

## 5. Spiritual significance of Shivaraathri

*Moham hithvaa priyo bhavathi*

*Krodham hithvaa na sochathi*

*Kaamam hithvaa arthavaan bhavathi*

*Lobham hithvaa sukhee bhavathi.*

*EMBODIMENTS of Love!* "*Moham hithvaa priyo bhavathi*" (As long as one is proud, men will not like him). Only when he suppresses his pride will he be liked by one and all. "*Krodham hithvaa na sochathi*" (The man filled with anger will have no happiness). He will be immersed in misery. When he subdues his anger, he will be free from grief. "*Kaamam hithvaa arthavaan bhavathi*" (When a man has insatiable desires he will never feel contented). When he controls his desires, he will be truly rich. "*Lobhamhithvaasukhee bhavathi*" (A miserly person will never feel happy). When he gives up greed he will realise happiness.

*Embodiments of Love!* Divinity is not easily perceived or realised. It is easy to talk about the Divine. It is easy to comment on the miracles and sports of the Divine. But to understand them in their fullness is very difficult. To look at something evil and shout about it like crows is not a good thing. It is better to sing like the cuckoo over something good. Tastes differ from person to person. One man's sweet is another man's poison. With such diverse tendencies, how can men recognise the Divine?

The ancient sages of Bharath carried out many spiritual investigations and through the study of the scriptures proclaimed their experience of the Divine. The Upanishaths declared: "*Raso vai saha.*" That is, the Divine is present in all things as their essence like sugar in sugarcane and butter in milk. God is present both in the good and the bad, in truth and untruth, in merit and sin. That being the case, how is one to determine what is false and what is unrighteous? The Geetha declares: "My Spirit is the indwelling spirit in all beings." The individual who realises this truth will experience *samathvam* (equal-mindedness).

### **Duality in life cannot be escaped**

But, for people living in the mundane world and concerned with worldly affairs, right and wrong, truth and untruth and similar opposites are unavoidable. Hence, as long as one is involved in leading a worldly life one cannot escape from duality. One's peace and security have to be found in the context of pleasure and pain. One's joy is linked with suffering. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. Life is a combination of light and shadow. Without sorrow there can be no happiness. Only when you walk in the hot sun can you experience the pleasure of a shady place. In such a life, it is not possible to experience pleasure alone all the time.

### **The cosmic process**

The entire cosmos is governed by three states: *srishti*, *sthithi* and *layam* (creation, sustenance and dissolutions). The truth of this is beyond dispute by anyone at any time. A Divine truth is conveyed by this concept. *Srishti* (creation) is the expression of the *Eshvara Sankalpa* (Will of God). It is called *Prakrithi* (Nature). Every object in creation should have the characteristics of Nature. Man has come into existence to manifest the powers of Nature. The powers of Nature are not present in all in equal measure. The man who is conscious only of the physical has a perverted view of these powers. The spiritually-oriented person sees their benign nature.

*Prakrithi* (Nature) and *Chaithanya* (Spirit) are one. But in accordance with their varied feelings and attitudes, things appear good or bad to Loka is one of the names applied to the world. Loka is that which has the power of *aalochana* (thought). In this assembly there are a large number of persons. They are all gathered in one place. But each lives in a world of his own. What is the reason? One will be thinking about an educational problem. Another will be thinking about a job. Yet another may be worried about his business. Another may be concerned about agriculture. Others may be thinking about some scientific problem. All these different realms of thought are all exercises of the mind.

### **The trinity in man**

Thus the cosmic process *shrishti* (creation), *sthithi* (sustenance) and *layam* (dissolution) goes on in every human being. *Srishti* is the outcome of *sankalpa* (thought). *Sthithi* is protection of creation. *Layam* is the merger of creation in its source. *Srishti*, *Sthithi* and *Layam* are also identified with the three qualities--*Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas*. Man is the embodiment of the three *gunas*. The three *gunas* represent the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara). The Trinity represent the *Thrilokas* (three Worlds). The three worlds and the trinity are present in every human being. The three are to be regarded as one and worshipped as Shivam. What is Shivam? It is the embodiment of Auspiciousness. When man recognizes the unified form of the Trinity his humanness acquires auspiciousness.

In a government there are different departments like education, finance, etc. Likewise in the spiritual field also there are different departments. They are: *Srishti*, *Sthithi* and *Layam*. Each department has a head. Each head has to govern his department on right lines.. There is an overlord presiding over all departments. He is like the Prime Minister in a cabinet. He is God. He is called Allah. By attributing different names and forms to God, Divinity is fragmented in various ways. The one Divine is responsible for the threefold cosmic process. This three aspects of God can be seen in the English word GOD. G represents *Generation--Srishti*. O represents Organizations-----*Sthithi*. D represents Dissolution--*Layam*. GOD represents the unity of the three aspects.

