



Syllabus

Year I, Quarter IV

Age Group : 5 to 8

Gokulam is the place where Lord Krishna's magical days of childhood were spent. It was here that his divine powers came to light.

Every child has that spark of divinity within. Bala-Gokulam is a forum for children to discover and manifest that divinity. It will enable Hindu children in US to appreciate their cultural roots and learn Hindu values in an enjoyable manner. This is done through weekly gatherings and planned activities which include games, yoga, stories, shlokas, bhajan, arts and crafts and much more.....

Balagokulam is a program of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS)

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Shloka

शमी वन्दना (ShamI VandanA)

शमी शमयते पापम्	shamI shamayate pApam
शमी शत्रुविनाशिनी ।	shamI shatruvinAshinI
अर्जुनस्य धनुर्धारी	arjunasya dhanurdhArI
रामस्य प्रियदर्शिनी ॥	rAmasya priyadarshinI

Shamee, the remover of all sins, the destroyer of all enemies bore witness to Arjuna taking how bow and Shree Rama coming back to his near and dear ones.

योगासन समये (Before YogAsana)

योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचा	yogena chittasya padena vAchA
मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन ।	malanm Sharirasya cha vaidya-kena
योऽपाकरोत्तं प्रवरं मुनीनां	yo-a-paakarottam pravaram muninaa
पतञ्जलिं प्राञ्जलिरानतोऽस्मि ॥	patanjalim praanjali-raanato-a-smi

With joined hands, I stay bowed to Patanjali-the preeminent among the sages, who removed the impurities of the mind by (explaining) yoga, of the speech by (commenting on) grammar and of the body by (expounding) medicine.

Geet

Bala Sagar Samaj Hove

Bala sagar samaj hove, Ravi Saman jagme sohe

Sankalp kare manas me, Sarvaswa liye haathome
Bhoomata ke charanome, Arpan kar hum mit jaave
Bala sagar samaj hove (1)

Haathome haath mile ho, Hridayonse hriday jude ho
Aikya Mantra mukh me nit ho, Satkarya hetu sab aave
Bala sagar samaj hove (2)

Vyakti vyakti kaa anushasan, Balvaan samaj chirantan
Jay vaibhav ka aashwasan, Yaha parivartan phir laave
Bala sagar samaj hove (3)

Jansewa Iishwar bhakti, Jaagrit ho samaj shakti
Isme hi jeevan mukti, Ab jeevan kritarth hove
Bala sagar samaj hove (4)

Meaning

Let the society be strong, It should shine like the sun.

Let us make a solemn resolution for the sake of humanity, to offer ourselves at the feet of mother Earth. Let us completely dedicate ourselves for the cause.

Let us join our hands and let the hearts meet. The song of unity should always be on the tip of the tongue. Let us all come together for this noble cause.

By developing personal discipline, the whole society gains strength. This is the only guarantee for victory and prosperity. We will bring such change in society.

Service to the people is service to God. We will awaken society and invoke strength in it. Now, this will be the only salvation (moksha) and satisfaction for me.



Avatara 7 - Rama Avatara

Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, had a streak of evil aspiration to be the Lord of the heavens and entire universe. With this desire he would constantly attack the Gods and challenge the authority of all peace loving people on earth.

The gods approached Vishnu and requested him, "Kindly save us from the terror of this arrogant demon." Vishnu assured them, "I'll relieve the three worlds from his terror after taking birth as a son of king Dasharatha of Ayodhya." Lord Vishnu took birth as Rama, the eldest son of Dasharatha, king of Ayodhya. Ramayana is the story of this young man who would practice his preaching of duty over desire.

Dasharatha had three queens namely Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. Queen Kausalya gave birth to Rama; Sumitra to Lakshmana and Shatrughna; and Kaikeyi to Bharata. The four brothers had great affection for one another.

The family sage Vashistha taught them the science of arms. The brothers grew up to be young men. Upon request of sage Vishwamitra, Rama and Lakshmana killed the demons who were harassing sages while performing their yagna. All sages were so delighted!! They gave blessings to these two brothers.

Soon four brothers got married. Rama married to Seeta, a daughter of king Janaka. Lakshmana married to Urmila, Bharata to Mandavi and Shatrughna to Shrutakirti.

To fulfill the wishes of mother Kaikeyi, Rama went to exile for 14 years. His brother Lakshmana and wife Seeta also accompanied him. During the exile period, Rama, Seeta and Lakshmana visited lots of sacred places and took blessings from sages and scholars. Rama and Lakshmana killed demons too. Lakshmana taught a lesson to Shurpankha - The demon king Ravana's younger sister!

A humiliated Shurpankha went to her brothers - Khara and Dhushana - who alongwith a huge army challenged Rama and Lakshmana. The battle ended soon with the victory of Rama. Then, Shurpankha went to her another brother - Ravana and asked him to take revenge.

Ravana, with the help of his uncle Mareecha, abducted Seeta in the absence of Rama and Lakshmana and took her to his kingdom - Lanka. Rama and Lakshmana, in great pain, began to search for Seeta.

Rama met vaanara king Sugreeva, his vaanara-army. He also met his great devotee - Hanuman. Sugreeva was humiliated and his kingdom was captured by his elder brother - Vali. Upon request of Sugreeva, Rama killed Vali. A delighted Sugreeva agreed to help Rama in the search of Seeta.

Hanumana found that Seeta was abducted by demon king Ravana and kept her in a Lanka. Rama, Lakshmana, and Sugreeva and his vaanara-army went to Lanka. Rama, with the help of vaanara army, fought with Ravana and killed him and destroyed most of his army. Everyone including gods in heavens got delighted. They showered flowers on Rama, Lakshmana and Seeta.

Rama, with Lakshmana and Seeta, went back to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile. All the people of Ayodhya became very very happy seeing their prince again. Later Rama became the king of Ayodhya.



The complete account of Rama's appearance on earth and his deeds is given in Ramayana, the soul of every Hindu. The Ramayana is referred as the wisdom of Vedas in action. Once the sage Vaalmiki asked the following question of celestial sage Naarada: "Is there anyone who is full of virtues and the same time possessed of great powers, who is well versed in Dharma, who is grateful, truthful and of firm resolve, who is possessed of right conduct and who is friendly to all living beings, who is a man of knowledge and also powerful, who has subdued his own-self, who has conquered anger, who is possessed of splendor and who is above fault finding, and whom the very gods dread when his wrath has been provoked in battle?" Naarada replied: "Yes, there is one. He is Rama.". Rama was the embodiment of truth, of morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband, the ideal father, and above all the ideal king. He is known as Maryada Purushottama Rama.

Thus, Rama's unquestioning obedience to his father's wishes, his moral uprightness in the war against Ravana, his deference to the wishes of his people, his generosity in the face of personal loss and his marital fidelity has made him Lord Vishnu's most august and venerable incarnation.





Avatara 8 - Krishna Avatara

As we have learnt in the earlier chapters, whenever the satanic values come to prevail on the earth and the righteous values decline, Lord Vishnu embodies Himself forth as a human-being in order to uproot vice and to establish virtue so that the earth may get rid of sinners.

