

7. Cultivate love, faith and humility

SHIVARATHRI is a day when one tries to establish friendship between the mind and God. Shivarathri makes one aware of the fact that the same Divinity is all-pervasive, that It is to be found everywhere.

In our daily experiences, there are a number of instances which reveal the existence of Divinity in every person. Consider a cinema; on the screen we see rivers in flood, engulfing all the surrounding land. Even though the scene is filled with flood waters the screen does not get wet by even a drop of water. At another time, on the same screen we see volcanoes erupting with tongues of flame, but the screen is not burnt. The screen which provides the basis for all these pictures is not affected by any of them. Likewise in the life of man, good or bad, joy or sorrow, birth or death, will be coming and going, but they do not affect the Atma. In the cinema of life, the screen is the Atma. It is Shiva, it is Sankara, it is Divinity. When one understands this principle, one will be able to understand, enjoy and find fulfilment in life.

Sankara (Easwara) refers to the one who is endowed with all types of *Aiswarya* (wealth). The types of wealth that we enjoy in the worldly sense are not what we mean by *Aiswarya*. Everything in the phenomenal world, every person, every bit of matter that you see, has this principle of *Aiswarya* in it. This *Aiswarya* is nothing other than Easwara. In other words, the entire phenomenal world is made up of Easwara. This has also been described as Sathaamaatra Chaitanya (Pure Consciousness). This principle of *Chaitanya* cannot be directly seen; it exists unseen. It is eternal, it is permanent, it is all-pervasive.

The Trinity and Omkaara

This is the *Aiswarya* that permeates and fills this world. This is the very embodiment of Easwara itself. For this principle of Easwara there are two aspects. One is Saguna (attributed) and *Sakara* (formful) and the other is Nirguna (attributeless) and *Nirakara* (formless). Associated with the mind and thoughts, and responding to the joys and sorrows, the pain and sufferings of human beings, various forms of Divinity have been visualized. These are the Saguna and *Sakara* aspects of Easwara.

In this context we have the Trinity---Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. These are associated with the three *Gunas* or *attributes*--*Rajas*, *Satva* and *Tamas*. *Rajas* is associated with Brahma, *Satva* with Vishnu and *Tamas* with Shiva. The *rajasic* attribute, associated with Brahma, is represented by the sound 'A'. The sound 'U' is the manifested form of Vishnu. And 'M' is the form of the Shiva principle.

These three forms, composing the Trinity, are not permanent. They are not permanent because they have taken form. Anything which has a form cannot be permanent. In the worship of the Dime with attributes the Trinity exist in each individual as auspicious witnesses. But there is one syllable consisting of 'A', 'U' and 'M', which is the One underlying all the three forms; that is the Omkaara. It is an expression of the *Nirguna Akara* the attributeless Divine Principle.

Get rid of action and be freed from Maya

Whatever number of births we may take and however long we may go on worshipping these three forms, we will never be able to free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. If one wants to get rid of birth forever, one has to worship the Nirguna *Nirakara*, the formless and attributeless principle, which is represented by the Omkaara. Only when we get rid of action, will

we be free from the delusion that the world is real. When we are rid of delusion, then we will also be free from the illusion of *Maya*. And only then will we be free from sorrow and will finally be able to reach the *Paratatva*, the transcendent principle. This may also be described as Paramatma, the transcendent principle within us. As long as we have the mind and the tendencies, we can only be described as *Jivatma*.

Jivatma and Paramatma are not two different entities. The characteristic of *Jivatma* is to waste the entire life in worldly things and associate the mind with this phenomenal world. This is the externalised vision, which is full of illusion and delusion. If you turn your mind inwards, it will be free from delusion. When it is associated with delusion, it is *Jiva Tatva*. When it is free from delusion and illusion, then it is one with the principle of *Paramatma*.

Cure the boil of "I" in the body

If there is a boil on the body, we put some ointment on it and cover it with a bandage until the whole thing heals. If you do not apply the ointment and tie the bandage around this boil, it is likely to become septic and cause great harm later on. Now and then we will have to clean it with pure water, apply the ointment again and put on a new bandage. In the same way, in our life, there is this particular boil which has come up in our body in the form of 'I', 'I', 'I'. If you want to really cure this boil of 'I', you will have to wash it every day with the waters of love, apply the ointment of faith on it and tie the bandage of humility around it. The bandage of humility, the ointment of faith, and the waters of love will be able to cure this disease that has erupted with this boil of 'I'.

With the help of the mind a man can rise from the level of the human to the highest level of divinity. But he can also descend to the animal nature or demonic level. Once you turn the mind towards worldly objects it tends to become animal and demonic in nature. If the mind is turned upwards towards God and freed from the thought process, it tends to merge with the *Nirguna Nirakara* and thus become liberated.