There is a misunderstanding about these three. *Layam* is considered as destruction or dissolution. Its real meaning is mergence. O represents organization. It means protection. G stands for generation (creation). Brahma, Vishnu and Eeshvara are three potencies Immanent in man. To understand this it is essential to follow the spiritual path. Spirituality does not mean leading a lonely ascetic life. Spirituality means getting rid of attachment and hatred and looking upon the whole humanity as one. Every one should understand this inner meaning of spirituality.

### **Shivaraathri is an auspicious night**

Man is endowed with infinite potencies. All that you experience by way of seeing, hearing and the like are reflections of the inner being. The significance of this experience has to be properly understood. For instance, today is Shivaraathri day. You experience the night every day. These are ordinary nights. They are nights of darkness. But Shivaraathri is an auspicious night. How is it auspicious? There are sixteen aspects for the mind. The moon is the presiding deity for the mind. Of the sixteen phases of the moon, today in the fourteenth day of *Maargasheersha* month, fifteen of the phases are absent. On this day it is possible to get full control of one's mental faculties. Hence it is considered an auspicious day. Auspiciousness consists in diverting the mind towards God. This calls for getting rid of the inherited animal tendencies in man. This is the occasion to recognise the omnipresence of the Divine in all beings and in all objects. It follows

that whomsoever you adore or condemn, you are adoring or condemning God. You must follow the injunction: Help ever, hurt never.

Every human being has sacred qualities, based on his *Shivathvam* (Divine essence). Hence man should realise his inherent divinity, though his body is made up of the five elements. Thereby humanness is transformed into divinity. The human birth is intended for the pursuit of *Dharma*. *Dharma* implies harmony in thought, word and deed. When every person realises his essential divine nature, the entire world will be transformed. The body and the mind are mere instruments. Man's reality is the *Aathma* (Self). Man should use the instruments given to him to perform his duties well and realise his oneness with God.

### **Unity in diversity**

All the phenomena in Nature proclaim the glory of the Divine. Why foster religious differences? Let everyone carry out the dictates of the Divine, who governs the universe. (Svaami sang a poem in Thelugu to convey this message). Everything that happens is by the Will of God.

The principle teaching of the *Vedhas* is that all men should strive together in harmony and share their joys together in amity. Through unity, humanity can achieve purity, leading to divinity. The three great enemies of man are lust, anger and greed. These have to be eliminated. The greatest quality in man is love. Love is God. Live in love.

Bhaarath has been hailed as the teacher for all lands. It is the country which regarded God as one and recognized the unity that underlies all diversity. God is one, the goal is one and all life is one. This unity underlies all diversity. This basic Divine unity is missed in the perception of diversity.

### **Use every opportunity to help others**

*Embodiments of Love!* At the present moment, in the prevailing situation, what is most essential is the cultivation of love. Losing love, mankind has lost its humanness. Love is the supreme human value. Truth, righteousness, peace and non-violence are other human values. Knowing these values, men are foolishly leading valueless lives. What a pity that men in human form do not behave like human beings. Rivers, trees and cows teach the lesson of living for the benefit of others. Man should also share the divinity in him with others. Men today are steeped in selfishness.

Whoever remembers the names of scholars and scientists? But millions adore the names of realised souls like Raamakrishna Paramahansa, Thukaaraam, Kabeer and Raamdhaas. Bear in mind four dicta to be observed: "Run away from bad company. Welcome association with good people. Do meritorious acts continually. Remember what is transient and what is permanent." Be with God, think with God, see with God and dedicate all actions to God. Consider all as members of one Divine family. Regard yourself as a trustee and use your wealth and talents for the good of others. Use every opportunity, to help others. Be compassionate at all times. Students in particular should always be ready to go to the help of people in distress.

God today is in search of good men. Every one should strive to be sincere in thought, word and deed. Then you need not go in search of God. God will discover you.

You have to develop fraternal feelings towards everyone. Here is an example from the Raamaayana. Once the four brothers as young lads were playing a game with a ball. After the game Raama ran to Kausalya and rested on her lap. He was full of joy. When Kausalya asked

him why he was feeling so happy, Raama said that Bharatha had won in the game that day and that made him so happy. Kausalya remarked that an elder brother rejoicing in the success of his younger brother is a great example for brotherly love. Shortly thereafter Bharatha came to Kausalya with a sad look. Kausalya asked him why he was feeling sad when he had won in the game. Bharatha said: "When I was about to lose the game, Raama managed to lose the game and made me the winner. I am feeling unhappy because of the defeat of my elder brother. Is it not sad that on my account my elder brother should lose the game?"

What an example of fraternal love! The elder brother should rejoice in the success of the younger, even by losing the game himself. This is the lesson taught by the Raamaayana. In those days the four brothers were in a supreme state of fraternal love. Today brothers go to the Supreme Court for settling their disputes! This is not proper. Brothers should be united and live in amity. The ideal of fraternal unity upheld in the Raamaayana should inspire the people today. *Students!* Strive for the welfare of society as a whole. Experience God through love.

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