

Amma on Mahashivaratri

“God is watching over us 365 days a year, but Shivaratri is the one night wherein we are asked to sacrifice and watch over God, taking a vow of fasting and maintain vigil at night. God is always present within us-wide awake. We, on the other hand, are fast asleep. This is why we are unable to recognize the divine presence. All the different experiences of life are just like the dreams we experience in our sleep...Food and sleep are the most important things to us. No one is ready to give them up just like that. Only when we develop a liking for remembering God, will we be able to fast and forgo sleep without suffering.”

“Staying awake does not mean just merely keeping the eyes open, but means maintaining awareness of one's thoughts, words and actions. Ignorance disappears with the dawning of such awareness. Darkness is not something that can be physically removed. But when we let in light, darkness automatically ceases to exist. In the same way, when true knowledge awakens, the darkness of ignorance disappears. Then we awaken to eternal light.”

“When the demons and the gods churned the ocean in order to obtain amrita, the nectar of immortality, the first thing to come to the surface was a deadly poison. It is said that Lord Shiva drank this poison in order to protect humanity from it. Here, the dreaded poison represents our prarabdha karmas. Lord Shiva, in the form of the Guru, accepts our karma and protects us. In order to protect Lord Shiva from the poison, everyone around him maintained vigil throughout the night.”

“When someone is bitten by a snake, the doctor will force him to stay awake as to do so lessens the effect of the poison and can ultimately save his life. The Guru is like this doctor. He will do anything and everything to keep us awake. We may not like it. He will make us drink bitter medicines in the form of experiences. But all this is done with our higher good in mind—to awaken us and keep us awake.”

“It is Amma's prayer that Her children have the attitude of sacrifice and surrender not only on Sivaratri but throughout their lives. May your thoughts, words and actions arise from love.”



M.A. CENTER SATSANG

FEBRUARY 26, 2011 BULLETIN

www.amma.org/bayarea

510-537-9417 x 431

Every day should become Shivaratri. Simply keeping awake and forgoing sleep is not enough. We have to awaken to that state (Shiva). We need to gain awareness in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Then everyday becomes Shivaratri. ~Amma

THIS EVENING'S PROGRAM

4:30 pm – Chanting the Sri Lalitha Sahasranama (1,000 Names of the Divine Mother); *p. 1-40 in Chants & Prayers binder, preceded by Guru Stotram on p.i*

5:30 pm

108 Names of Amma: *after p. 40 in binder*

Satsang (Spiritual talk)

Bhajans (devotional singing)

Arati & Closing Prayers *after 108 Names in binder*

Bake table opens on balcony when bhajans begin. Proceeds go to Amma's Housing Project for the poor in India.

After the program:

Dinner served on balcony benefits Amma's charities

Amma Shop & Library open

M.A. CENTER SCHEDULE

Every Saturday: Archana 4:30pm, Satsang Program: 5:30pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 3/2: Mahashivaratri, the Great Night of Lord Shiva

Dinner 6-7:15pm, All night program: 7:30pm - 7:00am

Includes Homa, 4-6am.

Spiritual practices done on this night are considered to be especially auspicious and beneficial. Staying awake is symbolic of the kind of awareness and oneness of purpose that a spiritual aspirant needs to reach the goal. You are welcome for any or all of the program. The schedule will include a participatory puja ceremony to Lord Shiva, 1,000 Names of Lord Shiva, group chanting, bhajans (devotional singing), meditative dancing around the lamp and more.

The night will culminate with an Auspicious Homa Fire Ceremony.

All are welcome to attend free of charge and receive the spiritual benefit. If you wish to sign up for a special intention to have the Homa done in your name or in the name of a family member or friend, please come to the back of the hall after the program for a list of options and prices. You can pay after satsang this evening or until 11pm on Shivaratri. Donations of roses and carnations to make petals for the Homa are most welcome. Contact: events@ammachi.org

A simple dinner will be served before the program. Chai and savory snacks will be available throughout the night and a bagel breakfast will be served in the morning. All proceeds from the sale of food will benefit Amma's charitable activities.

Saturday, 3/5 Craft Guild: 2:00-4:30pm on temple balcony

Knitting, Crocheting, Sewing, Recycled Plastic Projects, T-shirt yarn and more! Beginners always welcome to learn to knit & crochet. (Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.) Bring your own knitting needles and/or crochet hooks.

Thursday 3/10 Puja for Karthika (Amma's Birthstar),

7:30 pm, Main House Puja Room

Saturday, 3/12 Afternoon Sanskrit Classes begin. 8-week series,

See opposite page for details

Sat & Sun 3/12 & 13 Integrated Amrita Meditation Technique

Course, online registration available at www.amma.org

under "meditation classes"

Sanskrit Classes on Saturday afternoons for 8 weeks: March 12-April 30

Main House Puja Room; Donation: \$100.00. Please pay instructor at first class. Proceeds to Amma's charities.

Sanskrit I: 2:00-3:00 pm: Learn how to correctly pronounce and read the Sanskrit Devanagari script. Find out why Sanskrit is used for mantras, why it is considered a sadhana in itself, why it is the macrocosm contained within the microcosm and more. Give your spiritual practice a transformative boost!

Sanskrit II: 3:30-4:30 pm: This course will focus on reading/chanting Amma's 108 names, the 1000 names of the Divine Mother and more. Texts will be read in the Devanagari script. Attention given to proper timing and pronunciation.

Prerequisite for Sanskrit II: Ability to read Devanagari script.

Go to RSVP and if you have any questions please contact Ramana:
hubharamana@gmail.com.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Regular Programs in the Main House: Archana (1,000 Names): 5:15 am every morning; Evening bhajans (devotional singing): Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays at 6:15 pm & Wednesdays, Fridays & Sundays at 7:00 pm. Main House is uphill above Amrita Hall.

Saturday Seva (Selfless Service) 9:30 am – 4:30 pm: food prep, sorting medical supplies for India and Haiti, helping in the Amma Shop, gardening & orchard work, and many special projects. Chai and lunch provided. Come for any or all of the day!
Contact: seva@ammachi.org (510-537-9417 x444 if no email)

AM Group Practice in Amrita Hall: Saturdays from 3-4pm for those who have taken the course.

Amrita Bala Kendra Program for children ages 4 –12, 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, 3:00 – 5:30 pm, www.balakendra.org, Registration: Sudhir Aggarwal, sagggarwal3@gmail.com, 818-262-3895. For Information about **South Bay Bala Kendra:** Contact Suneetha: suneetha.tirumalai@gmail.com, 408-718-6495

AYUDH - Youth in Action Movement, ages 15-30. Green Projects, Community Service, Social & Spiritual Activities: www.AYUDH.org, AYUDH@amma.org.

CASTRO VALLEY BART STATION PICKUPS:

Saturdays: 9am for Seva Day, 4:00pm for Evening Program

For Shivaratri on Wed, 3/2: 6pm

RSVP: Leave msg @ 510-537-9417 x447

Please note: M.A. Center does not provide shuttles back to BART. Devotees find rides with others. Please consider giving rides to the BART station when you leave. Please also consider carpooling to and from the programs.

***Prayer List:** read at the end of each Saturday evening program. Names can be added until 6:30 pm on Saturday evening. Names can be sent to prayers@amma.org throughout the week.