

Humanism in Lord *Shiva*'s Persona: A *Vedic* Perspective

¹**Nandini Bhartiya**

Research Scholar

Department of English, GLA University

Mathura, India.

²**Dr. Mamta Bhatnagar**

Professor

Department of English, GLA University,

Mathura, India.

Abstract

The *Vedas* offer a fascinating investigation of humanism and its cohesion with the divine. This paper “Humanism in Lord *Shiva*'s Persona: A *Vedic* perspective,” examines the divine Lord *Shiva* from a humanistic angle. Lord *Shiva*'s interactions with various beings, including animals, demons and gods alike, reflect a profound understanding of democratic coexistence and acceptance. This aspect of his character resonates deeply with the *Vedic* ideal of embracing unity in diversity, which serves as a powerful lesson to the importance of compassion in human interactions. Moreover, the *Vedic* texts highlight the significance of *dharma* (righteous living) in human life which aligns with Lord *Shiva*'s principles of justice and moral integrity. The Indian classical concept of cohabitation of material pursuits with spiritual leanings, resounds with Lord *Shiva*'s synchronicity of family ties with *yogic* quests. Taking all such studies into consideration, the paper attempts to establish a shift from the existing popular notion of Lord *Shiva*'s spiritualism to a more relatable idea of humanism, thus establishing Lord *Shiva* as a deity with humanistic attributes. The paper correlates the theories of *Vedic* philosophy of humanism to the essence of Lord *Shiva*'s humanistic characteristics and consequently, presents the latter as, not only as a spiritual belief, but also an earthly ideology. It serves as a reminder that true divinity lies in the acknowledgment of human consciousness and the pursuit of truth; thus, encouraging his devotees and humans at large, to embrace a sense of unity with God, nature, and respect for all living beings. Therefore, viewing through the lens of *Vedic* humanism, Lord *Shiva* stands as a timeless symbol of the interconnectedness of all life and the shared journey toward enlightenment.

Keywords: Vedic Humanism, Lord *Shiva*, divinity, *dharma*, *Vedas*, spiritualism, nature, democratic coexistence, human consciousness.

Humanism

The word “humanism” is derived from the Latin word *humanitas* which connotes to development of human virtue, in all its forms, to its fullest extent. It is a philosophical stance that emphasizes the individual and social potential, and agency of human beings, whom it considers the starting point for serious moral and philosophical inquiry. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, Humanism is “a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centred on human interests or values, especially a philosophy that usually rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individual’s dignity and worth capacity for self-realization through reason” (Cherry 26).

Experts from all over the world acknowledge that humans are the most amazing and superior of all creatures that exist. The enormity of this universe can only be fully expressed by man. “Many are the wonders of world, And none so wonderful as man” (Lamont 80). In this cosmos, man is the only living being endowed with the remarkable ability to think. He is able to learn new things and carry out good activities in order to move forward in life. Every scripture, philosopher, and thinker in the global community has agreed on the significance of the human form and splendour to humanity. The 5th century BC pre-Socratic Greek philosopher and sophist, Protagoras, voiced in his book *Truth*, “Of all things the measure is man: of those that are, that they are; and of those that are not, that they are not” (Diels & Kranz 80B1). The statement became a little controversial with later thinkers, Socrates and Plato, but, it quite explicitly highlighted the spirit of humanism. Together with his shortcomings, man’s superiority is accompanied by a wide range of research, movements, ideologies, and evolving concepts. In essence, man and his humanistic desires and vocations are the foundation of all forms of art, science, talents, and crafts. Man is his own knower, the interpreter and the creator.

The historical basis of humanism can be traced back to the conditions of dependency of the human beings on one another. The co-operative life style is in fact a means to ensure human survival. If humans would have been total self-sufficient and would have not developed the feeling of mutual co-operation and help, they would have ended up as barbaric, stupid, uncivilized and solitary. Moreover, his lifespan on this earth would have been short and miserable (Hawton 31). Humanism is therefore closely tied to all people and their shared understanding of what is good. Researchers in the field were inevitably compelled to construct varying interpretations and contents for all-encompassing conceptions of social welfare and human good.

