

CHAPTER FOUR



DISCUSSIONS



MEANING OF THE MOST SACRED SYLLABLE ‘OM’

- * **OM** is the name for the infinite **BRAHMAN** (the ultimate reality), the cause and the basis of creation. Hence, OM is the most comprehensive name of God. Of all names of God, OM is the Supreme and signifies only God and nothing else. Whereas other names encompass only some aspects of God and stand for other things as well.
- * **OM** is a sound symbol indicating **AUSPICIOUSNESS**. It is the first sound of the Almighty – the sound from which emerges each and every other sound, whether of music or of language.
- * **OM** (also called **Pranava**) is chanted as **MANTRA** in meditation and other religious prayers or pujas. Meditation on OM satisfies every need and ultimately leads to liberation.

It is believed to be the traditional way of clearing all the impediments in the vocal chord to make one chant the hymns correctly. It is for this reason that all the Vedic Mantras has ‘OM’ or ‘AUM’ as the first term.

- * **OM** means ‘**THAT WHICH PROTECTS**’. When one chants Om with the understanding that it is a name for the Lord, it becomes a prayer for one’s protection.
- * **OM** is composed of three sounds: **A U M**

A stands for protection we are seeking during wake state.

U stands for protection we are seeking during dream state.

M stands for protection we are seeking during sleep state.

As one chants Om repeatedly, the silence between the chants stands for the awareness, consciousness that is the basis of the three worlds (waking, dream and sleep), the three experiencers (waker, dreamer and sleeper), and the three states of experience (waking, dream and sleep).

- * **OM** thus represent **all that exists** and the basis of all that exists.

* **OM** represents the **trimurti** (triad/ Trinity) and hence the **three gunas** (rajas, satvas and tamas).

A stands for Creation of the Universe by Brahma (who represents Rajas)

U stands for Preservation of the Universe by Vishnu (who represents Satvas)

M stands for Destruction or dissolution of the Universe by Shiva (who represents Tamas).

* **OM** is the sound form of **Atman**.

* **OM** represents all the **words** produced by the human vocal organ.

A Produced from the very depth of the human system, the throat takes the most prominent part in the expression of the sound.

U The second stage where the sound starting at the throat, rolls outwards as it were, to the tip of the tongue.

M The sound concentrated at the extremity of the human vocal system, the lips.

* **OM** is the sound produced by Lord Shiva's drum and through it came the notes of the octave, i.e., **Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni**. Thus by this sound Shiva creates and recreates the universe.

A represents 'Sa', the base note of the fundamental scale in music.

U represents 'Pa', the base note of the fundamental scale in music.

M represents 'Sa', the base note of the immediately higher scale in music.

Therefore, all the basic notes from Sa to Ni echo when one pronounces OM in continuity.

* In the **written symbol** of **OM** -  what looks like 3 is the 'a' sound in Sanskrit, the tail or trunk is the 'u' sound and the dot on the half moon is the nasal sound 'm', in Sanskrit. The symbol, like the meaning, is universal and symbolizes the **formless aspect of God**, ■

SHAANTIH

The word 'Shaantih' is chanted three times at the end of every Shaanti-Mantra for the following three reasons:

1. To prevent obstacles from natural disasters e.g. Storms, tornados, earthquakes, floods etc.
2. To prevent obstacles from surroundings, e.g. Noise, distractions by traffic etc.
3. To prevent obstacles from within self e.g. Tiredness, an agitated mind or distracted mind.

Refer the brief explanation given in chapter one (SLOKAS) for the peace prayer-*Om Sahanavavatu....* ■

Activity 17 (OM and Shaantih)

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Shaantih Atman protects Brahman formless

Almighty auspiciousness OM three

1. OM is the name for _____, the Absolute.
2. The sound symbol OM indicates _____.
3. OM is the first sound of the _____.
4. All Vedic mantras have _____ as the first term.
5. OM means 'that which _____'.
6. OM is composed of _____ sounds.
7. OM is the sound form of _____.
8. Written symbol  symbolizes the _____ aspect of God.
9. _____ is chanted three times at the end of every peace prayer.

THE TRINITY

(Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva)

Introduction:

Hindus believe in the Universal being called “Brahm” or “Omkar”, who adopts into so many appearances. Each one has distinctive character. Though Agni (fire-god), Indra (head of all devas/gods), and Surya (sun-god) constitute the Vedic Triad Gods, the Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva play an important role in Hindu mythology and in our Vedas today.

Ganesha (son of Shiva and his consort Parvati) is first invoked. He is revered by mass numbers of Hindus, whether they are followers of Shiva or Vishnu. As discussed earlier, the syllable 'OM' represents the Trimurti (triad) - Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.



Brahma:

- * Brahma is the **creator**.
 - * He is called **Prajaapati**, the Lord of Progeny.
 - * Lord Brahma is said to have appeared on a lotus, which grew from the navel of Lord Vishnu at the beginning of the creation.
 - * This god is shown with **four heads** facing the four quarters (directions).
 - * The faces have beards and the eyes are closed in meditation.
 - * There are **four arms** holding different objects and in different poses.
- * The objects usually shown are:
- * Akshamala (rosary),
 - * Kurca (a brush of Kusa grass),
 - * Sruk (ladle),
 - * Sruva (spoon),
 - * Kamandalu (water pot) and
 - * Pustaka (book).

The combination and arrangement vary from image to image.

Symbology:

- The **heads** represent the **four Vedas (Rig, Yajur, Sama & Atharva)**, the four Yugas (**epochs of time - Satya, Treta, Dvapara & Kali**), and the four Varnas (**divisions of society based on nature, nurture and vocation**).
 - The **arms** represent the **four quarters (directions)**.
 - The **rosary** represents **time**, and **the water pot, the casual waters**, from which all creation has sprung. So, Lord Brahma controls time as well as the principle of causation.
 - The **Kusa grass, the ladle and the spoon** being sacrificial implements, **represent the system of sacrifices**, which is the means to be adopted by the various creatures to sustain one another.
 - The **book** represents **knowledge**, sacred and secular. He is the giver of all knowledge-arts, sciences and wisdom.
 - The **poses of the hand (Mudras)** are **Abhaya** (assuring protection) and **Varada** (granting boons). He is easily pleased by austerities and bestows boons on the supplicants, be they Gods, demons or men.
 - The icon of Brahma is shown either standing on a lotus or sitting on a swan. **Hamsa** (swan), **His vehicle**, stands for discrimination and wisdom and hence for **knowledge**.
- * Lord Brahma represents the Vedas and his consort Sarasvati Devi their spirit and meaning. Hence, **he is the source of all knowledge and Sarasvati is the goddess of Knowledge**. He gave his consort a place in his tongue.
 - * His place of **abode** is **Satyaloka** or Brahmhaloka (the uppermost of the seven worlds above the earth).
 - * Lord Brahma was the chief priest who performed the marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati Devi.
 - * Lord Brahma is called by many names. Some of them are: **Vidhi** (the ordinator), **Loksha** (the master of the worlds), **Pitaamaha** (the patriarch) and **Hiranyagarbha** (Golden Embryo from which he is born - It is said, the embryo took shape in Vishnu's mind when he began to think of creation).
 - * Lord Brahma has only one temple, which is at the Pushkar Lake in Ajmer, Rajasthan.
 - * Every Temple, be it of Lord Shiva or Lord Vishnu, must have a niche in the northern wall for Lord Brahma, and his image must receive worship everyday since he is an important Parivaaradevataa (attendant of the Chief-deity). ■

Activity 18

Lord Brahma

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Hamsa	rosary	lotus	discrimination	four
Vedas	Prajaapati	Vishnu	Sarasvati	Varada
sacrifices	knowledge	Abhaya	arms	Kusa

1. Lord Brahma is called _____, the Lord of Progeny.
2. Lord Brahma appeared on a _____ from _____'s navel.
3. Lord Brahma has _____ heads and four _____.
4. The heads represent the four _____.
5. The _____ stands for time.
6. The _____ grass, the spoon and the ladle represent the system of _____.
7. The poses of the hand are _____ and _____.
8. Lord Brahma is the source of all _____.
9. Goddess _____ is the consort of Lord Brahma.
10. _____ is the vehicle of Lord Brahma and it stands for wisdom and _____.

Vishnu: Vishnu, also known as Mahavishnu, is god of all gods. He is the central and the major deity of the trinity-Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Vishnu is the **preserver**. The name Vishnu comes from the root *Vish*, which means to spread in all directions, “to pervade”. He is the inner core, the nucleus, and the cohesive point through which everything exists.