Lord Vishnu, in the form of Krishna, once again appeared on Earth to defeat sinners and establish virtues and noble values. Lord Vishnu, in the form of a Krishna, took birth as a son of Vasudev and Devaki.

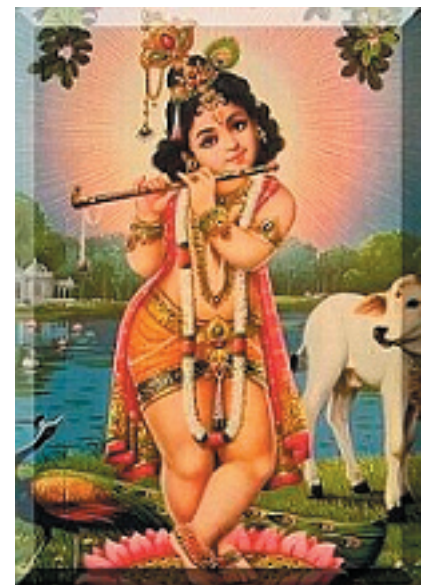
In those days, a king named Ugrasen was the ruler of a kingdom called Mathura - a province of Bharat. He had a son named Kamsa. Kamsa was so evil that he had imprisoned his own father, Ugrasen, and declared himself the King of Mathura. On his orders his soldiers used to kill innocent people.

Kamsa also had a cousin Devaki who was married to Vasudev. When he was sending them off after the wedding ceremony, he heard a voice from the sky, "O, proud king, Kamsa, the eighth child of your cousin Devaki shall kill you." These words of the voice angered Kamsa. He put Vasudev and Devaki in prison under a strong vigil. He killed Devaki's first 6 children. Vasudev managed to save Devaki's 7th child - Balaram.

Devaki gave birth to her 8th child - Krishna. With the blessings of Gods and nature, Vasudev also managed to come out of the prison. He safely left baby Krishna at Nanda and Yashoda's house at Gokul - a place where all cowherds live - and brought their only child-girl back to prison.

Krishna spent his childhood in Gokul. Nanda and Yashoda loved him very much. Gokul is the place where Bala Krishna's divine powers got recognized. Kamsa sent many demons to kill Bala Krishna by hook or crook. But Bala Krishna killed all of them. Bala Krishna used to play with cowherd friends. Because of his divine powers and loving nature, soon he became a darling of everyone. He used to play a flute while grazing the cows. All were always anxious to hear Bala Krishna's flute.

Later Bala Krishna, with his elder brother Balarama, went to Mathura - Kamsa's kingdom - to take part in wrestling.



He and Balarama killed all demons and later Kamsa too. After killing Kamsa, he again reinstated King Ugrasen on the throne.

Krishna and Balarama took education under the guidance of Sage Sandeepani. Sage Sandeepani taught them vedic arts and science especially military science, politics and spirituality His schoolmate Sudama and him were very good friends. Sudama was from a very poor family. Later Krishna helped him a lot in his bad days without letting him know.

Krishna married many queens. They happily lived first in Mathura and then Dwaraka. During this time, Krishna killed many demonic kings such as Shishupal, and Narakasura and many more.....



Krishna was a supporter of the Pandavas - princes of Hastinapur Kingdom. Especially the third prince Arjuna was his very good friend. Krishna not only advised them from time to time but also helped them a lot.

Soon war was erupted between Pandavas and Kauravas. Almost all kings participated in this war either from Kaurava's side or Pandava's side. Krishna took the Pandava's side. In the beginning of the war, when Arjuna got depressed and refused to fight, Krishna enlightened him and made him ready to fight. The message delivered by Krishna at that time is known as Bhagavad-Gita - literally The Song of God. It is the essence of all knowledge (or Vedas and Upanishads). Krishna also appeared in his universal form by which everyone was amazed. This war concluded with the destruction of the demonic kings and the Kauravas and the reinstatement of the righteous Pandavas. Having completed his mission, Krishna resumed his normal life in Dwarka.

Krishna is the fountainhead of all incarnations of Lord Vishnu. His activities on earth were full of opulence, beauty and knowledge, bliss and eternity.





Vijayadashami

Vijayadashami is one of the most important festivals of Hindus. The way Deepavali is festival of lights, Vijayadashami is a festival of victory. In Samskritam, 'Vijaya' means victory and 'Dashami' means 10th day. Thus 'Vijaya Dashami' means victory on the 10th day. It is one of the most auspicious days for the Hindus. It is celebrated in the month of October. It comes as the finale of the nine-day festival of Navaratri.

Navaratri festival is celebrated for 9 days. On the 9th day, Saraswati pooja is celebrated. Special pujas are offered to Goddess Saraswati - the divine source of wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment and Goddess Durga - Goddess of Strength and power. The 10th day is "Vijayadashami". This festival of victory is preceded by worship of Goddess Saraswati and Goddess Durga.

Vijayadashami - a festival of victory

Vijayadashami is a festival of victory because it is resplendent with many an inspiring episode reflecting the victorious culmination of deeds of valour of our ancestors. This day is marked by significant victories in Ramayan and Mahabharat.

It is said in Ramayana that on this day Shri Rama killed the demon Ravana and achieved a triumphant victory over the demons. Shri Rama worshipped Goddess Durga just before the battle with the demon Ravana started. Shri Rama worshipped Shami tree on this day just before proceeding to Ayodhya.

In Mahabharata, Pandavas spent thirteen years in exile. During the last year of Ajnaat-vaas (living incognito), they had hidden their arms in the Shami tree. This is the day, their ajnnat-vaas was over and they had taken out their arms from the Shami tree and revealed their identity. That marked their preparation for the victorious war of Kurukshetra. Invoking these inspiring memories, the Shami tree is worshipped on this day.

The story of how the demon Mahishasura was killed is also striking. Demon Mahishasura performed severe penance and became immortal and ruler of all three worlds; heaven, earth and the nether-world. Gods became powerless. As per Lord Vishnu's advice, they parted with a portion of their divine powers to form into a new physical form - Goddess Mahishasura Mardini. Literally "Mahishasura Mardini" means destroyer of Mahishasura. Thus Goddess Mahishasura Mardini took a physical form as the combined might of all Gods. She killed the demon Mahishasura after a ceaseless fight of nine days and nights.

Celebrations

Grand processions of all Gods and goddesses are taken out in every town and village on this day, signifying the victory of the forces of righteousness over those of wickedness. It marks a new and prosperous beginning. New ventures started on this day are believed to flourish and bring prosperity. Children being tutored on this day - to have a head start in their education. In the medieval period, the Hindu Kings and Emperors used to start their mission on this day.

In old days, each individual used to carry a weapon. They used to worship their weapons on this day. It is called "Aayudha (weapons) Pooja". The same tradition is continued with some modifications. Now-a-days Hindu people worship different types of things which are modes of their earning and progress. For example, students worship books, businessmen worship their factories and machines, musicians worship their instruments and technical workers worship their tools. Even vehicles are also washed, decorated and worshipped.



To celebrate Shri Rama's victory, Rama-leela is observed by the people with great enthusiasm and éclat. Ram-Leela is a stage enactment of Ramayana. On this day, people arrange a street play based on the Rama-Ravana war. They create dummies (effigies) of Rama, Seeta, Lakshmana and Ravana. Rama-Lakshmana aim

at Ravana's dummy with burning arrows and burn dummy Ravana. After that, people welcome Rama, Seeta and Lakshmana as if they are welcoming the real ones.