At every period during the 5,000 years of history when men developed a higher culture, humanism developed and flourished in civilizations with a high culture. However, “humanism is a word with a very

complex history and an unusually wide range of possible meanings and contexts ...” (Davies 2). Humanism has its origin in some of the oldest documented philosophies of antiquity – the *Vedic* period of India and classical ancient Greece. The roots of the Western concept of humanism run as far back as the ancient Greeks, while the Indian humanistic attributes find its origin in the *Vedic* culture. Sanskrit literature has the great Indian tradition and thoughts. The *Vedas* are the soul of Indian culture and tradition and it is also the storehouse of all type of wisdom(Santra 79)

***Vedic* Humanistic Ideology**

There is not a single stream of thought in the human history of the world which does not put man at the centre of its contemplation about creation (Raja 299). The *Vedas* , the *Upanishads* and the *Puranas*, the guiding principles of existence, also give a central position to man, but it is in cohesion with God, nature and spiritualism, aiming at all-inclusive development of human life. The *Vedas*, the oldest scriptures of Hinduism, contains hymns and rituals dedicated to various deities and cosmic forces. These texts reflect the ancient Indo-Aryan religious worldview, emphasising the importance of *yajna* (ritual sacrifice), *bhakti* (devotion) and *rta* (cosmic order). The *Rigveda*, in particular, contains hymns that praise the divine manifestations of nature and invoke blessings for prosperity and well-being (Majhi 108). The ancient *Vedic* period can be called as the origin of what is known today as the *Vedic* Humanism (*manavavada* in Hindi). The Indian thought process takes a route of integration, a plan where the material and the spiritual are complimentary and work together for the well-being of society. In general, (humanism) is an ideology that promotes the liberal principles and dignity of human beings. The Western thought of humanism is no doubt inspired by the motto of human welfare, but it could not do enough to build a cohesive order for the holistic development of self and humanity (Vedlankar 352).

The ideology of humanistic philosophy in the 19th and 20th centuries was derived from the idea of the public good or human welfare. The human life represents supreme good. It combines animalism, humanism and divinity into one (Advaita Ashrama ed. *The Complete Works of Vivekananda* 123). Fundamentally, humanism is an individualistic philosophy based on the welfare of the group. The diverse interactions between the initial power and its component units directly resulted in the world in which we live. Since the inception, research activities and contemplative understanding have been constantly analysing the phenomenon both inwardly and outwardly. Because the physical world is synchronized with this mobile and fertile aspect of the creation, this

dynamic universe revolves around the intelligent being. The only creature with an exceptional capability for reasoning is man. “Man is the best creation of the supreme creator of the universe” (Vedlankar 9) .