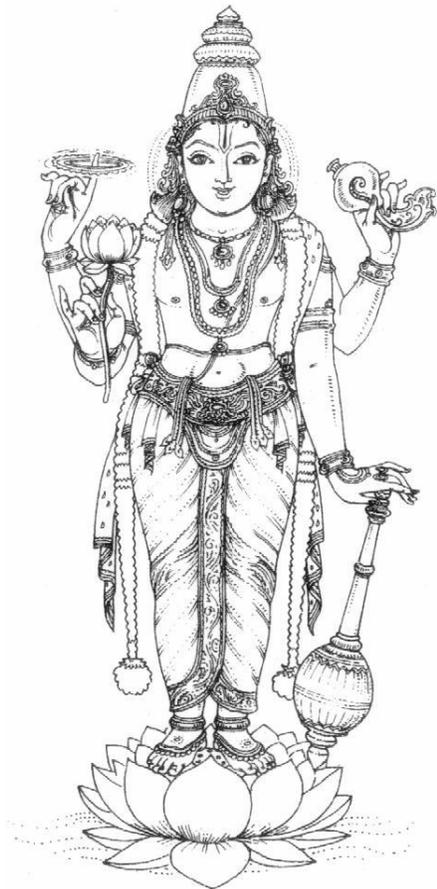
Vishnu is represented as dark blue skinned either sleeping over the waves of the ocean on the coils of the serpent-deity named Shesh Nag, or standing on waves with four hands-each hand holding one of his four chief attributes.

* **In the upper left hand:** he holds the **conch** or Shankha (named **Panchjanya**), symbol of **five elements** (aakaash-space or sky, vaayu-air, agni-fire, aapas-water and prithvi-earth). When blown it produces sound that is associated with primeval sound from which creation developed.

* **In the lower left hand:** he has the **mace** or Gada (called **Kaumodaki**) that indicates the **cosmic intellect**.

* **In the upper right hand:** he holds **discus** or wheel or Chakra (named **Sudershan**), symbol of **cosmic mind**.

* **In the lower right hand:** he holds **lotus** (named **Padma**) that points to the **evolving world**. Just as the lotus is born out of water and unfolds gradually in all its glory, this world also is born out of the casual waters and evolves gradually in its entire splendor. Hence the lotus stands for the evolved world.



This world can be created only by a combination of the five elements, the mind and the intellect. Hence the total meaning of this symbology would be that the Lord Vishnu is the creator and the master of this world.

Vishnu wears a necklace with the famous gem **Kaustubha** on it. A large **mole** (birth mark) can be seen on his chest. The **mole** represents all **objects of enjoyment**, the products of nature. The **gem** resting on the mole stands

for the **enjoyer**. So, this world of duality consisting of the enjoyer and the enjoyed is like an ornament for the Lord.

He is also wearing a **garland** (of gems, or fragrant flowers) **Vaijayanti** by name that is symbolical of the **subtle elements**.

His **consort** is **Lakshmi**, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. He gave his consort a place in his chest and hence called as Shreevatsa.

His **place** of abode is **Vaikunta** (heaven).

His **vehicle** is **Garuda**, the King of birds, a giant sized eagle shown as a human figure with a sharp beak and two wings at the back. Two hands are always in the adoration pose. The image is usually installed right opposite the central shrine. Garuda means 'wings of speech'. He actually personifies Vedic knowledge that has come down to us, on his wings, as it were, from the world of God.



Vishnu took nine **Avataras** (incarnations), tenth one is yet to come. They are as follows: Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Balarama, and Krishna. The tenth one is Kalki. Vishnu comes to earth whenever there is a broken law or no order.

Apart from these avataras, Vishnu took so many forms associated with the number of tales. One among them is Venkateshwara meaning the Lord who can burn away our sins when we worship Him.

Another name of Vishnu is **Narayana**, meaning '**one who dwells in the casual waters**'. This interpretation has given rise to a description of Narayana as follows: After the destruction of the universe of the previous



cycle and before the creation of the next, Narayana, the Supreme God, falls asleep on his bed of the great serpent Shesha, which is floating on Kshirasamudra, the ocean of milk. One of his hands is making offerings of vilvam to a small Shivalingam, to his right. When he is dreaming as it were, of the next creation, a lotus springs forth from his navel along with

god Brahma seated on it. After waking up, he instructs Brahma to proceed with the act of creation.

Kshirasamudra (ocean of milk) stands for the **purest form of Prakrti** or nature in its undifferentiated state. Milk-white indicates this purity. It can be said that Lord Narayana is floating on the ocean of the bliss.

The serpent **Shesha** is said to have a thousand heads and is supporting the worlds on its hoods. Hence it represents the **cosmic space**, in which everything exists.

Shesha is also called 'ANANTA', meaning the endless or infinite. Hence the serpent stands for **cosmic time**, which is infinite or endless.

The thousand **hoods** indicate the **innumerable divisions of time**. Created worlds come into being in time and are sustained in time and this is the meaning of the thousand hoods supporting the worlds.

'**Shesha**' actually **means** 'the remainder', 'what is **left over** at the end'. Since creation cannot proceed out of nothing, it is to be assumed that 'something' is 'left over' (shesha) from the previous creation, which forms the seed as it were, for the next. So Shesha represents the totality of the individual souls (Jivas) in their subtle form, left over from the previous cycle and needing opportunities for regeneration.

Serpent can also represent Kaama or **desire**, which is always left over (shesha), even after acquisition and enjoyment of the desired object. This goes on until Moksha or final liberation. Hence, it can stand for the desire of the Lord to proceed with the next cycle of creation after rest. ■

Activity 19

Unscramble the words.

1. A N Y A R N A A The Lord who dwells upon water _____.
2. N C A P J H Y A N A Vishnu's conch or shell _____
3. D R A G U A Vishnu's vehicle _____ .
4. U K M D A I K O A Vishnu's mace _____ .

Activity 20 (Lord Vishnu)

Match the words.

What does each object on Vishnu's icon represent? Match the words in Column A and Column B. Write the corresponding number of Column A in Column B.

Column A

1. Conch

2. Discus

3. Mace

4. Lotus

5. Mole

6. Gem

7. Garland

Column B

_____ Evolved world

_____ comic intellect

_____ enjoyer

_____ five elements

_____ cosmic mind

_____ subtle elements

_____ all objects of enjoyment

Activity 21 (Lord Vishnu)

Mark the correct answer with an X.

1. The name of Vishnu's Chakra or wheel is

_____ Sudershan

_____ Vaijayanti

_____ Panchjanya

2. The consort of Lord Vishnu is

_____ Sarasvati

_____ Durga

_____ Lakshmi

3. Vishnu's place of abode is called

_____ Kailash

_____ Vaikunta

_____ Satyaloka

4. The serpent on which Vishnu falls asleep is called

_____ Snake

_____ Nag

_____ Shesha

Shiva:

- * **Shiva** means auspiciousness (good), the one in whom the Universe ‘sleeps’ after destruction and before the next cycle of creation.
- * He is the third member of the Trinity.
- * He is the **destroyer**.
- * He is also named as Mahesh, or **Mahadev**, the greatest God.
- * He sits on a tiger skin.
- * He has cobras all around his neck and shoulders.
- * He has a crown of long matted hair from which flows the sacred river Ganga.
- * He has the crescent moon as an ornament on his head.
- * He has trisula (trident) symbol of power, Damaru (drum), akshamala (rosary) and Mendicant’s bowl.
- * He is shown as white as camphor and His body is smeared with ashes.
- * He has three eyes-the third eye being on the forehead between the eyebrows.



- * The icon of Shiva may have two, four or more arms. In the icon with four arms, two of the arms are shown holding trisula and damaru while the other two are in the Abhaya (protection-giving) and Varada (boon-giving) Mudras (poses).
- * A tiger skin and an elephant- skin adorn his body as his garments.
- * He has serpents all over his body forming the necklace, the girdle and arm-bracelets.
- * There is also a garland of skulls round his blue neck.
- * The sacred **bull** (called **Nandi**) is His **vehicle**.
- * His **consort** is **Parvathi**; the goddess of **courage**. He gave his consort the left half of his body in *Ardhanaarishvara* form.
- * Ganesha and Subrahmanya are his sons.
- * **Kailash**, the icy mountains in Himalayas, is His **abode**.

