

"A mantra can make the impossible possible"

A disciple talks to

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Q. The *mantra* is a mystic phenomenon. Can you explain the essence of *mantra*?

A. A *mantra* can be a word or a sentence which, when uttered in a particular manner and contemplated within, can make sorrows wither and assure *mukti* (salvation). The aim of *mantra* is to achieve *dharma* (religious righteousness and duty), *artha* (philosophical interpretative value or meaning and even the means), *kama* (procreative universal truth and sensual satisfaction) and *moksha* (salvation from birth and rebirth). Mantras have definitive importance both at the materialistic and spiritual levels.

Q. What are the different types of *mantras* in vogue?

A. There are simple *mantras* which are known to snake charmers who, with the help of these *mantras*, take out the poison from the mouth of a snake. However, there are *mantras* which are universal benefactors and take out the 'poison bag' from the mouth of the materialistic world and ensure emancipation. An example is the Rama *mantra*.

Q. What are the dynamics of *mantra*?

A. Everything in the world is perishable and we remain mortal. We nurture materialistic cravings. We are all *yantra*. There are two aspects: One is *yantra* and the other is *mantra*. *Yantra* only activates materialism and remains mortal. It does not provide peace and only feeds the world called *maya* or illusion. But a *mantra* is bigger than *yantra* and remains the embodiment of *Paramatman*, the Supreme Being.

If you want to understand *yantra* then see for yourself the impermanent aspect of *yantra*: Childhood, youth, old age, beauty, wealth etc which are never permanent and dwell in the sphere of mortality.

On the other hand, *mantra* ensures peace. Peace can be achieved through *mantra* and *upasana* (sitting near). If a calf does not sit near a cow then how can it get milk? If a baby does not cling to its mother then how can it get milk? Not going near God how can one get peace? How can the soul fill its hunger? So worshipping or doing *upasana* with *mantra* ensures a state of emancipation which scales beyond time and space. *Mantras* are powerful and by the act of *japa* (constant remembrance through counting beads) one is progressively empowered.

Q. Can *mantras* enhance will power and mental strength?

A. Let me tell you a short story. Once Alexander the Great, after conquering country after country, finally went to the Himalayas. Near a snowy mountain he met a sadhu (ascetic). Alexander told the *sadhu* to ask for anything. The saint asked, "Do you think you

are the most powerful person? Then bring the sun rays here and if you can't then go away and allow whatever rays to come here." Alexander stood speechless. The saint could dare to say all this and banish the ego of the Emperor with his *mantra sadhana!* Thus a *mantra* empowers and makes an ascetic fearless.

To understand the power of a *mantra*, let me cite another story. Once Emperor Akbar told his Minister, Mansingh, to find a solution as a fort being built at Prayag was collapsing again and again for unknown reasons. The Minister, while contemplating and strolling along the banks of the Ganga, saw a saint meditating. A python was about to attack the saint but failed miserably. The saint, with his power of *mantra* had defeated the python.

At the sight of this miracle, the Minister approached the saint with the problem of Emperor Akbar. After some contemplation, the saint said that the fort could not be built as Goddess Devi Shakti was annoyed. Then he gave a piece of paper with a *mantra* inscribed on it and instructed the Minister to lay it on the foundation of the fort and start building again. Mansingh followed his advice and the fort was rebuilt successfully.

A *mantra* can make the impossible possible. A simple *sadka* can become a great saint with the power of *mantra*. A *mantra* can change an unfavourable situation into a favourable one.

Q. How can a mantra make things favourable? Can you cite an example?

A. A *mantra* can create a favourable atmosphere and the *Ishta* (the God) of that particular *mantra* can even save a person from evil designs of his foes.

It so happened that Shivaji was fighting the Mughals and repeatedly eluded the sword of the mighty Mughal Empire.

Finally, the Mughals hatched a conspiracy and tried to kill Shivaji in a clandestine manner. With the power of *Tantra* and *Mantra*, a Mughal killer was able to penetrate the security system of Shivaji. The Mughal took out his sword and was about to attack a sleeping Shivaji when, suddenly, an unseen invincible power held his hand. The Mughal asked, "Who is stopping me?" Immediately an answer was heard, "Your *ishta* (God) could penetrate the security system and facilitate you to come up to this point but Shivaji's *Ishta* who is *satvik* (pure) and all-powerful is already present here to save Him". Thus an attempt to murder Shivaji was foiled by a mystic power which was appeased with Shivaji's *mantra sadhana*.

Q. Can you highlight the types of mantras we have?

A. There are three types of *mantras*. One is *Sabhri* which empowers one with *siddhi* or mystic powers. The second is *Tantra* which gives *ckamatkari* (amazing demonstrative powers) at the mystic level. The third is *Vedic mantra* which goes towards achieving eternal peace for the soul. Initiation with *mantra* from the guru covers most aspects of *sadhana* (spiritual cultivation). This *mantra* once given by a *guru* can erase fear within and diminish

Q. Will you elaborate the context of *Guru mantra* at the power level?

demonic influences, if any. Whosoever cultivates the *Guru mantra* is able to travel to *Puramdham*, the land of the Supreme Soul.

A. By uttering the seed *mantra* of *naam* (name) one gets into a creative process automatically. This is called *Naam Yoga*. A *sadkak* (worshipper) is not to bother about its result as the God or *Ishta Naam* takes care of the disciple automatically. In actuality, the God of any given name resides within the *naam* (name) and so the *Naam mantra* is referred to as *Mantramay* or embodiment of God within the sacred sound of *mantra*. In the process of *japa*, the *sadkak* gets closer to his/her *Ishta* or God who in turn bestows love and care on the *sadhak*.

The utterance of the name of God in a repeated manner is a *japa* and once it is chanted loudly it becomes *kirtan* or devotional song. On the score of utterance there are various stages or centres of activity. There is an involuntary movement of the tongue which is called *annamay kosh*. This is powered by the life force called *pranmay kosh*. But there has to be a wish for the movement of the tongue which is called *manamay kosh*. Then there has to be a doer (*karta*) called *Vigyanmay kosh*. The name of God has to be uttered with deep love, respect and dedication and then it becomes the harbinger of happiness or *anandamay - anandamay kosh*.

While we utter the name of God and all centres of activity work in cohesion and unison it empowers us with mental and physical strength. The negative *karma* of past lives gets effaced with the chanting.

Q. Will you narrate a story citing the impact of *mantras*?

A. *Mantras* have a tremendous impact at the body and mental levels. In Jabalpur there lived a saint, Mahamaleshwar, and if anybody touched any part of his body one could hear *Rama Naam* ringing automatically. And when he chanted *naam kirtan* even dogs danced. Similarly, when Mahaprabhu Chaitanya chanted *naam kirtun* trees began to sway as if in dance to his sacred tune.

A *mantra* is physically a pure sound and its repeated utterance creates a ring of sound within and outside. If one ties a small stone at the end of a rope and swings it to revolve then this small stone gets so powerful that if released it can even kill. The *mantra* if repeatedly chanted can create a dynamic sound wavelength which can inspire one to aspire for anything. The amalgamative power of a *mantra* at the sound and *bhava* level can become so prominent that one can even assume the qualities of the Divine.

Q. Finally, how does Rama, Rama, a simple *mantra* become a *Guru mantra*?

A. Rama, Rama uttered from Gurumukh (mouth of the *Guru*) has special meaning as the sound comes out of the cosmic touch of the *Guru's atman* (soul) and gets planted in the heart of a *sadkak* (follower). Let me explain this idea: We all see the gigantic *Vata Vriksha* but its seeds are very small. We do not see these seeds sprouting in plenty. Actually these small seeds are food for animals and birds who digest them and out of their body heat the seeds become soft and sprouting becomes easy. Similarly, when Rama,

Rama is processed by the *tapa* and *siddhi* of a Guru, it becomes cosmic *nada* of Rama, Rama. Such is the power of the Rama *mantra* which emits from the soul of the *Guru*.

Symbolic Meaning of Acts Performed During Hindu Pujas and Prayers

A simple prayer before the deity with hands folded and placed near the heart is the most common form of praying in Hindu religion. But there are also various other acts that Hindus perform while praying like lighting the lamp, offering flowers and leaves, burning camphor or offering food etc. In Hinduism, each act performed has a symbolic meaning.

Sprinkling of Water and Sipping while doing Puja

Sprinkling of water symbolically performs the purification of the surroundings. Sipping of water is purification of oneself.

Lighting of Lamp

It symbolizes removal of ignorance and ushering in of knowledge. The wick in the traditional oil lamp symbolizes ego and the oil or ghee used symbolizes our negative tendencies. When we are lit by self knowledge, the negative tendencies (oil) melt away and finally the ego (wick) perishes.

Burning of Camphor

Burning of camphor symbolizes the destruction of our egos and arrogance. When ego melts what is left is the pure Self.

Lighting of Incense and Agarbathis

This is used for fragrance which symbolically suggests the presence of the deity and the love of deity.

Performing Aarati or waving of lamp around the deity

Waving of lamp and camphor around the deity is symbolically an act of surrender.

Breaking of Coconut

Symbolically breaking of coconut is act of destruction of one's ego. Coconut kernel and the water is also considered to be the purest form of offering that a devotee can make.

Offering of Betel leaves and Betel nuts

Betel leaves and nuts symbolize fertility and is usually offered for the birth of children at home. It is also part of all important pujas in South India.

Bells Rung during Puja

The bells that are rung during puja are to keep out other noises and it is also a means of celebrations. Bells rung in the beginning is done to ward away evil forces.

Offering of Food or nevediya

Symbolically, offering of food indicates a thanksgiving to the deity. It is an act of sharing God's bounty. It is then distributed as 'prasad.' What is offered should be shared with the poor and the needy.

Offering of Flowers

Flowers are offered basically because of their fragrance and due to the association of a particular flower with a particular deity. For example Bilva leaf is associated with Lord Shiva and Tulsi with Lord Vishnu. Puranas have stories which explain why a particular flower is associated with a particular deity.

On the symbolic level, the flowers and leaves are picked up with five fingers and is offered with all five fingers. It is usually placed at the feet of the deity. The five fingers symbolically indicate the five senses and thereby surrendering of it before the deity.

Flowers are also offered by bringing it close to one's heart. This symbolically suggests that one is offering the soul or atma to the deity.

Walking thrice around the deity or Pradakshina

In some places mainly in temples people walk around the Sanctum Sanctorum three times in clockwise direction. It is symbolically to cross the nether world, earth and heaven to reach Brahman.

Knocking the two ends of forehead before Pujas in South India

Some devotees knock the two ends of forehead before beginning prayer and puja in South India. It is believed that the nerves connecting to the intellect passes through these two ends and the knocking is to invoke Lord Ganesha, the god of Buddhi (Intellect).

Arms crossed across the chest and holding ear tips

In South India, Hindus while praying knock both the sides of forehead and then put arms crossed across the chest and hold ear tips and then sits and stands before the deity a few times. This is known as Thoppukaranam in South. It is a sort of self-imposed penance and praying for forgiveness.

Why do Hindus light a lamp at home before the altar of a deity?

In every Hindu home a lamp or 'diya' is lit daily before a Hindu deity or any symbol associated with Hinduism. Many Hindus also perform an 'arati' with the traditional oil lamp. The lamp is lit in the morning or evening or both morning and evening. In some houses the lamp is maintained continuously and is known Akhand Deep or Akhanda Diya.



The light in the lamp symbolizes knowledge. It removes darkness, which symbolizes ignorance. Thus light symbolizes Brahman.

The wick in the traditional oil lamp symbolizes ego and the oil or ghee used symbolizes our negative tendencies. When we are lit by self knowledge, the negative tendencies (oil) melt away and finally the ego (wick) perishes. When the ego perishes, we realize that we are all part of Brahman and that life is a continuity.

The lighting of 'diya' or lamp at home is considered highly auspiciousness as it brings prosperity and good health. The daily evening lamp lit at home also gives us an opportunity to ponder over one's omissions and commissions in a day.

Each Day of a Week Dedicated to a Particular Hindu God

In Hinduism, each day of a week is dedicated to a particular god in the Hindu pantheon. Apart from the special Vratas and Upvaas, many Hindus also fast on a particular day in a week. Each day in a week has a specialty and there are numerous folklores associated with the fasting observed on the days of a week.

Sunday

Sunday is dedicated to Lord Surya (Sun God). Those who undertake fast (upvaas) on the day only take a single meal. Oil and salt is avoided. Red is the color of the day and red flowers are offered to Surya.

Monday

Monday is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is said that Lord Shiva is easily pleased. Therefore many people observe Upvaas on Monday. Those devotees observing fast only eat food once. People visit Lord Shiva shrines and conduct pujas, especially, Ardhanarishwara puja. The mantra 'Om Namah Shivaya' is chanted continuously. Siva devotees also read Shiva Purana. Unmarried women observe the Vrat to get good husbands. Others observe it for a happy and prosperous family life.

Tuesday

Tuesday is dedicated to Lord Ganesha, Durga, Goddess Kali and Lord Hanuman. Most devotees visit Devi and Hanuman shrines. Those people who fast avoid taking food containing salt at night.

Wednesday

Wednesday is dedicated to planet Mercury and Lord Vithal, an incarnation of Krishna. Green color leaves, especially Tulsi leaves, are used in Pujas. The day is highly auspicious for starting new ventures and it is believed that those who observe the Vrat are bound to get blessed with fortunes. People also give alms on the day.

Thursday

Thursday is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and his incarnations. Pujas are conducted using milk, ghee etc. Food is only eaten once and that too containing milk products. People read Srimad Bhagavad Purana on the day.

Friday

Friday is dedicated to Mother Goddess - Mahalakshmi, Santhosi Ma, Annapuraneshwari and Durga. Sweets are distributed on the day. Those devotees observing the Vrat make it a point to eat at night.

Saturday

Saturday is dedicated to alleviating the bad influence of Lord Shani. The Vrat on this day is mainly observed by those people who believe in Hindu astrology. Black is the color of the day and people visit Shani shrine or Navagraha shrines. Food is only consumed once on the day.

