

## **Dark and Light's Qualities**

Darkness

Dark Feelings/Maya – Ego, Misery, Fear and confusion

Light – knowing the truth, knowing reality, happiness

## **Background Reading**

Deepavali means "the array of lights." "Thamasomaa jyotirgamaya" (Lead me from darkness to light) is an Upanishadic prayer: This means that where there is darkness light is needed. What is this darkness? Sorrow is one form of darkness. Peacelessness is another. Loss is another. Disappointment is one form of darkness. Misery is yet another. Lack of enthusiasm is another. All these are different forms of darkness. To get rid of the darkness of sorrow, you have to light the lamp of happiness. To dispel the darkness of disease, you have to install the light of health. To get over the darkness of losses and failures, you have to usher in the light of prosperity.

Looking at the Deepavali festival from the scientific point of view, it should be noted that at one time in the distant past, our ancestors lived in the Arctic region (the polar region). In this region, darkness prevailed for six months. The sun appears on Mesha Sankranthi day (the sun entering the Aries sign of the Zodiac). The sun sets in this region on Tula Sankranthi day (when the sun enters Libra). In the movement between these two signs, there is an interval of six months. After the sun sets in Libra, the dark half-year starts.

Today is Chathurdasi (the fourteenth day) in the month of Karthik. It is Amavasya (New Moon day). The month is called Kaumudi. The people in the polar region used to start lighting their lamps from this day. The lighting of the lamp is not without other significance. As they would be in darkness for a long period, they described the lamp that was lit as Nithyajyothi (the perennial light).

It was on Deepavali day that Sri Rama's coronation took place after his victorious return to Ayodhya from Lanka vanquishing Ravana and his Rakshasa brood. For a long period Ayodhya had been plunged in darkness when Rama was in exile in the forest. In the absence of the effulgent Rama, Ayodhya was a city of darkness. The forests were filled with light. The return of Rama was hailed by the people of Ayodhya as the return of divine effulgence and hence they celebrated the event by the lighting of lamps everywhere.

Nor is that all. Today's festival is marked by other significant features. This is the day on which the Lord in His Vamana incarnation sent the Emperor Bali to the Nether World after He got the promise of three feet of ground (measured by the Lord's foot) from Bali.

Vamana (as the incarnation of Vishnu) used the gift of three feet of land to put down the Ahamkara (egoism) of Bali.

Deepavali is a festival which is designed to celebrate the suppression of the Ego by the Higher Self. Man is plunged in the darkness of ignorance and has lost the power of discrimination between the permanent and the evanescent. When the darkness of ignorance caused by Ahamkara (the ego-feeling) is dispelled by the light of Divine knowledge, the effulgence of the Divine is experienced. Deepavali is also the day on which Emperor Vikramaditya ascended the throne.

If the darkness of ignorance is to be dispelled, man needs a container, oil, wick and a matchbox corresponding to what an external lamp needs. For man, the heart is the container. The mind is the wick. Love is the oil and vairagya (sacrifice) is the matchbox. When you have these four, Atma-jyothi (the Divine flame of the Spirit) shines effulgently. When the light of the Spirit is aflame, the Light of Knowledge appears and dispels the darkness of ignorance.

The inner significance of Deepavali is to lead man from darkness to light. Man is perpetually plunged in darkness. Every time he is enveloped in darkness, he should light a lamp that is ever shining within him. Carry that lamp wherever you go. It will light your path wherever you may be.

#### [Divine Discourse: November 5, 1991](#)

All festivals of Bharat have an inner divine significance. In Bharat the festivals are celebrated to prove the immanent divinity in humanity. This day's festival, Deepavali, teaches a sacred inner meaning to humanity. No other element in this world is as significant as light. It is the light that shows us the way dispelling the darkness. It is because of the light that man is able to attend to his daily duties.

The flame of a lamp has two significant qualities. One is to banish darkness; the other is a continuous upward movement. Even if a lamp is kept in a pit, the flame is directed upwards. The ancients have taught that the upward movement of the flame denotes the path to wisdom and the path to divinity. However, the external light can dispel only the external darkness, but not the darkness of ignorance in man.

When Narakasura was killed all those who suffered under him were overjoyed. Having led a life of darkness till then, both internally and externally, they celebrated the occasion by lighting lamps. There is significance in lighting lamps. The flame of one lamp can light the whole array of lamps. That one lamp symbolizes the Paramjyothi (supreme effulgence). The others symbolize the Jeevana Jyothis (light in individual selves). Deepavali is celebrated in order to teach this truth to the world. People celebrate this festival by bursting firecrackers signifying the victory of good over evil.