Symbology:

Lord Shiva is the very personification of cosmic consciousness.

- 1) The **three eyes** of Shiva represent the **sun**, the **moon** and the **fire**, the three sources of light, life and heat.
- 2) **Matted hair** represents the **whole sky** including the powerful wind (Vayu) blowing in it. Hence he is called **Vyomakesha** (one who has the sky or space as his hair).
- 3) **Desire**, which consumes human beings, can be compared to ferocious **tiger** that mercilessly devours its hapless victims. Shiva has killed the tiger and wears its skin as his apparel shows his complete mastery over desire.
- 4) The elephant being a powerful animal, wearing its skin implies that Shiva has completely subjugated all animal impulses.
- 5) The **Garland of skulls** (Mundamala) that he wears and the **ashes** of the funeral pyre with which he has besmeared his body indicate that he is the **lord of destruction**.
- 6) The water of the river **Ganga** represents the enjoyment of the **bliss** of his own self in deep meditation. Ganga is also a great **purifying** agent; since Shiva carries Ganga on his hair he himself is the very personification of purifying power.
- 7) The **crescent moon** stands for **time**, since measurement of time as days or months depends upon the waxing and waning of the moon. By wearing it as a diadem, Shiva is showing us that even all-powerful time is only an ornament for him!
- 8) The venomous **cobras**, which **symbolize death** for us, adorn his frame in all possible manners embellishing it further. He alone, to whom symbol of death is a decoration, can gulp down the deadly poison Halahala to save the worlds. Hence he is called **Mrtyunjaya**, the conqueror of death!
- 9) The **trisula** (trident) being an important weapon of offence and defence, indicates that Shiva is the Supreme ruler. It can stand for the three **Gunas** or the three processes of **creation, preservation and dissolution**. Hence Shiva the wielder of the trident is the master of the Gunas and from him proceeds the cosmic processes.
- 10) While dancing Shiva sounded his damaru (small drum) fourteen times, thereby producing sounds like a-i-un, r-ir-k and so on, These sounds are now known as the *Maheshvarasutras*, the fourteen basic formulae containing all the alphabets arranged in the most ingenious manner, facilitating innumerable grammatical processes. Hence the **damaru** represents the alphabets, grammar (the science of language)

or **language** itself, that is, it stands for all words-spoken or written. It also **represents sound** as such, the logos, **from which entire creation** has proceeded. By holding it in his hand, Shiva is demonstrating the fact that the entire creation, including its various arts and sciences, has proceeded out of his will, his play.

- 11) The Akshamala (rosary) shows he is the master of spiritual sciences.
- 12) Snow-**white** (Color of Shiva and his abode, the Himalayas) stands for **light** that dispels darkness and **knowledge** that dispels ignorance.
- 13) There can be no Shiva temple without the sacred bull Nandi placed in front of the shrine. Nandi (meaning joyful) is also snow



white in color as Shiva. It has a huge body and soft brown eyes. Its hump resembles the top of the snow-covered mountain. Nandi or Nandikeshvara, also known as Adhikaaranandi, is the head of the Ganas (attendants) of Shiva and also

his Vahana (carrier-vehicle). The bull represents desire and Shiva's riding on it reflects his absolute mastery over it.

The icon of Shiva is never worshipped as the Mulamurti (original, installed in the sanctum sanctorum), but only as an Utsavamurti (the icon used during festivals for taking out in a procession).

- Shiva is worshipped in the form of Linga.
- Linga means sign or symbol. Hence Shivalinga is the symbol of Shiva who is all-auspiciousness.
- 'Shiva' means the one in whom the whole creation sleeps after dissolution. 'Linga' also means the same thing - a place where created objects get dissolved during the disintegration of the created universe. Since it is the same God that creates, sustains and destroys the universe, the Shivalinga represents symbolically God Himself.
- Shivalingas may be Cala (movable) or Acala (immovable).
- The Acala-lingas are those installed in temples. They are usually made of stone and have three parts.



- The lowest part, which is square, is called Brahma-bhaga and represents Brahma, the creator.
- The middle part, which is octagonal, is called Vishnu-bhaga and represents Vishnu, the sustainer. These two parts are embedded inside the pedestal.
- The Rudrabhaga, which is cylindrical, and projects outside the pedestal is the one to which worship is offered. Hence it is called Pujabhaga. The Pujabhaga also contains certain lines technically called Brahasutra, without which the Linga becomes unfit for worship.
- * Shiv represents the complete process of generation, destruction, and regeneration.
- * Like Vishnu, Shiva also took so many forms associated with number of tales. He is both mild and terrible. Shiva is called Rudra in his terrific aspect.
- * He is also called as **Nataraja**, the lord of cosmic dance.
- * Shiv is called **Shankar**, meaning the giver of joy.
- * Shiv is **Mahakal**, which means not only the Lord of Death but also the Lord of Time.
- * Shiva is **Yogi Raj** the Lord of Yoga and Yogis.
- * He himself is the greatest ascetic.
- * As a universal teacher (guru) Shiva is called **Dakshinamurti**. ■

Activity 22

Mark the “odd one out” (the one that does not belong in the group).
Mark it with an X.

Group 1 _____ Shiva _____ trident _____ tiger skin
 _____ Damaru _____ conch

Group 2 _____ Parvati _____ Ganesha _____ Lakshmi
 _____ Shiva _____ Subrahmanya

Group 3 _____ Mahadev _____ Venkateshwara _____ Nataraja
 _____ Mrtyunjaya _____ Vyomakesha

Activity 23 (Lord Shiva)

Check the correct answer.

1. Lord Shiva is the

___ Preserver _____ Destroyer _____ Creator

2. Lord Shiva's vehicle is

___ Garuda _____ Hamsa _____ Nandi

3. The sacred river that flows from Shiva's matted hair is

___ Ganga _____ Yamuna _____ Kauveri

4. 'Shiva' means

___ to pervade ___ infinite _____ auspiciousness

Activity 24 (Lord Shiva)

Fill in the blanks using the appropriate words given below.

Rudrabhaga stone symbol Linga three Utsavamurti

1. Shiva is worshipped in the form of _____, meaning _____.

2. The icon of Shiva is worshipped as _____.

3. Lingas installed at temples are usually made of _____ and have _____ parts.

4. The top portion of the Linga to which worship is offered is called _____.

GODDESS SARASVATI

- * **Sarasvati** is the power and consort of Lord Brahma, the creator.
- * Sarasvati means ‘the flowing one’. She was manifested out of Brahma
- * She is considered as the personification of all **knowledge** – arts, sciences, crafts, and skills.
- * Hence she is depicted as pure **white** in color and extraordinarily beautiful and graceful.
- * Clad in spotless white **apparel** and seated on a **lotus seat**, she holds in her four hands a
 - * Veena (lute),
 - * Akshamala (rosary) and
 - * Pustaka (book).
- * **Hamsa** (swan) and **peacock** are the carrier vehicles of Sarasvati.
- * Sarasvati is called by many names. Some of them are:
 - Sarada – the giver of essence,
 - Vagishvari – the mistress of speech,
 - Vagvadini – the deity of eloquence,
 - Vac – the goddess of speech and
 - Mahavidya – knowledge supreme.

Symbology:

- * The color **white** represents **purity**. To show that Knowledge is absolutely pure she is pictured as white and dazzling.
- * The **book** on her left hand represents all areas of **secular sciences**.
- * The **lute** stands for **fine arts**. Mere intellectual learning without a heart tempered by higher feelings, sentiments and emotions, is as dry as sawdust. So she holds a lute on which she actually plays, to show the need for the cultivation of fine arts.
- * The **rosary** on the right hand symbolises all **spiritual sciences** or Yoga including Tapas (austerities), meditation and Japa (repetition of the divine name). By holding the book in the left hand and the rosary



in the right hand she is obviously teaching us that spiritual sciences are more important than secular sciences.

- * The **peacock** with its beautiful plumage stands for this world in all its glory. Since the attractions of the world lead the spiritual aspirant astray, the peacock can actually symbolise **Avidya** (ignorance).
- * On the other hand, the **swan**, which is able to separate milk from water, stands for Viveka (wisdom, discrimination) and hence for **Vidya** (knowledge).
- * Though it is true that **Vidya** or Paraavidya (**spiritual illumination**) alone can give us Moksha (beatitude), **Avidya** or Aparaavidya **signifying secular knowledge** – the sciences and arts of the world – need not be and should not be neglected.
- * As the Ishaavaasya Upanishad (11) puts it,* we transcend hunger and thirst through the secular sciences and then alone can obtain immortality through the spiritual sciences.
- * It is to teach us this great truth that Mother Saravati has chosen the two carrier vehicles, the swan and the peacock. ■

* ‘Avidyayaa mrtyum tirtvaa vidyayaamrtamashnute’.

