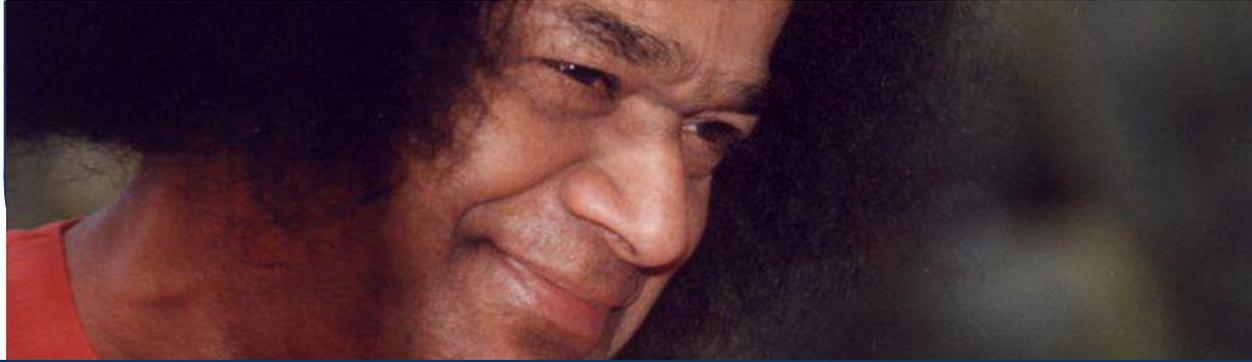


# Sai Dharmam



*Bhajan Corner*

## *Maha Shivaratri*

Shiva x4 Shirdi  
Pureeshwara Shambo  
Shankara Samba  
Shivom,  
Bhava Hara Pura Hara  
Putta Parthishwara  
Shambo Shankara Sada  
Shivom,  
Kailashaachala Bala  
Shiva Kaala Koota  
Dhara Bala Shiva,  
Keleelalasa Bala Shiva  
Leela Tandava Bala  
Shiva

### **Meaning**

Oh! Lord of Shirdi, we worship you as Shiva, Parameshwara, Shambho, Shankara, Sai Shiva. You are the remover of fear and worldly misery, Your abode is Kailasa and you are a great dancer of Tandava (The celestial Dance)

**M**aha Shivaratri or the night of Shiva is a Hindu festival dedicated to Lord Shiva, destroyer of the universe, one of the deities of the Hindu Trinity. It is the most important festival for the millions of devotees of Lord Shiva. According to sacred scriptures, the ritual worship of Lord Shiva on Shivaratri festival falls on the 14th day of the dark fortnight in the month of March, which pleases Lord Shiva, the most. So who is Lord Shiva? Shiva is the third god in the Hindu triumvirate. His powers of destruction and recreation are used even now to destroy the illusions and imperfections of this world, paving the way for beneficial change. Each new moon is dedicated to Lord Shiva, but Maha Shivaratri is especially important because it is the night when he danced the 'Tandav', his cosmic dance. It also celebrates the wedding of Shiva and Sati, the mother divine. Night represents evil,

injustice, ignorance, sin, violence, and misfortune. Tradition says that Shiva, like his symbol the new moon, appeared in order to save the world from darkness and ignorance, before the world entered complete darkness. The festival has been accorded lot of significance in Hindu mythology. It says that a devotee who performs sincere worship of Lord Shiva on the auspicious day of Shivaratri is absolved of sins and attains moksha. There were three main reasons why people had celebrated Shivaratri. The absolute formless God, Sadashiv appeared in the form of "Lingodbhav Moorti" exactly at midnight on Maha Shivaratri. That is why all Shiva devotees keep vigil during the night of Shivaratri and do "Shivlingam abhishekham" at night. Next Shiva was married to Parvathi on Shivaratri. Lord Shiva became 'Neelkantham' or the blue-throated by swallowing the deadly poison that came up during the churning of

"Kshir Sagar" or the milky ocean. Devotees will be celebrating the auspicious day by fasting and offering special prayers to Lord Shiva by pouring milk and water on the Shiva lingam and adorning it with beautiful flowers. It is said to be beneficial for one's physical and spiritual well being to stay awake and aware throughout the night. On this day, artists from various fields such as classical music and dance perform the whole night. That is the night of Shiva, Maha Shivaratri.



# Devotee Speaks

**T**here was one Shivarathri night, back in my senior year of high school, which really stood out to me. It was the day I truly felt the most connected to with Swami, in the form of Lord Shiva. I was studying for a major midterm or exam coming up, and I had been studying day and night for weeks. I was putting all my energy and concentration into learning the content. On the night of Shivarathri was the night before my final. I had decided to say the Lord's name during my studies, in hopes of being able to study and celebrate Shivarathri. I felt so connected with the Lord and myself during this time. I don't know why I was feeling so linked with the presence of Swami, but the more I focused, the more I felt connected. It felt as if Swami and I had the same goal; as if paying my undivided attention to studying was also equal to saying prayers. That Shivarathri night, I went to bed early to catch some sleep before my paper, and I had the most vivid dream. In my dream, I was sitting in the examination room writing the paper I was preparing for, and I am completely

stumped on a question. This question was beyond what I studied. Suddenly I felt a sharp pain in my back. I turned out, and the Lord Shiva himself was standing behind me, with my spear poking my back. On the spear, He had a paper attached. The paper had the answer to the question I was struggling on. I woke up startling from the dream, and I quickly wrote down what the Lord had showed me. To my utter surprise, it was that exact same question that appeared on my actual examination the next day. Bhajans and prayers definitely take us closer to Swami. But anything done whole-heartedly and honestly will take us just as close.

