



SHIV GATHA

Shiva's Stories for Children

Six gentle retellings for young readers, ages 5-9

A NOTE FOR PARENTS

Stories Meant to Be Read Together

The six stories in this book are simplified, gentle retellings of some of the best-known stories about Shiva and his family, written for reading aloud with children roughly ages 5 to 9. Nothing here is frightening or graphic, even the more dramatic moments (a poison swallowed, a great river falling from the sky) are told with care, and each story closes with a small, honest takeaway a child can carry with them.

Use them however works for your family: one story a night, a favorite read again and again, or a starting point for your own conversation about what these figures mean to you. There's no single right way to share a story like this. There's only the way that brings you and your child a little closer to it.

The six stories

1. One Big, Unusual Family
2. The Boy Ganesha Made
3. The Ocean That Turned Shiva's Throat Blue
4. The Dance That Never Stops
5. How the River Came Down From the Sky
6. Why the Moon Rests in Shiva's Hair



STORY 01

One Big, Unusual Family

High on a snowy mountain called Kailash, there lived a family like no other. There was Shiva, who was calm and quiet and loved to meditate. There was Parvati, who was warm and clever and loved her family fiercely. There was their son Ganesha, who had the head of an elephant and the biggest heart you could imagine. There was their son Kartikeya, brave and quick, who rode a peacock wherever he went. And there was Nandi, a bull who wasn't just a pet, he was Shiva's best friend and loyal companion, always close by.

They didn't look like other families. Shiva had blue skin and ash on his body. Ganesha had an elephant's head. Kartikeya rode a peacock instead of a bicycle. But every evening, they sat together on the mountain, and Parvati would laugh at something Ganesha said, and Kartikeya would tell a story about his day, and Shiva would smile the quiet smile of someone exactly where he belonged.

Being different from everyone else never stopped them from being close to each other. That was their family's secret: it didn't matter what they looked like. What mattered was how much they loved being together.



STORY 02

The Boy Ganesha Made

One day, Parvati wanted a little privacy while she bathed, so she made a boy out of clay and breathed life into him. "Stand guard at the door," she told him, "and don't let anyone in." The boy, whom she named Ganesha, took his job very seriously.

Soon, Shiva came home. He didn't recognize this new boy guarding the door, and the boy didn't recognize Shiva either. "You can't go in," Ganesha said firmly. Shiva was surprised, then upset. A misunderstanding grew bigger and bigger, the way misunderstandings sometimes do, until Ganesha ended up with the head of an elephant instead of the one he started with, given to him to make things right again.

When Parvati found out, she was heartbroken, but Shiva promised: this boy would be loved and honored above almost anyone, elephant head and all. And that's exactly what happened. Ganesha became one of the most beloved figures in the whole family, someone people everywhere turn to first, before starting anything new.

Sometimes things don't go the way we planned. But that doesn't mean they can't turn out wonderfully anyway.



STORY 03

The Ocean That Turned Shiva's Throat Blue

Long ago, the gods and demons worked together to churn a great ocean of milk, hoping to find a treasure hidden deep inside it: a nectar that could make anyone who drank it live forever. They churned and churned, using a giant mountain and a giant snake, and slowly, wonderful things began to rise up out of the water.

But before the nectar came, something else rose first: a terrible, dark poison, so strong it could have harmed the whole world. Everyone panicked. Nobody knew what to do.

Shiva did. Without hesitating, he scooped up the poison and swallowed it himself, to protect everyone else from its harm. Parvati, frightened for him, rushed to his side and held his throat gently so the poison wouldn't travel any further into his body.

It worked. The poison stayed right there, in his throat, turning it a deep, beautiful blue forever after. That's why Shiva is sometimes called Neelkanth, "the blue-throated one," a reminder that he was willing to carry something hard so that everyone else wouldn't have to.



STORY 04

The Dance That Never Stops

Shiva doesn't just sit still on his mountain all the time. Sometimes, he dances. Not an ordinary dance, but a great cosmic dance called the Tandava, so powerful that it's said to shape the whole universe as it moves.

When Shiva dances as Nataraja, the Lord of Dance, one foot lifts gracefully into the air while the other presses firmly down, holding steady. Around him, a great circle of fire spins, representing everything that exists, being made new. His dance isn't about destruction for its own sake. It's about making space, clearing away what's old and tired so that something new and beautiful has room to grow, the same way a garden needs old leaves cleared away before new flowers can bloom.

People who watch Shiva dance don't feel afraid. They feel amazed. Because in that spinning circle of fire, they can see something true about the whole world: everything changes, everything moves, and that's not something to be scared of. It's something to dance to.



STORY 05

How the River Came Down From the Sky

There was once a river so powerful that if it fell straight down from the sky to the earth, it would flood everything and hurt everyone below. But the earth needed that river badly, its water would bring life to dry land and thirsty people.

A king named Bhagiratha prayed for years and years, asking for a way to bring the river down safely. Finally, he found the answer: Shiva. Only Shiva was strong enough and gentle enough to catch the whole river in his own hair first, breaking its fall, before letting it trickle down gently to the earth below.

So that's what happened. The great river Ganga came rushing down from the sky, landed softly in Shiva's thick hair, wound through it slowly, and then flowed out gently onto the land, exactly as it needed to.

That's why, even today, you'll sometimes see Shiva pictured with a little river flowing right out of his hair. It's not just decoration. It's a reminder that even something as powerful as a falling river can arrive gently, if it lands in the right hands first.



STORY 06

Why the Moon Rests in Shiva's Hair

Long ago, the moon did something he shouldn't have, and as a result, he began to lose his glow, getting dimmer and dimmer every night. The moon was frightened. Without his light, how would the night sky ever feel less dark?

The moon went to Shiva and asked for help. Shiva listened kindly, and instead of scolding him further, he gently placed the moon in his own hair, right at the top of his head, where he keeps it safe to this day.

Because of that, the moon never disappeared completely. Some nights he's just a thin little sliver, and other nights he grows round and full again, but he always comes back, growing and shrinking in a gentle cycle, safe in his place in Shiva's hair.

It's a small story with a gentle lesson: even when we make mistakes, even when we feel like we're losing our shine, there's room for us to be held kindly while we find our way back to full brightness again.

THE END

Six stories, one family, and a mountain that's always there to come back to.

Thank you for reading Shiva's Stories for Children.

Shiv Gatha
shivgatha.com