In several stories, Paravati is Shiva's shakti or power. She carries out duties or undertakes obligations that suggest an interdependence between herself and Shiva. She is often referred to be the energy or shakti, driving the universe into being while Shiva sits aloof on his rock, uninterested in the process. As his Shakti, Parvati is active, influencing creation and his innate strength and power. She is often connected with prakriti (nature) in this capacity, while Shiva is identified with purusha. (Pure spirit).

There is no hostility between Prakriti and the Purusha. Her status as his Shakti is often seen favourably. That's why Shiva worships her; it's through her that the Absolute finds form in the world. He would be distant and unproductive without her. Parvati is essential to his ability to be creatively self-expressive, according to legend. Shiva may become all that he is supposed to be with her assistance. If Shiva were to be without Parvati as Shakti, he would be incomplete. It's Parvati who rules the night, and Shiva who rules the day. Shiva is the creator, while Parvati is the created. In a nutshell, they are two names for the same thing; they are just two sides of the same reality. She gives voice to his innermost self; she is his creative force; she is the Shakti of the phallic pillar. Shakti is the holy energy that underlies all creation and inspires new ideas. Almost commonly depicted as a goddess, it is a force for good. According to Hindu mythology, a male god is powerless and inert without his Shakti. She stands out as "the cause" of everything that has ever been created because to her role in the cosmic lila. Shiva is formless like the infinite sky, but the goddess is everywhere present like the soil. Just as the earth and the sky cannot survive without each other, Shiva cannot function without Parvati.

#### METHODOLOGY:

Ardhanarishvara is a sensual and passive figure, suggesting resolve, harmony, and balance. The first known example of an androgynous theme is found in the Rig Veda, where the sky and earth are revered as Father and Mother. This image is known as dyava-prithvi. As so, both the divine macrocosmic level and the human microcosmic level see the cosmos as fundamentally androgynous. The purpose of this study is to investigate the concept of duality in relation to Shiva's meaning and importance. The paper uses contemplation and meditation to probe the various faces of this multifaceted deity. The many incarnations of Shiva and the meanings behind them are discussed, along with Shiva's history as an idea and anthropomorphic figure. The range, variety, and characteristics of Shiva's opposite poles are enormous. He is the mighty archer, the cosmic dancer, and the perpetual snake; he is the deity of life and death, destruction and rebirth. In this work, the author investigates the philosophical coherence that may be found among Shiva's many contradictory forms. As a representational metaphor for religious precepts and dogmas, Ardhanarishvara is essential to comprehend and evaluate. Accordingly, the picture, as depicted in myth and symbolism, clarifies the scientific truths pertaining to human genesis. It shows how the dual or composite component of the god emerges in his or her symbolic concretization of reality as sunyata, the ineffable nothingness, moves from formlessness to form. In his anthropomorphic androgynous form, Shiva is often represented in literature and art as the deity who is half woman. This dualistic depiction offers the required internal consistency to share in the cosmogony's original role and purpose. The study's overarching goal is to demonstrate how Shiva, as practised in the postmodern era, is not limited by the strict binaries and classifications of dominate Western thought. There is no better illustration of this than the Hindu deity Shiva-Shakti Ardhanarishvara.



(1) Ardhanarishvara. Rajasthan, 6<sup>th</sup> century. Government Museum, Jhalawar.

## DISCUSSION

### ANNIHILATION OF DUALITY

The form Shiva is a metaphor for the ultimate truth, but in modern times it has lost its significance in writings. Shiva Mahadeva signifies the non-dualistic Absolute that exists beyond all of the contradictions and oppositions of this dualistic realm of time, space, and karma. He is the ultimate unification force that is greater than the sum of opposites and has the power of both sides of all dualities at the same time. Shiva transcends duality in his own essence, appearance, and manifestation, which necessitates his acceptance of all dualities and their resolution back into himself. For the dualistic intellect stuck in exterior differences and distinctions, names, forms, and contraries, this makes Shiva impossible to fathom. Shiva, as a non-dual god, seems to contradict our preconceived notions of what is rational, right, or proper. Shiva is represented as a detached yogi, even though

he possesses the most intense desires and an enchanting and powerful wife. He kills Kamadeva, the ordinary God of Love, but then transforms into Kameshvara, the Supreme God of Love. He carries us beyond misery, but he may give us great anguish in the process. Lord Shiva embodies the ultimate truth, which exists beyond both relative truth and relative lie. He is the Supreme Being, transcending both relative and non-being. He is the ultimate good, transcending both relative good and evil. He encompasses our universe from all sides, above, below, and in the middle, while standing unimaginably beyond it. He is One, but he is Everything. He is all and nothing, both inside and outside all things, and he is not bound by anything.

