

The significance of carrying the Gargum for the Divine Mother



An elaborate set up of a gargum.

We, at Dipika, humbly prostrate and seek the divine blessings of the Supreme Divine Mother Saraswati to compile this much-needed article, to make my fellow Hindus and those of other faiths understand more about the gargum. Jai Mata Di.

As devotees of Lord Muruga carry the Kavady to glorify and praise Lord Muruga, devotees of the divine mother carry the Gargum to also glorify and praise Her.

The Gargum symbolises The Supreme Queen of the Universe - Devi Adi Para-Shakti's crown, and is carried to honor Her as the Queen of the Universe. Great blessings await those that carry the Gargum for the Divine Mother, and observe the period of 10 days of fasting, while keeping a strict vrat (fast). Carrying a gargum is akin to carrying the Mother of the Universe. This is, indeed, a great honor - to be given the opportunity by the Divine Mother to be able to observe this prayer. Carrying the gargum, for many devout devotees, is a thanksgiving offering. Those persons, in performing this prayer, are paying homage to the Divine Mother with offerings to signify their absolute faith, trust and love for Her.

For most major problems (for example, conceiving, getting married, marriage issues, health issues, and most other issues) in one's life, I humbly advise carrying a gargum. The pertinent information for one to utilise, follows.

Who is Adi Para-Shakti, and why is it necessary to worship Her?

Vedic Shastras reveal that Adi Para-Shakti is the power, or energy, in action, in the Universe. This Shakti is not ordinary power – rather, it is Divine/Supreme Power. Scriptures further reveal this Shakti to be the breath of the Supreme Lord. This is the Supreme Power or “great breath” by which the Supreme Lord created the Universe. This is the power, or energy, that holds the universe together. This Divine Shakti is the one who decorated the heavens and the Earth.

The Mother's name can be broken down as follows - Adi (primal), Para (supreme) and Shakti (energy or power). Devis Durga, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Bhavani, Ambika, Kameshwari, Rajeshwari, Mariammen, among others, are Her Divine Forms. She is one Supreme Being, expanded into a multitude of diversified manifestations, according to the lila (pastime) She enacts.

She is the Mother of all Creation. The pious and the wicked, the rich and the poor, the saint and the sinner, are all her children. She is the energy in the Sun. She is the fragrance in flowers, She is beauty in the landscapes, She is colour in the rainbow, intelligence in the mind, potency in homeopathic pills, power in the Ayurvedic tonics, devotion in the devotees of The Supreme Lord - Her manifestations are countless. The names that describe the characteristics of Adi Para-Shakti are innumerable. When The Supreme Lord speaks, Shakti is the one who brings it to pass. Therefore, when The Supreme Lord wishes to take action, it will have to be by virtue of His Divine Energy or Shakti. This is why one needs Devi Adi Para-Shakti in one's life. When one accepts Devi Adi Para-Shakti and allows Her to take charge of one's life, irrespective of one's circumstances, She will certainly improve one's situation.

As this Supreme Power is allowed to positively impact one's family, business, finances and health, one's personal circumstances are not relevant as one will surely begin to grow from strength to strength, from success to success, and from greatness to greatness. The reason being, is that one is no longer operating on one's "limited natural strength" but through the "unlimited supernatural energy" and power of Mother Adi Para-Shakti.

As soon as this Divine Shakti begins to positively influence one's life, She will assist in healing most any ailment one may have. Finally, worship of the Mother Shakti grants one not only wealth and prosperity on this Earth, but also assistance in one's pursuit of spiritual liberation from all bondage, which leads to knowledge of the self and thus the knowledge of God within us. Devi Adi Para-Shakti is the "breath", or Supreme Power, of all. She can make and mar, mend and end, create and annihilate, among other things. No person can free oneself from the clutches of mind and matter without Her Divine Grace. The difficulty of illusion is often insurmountable. Through Her benign grace and favour, one can easily obtain liberation from this material world and travel beyond the heavenly abodes. Through Her infinite mercy and blessings, She leads us safely into the illimitable domain of eternal bliss and joy that surpasses all human understanding.

