

The Sunday Talk Given by Prof. Anil Kumar

“Mahashivaratri” (Part 1)

February 6, 2010

Shivaratri falls on the 12th of this month. It is one of the very important festivals observed here in Prashanthi Nilayam. This is the festival that draws Baba's devotees from all over the world. Shivaratri is important here because the office bearers discuss their plans for Baba's 85th birthday.

So, against this background, I welcome you all to this morning session. It's so nice to see so many of you from Russia. This is proof of Baba's love for the Russian people. You seem to be the chosen few. I appreciate and compliment you.

IMPORTANCE OF SHIVARATRI

I will prepare you for Shivaratri by first saying a few words about this holy festival. *Ratri* means 'night'. This is Shivaratri. *Ratri*, the word for night, is quite an ordinary word: the usual, casual, normal term. But this Shivaratri comes once in every month of the year. Every month of the year, in accordance with the phases of the moon, has two halves or parts, the dark half and the bright half. The dark half is when the moon is waning or becoming less bright; the bright half is when it is waxing or becoming full. The bright half ends on the full moon day. The dark half ends in a dark night, when you do not see any moon. Thus, there are two special nights in every month: full moon night and the completely dark, no moon night.

This Shivaratri which falls on 12th of February this year is not the Shivaratri of every month. It is something different and special. This Shivaratri, which is an annual celebration, is called Grand Shivaratri, Mahashivaratri or super *Ratri*. *Ratri* means night. *Ratri*, the night associated with Shiva, is called Shivaratri. What is Shiva? Who is Shiva? Shiva is an aspect of God, who is formless, attributeless, without a beginning and without an end. Shiva is what you call a doctrine, a philosophy, an idea but not a form.

Rama has a name and form. Krishna has a name and form. However, Shiva is nameless and formless. All *Avatars* had a beginning and an end. But Shiva has no beginning and no end either. All incarnations have a physical frame, body, and personality. Shiva has no physical frame or body. So, *Shivam* is a concept, a notion, and an idea. *Shivam* is vitality, vital force. *Shivam* is dynamism, activity.

Shivam is a sacredness that is totally auspicious. So, *Shivam* is a supreme, important concept spread all over the universe or cosmos. *Shivam* or the Divine principle is present in all; from micro-organisms to man, the macro-organism. We are like this because of the *Shivam* within

everybody. We are active, smart, smiling, and healthy because of *Shivam*. Once this *Shivam*, this Divinity is gone, what will happen? When the lights are off, power cut in the night, what will happen? It will be totally dark.

Therefore, this human body with *Shivam*, the vital force, is active and dynamic. Without this vitality *Shivam*, this becomes *sevam*, a dead body. *Shivam* is alive, *sevam* is dead. So, everyone here is Shiva, filled with life.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE IS SHIVARATRI

The recognition, the understanding of *Shivam*, the life and vitality within me, the celebration of that awareness is Shivaratri. The celebration of life is Shivaratri. Celebration of vitality and dynamism is Shivaratri. Knowledge of Divinity, the experience of Divinity is the purpose of Shivaratri.

Then the question arises, why *ratri*, the night? It is said that the moon is the presiding deity of the mind. The moon has 16 phases, shades or aspects. After two weeks of the month, 15 phases are gone. One phase is left on that holy night, Shivaratri. When all 16 phases or aspects are there, the moon shines; the moon has visible light, culminating in the full moon. The full moon starts losing one phase after another. On this Shivaratri only one phase or aspect or *kala* is left. By constant meditation on the Divine, even the last trace of the moon disappears, leading to a fully dark night. The moon is the symbol of the mind.

A moon that shines brilliantly can be likened to the mind with all its emotions, with all its desires and worldly involvements. Moon in its fullness stands for all that is worldly and sensual. As we come closer and closer to Shivaratri, the moon starts losing one aspect after another until the last trace or sliver is left. This symbolises the burning, passionate, emotional, sentimental, fully desire-laden mind becoming less active as Shivaratri approaches. By and by, the mind slowly becomes withdrawn, annihilated. Therefore the waning of the moon phases symbolises the annihilation of the qualities of mind.

When the mind is withdrawn in such a manner, you will notice that you are God. That which separates you from God is your mind. When the mind is withdrawn, the realisation is there: yes, you are verily God.

