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Mysore Gurupujas - 2013

10th March, 2013 - Discourse 3

The book "Ashram" gives us the instructions which when followed enable us to enter the subtle Ashrams present within us and also in the subtle planes of the planet.

In 1993, I gave a series of discourses in Buenos Aires on "How to enter an Ashram?" and it inspired many and later after 18 years people started asking me again on the same topic and so a book was published taking contents of those discourses. When released for the first time, it did not come out as well as I expected. So I, brothers Guruprasad and Ramana together worked on it and again brought it out in a better manner. Now that book is being released again.

On this festival of Maha Shiva Rathri, it is a belief that Shiva descends on this night every year. This is a promise made by Lord Shiva that he would descend onto earth on this day and it is a good opportunity for us to orient towards him and reach him today. We cannot go to him but when he is coming to us, we should not miss the opportunity. Shiva promised that he would give any boon on this day when he is worshipped with devotion and intent. He gave this boon to the humanity in a holy place called Somnath when Shiva took to an avatar as needed. We have a Jyothirlinga temple in Somnath.

Wherever Shiva took to an avatar and performed some grand act, that place is filled with his presence and there is a Shiva Linga present at each of those places.

For Shiva to be born as an avatar in Somnath (Soma = cosmic moon principle), moon is the reason. Moon has the 27 constellations as his wives. The 27 constellations are said to be the daughters of Daksha Prajapati (Patriarch). Moon is very beautiful and all the 27 constellations get attracted towards him and marry him. So he spends a day in each of their houses (constellations). Today he is in the house of Dhanishta constellation. This adds more significance to the Shiva Rathri this year. Today the constellation of Dhanishta will be blooming with more light.

Out of the 27 wives, Moon loved Rohini the most. At the time of birth of Krishna, moon wanted Rohini to get fame and comes into Rohini's house in a hurry. So Rohini got fame with the birth of Krishna taking place when moon was in her house.

Moon gives the least importance to constellation Revathi. So Rohini and Revathi are the 2 extremes to moon. This is the story as given in Puranas. It is actually to signify the nature of thoughts that come to our mind when moon is in that constellation. If you observe, people born

in Revathi constellation are very mild by nature. Moon is our mind. He is present in the mind of the Cosmic Person. So the presence of moon in a constellation when a child is born determines the nature of the thoughts that dominate his mind.

So moon is active when in Rohini and very mild when in Revathi. But Revathi bears that nature of moon with all patience. That is the basic nature of women. They have lot of patience. Men do not have such patience. Rohini is always very happy but Revathi feels sad at times.

There is the youngest daughter of Daksha by name Sathi who notices the sadness in Revathi and brings it to the notice of her father. Daksha is some who has immense capability and at the same time he has lot of pride. He looks down upon everyone including his father Brahma. There is no one who has more ego than him.

First the other daughters think if this issue is to be taken to him but finally Sathi tells the issue to her father. Daksha gets very angry and summons the moon. It is like facing a person with lot of ego. Daksha is ego while moon is mind. Moon rarely faces Daksha as he does not like the speech and actions of Daksha.

Moon is the son of Atri and Anasuya. Durvasa and Dattatreya are the brothers of moon. They were all born to Sage Atri. Moon is the one who bestows pleasantness to all. Atri is a great sage and moon was born to such a sage. He meets his father regularly but not his father-in-law.

Daksha conducts an annual festival. So moon had to attend that festival and meet Daksha in that meet. The stories are narrated very well in the Puranas. We should study them.

So Daksha questions moon. Daksha says to the moon "You are not seeing all my daughters equally." Moon says "Seeing equally is different from loving equally." I am seeing all equally. I take care of everyone equally. But I have special love towards Rohini and not so much towards Revathi. I cannot give a reason for that.

Same this is with us. We cannot say why we like something more to another. There are no causes for some special likes. Our logic does not work there. Where there is pure love and pure experience, logic ceases to be there. It is something above the experience of our mind. It cannot be explained.

Daksha does not like the answer and he says "you should love everyone equally. Now you should love Revathi more." Moon says "You do not know love." Generally a man of ego does not know love. It is said "Love is the antidote for power."

So that was the case with Daksha. He gets very angry and curses the moon to die. All the daughters get shocked with this word of Daksha and question his action. But even then Daksha does not concede due to his ego.

Even other Prajapatis question his action. They say "you have done something which will not only affect your family but also the whole creation." Daksha has so much ego that he says "I will create another moon by doing a ritual."

So all the Prajapatis gather along with Daksha and moon was also present in a dying condition. They did not know what is to be done. Finally the other Prajapatis take an initiative to invite Maharshi Markandeya to that place and on his instruction, together they chant the Mrutyunjaya Mantra.

Shiva appears at that place and puts the moon on his head and says that he cannot be touched by death. Shiva also tells to moon "though you need not fear of death. Due to your biased nature, you have to face waxing and waning. So we have the moon growing bigger for 15 days and smaller for 15 days.

In this manner, Shiva graces the moon and that moon gains the presence of Shiva all the time and becomes immortal from then on. Like the moon, we can also be graced by Shiva by worshipping him.

After this incident, Maha vishnu, Brahma and other intelligences appear at that place and together they celebrate on that night with Maha Shiva dancing. Maha Vishnu says "Tonight is a grand occasion and you should grant a boon to all the beings in creation on this night."

Shiva grants a boon that whosoever worshipped him with all devotion on this night; he would grant his presence to that person and grant any boon that he wants. So this is how Shiva Rathri festival became very significant.

This descend of Shiva happened due to the chanting of Mrutyunjaya Mantra and we have this mantra due to Markandeya. We should also recollect him on this occasion.