Activity 25

Choose the five names of Goddess Sarasvati and mark them with an X.

_____ Mahavidya	_____ Sita	_____ Vagvadini
_____ Rukmini	_____ Sarada	_____ Vac
_____ Radha	_____ Uma	_____ Vagishvari

Activity 26

Check the things that are associated with Goddess Sarasvati.

_____ Lute	_____ book	_____ tiger	_____ swan
_____ Akshamala	_____ trident	_____ peacock	_____ Lotus

Activity 27

Goddess Sarasvati

Fill in the blanks with the words below to complete each sentence.

Veena	Brahma	knowledge	secular sciences
purity	studies	Avidya	flowing one
lotus	swan	secular	spiritual sciences

1. Sarasvati is the consort of _____ .
2. Sarasvati means 'the _____ .
3. Sarasvati is the goddess of _____ .
4. Sarasvati is adorned in a white sari representing _____ of knowledge.
5. The book on Sarasvati's hand stands for _____ .
6. Fine arts is represented by _____ .
7. The rosary on her right hand symbolises all _____ .
8. Goddess Sarasvati is seated on a _____ .
9. The peacock stands for _____ signifying _____ knowledge.
10. Sarasvati is worshipped before beginning _____ .

GODDESS LAKSHMI

- * **Lakshmi** is the power and consort of Lord Vishnu, the preserver.
- * ‘**Shri**’ or ‘**Lakshmi**’, as depicted in the Vedas, is the **goddess of wealth and fortune**, power and beauty.
- * She was born out of the ocean of milk at the time of its churning.



- * She is variously described as dark, **pink**, golden yellow or white in **color**.
- * Lakshmi is usually shown as enchantingly beautiful, standing on a lotus, and holding **lotuses** in her two **hands**. Hence she is called *Padma* or *Kamala*.
- * The other two hands display the **Abhaya** (protection-giving) and **Varada** (boon-giving) **mudras** (poses).
- * She is also adorned with a **lotus garland**.
- * Very often **elephants** are shown on either side, emptying pitchers (pots) of water over her, the pitchers being presented by celestial maidens. This is actually the **Varalakshmi** form (as in the picture).
- * While in the company of Vishnu, she is usually shown with two hands
- * When represented independently, she is shown seated on a eight-petalled lotus throne, with four hands holding Padma, Shankha, Amrtakalasha (pot of ambrosia) and Bilva fruit. Along with the elephants as described above, she is then called *Gajalakshmi*, who is usually figured on the lintels of doorframes. Sometimes, the fruit called Mahalinga (a citron) is shown instead of Bilva fruit.
- * If the same goddess (*Gajalakshmi*) has two hands, she is called *Saamaanyalakshmi*, or *Indralakshmi*.
- * When shown with eight hands, bow and arrow, mace and discus are added. This is actually the *Mahaalakshmi* form.
- * The **owl** is her carrier-**vehicle**.

- * Lakshmi is manifest in many different forms. The eight forms of Lakshmi called *Ashtamahaalakshmi* are commonly worshipped. They are the following:
 - Dhanalakshmi – Lakshmi in the form of wealth,
 - Dhaanyalakshmi – Lakshmi in the form of grains and crops,
 - Dhairyalakshmi – Lakshmi in the form of courage,
 - Viryalakshmi – Lakshmi in the form of valor,
 - Vijayalakshmi – Lakshmi in the form of success,
 - Gajalakshmi – Lakshmi in the form of sovereignty,
 - Saubhagyalakshmi – Lakshmi in the form of good fortune, and
 - Vidyalakshmi – Lakshmi in the form of knowledge.

Symbology:

- * If Lakshmi is pictured as dark in complexion, it is to show that she is the consort of Vishnu, the dark god.
- * If golden yellow, that shows her as the source of wealth.
- * If white, she represents the purest form of Prakrti (nature) from which the universe had developed.
- * The **pinkish** complexion, which is more common, reflects her **compassion** for creatures, since she is the mother of all.
- * Her **four hands** signify her power to grant the **four Purusharthas** (ends of human life). They are: Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kaama (desires), and Moksha (beatitude).
- * The **lotuses**, in various stages of blooming, represent the worlds and beings in various stages of **evolution**.
- * The **fruit** stands for the **fruits of our labors**.
- * If the fruit is a citron or pomegranate, it signifies that the various created worlds are under her control and that she transcends them all.
- * If it is a **bilva** fruit, which is not very tasty or attractive but extremely good for health, stands for **Moksha**, the highest fruit of spiritual life.
- * **Amrtakalasha** also signifies the same thing as bilva fruit that she can give us the bliss of **immortality**.
- * The **owl** stands for **ignorance**. By riding on it Mother Lakshmi has kept this personification of ignorance under her control. ■

Activity 28 - Unscramble the words to complete each sentence.

- N I V H U S Goddess Lakshmi is the consort of Lord _____ .
- L T W A E H Lakshmi is the goddess of _____ .
- W L O The carrier-vehicle of Lakshmi is _____ .

Activity 29

What does the following associated with Goddess Lakshmi stand for? Match column A and column B by writing the corresponding number of column A in column B.

Column A	Column B
1. Pinkish complexion	_____ Immortality
2. Four hands	_____ Evolution
3. Lotuses	_____ Compassion
4. Fruit	_____ Ignorance
5. Amrtakalasha & Bilva	_____ Purusharthas
6. Owl	_____ Fruits of labors

Activity 30

Match the eight names of Goddess Lakshmi with her different forms.

Dhaanyalakshmi	Viryalakshmi	Vidyalakshmi	Dhanalakshmi
Saubhagyalakshmi	Gajalakshmi	Dhairyalakshmi	Vijayalakshmi

1. wealth _____
2. knowledge _____
3. valor _____
4. courage _____
5. sovereignty _____
6. grains and crops _____
7. success _____
8. good fortune _____

GODDESS PARVATI

- * **Parvati** is the power and consort of Shiva, the destroyer.
- * She is the goddess of **courage**.
- * According to the Puranas, her first incarnation was Daakshaayani, the daughter of Daksha and Prasuti, and married to Lord Shiva.
- * She was next reborn as Parvati, the daughter of Himavan and Mena.
- * Being the daughter of the Himalayas (the abode of snow) she has to be Gauri (the white one).
- * After performing intense austerities (tapas) she succeeded in pleasing Shiva and making him accept her again as his consort.
- * Like her consort Shiva, she also has two aspects: the mild and the terrible.



- * As **Parvati** or Uma she represents the **mild aspect**. In this aspect she is usually shown with Shiva. Then she has only two hands, the right one holding a blue lotus and the left hanging loosely by the side. The image is richly decorated.
- * When represented independently, **the icon of Parvati** is shown with four hands, two hands holding red and blue lotuses and the other two exhibiting the Varada and Abhaya Mudras (as in the picture).
- * '**Shakti**' and '**Devi**' are exclusively used to denote the Shakti of Shiva, the innumerable aspects of **Parvati**.
- * Puranas describe her as the **sister of**

Vishnu. It is possible that Vishnu is considered as the active power of Shiva and hence his symbols Shankha and Chakra are often shown in the hands of Devi. This surmise is strengthened by the fact that in the Haryardha-murti (also called Harihara or Shankaranarayana) of Shiva, the left half is Vishnu and and in the Ardhanarishvara form, Devi forms the left half.

- * **Durga** represents the terrible aspect of Parvati.
- * '**Durga**' means one who is difficult to approach, or, difficult to know. Being the personification of the totality of the power of the gods, she is naturally difficult to approach or to know.