The most important reason for bondage is giving too much freedom to the mind. For example, when an animal is tethered to a post, it will not be able to go to another place and spoil it. It will not be able to show anger or violence or do harm to any person. But if it is unwed and let loose, then it can roam over various fields, destroy the crops and cause loss and harm to others. It gets beaten for the mischief done by it. Similarly, the mind must be bound by certain regulations and limits. As long as man lives within certain limits and disciplines, certain rules and regulations, he will be able to maintain a good name and lead a happy and useful life. Once he crosses these limits he will go astray.

Conduct yourselves as true human beings

You want to study well. You want to pass and get a first-class. After that you want to get a good position and you want to get married and live a happy family life. And then you want to have children and you want them to be intelligent and do well in life. For these kinds of desires there is no limit. They will keep on multiplying. The reason for this multiplication of wants is that you think you are simply a man. But that is not sufficient to keep you free from suffering.

In addition to considering yourself a man, you have to put a number of questions to yourself: "To what caste do I belong? Am I an educated person or not? Where am I staying?. Am I conducting myself in keeping with this sacred privilege of staying in this most sacred Prashanthi Nilayam, in the immediate presence of Swami?" Only when you put all these questions to yourselves, will

you be able to conduct yourselves as true human beings. If one merely thinks he is a man and is entitled to pursue all kinds of desires and enjoyments, he is likely to behave like an animal or even like a demon. "My caste is the caste of humanity. I live in the sacred land of Bharat. I am born of a good family. I am an educated person, not an ignorant one. And I am here in this sacred Prashanthi Nilayam in the presence of Swami." When you have such answers and use them as guideposts for conducting yourselves, you will not go astray.

Wisdom exists in the midst of ignorance

Today is described as Shivarathri. '*Rathri*' means night. What is the significance of night? Night is another word for darkness. 'Shiva' means auspiciousness. So, Shivarathri speaks of an auspiciousness which is inherent in darkness. It refers to the wisdom which exists in the midst of ignorance. Ignorance and wisdom are not two different things; they are basically the same. They are associated with *Dwaita*; they are the opposite polarities of the same underlying principle.

The state that transcends both wisdom and ignorance is *Paratatva*. It is a stage which is not associated with any comings or goings, where birth and death do not occur. So long as there is birth for the body, death has to follow. What is it that has taken birth? Is it the Atma? No. It is only the body which has taken birth. You are Atma. You are the permanent entity. We consider this body as inert, but truly speaking, this body is not inert. Even in the physical matter making up this body there is the Divine Consciousness.

The form of the body is constantly changing. That is why the phenomenal world is described as *Jagat*. In the word *Jagat*, 'Ja' means taking birth; 'Gat' means dying. "*Jagat*" means that which has birth and death, a process which repeats itself over and over again. In this world there is nothing which is free from this birth and death, be it a body, any object or thing. All are continually undergoing changes.

Develop purity and sacredness

This Shivarathri is a day when one tries to establish friendship between mind and God. Shivarathri makes one aware of the fact that the same Divinity is all-pervasive and is to be found everywhere. It is said that Shiva lives in Kailasa. But where is Kailasa? Kailasa is our own joy, our own bliss. It means that Easwara lives in the Kailasa of delight. If we can develop that sense of joy and delight in our mind, that itself is Kailasa. How can one get this joy? It comes when we develop putty and steadiness and sacredness. Then the heart becomes filled with peace and bliss. Then your heart itself will be Kailasa and Shiva will be there in the sanctum sanctorum of your heart, within the temple which is your body.

At first look, everyone appears to be a devotee, but individuals respond differently to different circumstances. If you keep a ball of iron and dry leaf side by side, when there is no wind both of them will be firm and steady. But when a breeze blows the dry leaf will be carried away for miles together. The iron ball will remain firm and steady. If one has true love and firm faith in God, one will be like an iron ball, steady and undisturbed. If one is like a leaf running away on account of difficulties and problems, it is a travesty to call such a person a devotee. We should develop pure and steady love and faith.

Think of Divinity every minute

There are no permanent mothers in the world, the only permanent mother is the Divine Mother. Swami often reminds you of your spiritual family where Truth is your father, Love is your mother, Wisdom is your son, Peace is your daughter, Devotion is your brother, and *Yogis* are

your friends. In the spiritual path these are your true relatives, who will always accompany you. When you have this kind of relationship, when you treasure this kind of friendship, you will be able to break the bonds of the world and become free. Light has value only when there is darkness; otherwise it has no value by itself. Therefore, in times of trouble and sorrow, whenever problems arise, evoke the principle of Divinity, which will shed illumination and light in moments of darkness.

There is no use in just thinking of Shivarathri once a year. Every minute, every day, every night, you should think of Divinity and sanctify your time, for the Time principle truly speaking is Shiva. You yourself are Shiva. Try to understand and recognize this principle of Shiva Tatva which is your own Reality.

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