The *Vedic* Humanism is an essential concept rooted in the *Vedic* philosophy of ancient India, which emphasizes harmony between individuals, society, and the cosmos. Understanding the *Vedic* Humanism can be transformative in various dimensions of life—personal, social, and spiritual. It promotes the idea of interconnectedness, fostering a sense of global unity and shared responsibility, urging individuals to rise above narrow boundaries of caste, creed, or nationality. It emphasizes living a life of *dharma* (righteousness and duty). It teaches that every individual has a role to play in maintaining cosmic and social order. By aligning personal actions with ethical and moral principles, individuals can lead fulfilling lives and contribute to societal well-being. *Daya* (compassion), tolerance, and inclusivity are central tenets of *Vedic* Humanism. The *Vedas* stress the importance of respecting all forms of life and recognizing the divine essence in every being. This perspective encourages *ahimsa* (non-violence), environmental stewardship, and the development of compassionate social systems. The *Vedic* Humanism balances the pursuit of material well-being (*artha* and *kama*) with *moksha* (spiritual growth), creating a holistic framework for human life. This integration ensures that progress is not just materialistic but also aligned with inner peace and self-realization. The *Vedic* approach does not discourage questioning or rationality. Instead, it encourages deep inquiry into the nature of existence, reality, and self, fostering intellectual growth alongside spiritual wisdom. The synergy of spiritual and scientific understanding found in the *Vedic* thought is increasingly relevant in modern times, where the gap between science and spirituality is often debated. The *Vedas* view humans as integral to the natural world, advocating for living in harmony with nature. Rituals, hymns, and philosophies often reflect gratitude and respect for the elements of nature. This eco-centric approach is vital today as humanity grapples with ecological crises, offering a framework for sustainable living. The *Vedic* philosophy emphasizes self-awareness, meditation, and mindfulness as paths to inner peace and well-being. Practices derived from the *Vedic* thought, like *yoga* and meditation, are now globally recognized for their ability to reduce stress and enhance mental clarity. The *Vedic* Humanism teaches the value of *seva* (selfless service) and collective welfare.

The *Vedic* principle:

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः I

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत् II (Quoted in Vedlankar 353)

“May all be happy, May all be free from miseries. May all realise goodness and may no one suffer pain”(Vedlankar trans.) thus , inspiring individuals to work toward inclusive and harmonious societies.

Vedlankar comments:

Apparently the Vedas do not link religion, philosophy and life-style to any ideology, community or a path. . . . The philosophy which searches the self in the living beings and has a liberal world view of culture cannot think of discriminations, prejudices and injustices in society. . . . The creatures have their respective identity. Every life has a meaning. The body given by God is for the benefit of all living beings. All material things are for the use of the creatures (59-60).

Thus, *Vedic* Humanism promotes egalitarian ideals, community cohesion, and care for marginalized individuals. It offers timeless wisdom applicable across generations and cultures, inspiring humanity to transcend modern chaos and rediscover harmony, purpose, and peace. It fosters global peace and prosperity.

Prominent Indian humanists like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, S. Radhakrishnan and Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya have emphasized the importance of incorporating spiritualism into humanism. They argue that spiritualism provides a unifying ethos that integrates various aspects of mundane life through a Divine Principle, or the *Paramatman* (Supreme Soul) which exists in every part of nature as the *Atman* (soul). Radhakrishnan underscores:

Humanism is the religion of the majority of intellectuals today To be spiritual is not to reject reason but go beyond it When religion succeeds in making us spiritual, our conflicts are resolved. We are no more members of this or that particular group, but belong to humanity as a whole (1996).

Lal’s comment on *Geetanjali*, highlights Tagore’s faith in humanism:

Tagore believes that detachment, asceticism and deliverance are counter balanced with the love of humanism. But he does not believe in renunciation of world of senses. Tagore says that God lies among human beings. He is in you, me and every living being. Consequently, to love everyone in this world is to love the Almighty and to serve mankind is to serve God. . . . Deliverance is a mere illusion and the ascetic should accept life and perform the humble duties of life (1-2).

Vivekananda pronounces:

I always pray for you: you must pray for me. Let each one of us pray day and night for the down-trodden millions in India who are held fast by poverty, priest craft and tyranny- pray day and night for them. . . . Let these people be your God- think of them, work for them, pray for them instantly- the Lord will show you the way (24).

Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's concept of Integral Humanism is particularly notable. He proposed a unique combination of *Karma Yog* (the path of action), *Bhakti Yog* (the path of devotion), and *Gyana Yog* (the path of knowledge) that would lead to both spiritual and material elevation of humanity. Upadhyaya's philosophy emphasizes the integration of the individual, family, society, nation, world, and creation in a harmonious spiral form. This model aims at holistic development, considering the interconnectedness of all aspects of life and the universe (Upadhyaya).



Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's Model of 'Integral Humanism'

(Courtesy: Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Dham, Vrindavan, India)

Concept of humanism in India, provides a framework that is more holistic and inclusive, ensuring that every aspect of life and creation is interrelated and interdependent. This philosophy not only fosters individual

growth but also promotes societal and environmental harmony. By reintroducing these spiritual and integrative principles, humanism offers a pathway to a more balanced and enriched human existence, aligning material progress with spiritual well-being. This perspective can inspire new educational methods and societal frameworks that honour the profound interconnectedness of all life.

Humanistic Manifestation of Lord Shiva in Vedic Tradition

Indian gods, especially in the context of the *Vedic* and the post-*Vedic* traditions, embody these humanistic ideals through their attributes, stories, and roles. The *Vedic* ruler of gods, *Indra*, represents bravery, leadership, and the capacity to overcome challenges, motivating people to rise above hardship and advance the common good. The God of cosmic order *Varuna*, upholds *Rita* (the principle of universal harmony and justice), reflecting humanistic values of fairness, accountability, and harmony with nature and society. *Agni*, the fire god, connects divine and human worlds through sacrificial fire, symbolizing communication, cleansing, and metamorphosis, representing human desire to align with higher ideals. As a sacred plant and a divinity, *Soma* is linked to euphoria, inspiration, and energy, promoting spiritual and physical well-being, urging harmony with natural cycles. The goddess of knowledge, arts, and wisdom is *Saraswati*. She exemplifies the *Vedic* emphasis on knowledge and intellectual growth, encouraging individuals to seek wisdom for personal and societal upliftment. Many *Vedic* gods, like *Mitra* (friendship and cooperation) and *Ushas* (dawn and renewal), embody universal humanistic values. These deities remind humans of the importance of cooperation, renewal, and hope in personal and collective growth. *Vedas* and *Upanishadas* describe about *dharma* and duties to be undertaken by the people. *Rāma* was the personification of *dharma* ‘*Rāmo vighrahavān dharmah*’ (Sen 67). The goddess in her various forms (*Durga*, *Lakshmi*, *Kali*, etc.) embodies nurturing, empowerment, and protection. *Devi*’s forms reflect the empowerment and equality of individuals, especially women and the nurturing aspect of humanity to foster growth and compassion. These gods serve as archetypes of ethical behaviour, selfless service, and the pursuit of truth, inspiring individuals to strive for personal growth and contribute to the collective welfare of humanity.

In the same vein, Lord *Shiva* exhibits the *Vedic* humanistic attributes. Lord *Shiva*, one of the most revered deities in Hinduism, embodies profound principles of the *Vedic* humanism, emphasizing universal compassion, self-realization, transformation, and inclusivity. His characteristics and stories reflect values rooted in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* that guide humans toward ethical living, spiritual growth, and harmony with the universe.

Indian gods are a reflection of the *Vedic* humanism, which promotes the fusion of humanistic and spiritual principles. Indian gods continue to offer insightful guidance on leading a peaceful and contented existence through their tales and qualities. The *Siva Purana*, one of the most important texts in the *Puranic* tradition, elaborates on the nature, stories, and teachings of the Lord *Shiva*. It is not only a theological exposition but also a text that reflects deep philosophical and ethical principles aligned with the *Vedic* humanism. These principles emphasize the dignity of human life, the interconnectedness of all beings, and the pursuit of spiritual and moral values for individual and collective welfare. The *Siva Purana* has a number of anecdotes that depict essential qualities of the *Vedic* Humanism.