- * However, being the Mother of the universe, she is the personification of tender love, when supplicated.
- * Hearing the accounts of the misdeeds of the demon, Mahishasura (the he-buffalo), Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma were incensed and the Devi was born out of their wrath. The powers of these gods formed her limbs and the exact duplicates of their weapons formed her arsenal. Armed with these formidable weapons and riding on a fierce lion, she challenged Mahishasura and destroyed him along with his army. Hence Durga is called *Mahishasuramardini*.
- * Durga as *Mahishasuramardini* is the personification of all wealth, power, beauty and virtues.
- * Mahishasura stands for ignorance and stubborn egoism. The will to fight this ignorance and egoism within us is what Mahishasuramardini represents.
- * **Image of Durga** can have 4 or 8 or ten or more hands and usually three eyes.
- * The hair is dressed up like a crown.
- * She is gorgeously dressed with red cloth and several ornaments.
- * The more common objects held in her hands are – bow, arrow, sword, discus, conch, trident, mace, spear and serpent.
- * **Lion**, the royal beast, her mount, represents the best in animal creation. It can also represent the **greed for food** and hence the **greed for other objects of enjoyment**. By riding on it, Devi Durga (Simhavaahini) represents absolute mastery over it. Durga is shown on a tiger, instead of a lion, too.
- * In response to the prayer by gods, Durga then killed the demons Shumbha and Nishumbha after killing the demons Dhumralochana, Chanda, Munda and Raktabhija.
- * All these demons known as Asuras represent the various stages and states of egoism.
- * Durga destroyed Dhumralochana (the smoky-eyed) by a Hunkara, by a mere frown.
- * Chanda (=fierce) and Munda (=the low) were too mean to be handled by Durga directly. Hence **Kali**, the fierce black goddess who emerged



from Durga's forehead, beheaded Chanda and Munda and thus won the name Chamunda for herself.

- * The battle with Raktabhija was long drawn since he had the mysterious power to multiply himself through the drops of blood spilled in the battle. It was **Kali** (the power of time, Kala) who destroyed Raktabhija's source of strength enabling Durga to exterminate him.
- * Nishumbha was easily put to death after a mockery of fight.
- * Finally, Durga withdrew all her emanations and manifestations into herself and showing she was always only one form, killed Sumbha, thus ridding the worlds of a great terror.
- * The entire fight represents that Devi's grace is absolutely necessary to win the various stages and states of egoism.

* Another aspect of Devi widely worshipped in South India is **Lalita Tripurasundari**.

* If Durga and Kali represent the aspects of power of Parvati, Lalita represents the aspect of beauty.

* Lalita Devi manifested herself in the midst of a disc of extreme brilliance that arose from the sacrificial pit when Indra was performing a sacrifice in honor of her.

* She destroyed the demon Bhandasura (who represents ego) and annihilated his city, the Sonitapura. It is Devi who represents the destruction of that ego.

* **Lalita** is usually depicted as **slightly red** in color (as that of the dawn) and **extraordinarily beautiful**.

* In her four hands she is holding a bow of sugarcane, arrows, the goad (Ankusa) and the noose (Paasa). One of her feet usually the left, is shown resting on a diamond pedestal.



Symbology:

- * The **bow** of sugarcane actually represents the **mind**. It is through the mind we experience all joy. **Sugarcane** represents that **joy**. The bow is the instrument for discharging the arrows. Similarly, the mind is the instrument by which the sense organs are 'shot' towards the sense-objects. Hence the bow stands for the mind.

- * The **arrows** are the **Pancha-(bhuta)-tanmatras**, the **five subtle elements** (Aakaash=ether or sky, Vaayu=air, Agni=fire, Aapas=water, and Prithvi=earth). The sense organs like the eye and the ear are the products of these subtle elements and are discharged like arrows, through the mind, towards the sense-objects. Hence the subtle elements are described as the arrows in her hand.
- * She is the power that energizes and controls our minds and sense organs. This is the underlying idea.
- * The **paasa** (noose) is actually **Raaga** (attachment) that binds. The **Ankusa** (goad) is **Krodha** (anger, aversion) that hurts. The power that animates our attachments and aversions is also hers. If we forget her, she can bind us with Raagapaasa, and pierce us with the Krodhaankusa. If we take refuge in her, she can withdraw them into her hands and thereby free us from their torment. ■

Activity 31 (Goddess Parvati)

Match the words.

What do the symbols in Devi Lalita's icon represent? Match the words drawing lines between the two columns.

Column 1

Bow

Sugarcane

Arrows

Noose

Goad

Column 2

attachment

Pancha-tanmatras

Anger

mind

joy

Activity 32

Choose the five names of Goddess Parvati and mark them with an X.

_____ Gauri

_____ Uma

_____ Dakshayani

_____ Shri

_____ Durga

_____ Kali

Activity 33 (Goddess Parvati)

Fill in the blanks using the following words.

Mahishasuramardini	Vishnu	Kali	lion	Chamunda
Pancha-tanmatras	courage	Shiva	Lalita	Nishumbha

1. Parvati is the consort of Lord _____.
2. Parvati is the goddess of _____.
3. Durga destroyed the evil Mahishasura and hence called _____.
4. The vehicle of Durga is _____.
5. Durga also killed the demons Shumbha and _____.
6. The fierce black goddess who emerged from Durga's forehead is _____.
7. Kali killed the asuras Chanda and Munda and hence called _____.
8. Devi who destroyed the demon Bhandasura is _____.
9. Puranas describe Parvati as the sister of Lord _____.
10. The five subtle elements are called _____.

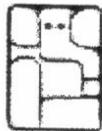
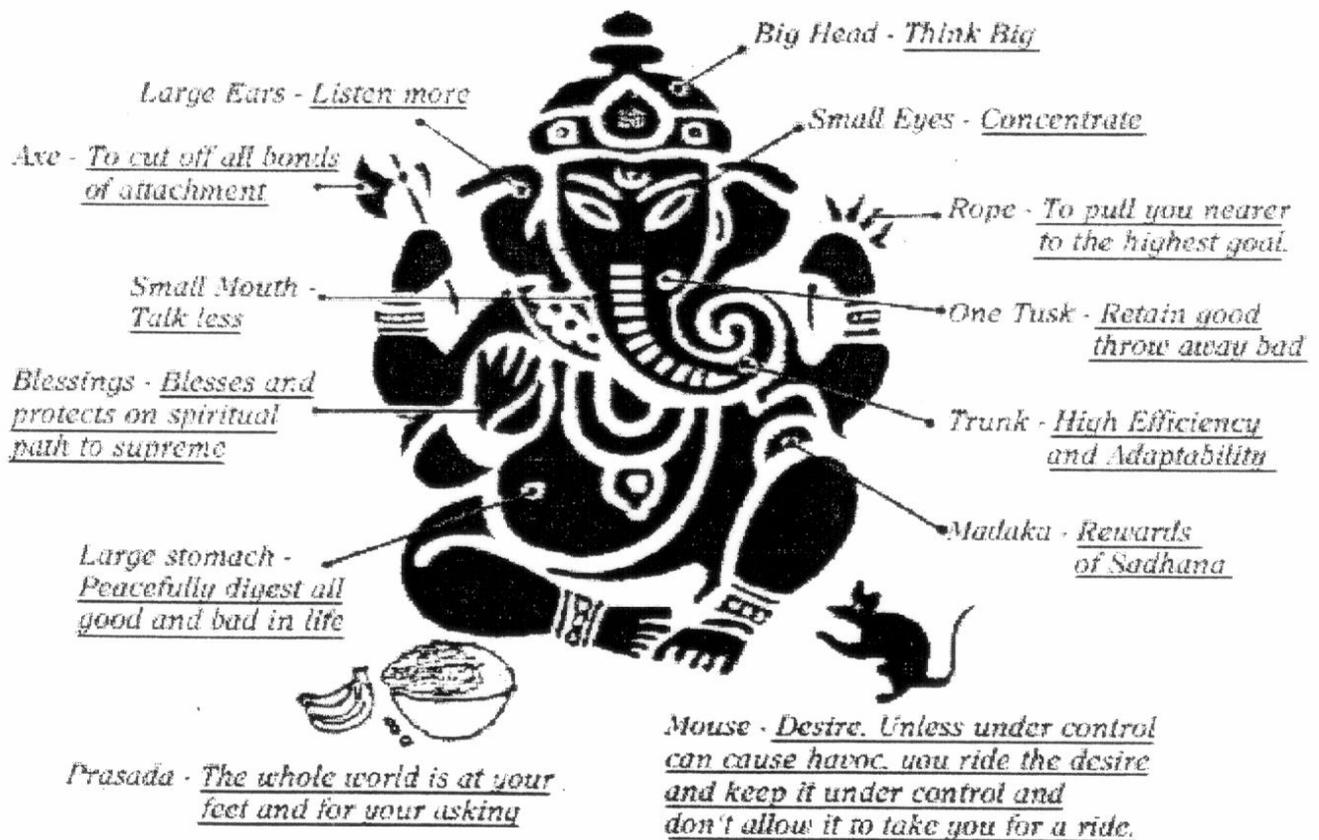
Activity 34 (Goddess Parvati)

Choose the five subtle elements and mark with them with an X.

