



SAI DHARMAM

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Cooksville



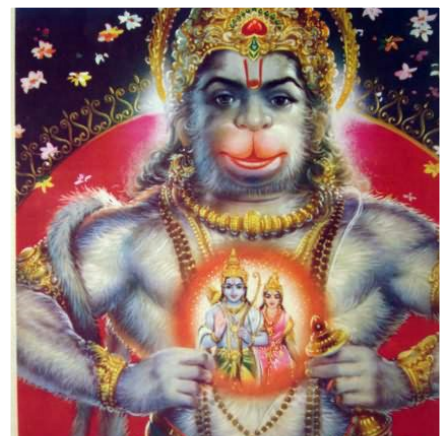
What is Divinity?

The bridge to Lanka is complete, the army is ready, and Sita is waiting. But first, Lord Shiva's blessings need to be invoked for the upcoming war against Ravana. So, Rama calls for Hanuman, ever the steadfast devotee, sending him up to Mount Kailash to bring back a Lingam to install before the troops take their first step over the bridge. However, that was hours ago.... the priests are now nervous, the auspicious time for the first step is passing, and Hanuman's figure is nowhere in sight... (Just so you know, this is a story about Unity. It has a lesson about Divinity that might come as a surprise. Will you guess it?) Rama hastily bends down and forms a Lingam of sand. It is accepted by the anxious priests and the ceremony commences. Only then

does Hanuman finally return, with a tiny stone Lingam in hand. He is crestfallen - he flew with far too little faith and far too little speed. Still, he is tired and angry that it was all for naught. But ever the steadfast devotee, he tosses aside his anger just as he carelessly tosses aside the Lingam, where its short trajectory is lost to all but Rama's discerning eyes. Hanuman helps where he can, the ceremony ends, and the first of the troops begins marching. (Now, Hanuman has made his mistake. Did you catch it? Rama did. No, not timeliness, not anger. Here's a hint: something Swami says is that since man regards only the material world as real, he fails to see Divinity in all forms. Can you see how this applies to Hanuman here? Continued on page three).

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- God's Greatest Bhakta learns an important lesson
- Swami's words on Lord Shiva
- A Devotee's favourite part of Darshan



Shivaratri

Shivoham, Shivovam...I am Shiva, I am Shiva.

This year, Shivarathri falls on February 13th, 2018. Shiva-raathri translates to auspicious night and is special because it is on this night that the mind can be made to lose its identification with man, and redirected towards prayer and the eternal divine. According to the scriptures, the moon is the presiding deity of the mind. As the moon wanes during the first 14 nights of the lunar cycle, the moon's control over the mind is also reduced. As such, the mind becomes freer to wander. By engaging in activities such as prayer, worship, and singing praises of the lord, we achieve more success on our spiritual journey. This is why these 14 days; *chaturdasis* are also called *Shivaraathris* (auspicious nights).

Celebrations during this period include offerings of cold water and Bael (Bilva) leaves to the Lingam, fasting all day and night, and drawing the *Tripundra* of Shiva. *Tripundra* refers to the three horizontal stripes of holy ash (*vibuthi*) as drawn on the lingam or on the foreheads

of Lord Shiva worshippers. The three stripes symbolise spiritual knowledge, purity and penance, as well as represent the three eyes of Lord Shiva.

Our beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, "*Shiva is worshipped with the three-leaved Bilva, for, He is immanent in the three worlds, in the three phases of time, in the three attributes of nature. He removes the three types of grief; He has no basis outside Him; He is the source of bliss; He is the embodiment of the sweetness and efficacy of nectar. Since every being is Shiva-Swaruupa (of the nature of Shiva) – for without Shiva, it is mere 'Shava' (corpse) – man has to live up to that divine status.*"

Baba also says that Shiva should not be sought after on the peak of some mountain, nor in any special place. Rather, just as merit and sin are present in each of our acts, Shiva is "*present in every thought, word and deed, for he is the energy, the power and the intelligence that is behind each of them*". Baba's lesson to all of us on Shivratri is such;

"Shiva is in all beings and all things. He is the inner motivator. Be aware of this always; do not cause pain to any one, do not harm or injure anyone, or hurt his self-respect. Love all alike, cultivate tolerance and spread brotherliness."