Significance of Maavilakku

A Maavilakku is a lamp made of ground rice and ghee, and is a sacred offering made to Devi Adi Para-Shakti. The maavilakku was offered to the Devi Adi Para-Shakti by Lord Vishnu to pacify Her anger towards the sins and transgressions of humankind, as She wanted to infect the earth with "pearls" of small pox (Muthu Mari, Marie translates to, among other things, pearls). The maavilakku is most often made of ground white rice, honey, butter (not margarine) and elachie powder, which are mixed together and then shaped into a lamp. In the centre of the lamp, a cotton wool wick which has been soaked in ghee, is placed and lit. This is, in effect, similar to the Lakshmi lamp that is commonly found in Hindu houses, in which, a cotton wool wick is placed, and various oils and/or ghee is used to sustain the flame.



This maavilakku is carried around a temple (where one shall be observing this prayer and carrying the gargum) three times, and then offered to Adi Para-Shakti at the designated place (utilised by the temple), to appease Her and pacify Her anger for our sins and transgressions. Devotees who suffer from certain ailments, such as a disease of the eye, mouth, ears, stomach, hand, leg, etc. should make an offering of a maavilakku unto Devi once they are cured. In the famous Samayapuram Mariamman Temple in South India, a very special ritual concerning the maavilakku is performed. The cured person lies on his or her back in front of the Deity of Amma (Marieamman) and a leaf is placed on the formerly affected part of the person's body. The maavilakku is placed on the leaf and lit. After a short period of time, the maavilakku is taken off and offered as prashad (blessed food). Please note that this divine maavilakku does not have to be made in the Tamil month of Aadi (Mid July – Mid August) - it can be made at any time of the year and offered with love and devotion unto our Divine Mother Adi Para-Shakti.

The procedure to follow for the ten day period preceding carrying one's gargum

Every Mother (Devi/Mata/Ammen) devotee has an affinity for a certain Mother. Some are attached to, for example, Mother Durga, some to Mother Kali, others to Marieammen, etc. . Therefore, carrying the Gargum is for the Mother of your choice. You may visit your local Ammen/Devi temple to inquire about the dates during which they observe this prayer.

Every year the Cato Manor Shree Gangei-Ammen Temple (located in Durban, South Africa) observes this prayer on Mother's Day.

Therefore, I would humbly advise the following. Pray to a Deity or picture of the Mother of your choice. I would suggest that you write your desires, from the Mother, on a piece of paper (however, don't be unrealistic or ask for trivial or questionable things). Fold this piece of paper a few times and then place it in-between your palms and pray to the Mother - pray that whatever you have written on such page is realised or comes true, and pledge to carry the Gargum for three years (the minimum period for carrying the gargum is three years, however, a period of three, five, seven, etc. years can be observed – an odd multiple, or, for the remainder of one's life). Now, leave this page by the Mother's Deity or picture, together with an amount of currency as per your circumstances. Use this currency when buying items for the upcoming prayer.

Ten days prior to the main day of carrying the Gargum (depending on the respective temple), the flag hoisting occurs. Every year, the Cato Manor Shree Gangei Ammen Temple observes

the Gargum prayer. In 2019, the flag hoisting at this temple will commence at 18h00, on the third of May.

On the flag hoisting day, I generally take the following on a tray (picture is on the next page). Do note that this isn't necessary but I just love to, hence I do. Place the following on a tray - three kinds of fruits (for example a banana, an apple, a pear, etc.) 250ml milk, 1 cleaned coconut (with the turf still attached), a small tray of mittai (Indian "sweet-meats"), 1 small packet of turmeric, 1 small packet of gadam podi (prayer powder). Optional items consist of a small bowl of payasam (sweet-rice), one betel leaf and one flat brown betel nut, one flower, one packet of incense, one block of camphor, one box of matches. You may cling wrap the tray.

*Do remember to wash the items before placing them on the tray.



The procedure at the Shree Gangei Ammen Temple, and possibly at other temples, is as follows. At the Shree Gangei Ammen Temple, one stands just outside the entrance, viewing the Mother inside. One then walks around the temple. Located a few metres apart, there are small rounded pits in which to place a piece of camphor. Place in a piece of camphor in such pit and light it. Walk three times around the temple, with the tray in hand. Thereafter, place your tray at a table that is meant for the devotees' trays. The priest/guru should commence with the main prayer, which is then concluded with a havan (which the crowd/devotees participate in). The entire procedure takes around one and a half hours. Thereafter, the actual flag hoisting commences, which takes approximately a further 45 minutes. Lastly, offered food (prasada) is served.

