

Compiled by Kidambi Raj

# VARALAKSHMI VRATHAM

## What is Varalakshmi Vratam?

It is one of the most auspicious festival that is celebrated in honour of Goddess Lakshmi. Varalakshmi (*Vara* means boon and *Lakshmi* means Goddess of wealth) is one of the forms of Goddess Mahalakshmi. She is the consort of Lord Vishnu and is the one who grants boons. It is an important pooja performed by many women in all the southern state, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh in India and by Tamilians in Sri Lanka. It is celebrated on the second Friday or the Friday before the day of full moon (Poornima) in the month of Shravana (July-August).

## Significance and importance of performing Vara Lakshmi Vrata:

It is performed by married women (Sumangalis) for the wellbeing of their family members, especially the husband, to get progeny etc. The eight forces or energies are recognized and they are known as *Sri* (Wealth), *Bhu* (Earth), *Saraswathi* (Wisdom), *Preethi* (Love), *Keerthi* (Fame), *Shanthi* (Peace), *Santhushti* (Contentment) and *Pushti* (Strength). It is believed that worshipping Goddess Varalakshmi on this day is equivalent to worshipping Ashtalakshmi.

Vishnu is called *Ashtalakshmi Pathi*, which is equivalent to saying that he is the asylum for the eight Lakshmis or forces. In fact, Lord Vishnu representing the preservative aspect of the universe, radiates these forces from Him. These forces are personified and worshipped as Lakshmis, since abstract forces is beyond the comprehension of the ordinary people. As health, wealth and prosperity depend upon the rhythmic play of these forces, the worship of Goddess Lakshmi is said to obtain these three.

## Legends related to Varalakshmi Pooja:

There are few legends related to Varalakshmi Vratas and here are three.

According to Hindu mythology, the importance of Varalakshmi Pooja is said to be mentioned in the Skanda Purana. It is believed that the importance of Varalakshmi Pooja was narrated to Goddess Parvathi by Lord Siva himself. Goddess Parvathi wanted to know about a vrata that is highly beneficial to woman, which will help her lead a happy and prosperous life on earth. Lord Siva then mentioned about the Varalakshmi Vratam.

Another one is about the story of Shyamabala. King Bathrasiravas and Queen Surachandrika had a daughter named Shyamabala. She was married to a prince of the neighboring kingdom. Once when Shyamabala was in her parent's palace, she saw her mother, Queen Surachandrika, driving away an old lady. The old lady had asked the queen to perform Varalakshmi Pooja, but the queen did not like a beggar advising her regarding a Pooja and therefore drove her out. The kind-hearted Shyamabala invited the old lady and listened to the greatness of Varalakshmi Vrata. When she returned to her country, she performed the Vrata as directed by the old lady. Soon her kingdom started prospering and the prince was appreciated for his good governance. However, her parents had to undergo numerous troubles and there was suffering all around. The King and the Queen lost all their wealth and people started revolting against their rule. Hearing about the suffering in her parent's kingdom, Shyamabala sent pots of gold, but the moment Queen Surachandrika set her eyes on them, they turned to ashes. Upon hearing this incident, Shyamabala realized that all this is the result of her mother driving out the old woman from the palace. She realized that the old



woman was Goddess Lakshmi in disguise. Shyamabala asked her mother to ask forgiveness to Goddess Lakshmi and perform Varalakshmi Vrata. She did so and was able to attain the previous glory.

There lived a woman named Charumathi in town called Kundinyapura in Maharashtra. That prosperous town was home to Charumathi and her husband. Very much impressed by her devotion to her family, Goddess Mahalakshmi appeared in her dream and asked her to worship Varalakshmi and seek to fulfill her wishes. Charumathi explained her dream to her family and they encouraged her to perform the Pooja. She invited many other women in her village and they all joined in performing the pooja in the traditional way and offered many sweets to the Goddess Varalakshmi. Charumathi recited the following Lakshmi sloka with other women with utmost faith and devotion.

*Lakshmeem Ksheerasamudra*

*Rajatanayaam Sri Rangadhameswareem*

*Daseebhootha Samastha Devavanitham*

*Lokaika Deepangkuraam*

*Sri Manmanda Kataaksha Labhdha Vibhava*

*Brahmendra Gangaadharaam*

*Twaam Trailokya Kutumbhineem*

*Sarasijam Vande Mukundapriyaam.*

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*Maathar Namaami Kamalae  
Kamalaayathaakshi*

*SriVishnu Hrutka Kamalavaasini  
Viswamaathahaa*

*Ksheerothajae Kamalakomala Garbhagowri*

*Lakshmi Praseethatham Namathaam  
Saranyae*

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Then Charumathi offered thambulam to the brahmin priests and distributed the Vrata prasadam to guests and relatives and led a happy life. Since then, Hindu women perform this Vrata with utmost faith and trust to this day.

May Goddess Lakshmi's Blessings be with you all !!!

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# VILAKKU POOJAI

## Significance of Vilakku Pooja:

The word *Vilakku* literally means lamp in Tamil. Vilakku Pooja is a special Vrata for women during the Tamil month of Aadi. The month of *Aadi* is considered very auspicious to connect oneself to this Divine Power. This pooja is an important ritual dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi and is performed on a Friday in the month of Aadi (July-August). The lamp has its own special place in Hinduism. It is a form and a symbol of *Tej* (Absolute fire principle). Lamp leads from darkness to light. It burns only to give message of peace and light to people. That is its greatness.

*Kutthu Vilakku*, it is said, truly represents the seven principal chakras or energy centres in the human body. These *chakras* influence practically every aspect of human being including physical body, mind and intellect. Just as there are seven Chakras in the human body, there are paths for the flow of vital energy or Chetana. These are called *Nadis* or channels. According to Siddhas there are 72,000 such nadis in a human body.