It must be noted here that the deity worshipped on a particular day might vary from region to region and community to community. The result of all upvaas or fast depends on the person. It is good, if all the members in the family can undertake a Vrata together.

Miracles do happen by observing a particular Vrata and the greatest miracle is Brahman realization. All rituals and observances are path towards understanding the Supreme Soul and this will automatically alleviate all sufferings.

Ravivar Vrat: Sunday Fasting Dedicated to Hindu God Surya

Ravivar, or Sunday, is dedicated to Lord Surya or Suryanarayana. Upvaas or fasting on the day is dedicated to the Sun God. Red is the color of the day.



Those people who undertake fast on the day only eat food once that too before sunset. Salt, oil and fried food items are avoided.

Red color flowers are offered while praying. Red color sandalwood paste is applied as tilak on forehead.

Extra care is given on cleanliness of the body and surrounding.

It is believed that Ravivar Vrat will help in fulfilling desires. People with skin diseases observe the Vrat to get relief.

Many devotees also give alms on the day.

Somvar Vrat - Monday Fasting Dedicated to Hindu God Shiva

Upvaas, or fasting, in Hinduism is mainly observed for the fulfillment of a vow. Upvas is also referred as 'Vrats.' But 'Vrat' has a wider meaning and it is not just curtailed to the fasting observed for material or other gains. Each day in a week is dedicated to one or more of the gods in the Hindu pantheon. A particular deity is appeased by the devotee on a particular day. Thus Monday is usually dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Upvass, or fasting, on Mondays begins at sunrise and ends at sunset. On the day, food is only eaten after evening prayer. Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati are worshipped on the day. Of course, no worship begins without remembering Lord Ganesha. The fasting on Mondays in the Shravan month is considered even more auspicious.

It is believed that those people who observe Upvaas on Monday will have their desires fulfilled and will be blessed with wisdom. In some areas, fasting on Mondays is observed by unmarried women to get an ideal husband.

The reason for fasting on a day is usually traced back to a particular incident in one of the Hindu Puranas or folk tradition. There are numerous myths associated with a particular fast. The stories vary from region to region and from community to community.

Somvar Vrat, or Monday fasting, dedicated to Lord Shiva too has numerous stories. Among the several myths, three have gained popularity – the first is the story of a poor Brahmin gaining wealth due to Monday fasting, second is the story of a rich merchant begetting a son after long wait and the subsequent death of the son and his rebirth due to the grace of Lord Shiva and Parvati and the third story is the most famous involving the game of dice played between Shiva and Parvati.

Any Upvaas or Vrat is directly or indirectly connected with some sort of material comfort. This is a sweet lure used by ancient saints to attract a devotee to the concept of Brahman.

The concept of Brahman in Sanatana Dharma is not easily digestible to many people. And they are least bothered about Brahman concept all they need is material comfort. For this many devotees are ready to go to any extend. They are ready to observe any harsh vow. Ancient wise men used this tendency among the common people to spread the awareness of Brahman. During each upvas there are occasional flashes when a person thinks beyond material comforts. This is a realization of Brahman. Gradually many devotees begin to think beyond material comforts.

How to do or observe Somavar Vrat? - Monday Fasting Procedure for Lord Shiva

Somavar Vrat, or Monday Fasting, is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Somavar takes its name from Soma or Chandra – the Hindu moon god. Fasting on the day is done by many to appease Lord Shiva and get prayers and wishes fulfilled. It is believed that observing Somavar Vrat will help in getting good husbands. It is also believed to help in attaining prosperity and peaceful family life.

Somavar Vrat begins from sunrise on Monday. Usually those devotees observing the Vrat visit a Lord Shiva temple in the morning and in the evening. If this is not possible prayers are offered at home.



White color dress is worn by those observing the fast. White flowers are also offered to the Shivling.

A single meal is taken on the day after midday. Those observing partial fast take fruits or Sabudana Khichadi.

In the evening a story related to Somavar Vrat is listened to or read by those observing the fast.

Apart from white flowers, people also offer Bilva leaves or Bil patra while doing the puja.

The mantra that is chanted is Om Namah Shivaya...

The fast ends on the next day morning after usual prayers and rituals.

When Amavasi, or no moon day, falls on Monday it is considered highly auspicious and the day is known as Somavati Amavas.

Mondays in Shravan month (July – August) in North India, Gujarat and Maharashtra is considered highly auspicious. Special pujas are offered to Lord Shiva on Mondays in temples and homes.

Mondays are auspicious in Kartik month (October – November) in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Mondays in Karthigai Masam (November – December) is also auspicious in Tamil Nadu.

Lingam Puja - How to Worship Shivling at Home?

Shivling or Shiva lingam connects a devotee with the Supreme Being - Lord Shiva. The lingam is the symbol of Lord Shiva and the lingam puja helps the devotee in understanding Lord Shiva. The Lord cannot be described but still we say he is without a beginning and an end and is without a form. It is difficult for a devotee to understand this formless nature. Therefore Lord Shiva appeared in the form of Jyotirlinga before Brahma and Vishnu. The Lingam thus is a symbol of Lord Shiva. Each Lingam puja, step by step, takes the devotee to the eternal truth - that he/she is part of the Supreme Being.

Worshipping Shivling at Home

Before starting the Puja, the devotee takes a bath and wear freshly washed clothes. Hymns praising Lord Shiva or the mantra 'om namaha shivayaa' are repeated to create a mood for worship. Then, the devotee sits in front of the lingam and blows conch or ring bells. This indicates the beginning of the Puja.

First it is the panchamrit abhishek - the libation of five holy liquids over the lingam. The libation



can consist of any five of the following - water from river Ganga, honey, sugarcane juice, milk, yogurt, ghee, seawater, coconut water or milk, fragrant oils, rose water or other precious liquids. Usually, only milk of cow is used. While pouring the liquid, om namah shivaya is uttered. Some devotees utter the Lord's name 108 times and some 1008 times. There is no fixed rule.

After the panchamrit abhishek, the lingam is cleaned with water from Ganga. (This is might not be possible always so just normal water.) After this the lingam is smeared with sandalwood paste and is decked with flowers. Water and sandalwood paste is used to keep the lingam cool, as Lord Shiva is always in a highly inflammable state. In some Shiva temples, cooling liquid constantly drops from pot hung above the Lingam.

Next, sweets, coconut and fruits are offered to the Lord. Camphor and incense are lit and 'arati' is conducted. Some devotees fan the lingam and sing praises of the Lord.

Finally, ringing of bells or blowing of conch indicates the end of Puja. White ash (vibhuti) is rubbed on the forehead and it is also distributed. Fruits, sweets and coconut are distributed as 'prasad.'

Shukravar Vrat or Upvaas: Friday Dedicated to Santhoshi Ma and Shukra or Venus



In Hindu religion, each day of a week is dedicated to a particular God or Goddesses. Friday or Shukrawar is dedicated to Shakti - the Mother Goddess in Hinduism - and Shukra or Venus. One of the most important Vrat or Upvaas (fast) on the day is dedicated to Santhoshi Matha (an incarnation of Shakti). The fasting is also known as 'Solah Shukravar Vrats because a devotee fasts for 16 consecutive Fridays. White color is given importance on Friday.

Another deity that is propitiated on the day is Shukra, who is known to provide joy and material wealth. The period of Shukra in one's astrological chart is considered to be most productive and lucky period.

Worship of Shakti – Durga, Kali and other forms – on Friday is considered highly auspicious. Shakti temples in India attract large number of devotees on this day.

Devotees wear white colored dress on this day. The fasting on Shukravar begins at sunrise and ends with sunset. The person fasting only partakes in the evening meal. White colored food like kheer or milk is the most preferred.



Fast is kept for various reasons which include removal of obstacles, for a child, happy family life etc.

There are numerous stories associated with Shukravar. In almost all the stories, Lord Shukra or Venus is dishonored in the beginning and the devotee later realizes his/her folly through numerous untoward incidents. Then the devotee realizes the mistake and propitiates Shukra and is finally rewarded.

Mangalvar Vrat: Tuesday Dedicated to Hindu God Lord Hanuman

In Hinduism, each day in a week is dedicated to a particular deity in the Hindu pantheon. Tuesday or Mangalvar is dedicated to Lord Hanuman. Upvaas (fasting) on the day is dedicated to Hanuman and Mangal or Mars. Mangalwar, Tuesday, takes its name from the god Mangal or



Mars who rules the day and is considered to be a trouble maker, and the fast is to ward off the harmful effects. Red is the preferred color on the day.

It must be noted here that the Hanuman might not be worshipped on Tuesday in all regions. Some communities might be worshipping some other deity. For example, in South India the day is dedicated to Skanda or Muruga or Kartikeya (Kartik). But generally Tuesday is dedicated to Hanuman.

Mangalvar Vrat is observed by those couples who wish to have a son. Other benefits include happiness in the family. People who believe in astrology observe fast to alleviate the harmful effects associated with the planet mangal or mars.

Those who undertake the fast on Tuesdays only take a single meal. It is a whole day fast. The



single meal on the day is usually any food made of wheat and jaggery. Most people observe the fast for 21 Tuesdays without a break.

People wear red colored clothes on the day and offer red flowers to Lord Hanuman.

It is believed that Lord Hanuman will help his devotees in overcoming difficulties in life especially those that arises from the activities of Mangal graha.

Budhvar Vrat: Wednesday Hindu fasting dedicated to Krishna and Mercury

Budhvar, Wednesday, is dedicated to Lord Krishna and the planet Budh or Mercury. The day is also associated with Lord Vithal, an incarnation of Krishna. In some regions, Lord Vishnu is worshiped. Keeping a fast (Upvaas) on Budhvar is believed to help in leading a peaceful family life.

Those devotees who undertake a fast on the day only take a single meal in the afternoon. The fasting is observed mainly by husband and wife together. Green color is considered highly auspicious on the day.



In Astrology, mercury is considered to be compassionate and generous. Mercury is usually depicted riding a lion.

In some regions, people start new ventures on Wednesday as Mercury or Budh is considered to help new business ventures. Educational activities begin on Wednesday in some places.

How to observe Budhavar Vrat? - Wednesday Fasting in Hinduism

Budhavar, or Wednesday, is generally dedicated to the planet Budha or Mercury, Lord Vishnu and Lord Krishna. Those people who believe in Astrology propitiate Mercury as He is compassionate and generous and helps in worldly pursuits and blesses with wisdom. In some regions, Lord Shiva is worshipped on the day. Lord Ganesha is also worshipped in many regions on Wednesday. The day is also of great significance to Lord Vithal (Krishna) in Maharashtra. It is believed that worship and fasting on the day promotes peace and happiness in life and helps in a happy married life.



Those people who observe Budhavar Vrat propitiate Budha or Mercury. Budha is believed to have a sharp intellect and is proficient in all sciences. He is worshipped for good intelligence, education, success in business and commerce.

Budhvar Vrat is observed for 24 hours and those undertaking the fast on the day eat a single meal in the afternoon. Couples undertake the fast together for a happy married life.

Green is the color of the day. People wear green colored dress. The offering made to Budha usually includes green colored grams like Moong Dal.

On the day, devotees listen to the Budhvar vrat katha before performing the evening puja.

The Prasad that is made on the day is using green colored dal or grain. Black and red color flowers are offered to him. In regions people offer ghee and curd. The fruit offered is grape.

In some regions, people start new ventures on Wednesday as Mercury or Budh is considered to help new business ventures. Educational activities begin on Wednesday in some places.

Lord Krishna, Lord Vithal, Lord Shiva, and Lord Ganesh are worshipped on Wednesday in different regions. But fasting is mainly dedicated to Budh Grah and is usually performed for astrological reasons or to improve relationships.

Budhvar Vrat Katha - Story of Wednesday Fasting in Hindu Religion

Budhvar Vrat, or Wednesday fasting, in Hindu religion is dedicated to Budha or Mercury. In some regions, Lord Vishnu, Lord Ganesh and Lord Krishna are also worshipped on the day. Those observing the Budhvar Vrat read or listen to the story associated with Wednesday fasting. There are several versions of the Budhvar Vrat Katha and this is one of them.

Once a newly married couple was on their first visit to the bride's home after marriage. The couple was welcomed happily by the in-law's. The brothers and sisters of the bride took care of the newlywed couple. Two days passed in joy and then the husband realized that it was time to return. But it was a Wednesday and the in-law's were not ready to send the girl as Mercury, or Budha, is not in favour of sending married girls to their husband's house on Wednesdays.

The young husband said that he was not worried about Mercury and he did not believe in such things and want to return today itself. He was a businessman and he is of the view that Budha helps merchants and traders and he will not harm him.

Finally, the girl's parents agreed to send their daughter with her husband on Wednesday.

They left home and on the way they reached a town. The girl was thirsty and she wanted some water and the husband went to get some water.

Soon another young man resembling like the girl's husband brought water and she started drank it and started talking merrily with him. Soon the real husband returned and he could not believe his eyes. The girl too was confused as to who was her husband.

The two look-alike young men started to quarrel over the girl. Both claimed that the girl was his wife.

Soon two guards arrived on the scene and listened to what had happened. The girl told that she is confused as both of them looked like her husband.

The guards took them to the king and told what had happened.

The king said it was late evening and he will settle the case tomorrow. He asked the guards to lock the three in separate prisons and keep watch on them.

The real husband could no sleep that night and he started muttering that all this was his fault and is the result of not listening to the in-law's who had warned him that it was not auspicious to travel on the day.

Next day the guards reported what happened. They said that one young man slept well and another young man was walking around muttering that he had made a mistake by not listening to the in-laws of not travelling on Wednesday.

The king said that the restless young man was the real husband and asked to restore his wife.

The king also asked the guards to bring the girl and the two men before him.

When the guards went to get the three they found that the real husband and the girl were in their respective prison but the other young man was missing.

The guards took the husband and wife to the king and reported that the other young man was missing from prison.

The king smiled and said that the young man was Budha or Mercury and he had come to teach a lesson to the husband who had challenged his authority. King said that it was not the fault of the guards that young man was missing. Wednesday is over and today is Thursday and therefore mercury disappeared.