* My humble advice is that if you are visiting the temple, kindly bring along at least one fruit or another form of offering. It is a famous saying that "when you visit a temple empty-handed you return home empty-handed". The Deities of the temple need nothing from the devotees, however, to show gratitude and appreciation, it is highly advised to bring a fruit or offering with.

Do note that it is not compulsory to visit the temple on the day of the flag hoisting. If, due to circumstances, one is unable to attend, it is acceptable. However, it is preferable to attend, where possible. In the ten day period leading up to the main prayer of carrying the gargum, temples should host various prayers daily, and it is recommended to attend if, and if so, when possible. If you cannot attend on the day of the flag hoisting, I advise praying at home to the Mother.

The ten day period of observance of the gargum vrat

During this ten day period, the devotee must abstain from various non-sattwic items, such as alcohol, meat, narcotics, etc. . The devotee has to observe celibacy (if one is married and/or living with a spouse, then one should sleep on a separate bed from your spouse) and maintain a vegetarian diet for this entire period.

The reason for observance of such strict rules is to facilitate purification of one's body, mind and soul - such that, on the tenth day, when one is carrying the gargum for our merciful and amazing Mother's blessings, one's body is purified to the extent that it is similar to a temple sanctum, and one's vibrational energies are at an extremely heightened level. Keep in mind that this ten day period fast is to be observed according to one's abilities. This is NOT a difficult ten day period of fasting, as one is eating strictly vegetarian foods WITH SALT. Kindly refrain from "showing off" and posting pictures of one's "piety" and activities with regard to one's fasting, etc., on social media. Each person is on their own journey – thus, one should respect others' journeys.

During the ten day period before the day of carrying the gargum, every morning or evening (depending on one's circumstances), one should prepare one of the Mother's favourite offerings - namely payasam (Sanskrit for kheer)(sweet-rice). When preparing the kheer, ensure that it is prepared with purity - whereby one refrains from talking or having negative thoughts, etc., as the Mother is going to consume this preparation. In the kheer, be certain to add milk and gur (jaggery(sugar)) – these items are compulsory. Optional items that may be added include cashew nuts, two strands of saffron, almonds or pistachio nuts.

Fruit, such as mangoes and bananas, are quite appropriate to offer to our dear Mother. With regard to the flowers to offer to the Mother, in South Africa, the marigold is offered frequently due to its yellow colour. However, in other places, jasmine garlands are offered to our Mother. If neither of these flowers is available, other suitable flowers can be offered.

A brief summary of the procedure to follow daily in the aforementioned ten day period - after having a bath (in the morning or evening, as per one's circumstances), prepare payasam. Clean a mango or banana (or other fruit, according to the fruit is available), cut it and place it in a bowl. In a lota/chumbhu, add milk (with one teaspoon of gur/sugar(sugar kept specifically, and only, for prayers)). In another lota/chumbhu, add water. Wash and place one betel leaf and one flat brown betel nut. The above-mentioned items should be kept on a tray that has been washed beforehand, as illustrated in the picture below.

***A point of note** - one may offer whatever one is cooking for that day (such as a curry, rice and salad), given that the offering is non-sattwic. One should not feel pressurised into preparing these offerings mentioned above. The above is simply a suggestion - which I prepare daily.

One should prepare a tray, on which the following items should be placed, as illustrated in the picture below.

Tray 1:- Kheer/Payasam in a bowl. A cleaned mango or banana (or other fruit, according to the fruit that is available), cut and placed in a bowl. A lota/chumbhu of milk (with one teaspoon of gur/sugar (sugar kept specifically, and only, for prayers)). Another lota/chumbhu of water. One betel leaf and one flat brown betel nut, washed and finally flowers for decoration.