The question then arises: when the mind is withdrawn, what then remains? It is the consciousness that lies within you, the supreme Self, the spirit or consciousness. We usually function at the level of the mind. Just as during the dark night of the Shivaratri, the moon is withdrawn to dark night, mind also gets withdrawn. The dark night is like a curtain. Behind that curtain there is a mirror. Slowly remove the curtain; slowly you will see your beautiful personality revealed, mirroring the God within you.

MASTER THE MIND

Mirror is life, curtain is mind. Once you remove this curtain, the mind, you will see your consciousness, the Self, your true Self. How to remove the curtain, mind? This is a monkey mind. It is never silent or still. The mind always wants this and that, everything that is possibly available in the world. It is full of endless desires and demands. Mind is constituted of limitless

desires. How to drop it? How to withdraw it? Mind is making me very mad, crazy. How to kill that monster in the mind? When I kill the monster in the mind, I can master the mind.

My friends, it is impossible to kill the mind. Mind is like a cushioned chair. The cushion rises when you get up from the chair; it subsides when you sit on it. The mind is something like curly hair. You try to straighten a piece of curly hair—it immediately bounces back. So it is not possible to kill the mind. If anyone tells you, 'I control my mind', take it as bogus. Impossible!

So what should you do? You can divert the mind. The mind, which is normally like a full moon, is extroverted, outward-looking and external. Then you divert that mind. When the mind is diverted, what happens? It starts looking within. If I show you a mirror, you see your face reflected there. If I turn the mirror towards me, I see my face. You don't have to break the mirror. Mirror faces outwards, towards the world.

CELEBRATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS IS SHIVARATRI

On Shivaratri, we turn this mirror, this mind-side within. And that turning of the mirror to one's own Self, the consciousness we see therein—this is the meaning of the celebration of Shivaratri.

Secondly, on Shivaratri, Baba materialises the *lingam*. Of course, He has stopped doing it for the last couple of years. Many, many people, especially foreigners, ask me about this *lingam*. They all come and ask me, "Anil Kumar, can you tell us about the *lingam* that Baba materialises?"

"What is *lingam*? Where does it come from? How can He materialise it? Why should He do that? What does it mean to me?" These are the searching questions in every thinking mind.

LINGAM IS IN EVERYONE

Baba says, "*Lingam* is in everyone." So *lingam* is not the sole property of Bhagavan. He declares clearly that *lingam* is in everyone. In the human body, there are metals like iron, gold and so on.

What happens on Mahashivaratri night is that all the metals within Baba's body (particularly gold) because of severe internal heat, they get converted from liquid state to solid state. Therefore gold (and other metals) take the form of a *lingam* within. And that emerges out of Swami.

That process looks painful. Devotees feel so badly for Swami, as He appears to be feeling so stressed and in pain. We feel bad because we see Him drinking pots and pots of water; we also see Him in much discomfort, struggling to bring up the *lingam*. When the *lingam*, which is so big, emerges out of His mouth, even Baba's teeth and lips get injured, causing some bleeding.

But Baba said, "You may feel the pain, but I have no pain. Mother delivers the child for the pleasure of giving birth to the child. I materialise *lingam* for your pleasure. Don't think that it causes pain to Me. It may appear painful, but it gives Me ultimate joy, seeing everybody watching the *lingam*." *Lingam* means a sign or a symbol. The whole creation came out of *lingam*

and gets merged into the *lingam* at the end. So we are all out of *lingam* and we will go back to *lingam*, our place of origin.

So *lingam* is a sign, a symbol of origin and the end of the universe. The *lingam* is directed upwards, meaning we should have an upward, onward, forward spiritual journey. The *lingam* points upward; its vertical egg-shaped part is upward-facing. It rests on a platform or horizontal part which is triangular. This triangular platform of the *lingam* represents the world of three basic attributes or qualities: *thamasic*, *rajasic* and *sathwic*.

So the lower platform represents this body and mind. The upward-facing *lingam* is consciousness. In this way, such a *lingam* is in everyone, my friends. Is there anybody here without a body? Everyone has a body. This body is the platform of the *lingam*. Is there anybody without life here? Is there anybody without vitality here? No! Life, vitality is the upward *lingam* or consciousness.

THE WHOLE COSMOS IS SHIVA

Shiva has another name: Ishwara.