The lesson of this legend is so beautifully clear. Even the good and the righteous can succeed against the evil forces only when they come together in an organized endeavour. Could there be a more telling message to the present-day?

Vijayadashami as a HSS Balagokulam Utsav

Vijayadashami is celebrated as one of the six utsavs of HSS. For HSS, Vijayadashami is more special than just a festival. It is because this day is the birth day of an organization - Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) - which has been the source of inspiration for HSS. On this very day, a great Hindu leader, Dr. Hedgewar, founded RSS in Bharat in 1925 for the rejuvenation and reorganization of the age-old Hindu Dharma.

Truely it has been said that Sanghe Shaktih Kalau Yuge - Organization holds the key to strength in Kaliyuga (today's world). Dr. Hedgewar realized that though Hindu people are immensely superior in culture, wealth and armies, they were defeated by foreign aggressors because they were disorganized. Though having all qualities of "Universal Dharma", Hindu Dharma has not been able to achieve that status because of disorganized Hindu people. Doctorji started RSS in Bharat on this day to organize Hindu people in Bharat. Keeping the tradition of Vijayadashami, RSS has been marching from success to success in all sectors of life.



Organizing Hindu society outside Bharat is also necessary which is one of the objectives of HSS. Vijayadashami being a festival of victory and a birth day of RSS, HSS too has given it a place in its six utsavs.



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) _____ is Lord Vishnu's seventh incarnation.
a) Krishna b) Rama c) Buddha d) Kalki
- 2) _____ is Lord Vishnu's eighth incarnation.
a) Krishna b) Rama c) Buddha d) Kalki
- 3) The complete account of Rama's deeds is described in _____.
a) Mahabharata b) Ramayana c) Vedas d) None of these
- 4) Epic Mahabharata belongs to _____ whereas Ramayana to _____.
a) Rama b) Krishna c) Buddha d) None of these
- 5) _____ is known as Maryada Puroshottama.
a) Krishna b) Buddha c) Rama d) None of these
- 6) Lord Krishna spent his childhood in _____.
a) Mathura b) Ayodhya c) Gokul d) None of these
- 7) Lord Krishna delivered _____.
a) Vedas b) Gita c) Upanishada d) None of these
- 8) _____ is the essence of knowledge of the Vedas and Upanishads.
a) Gita b) Hayagriva c) Ravana d) None of these
- 9) _____ is a festival of victory.
a) Deepavali b) Samkranti c) Navaratri d) Vijayadashami
- 10) Vijayadashami comes right after _____.
a) Samkranti b) Deepavali c) Navaratri d) None of these

Questions:

1) Describe the meaning of the first shloka.

2) Write first two lines of *Geet*.

3) Specify names of at least two friends of Krishna.

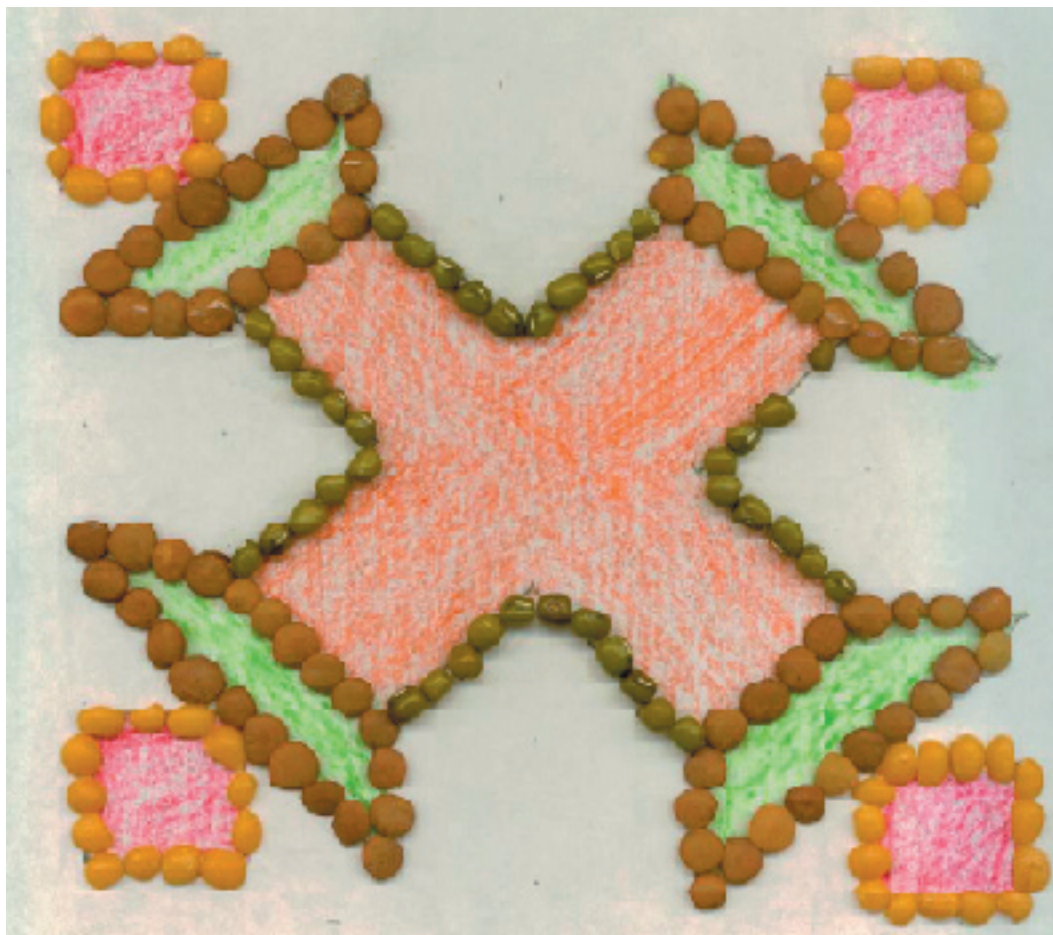
4) What is *Bhagvad Gita*? Describe briefly.

5) Why is *Vijayadashami* a festival of victory?

RANGOLI

Rangoli is one of the arts of Bharat. It is a traditional way of decorating courtyards and walls of houses, places of worship and sometimes eating places as well. Traditionally the powder of white stone, lime, rice flour and other cheap paste is used to draw different patterns. But if the powder is not available, markers can also be used to draw different patterns of Rangoli. Let us try to learn here how to draw a simple design (pattern) of Rangoli with markers.

- a) Draw a rangoli pattern with markers onto a construction paper (see below for one type of idea).
- b) Put the construction paper onto a cardboard (for better support when decorating).
- c) Decorate the patterns with different types of colored dals: moong dal, mag, tuar dal, whatever dried beans we have at home.