The husband and the girl was happy and they decided to observe Budhavar vrat for a happy and peaceful life.

How to observe Budhavar Vrat? - Wednesday Fasting in Hinduism

Budhavar, or Wednesday, is generally dedicated to the planet Budha or Mercury, Lord Vishnu and Lord Krishna. Those people who believe in Astrology propitiate Mercury as He is compassionate and generous and helps in worldly pursuits and blesses with wisdom. In some regions, Lord Shiva is worshipped on the day. Lord Ganesha is also worshipped in many regions on Wednesday. The day is also of great significance to Lord Vithal (Krishna) in Maharashtra. It is believed that worship and fasting on the day promotes peace and happiness in life and helps in a happy married life.



Those people who observe Budhavar Vrat propitiate Budha or Mercury. Budha is believed to have a sharp intellect and is proficient in all sciences. He is worshipped for good intelligence, education, success in business and commerce.

Budhwar Vrat is observed for 24 hours and those undertaking the fast on the day eat a single meal in the afternoon. Couples undertake the fast together for a happy married life.

Green is the color of the day. People wear green colored dress. The offering made to Budha usually includes green colored grams like Moong Dal.

On the day, devotees listen to the Budhvar vrat katha before performing the evening puja.

The Prasad that is made on the day is using green colored dal or grain. Black and red color flowers are offered to him. In regions people offer ghee and curd. The fruit offered is grape.

In some regions, people start new ventures on Wednesday as Mercury or Budh is considered to help new business ventures. Educational activities begin on Wednesday in some places.

Lord Krishna, Lord Vithal, Lord Shiva, and Lord Ganesh are worshipped on Wednesday in different regions. But fasting is mainly dedicated to Budh Grah and is usually performed for astrological reasons or to improve relationships.

Brihaspativar Vrat - Thursday Dedicated to Hindu God Vishnu and Brihaspati

In Hinduism, each day in a week is dedicated to a particular god in the Hindu pantheon. Thursday, which is Brihaspatiwar or Vrihaspativar, is dedicated to Vishnu and Brihaspati, the Guru of Devas.

Thursday is also popularly known as Gurubar or Guruvar. Yellow is the color of the day. A fast is observed on the day and food is consumed only once. In some areas, people make it a point to visit Hanuman Temple on Thursdays.



There are numerous stories associated with the reason for observing Upvaas, or fast, on Brihaspativar. Many of the stories are part of local folklore and stories vary from region to region.

Almost all stories suggest that those who perform pujas and Vrats on Thursdays will be blessed with wealth and happy life. In some stories, Lord Vishnu appears in the guise of a Sanni to test the devotees on Thursdays. In other stories, it is Brihaspati. First the person in the story denies alms and is lethargic but later realizes his/her mistake and observes Thursday Vrat and pleases the Gods.

Those devotees fasting on the day wears yellow colored dress and offers yellow colored fruits and flowers to Vishnu and Brihaspati. Food is only consumed once and includes Chana Dal (Bengal Gram) and ghee. Basically, yellow colored food is eaten on the day.

In some regions, banana or plantain is worshipped and watered.

Shanivar Vrat: Saturday Fasting Dedicated To Hindu God Shani and Hanuman

Talk about Shani or Sani to a Hindu and the first reaction will be fear and then the mentioning of ill effects and troubles. Shani is dreaded by Hindus, especially by those who believe in astrology. Many people observe an Upvaas or fast to avoid the adversities and misfortunes on Shanivar or Saturday. It is believed that those who have the blessing of Lord Hanuman are protected from the wrath of Shani. Therefore many people make it a point to worship Hanuman at home or in temples. Black is the preferred color on Saturday.

Shani, one of the Navagrahas, is worshipped in numerous temples and there are also temples exclusively dedicated to Sani. Devotees who are observing Shanivar Vrat usually visit Shani shrines. Black colored items like sesame til, sesame oil, black clothes, and black gram whole are offered to Shani. It must be noted here that the color of the idol of Shani is always black in color.

Those devotees who fast on Saturday only take a single meal that too in the evening after prayers. Food prepared usually consists of sesame til or black gram or any other black colored food item. Salt is avoided by many on the day.

Shani is represented as a deity carrying bow and arrows and riding a vulture. Some devotees worship a black iron idol of Sani. Some worship the Peepal Tree and tie thread around its bark. Black colored items like sesame oil and black clothes are also donated on the day.

Shani is so dreaded that many Hindus avoid journeys on Saturday. There are also numerous tales regarding the evil effects of Shani.

But generally it is believed that Lord Hanuman devotees are unharmed by Sani. Legend has it that Lord Hanuman had rescued Shani from Ravana. This happened during the burning of the Lanka episode in the epic Ramayana. Lord Shani had then promised that he would not trouble Lord Hanuman devotees.

Prasada : The Power of Sacred Food

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

On the spiritual path those that are most inclined to lead a peaceful existence that respects the value of all life often adopts the vegetarian lifestyle. It is in accordance with the yogic principle of *ahimsa*, which is to observe nonviolence and abstain from injuring any being in any way. However, in the process of bhakti-yoga, devotion goes beyond simple vegetarianism, and food becomes a method of spiritual progress. In the Krishna temples, food is offered to the Deities in a special sacrament, after which it becomes *prasada* or *prasadam*. This means the mercy of the Lord. Thus, the food we eat after it is offered to the Lord becomes a means for our purification and spiritual development.

Devotional service or Krishna consciousness is often described as a process of singing, dancing and feasting. But the feasting is done with spiritual food, Krishna prasadam.

In the *Bhagavad-gita* Lord Krishna says, "All that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform should be done as an offering unto Me." So offering what we eat to the Lord is an integral part of bhakti-yoga and makes the food blessed with spiritual potencies. Then such food is called prasadam, or the mercy of the Lord.

The Lord also describes what He accepts as offerings: "If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it." Thus, we can see that the Lord does not need anything, but if one offers fruits, grains, and vegetarian foods, He will accept it. The Lord does not accept foods like meat, fish or eggs, but only those that are pure and naturally available without harming others. So we offer what Krishna likes, not those items which are distasteful to Him. We also do not use garlic, onions, or mushrooms when we prepare food for Krishna.

The Lord is fully satisfied in Himself. He is the creator of all so everything is already His. He supplies us with food through nature, but we give thanks to Him by offering it back in a mood of loving devotion. So if His devotee offers something with love, out of His causeless mercy Krishna accepts it. The Lord is never hungry for our food, but for the love and devotion we offer. And then He reciprocates with that love.

So on the spiritual path eating food that is first offered to God is the ultimate perfection of a vegetarian diet. The Vedic literature explains that the purpose of human life is reawakening the soul's original relationship with God, and accepting prasadam is the way to help us reach that goal.

The food is meant to be cooked with the consciousness of love, knowing that it will be offered to Lord Krishna. In the spiritual world, Radharani cooks for Krishna and She never cooks the same preparation twice. The temple kitchen is understood to belong to Radharani.

The ingredients are selected with great care and must be fresh, clean and pure vegetarian. Also, in cooking for Krishna we do not taste the preparations while cooking. We leave the first taste for Krishna when it is offered.

After all the preparations are ready, we take a portion of each one and place it in bowls on a special plate and take it to the altar to offer it to the Deities or pictures of Krishna.

Then the preparations are presented with special prayers as we ask that God accept our humble offering. The Lord accepts it with the most important part being the love with which it is offered. God does not need to eat, but it is our love for God which attracts Him to us and to accept our offering. Even if the most sumptuous banquet is offered to God but without devotion and love, Krishna will not be hungry to accept it. It is our love which catches the attention of Lord Krishna who is then inclined to accept our service.

After He glances over and tastes that loving offering of vegetarian preparations, He leaves the remnants for us to honor and relish. Krishna's potency is absorbed in that food. In this way material substance becomes spiritualized, which then affects our body and mind in a similar way. This is His special mercy for us. Thus, the devotional process becomes an exchange of love between us and God, which includes food. And that food not only nourishes our body, but also purifies our consciousness.

By relishing the sacred food of Krishna prasadam, it purifies our heart and protects us from falling into illusion. In this way, the devotee imbibes the spiritual potency of Lord Krishna and becomes cleansed of sinful reactions by eating food that is first offered in sacrifice to God. We thus also become free from reincarnation, the continued cycle of life and death. This process prepares us for entering the spiritual world since the devotees there also relish eating in the company of Krishna.

Not only do we make advancement, but also all of the plants that are used in the preparations as an offering to God are also purified and reap spiritual benefit. However, we become implicated in karma if we cause the harm of any living being, even plants, if we use them for food without offering them to God. Thus prasadam also becomes the perfect yoga diet.

Therefore, the cooking, the offering and then the respectful eating or honoring of this spiritualized food all become a part of the joyful process of devotional service to the Lord. Anyone can learn to do this and enjoy the happiness of experiencing prasadam. The Sunday love feast in the Hare Krishna temples is the opportunity in which everyone can participate in this opulence of Lord Krishna. So we invite you to attend as often as you like and make spiritual advancement simply by relishing Krishna prasadam.

SriMahalaxmi and Deepavali

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Deepavali as celebrated from Dhanatrayodashi (ashwayuja krishna trayodashi) onwards till , Kartika tritiya is the most glamorous festival among all celebrations. On dhana trayodashi people buy gold and other precious articles as a sign of increased prosperity from then onwards day by day. Usually gambling is prohibited by shastras ,it leads to sin. but on Dhanatrayodashi no sin is incurred by gambling , a symbolic win on this day indicates a profitable year.

Ashwayuja Amavasya Deepavali:this day evening Mahalaxmi is prayed in various forms. Traders pray their accounts book ,close all their dealings and make a fresh start.This day is celebrated with gait and pomp with

all relatives. sweets ,gold ornaments,lights,crackers lit up entire country to a huge celebrative mood , refreshing all and everyone.

Bali Pratipada: This day is very auspicious and any work undertaken on this day before evening definitely results in success.This day an oil bath gives rejeunation and disappearance of all diseases. Lord Vaman appeared on this day sent Bali to Patal Loka and blesses him with the seat of Indra in the next manvantara cycle.This marks the new year for salivahan saka,vikram saka.Offering many deepas(lights) on this day in avari (rows) gives immense punya.

Yama Dwitiya : On this day Yama gave classic sermon on sanctity of brother-sister relationship .He preached his sister Yamuna that , Elder brother is like a father to a sister, there should not be any sexual inclinations towards each other, this marks the highest sanctity in civilization . Instead he should look for an able groom and hand over his sister in marriage. This day sisters pray for long life of brothers invite them to their houses and offer all sweet preparations

Bhagini Tritiya : This day brothers bring their sisters to their own house and celebrate with offering her clothes , sweets, gold,and other things of honour .On this day Yamuna prayed Yama for good progeny and healthy married life.

Dwitiya is a bhadra tithi that keeps everything safe. investments on this day keeps wealth steady . Tritiya is a jaya tithi and to obtain success this day is very apt for gains etc

Thus deepavali is a string of festivals where Mahalaxmi literally takes a tour of the places where she is worshipped and the effect of glory, prosperity, and wealth and happiness is seen at every doorstep that invites her with a lamp ,and lamps and rows of lamps **Deep (lamp) Avari (rows)**.

Krishna Satyabhama and Narakachaturdashi

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Triumph of Krishna over Narakasura with the help of Satyabhama ,is celebrated as Narakchaturdashi .Shrikrishna killed Narkasura who was like a big forest ,snatched his earrings and gave it back to Diti devi .There he saw Parijat tree in swarga.Parijata is a celestial tree whose flowers emanate a very pleasant aroma ,very dear to Lord. One must not use flowers ,that have been picked up from the ground, to the feet of Hari., but Parijata is exception.it can be offered in any form to Krishna,who fought with Indra and brought the tree to the earth.

A bath after applying oil on the body in the early hours of Narakchaturdashi ,washes off all the sins.Chaturdashi is a riktha tithi, any act which requires thorough riddance should be carried on riktha tithi. the other riktha tithis are , chaturthi,navami. chaturthi is chosen to get rid of obstacles.navami is used to get rid of instability. chaturdashi rids one from all sins.

Krishnarpana

Dashavatar and Astrology

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Sage Parashara says , in every human body ,there is Parmatma amsa and Jeevatma amsa. Ther is no difference with respect to parmatma and parmatma amsa , amsa and amsi of Pamatma are same. But same

cannot be said about the Jeeva. Amsa and amsi of Jeevatma are different . When Only Parmatma amsa takes over , it is declared as Avatara. Every Avatara also emanates from full manifestation of each planet .From

1. Sun, God came as Rama
2. Moon ,God came as Krishna
3. Mars , God came as Narsimha
4. Mercury,God came as Buddha
5. Jupiter ,God came as Vaman
6. Sukra God came as Parsuram
7. saturn manifested as Kurma
8. Rahu took avatar as Varaha
9. Ketu God came as matsya
10. when saptarishi enters cancer with jupiter in it , Kalki is born to clean the earth of mletchhas , who would be all but size of human thumb with maximum longevity of only 20 years.

when sun rises with moon also entering cancer along with jupiter and saptarishi in cancer along with star agasthya,kaliyuga ends and Satyayuga starts again .Saptarishis descend on earth to recreate this progeny who would be again 28 ft in height and longevity of 1 lakh years, Dharma will be totally on its four feet ,there will be no need to cultivate as crops will be available 12 months ,no rainfall would be necessary , precious gems will be used in day today life. There would be peace everywhere. The great Manu will be born again and from him his sons would be known as \manavs\ .

1. "Matsya"(the fish) will come to save Vedas from madhu and kaitabh
2. Devas and Rakshasas will agree to skim the ocean for nectar "Kurma" (the tortoise)comes to hold the mount Meru for churning.
3. Hiranyaksha abducts prithvi into the ocean "Varaha"(the boar) kills Hiranyaksha and lifts the Prithvi from his tusk.
4. "Narsimha"(half lion-half man) emerges from a Pillar to kill Hiranyaksha and graces Prahlada.
5. "Vamana"(the dwarf) turns into "Trivikrama"(the dimensionless) to stop Bali.
6. "Parsurama"(Bramhin with axe) destroys all kshatriyas 21 times kills Kartyaviryaarjuna.
7. "Rama"(one who attract everyone's minds) The King slays Ravana and Kumbhakarna
8. "Krishna"(one who reduces the crest of demons) Kills Shishupal and Dantavakra
9. "Buddha" (the all knowing) destroys Tripurasura .
10. "Kalki" destroys all the mletchhas.

