

SHIV RATRI

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If we compile a list of festivals celebrated by each community or in each country, the list would run into quite a number of pages and there would be quite a wide variety of them to all. But we can notice one factor which is common to all. It is that all of them are illustrated in honor of some great corporeal ancestor. However, a peculiarity of Shiva -Ratri is that it is celebrated to commemorate the event of the divine advent of Him who is not corporeal, whose figure has no corporeal appearance as of a human being or a deity but who is of the form of a point of light (of which Shiva Linga is a gross symbol) and who, being self-luminous, is known as Jyoti Linga

UNIQUE NAME

Shiva-Ratri is unique not only because of the form of the person in whose sacred memory it is celebrated, but the name 'Shiva' also is unique and so is 'Shiva-Ratri. The word Shiva is an attributive, name as it refers to God for what it means: 'One who does well to all' or One who is 'good personified. Evidently, Shiva-Ratri is the most significant festival as it relates to the advent of God Himself. Other festivals, such as 'Buddha Nirvanotsava, refer to the day of Buddha's relinquishing his mortal coil and attaining what his followers call the 'Nirvana' -liberation. This implies, though indirectly, that Buddha was a human being who was formerly in the bondage of actions but who worked out his way to final emancipation, which means that Buddha was not an ever liberated being or God. Similarly 'Rishi Bodha Utsava' which is celebrated to commemorate Rishi Dayanand's attainment of knowledge also clearly points to the fact that Rishi Dayanand was a human being who made efforts towards the goal of enlightenment, knowledge and teaching yoga. The words 'Shiva Ratri' do not refer to the night but the name Shiva refers to one who is eternally knowledgeable and who does good to others by bestowing upon them the sacred attainment of Liberation or knowledge. They point to God Shiva's advent into this world when there was utter degeneration of moral values in this world and people were body conscious and spiritually ignorant.

Why Does Shiva Descend into This World?

Some people ask: God can reveal knowledge by prena, by goading, inspiring or prompting the mind of men; what reason is there to believe that He incarnates?

Those who put this question. Easily forget that at the end of Kaliyuga. The Iron Age-all people are body conscious and they have one or the other of the six well-known evils entrenched in their mind and they have no precise and accurate knowledge of God. As a such, they cannot have prompting or inspirations of God. In order to make soul conscious and to establish those in yoga God Himself has to descend from His supreme abode (Param Dhama or Brahm-Loke) on a human being. He makes a human his corporeal medium so that he can reveal the a scetie knowledge by using his oral organ He does not constantly and, at all hours, dwell in that human being's bod.; He makes it His camp office, so to say, for some brief parts and reveals the unknown but essential knowledge for a holy and happy life This unique advent of God has Gita, as Divya Janam' (Divine Birth) of God. In the Gita, God says 'My birth is supernatural: I am not born in an ordinary way, I hold prakriti under my control and take a human body as a mere medium."

The word 'Ratri' also is significant. In spiritual terminology, it refers to darkness prevailing over the mind. 'Ratri' does not mean 'night' in the ordinary sense of the term; it means: Ignorance Tamoguna. So the festival is commemorative of the advent of God, the father of all souls, to remove the darkness of ignorance and devil Karmas

The greatest of Festivals taken in this light, Shiva-Ratri is the greatest of all festivals. But due to ignorance prevailing to-day, people consider it to be a sectional festival. One of the reasons for this is that many people do not understand the difference between Shiva & Shankar So, they consider it to be a festival of the Hindus or of those who worship only Shankara. Others believe that God is omnipresent and therefore they do not consider Shivlinga to be the symbol of Almighty God-the Supreme Soul. Rather, they have wrong notions about Shivlinga because some foreigners have raised many misconceptions about this.

However if one gives a patient hearing it can be proved beyond doubt that God is not Omnipresent. He abides in Brahmlok. He is a point of Light and is the transcendental Father of all souls. In fact, there was a time when He was regarded by followers of all major religions as having this form. All the History bears an indelible mark of the fact that, once upon a time, Shiva was regarded all over the world, as the Supreme Soul. If people realise these truths, they would celebrate Shivratri as the holiest and the highest of all festivals.