After preparing “Tray 1”, offer it by placing it in front of a picture or murti of the Mother. Pray to the Mother and ask that she accepts the food which one has prepared. Leave the tray for five minutes for the Mother to accept and “consume” the offerings/preparations. After five minutes, return, and pray to the Mother - and ask for forgiveness, in respect of any shortcomings in the preparation and/or offering of the preparations. It is often important to be humble – remember that one’s offering may not necessarily be perfect. However, the Mother will surely accept a preparation prepared and made in good faith.

Tray 2:- Three incense sticks in an incense holder (which has not been lit as yet), clay lamp with a tablet of camphor or cotton wick with ghee or oil and one marigold, jasmine or another flower that's easily accessible and washed.



After preparing “Tray 2”, light the incense and then light the clay lamp. If one prefers, one can follow this method, as often used in temples – offer the tray by turning the tray four times around the feet of the Mother, two times around the abdomen/navel, three times around the Mother’s head, and lastly seven times around the entire picture/murti of the Mother.

Lastly, select a Devi/Mother/Ammen mantra of one’s choice. One should chant said mantra one-hundred and eight times, daily, whilst being in front of a picture/murti of the Mother. Please chant the selected mantra in good faith. After one completes such chanting, one should bow down to the picture/murti, ask for forgiveness in respect of one’s errors with regard to chanting, and pray for one’s desires with regard to carrying the gargum, and, thereafter, one can continue with one’s daily activities.

*******Keep in mind that one’s faith and devotion is of the most value and importance to the Mother. A sincere prayer, made in good faith, is always recommended.

One can, additionally, visit a temple related to the Mother, during this ten day period before the carrying of the gargum. Where possible, try to focus on one’s prayers and the Mother, perhaps by playing religious music, etc. .

The procedure to follow on the night before carrying the gargum

Keep in mind that a temple may have it’s own rules and methods with regards to prayers, such as the carrying of the gargum. The following related to the procedure followed by the Cato Manor temple.

With regard to carrying the gargum, a temple may often charge a fee – to carry the gargum (which should be used for the upkeep of the temple) and to cover the cost of the ingredients that the temple provides, which will be poured into the metal pot that will serve as the gargum. This fee is often nominal, and not exorbitant, and thus should be within a devotee’s means. The temple may absolve one from paying the fee, in extenuating circumstances, however, one

should donate as per one's means – as the funds are to be used for the temple and for the prayer.

One may acquire the ingredients oneself, if one hasn't paid the temple fee. However, the fee should be nominal compared to the cost of the ingredients, and therefore one should simply pay the temple fee.

The following items are acquired by the temple, mixed, and added into the pot to be used as one's gargum - red scent (liquid perfume), rose water, sour milk, milk and honey. Be certain to verify if the temple at which one wishes to carry the gargum makes such provisions, and, to make such provisions if this is not the case.

One should gather the following items prior to the evening before the day of carrying the gargum, as these items will be used the evening prior, to prepare the gargum for the next day.

*One large packet of turmeric powder, one small packet of kungu (a powder used in prayers that is cerise-pink in colour), one coconut, twenty to thirty syringaberry sprigs (small branch with leaves) and one large syringaberry stick/branch, yellow or red cloth (clean cloth bought only for prayers) and marigolds (enough to make three one-metre long garlands).

*In the evening prior to the day of carrying the gargum, do the following. Prepare a paste with the turmeric powder, and another paste with the kungu. Smear the turmeric paste on the large metal pot. After the turmeric paste has dried, use the kungu paste to make seven or nine around the pot, near the middle of the pot.

*Clean the coconut and remove the husk, except a small portion of the husk near the top of the coconut (the "turf"). Smear turmeric paste on the coconut and let it dry.

*Wash the syringaberry leaves and the syringaberry stick, and leave to dry. It is absolutely compulsory to obtain the syringaberry leaves and stick, as there is no substitute. One should plan ahead, to acquire the leaves and branch in advance, before the prayer. The leaves and branch can be stored, and used, even if dry/old (as there is no substitute), however, fresh leaves and branches are preferred.

*Use the cloth and mold it into a shape, as illustrated in the picture below, that one can place on one's head. It will assist in keeping the gargum steady when placed on one's head and on such cloth. It will also help to evenly distribute the weight of the pot, which will make carrying the gargum more comfortable.



