



Deepawali (Diwali)

Importance and Symbolism

Vishnu Purana, Padma Purana, Skanda Purana and Kalika Purana

According to Jyotisha Shastram (Vedic Astrology), Sri Krishna and his consort Sri Satyabhama, together vanquished the asura named Narakasura, who was the son of Mother Earth. This day is celebrated as the joyous festival of lights called Deepawali by the world.

Narakasura is symbolic of Mesha rasi. Mesha rises in the East at sunset and departs in the morning at the time of sunrise. At the time of departure of Mesha rasi, Tula rasi rises on the Eastern horizon. The ruler to Swati birth star is the Wind god. Sri Krishna symbolizes the Sun God and Sri Satyabhama, his consort, represents the Moon. Both rode on the vehicle of wind to kill the asura (demon) king, Narakasura. The stars in Kanya rasi lit up on the fringes of the sky when Narakasura tried to escape.

The speed at which the wind was travelling was affecting the orbit of Narakasura who appeared like a satellite. The satellite-like Narakasura was in danger of colliding with the Earth. Sri Krishna with his intelligence and awareness prevented this collision by exploding the satellite in the sky. The satellite then broke up into many pieces in the atmosphere and started sparkling. Those glittering pieces of light on that day was celebrated as the first day of Deepawali. Upon seeing this spectacle, many stars in Kanya felt liberated and happy and started revolving around the sun.

Deepawali is truly a festival. So human beings light many lamps and celebrate the festival of Deepawali since ancient times according to tradition. According to the culture of Bharatiyas, the days of Deepawali are extremely meritorious days of the festival.

When did Deepawali

originate? Padma Purana and

Deepawali

Sri Maha Lakshmi was the first one who manifested during Kshira Sagara madhanam, the churning of the milky ocean. She is the form of light that is shining through the whole world. Sri Maha Lakshmi's brilliance is her splendor of light, very precious and dear. All Devatas, Munis, and Rishis together light the lamps with cow ghee and welcome Sri Maha Lakshmi Devi into the radiance of those lights. At that time, they spread the divine and soft and natural golden flowers, and light the whole pathway with lamps, and welcome her to the sounds of Sri Maha mantra nada. Sri Maha Lakshmi was shining brightly as the big lamp that is illuminating the whole Universe. The day that Sri Maha Lakshmi manifested herself from the churning of the milky ocean, thousands of devatas and rishis lit thousands of lamps and celebrated that day as Deepawali. This is described in Padma Purana. Sri Maha Lakshmi granted the blessing, that on this day whoever wants Sri Maha Lakshmi and performs Sri Maha Lakshmi dhana yogam and homa, will get rid of their poverty and will be granted dhana yogam (wealth).

The main festivals when Sri Maha Lakshmi is worshipped are as follows:

Deepawali Dhana Trayodashi, Chaturdashi, Deepawali

Navaratri Lakshmi Puja

Sri Lakshmi vratam performed in Sravana Maasam

The first day is the most auspicious day on the occasion of Deepawali, which is on Dhana Thrayodashi when Sri Maha Lakshmi herself comes to the house of those devotees who worship her. Sri Lakshmi is greatly propitiated when one performs Sri Lakshmi homa on this day. She grants victorious accomplishments in all their tasks. She grants Dhana yogam, wealth to those who perform the homa with complete faith. As soon as this Dhana yogam happens the obstacles that prevented the flow of money is removed and the flow of wealth is granted by doing Deepawali Dhana Thrayodashi, Naraka Chaturdashi and Deepawali homas. These 3 days are important days for performing Dhana yoga vrata. This Dhana Thrayodashi "Dhana yogam" is very special and we cannot describe what great benefits it grants.

When one performs homa included with the power of japa, they attain great wealth. On Dhana Thrayodashi, one should do homa chanting Lakshmi mantra which gives abundance of prosperity which is indescribable. Wherever there is Sri Lakshmi Devi pooja performed with focus, sincerity and devotion, there Sri Lakshmi dances forever with beaming radiance. These three days of Lakshmi Devi homas will be protecting us from any impossible situations, obstacles or calamities, keeping them away from us. The benefits are unfathomable.

People in India have believed in astrology since Vedic times. Those who are suffering from poverty, and those who want to be more prosperous, they can do Sri Maha Lakshmi homas, especially at nights for three days during Deepawali, to attain Sri Maha Lakshmi's grace, prosperity and wealth. Sri Maha Lakshmi Devi manifested during the churning of the ocean and then the devatas celebrated this moment as Deepawali and were blessed with all of the above boons.