The *Vedic* Humanism emphasizes the integration of body, mind, and soul for a balanced life. Lord *Shiva*, the first *yogi*, represents wisdom and spirituality, representing the perfect balance of material, mental, and spiritual realms. *Yoga*, introduced by Lord *Shiva*, maintains physical vitality and aligns with the cosmos, encouraging millions to pursue yogic activities for self-transformation. “Yoga is the fixation of the mind in me, along the path indicated by me, restraining other activities” (Shastri IV:1942-1943). On Mount *Kailash*, *Shiva* frequently retreats into intense meditation, symbolizing the pursuit of inner calm and quiet. As advocated by the Hindu metaphysics, Self-knowledge in correlation with external experience, is the goal of all spiritual activities. Thus, *Yoga* is a humanistic discipline that leads to the knowledge of self and to the expansion of human experience with self and the world. *Yoga* (lit. “yoke” or “union”) is a group of physical, mental, and spiritual practices or disciplines that originated in ancient India, aimed at controlling body and mind to attain various salvation goals (Bowker, Keown, Johnson). For a human being, this teaches the value of turning inward, practicing self-reflection, and finding calm in the midst of life’s chaos:

Man shall eschew everything and be engaged in meditation since he will be having both happiness and salvation from the practice of meditation. Knowledge cannot be attained without meditation. A non-*yogin* cannot have meditation. The ocean of worldly existence is crossed by the person who has both meditation and knowledge (Shastri IV:2083).

Lord *Shiva*’s meditative posture encourages us to seek stillness and cultivate mindfulness, which are foundational to *yoga* practice. *Vedic* humanism embraces such practices as tools for achieving personal fulfilment, mental well-being, and harmony with the world.

Democratic equality is another fundamental idea that has its roots in the *Vedic* philosophy and spirituality. The *Vedic* humanism, which blends humanistic notions with divine principles to uphold the intrinsic

worth, dignity, and interconnectivity of every person, is based on equality. The *Rig Veda* upholds the spirit of equality:

अजेयस्थसो अकनिष्ठा एते साम भर्तारो वावर्धुह सौभाग्य (5.60.5).

This implies “Rigveda calls man as brethren. The birth does not cause discrimination. This equality has to be developed for peace, progress and affluence. All men are equal” (Vedlankar 153). The concept of equality of all living beings through Shiva’s lens is deeply rooted in his universal, all-encompassing nature. Also, he embodies the principles of unity, compassion, and transcendence beyond dualities, emphasizing the oneness of all existence. Along the same theme there is *Ardhnareshwara*. It is one of the Shiva’s sixty-four *avatars* (incarnations), being half-female and half-male, is a composite form of Shiva and *Parvati*. It symbolizes the belief that harmony and advancement require a balance between the sexes and that neither gender is complete without the other. The androgynous shape is what distinguishes it from other manifestations of Shiva and makes it special. Both the masculine and female components are incorporated into this common form of Shiva, which transcends gender boundaries. It is the dictum of *Ardhanarishwara*, that conveys the spirit of gender equality. *Ardhanarishwara* dispels myths about subordination of women while shedding light on equality. So, the ideology of *Ardhanarishwara*’s gender equality subverts patriarchy, and, at the same time, is a vital reflection of *Vedic Humanism*. *Vedic* humanism is not only concerned for human beings but for nature as well. “The humanist approach has always been one of concern for other animals too. Because of the word humanist, some people get the mistaken impression that this view of the world must be exclusively human-centred, not taking other animals into account” (Copson and Roberts 30). Thus, *Shiva Linga* symbolizes the formless, universal consciousness, signifying that all beings arise from and dissolve into the same source. His inclusivity embraces every being, from the smallest creature to the cosmic scale, as equal parts of the divine whole. Such was *Shiva*’s association with Mount *Kailash*, the *Ganges* River, and his adornment with serpents and the crescent moon signifying a deep connection with nature. “Siva, stayed on Kailasa, the best of all mountains, along with his Ganas, practising yoga and meditation at his own sweet will” (Shastri I:273). The epithet *Gangadhara*, “Bearer of the river Ganga”(Ganges) indicates someone who is the holder of this sacred river . The *Ganga* flows from the matted hair of Lord *Shiva* (Sivaramamurti 8). The Hindu faith considers the *Ganga* to have made her abode in Lord *Shiva*’s matted hair, representing him as the master of knowledge and prosperity. This respect for nature is echoed by *Vedic* humanism, which upholds ecological stewardship and sustainability as moral requirements.

