I

m the Indian culture, at one
time, there used to be 365
festivals in a year. In other
words, they just needed an ex-
cuse to celebrate everyday of the
year. These 365 festivals were
ascribed to different reasons,
and for different purposes of life.
They were to celebrate various
historical events, victories, or
certain situations in life, like har-
vesting, planting, reaping. For
every situation there was a festi-
vale. But Mahashivratri is of a
different significance.

The 14th day of every lunar month or the day before the new
moon is known as Shivaratri. Among all the twelve Shiva-
rathris that occur in a calendar
year, Mahashivratri, the one
that occurs in February-March
is of most spiritual significance.

On this night, the northern
hemisphere of the planet is
solicited in such a way that there
is a natural upsurge of energy
in a human being. This is a day
when nature is pushing one to-
wards one’s spiritual path. It is
to make use of this, that in this
tradition, we establish a certain
festival which is night-long. One
of the fundamentals of this night-
long festival is to ensure that —
to allow this natural upsurge
of energies to find their way —
you remain with your spine vertical,
or you stay awake.

Mahashivratri is very signifi-
cant for people who are on the
spiritual path. It is also very sig-
nificant for people who are in
family situations, and also for the
ambitious in the world. People
who live in family situations, ob-
serve Mahashivratri as Shiva’s
wedding anniversary.

Those with worldly ambitions
see that day as the day Shiva
conquered all his enemies. But,
for the ascetics, however, it is
the day he became one with the
Kalahis, because he became like
a mountain. — still, absolutely.
In the yogic tradition, Shiva
is not worshipped as God but
considered as Adi Guru, the
First Guru from whom the
spines are erect.” If you were
still a creature whose spine was
horizontal, you could not make
use of it. But blessed are those
who have an erect spine, be-
cause on the Mahashivratri day,
effortlessly their energies can
move heavenward.

The sages and seers of the
past recognised this, so they
make it a part of the tradition to
make use of this day as a day of
sadhana, as a day of intensify-
ing the spiritual processes.

Moreover, Shiva has always
been referred to as Trimakaba
— the one with three eyes. The
third eye is the eye of vision.
Your two eyes are sensory or-
gans; they feed the mind with all
nonsense because what you see
is not the truth. These two eyes
are for the body, but the so-
another eye, an eye of deeper
perception, has to be opened up.

In this country, in this tradition,
knowing does not mean read-
ing books, knowing does not mean
listening to someone. Knowing
does not mean getting information
from here and there. Knowing always meant open-
ing up a new vision into life. So true knowledge or
one’s spiritual eye has to open up. Any amount of
thinking, any amount of philo-philosophy, will not bring
clarity into your mind. The logi-
ical clarity you create, anybody
can distort it. Only when vision
opens, only then there is clarity.

Nobody, no situation, can distort
this clarity within you. On the night
of Maha-shivaratri, nature is
bringing that possibility very
close to us.

One of the prescriptions for
Shivaratri is you do not lie down
in horizontal positions; remain
in a vertical position. Remaining
vertical alone is not sufficient; we
will have to be in such position
where we are not ourselves.
Shiva means ‘that which is not.’
On this night, allow him to be;
you are not. Then there is a
possibility of opening up new vision
into life, looking at life with clarity
that cannot be distorted.

Nightlong Sati

Isha volunteers in Mysore
have organised Mahashiv-
ratri celebrations on Feb.
23 at Vivekananda Hall of
Mahajana PU College in Jaya-
lakshmipuram.

Mahashivratri celebra-
tions will commence at 6 pm
on 23rd and conclude at 6 am
on 24th. This nightlong sat-
sang will involve discourses
and powerful meditations from
Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev

irradiated with cultural pro-
grames being held at Isha
Yoga Centre, Cumbatore.
Isha Foundation is a non-
profit voluntary organisation
that addresses all aspects of
human wellbeing. From its yoga
programmes for inner trans-
formation to its inspiriting out-
reach projects, Isha activities
are designed to create an in-
clusive culture as a basis for
global peace and development.