Pati ,Patni aur Jyotish-[Husband,wife and Astrology]

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

One of the astrological principle is , if the two people involved have friendly moon signs or ascendants , they become good friends, relationship between them is harmonious and happy. According to astrology seventh sign is that which describes wife.Seventh lord if it is friendly to ascendant lord then husband and wife will be coherent. But strangely no sign in astrology has its seventh as a friendly sign.

1. Aries < libra neutral/neutral
2. taurus <scorpio neutral/neutral
3. gemini <sagittarius enemy/enemy
4. cancer<capricorn neutral/enemy
5. leo < aquarius enemy/enemy

5. virgo<pisces enemy/enemy

thus we can see nowhere freindship is found between the two signs showing this relationship can never be friendly and harmonious except when aries /libra taurus/scorpio pair have in their respective horoscopes ,venus and mars within four signs .This would make them temporary friends , and man woman can have very happy life. Incidentally , aries /scorpio is ruled by mars and libra /taurus belongs to venus. So it is only venus and mars pairs that can get happy in a marriage , all others brave a at the most neautral reallationship with either one of them dominating. This is perhaps a great balance levered by God to induce a person to seek other world , else man would never ever want to leave this world , when he is happy with his wife . He would like to have his time freeze forever . So what are a happy marriage combinations?

1. seventh lord exalted in kendra
2. aspect of jupiter on seventh house
3. arudha lord and upapada lord in mutual angles
4. jupiter in second from upapada
5. jupiter and moon in seventh from karkamsa
6. Venus exalted/own house in other than seventh.
7. venus seventh lord and seventh in Navamsa well disposed.

moon in the seventh house gives shy and soft spoken wife . Sun gives wife who is always ready to pack bags to her mother's house.mars gives a short tempered wife.mercury gives a clever and communicative wife.Jupiter gives a pious ,knowledged and well mannered wife.venus gives a voluptuous wife with very attractive features but spoils happiness in married life . saturn gives if placed well a religious wife ,if otherwise a sickly woman,if afflicted, an elder woman as wife.

Mars in seventh and fourth if unaspected by jupiter shortens marital life. Saturn denies marriage. Saturn with venus , aspect of saturn on seventh or rahu in seventh delays marriage. association of ketu with venus or seventh brings many obstacles in marriage. A good wife indicates a person also enjoys good food . If somebody has abundance of Ghee and butter it indicates he will invariably marry a good girl . Those who eat in golden plates marry well. Those who are happy in marriage are also successful in transactions, travels,and almost always recover lost wealth. Marriages happen only by the will of destiny, when marriage yoga occurs irrespective of time, position and wealth ,marriages takes place. Like Draupadi marrying unknown, ordinary appearing, men ; who had won her swayamvar.

King Drupad worried as to who had won the hand of his daughter, sent his son Dhrustadhyumna to spy on the Pandavas in disguise.(Pandavas were thought as dead in Laksha graha , their last rites were also performed) .Dhrushtdhyumna finds that these men, though looking like ordinary people, were speaking extraordinarily and their gaits were kingly ,yet they were wearing a dress of brahmins, but living like ordinary peasants. to test them Drupad prepares four houses suitable for four castes.

1. one with all the stores of articles for homa and yagnya
2. second with arms and the articles of weaponry
3. third full of wealth/cattle
4. last full of grains and pots

pandavas enter second one ,giving immense pleasure to Drupad ,who asks why they were living a simple life when they were kshatriyas. To this Yudhistira replied "oh King you had not declared swayamwar only for kshatriyas ,ordinary men could also take part. Now are you repenting that? "

Then Yudhistira told they were pandavas ,to give immense pleasure to Drupad. Though a King, Pandavas married everytime they were either in exile or forest, in ordinary circumstances.

One should marry good people ,giving preference to the qualities rather than pomp and show. King Manu gave away his daughter to a Hermit in the forest ,after he came to know that he was the best in the qualities, instead of giving his daughter to a prince. Princess served her husband for many years in forest without having any pleasure since rishi was engaged in penance . Both grew older and when rishi realised he had not given any happiness to his wife and they had got older now , he acquired youth through penance for both himself and wife and enjoyed bodily pleasures for hundred thousand years by creating palaces , gardens, rivers through his mystical powers. and in the process creating the entire clan of human mankind. Thus is told the story of first man and woman who procreated manyfolds thus fortifying the belief of MANU.

Shri Krishna,Astrology and Arjuna: The great Pandava

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Arjuna was born in utaraphalguni nakshatra in the moon sign Virgo.This sign is compatible with taurus hence Arjuna was very close to Krishna born in taurus.Krishna explained Bhagavadgeetha to him,showed his Vishwaroopa to him. Arjuna could fight simultaneously with 10000 warriors , Arjuna single handedly defeated entire Kaurava army consisting of Bheeshma, Karna, Duryodhana, Ashwatthama,Kripacharya,Dronacharya,Shalya,etc, thrice before Mahabharatha war . Arjuna had the great Gandeeva bow , which was 22000 kgs in weight , it could simultaneously expel eight kinds of arrows

1. moorcha
2. mohana
3. bhranthi
4. one that creates dazzling light
5. one which multiplies in arrow after it leaves into thousands
5. one which releases spirits and pisacha
7. maya
3. one which induces tendency of suicide in the opponent.

Arjuna was very handsome,and expert in dancing and singing and disguising.Arjuna had a long belly as a result of which ,he always kept travelling and missing family life.Arjuna had many wives too . Subhadra was most dear to Him. He had another wife from Tripura (kaamroopa desh) He had a son Babruvahan from her. He had another son who was incarnation of mars from Uluchi. These both sons of Arjuna unknowingly bring death blow to Him.

Man according to astrology is born with a initial longevity at birth. A man can live maximum of 120 years and five days on earth. If one is careless with life , one can get premature death(apamrutyu). In case of premature death , one has to wander bodyless on the very earth till he allocated longevity is exhausted. Hence one has to take precaution with respect to safety of the self. Also every person born on this earth is allocated some work /achievements to accomplish. If his accomplishments are exemplary w.r.t efforts he puts in, God extends his life expectancy towards a full of 120 years .

Arjuna defied death many times in his life. every time he died he was brought back to life by Krishna. such incidents are

1. Laksha graha,(Bheema sena saves him by taking him on his shoulders)
2. Yaksha prashna (Yaksha Yama brings him back to life)
3. Combat with Pasupati(Shiva blesses him with Pashupati astra)
4. Combat with Babruvahan(krishna bringsback to life)
5. Combat with son of Uluchi(krishna brings back to life)
5. Curse of Urvashi (he turns Transvestite , krishna makes it appear as a boon to him in vanavasa)

7. Jarasandha chooses Bheemasena to fight instead of Arjuna(krishna influences his choice)
3. Combat with Karna (nagastra) [Krishna saves him by pressing his chariot one inch below ground ,thus astra hits crown]
9. To bring back son of Bramhana (Krishna takes him Narayana loka ,shows him NaraNarayana)
10. Attempt at suicide before killing Jayadrath (saved by krishna by stopping sunset with SudarshanChakra)
11. Attempt at suicide for not being able to Kill Yudhistira , as latter had insulted Gandiva.(Saved by Krishna, who asks him to praise himself [akin to suicide])
12. Combat with Shalya (Krishna asks him step back to attain victory)
13. Combat with Bhargavdatta(use of vaishnavastra Krishna taking it on himself as garland)
14. Use of shakti by Karna on Ghatotkacha (thus saving Arjuna)
15. Burning of Chariot after Mahabharatha war (Krishna asks Arjuna to step down first , and then steps down later after which chariot burns up)
16. Duryodhan chooses Bheemasena to fight his last battle.(Krishna uses his maya avoids Arjun)
17. Bramhastra by ashwatthama (Krishna asks Ashwatthana to divert his brahmastra)
18. Ashwatthama killing all upandavas thinking they are Pandavas.(Krishna takes Arjun away to another place.)

Arjuna was saved many times from death,death like situations,and even after certain death he was brought back to Life. And all this because it was his progeny , son of Abhimanyu (which Krishna wanted to save to rule the earth) , Parikshit who ruled the earth after MAhabharath , with great rulers like Janmejey ,shatanik,sahasranik, and finally Kshemak ruling this earth in the lineage of Somavansha , Pandavas.for 1000 years .

The other names of Arjuna are

1. Arjuna
2. anagha
3. kapidhwaja [he had Hanuman on his Flag]
4. kurushrestha
5. kurunandan[born in lineage of kuru]
6. kurupravir
7. kaunteya [son of kunthi]
3. gudakesha [performed penance alone in a cave on indrakeela parvat without food and sleep for pasupatastra]
9. dhananjay
10. dhanurdhar
11. parantap
12. Parth
13. purushvyaghra
14. purusharshabha
15. Bharath
16. Mahabaho
17. Pandava
18. Bharathshreshta
19. Bharathsattam
20. savyasachi [one who can leave arrows from both hands simultaneously]
21. Phalguna.

Shri Krishna,Astrology and HIS 16108 wives

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Shri Krishna was born in rohini nakshatra with a moon sign taurus. People born in this star are inimical to maternal uncles. Kamsa was maternal uncle of Shri Krishna whom shri krishna killed to relieve earth of a vile demon. Krishna was born when taurus was rising with moon and venus in it. seventh lord mars exalted in capricorn (9th house) , saturn exalted in libra (6th house) since 10th was in sixth Krishna never had a kingdom of his (all though entire universe is his kingdom shown by exalted 10 th house). Sun was in leo the 4th house. exaltation of seventh lord alongwith its dipositor with venus in own house ,and aspect of moon on seventh makes one have innumerable wives. **Lord krishna had 16108 wives. Aspect of moon and venus on seventh house also makes one have affairs.** Krishna gave sexual pleasure to a kubja . He had rasaleela with gopika stree and Radha in gokula although he was only ten years old then .(kishoreavastha) . Lord exists in everyone , it is he only who primarily enjoys in a Human body and gives enjoyment to the soul too. He existed even in husbands of the gopika stree(s). there was nothing he did not know about their bodies as their husband , or there was nothing extra/new that they could offer to Krishna in the absence of their husbands. Hence Krishna did not have any allegations on him on account of these affairs. Look at the aspect of exalted Jupiter from third house on seventh. Aspect or association of jupiter with seventh house gives rise to **shuchi** yoga ie. one who is extremely clean with respect to sexual conduct. HE does not indulge in Vyabichara or illicit sex . Also this yoga gives one a pious and obedient wife Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Neela, Mitravinda, lakshana, Kalindi, Bhadra devi. and 16100 kanyas released from the prison of Jarasandha. 16108 wives.

Shri krishna married Neeladevi in a swayamvara , that was more difficult than Draupadi swayamvar. In Draupadi swayamvar a warrior was supposed to pierce the eye of the fish fixed on rotating disc by aiming at the reflection of the disc in the water kept in a bowl below the disc. Arjuna successfully claimed Draupadi.

But in Neela swayamvar , the fish was on the upper side of the rotating disc. The mirror in which the reflection need be seen was fixed below the disc to the ground. there was a hole in the disc .The warrior had to watch the fish on the ceiling mirror once , hit his arrow through the hole observing it in the below mirror , it should get broken by another arrow hit through the hole and then when the broken arrow is in its trail downwards, it should pierce the fish. Only Krishna could accomplish this feat rest all fail . Showing superiority of Krishna.

Rama Astrology and Hanuman

By paramahansa Dr. Rupnathji

Hanuman was born in Poorvabhadra nakshatra. Meena Rasi , moon sign Pisces . Since this sign is 9th in an angle (kona) to cancer, this shows natural compatibility with Ram . His thoughts matched that of Rama, his actions were acceptable and in accordance with Rama's plan. Hanuman born in cancer ascendant with jupiter in ascendant in simhasanamsa , saturn in devalokamsa , and mars in paravatamsa , indicates limitless longevity , he is still living in Kimpurush Khanda of Bhuloka. Lord Ram dedicated his Roopa to Hanuman to exclusively worship.

Person born in cancer ascendant with jupiter and moon there, with venus and mercury in angles enjoy limitless longevity amitaayu. All people with extraordinary longevity are born , when cancer rises and few brilliant combinations. Other ascendants invariably kills man.

Hanuman never faced any death like situation in his entire avatara, even bramhastra also only bound him (that he permitted it). His tail was set afire , did agni (fire) cause him any heat and burn? No. Hanuman was hotter than Fire , how ? **Lanka was a fire poof city , ordinary fire could not burn it , then Hanuman burnt Lanka . Was it with fire in his tail (no chance) , He burnt it with heat (tezas) emanating from**

his body. He killed 85 crore rakshas in ashoka vatika in just an hour . Later he killed 1/3 of the Ravana's army. What an assault!Single handedly.

When Indrajit used Nagapasha astra , whole of the vanar sena(monkey army) died. Laxmana fell unconscious , Rama too became immovable ,closed his eyes , sumanta(brahaspati), jambavanta (immortal) was also immobilized but were breathing.

here interesting dialogue takes place between brahaspati and dharmajambavanta . Brahaspati says” oh elder one , all of us were fooled by this mortal Rama , we all thought he was God and followed HIM to this war , Indrajit has finished the entire army, look Rama is also lying dead. You were wise and elder to all of us ,how could you mislead us all into this misfortune , lying and waiting for death in the battlefield. I say there is no GOD ,else how come these Asuras have triumphed today , we supposedly fighting for Dharma (righteousness) have failed miserably.”

[Brahaspati is author of the great nyaya shastra (Logic) , which essentially undermines presence of GOD. his comments reflect this atheist conclusion]

Jambavan(represents Dharma) replies ” oh learned priest , you are mistaken , my experience cannot betray me , Lord Rama is indeed God , here He might be enacting some leela.(playful act).just look around and see if anyone is alive “.