Yajurveda declares:

मित्रस्या मा कक्ससा सर्वानी भूटानी समिकान्तम्

मित्रस्याम् मा कक्ससा सर्वानी भूटानी समिकसे।

मित्रस्य काक्ससा समिकसमहे (36.18)

“Let me see in all human beings my genuine friends. Let us all develop friendship and a friendly perspective” (Vedlankar trans. 152). In an identical fashion even Lord *Shiva* disregards hierarchical conventions, welcoming people from all walks of life- humans, animals, *asuras* (demons) , and *devas* (gods) including marginalized communities like *bhutas* (spirits) and *ganas* (commoners).

Lord *Shiva* is the most democratic of all Gods. No other illustration other than the Hindu festival of *Mahashivaratri* (*Shiva's* grandest night) can be cited in the support. As per one understanding, *Mahashivaratri* signifies Lord *Shiva's* wedding to Goddess *Parvati*. The marriage was solemnized with all grandeur, including Lord *Shiva's* *Barat* (the wedding procession). The convoy included a wide spectrum of creatures – *devatas* (deities), *danvas* (giants), kings, *ganas*, *Nandi* the bull and other animals, ghosts, goblins, snakes and more. Lord *Shiva's* wedding pageant is often seen as a representation of how he treats everyone equally, regardless of social status, appearance, or background. The procession is depicted as a grand event, but what makes it unique is the diversity of individuals involved and Lord *Shiva's* unorthodox approach to celebrating such an event:

Śiva called Nandin and other Gaṇas and ordered them to accompany Him. . . . In the marriage procession of Śiva, Nandin and other leaders of Gaṇas went surrounded by hundreds and twenties of crores of Gaṇas. . . . Bhairava the Kṣetrapāla went jovially. . . . The leaders were as refulgent as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Indra, Aṇimā and other Energies. They were as brilliant and lustrous as crores of suns. O sage, some of them belonged to this terrestrial world, some came through nether worlds, some came through the sky and some came through seven heavens. . . . Rudra's sister Caṇḍī of deformed face went ahead gladly and enthusiastically. . . . The divine Bhūta attendants were crores and crores in number. . . . Many other sages enthusiastic about the marriage of Śiva shone well on their way. Śākinīs, Yātudhānas Vetālas, Brahmarākṣasas, Bhūtas, Pretas and Pramathas, Tumburu, Nārada, Hāhā, Hūhū, Gandharvas and Kinnaras went ahead playing on their musical instruments with great delight. The Mothers of the universe, the celestial virgins, Gāyatrī, Sāvitrī, Lakṣmī, the celestial

maidens, the wives of the gods, the mothers of the worlds went ahead with great joy, only because it was the marriage of Śiva (Shastri II: 639-643).

This egalitarian ethos aligns with the humanist principle of social justice and the spiritual ideal of seeing divinity in all. By looking at life through Lord *Shiva's* perspective, we not only see the world as an interconnected whole, where every being, regardless of form or function, is equally sacred but also his oneness with nature. He is both the essence of divinity (God) and an integral part of the natural world, embodying the interconnectedness of all existence. *Shiva's* depiction and stories reveal his intimate relationship with the natural world. He is not separate from nature but rather its ultimate representation.