The three principal Nadis are *Chandra Nadi* (Moon Channel), *Surya Nadi* (Sun Channel) and *Sushmna Nadi* (the Central Space) remains dormant. But Sushmna is the most significant aspect of human

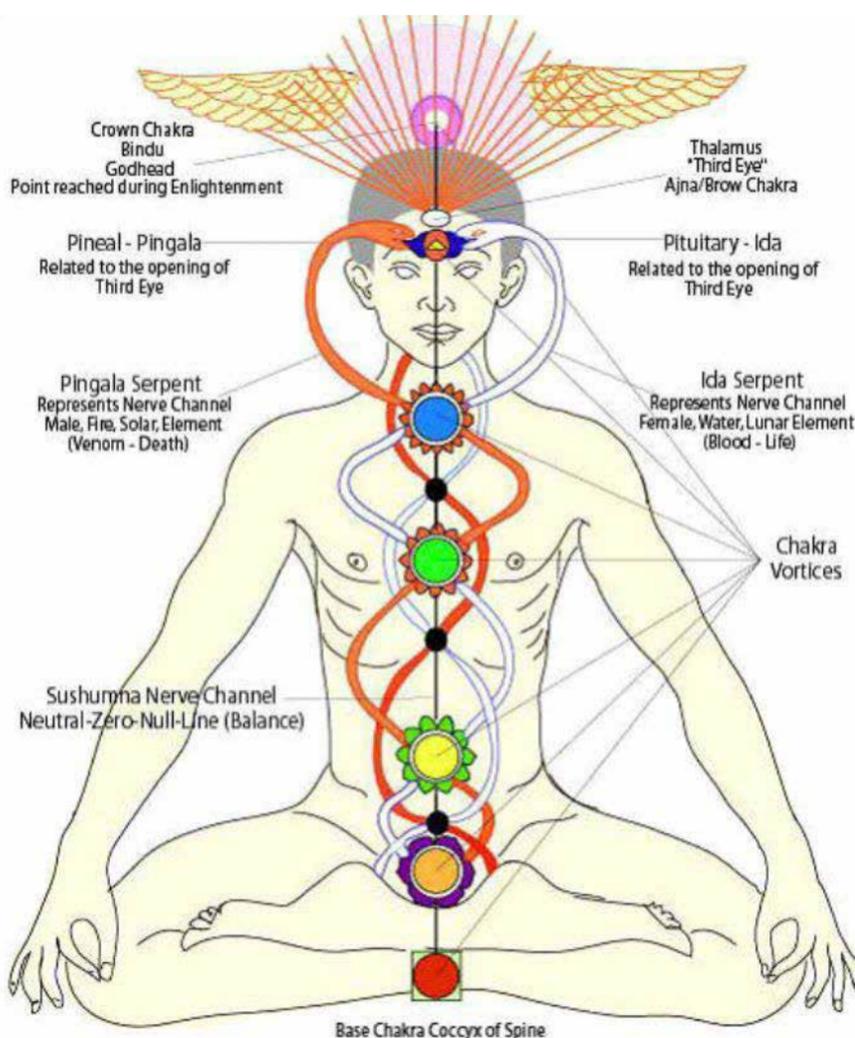
physiology. Only when energy enters into Sushumna, life really begins.

When the Chandra Nadi is active the person perceives coolness. The activation of Surya Nadi imparts energy to the person and The Sushmna Nadi is activated when the person starts progressing spiritually.

The structure of Kutthu Vilakku used during pooja is a symbolic representation of the above concept. The Stem of the lamp represents the Sushmna Nadi and the seven chakras on them. The five faces of the lamp (pancha mugas) represent the five senses.

## Importance of lighting the lamp for functions:

Great importance is given for lighting lamp in Hinduism. The implied meaning of lighting a ceremonious lamp just awakens the Glow of the soul (Atmajyoti) within oneself. The serene aura around the lamp represents the Light of the soul, while the predominant light represents the radiance of the soul. When a function is started by lighting the lamp, the respective Deity principle is invoked and a prayer is offered for the waves of the Deity to be present at that venue. This activates the Sankalpa (commitment) power and the task gets accomplished. The movement of the light particles



emitted by the flame of the lamp the non-materialized waves of action of the God from the Universe get converted into predominant shakti of God and it helps in the formation of a protective sheath and prevents negative energies from entering the area. Thus, the desired task is accomplished with Divine blessings and without any obstruction.

## Benefits of Lamp Pooja:

Lighting lamps in numbers of 108 or 1,008 on Fridays and on auspicious days like full moon day or Amavasai day in temples provide great benefits for the worshippers as it is equal to Yagna. Though doing Lamp Pooja on Aadi Amavasai is good, doing lamp pooja of full moon or amavasai day in every Tamil month, has its own varied benefits as given below:

Lamp pooja on Chitra pournami or amavasai will give abundance of all species of food grains,

Lamp pooja on Vaikasi pournami or amavasai will give money,

Lamp pooja on Aani pournami or amavasai will remove obstacles in marriage,

Lamp pooja on Aadi pournami or amavasai will extend one's life period,

Lamp pooja on Aavani pournami or amavasai will give children,

Lamp pooja on Purattasi pournami or amavasai will increase number of cows in the house,

Lamp pooja on Aippasi pournami or amavasai will remove all diseases,

Lamp pooja on Karthigai pournami or amavasai will provide mukthi,

Lamp pooja on Margazhi pournami or amavasai will provide good health,

Lamp pooja on Thai pournami or amavasai will provide victory,

Lamp pooja on Maasi pournami or amavasai will remove all sorrows and Lamp pooja on Panguni pournami or amavasai will help think on the way of dharma.

*Now you know the significance and power of Lighting a Lamp in Pooja !!!*