Shiva brings us to a more enlightened state of being by forcing us to go beyond the surface of our existence and beyond the limitations of our cultural and spiritual assumptions. Shiva stands for the ideal version of ourselves that we want to become, but to get there, we must let go of our usual sense of self—our ego, attachments, and ideas. The ancient and known world's literatures, mythologies, and mythical portrayals of the male and female have all acknowledged and given proper consciousness to this duality. Different iterations of the topic have impacted historical and mythological religious and philosophical projections in India. To provide one concrete example, it is widely held that the Devanagari alphabet's aksharas, or letters, depict Shiva and Parvati in their united form, with the letters standing in for Shiva and the horizontal support for Parvati.

Human beings, according to Ellen Goldberg, exemplify this holy androgynous image, notably in the aspect of the ahamkara. (a-ham-, ego). As a result, the Sanskrit alphabet's initial and end syllables, denoted by a, vowels, and ham, consonants, are classified as male and female, or Shiva and Shakti. As a result, both the human person and the universe are eventually connected with Ardhanarishvara, and humankind is linked to and ultimately pushed to behave in line with the expanding and changing rhythms of the original, divine androgynous body.

### **ARDHANARISHVARA**

Ardhanarishvara, the deity who is half woman and half man, is arguably Shiva's most powerful manifestation, transcending from the metaphysical to the physical. In her book *Ardhanarishvara: The Androgyne Probing the Gender Within*, Alka Pande identifies two myths about androgyny from two separate schools of thought that mirror cultural expressions about the birth of humans from the heavenly notion of Ardhanarishvara, half man half woman. According to the Shaiva School of thought, the birth of humans is credited to Brahma, the creator in the Hindu Pantheon, who did not know how to continue after making the Prajapatis, the first renderings formed by him. There are several variants of the tale. According to the Mahabharata, Brahma failed in his efforts to create creatures that would have carnal offspring and then die. According to the Shiva Purana, Brahma lacked the ability to create women until Shiva stood before him in the androgynous form of Ardhanarishvara, "the lord whose half is woman," with the right manifestation being the masculine manifestation. When Brahma saw the celestial Lord Shiva, he knew that Ardhanarishvara had the potential to become a pair that might union physically, and he went into Tapasya, penance, to guarantee this. Shiva, the all-knowing and all-encompassing, was delighted by Brahma's sacrifices and created Sati, the True, from his left side. The goddess gave birth to all shakti, feminine emblems of power. The Vaishnava school of thought, on the other hand, believes that Lord Vishnu is the source of the androgynous body. 'Lord Vishnu is known to have taken on the female form of Mohini at the crucial time of the gods and demons churning the ocean', Pande explains. An agreement had been made that the commodities and wealth would be shared in turn. It was the turn of the devils when Amrit, the nectar of endless life, was spoken. However, in order to deny the demons of the nectar, which causes devastation once immortalized, Vishnu donned the Mohini form to divert the asuras' (demons') attention. (Pande, p. 24). Myths concerning the origins of androgyny get established in cultural awareness through time and are often used to explain the presence of the androgynous body.

As the primary cause of creation in the world, Ardhanarishvara took on the qualities of both sexes. In addition, by adopting the shape of Ardhanarishvara, Shiva showed himself in completely human aspects for the first time. Thus, Ardhanarishvara, also known as a hermaphrodite or androgynous god, is one of Shiva's primary forms. The Ardhanarishvara concept, which settles contradictions between polarity and unity, halts the creative process at the moment of its emergence from the merging of the Uncreated, which is neutral and genderless, and the Created, which must have distinct characteristics. It depicts both--half man and half woman, which equals twofold fecundity; neither is diminished, but both are enhanced--a symbol of whole fulfillment culminating in an entire. Several ancient civilizations have derived their iconography from Ardhanaribana imagery, a source of androgyne philosophical construct.