Shloka

दीपोज्वलनम् (Deepojvalnam)

शुभं करोति कल्याणम् ।	śubham karoti kalyāṇam
आरोग्यं धन-सम्पदा ॥	ārogyam dhana-sampadā
शत्रुबुद्धिर्विनाशाय ।	śatrubuddhirvināśāya
दीपज्योतिर्नमोस्तुते ॥	dīpajyotirnamostute

The lamp brings auspiciousness, prosperity, good health and abundance of wealth. Let (my) salutations be to you for the destruction of ignorance, which is the intellect's enemy.

लक्ष्मी वन्दना (Lakshami Vandanaa)

सर्वज्ञे सर्ववरदे	Sarvagye sarva-varade
सर्वदुष्टभङ्करि ।	sarva-dushta-bhayankari
सर्वदुःखहरे देवि	Sarva duh-kh hare devi
महालक्ष्मि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥	mahaa-lakshmi namo-a-stu te

You know every thing. You give all kinds of boon to all. All demons fear of you. You destroy all kinds of unhappiness. O MahaaLakshmi, I bow to you.

Geet

Bala Sagar Samaj Hove

Bala sagar samaj hove, Ravi Saman jagme sohe

Sankalp kare manas me, Sarvaswa liye haathome
Bhoomata ke charanome, Arpan kar hum mit jaave
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Jansewa Iishwar bhakti, Jaagrit ho samaj shakti
Isme hi jeevan mukti, Ab jeevan kritarth hove
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Meaning

Let the society be strong, It should shine like the sun.

Let us make a solemn resolution for the sake of humanity, to offer ourselves at the feet of mother Earth. Let us completely dedicate ourselves for the cause.

Let us join our hands and let the hearts meet. The song of unity should always be on the tip of the tongue. Let us all come together for this noble cause.

By developing personal discipline, the whole society gains strength. This is the only guarantee for victory and prosperity. We will bring such change in society.

Service to the people is service to God. We will awaken society and invoke strength in it. Now, this will be the only salvation (moksha) and satisfaction for me.



Avatara 9 - Buddha Avatara

With the departure of Lord Krihsna (Krishna Avatar), once again the true devotion to vedas was replaced by empty rituals. To enlighten the world in such times, Lord Vishnu descended the earth as Buddha - the enlightened one. Lord Buddha was born to Mayadevi, the wife of King Shuddhodana. His original name was Siddhartha. When Siddhartha reached sixteen, he married a charming princess Yashodhara.

One day, however, Siddartha ventured out into the world and was confronted with the inevitability of aging, illness, and death. Overcome by dismay, the young prince wondered if there might be a happiness that was not subject to change and decay. Then, seeing a forest wanderer, he decided that only by taking up the wilderness life could he find the answer to his question. That night, at the age of twenty-nine, he left his kingdom and entered the wilderness.

For six years, Siddartha submitted himself to rigorous ascetic practices. First he studied with different religious teachers, but, dissatisfied with what they saw as their highest goal, he set out to practice extreme physical austerities on his own. One night, Siddartha sat under the bodhi tree and meditated until dawn. He attained awakening, thus earning the title Buddha, or "Awakened One."

For the remainder of his life, the Buddha taught the dharma to others—men, women, and children; rich and poor. His preachings were based on four noble truths -

- 1) The world is full of misery and sorrow.
- 2) The main cause of misery is desire.
- 3) Misery and sorrow can be ended by killing desire and
- 4) Desire can be suppressed by attainment of Nirvana or complete enlightenment.

At the age of eighty, he lay down between two trees in a forest park and gave his last teachings to the assembled followers. With that, he entered total nirvana. He died in 487 BC.





Avatara 10 - Kalki Avatara

In previous chapters, we learnt that whenever there was a decline of Dharma and righteousness, Lord Vishnu incarnated Himself and appeared nine times on Earth, saved the world and established virtues and righteousness. Lord Vishnu, in the form of Krishna, has very well explained it in this shloka of Bhagvad Gita.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदाऽऽत्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

yadA yadA hi dharmasya glAnirbhavati bhArata |

abhyutthAnamadharmasya tadA.a.atmAnaM sR^iujAmyaham ||

Meaning: (O Arjuna!), whenever there is a decline of righteousness and predominant rise in unrighteousness, then I manifest myself.

It is said that Lord Vishnu once again will appear on the Earth in form of Kalki (machine man) to punish sinners; to destroy evil and uphold Dharma (righteous values) in human race. It will be his tenth incarnation.

When the practices taught by the Vedas and the institutes of law shall nearly have ceased, the close of the Kali age will begin. There would be terrible turmoil as the end nears. There would exist no topics on the subject of God, even at the residences of so-called saints and respectable gentlemen; at that time the Lord will appear as the supreme chastiser (purifier).

After all the imposter kings have been killed, the residents of the cities and towns will feel the breezes carrying the most sacred fragrance of the sandalwood paste and other decorations of Lord Vishnu, and their minds will thereby become pure. When Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appears in their hearts in His transcendental form of goodness, the remaining citizens will continue the circle of life on the earth. When the Supreme Lord has appeared on earth as Kalki, the maintainer of religion, Saya-yuga, the Age of Purity will begin, and human society will bring forth progress in the mode of goodness.





Deepavali - 1st Day



Deepavali is the festival of lights. Deepa means light and Avali means a row. It means a row of lights. Deepavali, in short, is a celebration for adoration of light. Deepavali has a special place among all the festivals of Hindus. Its greatest characteristic is that it is not related to any specific caste, class or province. Even non-Hindus celebrate this Hindu festival. It is truly a universal festival. The festival is celebrated by all people with great enthusiasm to dispel darkness and light up their lives.

The festival symbolizes unity in diversity as every province celebrates it in its own special way. People wear new and bright clothes. They clean and paint their houses and adorn them by lighting up "Diyas" (earthen lamps) and making "Rangoli" in front of their houses. Even the humblest of huts are lighted by a row of "Diyas". Crackers (fireworks) resound and light up the earth and the sky. Illumination -



Deepotsavas - and fireworks, joy and festivity, is to signify the victory of divine forces over wickedness. Illumination in temples and all sacred places of worship symbolize the scattering of spiritual radiance all round from these holy centers. People invites their friends

and neighbours and offer them sweets and snacks specially prepared for the festival. They send greeting-cards to relatives and friends who live far away.

The origin of Deepavali can be traced back to ancient Bharat. Since that time, it is being celebrated for many reasons. One of the reasons is to celebrate the abundance of the autumn harvest. Another reason is also dedicated to various gods and goddesses. The festival also marks an important date in the Bharatiya (Indian) calendar as Lord Rama returned back to his kingdom after a long exile of fourteen years. People celebrate Deepavali for 5 days. Those 5 days are - Dhana-trayodashi or Dhanteras, Narak-chaturdashi, Lakshmi-Poojan, Bali-Pratipada and Bhai-Duj. Each day has its own importance.

Dhana-trayodashi or Dhanateras - 1st day of Deepavali

The first day of Deepavali is Dhanteras (two days before Lakshmi poojan) is dedicated to Lakshmi, whose blessings are essential for a prosperous, fruitful and peaceful life. The word "Dhan" means wealth. Houses and business buildings are renovated and decorated. Entrances are made colorful with lovely traditional motifs of Rangoli designs to welcome the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. To indicate Goddess Lakshmi's long-awaited arrival, small footprints are drawn with rice flour and vermilion powder all over the houses. Lamps are kept burning all through the nights. We believe this day to be auspicious, women purchase some gold or silver or at least one or two new utensils.

