

8. Shiva in shava

Today, when from the Himaalayan ranges down to Kanyaakumaari Cape, the entire land is resounding with the declaration, *Shivoham, Shivoham*, it is indeed your good fortune that you have been able to come here and be with Me. On all such days set apart by tradition for the contemplation of one's innate Divinity, you must examine your own equipment and decide on what to discard and what to retain. All qualities, attitudes, habits that remind you of the Absolute into which you have to merge, have to be retained and developed; all that draw you away into the relative world of Time and Space, have to be discarded or at least recognised as having but temporary value.

All the joy you crave for, is in you; but, like a man who has vast riches in the iron chest, but, who has no idea where the key is, you suffer. With proper directions, dwelling upon them in the silence of meditation, it is possible to secure the key, open the chest and be rich in joy.

The flames of anger, pride, hatred, envy are more devastating than other fires; they arise in the mind stealthily and in spurts; they are ever demanding more and more to feed upon. Fire is called *anala* in the Geetha, for *anala* means, "not enough!" Fire never says, "Enough" or "I am satisfied." You dread fire when it leaps at a distance; what then is to be said when it is inside your very self? How to put out these awful flames? Well, *Sanaathana Dharma* (the ancient spiritual code) has certain extinguishers tested by experience and guaranteed by sages. They are *Sathya, Dharma, Shaanthi* and *Prema*. Saturate your heart with these and you are rendered fire-proof.

You seek joy and earn pain

Like the frog caught and held in the mouth of a cobra which, unaware of its fate, flicks its tongue at a fly, you too are unaware of Death which holds you in its fangs. You seek joy and earn pain, hunt for pleasure and bag grief. You attach yourselves to the body that decays and let go the God that lasts. Of course, a thousand wise men have poured this into your ears, but their words have fallen on hard ground and 'refused to sprout. Had they fallen on the soft soil of your heart and been watered by the tears of contrition, certainly they would have germinated and grown. A clean Consciousness is as a lamp; pour into it the oil of Grace; place in it the wick of Self-control; keep in position the chimney of *Naamasmarana*, so that the gusts of Joy and Grief might not scotch the flame. Light the lamp, with some *Mahaavaakya* (Great Statement), like *Aham Brahmaasmi* (Self is Brahman) or *Thath thwam asi* (Thou art That). Then, you will not only have Light; you will be a source of Light.

The Flag I am hoisting now is a call to light your own lamps. The symbol on it is here on the ground, represented elaborately and clearly for all to see and learn. These concentric circles round the Lotus Pillar mark the stages of the progress of the spiritual aspirant to the Goal. He has to pull himself across the sandy waste of Desire, up the blood-red steps of Anger and Hatred, through the cool green spaces of Bliss, to attain the vast silence of *Yoga* (union with God). There he must get well established in meditation, like an erect Pillar. You will notice that there are six rings on that *Yoga-danda* or Pillar in the centre of the Circle. They are the *Chakras* (energy centres), up which the *Kundalini Shakthi* (the Serpent Power) of the *saadhaka* passes towards the Goal. And what is the Goal? The blossoming of the Lotus of the Heart and the emanation of *jnaana-jyothi* (light and wisdom) from it, consuming all delusion and making the Individual Splendour merge in the Universal Splendour.

Three gates of Prashaanthi Nilayam

You will also notice that the Prashaanthi Nilayam has three gates but, no wall around, or even fence! Some sage has asked' For Him who has the Universe as His residence, which is the front door? Here too, we have entrances everywhere, nothing to keep people out! The first gate is *Thamoguna* (quality of inertia) and if you enter it, you are drawn by the garden, the decorations, the festoons, and the music into stepping across the *Rajoguna* (quality of activity) gate, and pass on to the Hall, where *Sathwaguna* (quality of poise and serenity) prevails. There is a meaning in whatever I do or speak; I never indulge in significance-less acts. These gates too have a lesson for you.

Do not treat a holy day like Shivarathri as a holiday, set apart for picnic, cinema, card-game, revelry, rivalry and fun. *The rishis* (sages) fixed these days in the calendar for the contemplation of God and the service of God in man, for the removal of the weeds of vices and weakening habits. Contemplate the *Aathma-linga* (spirit of the soul), the *Jyothi-linga* (the effulgent form), which this day emerges from Me; be convinced that the *Linga* is in every one of you, for it is a mark of the Shiva that resides in the *shava* (body shell). Allow the vision of the *Aathmalinga* to enter into your inner consciousness and elevate it into Divine heights; do not waste the few days that you are bent on spending at the Prashaanthi Nilayam, into days of hectic chatter, vain disputation, idle curiosity or restless wandering! learn the discipline of the place and limit your talk, your association, your comfort, so that you may live in thoughts Divine, not merely in this atmosphere but later, in your own homes. Take delight in the *shaanthi* (peace) of this place; do not disturb it by thought, word or deed. Utilise this rare chance, this unique opportunity, secured by the merit of many births, for self-improvement.

Prashaanthi Nilayam: Mahaashivaraathri: 8 a.m.

Flag Hoisting Ceremony, 1-3-1965

*Each one from ego
takes his birth and
clad in ego dies
and comes and goes,
gives and receives
and earns and spends,
and deals in lies
or speaks the truth,
in ego all the while.
Those who do away with their ego
attain salvation.
SHRI SATHYA SAI*