Based on mythology, this deity is related to magical androgyny, particularly when it comes to Indian magic and mythology, and is associated with certain kinds of sadhanas, or methods of attainment. Both the manifest god and goddess proceeded to split themselves as the creation process progressed. Shiva gave birth to the eleven rudras, the vital breaths that conveyed Rudra's fiery essence into all forms of existence. Shiva is claimed to have asked the Great Goddess to split herself into two parts, black and white, from which the infinite shaktis, or feminine forces, sprang. It should be noted, however, that no children were born from the marriage of Shiva and Sati, neither mortal nor eternal. Ardhanarishvara is a being that needs nothing. This expression represents the fullness of a single whole. Shiva let Brahma and himself to independently experience his power, or Shakti. Erotic pleasure, which is a part of the fire's corpus, was severed. The mighty Goddess poured her blazing passion into the realm of the gods as a woman. As a result of Ardhanarishvara's internal split, dualism entered

the world in the form of the female gender, sexuality, and sensuality. The Supreme Goddess re-entered Ardhanarisbuara as a timeless, unending picture after the act of distinction, an image that embodies the potential for both sexes' sexual knowledge and realisation inside a single body. For the magnificent deity Maheshvara, there is no need for a separate bride; his own bliss is the Goddess.

'Vagartha viva sampriktauvagarthapratipattaye, jagatahpitaraudevande Parvati-Paramesvarau.' (Kalidasa, 5th century AD)

'Homage to the mother-and-father of the world, to him whose left half is his wife Whose left eye shrinks from the mere glance of the right.' (175)

Purusha is seen as an idle observer of development but the crucial trigger, complementing Shiva and Shakti, and the force of prakriti, which creates the world. Purusha-Prakriti, Yin-Yang, Adam-Eve, and many more beings, such as Shiva-Parvati and Isis-Osiris, signify the First Parents, from whom many civilizations descended. The seeming dualism of all animal life also highlights humankind's first knowledge of creation and its significance. The notion of complimentary male and female principles, such as active-passive, light-dark, creative-receptive, good-evil, and so forth, deepened and expanded throughout time as this literalness progressed. Advaita, Transcendence of Division, was the next development of this idea.

Numerous mythologies have served as examples of the everlasting feminine essence inside Shiva. One such tale states that Shiva once assumed the feminine form of a mother to nurse a litter of piglets that their mother had left behind. Matribhuteshvara is the name of Shiva's mother form. The continual link of Shiva with Uma or Parvati is represented in numerous conceptual ways in abstract terms as well. The idea of Candravindu suggests that Shiva and Parvati are still in the process of uniting. Shiva is implied by Candra since one of his well-known names is Candrasekhara. Similarly, Parvati, also known as Vinduvasini, is mentioned in Vindu as someone who lives in the vindu, point. The yonipatta, the oval support known as the linga's feminine counterpart, is always embedded in or appears to radiate from the Shiva linga, the phallic depiction of Shiva symbolised by the cylindrical component of the emblem principle. This was then transformed to a triangle shape in tantric artistic depiction, which the tantrists believed depicted Shiva in a sitting position and the feminine organ of production and advancement. It adheres to the idea that there may be dualism within the Absolute Oneness.

### THE ANDROGYNE GODS

Numerous significant gods in the Vedic pantheon are associated with androgynous characteristics. This is psychologically attractive, since all humans possess both masculine and feminine characteristics, and a balance between the two is believed to make a person 'happier'. In Indian society, which is notably patriarchal, this may be regarded contradictory. However, the realm of gods does not always parallel the world of humans in every way. Prajapati is described as androgynous with breasts in the Vedas. Saraswati, the river deity, is also seen as an androgyne. Saraswat, her masculine soul, is referenced in the Rig Veda (7.95.3) and likewise had breasts. Indra was known to be an androgyne who could reside among women in the shape of a woman and among men in the form of a man; this was likely the origin of the Ardhanarishvara idea.