____ Sky ____ fire ____ air ____ water ____ heaven ____ earth



Ganesha Symbolism



LORD GANESHA

- **Ganesha** is the son of Shiva and Parvati, and the older brother of Lord Subrahmanya.
- Ganesha means the **Lord of all beings**.
- He is called Vigneshvara or Vighnaraja, the Lord of obstacles. So he is **first worshipped** and honored before any undertaking whether sacred (like performing puja to any deity) or secular (like beginning studies, starting a journey, business etc.).
- When pleased by worship and service, he **removes all the obstacles** that may arise in our path, and blesses us to complete any task successfully.
- Ganesha has been described as created out of Parvati's bodily scurf.



- Lord Ganesha's form depicts him as **red** in color and in a human body with an **elephant's head**.
- Out of the two tusks, one is broken.
- He has **four arms**.
- Two of the arms hold the **Paasa** (noose) and **Ankusa** (goad).
- The other two arms are held in the Abhaya and Varada Mudras holding his **broken tusk** and favorite dish **Modaka** (a kind of sweet), respectively.
- He has a **large belly**

decorated with a snake-belt.

- The right leg may be shown bent and resting on the seat.
- The **trunk** may be **turned** to the left or to the right.
- He wears a lovely carved crown, beautiful robes and ornaments.
- The **mouse** is his **carrier-vehicle** and is seen near him, nibbling at his share of the sweets.
- A third eye may sometimes be added on his large forehead, in the center of the eyebrows.

- His Shakti is shown sitting on his lap, in some forms.
- Sometimes two Shaktis, **Rddhi** (for success) and **Siddhi** (for prosperity), are also shown.
- There are several varieties of Ganesha icons available in our temples and archaeological monuments.
- Ganesha has many names. Some of them are:
 - *Ganapati – the Lord of the tribe or ganas (attendants)
 - *Vinayaka – the prominent leader
 - *Gajanana/Gajamukha – elephant-faced
 - *Gajadhipati – the Lord of elephants
 - *Lambodar - pot-bellied
 - *Ekadant - having one tusk
 - *Lambkarn - long-eared

Symbology:

Ganesha is also considered to be the **Lord of wisdom**.

- * The large **forehead** stands for the **intellect**.
- * His large **ears** symbolize the importance of **listening** and learning.
- * The **trunk** stands for the **discriminative capacity** because it is strong enough to carry out heavy tasks; like carrying or uprooting a tree, and at the same time sensitive enough to pick up tiny objects from the ground. It is important for the intellect to have the capacity for discrimination with regard to the finer issues as well as the bigger issues that one encounters.
- * The **bent trunk** is a representation of **Om** or Pranava, which being the symbol of Brahman, the Absolute, is declaring as it were that Ganesha is Brahman itself.
- * His large **belly** represents the presence of the **whole universe** within him.
- * His **form** also represents **curiosity and memory**, two qualities associated with the elephant.
- * Thus the whole form stands for listening, discrimination, curiosity, and memory all of which are necessary for one to acquire knowledge and wisdom.
- * The word **Mushika** (=mouse) is derived from the root ‘mush’ which means **‘to steal’**. A mouse stealthily enters into things and destroys them from within. Similarly egoism enters unnoticed, into our minds and quietly destroys all our undertakings. Only when it is controlled by divine wisdom, it can be harnessed to useful channels. So the **mouse** that is wont to see the inside of all things can stand for the **incisive intellect**. ■

Activity 35

Complete this dot-to-dot drawing. Draw a continuous line starting with dot #1 all the way to dot #80. Identify the picture and write the name below.



Activity 36

Fill in the blanks with the words below to appreciate the form of Lord Ganesha.

forehead
large belly

large ears
whole elephant form

tail
trunk

1. Lord Ganesha's _____ symbolizes the intellect.
2. His _____ symbolize the importance of listening to the scriptures.
3. His _____ symbolizes the discriminative capacity.
4. His _____ symbolizes the whole universe is within him.
5. His _____ symbolizes the memory.

Activity 37

Choose the five names of Lord Ganesha and mark them with an X.

_____ Vigneshvara

_____ Ganapati

_____ Gajanana

_____ Kumara

_____ Lambodar

_____ Vinayaka

Activity 38 - Answer the following questions on Lord Ganesha.

1. What does Ganesha mean? _____ .
2. Name the parents of Ganesha _____ .
3. Who is his younger brother? _____ .
4. The vehicle of Lord Ganesha is _____ .
5. What is the favorite dish of Lord Ganesha? _____ .
6. Name the consorts of Lord Ganesha _____ and _____ .

LORD SUBRAHMANYA

- * **Subrahmanya** is the son of Shiva and Parvati, and the younger brother of Lord Ganesha.
- * Subrahmanya means ‘one who tends the spiritual growth of the aspirants’. He **represents** the highest state of **spiritual consciousness**.
- * According to Kalidas’s Kumar Sambhav, he was born to destroy the demon Tarakasura. Kumar Sambhav tells the story of how he was born as follows:
- * In response to the prayers of Devas (gods), who suffered under the rule of Tarakasura, Shiva created a seed whose energy is enormous, Agni (fire-god) alone could bear it by taking the seed into his mouth and thereafter transferring this seed to Ganga. The god Subrahmanya so born is called **Gangeya** (son of Ganga) or **Agnibhu**.
- * The child so conceived is called **Kumara** – forever young and chaste.
- * As per Skandha-Purana, his birth was in response to the prayers of Devas (gods), Rishis (sages) and other beings who suffered under the rule of the demon king Soorapadma. His birth story according to the Skandha-puran is as follows:
- * Shiva opened his third eye and emitted six sparks of fire. The six sparks settled in a pond, in Tamilnadu, called Saravana (hence the name **Saravanabhava**) and transformed into six children. The six Krithika maidens cared the six children (hence the name **Karthikeya**). Parvati united all the six into one form with six faces (hence the name **Shanmukha**).
- * Subrahmanya is widely known as the **God of war**. He is known as **Skanda** – a forceful attacker in war.
- * He was appointed the commander-in-chief of the gods and thus became ‘**Devasenapati**’.
- * His mother Parvati gave him a spear infused with her power.
- * With this matchless weapon he easily destroyed Tarakasura, Soorapadma and other demons and fulfilled the purpose of his incarnation.
- * This spear is known in Tamil as Vel or Shakti Vel (hence the name **Velan**).
- * Some of his other names are:
 - o **Muruga** (the chaste boy),
 - o **Guha** (the secret one) and
 - o **Swaminatha** (the preceptor of his own father – Subrahmanya is said to have taught the meaning of Pranava/Omkara to Shiva).

- * In **icons**, he is shown as a boy either with one head and two arms or with six heads and twelve arms holding different objects.
- * His spear and his vehicle-peacock are also prominently displayed.
- * A fowl (bird), usually rooster, adorns his banner.
- * Sometimes, his two consorts Valli and Devasena are also shown on his sides.
- * His temples are usually found on hilltops.
- * Historically speaking, he is a much older deity, being mentioned in stone inscriptions and shown on coins (1st century to 5th century A.D.), and was well known in North India. But he has somehow remained confined to South India.



Symbology:

- * His **six heads** represent the **five sense organs and the mind**, which co-ordinates their activities. When these are controlled, refined and sublimated, man becomes a superman (yogi).
- * Man has only two hands. But, his superior intellect has enabled him to invent so many tools and instruments through which he can accomplish manual tasks, even simultaneously. Subrahmanya with his **12 hands** symbolically represents this **power and capacity of man**.
- * The combination of the six heads and twelve hands teaches us the following: The ideal of humanity is the perfected being who is not only a great Yogi but also a great worker!
- * The **spear** stands for **knowledge and wisdom** with which the ugly demons of ignorance can be destroyed.
- * His vehicle, the peacock is shown belaboring a snake with one of its legs. The snake stands for time. The peacock that kills it stands for what is opposed to it. By **riding the peacock** he is showing that he is beyond what is within time and outside it. **He is beyond all dualities**.
- * Also, the peacock, with its beautiful plumage, represents creation in all its glory. Hence he that rides it is the Supreme Lord, **the master of creation**. ■

Activity 39 (Lord Subrahmanya)

Check the correct answer.