A very interesting story about this day is of the sixteen-year-old son of King Hima. As per his horoscope he was doomed to die by a snake bite on the fourth day of his marriage. On that particular fourth day of his marriage, his young wife did not allow him to sleep. She laid all the ornaments and lots of gold and silver coins in a big heap at the entrance of her husband's bedroom and lighted innumerable lamps all over the place. She went on telling stories and singing songs. When Yam, the god of Death arrived there in the disguise of a serpent his eyes got blinded by the dazzle of those brilliant lights and he could not enter the prince's chamber. He climbed on top of the heap of the ornaments and coins and sat there whole night listening to the melodious songs. In the morning he quietly went away.

Thus, the young wife saved her husband from the clutches of death. Since then, this day of Dhanteras came to be known as the day of "YAMADEEPDAAN" and lamps are kept burning throughout the night in respectful adoration to Yam, the god of Death.

It is also believed that the main divinity of Ayur-Vignan (knowledge of life) called Dhnavantary first manifested on this day. Hence the importance attached to this day for the healing profession practising the disciplines of Vaidya (practitioners of Ayur-Veda). All over places, the Vaidyas organise joyful celebrations of the annual Dhnavantary festival.

Thus, being the first day of Deepavali, Dhanateras has quite a lot importance.





Deepavali - 2nd Day



As we learnt in previous chapter, Deepavali is celebrated for 5 days. We learnt the importance of the first day - Dhanteras. Now let us learn about the second day of Deepavali. The second day of Deepavali is **Naraka Chaturdashi**.

It is on this day; Lord Krishna and his wife Satyabhama defeated the evil demon Narakasura. Narakasura ruled the kingdom of Pradyoshapuram - Aasam province of Bharat which is the eastern end of Bharat. One of our holy scriptures, the Puranas describes that Narakasura, son of Bhudevi, acquired immense power from a blessing given by Lord Brahma after a severe penance. Under his rule, the people suffered a lot of hardship as the demon tortured the people and kidnapped the women to be imprisoned in his palace with his invincible might.



Power made Narakasura swollen-headed and he became a menace to the good and the holy men and even the Gods. Unable to bear the tyranny of the demon, the Gods led by Devendra implored lord Krishna to save them from his torture. Lord Krishna knew that Narakasura can be killed by only his mother Bhudevi. So, Krishna asked his wife Sathyabhama, the reincarnation of Bhudevi, to be his charioteer in the battle with Narakasura.

Lord Krishna was at Dwarika which is the western end of Bharat. Lord Krishna marched from west to east of Bharat to kill Narakasura. When Krishna fell unconscious after being hit by an arrow of Naraka, Sathyabhama takes the bow and aims the arrow at Narakasura, killing him instantly. Thus mother Bhudevi herself punished her own son Narakasura as he was evil. It is interesting to note that mother Bhudevi declared that Narakasura's death should not be a day of mourning but an occasion to celebrate and rejoice.

The populace was freed from the oppressive tyranny and all heaved a sigh of relief. The 16000 women kept in captivity by demon Narakasura were also freed. With a view to removing any stigma on them and according social dignity, Lord Krishna gave all of them the status of his wives.

The message of Naraka Chaturdashi Parva is that the good of the society should always prevail over one's own personal bonds. Mother Bhudevi, in form of Satyabhama, herself killed her own son Narakasura as he was evil. She reconciled herself to the loss of her son as she knew that her son was killed for the welfare of world. Thus she set a glowing example of how one has to brush aside one's personal joys and sorrows in the interest of society. It could also be taken to interpret that parents should not hesitate to punish their children when they step in to the wrong path.

Lord Krishna had an oil bath to rid himself off the blood spattered on his body when Narakasura was killed. That is why it is customary to get up early in the morning, massage the body with a mixture of oil, flour and haldi (turmeric) before the daily bath. In the evening, tarpan (act of satisfying by offering oblations of water) is offered to Yamaraj (god of death). It is believed that the observance of vrata (fasting) on this day paves the way to heaven. People light fireworks, which are regarded as the effigies of Narakasura who was killed on this day.

It has also been said that Lord Rama marched from North to South to complete his mission, thus unified north and south of Bharat and Lord Krishna marched from west to east, thus unified west and east of Bharat. They together, therefore, symbolize the grand unity of Bharat.

A new trend is also being established, which may eventually be considered as part of the Deepavali celebrations. Huge images of Narakasura, filled with crackers and dry grass are brought on street in procession, on Dhan trayodashi night. The tyrant king Narakasura and Krishna dance to the tune of drums and music to entertain the viewers. The dance ends with Krishna throwing a lighted arrow on the image of Narakasura, which instantly catches fire and burns amid sounds of firecrackers and display of fireworks.



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) _____ is Lord Vishnu's ninth incarnation.
a) Krishna b) Rama c) Buddha d) Kalki
- 2) _____ is Lord Vishnu's tenth incarnation.
a) Krishna b) Rama c) Buddha d) Kalki
- 3) Lord Buddha's original name is _____.
a) Rama b) Siddhartha c) Krishna d) None of these
- 4) Deepavali is a _____ day festival.
a) two b) three c) five d) None of these
- 5) Lord Krishna and Satyabhama (Bhudevi) punished _____.
a) Ravana b) Kamsa c) Indrajit d) Narakasura
- 6) Lord Krishna marched from west to _____ to punish Narakasura.
a) East b) South c) North d) None of these

Match the pairs

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) Deepavali - 1st day | 1) Enlightened (awakened) one |
| 2) Deepavali - 2nd day | 2) Kalki Avatara |
| 3) Buddha means..... | 3) Killed Narakasura |
| 4) Machine-man | 4) Dhanateras or Dhanatrayodashi |
| 5) Lord Krishna and Bhudevi | 5) Deepavali |
| 6) Festival of Lights | 6) Narak-Chaturdashi |

Questions:

1) Describe the meaning of the first shloka.

2) Write the second stanza of the *Geet*.

3) Lord Krishna and Bhudevi (Satyabhama) punished demon Narakasura. What is the moral of this story?

