

## **Shivratri, the Bodh Utsav - Day of enlightenment of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati**

Shivratri is celebrated to worship Shiva, the all mighty, Shiva the creator and the protector. This day also happens to be the day of enlightenment for Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati. When India politically under British rule and was suffering form economic backwardness, social evils like Sati tradition, untouchability, child marriage, blind belief, illiteracy, belief in miracles and general ignorance and illusion was prevailing all over, a ray of hope emitted in the form a child named Mool Shanker on Phalgun Krishna dashmi 1881 Vikrami, corresponding to 12th February 1825, in village Tankara of Gujarat, He later emerged Swami Dayanand Saraswati and enlightened the world with the light of the Vedas and saved the world from the depth of ignorance.

Karsanji Tewari, father of Mool Shanker was a religious person and staunch devotee of Shiva. He wanted Mool Shanker also to be a firm devotee of Shiva and a religious minded person. By his inspiration Mool Shanker decided to keep fast, kept awake whole night and worshiped idol of 'Shiva' on Shivratri ,Falgun Krishna 14, 1894 Vikrami. The crowd of devotees was busy in the worship process. Mool Shanker was curious to realize the Shiva. By the third quarter of night, all the devotees including the priests and Mool Shaker's father fell asleep. Mool Shanker observed a rat running on the idol and eating the offerings. A doubt flashed in his mind how the idol could be omnipotent Shiva when even a rat could not be removed by him. He woke his father, put the doubt before him but was not satisfied with

reply. He revolted, broke the fast and returned home. This event made him clear about the futility of idol worship and he took vow of having darshan of the true Shiva. In his quest, he wandered from place to place in search of a real guru who could help him realize the true Shiva. Ultimately he could find the true knowledge from Swami Virjanand Saraswati. In Dakshina he pledged his life for the spread of true knowledge of God revealed through the Vedas and to get the mother Land – Bharat, rid of all the ills and evils that had engulfed the society at that time. He was a real revolutionary who brought about a renaissance in the religio- social infrastructure of India. He fought against the evils of sati, animal sacrifice in Yajna, idol worship, was an ardent advocate of upliftment of women, and their right and need for education. He inspired many leaders of our freedom movement including Lala Lajpat Rai, Shyamji Krishan Verma (the founder of India House in England), Bhagat Singh and Ram Prasad Bismil among others

**Maharishi Arvind** has paid him a very befitting tribute in the following words: “Among the great company of remarkable figures that will appear to the eye of posterity at the head of the Indian Renaissance, one stands out by himself with peculiar and solitary distinctness, one unique in his type as he is unique in his work. ....But amidst them all one hill stands apart, piled up in sheer strength, a mass of bare and puissant granite, with verdure its summit, a solitary pine jutting out into the blue, a great cascade of pure, vigorous and fertilizing water gushing out from its strength as the very fountain of life and health to the valley; Such is the impression created on my mind by Dayananda”.