

Twitter Thread by Johnny Silverhand



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@SparesofWar



Haha. Fool. On the day of Deepavali Amavasya, abhyangana snaana, pitru tarpanam, deepa daanam, ulka darsanam, and Lakshmi puja are performed. Deepa daana is not some Buddhist creation. The concept of even the wicks in a Deepam is highly Vedic, so it is impossible that what is

'Diwali isn't what you thought it was actually Deep Daan Utsav, a Buddhist festival'

Kalyani [@FiercelyBahujan](#), PhD scholar, JNU, writes [#ThePrintOpinion](https://t.co/wbNjbeRYmq)

— ThePrintIndia (@ThePrintIndia) [November 4, 2021](#)

essentially a naasitka vaada will even promulgate something about Deepam, let alone Deepa Daanam. It is that time of the year again — an auspicious occasion of Deepavali marked by festivities, exchange of pleasantries, sumptuous food, crackers! and of course, Bhagavan's blessings

However, this is also the time when a lot of misinfo, faltu gnaan, and unsolicited advice start pouring in from the usual suspects. I don't necessarily fault ThePrint or any such farcical media outlets. They are steadfast in their agenda and they won't change even if one moves

heaven and earth. However, it is important to call out blatant misappropriation for our own good and know why we celebrate certain festivals.

Let's understand what Deepavali is all about. Now, the festival means many things to many people and there are too many variations in how

it is celebrated across the world. That being said, I will try to present some aspects that form the core of it all.

As always, every festival, every act, and every ritual in SD is extensively deep-rooted in philosophy that addresses both iha and para.

Time plays a very important role in shaping our lives. Everything is a function of time, which is why Time is a form of Paramatma. We have Siva worshipped as Mahaakaal in Ujjain, Ambal worshipped as Kaali; in fact, Kaali puja is an integral component of Deepavali celebrations in

many parts of Bharatvarsha. Krishna says in the Gita, Kaaloshi lokakshaya krit pravridho (I am Time, destroyer of all worlds).

Devi Bhagavatam says Kaalohi balavaan karta satatam sukha dukhayo: |
Naraanaam paratantraanaam punya paapanu yogata: ||

Time alone is the most powerful doer. A person's happiness and sorrow are dependent on the individuals punya and paapa karmas. In this aspect, humans are helplessly dependent on their pieties and sins.

Similarly,

Kaala: pachathi bhutaani kaala: samharate prajaa: |

Kaala: suptheshu jaagarthi kaalo hi duratikrama: ||

Time eats all beings, time kills everyone. Time is awake when you are asleep. Time is insurmountable.

Janthunaam narajanma durlabham. Among all animals, begetting a human birth is the most difficult. Therefore, our festivals and aacharaas are all designed to make the most of our limited time on this earth. Thus, the aim of our Rishis has always been to bring such esotericism

within the reach of the common man irrespective of one's social status, learning, or other faculties and to enable him/her to make the most of their available time in this janma. And Deepavali is no different.

The time period from the Mahalayapaksha to Deepavali Amavasya is of extreme importance. This is commonly called the Pitru Parvam. While celebrations and Daiva aaradhana are commonly seen, this is also the time when worship to Yama is given a lot of importance.

Generally, all of us are aware that Yama and Yamuna are the children of Surya Bhagavan and that Yama is the ruler of Naraka. Naraan krandhayate iti narakam (that which troubles people). But that's not the only greatness of Him.

All Devatas are functionaries of Paramatma and are a part of His unlimited potency. Just like how we associate ourselves in singular (I, Me, Mine) with various tasks even though it is actually our limbs and senses doing the work, similarly all Devata shaktis are akin to limbs of

the Viraat Purusha that carry out His bidding. That means, they are to be equally revered as well since the function of the limb is seen to be indifferent from the function of the Self.

That's why Vishnu Sahasranaamam says Niyanta Niyamo Yama: not once but twice.

i.e. One Who directs, Controls, and Restricts (can also be taken as Ayama: meaning Deathless).

For any sadhana, Yama and Niyama are essential. This is the reason why Patanjali's first two sutras are about Yama and Niyama before even remotely contemplating about Aasanas.

Yama includes both internal and external discipline. The specifics would be a discussion for another day. However, suffice to say that Yama aaradhana on Deepavali is important because the Pitrus who have come to visit us during Mahalayam from

Yama Loka must be sent back.

They must be shown the way using "Ulka daanam" aka fireworks.

Ulka hasta nara kuryu: pitrunaam maargadarshanam says Skaanda Puranam, meaning people should light the path for the ancestors by holding "torches".