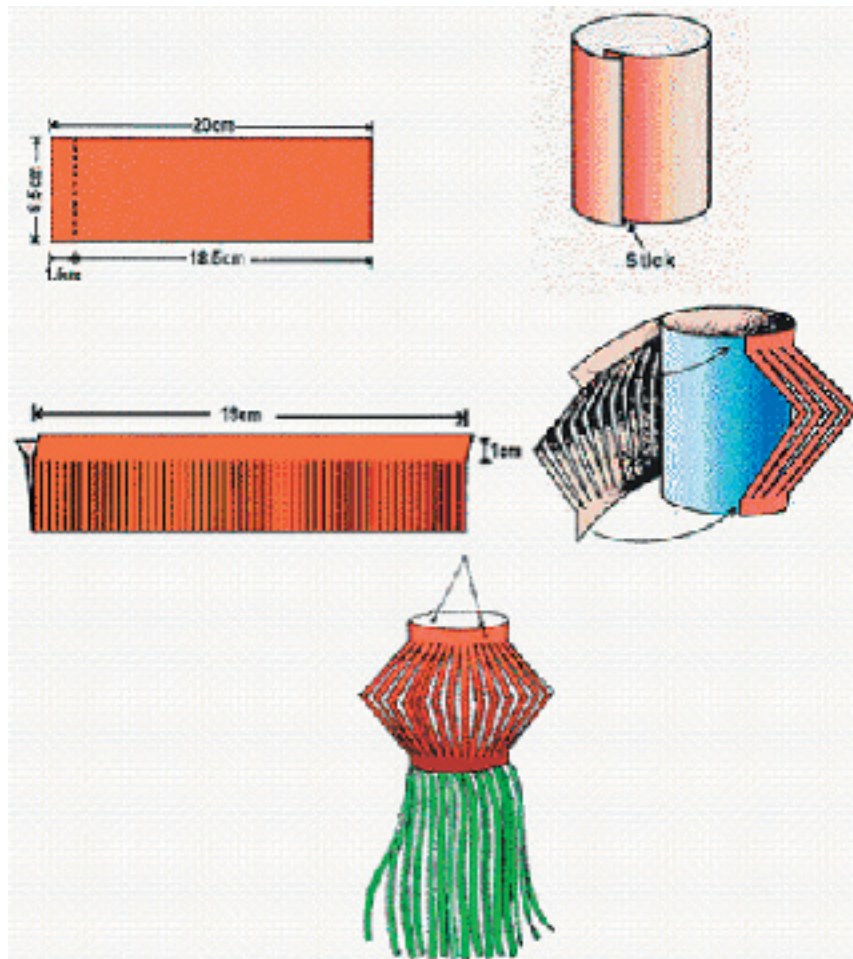
4) Lord Buddha's teaching were based on what noble truths?

5) How do people decorate their houses during Deepavali festival?

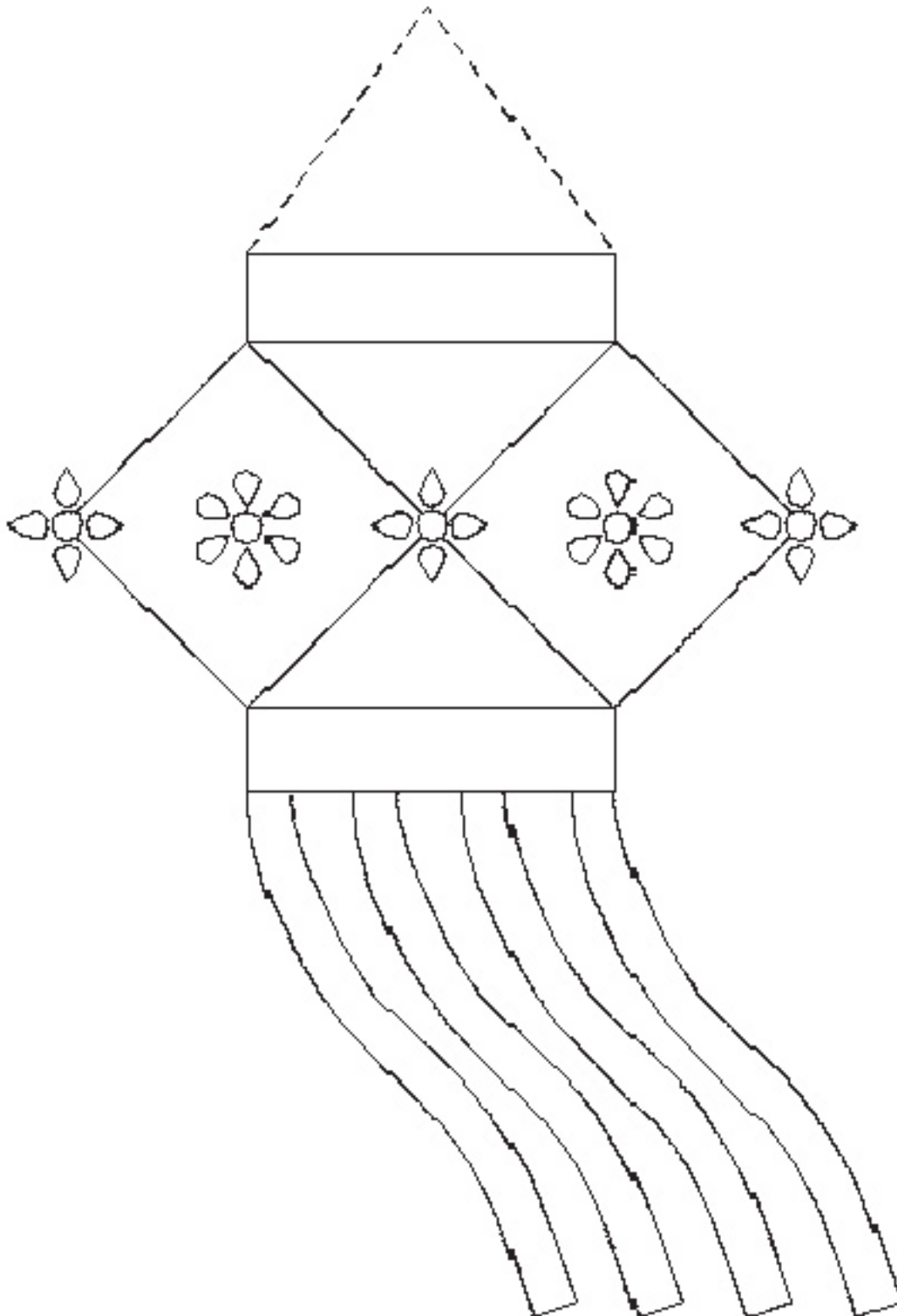
Make your own Aakash Diya (Kandil)

"Aakash Diya (kandil)" is a decorative colored paper lamp light. It is hung above the houses, temples and all places of worship during the Deepavali festival as Deepavali is a festival of lights. Readymade "Aakash Diya" can be bought from the market. You can make your own Aakash Diya too. It is very easy and fun to make! Follow simple instructions given below. Use colors of your choice to make the Diya look the way you want it to.

Form a roll with a sheet of cardboard 20cm x 6.5cm. Take a colored tinted paper 19cm x 8.5cm and fold it in half. Make parallel cuts at a distance of about 0.4cm as shown, leaving a margin of 1cm. Now unfold and paste the margins along the upper and the lower edges of the cylinder. For extra decoration, cut a sheet of thin colored paper 19cm x 19cm, as shown, leaving a margin of 1cm. Stick it along the lower edge of the lantern.



Aakash Diya (kandil) for coloring



Shloka

ॐ (Om)

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम्
 पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
 पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ।

om pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam
 pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate |
 pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya
 pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate |

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||

OM! That is full. This is full. From that full, this full has come; when this Full is taken from that Full it always remains Full! Om Peace, Peace, Peace!

श्री कृष्ण (śrī kṛiṣṇa)

आकाशात् पतितं तोयं
 यथा गच्छति सागरम् ।
 सर्वदेवनमस्कारः केशवं
 प्रतिगच्छति ॥

ākāśāt patitaṁ toyam
 yathā gacchati sāgaram |
 sarvadevanamaskāraḥ keśavam
 pratigacchati ||

Just as every drop of rain that falls from the sky flows into the Ocean, in the same way all prayers offered to any Deity goes to Bhagawan Krishna

(Bhagvan Vishnu).