1. Lord Subrahmanya is the son of

___ Brahma & Sarasvati ___ Vishnu & Lakshmi ___ Shiva & Parvati

2. Subrahmanya's brother is

___ Ganesha ___ Hanuman ___ Krishna

3. The weapon given to Subrahmanya by his mother Parvati is

___ trident ___ spear ___ mace

4. Lord Subrahmanya's vehicle is

___ snake ___ owl ___ peacock

5. The consorts of Lord Subrahmanya are

___ Rddhi & Siddhi ___ Valli & Devasena ___ Radha & Rukmini

6. The two demons killed by Lord Subrahmanya are

___ Tarakasura ___ Mahishasura ___ Soorapadma

Activity 40

Choose the ten names of Lord Subrahmanya and mark them with an X.

___ Shanmukha ___ Karthikeya ___ Saravanabhava

___ Dharmasasta ___ Kumara ___ Skandha

___ Gangeya ___ Lambkarn ___ Devasenapati

___ Velan ___ Muruga ___ Swaminatha

LORD AYYAPPAN

- * **Ayyappan** or Sasta is the son of Lord Shiva and Mohini, the female form of Lord Vishnu, hence he is also known as **Harihara Puthran**.
- * '**Sasta**' means one who controls and rules over the whole world.
- * He was born to destroy Mahishi, the wife of the demon Mahishasura (who was destroyed by Durga).
- * Mahishi received a boon from Brahma, which made her invincible and even Lord Shiva and Vishnu were helpless against her.
- * King Rajasekhara of Panthalam in Kerala, a devotee of Lord Shiva, who was childless and found the baby Ayyappan in a forest, brought it up in the name of **Manikantan**.
- * When Manikantan was twelve years old, he killed Mahishi and brought leopardesses to his father's palace since their milk was needed to cure the 'headache' of the queen.
- * Meanwhile to the king had been revealed the secret of Manikantan being God Himself.
- * Adored by the king, Shri Ayyappan went back to Heaven.
- * Before his leaving for Heaven, King Rajasekhara requested his grace in building a temple for Him.
- * Ayyappa Swami shot an arrow at the summit of the **Sabari Hills** and told the King to build a **Temple** wherever the arrow falls, with just **eighteen steps** leading to it at the Eastern gate.
- * It is believed that the divine **architect Vishvakarma** guided the construction of the Temple and Lord **Parasurama** himself **carved the**



- idol** in it and performed the consecration ceremonies.
- * **Sabarimalai** attracts millions of pilgrims even now.
- * **Dharmasasta** (the protector of Dharma) is the other name by which the deity is known.
- * The deity is said to **ride on a white elephant** called Yogi.
- * The **image** should have only two hands and two eyes, and should be seated with the **legs folded**.
- * One of his hands is held in the **Jnana mudra**.
- * The ritual pilgrimage to the

shrine of Shri Ayyappan at Sabarimalai is considered to be extremely auspicious and meritorious. The pilgrimage itself has to be preceded by **forty-one days of austerity** during which period strict celibacy is to be observed as also restrictions regarding food, speech and sleep. ■

Activity 41

Unscramble the words to complete each sentence.

I H N M I O

The female form of Lord Vishnu is called

_____.

A R H I A H A R U P H T N R A

Son of Shiva and Vishnu is called

_____.

A S A T S

One who rules & controls over the whole world

_____.

N A K M A I N A T N

The King named the baby Ayyappan as

_____.

H S M I A H I

Ayyappan killed Mahishasura's wife

_____.

A R A I A L M B S A I

The king built a temple for Ayyappan at

_____.

R A V A I M H S V A K

The divine architect is called

_____.

A R A M S R A P U A

Sasta's idol at Sabarimalai temple is carved by

_____.

G Y I O

Ayyappan's vehicle, white elephant, is called

_____.

LORD HANUMAN

- * **Hanuman**, the monkey God is the son of Vayu or Marut, the wind God and Anjana Devi and hence he is also known as **Maruti** and **Anjaneya**.
- * He is as strong as he is **wise**, and as **devoted** as he is strong and wise, a rare combination indeed.
- * Hanuman is also known as **Bajarangbali**.
- * It consists of two words: bajrang and bali.
- * Bajrang is derived from Vajrang, which means a person with a **strong** iron-like body.
- * Bali means all-**powerful**.
- * He is the most **agile** and speed-oriented God.
- * He has the **ability to expand** until he could be as large as a mountain **or to contract** until he could be as small as a fly.
- * The scriptures state that 'his **form** is as **vast** as a mountain' and as **tall** as a gigantic tower.
- * His **complexion** is **yellow** and glowing like molten gold.
- * His face is as red as the brightest ruby; while his enormous **tail spreads** out to an interminable length.
- * He stands on a lofty rock and **roars** like thunder.
- * He **leaps** into the air and **flies** among the clouds with a rushing noise, while the ocean waves are roaring and splashing below.
- * He **travels** as **fast** as the mind and the wind.
- * His power is described by a quaint myth: Once as a child, Anjaneya mistaking the Sun to be a ripe fruit **plucked the Sun** and was about to eat it. Indra hit the child with a thunderbolt, to prevent him from eating the Sun and upsetting nature's balance. The thunderbolt fractured the child's jaw; hence he is called Hanuman (**one whose jaw is fractured**). His father, Vayu got angry with Indra and stopped blowing. All the three worlds began to suffocate. Brahma, the creator, blessed Hanuman and gave him a boon to calm down Vayu.
- * Hanuman took a prominent part in Lord Rama's war against Ravana, the demon King of Lanka, to bring back Rama's abducted wife Sita. Hanuman was **Rama's messenger** and delivered Rama's ring to Sita



Devi, when she was in captivity, and burnt down part of the city of Lanka to teach Ravana a lesson. When Lakshmana, Lord Rama's brother, lay dying in the war, Hanuman was commanded to bring herbs from the Himalayas to revive him. Not being able to recognize the right herb, Hanuman lifted the whole **Sanjeevini Mountain** and brought it to Rama thus saving the life of Lakshmana.

- * His devotion and loyalty to Rama and Sita bestows upon him the blessing of eternal youth, health and immortality (**Chiranjeevi**).
- * The Ramayan says that **Hanuman**, the **chief of monkeys** is a perfect being, and that no one can equal him **in learning of Shastras** and in comprehending the meaning and sense of scriptures.



- * Hanuman is represented in two **postures**: When in the company of Shri Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, he is shown standing humbly at a distance or sitting devotedly at the feet of Shri Rama.

- * In shrines specially erected for him, he strikes a **heroic pose**, usually with the mace in his left hand and carrying the Sanjeevini Mountain in his right hand.

- * Hanuman is believed to be an **avatar of Lord Shiva**. Lord Shiva, upon seeing that Lord Vishnu had taken birth as Rama and was aware that Ramayan was about to unfold

in the future, desired to participate in the drama and manifested as Hanuman on Earth to serve the Lord.

- * Hanuman, a bachelor, is worshipped as a **God of wisdom, strength, health, courage and agility**.
- * Almost every village in India has a Temple dedicated to Him. ■

Activity 42

Mark the “odd one out” (the one that does not belong in the group).
Mark it with an X.

_____ Anjaneya

_____ Hanuman

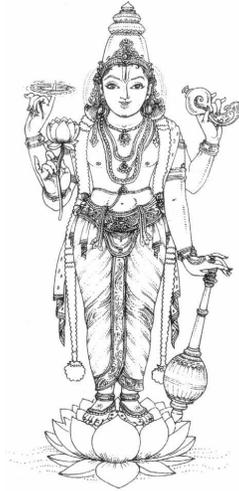
_____ Maruti

_____ Bajrangbali

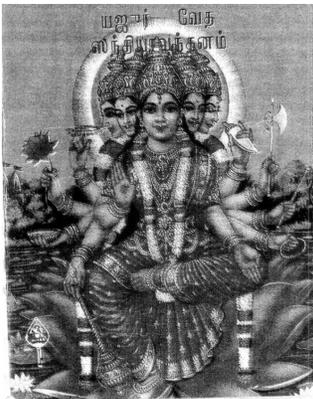
_____ Lakshmana

Activity 45

(This activity should be considered in session# 20 after all the symbolisms are discussed).
Identify the deities and write the names below each picture.



Activity 45 – continued...



Activity 46

(This activity should be considered in session# 20 after all the symbolisms are discussed).