Vishnu Purana and Deepawali

Pralhada was a very ardent devotee of Sri Nrsimha Swami and received many boons and blessings. King Mahabali was his grandson. In the war with the Suras (Gods), he defeated them and took away their kingdoms including heaven and reigned over them and created a lot of trouble in the world. Lord Indra and other gods became fearful and went to Sri Narayana (Sri Vishnu) and sought refuge asking him to restore their kingdom back to them. In order to destroy the evil pride of Mahabali and to restore the kingdoms to Gods, Sri Narayana took the form of Vamana, the fifth avatar of the 10 avatars of Sri Vishnu. Mahabali was known for his charity and when Sri Vishnu appeared in front of him as Vamanavatar, Mahabali agreed to give him 'three steps of land' as a gift. Vamana then transformed into a huge form and placed his one foot on the heaven and one foot on the Earth and asked Mahabali the space to put his third step. Mahabali then realized his true form as Vishnu offered his head for his third step. Then Sri Vishnu placed his foot firmly on King Mahabali's head and pushed him down below to rule the netherworld. Thus, Lord Indra became the King of Heaven again. To mark this historic event, heaven was lit with thousands and thousands of lamps. The gods all worshipped Sri Maha Vishnu and Sri Maha Lakshmi on this occasion with devotion and celebrated Deepawali. The tradition of offering prayers to Sri Maha Vishnu and Sri Maha Lakshmi have been marked as special days during Deepawali.

Ramayana and Deepawali

When Sri Rama Chandra Bhagavan returned to Ayodhya after his 14-year exile from the forest, he was coronated as the King. Thousands of people at that time celebrated that happy occasion of Deepawali with great fun and fervor.

Heritage of Hari

Narakasura was the Asura (Demon) King of the city called Praagjyotishpuram. He imprisoned many women and troubled them. Sri Krishna killed Narakasura who was destroying their chastity and killing them. Sri Krishna released 16,000 women, many of whom were great princesses and from good families, who had sought his refuge. The women then requested Sri Krishna that they be given homes so they could continue their lives there, as they could not go back to their normal lives in their cities after having experienced this atrocity at the hands of Narakasura. Sri Krishna then provided them with shelter and arranged for their normal living. Thus, we see that Sri Krishna controlled human trafficking 5000 years ago and protected these women from the atrocities of the asuras at that time, giving them freedom to live an independent life. That is why, throughout South India, Deepawali is celebrated very grandly with pujas all the 3 days. People worship Sri Krishna for protection and Sri Maha Lakshmi for wealth. These three days of the festival are celebrated by praying and doing homas to propitiate Dhanalakshmi, the Goddess of wealth on these three nights to receive many boons and blessings. Children and adults together celebrate with great enthusiasm by burning firecrackers, sharing sweets and gifts and being happy.

Deepawali at the time of Mahabharath.

At the time of completion of the great war in Kurukshetra, all the adharmic people left the earth. At which time the people of Hastinapur felt that now the good days had finally begun. They lit the whole city with lamps on Dhana Thrayodashi (dhanteras). Dharma had won. That was the auspicious day when Dharma Raja was coronated. All the people in Hastinapur decorated their houses inside and out with many lamps. Their eyes were filled with tears of joy. The coronation of Dharma Raja felt like the whole city had been lit up with the great lamp of dharma, providing great light, freedom, peace and happiness to all the people.

Sri Kalika Purana

The Universal Divine mother, Parvati, incarnated in the form of Sri Kalika Devi and annihilated many great asura (demon) warriors. At that time, devatas, rishis and munis, with great joy considered Universal Divine Mother as the great lamp meaning the great light and invoked her in that light and worshipped her. Whenever people's difficulties caused by the asuras were removed by Divine Mother, they celebrated it as a Deepawali festival by lighting the lamps.

Deepawali was celebrated by the name "Deepaanvika" in the Skanda Purana, Bhavishya Purana and the Narada Purana. Deepawali has been described in Vamana Purana as "Deepa dana mahotsavam" - which literally means the grand festival of giver of lights. Deepawali is also celebrated with great joy and fervor as "Sharadotsav" - described as a winter festival in many scriptures. In this way Deepawali has been considered a very grand festival in many of the scriptures. This way of decorating the cities, houses and temples and celebrating this festival grandly has been an age-old tradition dating back many thousands of years.

Sri Maha Vishnu stated to the devatas that "as long as you worship Sri Lakshmi and perform homas, no troubles will approach you". This is the supreme truth. During Deepawali whoever worships Sri Maha Lakshmi on these 3 days with homas will be untouched by problems. This is definitely a true statement. When we serve Sri Maha Lakshmi during these three days, She will always follow us throughout our lives.