The Silparatna, a book authored in Kerala in the sixteenth century by Sri Kumar, recounts the united appearance of Ganesha and his spouse. The portion of the body above the neck is that of the male Ganesha, referred to in the literature as the Shaktiganapati form, while the portion below bears the feminine characteristics of his Shakti. In Hindu literature, including the most popular term Ardhanarishvara, a variety of names have been used to describe the deity and goddess in their united form. Narayanamurti, Umardhamurti, Gaurisvaramurti, and Kantasammisradeha are some of the varieties. The form's Vaishnavite counterpart is known as Ardhakshmihari and Vasudeva Kamalaja. In each of them, the equal involvement of masculine and female principles in a single form is suggested. In addition to the composite/syncretic imagery of males and females, there are also pictures of Shiva and Vishnu known as the Hari-Hara. The dual images are plenty: Krishna-Karttikeya, Brahma, Martand- Bhairava, Surya-Brahma, Hanu-Bhairava, Parvati-Lakshmi. Complementary energies are a universal principle. The Buddharadhi-Bhagvati Tara is mentioned in Buddhist texts. (The goddess who is half Buddha). A goddess known as Ardhanarishvaresvari is mentioned by name in the Avhidhanottara Tantra. The Jain belief system posits that God embodies both the masculine and feminine principles. Mallinatha, the Jains' Tirthankara, has been pictured as having both masculine and feminine characteristics.

### MOHINI

There are several myths in which Vishnu assumes the shape of Mohini, the lovely enchantress. This is sometimes done to aid the gods, including Shiva himself, and sometimes to fool his opponents. During the samudramanthan, Vishnu assumes the appearance of Mohini to fool the asuras into returning the amrita they stole from the devas, but in the Daruvana story, he assumes the form of Mohini to entice the rishis and assist Shiva in instructing errant worshippers in the proper method of devotion.

The Mohini story reaches the logical conclusion of Vishnu's change. According to one account, Shiva is so smitten with Mohini that he sheds his seed, which the seven seers gather on a leaf. They place it in the ear of Anjani, the daughter of the sage Gautama, who gives birth to Hanuman in due time. Shiva, having learned from

Narada that Vishnu could assume the appearance of a woman, accompanied Parvati to see Vishnu and demanded that he demonstrate his female form. Vishnu quickly altered himself, but Shiva, upon seeing Mohini, became enamoured and pursued her. In an effort to restrain him, Parvati grasped his phallus, and Shiva scattered his seed throughout the ground. It gave birth to the deity Mahabala. The result of Shiva and Mohini's marriage differs across sources. It is said that Hanuman, Mahabala, Skanda, and, subsequently, Ayyappan were born from it.

### **HARIHARA**

Harihara is another form that demonstrates the Vishnu-Shiva relationship. The syncretization of disparate deities is a significant factor in Hindu religious art and mythology. Ardhanarishvara, a combination of Shiva and Parvati, with Parvati, the dynamic prakriti, on the left and Shiva, the static purusha, on the right, is the image that is most well recognised and seen. It is seen conceptually as the connection between the divine's dynamic component expressing as creation or matter. One approach to comprehending or explaining synthesis would be to see the divine potential of deities as interchangeable and transferable or shareable. The two gods would thus have joint, dualized responsibilities and tasks. Even though Vishnu and Shiva are cosmological opposites, a united form, Harihara, is often described in the many Puranas and epics, with Hari being an epithet for Vishnu and Hara for Shiva. However, there is little folklore related with Harihara. In a discussion between Markandeya and Brahma in the Harivamsa, for instance, Markandeya asserts that there is no distinction between Shiva in the form of Vishnu and Vishnu in the form of Shiva. Collectively, they resemble the Ardhanarishvara. Any difference between them is a result of avidya, or ignorance. Both the Vishnu Purana and the Vamana Purana declare that the two are identical: 'Yo'hamsatvam'.

(Nilima, Chitgopekar) The Harihara motif, whose beginnings may be traced back to the early Kushan period (second century C.E.), grew into a figure of great significance and displayed clear iconographic similarities to the Ardhanarishvara. This form placed two significant brahmanical pantheon deities' side by side in a single reconciliatory figure. Vishnu, shown on the left in Harihara paintings, assumes the function and duty of Shakti.

