



Text of Prime Minister's speech at unveiling of 112 feet statue of "Adiyogi - The Shiva"

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My loving greetings to all.

It is my honour to be here, in this august gathering.

That too, on the auspicious occasion of Maha-Shivratri.

There are many festivals, but this one is pre-fixed with "Maha."

Indeed, there are many Devs, but only one Maha-Dev.

There are many Mantras, but the Mantra which is identified with Lord Shiva, is called Maha-Mrityunjayi Mantra.

Such is the glory of Lord Shiva.

Maha-Shivratri symbolizes a union of divinity with a purpose, of overcoming darkness and injustice.

It inspires us to be courageous and fight for good.

It marks the shift of seasons, from the cold to the lively spring and brightness.

Maha-Shivratri celebrations go on for the entire night. This symbolizes a spirit of vigilance- that we have to protect nature and mould our activities in sync with our ecological surroundings.

My home state, Gujarat is the land of Somnath. The call of the people and the longing for service took me to Kashi, the land of Vishwanath.

From Somnath to Vishwanath, from Kedarnath to Rameshwaram and from Kashi to Coimbatore where we have gathered, Lord Shiva is everywhere.

Like crores of Indians across the length and breadth of the nation, I too feel delighted to be a part of celebrations of Maha-Shivratri.

And we are merely drops in the ocean.

Through centuries, there have lived countless devotees, in every age and time.

They came from different places.

Their language may have been different but their longing for the divine is always the same.

This longing throbs in the core of every human heart. Their poetry, their music, their love has soaked the very earth.

Standing here before this 112-feet face of Adiyogi and the Yogeshwar Linga, we are experiencing a colossal presence enveloping everyone in this space.

In the times to come, the place where we have gathered is going to be a source of inspiration for all, a place to immerse one's self and discover truth.

ये स्थान सबको शिवमय होने के लिए प्रेरित करता रहेगा। It will remind us of the inclusive spirit of Lord Shiva.

Today, Yoga has come a long way.

There are various definitions, types, schools of Yoga and ways to practice Yoga that have emerged.

This is the beauty of Yoga- it is ancient, yet modern, it is constant, yet evolving.

The essence of Yoga has not changed.

And I say this because it is of utmost importance to preserve this essence.

Otherwise, we may just have to discover a new Yoga to re-discover the soul and essence of Yoga.

Yoga is the catalytic agent, ushering the transformation from Jiva to Shiva.

हमारे यहां कहा गया है - यत्र जीवः तत्र शिवः
जीव से शिव की यात्रा, यही तो योग है।

By practicing Yoga, a spirit of oneness is created - oneness of the mind, body and the intellect.

Oneness with our families, with the society we live in, with fellow humans, with all the birds, animals and trees with whom we share our beautiful planet...this is Yoga.

Yoga is the journey from 'me' to 'we.'

व्यक्ति से समस्ती तक ये यात्रा है। मैं से हम तक की यह अनुभूति, अहम से वयम तक का यह भाव-विस्तार, यही तो योग है।

India is a land of unparalleled diversity. India's diversity can be seen, heard, felt, touched and tasted.

The diversity has been India's greatest strength and has also brought India together.

Think of Lord Shiva and the picture that comes to mind is that of his majestic presence at Mount Kailash, in the mighty Himalayas. Think of Goddess Parvati and you remember the beautiful Kanyakumari, which is surrounded by the vast oceans. The union of Shiva and Parvati is a union of the Himalayas with the oceans.

Shiv and Parvati... this is by itself a message of oneness.

And look at how this message of oneness further manifests itself:

Around the neck of Lord Shiva, there is a snake. The 'Vahan' of Lord Ganesh is the mouse. We are well aware of the frosty relations between a snake and a mouse. Yet, they live together.

Similarly, the 'Vahan' of Kartikeya is the peacock. Peacocks and snakes are supposed to harbor great enmity. Even then, they live together.

The family of Lord Shiva is diverse yet the spirit of harmony and unity is vibrant.

Diversity is not a cause of conflict for us. We accept it and embrace it whole heartedly.

It is a speciality of our culture that wherever there is a God or Goddess, there is either an animal, a bird or a tree that is associated with him or her.