*Prepare three, one-metre length flower garlands. The flowers should be closely threaded, if possible. One can use the flowers that are available during this period. Marigolds are preferred, due to the durability and suitability of these flowers (the flowers are easier to prepare garlands with, the flowers stay fresh for quite some time, etc.). If one is unable to acquire many marigolds or other flowers, then one can place the flowers sparsely, to prepare the garlands.

One should have the following items prior to the day of carrying the gargum, as these items will be used on the day of carrying the gargum. Place the following items in a box or other container, to allow the items to be moved more easily. The items should have all be obtained beforehand, and be ready to be taken to the prayer site on the day of carrying the gargum.

One medium-sized tray, one large metal pot (which will be used as one's gargum (the gargum is the pot, with the mixture of liquids, the smeared turmeric and kungu, etc.)) (the pot that was prepared the night before, as mentioned above), syringaberry branches with leaves and two half-metre syringaberry sticks, one roll of white cotton thread and one large needle (to make the garlands) {garlands, aside from those above?}, one roll of white twine, one coconut (cleaned and with the husk removed, except for the "turf"), two blocks of camphor tablets, one box of matches, a coin (currency), three betel leaves, three flat brown betel nuts, one used small clay lamp, three prayer limes (kindly note that these limes are small limes and not the yellow "spanish" limes, a 500ml bottled water separate from the drinking water for using to make a kungu and turmeric later later on). A yellow cloth 1,5m X 15cm for tying the lime the next day. A ready made face of the Mother is another option to decorate the Gargum.

As an optional item, one can bring one large metal trishul (trident) (an example of a trishul can be found in the pictures further on in the article) and three additional prayer limes, which will be skewered onto the prongs of the trishul just before carrying the gargum.

(All of the above-mentioned items should be prepared the evening prior to the day of carrying the gargum, or earlier. The above simply serves as a checklist to verify if one has all the necessary items.) Another optional item, is one new sari or a dupatta (is a combination of 'du-' meaning two, and 'patta' meaning strip of cloth, originally from Sanskrit. In other words a shawl) (kindly note that this sari or dupatta must be a new sari that should be bought for just for this prayer, and such).



One is advised to take along the following items, as they will likely assist in making the overall experience more comfortable, and safer. These items should be carried with, in a bag or container separate to the box, as it will be taken with while carrying the gargum (when the box of items is left behind).

One pair of scissors, one box of matches, a piece of paper and tape or a cable tie with one's details in order to identify one's gargum, two plastic packets to keep any refuse and dirt, water as per one's consumption needs, one medium-sized bowl to mix items at the temple/prayer site if necessary, one large towel to wipe and/or in the event of rain, an umbrella, any medication to treat headaches, etc., in the event that it is needed and any other items that may be suitable to bring with.

The above information is accurate at the time of compiling this article, and specific to Cato Manor temple, in South Africa. The items, procedures, etc., are subject to change, based on one's location, the temple, the relevant circumstances, etc. .

The procedure that occurs on the day of carrying the gargum

One should arrive at the temple early – at least an hour earlier than the start of the carrying of the gargum is advised. This should provide ample time for one to prepare for the events to follow. At the Cato Manor temple, the carrying of the gargum beings at 6 AM, this it is suggested to arrive at or before 5 AM.

Take the metal pot (kodam)(the pot, smeared with turmeric and kungu, to be used as one's gargum) to the temple, and queue to enter the temple itself. Once in the temple, one should be given flower petals – offer these petals to the temple Deity (the Mother). Thereafter, a turmeric stick or strand of kusha grass (darbha), with a string, should be tied onto one's right wrist by a temple member (devotee). At the temple, a havan (fire sacrifice) should be performed, by the presiding priest. Thereafter, devotees should queue to offer havan samaghree into the havan kund of the prayer being performed. Afterwards, one should queue to fill one's metal pot (kodam)(to be used as a gargum) with the liquid mixture of ingredients provided by the temple, if applicable. Thereafter, one should obtain a packet with one prayer lime, one betel leaf and one flat brown betel nut (which have been blessed) – which should be provided by the temple.