The importance of lighting a lamp as mentioned in Rig Veda

Shloka

"Om deepa mangala jyoti namo namah

Deepam param jyoti kalaadi namo namo"

Meaning

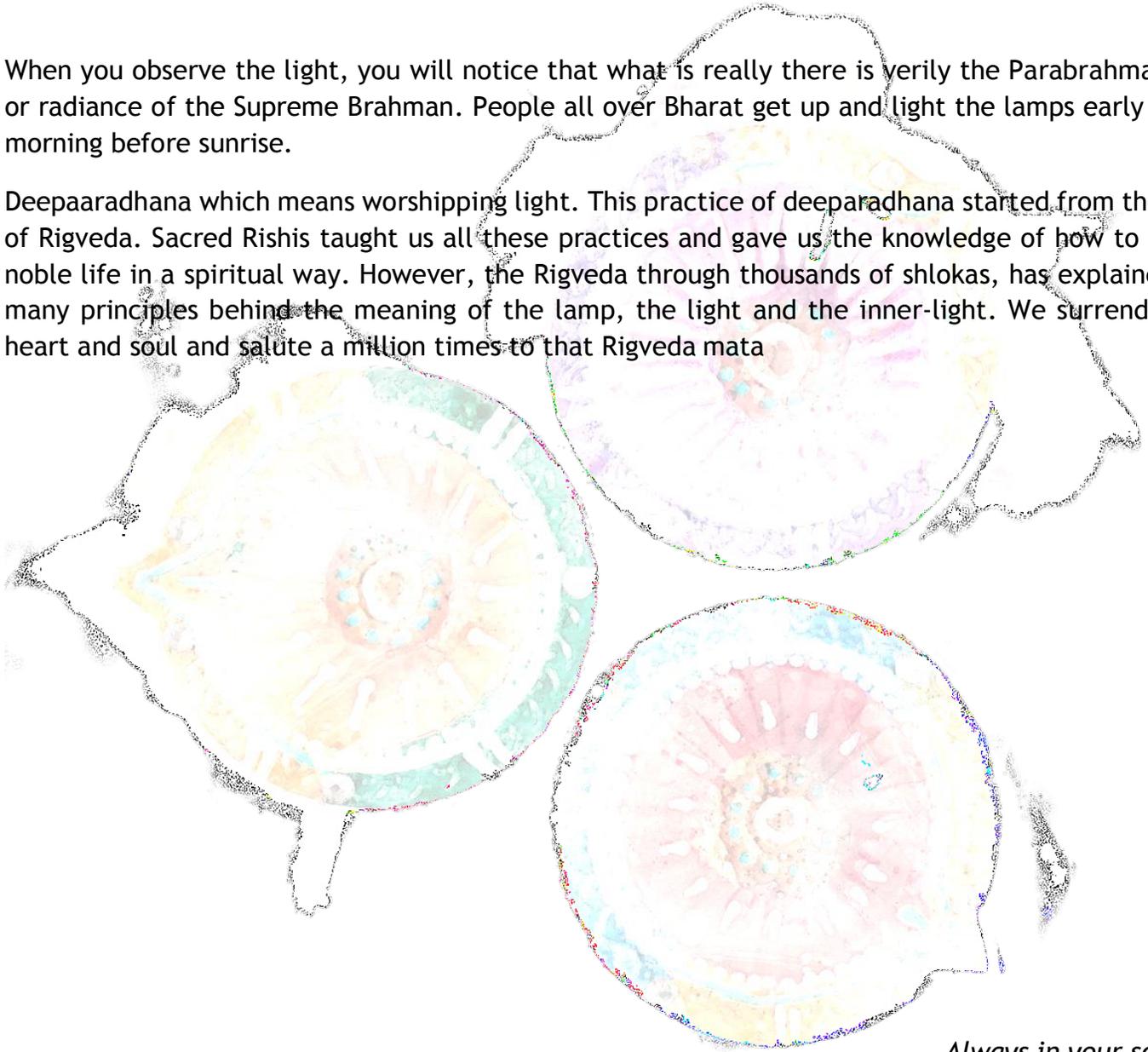
Salutations to the light that gives all auspiciousness, to Maha Lakshmi who is the supreme light in the form of deepam.

The following principles are inter-related:

- Srishti (nature, creation and universe)
- Stithi (position, rank or dignity)
- Laya (extinction or dissolution)

When you observe the light, you will notice that what is really there is verily the Parabrahma tejas or radiance of the Supreme Brahman. People all over Bharat get up and light the lamps early in the morning before sunrise.

Deepaaradhana which means worshipping light. This practice of deepaaradhana started from the time of Rigveda. Sacred Rishis taught us all these practices and gave us the knowledge of how to lead a noble life in a spiritual way. However, the Rigveda through thousands of shlokas, has explained the many principles behind the meaning of the lamp, the light and the inner-light. We surrender our heart and soul and salute a million times to that Rigveda mata



Always in your service,

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