'Lord Vishnu, who took many forms-as thy arrow, as thy mount, as thy consort occupying half thy body, as a boar, as thy friend, as thy drummer, and who offered his eyes at thy feet (in place of the lotus flower)-that Vishnu, forming a part of thy very being, t inspires worship... Who is there to excel him?' (Verse 82)

As with Mohini, it is believed that the marriage of Hari and Hara created the deity Hariharaputra, known in South Indian literature as Shasta. (Aiyanaar or Ayyappan). The true significance of composite deities, according to iconography historians, is that they reveal the inseparability or unity of the masculine and female in cosmic creation. Despite the fact that this is a basic issue, it does not remove the implicit hierarchical advantage that Shiva enjoys; whether Shiva is united with Vishnu or Parvati, he generally symbolises the masculine and dominating component of the couple. Complex and deserving of inquiry are the religious, philosophical, and social ramifications of the masculine and female elements of the Harihara figure. In the Indian tradition, images like as those of Harihara provide enlightening theological perspectives on the interconnectedness of divine polarity. The Harihara picture reconciles the polarities of praising worldly life and rejecting its shackling spells. It is noteworthy to note that the indivisibility of male and female reflected in Ardhanarishvara's many iconographical forms is also utilised in the selection of stones for the sculpting of temple deities: pum-sila, male, and stri-sila, female, stones are chosen, depending on the god. The Dravidian schools of sculpting stipulate that the stones must originate from the earth's core and be of the basic rock group. This suggests that granite stones are picked based on their color, mineral composition, and resonance at certain notes of the fundamental scale of Indian music. When the reversed chisel resonates at sadjamam, rishabham, and gandharam when struck on the stone, it is regarded a male stone and masculine deities are fashioned from it. If the stone resonates at madhyamam, it is considered neutral and is used to create male/female deities such as Ardhanarishvara. If, however, the resonance occurs at panchamam, dhaivatham, or nishadham, the stone is deemed female and is used to create female deities. Even when creating a Shiva linga, the instructions specify the use of a male stone for the linga and a female stone for the yoni, signifying the desired union of male and female at a later stage of growth.

Ardhanarishvara's image must also be regarded as a meditational and devotional aid for worshipers, since it is an intrinsic element of the yoga and bhakti traditions of India. The canonical texts of Indian iconography, such as the Vishnudharmottara Purana from the ninth century, describe Ardhanarishvara's iconographic qualities. In these sources, the androgynous picture is recognised as the Isana form of the Panchmukha Mahadeva



(2) Nataraja. Chola Bronze from the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. LAMCA

#### CONCLUSION:

Kalidasa expresses the inseparability of the god and goddess through his unique upama, analogy, of the homogeneity of vagarthavivasampriktha, the word and its meaning. These forms emphasise the closeness of the god and goddess to one another. Ardhanarishvara's singularity as an aesthetic idea stem from the fact that it rationalises Shaivite and Shakta qualities under a single anthropomorphic shape, therefore embodying cultural, social, theological, and spiritual aspects. According to Alka Pande, the question of the idea of the Ardhanarishvara form as such raises a critical concern. The dispute is whether this reflects a Shaivite kind of iconography or the Shaktas' iconographic representation of the supreme presence of deities. In other words, the dispute is whether the Ardhanarishvara form is a picture of Shiva sharing the body of Parvati or vice versa. Famous 20th-century English writer and philosopher Aldous Huxley shared his thoughts about Shiva in his Natraja manifestation. 'No, we are very, very poor in it.' A few Christian emblems may be found among our possessions. The cross is a fine symbol, but it overlooks the cosmic dimension of existence. It ignores the four

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most fundamental dimensions—mass, energy, space, and time—as Huxley put it. Shiva refers to the infinite void, the naught that permeates everything and has no origin or end. Shiva represents Shunya, or emptiness, but it is also the source of all things, since the Universe itself is said to have sprung from Shiva tatva, or nothingness, and everything of creation is only a crystallised or altered version of Shiva.

Towards in the end of the poem 'Among school children' Yeats refers to 'O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, how can we know the dancer from the dance? This might have been a cosmic depiction of all energies found in the natural world and the universe. Even science demonstrates that energy is always dancing across the whole cosmos. Finally, the cosmic dance metaphor brings together concepts of creation, annihilation, and regeneration with ancient Indian mythology and modern scientific knowledge.

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