Who is Ishwara? The master or controller, in whose possession there are various forms of wealth. Health is wealth. Intellect is wealth. Good name, good reputation is wealth. Thus, wealth is expressed in eight forms, not necessarily in currency notes. Ishwara is the one who embodies all eight forms of wealth: good name, health, property, intelligence, reputation, success and so on. If you want to be intellectual and knowledgeable, if you want to be rich and influential, if you want to be recognised and reputed, you should pray to Shiva as Ishwara, because all these are under his control.

Shiva has still another name: Shankara. We want only good things to happen in our lifetime. None of us is prepared to face anything that is bad and evil. We want all auspiciousness; that only the best of things happen to us. Therefore, we have to pray to Shiva as Shankara. *Shan* means 'all that is good, all that is auspicious'. *Kara* means 'giver'. He gives you all auspicious things.

As I said in the beginning, the whole cosmos is Shiva. We have South Pole, North Pole, the east and the west. These are the four poles or pillars; there is no fifth pole. God presides over all four poles or pillars. The name for this is Digambhara. *Digh* means 'pole', while *ambhara*, 'a canopy or umbrella'. So, the whole cosmos belongs to Digambhara, Shankara, Shiva.

FIERY DESIRES WILL BURN OUR LIVES

Shiva has another name—Kamahari. Every man, every person looks worried. Look at people's faces. Nearly everyone looks worried in one way or the other. They hardly smile. Why? Desires! If they have something, they want to have something more. They will also want something else later. They want to have everything in life. Impossible to satisfy the mind! If you put anything in a fire, do you think the fire will say, "Thank you, I want nothing more to burn?" No, no! Fire will invite you saying, "Put more stuff in, I will burn it." Desires are like that.

Similarly, this fiery desire will burn our lives. Hot, hot desires will make us turn mad. When we pray to Lord Shiva, we become desireless. So another name for Shiva is Kamahari. *Kama* means 'desire'. Hari means 'the one who sees to it that all desires go'.

Then you will ask me, "Why should I conquer desire?" Please understand: desire is the cause of birth. The cause of rebirth is desire. When you are desireless, there is no question of birth and rebirth. Desirelessness makes you immortal, beyond death, beyond all dimensions. Desirelessness means no birth, no death. Deathlessness or immortality is the state when you are desireless.

Therefore, when you pray to Shiva as Kamahari, you become desireless. By being desireless, you become deathless, immortal. That is Mrithyunjaya. Who is Mrithyunjaya? Who conquered death? A desireless man conquers death.

Therefore, Shivaratri has so many dimensions. All these names have definite meanings. Shiva is also called Ardhanariishwara. *Ardha* means 'half'. *Nari* means 'woman'. *Ardha nari* means 'half of the body is man, and half of the body is woman'.

"If there were anyone who was half man and half woman, they would be very ugly to look at!" No, no, don't take it that way. The woman represents matter and the man stands for energy. So, Ardhanari means 'matter plus energy'.

LORD SHIVA'S LESSON OF LIFE

For your information, Shiva is the friend of the richest man. His name is Kubera, one with international monetary fund, endless monetary fund! (*Laughter*) A big banker. While his friend is a banker, a very rich man, Shiva leads the life of a beggar. His friend Kubera is the richest man and He, Shiva, a beggar. Why?

It is only to teach us that towards the end, everyone dies a beggar. At death nobody carries along any belongings, any property, any cash, or any gold whatsoever. You cannot carry anything with you. So everyone has to die as a beggar. This is the lesson of the life of Shiva.

You know He has three eyes: the centre eye and the two regular eyes. The centre eye or third eye is the eye of wisdom. So it is called *trinetra*. *Tri* – three. *Netra* – eyes. So He has two eyes, just like the human, plus the third eye, the eye of wisdom.

The name of Shiva's wife is Parvati. Together they symbolise matter and energy. Shiva and Parvati have two sons. One is Vinayaka, the remover of obstacles; the other is Subramanya, representing strength and wisdom.

Many people come here and complain, "I have a family problem." One says, "My daughter doesn't care for me." The other says, "My son doesn't look at me." Or, "My wife and I are at loggerheads." These are our usual family problems.

Shiva's family also has the same thing happening . . . many problems. But Shiva maintains a balance, so why not you and I? Divorce is not a solution; separation is not a solution. Fighting is not a solution. Understanding, adjustment, co-operation, and integration are the solution.