Geet

Shata naman Madhav charan me

Shata naman Madhav charan me

Aap ki piyush vaani. shabda ko bhi dhanya karati.

Aap ki aatmiyataa jo, yugal nayano se barasati,
Aur vah nishchhal hasi jo, gunj uthati thi gagan me || 1 ||

Gyan me to aap rishiwar, deekhate the aadya Shankar,
Aur bhola bhav shishu saa, khelataa mukha par nirantar,
Deen dukhiyo ke liye thi, dravit karunaa dhaar mana me || 2 ||

Dukkha sukha nindaa prashansaa, aap ko sab ek hi the,
Divya Gita gyan se yuta, aap to sthita pragya hi the,
Bharatbhu ke putra uttam, aap the yugpurush janame || 3 ||

Sindhu saa gambhir manas, thaaha kab payi kisi ne,
Aa gaya samparka me jo, dhanyataa paayi usi ne,
Aap yogeshwar naye the, chhal bhare kurukshetra rann me || 4 ||

Meaning

Oh I Madhava we bow before you...

Your sweet words give real meaning to words themselves. Your kindness pours down from your eyes. Your innocent laugh echoes from the skies.

Your intelligence Is like an ancient saga you appear like Adi Shankaracharya. While your face always reveals childlike innocence and your eyes are always filled up with tears for down trodden

Everything is equal to you may it be joy or grief, praise or no praise. You are always like sthita pragya described in Gita. You were the great son of this land and born here as her greatest son.

Your mind appears like the ocean, deep and quiet. Everybody gets blessings whoso ever comes in contact with you. You are like Lord Yogeshwar (Krishna) promising to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra.



Deepavali - 3rd Day

As we learnt in previous chapter, Deepavali is celebrated for 5 days. We learnt the importance of the first and second day. Now let us learn about the third day of Deepavali.

The third day is Amavasya (no moon in the sky at night) when Maha Lakshmi puja is performed. On this very day the Sun enters his second course and passes Libra, which is represented, by the balance or scale. Hence, this design of Libra is believed to have suggested the balancing of account books and their closing. It is believed that on this day Goddess Lakshmi would be in her benevolent mood and fulfill the wishes of her devotees. One version says that it was on this day that Goddess Lakshmi emerged from Kshira Sagara (Ocean of Milk) when the Gods and demons were churning the sagara (ocean) for nectar (Amrit).

Maha Lakshmi is also considered as a goddess of wealth and prosperity. The business community open their new year's account with Her worship. They also do pooja of their account books on this day.

It is believed that on this auspicious day Lord Krishna discarded his body. One more interesting story related to this day is of a small boy called Nachiketa who believed that Yam, the god of Death was as black as the dark night of amavasya. He on this day met Yam in person and was puzzled seeing Yam's calm countenance and dignified stature. Yam explained to Nachiketa on this day of amavasya that by only passing through the darkness of death, man sees the light of highest wisdom and then only his soul can escape from the bondage of his mortal frame to mingle with the Supreme Power without whose will nothing moves in the world. It was then that Nachiketa realized the importance of worldly life and significance of death. All of Nachiketa's doubts were set at rest and he whole-heartedly participated in Deepavali celebrations.

On the dark new moon night, the entrances to all homes are lit up and decorated with rangoli patterns to welcome Lakshmi, the radiant consort of Vishnu and the goddess of wealth and luster. Goddess Lakshmi likes cleanliness, and she will visit the cleanest house first. This is also the reason why the broom is worshiped on this day with offerings of haldi and kumkum (turmeric and vermilion). The lamps are lit in the evening

to welcome the goddess. Lakshmi Puja is performed on this day.

Lakshmi Puja consists of a combined puja of five deities: Ganesha is worshiped at the beginning of every auspicious act as Vighnaharta; Goddess Lakshmi is worshiped in her three forms - Mahalakshmi (the goddess of wealth and money), Mahasaraswati (the goddess of books and learning), and Mahakali; Kuber (the treasurer of the gods) is also worshiped. The steps to the Lakshmi Poojan is as follows:



- First clean the Puja room and then Bathe each Deity (Lakshmi & Ganesh) first with water, then with panchamitra/or rose water, followed by water once more
- Now put Deepak (Lamp) in front of the Deities - As the tiny diyas of clay are lighted to drive away the shadows of evil spirits.
- Make a Panchamitra with 5 ingredients of milk, curd, ghee (butter), sugar & Honey. Place few sweets, snacks & fruits as a prasad.
- Make offerings of flowers, abir (red color), sindoor (vermilion), haldi (turmeric), and light the agarbatti (incense sticks) and lamps filled with Ghee.
- Now make offerings of fruit, sweet (mithai), salty snacks and offer dakshina (token money), which could be given to the poor.
- In the end, offer paan (betel leaves), cloves. Now pray to the deities to seek their blessings.
- Ganesh Pooja: Ganesh Puja is a must for Deepavali Puja. (Lord Ganesha is to be worshipped in all pujas before any other God or Goddess.) (Ganesh Aarti is sung)
- Lakshmi Pooja: Place Lotus and other flowers at her feet as an offering. A silver coin is placed in front of the Goddess during the puja. Now perform aarti with flowers in hand (Lakshmi Aarti is sung)
- After Deepavali Puja have the Prasad and go out to burst Deepavali Crackers.

Third day (Lakshmi Poojan) has been a most important day of Deepavali.





Deepavali - 4th Day

In previous chapters we learnt the significance of first, second and third day of Deepavali festival. Now let us learn about the fourth day of Deepavali.

The day following the Lakshmi Poojan that is Amavasya is "Kartik Shuddh Padwa". This particular lot of importance in Hindu Dharma. On this day, Lord Vishnu punished demon Bali. It is an interesting story.

On this day, Lord Vishnu, taking the form of dwarfish Brahmin by name Vamana approached Bali. He asked Bali, "Hey Bali! Give me 3 steps of space". Bali was surprised at his demand. But he was known for his charity. He gladly granted Vamana 3 steps space. With one step, Vamana (Lord Vishnu) covered entire earth. With second step, He covered outer sky. Now He asked Bali, "Bali! where should I keep my third step?" Bali, left with no other choice, pointed out his own head. Vamana put his third step (foot) on Bali's head and punished him. Repentant Bali requested Vamana to permit him to visit the Earth once a year. Vamana permitted him. On this day, Bali visits the Earth. That is why this day is also known as "Bali Pratipada".

Govardhan-Puja is also performed in the North on this day. Govardhan is a small hillock in Vraj, near Mathura and on this day of Diwali people of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar build cow dung, hillocks, decorate them with flowers and then worship them.

The deity presiding over this mountain spoke to Hanuman asking of His reason for leaving the mountain there. Hanuman replied that the mountain should remain there until the age of Dwapar when Lord Rama incarnates as Lord Krishna in the form of man. He, Lord Krishna will shower his grace on the mountain and will instruct that the mountain be worshiped not only in that age but also in the ages to come. This deity whom Hanuman spoke to was none other than Govardhan (an incarnation of Lord Krishna), who manifested himself in the form of the mountain. To fulfill this decree, Govardhan Pooja was performed and is continued to be performed today.

