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From the Foothills

Short of air? For those hardy mystics (readers) who have been studying this four-page section on Monistic Theism at the 30,000 foot level and are starting to find the breath-taking view of Being leaving them just short of breath, we are offering a short tram ride back to the foothills, where the oxygen-rich air of Becoming abounds.

At this foothills level, striving and humanness thrive as rich and profusely as the thick forests that girdle out high, icy peak, It is here that we pause to honor and pay loving but brief tribute to a few of the many and varied Saivite traditions, beliefs, and perspectives that-like the climber's pick and axe, old mountain maps and trusted Sherpa guide-help each soul complete Saivism's glorious quest and see it all from the top.

The Temple: No one-even yogic mountaineers- outgrows the temple. That kingpin of all Saivite life, the Hindu temple, is the "place upon the earth in which the [being of all] three worlds can communicate for the upliftment of mankind...through a psychic ray which is established over the sanctum sanctorum connecting it to the Third World" (Saiva Dharma: A Catechism for Saivite Hindus).

Karma/Reincarnation: No Hindu understanding is so central and helpful to the soul's evolution as the subtle inner law of karma and the process of reincarnation. "Every action has a reaction. If you plant eggplant, you can pluck eggplant. If you sow goodness. If you sow evil, you will reap evil..." -Siva Yogaswami. "Saivites do not fear death, not do they look forward to it...In stepping out of the physical body, consciousness continues in unbroken continuity in the astral body, its exact duplicate. In the Second World mind continues, emotions continue, associations

continue. Just before rebirth, the astral body is sloughed off and the soul in its self-effulgent form soars into the Third World, then enters a new womb in the First." -Sivaya Subramuniaswami

The Guru-The Guide: On the pilgrims's journey to God, he always gone to someone who knew more than himself, someone he felt was closer to God than he was. From these holy men he received clarifying directions, yoga practices and blessings to proceed. In love and gratitude for this help, Saivites honor all men and women who have sacrificed and traversed the icy slopes of Kailas-but most especially the Sat Gurus who chart the path from the highest glacial peaks.

Bhakti: To ascend the narrow paths of the inner climb, all scriptures prescribe a purified intellect, divested of pride and ramified knowledge. Then awakens bhakti-that profoundly simple child-like love for God, for all His creation.

Mahadevas/Devas: "Mahadevas, devas, people devas in all states of evolution have exactly the same relationship with Siva. None is more favored, more dear or cared for than another. In later stages, the mental body is purified and the soul matures, and thus reflects its nature, Siva's nature, more than in early stages. This stage is the loving caring for other souls. This is the innate nature of the soul and the nature of Siva. As the light cannot detach itself from its rays, Lord Siva cannot from His creations." -Sivaya Subramuniaswami

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