Markandeya, as a child, does immense worship of Lord Shiva and he was destined to die at a very young age. When the time of his departure comes, Yama sends his soldiers to pull that child out of that body. But the rope of death, when put on Markandeya, bounces back. None of the soldiers of Yama could bring that child. So Yama himself had to go. He goes on his vehicle and throws the rope of death. It again bounces back. He tries so for 2 times. When he tries for the 3rd time, the rope not only bounces, a trident appears and hits him on his heart. He realizes that it is the trident of Shiva. Yama, who doesn't know fear, fears on seeing the trident.

Then Shiva appears to Yama and tells "Should you not see the reason for the rope of death coming back so many times?" Yama salutes to Shiva and tells "My Lord! I am just doing my duty. It is time that this child has to die. I am doing nothing wrong. It is as per the dharma (eternal law) in creation.

Then Shiva tells to Yama "Remember! I am adding a new dharma. Markandeya will stay in the body as long as he wants. Any devotee of mine, until he wants to depart from the body, you cannot touch him. You can remove him from the body when he wants to depart."

A devotee of Shiva is like a ripened fruit while just holds onto the tree and not stuck to it. A devotee of Shiva is one who wants to fulfill his life and become immortal by separating himself from the body. Only such a one is a devotee of Shiva.

The same principle was given by Master CVV. One who aspires to become immortal by working in the path prescribed by me, he will have an elongated life to pursue the path. It is a promise of Master CVV.

The same thing was proclaimed by Shiva for the first time in creation. Though the eternal law states that everyone should die but there are exceptions for devotees. This is a new law prescribed by Shiva.

So Markandeya becomes a Master of death, a Master who has complete knowledge of death and how to overcome it. The Mrutyunjaya Mantra was given to attain immortality. Attaining immortality is one of the important goals in Yogic path. Yoga leads you to immortality.

So Maha Shiva, when worshipped with devotion, would bestow us immortality. All those who worshipped like that are now working as Masters of Wisdom in creation and they help us to attain an immortal state like that. Markandeya was the first one to attain immortality in creation. He has shown the path to many others. We should also follow the same path.

The Yoga of Master CVV has a close relation to the path of Markandeya. The 2 things promised by Master CVV are immortality first and then Self Realisation.

In this manner we can discuss many grand acts of Lord Shiva.

When Ganga was coming down into creation through the feet of the Cosmic Person, there came a question as to who can take the force of flow of Ganga. People who took bath in the river Ganga know the force with which it flows. People catch chains while bathing in Ganga as it is very difficult to stand in that flow. The flow that we see is actually slowed down twice earlier.

Ganga came down to earth due to the worship of Bhagiratha. Pleased by his worship, Ganga says that he would come to earth but the earth cannot take the force of Ganga. So Bhagiratha had to find a way to restrict that force of flow of Ganga. The Sages tell him to worship Shiva. Bhagiratha requests Shiva to restrict the force of Ganga. Shiva agrees to take the force first and then to allow it to flow in a restricted manner. Ganga is actually the flowing consciousness at the cosmic level which flows with immense energy.

Bhagiratha conveyed the same to Ganga. Ganga questions "can Shiva take my flow if I fall on his head?" She had her own doubts. Bhagaratha says "Shiva promised that he would." So Ganga prepares to descend onto the head of Shiva.

Shiva gets prepared by opening his hair and once Ganga descends, he closes his hair in such a manner that it became water proof. Ganga almosts gets stuck in the hair of Shiva. She could not come out even as a leak. In this manner, the ego of Ganga was brought down and she becomes a

great devotee of Shiva. Later she even requests Shiva to marry her. How is marriage possible? It is a place of transit and she has to go to earth. So Shiva grants her a status as his wife.

She then descends onto earth with a force equivalent to 1/10000 of the original. Shiva holds her in such a manner. In this manner, the wish of Bhagiratha was fulfilled. With her flow, she purifies the earth and finally reaches the ocean.

So the stories of Maha Shiva are such. In the olden days, we used to have study of Puranas happening in all the temples for about 2 hours daily. That used to be our tradition. We lost it for sometime but now that is again being restored with discourses coming up in many television channels. So people who cannot read Puranas, they can at least watch related movies or hear them when someone narrates.

So on this grand occasion, if we recollect the stories of Shiva, we will surely be graced by his presence. The presence of Shiva is very auspicious. We have many comforts in worship of Shiva as there are no rules and regulations. Shiva gives more importance to devotion than to rules & regulations.

We need not worry if we cannot chant Rudra Sukta. We can just recollect Shiva and perform water ritual. That is sufficient for his presence to grace us. You can perform worship Shiva the way you like. Only devotion matters, nothing else. There are also dacoits who worshipped Shiva and became his devotees. There are also many Rakshasas who are devotees of Shiva. He will surely grace us if you worship him with all devotion. He will grant us any boon with questions unasked.

We are lucky to gather and recollect the stories of Shiva this day. By coincidence, we had Gurupujas and Shiva Rathri falling on the same day. May Shiva grace us all and may he bless us all in all our endeavors.

I will tell one thing. Shiva is more pleased if you worship him in the evening hours than in the morning hours. So for people who cannot wake up early in the morning, they can worship Shiva in the evening. Shiva knows that we cannot wake up very early in the morning :) So he allowed us to worship in the evening. That is why, if we can complete our activities an hour before sunset and take a bath and worship Shiva, he would grace us very much. It is also advised to visit a temple of Shiva in the evening hours.

Today we worshipped him more by recollecting his stories than performing the water ritual. Both are equivalent. Do not think it is good only if we perform water ritual 11 times on Shiva Rathri. The recollection of stories of Shiva is equivalent to performing 11 times water ritual on this day.

So close this day of yours in recollection of Shiva and he will surely grace you. Hope Shiva graces all of us.

-Swasthi