SEARCH - A - WORD**Theme: Names of Gods and Goddesses**

S I T A H A D F G H F D S D F G H R E
 H R R G H J U Y T R E J K L F B O I U
 I V I S H N U A K E L D B R A H M A I
 V J O V E T S S C G H J T I O U P M N
 A G K L E E K A B J G K N B R D S K D
 D H K T Z N X T A Y H L S J T E Y L H
 B F R E T Y K Y U I O G D F G V R T R
 A N D A L S P A D M A V A T H I G A A
 T Y U I O P W N T A D G T N X B L J F
 U T S H K G K A Y E S P D P E F Q G T
 V C R F S T H R F B S I L K J S G R S
 D F I G D F J A K H K H T G F C H G R
 K A R T I K E Y A D G D W F F H F A I
 Z S A R A S W A T H I G R A Y A K R K
 Q D M G X F S N J A R K Y F R J T E R
 I N A B G K F A D N S P A R V A T H I
 G F J R T G K H J U F D E R T Y I S S
 I V E D I R S D G M D H T Y R I Y L H
 G J H Y U T Y R E A Q S B N A J K L N
 D L A K S H M I L N F R T G S U R Y A
 G Y U R E T Y U J H G F S R J L K H T
 I P T R H B N M T Y R E D G F C V Z X
 T G J Y I U O T N B V C M L J O I U P

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|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Sri Krishna | 8. Sri Rama | 15. Sridevi |
| 2. Lakshmi | 9. Satyanarayana | 16. Kartikeya |
| 3. Vishnu | 10. Hanuman | 17. Indhra |
| 4. Sri Venkateswara | 11. Brahma | 18. Sita |
| 5. Ganesha | 12. Shiva | 19. Padmavathi |
| 6. Saraswathi | 13. Parvathi | 20. Bhudevi |
| 7. Andal | 14. Surya | |

MAJOR FESTIVALS AND ASSOCIATED DEITIES

<u>Festival</u>	<u>Associated Deity/Deities</u>
1. Makara Sankranti / Pongal	Lord Surya
2. Makara Jyothi	Lord Ayyappan, Sabarimalai
3. Vasanth Panchami	Goddess Sarasvati
4. Maha Shivratri	Lord Shiva
5. Sri Ramanavami	Lord Rama
6. Sri Krishna Janmashtami	Lord Krishna
7. Sri Ganesh Chaturthi	Lord Ganesha
8. Navratri / Dusshera	Goddesses Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvati
9. Diwali	Goddess Lakshmi
10. Govardhan Puja & Annakoot	Lord Krishna
11. Annamalai Deepam	Lord Shiva
12. Skandha Shashti	Lord Subrahmanya
13. Sri Hanumath Jayanthi	Lord Hanuman
14. Arudra Darshan	Lord Nataraja
15. Sri Vaikunta Ekadashi	Lord Vishnu

Note to the teacher:

Please discuss with the students the significance of any particular festival in the session that is very close to that festival day.

FEW SANSKRIT WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

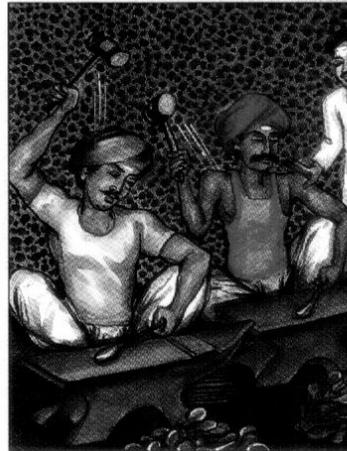
<u>hariH OM !</u>	Hello !
<u>suprabhaatam.h </u>	Good morning.
<u>namaskaaraH/</u> <u>namaste </u>	Greetings/Good afternoon/Good evening(for any time of the day.)
<u>shubharaatriH </u>	Good night.
<u>dhanyavaadaH </u>	Thank You.
<u>svaagatam.h </u>	Welcome.
<u>kshamyataam.h </u>	Excuse/Pardon me.
<u>chintaa maastu </u>	Dont worry.
<u>kR^ipayaa </u>	Please.
<u>punaH milaamaH </u>	Let us meet again.
<u>astu </u>	All right./O.K.
<u>shriiman.h </u>	Sir.
<u>maanye/aarye </u>	Madam.
<u>saadhu</u> <u>saadhu/samiichiinam.h </u>	Very good.
<u>shubham.h </u>	Good luck.

HINDUISM'S CODE OF CONDUCT

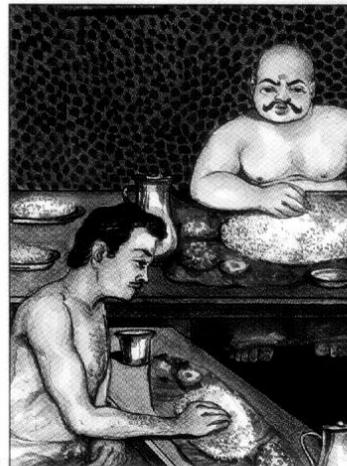
The *yamas* and *niyamas*, drawn from the *Vedas*, are the distilled wisdom of thousands of years of religious culture. They are simple guidelines charting the path of good conduct. *Yama* means “reining in” or “controlling” the base, instinctive nature. *Niyama* means “un-leashing” or expressing the divine nature. Observing these twenty restraints and religious practices builds good character, which is the foundation for happiness and spiritual unfoldment.

TEN RESTRAINTS, THE YAMAS

1. **Noninjury, *ahimsā*:** Not harming others by thought, word or deed.
2. **Truthfulness, *satya*:** Refraining from lying and betraying promises.
3. **Nonstealing, *asteya*:** Not stealing, coveting or entering into debt.
4. **Divine conduct, *brahmacharya*:** Controlling lust by remaining celibate when single, leading to faithfulness in marriage.
5. **Patience, *kshamā*:** Restraining intolerance with people and impatience with circumstances.
6. **Steadfastness, *dhṛiti*:** Overcoming nonperseverance, fear, indecision and changeableness.
7. **Compassion, *dayā*:** Conquering callous, cruel and insensitive feelings toward all beings.
8. **Honesty, straightforwardness, *ārjava*:** Renouncing deception and wrongdoing.
9. **Moderate appetite, *mitāhāra*:** Neither eating too much nor consuming meat, fish, fowl or eggs.
10. **Purity, *śaucha*:** Avoiding impurity in body, mind and speech.

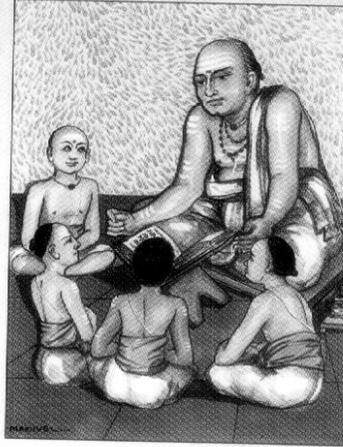


Above: Workers demonstrate steadfastness. Below: One man overeats; another's appetite is moderate.



TEN PRACTICES, THE *NIYAMAS*

1. **Remorse, *hrī*:** Being modest and showing shame for misdeeds.
2. **Contentment, *santosha*:** Seeking joy and serenity in life.
3. **Giving, *dāna*:** Tithing and giving generously without thought of reward.
4. **Faith, *āstikya*:** Believing firmly in God, Gods, *guru* and the path to enlightenment.
5. **Worship of the Lord, *Īśvarapūjana*:** Cultivating devotion through daily worship and meditation.
6. **Scriptural listening, *siddhānta śravaṇa*:** Studying the teachings and listening to the wise of one's lineage.
7. **Cognition, *matī*:** Developing a spiritual will and intellect with the *guru*'s guidance.
8. **Sacred vows, *vrata*:** Fulfilling religious vows, rules and observances faithfully.
9. **Recitation, *japa*:** Chanting *mantras* daily.
10. **Austerity, *tapas*:** Performing *sādhanā*, penance, *tapas* and sacrifice.



Above: Students listen to a wise elder. Below: A devotee performs her daily recitation on japa beads.



Religion teaches us how to become better people, how to live as spiritual beings on this Earth. This happens through living virtuously, following the natural and essential guidelines of dharma. For Hindus these guidelines are embodied in the yamas and niyamas. In Indian spiritual life, these restraints and observances are built into the character of children from an early age. By following them, we lift ourselves into the consciousness of the higher chakras—of love, compassion, intelligence and bliss—and naturally invoke the blessings of the devas and Mahādevas.