Brahaspati says” All are dead except Hanuman who seem to be intact ” Jambavan says ” then we are all are intact just take shelter in Hanuman , have faith in him , we will be out of troubles”.

When these were engaged in fruitless discussion , Hanuman spared no time in flying to Himalayas to bring sanjeevani . Himalayas are two , one beyond Kashmir ,uttaranchal , and another bordering BharatKhanda and Kimpurush khanda. Hanuman looks for herbs since they are not visible(these herbs make themselves visible to the needy) Even when God's army needed these herbs showed arrogance hence Hanuman uprooted entire mountain,

Now a mountain means an entire ecosystem. There are tribes living on a mountain, animals ,trees many inhabitants with their houses ,children and flora and fauna. Uprooting it would mean bringing an earthquake like situation, creating chaos and danger to this ecosystem. These living beings on this mountain would be left devastated, uprooting would leave a big hole there on the earth . Did Hanuman disturb this creatures on the mountain?

No , Hanuman executed a lateral blow to the Mountain such that it slid on to his fist without even disturbing a smallest pebble stone on the mountain, the cut left no hole but a clean level playground.Hanuman flew towards Lanka,mountain had fourherbs,Sashailikarni.

Savrittikarni,Savarnikarni,and Sanjeevani These herbs acted just by their smell alone, application of herbs was not necessary.

In a war many weapons and missiles are used , some pierce body and break bone and cuts and wounds and some die. If some one injured is treated , his bones may be set, his cuts may be stitched , but still he would look horrible ,disfigured and would perhaps prefer death than this ugliness, His mental wounds would never be pacified. So much for a WAR.

These herbs automatically removes pieces of missiles from the body(sashailikarni), sets the bones stronger(savrittikarni), stitches the wounds and brings back normal skin color and hue (savarnikarni) and if somebody's dead it brings them back to life(sanjeevani) . Hanuman brings all of these (entire army) back to

life . Laxmana is also cured . brahaspati and jambavan recover , Hanuman does not go back to himalaya to keep the mountain. He tosses the mountain playfully with his left hand such that it sits back at its original place more intactly than before without disturbing anyone

All this happened in a just three NIMISHA . nimisha is a time taken by a person to wink his eyelids . even before one could wink thrice , whole army was upright and more charged and waiting to finish Indrajit. What a feat by Hanuman ! A mans' accomplishments earns appreciation only when we know how difficult the task was, how remote was a possibility of the solution, and how perfectly it was executed and how easily it was achieved , speaks volumes of the intelligence , valour, capacity, strength and knowledge of Hanuman.

After this Hanuman garlands Lord Rama with both hands and takes almost 1 1/2 hour to complete this task.(This for him was more serious and important task requiring his greater attention)

Philosophic interpretation of the above incident: There are times in this world when evil takes over reigns , everything is smashed , even GOD appears to be silent , people with usual and ordinary intellect declare non existence of truth . All can get smashed but knowledge and Dharma still survives.(jambavan) Hanuman.(devotion, unattachement, divine teachings) always remain intact. We face many such situation in life when there is only gloom and no hopes , God does not seem to help us , we think o HIM as otherwise, There seems to be no solution to our problems. Solution if one exists, it is highly remote(like himalayas) and sometimes unthinkable (like sanjeevani miraculous does not appear). but instead of arguing about our misfortunes and debating on presence of GOD (like brahaspati) , if we stick to devotion and think of Hanuman (like jambavan) , however impossible our state may be . however impossible the recovery may be , He is going to get it for us in just three winks , even before you finish your worship, your sanjeevani is there to rejuvenate you .In this world when we are attacked with evil designs, misfortunes, our state of mind is beyond repair, even if we seek some worldly remedies our state is still disfigured like a wounded soldier in the war.

But think of Hanuman , all your problems are solved . This incident Rama has enacted only to highlight Hanuman. Thinking of God present elsewhere doesn't Help people , Thinking of God as present in Hanuman brings invincible results .

Such is the greatness of Hanuman Jai Hanuman .

Moola nakshatra -The story of chandrasahsa

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

During Mahabharata era there lived a very just and benign ruler called Chandrasahsa. He was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. Chandrasahsa was born to a king in the star of MOOLA with moon sign Sagittarius. This star is considered very inauspicious. It is said to wipe out entire clan after the birth of the child , child himself faces premature death . People of this star either live a wretched life or kingly life of high gains and successful accomplishments..if successful , they later on establish a great unhindered race . (all extremes) Girls born in these star usually marry boys whose father has expired. It is inauspicious for Father in law.

These people usually have six fingers or toes.

Chandrasahsa too had six toes. As he was born, the kingdom was attacked and king died in the battlefield , queen succumbed to the news . Minister took charge as the caretaker and wanted to usurp the kingdom. so he ordered henchman to kill the baby. These mercenaries took the boy to the jungle , feeling pity at the child cut off his sixth toe , smeared their swords with the blood as proof and left the boy in the jungle. baby was crying as villagers carried him to the village and he grew up as a village boy. one day as boy was playing with

pebbles , he found a strange pebble with which he could win almost all pebbles of his fellowbeings in the game. He carefully preserved this stone into his mouth day and night. This stone was Saligrama of Lord Vishnu.

With daily oblations to lord in the mouth he became purified.. His body lustre grew day by day. Nearby King Vikramasena was issueless .so he asked astrologers to examine the chart of the lusturous boy , whether he is fit to be king to be adopted. Astrologers declared him to be a blessed child . King adopted Chandrahasa , Chandrahasa prayed to Saligrama with devotion every day . One day neighboring King (earlier minister Durbuddhi) happened to visit the kingdom , stunned by the boy's appearance and also witnessing his sixth toe(cutoff) sensed danger to his kingdom. So he hatched a plan to finish this boy. He pleaded the Vikramsena that he had forgotten an important document , would like to fetch it,if he could send his adopted son to get it for Him. (Minister-king) Durbuddhi wrote a letter asking his son **to give "Visha" (poison) to the bearer of this letter.**

Chandrahasa rode a horse and went to the Durbuddhi's Kingdom. Near the palace ,he took rest in the nearby garden and fell asleep.Durbuddhi had a beautiful daughter "Vishala" by name. She also visits the garden , falls in love with a **sleeping lustrous prince** . She curiously reads the letter he held , sensing her fathers' treachery , she adds "la" to the word "Visha" with her kajal (eye liner). now the text becomes

Give "Vishala" to the bearer of this letter.

son happy at his Fathers' decision , announces marriage in the state. invitaion is sent to Vikramasena as well . \shocked everyone came to the capital. Durbuddhi still wanting to kill Chandrahasa , asks him to visit the family temple outside the capital as ritual. He sets up two henchmen to hack the first person who appears in the temple.

Chandrahasa gets ready towards the temple , Vishala's brother insists that he will accompany and enters first the temple to be hacked by the henchmen. Durbuddhi becomes inconsolable and repents for the entire misdeeds, asks pardon to Chandrahasa . Chandrahasa prays goddess Durga to bring back the life of Son of Durbuddhi ,since it was his misfortune that got exchanged with durbuddhi , due to his extreme devotion to Saligrama. Devi obliged , Vishala married chandrahas. He ruled for 900 years, where in his kingdom ,everyone was a vaishnava and no sorrows were known.

One day Arjuna along with Krishna came to conquer Chandrahasa . hearing about Krishna , Chandrahasa ran outskirts to pay his respects to Krishna . Arjuna angrily said "what Kshatriya are you ,I have come to win your part of the world , and you are insanely crying looking at Krishna .Take your arms and Fight."

900 year old man says to 46 year old Arjuna , "hey mighty pandav , with lord of the entire world by your side ,which world are you set-about to conquer . is there any world beyond Krishna ? so i pray to HIM , you may kill me if you wish. "

Krishna intervenes and blesses Chandrahasa , Arjuna is ashamed at his childishness , makes peace with Chandrahasa.

Thus Chandrahasa changed his destiny of shortlife and misfortune with great fortune and divine blessings by the worship of Saligrama Vishnu.

Ram ,Astrology and Ravan-3

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Rama along with his brothers and His Father Dasharath shared his moon sign cancer. On the day of coronation cancer sign was afflicted with sun mars and rahu , this affliction brings immense difficulties to all the five. Dasharath falls sick and eventually dies out of grief of parting with son. Rama had to undergo exile, Bharat rejected kingdom settled in nandigram as a hermit . Lakshmana followed Rama , Shatrughna served Bharath. What a great brothers never again in History such exemplary brothers will be seen with unmatched sacrifice in their course to Dharma.

All in all affliction of moon sign with 3 or more malefics , brings dangers to the native.

When in vanavasa Rama's wife was abducted by Ravana. Sugreeva gets his kingdom from Vali with the help of Rama . Sugreeva promises Rama to help find Sita. All of them wait for good days to come (full three months till rainy season is over) Why should Lord Rama wait for three months without action when his wife was missing ? only to look for good time ! to allow Sugreeva to enjoy his kingdom.

Then when Jatayu , his elder brother Sampathi had already told Sita was taken away by Ravana ,still monkeys were sent in ten groups to ten different different directions . though everyone knew Ravana's Lanka was in the south.

1. though a man is expert in some field . He should always resort to ten secondary options while executing a Plan.you never know what can go wrong .lesson one. No overconfidence.
2. Human has right only on prayatna .his prayatna should be tenfolds in ten ways.
3. though Ravana lives in south Lanka , he might have kept Sita somewhere else , a thief hides his hiest at a place other than his home.
4. but gives his ring only to Hanuman ,sent to Lanka.

incidentally Lanka is not Srilanka .Srilanka is simhala dwEEP according to varaha purana. Lanka was on trikuta parvat beyond malayachal . moreover Hanuman had jumped 100 yojana in sea to reach Lanka . that is 8*28*100miles. srilanaka is very near.Vibheeshana is chiranjeevi and is still ruling Lanka ,as 5150 years ago when Rajsuya yagnya was performed by Yudhishthira , to conquer entire universe , even lanka had to be conquered , since Lord Rama had devised a boulder to prevent others/humans entering Lanka , Ghatotkacha son of Bheema goes aerially and asks Vibheeshana to accept superiority of Pandavas as an order from Krishna who is none other than Rama of tretayuga. This incident tells us there is Lanka other than Srilanka.

Rama killed Ravan in a muhurtha called Vijay , hence the name VijayaDasami.

RAM ,Astrology and Ravan-2

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

Shri Rama was born in Punarvasu star , lakshmana and Shatrughna were twins born in Ashlesha , Bharat was born in Pushyami . Pushyami comes before Ashlesha hence Bharat was elder to Lakshmana by a day. Though All were born with same planetary combination as Ram ,only Ram ruled . This highlights the point that mere exaltation of planets alone do not ensure the kingship. Here navamsa comes into play , even if one planet is in enemy's house or debilitation in navamsa , man has to serve somebody.one who does not have such planets in navamsa leads his life independently.

Ravana was born as his father copulated with kaikasi, in the evening. Cohabitation during prohibited hours give cruel offsprings. This brings into importance nisheka lagna(the time of coitus).

so what determines the characteristics of a person. time of coitus of parents or birth time. birth time can be , appearance of head of the child, cutting of umbilical chord, or crying of the child or placing the child down.

According to sage parashar , mans' character is dependent on,

1. genes of the father
2. genes of mother
3. time of the birth
4. association and upbringing

the strength of the above being in the ascending order. Man who is in good association develops good qualities irrespective of his birth. But an evil man cannot become good ,like however you raise a neem tree you wont get sweet fruits on it. a snake even after drinking milk gives out poison. So avoid evil association.

Ravana was born 36000 years before Rama ,At that time parshuram was also born but he did not kill ravana , God took another avatar of Rama to kill Ravana, even sita was born before Rama . but sita married Ram at the age of eight when Ram was 24 years. How is that possible?

As sita was born she was taken away to Bramha loka, when you pass a single day there here many years pass away on the earth.As ram was born and became adult sita was discovered by Janak as a baby while ploughing hence name Sita.King janak was 99000 years old as he was a true karmayogi.

Why do we worship Kalasha ?

By paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji

First of all what is a kalasha? A brass, mud or copper pot is filled with water. Mango leaves are placed in the mouth of the pot and a coconut is placed over it. A red or white thread is tied around its neck or sometimes all around it in a intricate diamond-shaped pattern. The pot may be decorated with designs. Such a pot is known as a kalasha.

When the pot is filled with water or rice, it is known as purnakumbha representing the inert body which when filled with the divine life force gains the power to do all the wonderful things that makes life what it is.

A kalasha is placed with due rituals on all-important occasions like the traditional house warming (grihapravesa), wedding, daily worship etc. It is placed near the entrance as a sign of welcome. It is also used in a traditional manner while receiving holy personages. Why do we worship the kalasha? Before the creation came into being, Lord Vishnu was reclining on His snake-bed in the milky ocean. From His navel emerged a lotus from which appeared Lord Brahma, the creator, who thereafter created this world.

The water in the kalasha symbolizes the primordial water from which the entire creation emerged. It is the giver of life to all and has the potential of creating innumerable names and forms, the inert objects and the sentient beings and all that is auspicious in the world from the energy behind the universe. The leaves and coconut represent creation.

The thread represents the love that "binds" all in creation. The kalasha is therefore considered auspicious and worshipped. The waters from all the holy rivers, the knowledge of all the Vedas and the blessings of all the deities are invoked in the kalasha and its water is thereafter used for all the rituals, including the abhisheka.

The consecration (kumbhaabhisheka) of a temple is done in a grand manner with elaborate rituals including the pouring of one or more kalashas of holy water on the top of the temple. When the asuras and devas churned the milky ocean, the Lord appeared bearing the pot of nectar, which blessed one with everlasting life.

Thus the kalasha also symbolizes immortality. Men of wisdom are full and complete as they identify with the infinite Truth (poornatvam). They brim with joy and love and respect all that is auspicious. We greet them with a purnakumbha ("full pot") acknowledging their greatness and as a sign of respectful and reverential welcome, with a "full heart".