The inner meaning underlying the Bharatiya festivals should be rightly understood. On each festival day people have a sacred bath early in the morning and wear new clothes,

keep their houses and surroundings clean. Thus the festivals teach us the importance of internal and external cleanliness. The Vedas declare, "Anthar Bahischa Tat Sarvam Vyapya Narayana Stithaha", God is present within and around. So one has to be pure both internally and externally. It is the water that helps to keep your body clean. But it is love that keeps your heart clean. You should celebrate the festivals in full realization of their inner significance.

### [Divine Discourse: October 19, 1998](#)

Before you take your Padmasana and before you sit on the wooden plank, have a small Jyoti, candlelight, in front of you. You look at that Jyoti, the light, well with open eyes. After one minute, close your eyes; after you have closed the eyes, feel that the light that you had seen before closing your eyes is in your heart. You get the feeling that inside the lotus of your heart, right at the centre is this particular Jyoti. If you are not able to picture the Jyoti in the lotus of your heart and get that feeling, then open your eyes, look at the light again, close your eyes and try to picture it inside your heart once again. After that, you think of it and you picture to yourself, fix it in your mind and feel that particular Jyoti is put in the centre of this lotus. After that, you take this Jyoti from the centre of the heart and move it to each part of your body; bring it to your neck; from the neck bring it to your mouth; from the mouth bring it to your hand; from the hand take it to your leg; from the leg take it to your ear; take it to your eyes; take it to your head; from the head bring it out all around you; when you have brought it out of your head, you imagine that you have taken this Jyoti and given it to those who are related to you; those who are affectionate to you and your friends. Not only that, spread the light even amongst your enemies. After that, you picture to yourself that you have taken this Jyoti and given it to all the birds, the beasts and everything around you.

Where this Jyoti or light has moved, there will be no darkness. It is in this context that all our Upanishads have said "Thamaso maa Jyotirgamaya". Since this Jyoti has reached your eyes, you will no longer have any bad vision or bad sight. Because this Jyoti has gone to your ears, you will not hear evil. Because this Jyoti has reached your tongue, out of your tongue will no longer come any bad words. Since this Jyoti has reached your head, evil thoughts should no longer go into your head nor will they arise in you. Since the same Jyoti has gone into your heart, bad ideas should no longer enter your heart. Since the same Jyoti has also touched your feet, your feet should no longer walk into bad places. Because to your hands, the same Jyoti has reached, your hands will no longer engage themselves in bad acts. The word bad is synonymous with darkness. In truth if you have allowed this Jyoti to spread everywhere, there is no room anywhere for this darkness or bad to persist. If, while engaged in such Dhyana or meditation, you are still doing something bad, it simply means that this Jyoti has not reached that particular organ which is doing bad.

By this meditation, not only bad traits which are in you will have been removed, but in their place noble and sacred ideas and sacred actions would have entered; not only that, you would be able to get the glorious Darshan of Eswara or you would experience Advaita, the experience of oneness, because the light that is in you is present in all human beings, because the light that is present in you is present in all the birds and animals, the light is everywhere. By realising this, you will also have established the truth of the

saying "Geetavakyam Idam Dharmam". Some of you may get a doubt and say to yourselves "Well, we like Rama, He is our God; we like Krishna, He is our God; we like Swami, He is our God. Why should we not take and meditate on one of these forms? Why should we have a light in front of us for meditation?" But a shape or a particular form is not a permanent thing. That is a changing thing; that is also a fleeting thing. It is not right that you should put your concentration on something which will change, which is not permanent. You must have something which does not change. That is why you have to take the Jyoti. Having the Jyoti which does not change, in your meditation you can certainly put into it, the Roopa or form which you want and which you want to pray to. There is nothing wrong in doing that. In this form or Roopa, there is always a growth and decline. On the contrary, if we have a Jyoti, or a light in one place, it does not matter how many people may come and light up their lamps from this one Jyoti, this Jyoti is not going to diminish or lose anything. This first Jyoti, the source, is called the Akhanda Jyoti. Those who come and light up their lamps are called Jeevan Jyoties. So many Jeevan Jyoties, all of them have started from one single Akhanda Jyoti only. By putting this Jyoti in our heart, in each individual Jeeva's heart, the result of the meditation will be that this single Jeevan Jyoti will go and merge itself in the Akhanda Jyoti and will teach you the nature of Advaita or the oneness of this world and the entire creation.

## **Meditation**

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