The importance of *seva* (selfless service) and communal welfare are two other crucial lessons that the *Vedic* Humanism offers. The *Vedic* principle:

भूरीणि भद्रा नर्येषु बाहुषु II (Rig Veda 1.166.10)

“The arms of brave people protect human welfare and have capacity to serve society” (Vedlankar trans. 160), inspires individuals to work in order to protect people. Lord *Shiva*, revered as the embodiment of compassion, selflessness, and supreme detachment, is known for numerous acts of sacrifice and selflessness that illustrate his humanistic qualities. The mythological legend of *Samudra Manthan* (Churning of the Ocean), another significance of *Mahashivaratri* festival, is the one when *Shiva* consumes the *halahala* poison to save the world from destruction:

Lakshmi has disappeared into deep oceans. Unless the oceans are churned. She cannot be recovered. Then Vishnu also advised them to procure Mount Mandara to use it as churning stick and serpent Vasuki to be used as churning rope. . . . And soon wonderful objects began to emerge from the ocean as a result of the churning. The first to come out was the cow Surabhi, worshipped by the gods. Then it was followed by many rare objects and beings including the most toxic poison halahal which at the joint request of both demons and the god was imbibed by Lord *Shiva* but he didn't allow to go down his neck. But the fierce toxicity of the poison made his neck turn blue. Hence his acquiring yet another epithets for himself: ‘Neelkanth’. Since he had imbibed the most poisonous drinks of the universe for the benefit of all animate and inanimate being he came to be universally hailed as ‘Mahadeva’ (Super-god) (Chaturvedi).

This exemplifies Lord *Shiva*'s role as a saviour who bears suffering to protect others. The selfless deed embodies the spiritual value of *seva* (service), which is essential to the *Vedic* humanism, as well as the humanist ideal of compassion.

In the *Vedic* Humanism, *Dharma* is the cornerstone of personal, societal, and cosmic harmony. It represents the universal principles of truth, morality, and duty that uphold the balance of life. *Dharma* is a moral guideline that promotes integrity, compassion, and justice. It aligns with universal human values like *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), and *karuna* (compassion), encouraging harmony with others and the environment. It emphasizes balance between material pursuits and spiritual growth. Indian gods embody values that resonate with the *Vedic* humanism, exemplifying compassion, justice, self-realization, and interconnectedness. Lord *Shiva*'s philosophy embodies the *Vedic* humanism principles, emphasizing *dharma*'s importance in maintaining cosmic balance and achieving spiritual moksha. The *Siva Purana* states:

At my bidding, the duties as derived from the Vedas of the various stages in life were mentioned formerly by Brahmā. That compendium of duties is called Brahmā's Dharma. . . . O goddess, my eternal Dharma is fourfold: Jñāna, Kriyā, Caryā and Yoga. Jñāna is the knowledge of Paśu, Pāśa and Pati. Kriyā is the purificatory rite in regard to the six paths under the instructions of the preceptor. Caryā is the practical application of the holy rites such as my worship and the duties of the different castes and stages in life as prescribed by me. Yoga is the fixation of the mind in me, along the path indicated by me, restraining other activities (Shastri IV: 1942-1943).

The *dharma* of Lord *Shiva* transcends narrow definitions of righteousness, encompassing universal compassion, transformation, spiritual growth, and justice. He embodies a holistic vision of life, where the spiritual and material, the ascetic and the householder, coexist in harmony. His *dharma* inspires humanity to live a life of balance, inclusion, and alignment with the cosmic order, making him a timeless symbol of divine wisdom and compassion.

Conclusion

Based on the ideas of the *Vedic* philosophy, Lord *Shiva*'s *Vedic* humanism is an amalgam of divine wisdom and universal human ideals. The divine and the human are intertwined in the *Vedic* humanism, which emphasizes equality, compassion, and spiritual development. Through his qualities and teachings, Lord *Shiva*, as the "*Mahadeva*" and "*Adiyogi*," embodies these principles. Deeper truths about balance, wisdom, and transcending material attachments are reflected in his symbiology, which includes the third eye, *Trishula*, and

an ash-smeared body. His acceptance of all creatures, regardless of their social status, is consistent with the *Vedic* idea of “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” (the world is one family). Shiva’s *Vedic* humanism inspires people to live in harmony, balance, and reverence by balancing spiritual understanding with moral behaviour. This provides a timeless foundation for achieving both individual enlightenment and societal well-being.