Navratri



This is the golu display in my maama's house .

Navratri is a Hindu festival of worship and dance. In Sanskrit, the word "Nava" means nine and "Ratri" means Nights . During these nine nights and ten days , nine forms of Goddess Durga / Goddess Shakti are worshipped and are as follows :



- Shailputri
- Brahmacharini
- Chandraghanta
- Kushmanda
- Skanda Mata
- Katyayani
- Kalratri
- Maha Gauri
- Siddhidatri.

Traditions and Rituals of Navratri :

The festival of Navratri is celebrated twice in a year. Once in the Hindi month of Chaitra (March - April) and again in the month of Ashwin , (Puratasi , September - October) . And this festival is celebrated in different ways throught India.

In North India : There are five Navratris devoted to the worship of Goddess Shakthi. of which only three are celebrated now :

- Sharad Navaratri / Maha Navratri - September to October
- Vasant Navaratri - March to April
- Ashada Navaratri / Guhya Navratri - July to August

The sharad navaratri culminates Dussehra and Durga pooja. The Dussehra of Kulu in Himachal Pradesh is particularly famous in the North. In Westbanganal of Eastern India, the last four days of sharad Navratri is celebrated in grand manner as Durga pooja. This is biggest festival of the state. Exquisitely decorated clay idols of Goddess Durga depicting her slaying the demon Mahisasura are set up in temples and other places. These idols are worshipped for five days and then immersed in river. In Western India of Gujarat, Navratri is celebrated with the famous Garba dance.

In **Southern state** of Tamilnadu and to a lesser extent part of Andhra Pradesh, Navaratri is called as Kolu or Golu. The word Kolu is originated from the word in Tamil : Kolu and Telugu : Koluva, which means a sovereign sitting in his royal darbar. It commences on the Amavasya day of the month of Bhadrapada / Puratasi. On the Amavasya day after finishing the rituals, like offering tarpana etc. the custom is, to keep the Kalash filled with rice, toor dal, haldi sticks, betel leaves and nuts or mango leaves with a coconut on it. The most important thing is to keep two wooden dolls specially brought from Tirupathy. The wooden dolls are anointed with oil and bathed and decorated as bride and groom. The right muhurtam is chosen before placing the Kalash and the dolls for worship, with which the Kollu festival begins. The dolls are given to the girl from her parents during her marriage and are called "**Marapachi Bommai**". From this day she starts collecting dolls and observes the ceremony annually from South. Marapachi means a special kind of wood which has medicinal value too and Bommai meant dolls. This is done by constructing wide tiers or steps in any odd number, maximum being Nine. From the day the married girl gets the Marapachi Bommai.

And in Karnataka, Dasara also called "Navaratri" is the most extravaganza



ant festival of Mysore. This festival has been celebrated in Mysore with great pomp and show since centuries. This tradition is still carried on. According to Hindu mythology the festival celebrates and commemorates the victory of Goddess Chamundeswari after slaying the demon Mahishasura and the triumph of good over evil. The Dasara festivities have become an integral part of the culture and life in Mysore.

To celebrate this festival they light up the Palace of Mysore with more than 10,000 lights during that period. Which is of course a treat to the eyes.

The first three days of Navratri :

These days are devoted to the worship of the Goddess Durga. Kumari, which signifies the girl child, is worshipped on the first day. Parvathi, who is the embodiment of a young woman is worshipped on the second day. Goddess Kali is worshipped on the third day, who represents the woman who has reached the stage of maturity.

Fourth to sixth days of Navratri :

The mother is adored as a giver of spiritual wealth, Goddess Lakshmi, who is considered to have the power of bestowing on her devotees inexhaustible wealth, as she is the Goddess of wealth.

Final three days :

On these days Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom is worshipped. Saraswati puja / Ayutha puja day, all the tools of the trade, pen, machinery, books,

automobiles, school, work are given rest and ritually worship them and fresh start on the last day which is considered as vijayadasami day. A period of introspection and purification, Navratri is traditionally an auspicious and religious time for starting new ventures.

In the following procedure the steps are arranged with dolls : (starting from top to Bottom)

Step 1 - 3 :

The clay dolls displayed are mostly from mythological characters. All Gods and Goddesses of our Epics and Puranas are displayed on the tiers which are beautifully decorated and look spectacular and colourful. For example, 'Garuda Vahana' i.e. God Narayan taken in Garuda Vahan or vehicle is kept. The Kumbham filled with fresh water and the kalash is covered with silk cloth and a coconut, mango leaves are placed on top of it. This is kept on first step.

Step 4 - 7 :

These steps are devoted to saints, demi Gods, great men and even national leaders. One of the items exhibited is the Marriage Set called "Melam Talam" i.e. the marriage procession of relations and friends led by musical players of clarinet (melam) and mridangam (talam). Then there is the Dashavatar set episodes from Ramayana and Krishna Leela. One can add more dolls but should not decrease the number. The festival lasts for nine days with arti, prayers Prasad daily mornings and evenings.

Step 8 & 9 :

The eighth step is devoted to various business and crafts dolls, like chettiar dolls - a businessman and his wife are seated and their commodities like rice, pulses and other utensils are kept in front of them.

The ninth step is the last step where the traditional woden dolls called marapachi bommai are kept. Dolls of animals, birds, reptiles and other forms of evolution are also kept on this step.

On the 10th night after the ceremonial arti and prayers, the dolls are put to 'sleep.' And the next day, the exhibits are packed carefully in cloth or paper and preserved for use the next year.

During these nine days ladies are invited and offered haldi kumkum, betel leaves with nuts and fruits. In the morning sweets and evening chundals' i.e. different chanas are offered to the ladies. During Kollu old traditional women observe "Valluku Anaya" Valluku meaning lamp and Anaya meaning not going up. That is the lamp or diya once lit is continuously kept burning for twenty-four hours for ten days. Some people observe it even today. On the tenth night after the ceremonial arti and prayers the, Marapachi' are put to sleep. And, the next day the exhibits are packed carefully in cloth or paper and preserved for use the next year. Vijay Dasami and Navratri are also the auspicious time for buying new clothes and feasting. Unlike other Vrats, there is no custom of fasting during Navratri Kollu.

Why do we have Prayer room ?

Most Indian homes have a prayer room or altar. A lamp is lit and the Lord worshipped each day. Other spiritual practices like japa - repetition of the Lord's name, meditation, paraayana - reading of the scriptures, prayers, and devotional singing etc are also done here. Special worship is done on auspicious occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, festivals and the like. Each member of the family - young or old - communes with and worships the Divine here. The Lord is the entire creation. He is

therefore the true owner of the house we live in too. The prayer room is the Master room of the house. We are the earthly occupants of His property. This notion rids us of false pride and possessiveness. The ideal attitude to take is to regard the Lord as the true owner of our homes and us as caretakers of His home. But if that is rather difficult, we could at least think of Him as a very welcome guest. Just as we would house an important guest in the best comfort, so too we felicitate the Lord's presence in our homes by having a prayer room or altar, which is, at all times, kept clean and well-decorated. Also the Lord is all pervading. To remind us that He resides in our homes with us, we have prayer rooms. Without the grace of the Lord, no task can be successfully or easily accomplished. We invoke His grace by communing with Him in the prayer room each day and on special occasions. Each room in a house is dedicated to a specific function like the bedroom for resting, the drawing room to receive guests, the kitchen for cooking etc. The furniture, decor and the atmosphere of each room are made conducive to the purpose it serves. So too for the purpose of meditation, worship and prayer, we should have a conducive atmosphere - hence the need for a prayer room. Sacred thoughts and sound vibrations pervade the place and influence the minds of those who spend time there. Spiritual thoughts and vibrations accumulated through regular meditation, worship and chanting done there pervade the prayer room. Even when we are tired or agitated, by just sitting in the prayer room for a while, we feel calm, rejuvenated and spiritually uplifted.

Why do we need to go Temples ?

God exists everywhere. So, a question may be asked why there should be any temples built for Him. We know that God exists everywhere, but still the idea does not get firmly established in our mind. It does not get reflected in our daily actions. If one remembers God all the time, how can one utter any falsehood or commit evil acts?

If God is merely omnipresent (Being present everywhere at once), how can He help us? We all long for His grace somehow. So, we have to worship Him and get His grace. But the agama-shastras tell us how this should be done. The sun's rays contain a lot of heat energy. If we keep a piece of cloth in the sun, it does not catch fire by itself. But if we place a lens and focus the sun's heat rays on that piece of cloth, after some time, we find that the cloth catches fire.

Similarly, electrical energy is everywhere, but in order to bring it to our daily use, we need to have generators to channel that energy and transmission systems to distribute it at the places where we need it. In the same way, in order to get the grace of the Omnipresent Lord, we have to build temples, where we can focus the power of the Lord in a consecrated idol for our benefit in an easy way.

In our temple, a huge temple bell is rung at the time of puja. This is done so that the evil spirits may go away from temple premises, and all abuses or other bad sounds may be stifled from being heard. In our houses, we do not have such a huge bell, but we ring only a small bell at the time of puja. But we do not offer musical instruments and other upacharas to the deity, but only akshata or unbroken rice.

The puja that we do in our houses is for our own welfare. We do it according to our convenience and, according to our mental frame of mind. But the puja done in the temples is for the whole of society and therefore, there is so much of fanfare, and

sounding of musical instruments and singing of auspicious tunes; the deity is taken out in a procession during festival days and there is display of fireworks.

We consider God as Rajadiraja or the king of all kings and so we offer him many upacharas such as umbrella, musical instruments, vahana and so on, which are all due to a king. The divine presence in our idols, when we worship them, helps us to banish poverty as well as evil. Thus, the idol with divinity which we see in our temples is an object of beauty for us, and worthy of meditation.

If our thoughts are of a high order, then we worship the deity in the above manner, so that we may get supreme happiness. It is with this idea that we perform abhisheka and decorate the idol with ornaments etc. Thus we worship God in these various ways by doing so many upacharas. This kind of worship is possible only in the Hindu religion.

Idol worship is very important in our religion, for the ordinary people. When we bow before an idol or pray before the deity consecrated in the idol, we never think that it is only a piece of stone, but we think that the deity in the idol is the protector and the root cause of the whole world.

Thus, temples help to increase the devotion of a person to God and this devotion helps him to overcome or reduce his sufferings.

Ordinary people may not have the capacity, and strength of mind to bear their sufferings. But with bhakti or devotion to Ishwara, they can face them, and get also the mental strength to bear them. It is for this purpose that an ordinary person goes to the temple. He goes there, offers some prayers and then he feels all right. If one person talks about his sufferings to another, the other man will listen to him for some time, but after some time he will start narrating his own sufferings and say that he is having more sufferings than other individuals. So, sharing one's sufferings with another person, who is also suffering, will not result in the removal of the sufferings.

Therefore, we go to temple and pray to Him, and we pour out before Him our tale of woe and sufferings.

Saguna worship has got this capacity to give peace of mind because there is chaitanya in the idol installed in the temple and after pouring out our suffering before God in the temple, we get some peace of mind. That is why we have the habit of going to the temples.

Of course, some people do not go to a temple at all, but they go to a river or a lonely place and weep there for some time and they then come back with peace of mind. People get peace of mind wherever there is no reaction to what they say. So, a suffering man goes only to those places where there is no reaction to what he says.

In ancient days, besides fulfilling the spiritual needs of a person, the temple was a place for secular learning, for lectures, dedication of music and dance. The temples of those days were like the community centres of today. Renovation and preservation of temples are rooted in our culture. They are symbols of faith which fetch peace and

have given our country, a distinct identity. Another significance of the temple is its structural representation of the human body. The temple represents the physical body and the heart is the Sanctum Sanctorum where we experience the Lord's presence.

In South Indian temples, even though the temple may be large, the main idol is kept in a small dark place. Only by offering a camphor light, the form of the Lord can be seen. The significance is thus explained. God who is seated in our heart is covered by the darkness of our ignorance. We do not see or know Him. The camphor burns all the negative tendencies and impressions in our minds. The fire of knowledge is kindled within us and the ego gets burnt. In the light of that Knowledge, we behold the Lord. Whatever we see with our eyes, goes into the heart. So now we have this new vision of Lord everywhere, in whatever we behold.

These temples are the great heritage of our country. Our country being a poor country, the needs of our people were very small, and therefore, they had built great structures like temples and temple gopurams to help people in their spiritual development.

Some people have a doubt whether they should go to temples daily, or not. Of course, it is absolutely necessary to do so. If one feels that daily it is not possible, at least doing Gopuram darshan is a must. In the olden days, people never used to have their food in their houses unless they heard the temple bell ringing at the time of the morning, noon, evening and night pujas to the Lord.

It is up to us therefore to nurture the divinity in the temples by ensuring that the pujas are performed properly and that the temple rituals are observed with diligence. We should see that the temple premises are kept clean and the deepa is lit every day. We should also see that the cloth that we offer to Lord is washed daily. If only we could ensure these things, automatically we shall be able to derive as much benefit, if not more, than what we get by the establishment of hospitals and other social welfare institutions.

The food that has been offered to the Lord becomes prasada, and our partaking this prasada indicates the blissful peace that we experience upon realization of God. Prasada means purity, cheerfulness, bliss and peace. That is what we gain after looking at the idol and experiencing peace in our hearts.

Since a temple is a place of divinity, of course we have to observe certain rules while we are in the precincts of the temple. All these rules have been prescribed only for our welfare and to preserve the sanctity of the temples. It is up to us all to observe these rules, protect and nurture the sanctity of our temples, which have been the greatest heritage.

Paramahansa Dr. Rupnathji says, all other religions say there is only one God, whereas Hindu religion says 'there IS God' .

(Will write as a separate posting about the do's and don'ts inside the temple. (rules))

Why do we offer food to Lord before eating ?

Indians make an offering of food to the Lord and later partake of it as prasaada - a holy gift from the Lord. In our daily ritualistic worship (pooja) too we offer naivedyam (food) to the Lord.