That animal, bird or tree is also worshipped with the same spirit as the God or Goddess. There cannot be a better means to inculcate a spirit of reverence for nature. Nature equals to God, this has been firmly established by our ancestors, showing their foresight.

Our scriptures say: एकमसत्, विष्णुः बहुधा वदन्ति

Truth is one, sages call it by different names.

We have been living these virtues since our childhood and that is why compassion, kindness, brotherhood and harmony are naturally a part of us.

These are values we have seen our ancestors live and die for.

These are virtues that have kept the Indian civilization alive for centuries.

Our mind should always be open to new thoughts and ideas from all sides. Unfortunately, there are a select few, who in order to hide their own ignorance, take a very rigid view and destroy any scope of welcoming new thoughts and experiences.

Rejecting an idea just because it is ancient can be potentially harmful. It is essential to analyse it, understand it and try to take it to the new generation in a manner in which they understand best.

The progress of humanity is incomplete without the empowerment of women. The issue is no longer women development but it is women-led development.

I am proud of the fact that in our culture the role of women is central.

Our culture has so many Goddesses who are worshipped.

India is home to many women saints, who led the movements for social reform be it in the north, south, east or west.

They shattered stereotypes, broke barriers and became trendsetters.

You would be interested to know, that in India we say -नारी तू नारायणी, नारी तू नारायणी - woman is a manifestation of the divine.

लेकिन पुरुष के लिए क्या कहते हैं, for man we say नर तू करनी करे तो नारायण हो जाए- if a man does good deeds, he will attain divinity.

Do you see the difference- the divine status of the woman is unconditional Women unconditional नारी तू नारायणी whereas for men, it is conditional. He can earn it after good deeds.

That is also why perhaps Sadhguru insists that one takes the oath of being a mother to the world. A mother is someone who is unconditionally inclusive.

The changing lifestyles of the 21st century have brought their own set of challenges.

Lifestyle related ailments, stress related diseases are becoming more and more common. The communicable ailments can be controlled but what about the non-communicable ones?

It gives me immense sadness, one that I cannot describe in words, when I read about people taking to substance abuse and alcohol because they are not at peace with themselves.

Today, the whole world wants peace, not just peace from wars and conflict but peace of the mind.

The burden of stress takes a heavy toll and one of the sharpest weapons to overcome stress is Yoga.

There is ample evidence that practicing yoga helps combat stress and chronic conditions. If the body is a temple of the mind, yoga creates a beautiful temple.

That is why I call Yoga a passport to health assurance. More than being a cure to ailments, it is a means to wellness.

Yoga is about Rog Mukti (freedom from diseases) as well as Bhog Mukti (desisting from worldly greed).

Yoga makes the individual a better person in thought, action, knowledge and devotion.

It would be very unfair to see Yoga only as a set of exercises that keeps the body fit.

You may see people twist and turn their bodies in many sorts of fashion. But they are not all yogis.

Yoga is far beyond physical exercises.

Through Yoga, we will create a new Yuga – a Yuga of togetherness and harmony.

When India mooted the idea of the International Yoga Day at the United Nations, it was received with open arms.

The world celebrated both the Yoga Days, 21st June 2015 and 2016 with great fervour.

Be it Korea or Canada, Sweden or South Africa- in every part of the world the rays of the sun were welcomed by Yogis, engaged in the practice of Yoga.

The coming together of so many nations to mark the International Day of Yoga illustrates the real essence of Yoga- togetherness.

Yoga has the potential to herald in a new Yuga (a new era)- a Yuga of peace, compassion, brotherhood and all-round progress of the human race.

One truly remarkable thing that Sadhguru has done is he has made yogis out of ordinary, common people. People who stay with their families and work in the world, but who are living at the peaks within themselves - undergoing intense and wonderful experiences on a daily basis. Wherever one is, in whatever situation one is placed, one can be a yogi.

I see so many radiant and joyous faces here. I see people working with utmost love and care, paying attention to the smallest of details. I see people full of energy and enthusiasm to offer themselves to a greater cause.

Adiyogi will inspire many generations to take up yoga. My gratitude to Sadhguru for bringing this to us.

Thank you. Thank you very much. प्रणाम, वाणकम

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