Lord *Shiva* reminds people the importance of satisfaction via his simplicity and disengagement from material belongings. Shiva, who symbolizes the human ability to lead, educate, and uplift others with knowledge and experience in this capacity, assists individuals in achieving inner peace and enlightenment by teaching them about *yoga*, meditation, and spirituality. Lord *Shiva*’s revitalizing force symbolizes people’s capacity to rise beyond their limitations, ingrained behaviours, and beliefs in order to improve themselves. He stresses that transformation and change are necessary for growth and progress. Thus, Lord *Shiva*’s humanistic aspects in light of the *Vedic* humanism provides significant perspectives and answers for contemporary problems, ranging from social peace and mental wellness to environmental sustainability. People and societies may deal with life’s challenges with resilience, wisdom, and compassion by adopting Lord *Shiva*’s teachings.

References

1. Adwaita Ashrama, editor. *The Complete Works of Vivekananda*. Vol. 6, Belgaum, Adwaita Ashrama, 2016.
2. Bowker, John. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*. Oxford UP, 2000.
3. Chaturvedi, B. K. *Vishnu Purana*. Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd., 2006.
4. Cherry, M. *The Humanist Tradition*. Cambridge UP, 2009.
5. Copson, Andrew, and Alice Roberts. *The Little Book of Humanism*. Piatkus, 2020.
6. Davies, Tony. *Humanism*. Routledge, 1997.
7. Diels, Hermann, and Walther Kranz. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Weidmann, 1952.
8. Hawton, Hector. *Reason in Action*. Hassell Street Press, 2021.
9. Johnson, W. J. *A Dictionary of Hinduism*. Oxford UP, 2009.
10. Keown, Damien. *A Dictionary of Buddhism*. Oxford UP, 2004.
11. Lal, Babu. “Spiritual Humanism in Tagore’s Gitanjali.” *International Journal of Research (IJR)*, vol. 1, no. 9, 2014, pp. 1–7.
12. Lamont, Corliss. *Humanism as a Philosophy*. Philosophical Library, 1949.

13. Majhi, Laxman. "Exploring the Significance of Sanskrit Literature in Shaping of the Indian Knowledge System." *Partners Universal International Innovation Journal*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2024, pp. 103–114.
14. Radhakrishnan, S. *Indian Philosophy*. OUP India, 1996.
15. Raja, Kunuham C. *Some Fundamental Problems in Indian Philosophy*. Hassell Street Press, 2021.
16. Santra, Kumar Bidyut. "Law of Karma in Early Sanskrit Literature." *Humanism in Sanskrit Literature*, edited by Prasanta Kumar Mahala, The Banaras Mercantile Co., 2018, pp. 73–79.
17. Sen, Subhrajit. "Humanism and Sanskrit Education: A Condemnatory Study." *Humanism in Sanskrit Literature*, edited by Prasanta Kumar Mahala, The Banaras Mercantile Co., 2018, pp. 66–72.
18. Shastri, J. L., editor. *The Siva Purana: Part I*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1970.
19. ---. *The Siva Purana: Part II*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1970.
20. ---. *The Siva Purana: Part III*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1970.
21. ---. *The Siva Purana: Part IV*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1970.
22. Sivaramamurti, C. *Śatarudrīya: Vibhūti of Śiva's Iconography*. Abhinav Publications, 1976.
23. Upadhyaya, Deendayal. *Integral Humanism: An Analysis of Some Basic Elements*. Prabhat Paperbacks, 2022.
24. ---. *Model of Integral Humanism*. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Dham, Vrindavan, India.
25. Vedlankar, Dilip. *Vedic Humanism – Path to Peace*. Vijay Kumar Govindram Hasanand, 2001.
26. Vivekananda, Swami. *I Am a Voice Without a Form*. Adhyaksha Ramakrishna Math, 2022.