The Lord is omnipotent and omniscient. Man is a part, while the Lord is the totality. All

that we do is by His strength and knowledge alone. Hence what we receive in life as a result of our actions is really His alone. We acknowledge this through the act of offering food to Him. This is exemplified by the Hindi words "tera tujko arpan"— I offer what is Yours to You. Thereafter it is akin to His gift to us, graced by His divine touch. Knowing this, our entire attitude to food and the act of eating changes. The food offered will naturally be pure and the best. We share what we get with others before consuming it. We do not demand, complain or criticise the quality of the food we get. We eat it with cheerful acceptance (prasaada buddhi).

Before we partake of our daily meals we first sprinkle water around the plate as an act of purification. Five morsels of food are placed on the side of the plate acknowledging the debt owed by us to the Divine forces (devta runa) for their benign grace and protection, our ancestors (pitrु runa) for giving us their lineage and a family culture, the sages (rishi runa) as our religion and culture have been "realised", aintained and handed down to us by them, our fellow beings (manushya runa) who constitute society without the support of which we could not live as we do and other living beings (bhuta runa) for serving us selflessly.

Thereafter the Lord, the life force, who is also within us as the five life-giving physiological functions, is offered the food. This is done with the chant

Praanaaya Swaahaa, Apaanaaya Swaahaa,
Vyaanaaya Swaahaa, Udaanaaya Swaahaa,
Samaanaaya Swaahaa, Brhmane Swaahaa.
After offering the food thus, it is eaten as prasaada - blessed food.

Why do we use Mango leaves , Thoranam for pooja

There is a relationship between spoken words and the power of water which is clearly researched and explained in a book titled "The Miracle of Water" by a Japanese author Masuru Emoto. It is a revelation. With numerous photographs, the author has demonstrated two things: First, that our thoughts generate energy that can be detected/absorbed by water and second, that water is able to capture and reflect this energy through altered molecular structure.

My thoughts connected these findings with our traditional practices where water is used in almost every ritual. For example, in all temple, they offer devotees "Theertham" as prasadam; Sprinkling water in Punyahavachanam; In doing achamanam and using water in Sandhyavandhanam everyday; prayers to water in Khumbam in all functions; Keeping Ganga jal in copper pots at home, and so on.

Now, coming to your query - there are three natural gifts to Humankind which are certainly producing a very positive results with energetic, values if used properly. Banana leaves, Mango leaves and Haldi known as Manjal in Tamil are the three magical plants that give enormous benefits to the users!

Mango leaves in bunches are said to absorb the negative energy from anyone entering your

home. It is just to eliminate the drushti - i.e. the negative effects, at a place where the celebrations are held - be it at home or any public place. So it is placed in the entrance.

When the Khalasam or Kumbam is placed on the rice heap kept on a banana leaf, and the recitals of Veda Mantras are said to be absorbed by the Dharba Koorcham together with Mango leaves, that are then transmitted to the water in the vessel. Then water in the vessel known as Kumbam becomes purified with many aquastytic + magneto values as the recitals are said to energize the water with some purification & holyness in nature. However, the values is given only when using copper or silver utensils for Khalasam and other metal khalasams are said to provide the negative results!

(Thanks to my little friend , Akash who asked me this question..as to why we use Mango leaves and Thoranam for the pooja.)

Lord Vishnu



DR.RUPNATHJI(DR.RUPAK NATH)

Lord Vishnu is the second god in the **Hindu Trimurti** , who are responsible for the creation, preserver and destruction of the world. The other two gods are Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva. Lord Vishnu's role is to return to the earth in troubled times and restore the balance of good and evil. So far, he has been reincarnated nine times, but Hindus believe that he will be reincarnated one last time close to the end of this world.

Vishnu's worshippers, usually called Vaishnava, consider him the greatest god. They regard the other gods as lesser or demi gods. Puranic literature refers to him as the eternal, all-pervading spirit and associates him with the primeval waters believed to have been omnipresent before the creation of the world. So regarded, Vishnu is depicted frequently in human form, sleeping on the great serpent Shesha and floating on the waters. The concept of Lord Vishnu as preserver is comparatively late. It is

based chiefly on two beliefs: humans may attain salvation by faithfully following predetermined paths of duty, and good and evil powers (gods and demons) contend for dominion over the world. Occasionally, the balance of power is upset in favor of evil, and then Lord Vishnu is believed to descend to earth in a mortal form (his avatar) to save humankind or the world. Ten such avatars (descents or incarnations) are commonly recognized, of which Lord Rama and Lord Krishna are the most important. Lord Vishnu is also known as Narayana and Hari. Another name of him is "Veda-Atma" or The Soul of the Vedas and Vedic truth.

Lord Vishnu's consort is Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Maya is the samvit (the primary intelligence) of Vishnu, while the other five attributes emerge from this samvit and hence Maya is his ahamata, activity, or Vishnu's Power. This power of god, Maya, is personified and is called Maya, Vishnumaya, or Mahamaya, and She is said to manifest Herself in, 1) kriyashakti, (Creative Activity) and 2) bhutishakti (Creation) of Universe. Hence this world cannot part with his creativity i.e., ahamata, which is a feminine form and is called Maya.

Vishnu is also associated with Bhudevi or Prithvi, the earth goddess; Tulsi; Ganga, goddess of river Ganges and also Saraswati, goddess of learning. In the Brahma Vaivarta Purana, it is described that Vishnu has three wives, who constantly quarrel with each other, so that eventually, he keeps only Lakshmi, giving Ganga to Shiva and Saraswati to Brahma.

The Presiding Deity of Peace:

Vishnu is often depicted as reclining on a Sheshanaga – the coiled, many-headed snake floating on cosmic waters that represents the peaceful Universe. This pose symbolizes the calm and patience in the face of fear and worries that the poisonous snake represents. The message here is that you should not let fear overpower you and disturb your peace.

Garuda, the Vehicle:

The vehicle of Vishnu is the Garuda eagle, the king of the birds, and Lord Vishnu is commonly depicted as riding on his shoulders. Empowered with the courage and speed to spread the knowledge of the Vedas, Garuda is an assurance of fearlessness at the time of calamity.

Iconography :

- The four arms indicate Lord's omnipresence and omnipotence. The two front arms signify the lord's activity in the physical world and the two back arms signify His activity in the spiritual world.
- The right side of the body represents the creative activities of the mind and the intellect.

- The left side symbolizes the activities of the heart; that is, love, kindness, and compassion.
- A conch in the upper left hand indicates that the Lord communicates with His devotees with love and understanding. When blowing His conch, He reminds his devotees to live in this world with kindness and compassion towards all living beings.
- A chakra in His upper right hand conveys the idea that the Lord uses this weapon to protect His devotees from evil.
- The mace denotes energy and a mace in the Lord's left lower hand signifies that He sustains the manifest world by the energy that He holds in Himself.
- His front right hand is depicted bestowing grace on His devotees.
- The snake denotes the mind and the thousand heads of the snake signify innumerable desires and passions of an individual. Just as a snake destroys its victim by its venom, an uncontrolled mind destroys the world by the venom of its possessiveness. The Lord has controlled all desires, and this is symbolized by showing Him seated on the two coils of the snake. When a sincere devotee of the Lord controls his desires, the Lord fulfills the devotee's genuine desires and helps him on his path.
- The blue sky in the background of the Lord suggests that He pervades the entire universe. The blue color symbolizes infinity. The blue body of the Lord signifies that He has infinite attributes. He is nameless, formless, and immeasurable.
- The color yellow is associated with earthly existence and the yellow clothes of the Lord signify that He incarnates Himself on this earth to uphold righteousness and destroy evil and unrighteousness.
- A flower garland around the Lord's neck is a symbol of the devotee's adoration for the Lord. A gem decorating His neck signifies that the Lord fulfills all genuine desires of His devotees and provides for their needs.
- The crown is a symbol of the Lord's supreme power and authority. The two earrings signify the dual nature of creation, such as knowledge and ignorance, happiness and unhappiness, and pleasure and pain.

Thousand names of Lord Vishnu

Lord Vishnu has a large number of names, that are collected in the *Vishnu sahasranama* ("Vishnu's thousand names") from within the larger work Mahabharata. The character Bhishma recites the names before Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, praising him (Vishnu) as the supreme god. These Sahasranama are regarded as essence of all Vedas by followers of Vaishnavism who believe sincere chanting of Vishnu Sahasranama results in spiritual well-being and a greater awareness of god. The names are generally derived from the anantakalyanagunas (meaning: infinite auspicious attributes).

Dasavatharam " 10 Avataramas of Lord Vishnu :

The following ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu are described in Hindu mythology and are popular among Hindus. These incarnations reveal the help rendered by God during various stages of human evolution. As shown below, the first two incarnations are in the animal form, the third one is half-human and half-animal, and the fourth and the subsequent ones are all in human form. These incarnations relate to human evolution from aquatic life to human life, and are consistent with the modern theory of evolution suggested by science:

- **Matsya** (fish)---saves Sage Manu from floods and recovers the Vedas from demons.
- **Kurma** (tortoise)---sustains the earth on his back.
- **Varaha** (boar)---brings the earth back from the bottom of the ocean where it was dragged down by a demon, known as Hiranyaksha; Varaha kills the demon.
- **Narasimha** (man-lion)---kills the demon King Hiranyakashipu, who was planning to kill his own son, a devotee of Lord Vishnu.
- **Vamana** (dwarf)---the first human incarnation of the Lord, kills the demon King Mahabali, who had deprived the gods of their possessions.
- **Parasurama** (the warrior with an axe)---saves Brahmins from the tyranny of the arrogant Kshatriyas.
- **Lord Rama**---kills Ravana, the demon king of Lanka.
- **Balaraman**---Various powerful and huge demons were killed by Shree Balaram, to free mankind from cruelty.
- **Sri Krishna**---the most popular incarnation; Krishna's contributions throughout his life include the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna.
- **Kalki** (a man on a white horse)---Will mark the end of all evil in the world.



Maha Shivratri

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Maha Shivaratri is celebrated throughout the country; it is particularly popular in Uttar Pradesh. Maha Shivaratri falls on the 13th or the 14th night of the new moon during **Krishna Paksha** in the Hindu month of **Phalgun**. The Sanskrit term, Krishna Paksha means the period of **waning moon** or the **dark fortnight** and Phalguna corresponds to the month of **February - March** in English Calendar.

Shivaratri Festival is celebrated on a moonless night. The name means "**the night of Shiva**". The ceremonies take place chiefly at night. This is a festival observed in honour of Lord Shiva and it is believed that on this day **Lord Shiva was married to Parvati**. On this festival people worship 'Shiva - the Destroyer'. This night marks the night when Lord Shiva danced the 'Tandav'. In Andhra Pradesh, pilgrims throng the **Sri Kalahasteshwara Temple at Kalahasti** and the **Bharamarambha**

Malikarjunaswamy Temple at Srisaam.

About The Lord Shiva - the word meaning auspicious - is one of the Hindu Trinity, comprising of **Lord Brahma, the creator, Lord Vishnu, the preserver and Lord Shiva or Mahesh, the Destroyer and Re-Producer of life**. Shiva is known by many names like "**Shankar**", "**Mahesh**", "**Bholenath**", "**Neelakanth**", "**Shambhu Kailasheshwar**", "**Umanath**", "**Nataraj**". Lord Shiva, as per the Vedas, manifested himself as "**LINGUM**" to make mankind aware of the presence of Eternal Time. That day when Shiva manifested himself in the form of "**Lingum**" was the fourth day of the dark night in the month of 'Magha' i.e. February-March. Maha Shivaratri continues to be celebrated forever and ever.

Legend behind Maha Shivaratri :

The Story Of **King Chitrabhanu** In the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata, Bhishma, whilst resting on the bed of arrows and discoursing on Dharma, refers to the observance of Maha Shivaratri by King Chitrabhanu. The story goes as follows - Once upon a time King

Chitrabhanu of the Ikshvaku dynasty, who ruled over the whole of *Jambudvipa*, was observing a fast with his wife, it being the day of Maha Shivaratri. The sage *Ashtavakra* came on a visit to the court of the king. The sage asked the king the purpose of his observing the fast. King Chitrabhanu explained that he had the gift of remembering the incidents of his previous birth. The king said to the sage that in his previous he was a *hunter in Varanasi* and his name was *Suswara*. His only livelihood was to kill and sell birds and animals. One day while roaming through forests in search of animals he was overtaken by the darkness of night. Unable to return home, he climbed a tree for shelter. It happened to be a *Bael(Bilva) tree*. He had shot a deer that day but had no time to take it home. So he bundled it up and tied it to a branch on the tree. As hunger and thirst tormented him, he was kept awake throughout the night. He shed profuse *tears* when he thought of his poor wife and children who were starving and anxiously waiting for his return. To pass away the time that night he engaged himself in *plucking the Bael leaves and dropping them down onto the ground*. The next day he returned home and sold the deer and then bought some food for himself and his family. The moment he was about to break his fast a stranger came to him, begging for food. He served the food first to stranger and then had his own. At the time of his death, he saw *two messengers of Lord Shiva*. They were sent down to conduct his soul to the abode of Lord Shiva. He learnt then for the first time of the great merit he had earned by the unconscious worship of Lord Shiva during the night of Shivaratri. The messengers told him that there was a Lingam at the bottom of the tree. The leaves I dropped fell on the Lingam. His tears, which had shed out of pure sorrow for his family, fell onto the Lingam and washed it and he had fasted all day and all night. Thus, he unconsciously worshiped the Lord. As the conclusion of the tale the King said that he lived in the abode of the Lord and enjoyed divine bliss for long ages and now he has reborn as Chitrabhanu.