The term 'metal pot'(kodam) has been used thus far. The gargum is the metal pot after it has been adorned with the flowers and leaves, etc. . Essentially, one should note that they are not different items.



The bucket, in the picture in the previous page, is the mixture of ingredients that the temple should prepare, some of which should be poured into one's metal pot, as stated above.

Thereafter, one should take one's metal pot (kodam)(to be used as a gargum), with the mixture of liquids in it, and the box of items prepared beforehand, to an area designated by the temple, in order to adorn the metal pot in preparation for carrying the gargum.

Once at the designated area, with one's metal pot and box of items, perform the following. Place the metal pot on a pedestal/table designated by the temple. Place the following items on a clay lamp – one betel leaf, one prayer lime, one flat brown betel nut, one coin and a small piece of a camphor tablet. Light the piece of camphor, hold the clay lamp in one's right hand, and pray to the Mother (for example, about the aspects one prayed for in the ten day period before carrying the gargum). Thereafter, turn the lamp three times, in a clockwise direction, around the metal pot, & place the contents of the lamp (except the clay lamp & the prayer lime), in the metal pot.



Pictured above – the complete set of the betel leaf, betel nut, coin, camphor and prayer lime – for one's safety, it is advised to place the items on a clay lamp.

Afterward, place a bunch of syringaberry leaves, with the tips of the leaves pointing upwards, in the metal pot. Place sufficient leaves to cover the entire rim of the metal pot, and place the coconut in the pot, such that the leaves are kept in place by the coconut. Thereafter, gather the leaves together such that it covers the entire coconut, and use the white cotton twine to fasten the coconut and leaves in place. Place the one half-metre syringaberry stick or trishul in the metal pot horizontally behind the coconut and fasten it in place with the twine. Then place another half-metre syringaberry stick vertically behind the coconut, fastened in place with the cotton twine, to hold the metal pot in place, while carrying the gargum. The coconut should be placed first, then the two syringaberry sticks, and the optional trishul, in this order. An example of the gargum, with the sticks and flowers, is shown in the pictures below.

The metal pot is generally shaped such that it has a narrow opening, and a wide base. One should, ideally, use a metal pot with an opening that is narrow, such that, when a coconut is placed on the opening, it does not fall into the metal pot. This should allow one to place the coconut, leaves, flowers, etc., on the metal pot, which is, after being adorned with paraphernalia, the gargum.

One can now adorn one's metal pot as per one's circumstances. The simplicity, or intricacy, of the dressing of the gargum is a matter of choice. The following is a suggestion, as to how to dress/adorn the metal pot.

The flower garlands (likely to be marigolds) should be draped/wrapped around the {coconut} and fastened in place with the cotton twine. If one so desires, further items can be added – a sari or dupatta (shawl) and a face of the Mother, etc. . Next, use “clean” water (from a 500ml bottle water separate from the drinking water) to prepare turmeric paste and kungu paste. Smear one lime with turmeric paste, place a dot on the top of the lime with kungu, and skewer the lime on to the half-metre long horizonattly syringaberry stick. If one is also utilising a trishul, three limes are prepared and placed as such – one for each prong.

Once again, keep in mind that one's gargum is adorned according to one's circumstances and preferences. There should be no “competition” - whether one's gargum is simple or intricate, one's faith and sincerity is of utmost importance.





Take the blessed prayer lime provided by the temple and place it in the centre of the yellow cloth mentioned above. Knot the lime in the cloth, such that it is held in place in the cloth. This cloth, with the lime, is then tied along one's waist, prior to carrying the gargum.

After adorning the gargum as desired, proceed, with one's gargum and box of items, to the area designated by the temple, where all the devotees' gargums are placed on the ground. Once one places the gargum down, in front of the gargum, a temple devotee should bring, and place, a banana leaf, one fruit, one camphor tablet, and one incense stick. One should bring the blessed prayer lime, betel leaf and flat {brown} betel nut provided earlier by the temple, and place the items on the banana leaf, as per the picture below. The presiding priest should bless the gargum and prayer items thereafter.



The assortment of items, to be offered, after adorning the gargum, as explained above.

Thereafter, the devotees carry their gargums, on their heads, and the procession commences. Certain devotees may call upon their 'trance' prior to the procession.