Yamalokam parityajya aagata ye mahaalaye |

Ujjwala jyotisha vartma prapasyanto vrajantu te ||

Since our ancestors had come during Mahalaya leaving behind Yama Loka, let them be known that their path back to Yama Loka during this time of Pradosha on Tula masa Amavasya (Souramanam)

or Aashwayuja Amavasya (Chaandramanam) has been well lit. This Pitru Parvam is marked by special tarpanam to Yama.

Those doing daily Sandhyavandanam will be already aware of Yama naamam,

Yamaaya Dharmaraajaya Mrutyuve cha Anthakaya cha

Vaivaswathaya Kalaya Sarvabhoothakshayaya cha |

Oudhumbharaya Dhagnaya Neelaya Parameshtine

Vrukodharaya Chithraya Chithragupthaya vai nama: ||

Remembering the above names of Yama particularly in this parva removes all apamrutyu doshas, fear, and confers bliss. In fact, while we celebrate Narakachaturdasi to commemorate Krishna's slaying of Narakaasura, the festival had been in vogue even before Krishna Avatar happened.

Krishna's Leela brought in a new dimension and augmented the existing Vedic custom.

As alluded to earlier, time is everything in SD. Amavasya, Panchami, Dasami, and Pournima are considered purna thithis. Of these Amavasya is particularly suited for Pitrus.

Pitrus are the ones who bless us directly with vamsaabhivruddhi, and peace. Therefore, worship of Pitrus and Yama is particularly advocated.

Apart from worship of Pitrus, this is also the period that Alakshmi nissaranam (sending away of Alakshmi or Jyesta Devi) is performed to

beget good fortune.

Sri Suktam says,

Taam Padmineem-eem Sharanam aham prapadhye alakshmi: mey nashyataam tvaam vrune |

I take refuge in Her, who resides in the Lotus, who is known by the beeja Eem. By Her Grace, let Alakshmi both inside and outside be destroyed.

It further goes on to say,

Tasya phalaani tapasaanudanthu maayaantharaayascha baahya Alakshmi: |

May the fruit of the One who is born of Tapas drive away ignorance and Alakshmi within and outside.

The lighting of the lamp signifies driving away of this ignorance or tamas.

Ignorance due to paapa karmas is what hinders both material and spiritual growth. This is also that time of the year when the sunlight intensity is comparatively low. Thus, by arranging rows of lamps (Deepa - lamps, aavali - arrangement in rows),

we aim to get equalize this reduced effect of sunlight. This is the loukika aspect.

There's also a paaramaarthika or aloukika aspect. Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya say Upanishads. No matter what one becomes in mundane pursuits, the real goal of human endeavor is to attain gnaana.

Only through gnaana can one attain moksha. The lighting of the lamp is a metaphorical indication for us to develop the inclination to attain gnaana.

Vedam says, Siddhalakshmi Mokshalakshmi Jayalakshmi Saraswathi. This means the same Lakshmi Who gives prosperity is also the One

responsible for giving gnaana and moksha.

Going even further, ultimately the form of Virat Purusha embodies everything there is.

Annamacharya in this wonderful kirtan establishes this along with several Aagamic truths.

Nitya pujalivivo nerichina noho
Pratyakshamainatti Paramathmuniki |

These are the nitya pujas that I have learnt to perform to this Paramatma, Who is actually beyond sensory perception, but has manifested on Venkatadri.

Thanuve gudyata talaye shikaramata
Penuhrudayame Hari peethamata
Kanogona chupule ghana deepamulata
Thanalopali yantharyamiki ||

For the Antharyami within all of us, the body is the temple, the head is the gopura sikharam.

The heart is the seat of Hari (as also detailed in the Narayana Suktam) while the eyes are the lamps. This Antharyami that is in all is also giving saakshatkaram as Srinivasa right before our very eyes.

Our practice of festivals should lead to this realization. While it may not happen for everyone at the same instance, sincere practice of what has been handed down with utmost care by our ancestors will ensure that one day this gnaana will ultimately dawn upon us.

Until one has reached that stage, only shraddha and vishwasam will work but not vithanda-vaada or faux rationality. Shreddhavaan labhate gnaanam. And after reaching that stage, all these ramblings of others appear extremely amateurish.

Wishing you all a very happy and prosperous Deepavali and ensuing Karthika maasam celebrations.

May this Deepavali enlighten our kindred and pave the way for a Bhaarata that understands its roots and shows the world how it's done like it always has.

Shubham ■■