As per the Vishnu-Puran the people of Gokul used to celebrate a festival in honor of Lord Indra and worshiped him after the end of every monsoon season but

one particular year the young Krishna stopped them from offering prayers to Lord Indra who in terrific anger sent a deluge to submerge Gokul.

People were afraid that the downpour was a result of their neglect of Indra. But Krishna assured them that no harm would befall them. He lifted Mount Govardhan with his little finger and sheltered men and beasts from the rain. This gave him the nickname Govardhandhari. After this, Indra accepted the supremacy of Krishna.



This day is also observed as Annakoot meaning mountain of food. Pious people keep awake the whole night and cook 56 or 108 different types of food for the bhog (the offering of food) to Krishna. In temples, especially in Mathura and Nathadwara, the deities are given milk bath, dressed in shining attires with ornaments of dazzling diamonds, pearls, rubies and other precious stones. After the prayers and traditional worship innumerable varieties of delicious sweets are ceremoniously raised in the form of a mountain before the deities as "Bhog" and then the devotees approach the mountain of food and take prasad from it.

Padwa or Bali Pratipada is a symbol of love and devotion between the wife and husband. On this day newly married daughters with their husbands are invited for special meals and given presents.

Houses are cleaned prior to the festival. Colorful rangoli designs are drawn at entrances. New clothes are worn on this day. There is a family gathering and delicious food such as puran poli or sweet rotis, soonth pak and usal are prepared for everyone.

This day is considered a very auspicious day. New ventures are begun, house-warming poojas are performed, and people also may choose to buy gold, silver or property on this day. There are some legends behind the celebration of Gudi Padwa. It is said that Lord Brahma created the Universe on this day and Satyuga (The Age of Truth and Justice) began. It is also believed that on this day, Rama killed King Bali and Shri Rama returned to Ayodhya victorious.

Gudi Padwa is the first day of the lunar New Year. This is one of the 3 and a half days in the Hindu Lunar calendar, whose every moment is considered auspicious.





Deepavali - 5th Day



In previous chapters we learnt the significance of Deepavali's first, second, third and fourth day of Deepavali festival. Now let us learn about the fifth and last day of Deepavali. The fifth and last day of Deepavali is known by the name of Bhai Dooj in the Hindi-speaking belt, Bhai Phot in Bengal, Bhav Bij in the Marathi-speaking communities and in Nepal by the name of Bhai Tika.

After the high voltage celebrations of the festival of lights and fire-crackers, sisters all over world get ready for 'Bhai Dooj' - when sisters ceremonize their love by putting an auspicious tilak or a vermilion mark on the forehead of their brothers and perform an aarti of him by showing him the light of the holy flame as a mark of love and protection from evil forces. Sisters are lavished with gifts, goodies and blessings from their brothers. The essence of this festival is similar to that of Raksha Bandhan except that the reasoning behind it is different. On this day the sister worships her brother with an aarti. The brother stands for Krishna who did the noble deed of killing the demon Narakasura.

As the legend goes Yamraj, the God of Death visited his sister Yamuna on this particular day. She put the auspicious tilak on his forehead, garlanded him and led him with special dishes and both of them together ate the sweets, talked and enjoyed themselves to their heart's content, while parting Yamraj gave her a special gift as a token of his love and in return Yami also gave him a lovely gift which she had made with her own hands. That day Yamraj announced that anyone who receives tilak from his sister will never be thrown. That is why this day of Bhai dooj is also known by the name of "YAMA-DWITIYA" Since then this day is being observed as a symbol of love between sisters and brothers. It became also imperative for the brother to go to his sister's house to celebrate Bhai dooj. On this brother and sister day, sisters pray to Yamraj for her brother's long life and prosperity.

Legend holds that when the Kirat king fell ill, Yama sent messages in the form of dogs and crows. At this time, Bali Hang's sister guarded him by sending messages that he could take him only after fulfilling certain conditions; that the god of death should wait till Panchami, therefore bhai tika. She also put forth conditions that Yama should

not take Bali Hang until the tika, which she had smeared on his forehead, fades away, the water sprinkled dries and the makhmali (a kind of flower) flower wilts.

A mandap is made in the name of her brother, then the sister put Paanch Rangi Tika (Five colored) -- Yellow, green, red, blue and white color, offers him shagun, fruits and sweets and in return the brother gives their sister gifts or money. The main theme behind bhai tika is the sisters praying for their brother's long life from Yama Raj, god of the underworld.



According to one legend, on this day, Lord Krishna, after slaying the Narakasura demon, goes to his sister Subhadra who welcomes him with the lamp, flowers and sweets, and puts the holy protective spot on her brother's forehead.

Yet another story behind the origin of Bhai Dooj says that when Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, attained nirvana, his brother King Nandivardhan was distressed because he missed him and was comforted by his sister Sudarshana. Since then, women have been revered during Bhai Dooj. A special square shaped space is created on the floor, lined with various designs in corn powder, to worship the brother. Before stepping into this square shaped puja place, the brother tastes a particular bitter fruit (Karith in Marathi) which Krishna is said to have tasted before setting out for the kill.

On this day, every brother visits his sister who performs aukshan, wishes him a long & healthy life and offers him sweets with warmth. The brother in exchange offers a present as a token of love & affection. The sister asks the Lord for the well being of her brother, who is her protector. Those who do not have a brother perform a sort of puja to the Moon-God. The Bhau-beej puja is performed in any case. Basundi-poori or shrikhand poori is the special sweet prepared for the occasion.

Deepavali has always been the festival with social and religious association. It is a personal, people-oriented festival where enmities are forgotten; families and friends meet, enjoy and establish a world of closeness.



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Goddess Lakshmi is considered as goddess of _____.
a) wealth b) knowledge c) strength d) None of these
- 2) Bhai-dooj (5th day of Deepavali) primarily belongs to _____.
a) monther and son b) brother and sister c) None of these
- 3) _____ is the beginning of new year.
a) Bhai-dooj b) Balipratipada c) Lakshmi-pooaja d) None of these
- 4) Govardhan pooja is performed on _____.
a) Bhai-dooj b) Balipratipada c) Lakshmi-pooaja d) None of these
- 5) On balipratipada, bhagvan _____ attained nirvana.
a) Buddha b) Gurunanak c) Mahavir d) None of these
- 6) _____ symbol of love and devotion between husband and wife.
a) Bhai-dooj b) Balipratipada c) Lakshmi-pooaja d) None of these

Match the pairs

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Deepavali - 3rd day | 1) Bhai-dooj |
| 2) Deepavali - 4th day | 2) Padwa (or Bali-Pratipada) |
| 3) Deepavali - 5th Day | 3) Lord Krishna's sister |
| 4) Start of a new year | 4) madhav charan me |
| 5) Subhadra | 5) Lakshmi Poojan |
| 6) shata naman | 6) Bali-pratipada |

Questions:

1) Describe the meaning of the second shloka.

2) Write the second stanza of the *Geet*.

3) Describe the importance of Deepavali.

Aakash Diya (kandil) for coloring

