

Significance of Dhanurmasam

In Hindu religion we find two types of calendars being followed viz. Solar Calendar known as Sauramana and Lunar calendar known as Chaandramana. In Solar Calendar the months derive their names based on the transit of Sun in a particular zodiac sign and in Lunar calendar it is based on the constellation (Nakshatra) occurring on the full moon day (Pournami). The period between two successive solar transits (sankramana) or the time taken by the Sun to pass through a zodiac sign is known as a Solar month.

Accordingly when Sun transits into Sagittarius (Dhanus Raasi) that month is denoted as Dhanurmasam. It marks the entry of Sun into Dhanus raasi that is known as Dhanus Sankramana which generally occurs around the middle of the winter month December. Dhanurmasam generally occurs in between the two lunar months Margasira and Pushya. As per English calendar, Dhanurmasam generally starts on 16th December and ends on January 13th or 14th on the Bhogi festival day. It is the ninth month of the zodiac starting from Aries (Mesha raasi) and is the last month before the onset of Uttarayana.

Dhanurmasam has acquired a unique significance of auspiciousness in Hindu spiritual calendar for devotional activities especially worshiping of Lord Sri Maha Vishnu. More significance is given for worshipping Lord Vishnu in Dhanurmasam during the early hours before Sunrise known as Arunodaya Kaala. In this month one is expected to perform pooja rituals during the auspicious Brahmi Muhurtha approx two hours before the Sunrise when the stars are still twinkling in the sky. During Dhanurmasam a special dish known as Huggi (Mudganna) prepared with Rice and Moong dal mixed in equal proportions is offered to Lord Vishnu as Naivedya.



Lot of significance is given to Dhanurmasam in Vaishnava Sampradaya and all the Vishnu related temples perform special rituals and poojas early in the morning during this month. We find temples offering to the Lord, sweet Pongal, Kara Pongal, and Pulihora as Naivedya and distributing the same as prasadam to the devotees during Dhanurmasam. There is also a health significance attached in prescribing these food items during Dhanurmasam. At Tirumala Kshetra, the abode of Lord Sri Venkateswara, we find the priests reciting

Tiruppavai a celestial song composed by Sri Godadevi (Aandaal) an ardent devotee of Lord Sri Krishna, instead of regular Suprabhatham.



At Tirumala temple Lord Venkateswara is worshiped daily with Bilva leaves (Bilva Pathra) during Dhanurmasam. It is highly meritorious to recite Sri Vishnu Sahasra Nama Sthothram, Purusha Sooktham, Sri Vishnu Sooktham and Narayana Upanishad during this auspicious period of Dhanurmasam. Worshipping Goddess Sri Maha Lakshmi along with Lord Vishnu is also prescribed during Dhanurmasam.

Sukla paksha Ekaadasi (either in Margasira or Pushya maasam) associated with Dhanurmasam is revered as Vaikunta Ekaadasi or Mukkoti Ekaadasi the most auspicious day to worship Lord Sri Maha Vishnu. Next day is known as Mukkoti Dwaadasi. Vyatheepatha yoga during Dhanurmasam (Dhanur-Vyatheepaatha Yoga) is given lot of prominence and it is believed that any Pithru kaarya or charity given in respectful reverence to one's Pithrus on this day is considered as highly meritorious.

As per Sri Venkatchala Mahatmya it is said that, taking bath in Sri Swami Pushkarini Theertha at Tirumala on the day of Sukla Dwadasi (Mukkoti Dwaadasi) in the month of Dhanurmasam during Arunodaya time is considered as highly sacred and celestial. On this day it is said that, more than three crores of sacred theerthas in the entire Bhoomandala will enter into Sri Swami Pushkarini. Taking bath on this day in Swami Pushkarini is considered highly meritorious and equivalent to taking bath in all the three crores of sacred theerthas. It is revered as Sri Swami Pushkarini Theertha Koti day in the almanac of Tirumala temple.

Considering the superior sacredness and spirituality attached to the Dhanurmasam, auspicious functions like Marriage, Gruha Pravesam etc. are not generally performed during this month. It is only to give more focus and attention to the Divine worship rather than mundane materialistic activities.

Why Arunodaya time is prescribed for worshipping the Lord during Dhanurmasam?

As per the concept of Hindu time element, it is said that, one day for Devathas is equal to one human year comprising of 6 months of Uttarayana and 6

months of Dakshinayana. That means Uttarayana is the day time and Dakshinayana is the night time for devathas. Accordingly one human month is equal to two hours for Deities. The period of Dhanurmasam falling at the fag end of Dakshinayana indicates the last leg of the night time for Devathas (Arunodaya) when they worship Lord Sri Hari. Hence, it is befitting for human beings also to worship Lord Sri Maha Vishnu at a time that coincides with the Arunodaya Kaala for Devathas. This incidentally coincides with the Dhanurmasam. This auspicious period is known as Arunodaya or Brahmi Muhurtha.

Any worship conducted during Arunodaya time is said to be of highest quality that yield meritorious results. It is said that worshiping Lord Sri Maha Vishnu during this auspicious and sacred period of Dhanurmasam, the dearest month for Lord Sri Hari even for a single day is equivalent to worshiping the Lord for 1000 years. In Hindu philosophy for everything a specific time measure is set and prescribed according to the concept of time element. It specifies the unique significance given to the month, day, thithi, Nakshatra etc in Hindu religion. Therefore perform right deeds at the right time and seek Divine blessings that yield higher results.

Checklist for Dhanurmasam

- Worship Lord Sri ManNarayana and Goddess Lakshmi Devi
- Perform pooja rituals during Arunodaya time two hours before Sunrise
- Offer Huggi as Naivedya to the Lord adding Shunti
- Recite Sri Vishnu Sahasra Nama Sthothram + Purusha Sooktham
- Observe fasting on Vaikunta Ekadasi day
- Perform Pithru Karya on the day of Dhanur Vyatheepatha yoga
- Avoid performing auspicious functions like marriage, etc.

Sri Krishnaarpanamasthu



SHSK BALAJI