After adorning the gargum, one places the gargum on one's head, and walks around the prayer site a specified number of times – this is the “procession”. Thereafter, one, with the gargum on one's head still, proceeds back to the temple with the other devotees. One should go to the Deity of the Mother, lower the gargum, present the gargum to the Mother, and thereafter proceed to another designated area and place the gargum (an area where the devotees' gargums are placed). The gargum should remain for a short period of time, during which one can, if one desires, partake in any meals provided by the temple. After partaking in the meals, or after a short period of time, one should pay respects to the Mother, ask for forgiveness for any shortcomings and thank the Mother for being able to perform the prayer. Thereafter, one may retrieve one's gargum, and leave.

As mentioned in various instances above, one should observe the ten day period before the carrying of the gargum, and the actual carrying of the gargum, as per one's circumstances and abilities (for example, if one has health issues, one may continue to take medication, one can offer the incense and other items when possible, etc.). The following is absolutely compulsory, whereas other offerings and aspects are suggested (i.e. are optional).

Keeping the vrat(fast) for the ten day period (abstaining from non-sattwic items).

Offering incense, lamp and flowers daily to the Mother, in the morning or evening, after having a bath.

Offering fruit, milk, water and sweet-rice, which has been prepared daily (i.e. sweet-rice cooked on one day, should only be offered for that day. On subsequent days, another sweet-rice preparation should be offered.), in the morning or evening.

Addendum:-

Once one takes their gargum home, one can either keep one's gargum at one's prayer place and worship one's gargum for three days (counting from the day one carried one's gargum), performing the same prayers as in pages (5-7). Or if one don't want to wait for three days then that same evening or next morning before one deconstructs ones gargum place a piece of camphor (in a clay lamp) in front of one's gargum and then pray to the mother asking for forgiveness for any offenses you may have committed during the period of the ten days.

Rather than disposing of the prayer items in a river I would humbly suggest the following. Use the garlands to adorn the doorways of your home or dry the flowers and plant them if you have a large yard so that the flowers can be used for future prayers.

Distribute the liquid ingredients in the metal pot as prashadam to those at one's home or to the sickly as this liquid is now blessed. The turmeric paste used on the coconut and on the pot is used to bath with as well as drawing an OM or Swastika design on ones house doors. The turmeric stick that was tied on ones wrist on the day of carrying the Gargum is crushed and then used to bath with with. The two Syringa sticks are placed in a clean place in ones yard. The coin that was placed in the metal pot is washed and kept at one's prayer place. This coin can be used in future to purchase other prayer items. The limes is given to the sick or to close family. The limes is turned three times (clockwise) around that person and cut in half and disposed off in ones yard in a clean place. This is to remove any "evil eyes" that is affecting that person. The sari or dupatta is washed and worn as devi's blessings or gifted to someone. The twine is used for household purposes or for gardening. The coconut is lastly broken after turning the coconut three times around a lit camphor. This is the Mother's blessed food and is to be eaten and shared with family and friends. The excess prayer items (like the kungu or turmeric etc) can be used for future prayers.

DISCLAIMER 1:- Do note that the information given above is given with good faith. Dipika's free services are not intended to be a substitute for any medical care. The information above is intended for general education purposes and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional and/or medical advice.

DISCLAIMER 2:- Do note that Dipika is not affiliated to any Hindu group or organization. We at Dipika choose to remain an independent repository of spiritual advice. We appreciate that there are variances between organisations and humbly request that if our views differ from yours that you respect our decision not to conform to the prescripts of your particular organisation. We remain committed to spiritual advice which is based on scripture.



Thank you so much for taking the time to read this article. We pray that this article will assist you in some way and we also pray that it helps you to appreciate the beauty and remarkable foresight of our ancient Hindu culture. We wish to educate all readers and demystify the path of Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma). Please feel free to share these articles with friends and family who do not have direct access to our website or articles. If you use the articles in any form including blogs and/or as part of other articles kindly credit our website as a source. We hope that the articles serve as a reference to you and your family when you need clarification of certain topics. Jai Mata Di. All glories to our Divine and Amazing Mothers.

Please do visit our Website to receive more
free information about our beautiful culture
www.dipika.org.za

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