The chariot of Vinayaka, the eldest son of Shiva, is the small mouse or rat. The chariot of Shiva is a bull. Chariot of the mother, Parvati, is a lion. The chariot of the second son, Subramanya, is a peacock. All of these 'chariots'—mouse, bull, lion and peacock—are enemies of one another.

The face of the first son, Vinayaka, is that of an elephant. Chariot of Mother Parvati is a lion. Elephant and lion are opposites. The chariot of the second son, Subramanya, is a peacock. Around the neck of Shiva, the father, are snakes. Snakes and peacocks are opposites, enemies. The chariots of Shiva and Parvati, the bull and the lion, are also enemies or opposites.

There is no unity in Shiva's family. Even in Shiva's body there are opposites! There is water coming from the top of his head. There is fire in the third eye. Water and fire are opposites, but they exist together there. They all live together. Though diversified, though there is diversity, yet there is unity.

So, unity in diversity is the lesson of Shiva's family. It is also the lesson for every one of us. You know the earth revolves around itself on its axis. It also revolves around the sun, which leads to the seasons. You also hear of the lunar system and solar system; you hear of galaxies, stars and nebulas. The whole globe itself is beautiful. This is called the celestial dance or Shiva *tandava*.

BE AWAKE TO INNER CONSCIOUSNESS

On Shivaratri night, if you sing in praise of Him, the last trace of moon, or mind, goes. The mind becomes God. The mind becomes desireless. Then one can experience and witness the supreme consciousness within. On Shivaratri night we observe a vigil: we keep awake through the night.

Some people may be awake through the night watching four movies; some people may be playing cards in Las Vegas. Gambling! It is useless. We should be awake not to the outer world; we should be awake to inner consciousness.

Many people fast on Shivaratri night. The meaning being that the body is secondary, while the consciousness is more important. Mere fasting without understanding is useless. In families we find husband and wife fighting with each other and fasting. That is not Shivaratri. It happens almost every day. That is a family fight, not holy Shivaratri. When we fast on Shivaratri, understand that the meaning is the body is secondary.

Then we worship Shiva *lingam*, pouring holy water on the *lingam*. That is called *abhishekam*. So sprinkling holy water on the *lingam* is *abhishekam*. It is only an external ritual. The inner meaning of worshipping with water is that by singing the glory of God, you shed tears of joy. These are the implications of Shivaratri.

I think I have given you enough information about Shivaratri so that we can prepare mentally to celebrate meaningfully. Do not go outside of the *ashram*. When there are *bhajans* going on, participate there in the Mandir. Don't move around outside the *ashram*, smoking and socialising. Don't be in a hurry to establish contact with anyone and everyone. We are not here to contact others; we are here to detach. We are not here to socialise; we are here to seek solitude, not

socialisation. We are not here for outlooks, the outer world. We are here to meditate and go within.

I really thank you very much. I see all of you here with bright, brilliant faces so keen and interested in what I have to say. That's why I jump to grab every opportunity to talk to your group. I would like to thank the gentleman who has organised this. What is his name?

“Ivor.”

My heartfelt thanks, gratitude, and sincere appreciation also go to our translator, who always does an excellent job every time.

I also appreciate the time and participation here, to video experts, Mr. Lakhi and Mr. Satish. A very good job. (*Applause*)

I am so happy. Thank you so much. (*Applause*)

May your life be full of smiles, full of laughter, full of dance, Shiva *tandava*, rich in harmony and unity like Shiva's family, and with total detachment like Lord Shiva. May you be blessed with the wisdom of Shiva. Shiva is our hero now. May he be the role model for all of us! And may you see Him within, in the form of consciousness.

May that the form of *lingam*, without a beginning and end, be at the centre of concentration and meditation. So, my holy Shivaratri best wishes to all of you. Greetings to all of you!

Thank you for your time. May Baba bless you. (*Applause*)

We do not belong to Ukraine, Latvia, or India. We belong to Sai. Yes! He is our Shiva. We are from Him, we are in Him. We will go back to Him and we belong to Him. We are not Indians and Russians. We are the children of Sai, of the same blood, of the same Sai Divine family. Thank you so much.

*Asato Maa Sadgamaya
Tamaso Maa Jyotirgamaya
Mrityormaa Amritgamaya*

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

Jai Bolo Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaji ki Jai!

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Jai Bolo Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Babaji ki Jai!

