

Adhyatmik importance of Mahaashivaraatri

The people of Bharat believe God Shiva to be *Mukteshwar* (the Lord who brings about liberation) and *Paapakateshwar* (the Destroyer of sins). It is believed in Bharat that God Shiva is 'Ashutosh', meaning He is the One who is pleased soon and easily. And He is 'Avdhardaani' as well, meaning He is the One who grants boon easily. With this very feeling, people offer water to Shiva and worship Him. But a question arises: despite worshipping God Shiva constantly throughout the life and observing *jaagaran* (vigil), *vrata* (fast) etc. with faith every year on *Shivaraatri*, why aren't the sins and sufferings of a human being destroyed? Why doesn't he obtain everlasting happiness and peace? After all, what is the easy method of pleasing God Shiva? What is the actual importance of '*Shivaraatri*'? How should we celebrate *Shivaraatri* and what is the relation of *Mahaa Shiva* (the great Shiva) with *raatri* (night)?

Mahashivaraatri is a very important festival for the entire humanity. '*Raatri*' means night or darkness. It becomes difficult to see [anything] in the night and people keep wandering to achieve their aim. '*Raatri*' represents extreme ignorance and immorality in this world. Human life is very stressful and everyone is so busy that they don't even know this clearly: humanity is heading towards which direction? Vices in the form of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego have seized every human being with the darkness in the form of ignorance. This itself is '*raatri*', meaning the night of ignorance. That night of the darkness of ignorance proves beneficial for every human being. How? According to the words of the Gita: "*yadaa yadaa hi dharmasya... (whenever the [True] religion is defamed...)*", meaning '*jab-jab hoye dharma ki glaani, barhe asur-adham abhimaani, tab-tab leta prabhu maanush shariiraa (whenever the [True] religion is defamed and there is increase in the number of demons, lowly ones and egoistic ones, God takes on a human body)*'. Human beings celebrate 'the festival of *Mahaashivaraatri*' out of happiness of the incarnation of God; but they don't know that God. He has a unique birth, He isn't born like we human beings. For this, it is mentioned in the Gita: "*praveshtum*", [meaning] I am capable to enter. He can enter means He has divine birth. "*Gyaan surya pragataa agyaan andher vinaash (When the Sun of knowledge rises, the darkness of ignorance is destroyed)*". It means, when the human beings are trapped in the clutches of vices in the form of lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego, when they start considering irreligiousness itself to be religiousness, God comes and awakens us by giving us the light of knowledge in such a deep night. In the remembrance of it people observe *jaagaran* on the day of *Shivaraatri*; it means to wake up from the sleep of ignorance. On the day of *Mahashivaraatri*, there is special importance of *Bel patra* (leaves of the *Aegle marmelos* tree) having three leaves (trifoliate form); it is offered to God Shiva. The three leaves of *Bel patra* are the remembrance of the three workers of Trimurti Shiva: Brahma, Vishnu and Shankar. Through these three personalities, who are the highest among the 33 crore deities, God Shiva has the tasks performed in practice to bring about benefit to the world. It means, establishment of the divine world through Brahma, destruction of the old demonic world through Shankar and sustenance of the divine world through Vishnu. People observe '*upavaas* (fast)' on this day; '*upa*' means close, '*vaas*' means to sit; it means to be close to God lovingly and devotedly itself is the real '*upavaas*'. In the path of *bhakti*, we observe '*upavaas*' for just one day, i.e. we stay close to Him for one day by doing *bhakti*, worshipping and reciting [praises for Him] lovingly. Because of it, the mind attains peace for few seconds. If we recognize the real form of God who has come in the corporeal form, we will be able to attain inexhaustible happiness and peace by always staying close to Him.

Shankar alone is called *Shantidevaa* (the deity of peace); peace is established in the entire world through him. He Himself is the 'the first man' of this world who is called '*tvamaadideva purushah puraanaah... (Gita ch.11, shloka 38)*' in the Gita. It isn't that he is just related to the Hindu religion, [rather] He is praised and accepted in every religion. He is known as Aadam among the Muslims, Adam among the Christians and Adinath among the Jains. Today, all of us celebrate *Mahaashivaraatri* in the very remembrance of the incarnation of Shiva-Shankar Bholenath (the Lord of the innocent ones). To know about the incarnation of Shiva + Shankar Bholenath contact us at: Adhyatmik Vishwavidyalaya, Vijayvihar, Rithala, New Delhi-110085 📞 Mo. 9891370007