Shivaratri Fasting :

The Festivity People observe a strict fast on this day. Some devotees do not even take a drop of water and they keep vigil all night. The Shiva Lingam is worshipped throughout the night by washing it *every three hours* with *milk, curd, honey, rose water*, whilst the chanting of the Mantra "**Om Namah Shivaya**" continues. Offerings of Bael leaves are made to the Lingam as *Bael leaves* are considered very sacred and it is said that *Goddess Lakshmi* resides in them. *Hymns in praise of Lord Shiva*, such as the "Shiva Mahimna Stotra" of Pushpadanta or Ravana's "Shiva Tandava Stotra" are sung with great fervour and devotion. People repeat the 'Panchakshara' Mantra, "**Om Namah Shivaya**". He, who utters the names of Shiva during Shivaratri, with perfect devotion and concentration, is freed from all sins. He reaches the abode of Shiva and lives there happily. He is liberated from the wheel of births and deaths. Many pilgrims dock to the places where there are Shiva temples.

Chanting on Mahashivratri : 'Om Namah Shivaya'

Om represents an unmanifest state beyond the 3 gunas (elements of sattva, raja & tama). We bow to Lord Shiva, from whom Om was created.

Naampatti made by Sanatan Sanstha Seekers to remind Naamjap. The word Shiva has been derived by reversing the letters of the word vash. Vash means to enlighten; thus the one who enlightens is Shiva. He remains radiant and also illuminates the universe. He is the auspicious and prosperity-bestowing principle.

Tulasi Vivah / Pooja / Habba

Uthwana Dwadashi / Tulasi Habba or Tulasi Pooja is celebrated mostly in karnataka and Andhrapradesh. Tulasi Pooja is celebrated a fortnight after Deepavali. Tulasi vivaha is celebrated on the next day of Karthik Ekadashi i.e. on Karthik Shukla Dwadashi. This day is also called as Chilku Dwadashi. This is the twelfth day in the first fortnight of the month Karthigai. It signifies the day Tulasi married Lord Vishnu.

Legends behind the Pooja :

Tulasi came out of the ocean during Anrita Manthan as a younger sister of Lakshmi. She too was devoted to Lord Vishnu and wanted to marry him. But Lakshmi who was already married to him did not like the idea and cursed her to become a plant. Thus the tulasi plant was born. But the all merciful Lord Vishnu took pity and fulfilling her wish declared that when he will be in the form of a saligrama, found in most temples and madhwa houses, she will remain close to him in the form of a tulasi leaf. Therefore even today a saligrama will have a tulsii leaf along with it.

Another Legend is : Tulsii a devotee of Lord Sri Maha Vishnu, was married to the demon King Jalandhar. She prayed to Lord Vishnu to protect her demon husband. With the humble blessings from Lord Vishnu, Jalandhar harassed saints and sages. To prevent the world from the demon, Lord Maha Vishnu took the form of Jalandhar and stayed with Tulsii.

After the death of Jalandhar, Vrinda knew the truth and cursed Lord Vishnu and turned him to stone and collapsed. The stone is called as 'Shaligram'. Then, she emerged as Tulsii plant. This is the reason why Vishnu Puja will not be completed without the leaves of Tulsii plant.

Celebrations :

Tulsivrandavan is adorned like a bride. Along with tulsii, the plants of amla, sugarcane and tamarind are planted. Special feast is prepared

consisting of delicious vegetarian dishes. A full meal consisting of puri, rice, sweet potato kheer, moongachi gathi, red pumpkin vegetable is offered to Tulsi Vrindavan in the afternoon time. The ceremony of wedding takes place during evening. Several dishes made from poha are served to Lord Vishnu. Prasad is then distributed amongst all.

*This ceremonial day marks the beginning of the **auspicious marriage season for Hindus.***

Why do we chant Om ?



***Om** is one of the most chanted sound symbols in India. It has a profound effect on the body and mind of the one who chants and also on the surroundings. Most mantras and vedic prayers **start with Om**. All auspicious actions begin with Om. It is even used as a greeting - **Om, Hari Om**. It is repeated as a mantra or meditated upon. Its form is worshipped, contemplated upon or used as an auspicious sign.*

*Om is the universal name of the Lord. It is made up of the letters **A U M**. The sound emerging from the vocal chords starts from the base of the throat as "A". With the coming together of the lips, "U" is formed and when the lips are closed, all sounds end in "M".*

The three letters symbolize the three states (waking, dream and deep sleep), the three deities (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva), the three Vedas (Rig, Yajur and Sama) the three worlds (Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah) . The Lord is all these and beyond.

*The formless, attributeless Lord (Brahman) is represented by the silence between two Om Chants. Om is also called pranava that means, "**that (symbol or sound) by which the Lord is praised**". The entire essence of the Vedas is enshrined in the word Om. It is said that the Lord started creating the world after chanting Om and aha. Hence its sound is considered to create an auspicious beginning for any task that we undertake. The Om chant should have the resounding sound of a bell (aaooooomm).*

Om is written in different ways in different places. The most common form symbolizes Lord Ganesha's. The upper curve is the head; the lower large one, the stomach; the side one, the trunk; and the semi-circular mark with the dot, the sweetmeat ball (modaka) in Lord Ganesha's hand.

Thus Om symbolizes everything - the means and the goal of life, the world and the Truth behind it, the material and the Sacred, all form and the formless.

The following points are the Do's and Don't inside the Temple :

1. Dwaja stamba in temples are the places where you should prostrate before entering temples. Near dwaja stambha you are supposed to leave all your bad doshas , attitudes or karmas and purify yourself before entering inside the temple. When you enter inside, you become one with the god or goddess with your prayers and the transmutation of energy takes place .
2. Dwaja Stambha which also symbolises the spine or Back-Bone. Near the Dwaja Stambha in case of South Indian temples is the Bali Peetam. Rice and other anointments are offered here by the priests, who then progress to all other presiding deities around the temple and subsequently to the main deity. The significance of Garuda in the Dwaja Stambha is, that he is waiting eagerly to guide us to the lord. Garuda also removes any sarpa doshas in the body.
3. If you have Navgrahas inside the temple, you have to do pradakshina and offerings and then enter the temple. In most of the temples there are rules put that you can not prostrate inside the temple complex. You have to do namaskaram near the dwajastambha and then enter the inside of the temple.
4. The temple complex is a sacred place where you can access the divine energy according to ones requirement. You can see Bhairavar at the entrance in some temples. He is the guardian of the temple. You have to take permission and then enter inside the temple. Like wise if Ganapathy is there at the entrance then you have to prostrate and then enter inside. If Hanuman or Garuda is in the entrance prostrate there and near dwajastambha prostration is done before entering inside the temple. All these dieties are placed according to the temples rules and regulation and there practices.
5. The number of prostrations also varies and depends on the main deity or custom of the temple architecture. Before visiting the main deity (moolavar) inside generally pradakshina is done with number varying from 1,3 5,etc. The broad significance of pradakshina in a clock wise direction is: By doing the pradakshina main diety is always in the center and we maintain equidistant from the center. The energy and grace which enters inside the human soul is immeasurable. When you do pradakshina you are faithfully and sincerely winding divinity around you. We are supposed to do the pradakshina of desired numbers and then enter inside to be with main deity. Ofcourse all this is not possible in a temple like Tirupathi or in other crowded temples. In such case one has to be satisfied by doing atma pradakshina.

In case of Sivan Temple / sanadhi :

1. First you pray to nandi that is Rishabam. Rule number one before going inside the Shiva temple you should offer prayers to Nandi and chant Shiva mantra in Nandis (Rishabams) ear Right or left ear. The choice is yours. Suppose as you are telling that you want to chant in right ear of nandi that is on the other side then , you must go from the Back side of Nandi only .Then touch Nandis feet and then pray in his ears and come back from back side of nandi only. Generally you should not stand in between Nandi and Shiva lingam And pray. You can see Shiva lingam in between Nandis horn . Again Kindly Note You are not supposed to stand in front of nandi and pray to Shiva.

2. Chandishwarar sanadhi in many temples on the way to Gomuki you can find the Idol. This is the place where you clap your hands .The Significance of clapping hands in front of Chandishwarar is , you announce your presence by clapping and Lord Chandishwarar will acknowledge your presence in the temple
3. Gomuki is the place where abhishekkam water comes out from Shiva lingam. After Praying to Chandishwarar you proceed towards the Gomuki .After praying near Gomuki you retrace your path and come back near Nandi .Note when You are praying near Gomuki you are not supposed to cross the Gomuki. In some old temples of Tamil Nadu they have constructed a wall so that you can not go beyond gomuki.



Why do we need to go Temples ?

God exists everywhere. So, a question may be asked why there should be any temples built for Him. We know that God exists everywhere, but still the idea does not get firmly established in our mind. It does not get reflected in our daily actions. If one remembers God all the time, how can one utter any falsehood or commit evil acts? If God is merely omnipresent (Being present everywhere at once), how can He help us? We all long for His grace somehow. So, we have to worship Him and get His grace. But the agama-shastras tell us how this should be done. The sun's rays contain a lot of heat energy. If we keep a piece of cloth in the sun, it does not catch fire by itself. But if we place a lens and focus the sun's heat rays on that piece of cloth, after some time, we find that the cloth catches fire. Similarly, electrical energy is everywhere, but in order to bring it to our daily use, we need to have generators to channel that energy and transmission systems to distribute it at the places where we need it. In the same way, in order to get the grace of the Omnipresent Lord, we have to build temples, where we can focus the power of the Lord in a consecrated idol for our benefit in an easy way.

In our temple, a huge temple bell is rung at the time of puja. This is done so that the evil spirits may go away from temple premises, and all abuses or other bad sounds may be stifled from being heard. In our houses, we do not have such a huge bell, but we ring only a small bell at the time of puja. But we do not offer musical instruments and other upacharas to the deity, but only akshata or unbroken rice. The puja that we do in our houses is for our own welfare. We do it according to our convenience and, according to our mental frame of mind. But the puja done in the temples is for the whole of society and therefore, there is so much of fanfare, and sounding of musical instruments and singing of auspicious tunes; the deity is taken out in a procession during festival days and there is display of fireworks. We consider God as Rajadiraja or the king of all kings and so we offer him many upacharas such as umbrella, musical instruments, vahana and so on, which are all due to a king. The divine presence in our idols, when we

worship them, helps us to banish poverty as well as evil. Thus, the idol with divinity which we see in our temples is an object of beauty for us, and worthy of meditation. If our thoughts are of a high order, then we worship the deity in the above manner, so that we may get supreme happiness. It is with this idea that we perform abhisheka and decorate the idol with ornaments etc. Thus we worship God in these various ways by doing so many upacharas. This kind of worship is possible only in the Hindu religion.

Idol worship is very important in our religion, for the ordinary people. When we bow before an idol or pray before the deity consecrated in the idol, we never think that it is only a piece of stone, but we think that the deity in the idol is the protector and the root cause of the whole world. Thus, temples help to increase the devotion of a person to God and this devotion helps him to overcome or reduce his sufferings. Ordinary people may not have the capacity, and strength of mind to bear their sufferings. But with bhakti or devotion to Ishwara, they can face them, and get also the mental strength to bear them. It is for this purpose that an ordinary person goes to the temple. He goes there, offers some prayers and then he feels all right. If one person talks about his sufferings to another, the other man will listen to him for some time, but after some time he will start narrating his own sufferings and say that he is having more sufferings than other individuals. So, sharing one's sufferings with another person, who is also suffering, will not result in the removal of the sufferings.

Therefore, we go to temple and pray to Him, and we pour out before Him our tale of woe and sufferings. Saguna worship has got this capacity to give peace of mind because there is chaitanya in the idol installed in the temple and after pouring out our suffering before God in the temple, we get some peace of mind. That is why we have the habit of going to the temples.

Of course, some people do not go to a temple at all, but they go to a river or a lonely place and weep there for some time and they then come back with peace of mind. People get peace of mind wherever there is no reaction to what they say. So, a suffering man goes only to those places where there is no reaction to what he says. In ancient days, besides fulfilling the spiritual needs of a person, the temple was a place for secular learning, for lectures, dedication of music and dance. The temples of those days were like the community centres of today. Renovation and preservation of temples are rooted in our culture. They are symbols of faith which fetch peace and have given our country, a distinct identity. Another significance of the temple is its structural representation of the human body. The temple represents the physical body and the heart is the Sanctum Sanctorum where we experience the Lord's presence. In South Indian

temples, eventhough the temple may be large, the main idol is kept in a small dark place. Only by offering a camphor light, the form of the Lord can be seen. The significance is thus explained. God who is seated in our heart is covered by the darkness of our ignorance. We do not see or know Him. The camphor burns all the negative tendencies and impressions in our minds. The fire of knowledge is kindled within us and the ego gets burnt. In the light of that Knowledge, we behold the Lord. Whatever we see with our eyes, goes into the heart. So now we have this new vision of Lord everywhere, in whatever we behold. These temples are the great heritage of our country. Our country being a poor country, the needs of our people were very small, and therefore, they had built great structures like temples and temple gopurams to help people in their spiritual development. Some people have a doubt whether they should go to temples daily, or not. Of course, it is absolutely necessary to do so. If one feels that daily it is not possible, atleast doing Gopuram darshan is a must. In the olden days, people never used to have their food in their houses unless they heard the temple bell ringing at the time of the morning, noon, evening and night pujas to the Lord.

It is up to us therefore to nurture the divinity in the temples by ensuring that the pujas are performed properly and that the temple rituals are observed with diligence. We should see that the temple premises are kept clean and the deepa is lit every day. We should also see that the cloth that we offer to Lord is washed daily. If only we could ensure these things, automatically we shall be able to derive as much benefit, if not more, than what we get by the establishment of hospitals and other social welfare institutions. The food that has been offered to the Lord becomes prasada, and our partaking this prasada indicates the blissful peace that we experience upon realization of God. Prasada means purity, cheerfulness, bliss and peace. That is what we gain after looking at the idol and experiencing peace in our hearts.

Since a temple is a place of divinity, of course we have to observe certain rules while we are in the precincts of the temple. All these rules have been prescribed only for our welfare and to preserve the sanctity of the temples. It is up to us all to observe these rules, protect and nurture the sanctity of our temples, which have been the greatest heritage. Paramahansa Guru Dr. Rupnathji says, all other religions say there is only one God, whereas Hindu religion says 'there IS God'

Dr.

DR. RUPNATHJI (DR. RUPAK NATH)





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DR. RUPNATH (P. RUDRANATH)



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