Shivoham, Shivovam...I am Shiva, I am Shiva.



Devotee Speaks

Swami says, “God is Love and can be won only through the cultivation and exercise of Love. He cannot be trapped by any trick; He yields Grace only when His commands are followed – command to love all, serve all.”

Ever since I started SSE, I have cultivated the importance of serving and loving others through devotion and divinity. His omnipresence and blessings have always been with me, and still are. Swami has always been my well wisher, father, mother, and guru. In every activity I do, I pray to Him before executing the task to the best of my abilities.

My grandmother was a great devotee of Swami and had always visited Puttaparthi to celebrate numerous occasions with him like Thai Pongal and His birthday. She spread his glory to me by always telling me stories about Swami and miracles that he's done to showcase his love and divinity.

In 2005, I was about 7 years old when I visited Puttaparthi with my family, and had the most unforgettable experience in my life. Seeking blessings from Swami and

attending his darshan were always something I wanted to experience. Whenever we attended darshan, I would sing along with my grandmother and mother and seek blessings from Swami.

On my birthday, we went to participate in the early morning darshan. As usual we sang bhajans however, this time I really wanted to have Swami look at me and bless me. It was towards closing prayers and Swami was getting ready to leave. As he got into the car, I was looking at him from across the darshan hall, He raised His hands and looked at everyone with love and blessed everyone from his heart. This moment always comes to my mind when we sing closing prayers and never fails to give me goosebumps. Sometimes I would tear up unknowingly feeling Swami being a part of me and giving his love through my heart.

In His teachings, the most prominent message he focuses on teaching us Seva (service) and the attitude of 'giving' to others.

When we love all and serve all, we tend to

understand the divinity and Swami's message. When God's grace develops in us, we are strengthened beyond all previous experience. Let all the days of living be a continuous offering of Love.



We are always in the need of searching for God, but we never acknowledge that He is within us. Swami says, we are all His children, and should strive to realize this truth. We should all have faith that every human being is an embodiment of the Divine. Love all. Serve all. The best way to God is to LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL.



What is Divinity?

(Continued from page 1) Later, while walking, Rama stumbles across some stones on the beach. He murmurs that it is a small black one that especially upset his balance. Hanuman, comes forth offering to pull out the offending stone. He uses all his strength but is unable to even pick it up. But then Rama steps forth and lifts it gently, lovingly, easily – it is the tiny stone Lingam – and says, “*Know that all names and all forms are mine.*” Now in this lesson, Rama wanted to teach Hanuman that there was no difference between Him and the Lingam that he tossed so carelessly aside. He wanted to teach Hanuman that both Vishnu and Shiva should be adored alike. Likewise, Swami reiterates that “*whatever one's religion may be, everyone should cultivate respect for other faiths. One who does not have such*

an attitude of tolerance and respect for other religions is not a true follower of his own religion.” Just as each limb is as important as any other in the effective functioning of the body, so also is each individual in Rama's army or in your very own society. Once the Truth of this Unity is recognized, Swami says, there will be awareness that the world is one family, all following one religion – the Religion of Man. It is important to see the essential unity of all religions: Unity is Divinity. If you are genuinely devoted to Swami, you will see his Divinity in images of both Shiva and Rama, within the sacred messages of both the Torah and Quran, and within the walls of both Churches and Temples. And most importantly, within the mindset which unites them all – you.



Game

Maha Shivaratri



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



Fasts	Lord Shiva	Parvati
Fourteenth Day	Meditation	Prayers
Lingam	Night of Worship	Shivaratri



Bhajan



Arunachala Shiva Arunachala Shiva Arunachala Shiva
Aruna Shiva
Akshaya Linga Atma Linga
Tejonmaya Vighraha Linga
Iha Para Sukha Dayaka Esha (Sai) Iha Para Sukha Dayaka
Om Namah Shivaya Shivaya Namah Om (3)

Meaning:

O Shiva, you are the resident of Arunachala (place) and in the form of imperishable Atma Linga. An effulgent symbol of Shiva which bestows peace and happiness in this and the higher world. O Shiva salutation to thee, the embodiment of Primordial sound.