## Swami and Shivaratri

**M**aha Shivarathri is one of the most important Hindu festivals celebrated in India and around the world. It falls on the 14th day of the Magha month in the Hindu calendar. The name Shivarathri itself, means auspicious night. Shivarathri is celebrated on the day before the new moon. The moon is believed to by a symbolic waning influence on the mind. Therefore, on the Shivarathri night, the night before the new moon, bhajans and prayers are sung so the mind is focused on the Divine during the time the moon least impacts our minds. Singing bhajans and prayers on this day makes to easier to control the mind and direct thoughts towards Swami. Maha Shivarathri is generally celebrated performing Akhanda Bhajans. This day has great value at Prasanthi Nilayam, as Swami has shown numerous miracles. It is on this day that Swami materialized Lingas. The linga is a symbol of the no beginning, no-ends, and no-limits. Swami says we should celebrate the joys of Maharathri through bhajans with friends and family.



# President's Message

Cooksville Sai Centre extends a warm welcome to all to attend Maha Shivarathri bhajans on Monday, March 7, 2016 from 6:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. at our new Centre.

In this context of Maha Shivarathri, let us understand,

**"What does Shiva's cosmic dance mean to us? "**

*The cosmic dance of Shiva symbolizes the interplay of dynamic and static divine energy flow, containing the five principles of eternal energy — creation, preservation, destruction, illusion and emancipation*

The dancing form of Lord Shiva, Nataraja means "King of Dancers". In this form, Shiva dances Anandatandava –the Dance of Bliss-symbolizing the cosmic cycles of creation and dissolution, as well as the daily rhythm and harmony of life, of birth and death. The purpose of this dance, it is believed, is to release humankind from ignorance and the snare of illusion of the "self". Each element composing the Nataraja has particular significance.

The form is encircled in flames representing consciousness and the manifest universe; the endless cycle of birth and death; the fiery ring; He holds a 'Damaru' or a drum in his upper right hand and that signifies the creation of the world through music. The Upper left hand holds a flame (agni), which signifies destruction; The lower right hand shows the abhaya mudra ("fearlessness"). The blessing is believed to bestow protection from both evil and ignorance.

The lower left hand points towards the left foot, which is elegantly raised, signifying the upliftment and liberation. Snakes that stand for

egotism uncoil from his arms, legs and hair. The cobra around Nataraja's waist is the divine force thought to reside within everything.

On his head is a skull, symbolizing Shiva's conquest over death, and the goddess of Ganga also sits on his hairdo. His third eye is symbolic of omniscience, insight and enlightenment.

Shiva's right leg, symbolizes his victory over ignorance. The uplifted left leg, is revealing grace, which releases the mature soul from bondage.

The entire form rests on a lotus pedestal, the symbol of the creative forces of the universe, the inner tranquility countered by vigorous outside activity. Shiva's stoic face represents His neutrality, thus being in balance.

Let us contemplate on this form of Shiva and realize the tranquility amidst the turbulence of life.

In the land of myth, there is no one explanation which goes for all people. For some, the figurine is simply a shape in bronze. For some it is alive and breathing with the dance of particles of the Universe. For some it is a supernatural being. For some else, it is a representation of the Unknowable Un-taint-able Conscious Principle from which all things come, by which all things are sustained and into which all things go.

In the form of Nataraja, Shiva depicts all of these elements.

The dancing Indian deity, representing the cosmic cycles of creation and destruction also depicts the dynamics of subatomic particles, the basis of creation of the universe that is being researched by physicists around the



# Upcoming Events

## March 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Youth Bhajan 7:30-9pm	4 Universal Prayer 7:30-8:30pm	5 SSE 10am-12pm Bhajan Practice 12:15-2pm
6 Youth Bhajan 11-12pm	7 Shivaratri Bhajans 6pm-12am	8	9	10 SSE Children Bhajan 7:30-9pm	11	12 SSE 10am-12pm Sandwich Proj. Gr. 4 Boys
13 Youth Bhajan 11-12pm GBM @ Centre 3-5pm	14	15	16	17 Study Circle & Bhajan 7:30-9pm	18	19 No SSE Classes March Break 'Idea Sai Centre' Workshop @ York 8am-4pm
20 Youth Bhajan 11-12pm Bhajan Practice @ Shivani's Res 3-4pm	21	22	23	24 Gayatri Chant 7-7:30pm Bhajan 7:30-9pm	25 Ladies Meeting 7:30-9pm	26 No SSE Classes Easter  Narayan Seva
27 Youth Bhajan 11-12pm Erin Meadow Senior Home 3:30-4:05pm	28	29	30	31 Bhajan 7:30-9pm		

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 S H H C B K G H A M A N N M U  
 O W Y F V V L X B S S D T E G  
 H K L M E X I Q N F H S G N P  
 E I J A D L N M I X A P J I P  
 K G H N A P G E O F N T S G Q  
 A Z P T H W A I O N K X K H Y  
 I I U R A S M C X G A M M T D  
 L K E A M V V I P S R Z O D U  
 A F Q S J F R O B M A H S O T  
 S X F X M A V A D N A H T T N  
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 A V I H S F N O I A F O B F M  
 B H V G O N S C T J C H M N V  
 C O D L F U Z E J Z G G M K F

## Game Corner

Find all the words below:

DEVOTION	NAMAH
FAST	NIGHT
KAILASH	PARVATHI
LINGAM	SHAMBO
MAHADEV	SHANKARA
MANTRAS	SHIVA
MOON	THANDAVAM