

## Hindu New Year – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Gudhi Padva, is the Marathi (language spoken by millions in India and around the world) name for Chaitra (Hindu Month) Shukla (bright half of the moon) Pratipada (first day of the bright/dark moon phase). It is celebrated on the first day of the Chaitra month to mark the beginning of the New year according to the luni-solar Hindu calendar. This day is also the first day of Chaitra Navaratri (The second of the four Navaratri's celebrated in a year). The practice of raising the Gudhi (flag) was started by Shivaji Maharaj to welcome the new year and symbolizes victory "Vijay Dhwaja" (Victory Flag). Since then this culture of raising Gudhi's has been followed in and around the strong holds of the Maratha kingdom. The day begins with ritual oilbath followed by prayers. Oil bath and eating Neem leaves are must rituals suggested by scriptures.

The word padava comes from the Sanskrit word paddava, which stands for the first day of the bright phase of the moon called pratipada in Sanskrit. Samvatsararambh: Chaitra Shukla Pratipada, Kaliyug Varsh (25<sup>th</sup> March 2020)



A Gudhi is erected on Gudhi Padva

Astronomical: This moon day has special meaning from an Astronomical point of view. The Sun is supposed to be in first point of Aries, which is first sign of the zodiac and is a natural beginning of spring in India. Many civilizations have known this. People of ancient Egypt knew this and Nowruz (literally "New Day") in Persia is also based on this observation. The Sun however may not be exactly in Aries due to the Lunar month. This is adjusted by adding a "Adhik Maas" (an extra Lunar month every three years three months to ensure New Year Day ("Gudhee Padwa") indeed matches observed season.

The first Holy festival which marks the beginning of the Hindu New Year, new month and new day for us Hindus falls on Chaitra Shukla Pratipada. It is known as Gudhi Padwa (Ugadi). Every Hindu proud of their own culture should "suggestedly" celebrate Gudi Padwa.

The wheel of Time that begins on Samvatsararambh day is related to the origin of the Universe and is beneficial for humankind. The period commencing on 1st January is related to the Dissolution of the Universe and is detrimental. Hence, celebrate the Samvatsararambh day (The Hindu new year)!

This Hindu New Year Day is celebrated by worshipping and hoisting the Dharmadhvaj (The Dharma flag) immediately after sunrise (shown above). On this day, Prajapati vibrations (frequencies) arrive on Earth in larger proportions. The kalash on the Dharmadhvaj facilitates the entry of these frequencies into the house. Neem leaves have greater ability to absorb Prajapati vibrations (frequencies), hence one should partake this as prasad.

The Dharmadhvaj should be lowered before sunset. Using the dhvaj-kalash for drinking water helps us avail of these frequencies the entire year.

The day is celebrated with an auspicious bath, followed by decorating the doorway with a 'toran', performing ritualistic worship and hoisting the Dhwaja or Gudi.

Presently in India New Year is being celebrated on 1st January as per the Western Gregorian calendar. Celebration on the eve of the Western New Year includes a lot of malpractices like indulging in eve teasing after drinking, etc. So, instead of beginning the New Year on an auspicious note it begins unpleasantly. To ensure that the beginning of the New Year begins on an auspicious note celebrate it according to our Hindu scriptures, on Chaitra Shuddha Pratipada (25<sup>th</sup> March) as per the Hindu lunar calendar, as this date is glorious in all ways as per the cycle of Nature and it also has historical and spiritual significance. All this contributes to endowing the one celebrating it as per the Hindu scriptures with several benefits. It is the duty of each individual to arrest the loss being caused to the society by emulating the Westerners.

According to the Brahma Purana, this is the day on which Lord Brahma created the world after the deluge and time began to tick from this day forth.

### Significance of Gudi Padwa

On this day the Tej and Prajapati frequencies are effective in large measures. During sunrise on this day, the Chaitanya (Divine Consciousness) emitted from these frequencies can be retained for a longer period.

It is accumulated in the cells of the embodied soul and is used by the embodied soul as and when required. Therefore within 5-10 minutes of sunrise one should perform ritualistic worship of the Gudi.

## Science in the worship of the Gudi



The divine consciousness emanating during sunrise, absorbed at that time lasts longer. Thus the Gudi should be worshipped within 510 minutes after sunrise! On Gudi Padwa, the waves consisting of the fire element (Tej tatva) and the creative element (Prajapati element) are activated on a large scale. The divine consciousness emanating during sunrise, absorbed at that time lasts longer. This consciousness is stored in the body cells and used as required. Hence the Gudi should be worshipped within 510 minutes of the sunrise.

The Gudhi: On Gudhi Padava, a gudhi is found prominently displayed in traditional Maharashtrian households. Bright green or yellow cloth adorned with brocade (zari) tied to the tip of a long bamboo over which gaathi (sugar crystals), neem leaves, a twig of mango leaves and a garland of red flowers is tied. A silver, copper or clay pot is placed in the inverted position over it. Altogether, it is called as Gudhi. It is hoisted outside the house, in a window, terrace or a high place so that everybody can see it.

Some of the significances attributed to raising a Gudhi are as follows:

- Maharashtrians also see the Gudhi as a symbol of victory associated with the conquests of the Maratha forces led by Chhatrapati Shivaji. It also symbolizes the victory of King Shalivahana over Sakas and was hoisted by his people when he returned to Paithan.
- Gudhi symbolizes the Brahmadvaj (translation: Brahma's flag) mentioned in the Brahma Purana, because Lord Brahma created the universe on this day. It may also represent Indradhvaj (translation: the flag of Indra).
- The Gudhi symbolizes Lord Raam's victory and happiness on returning to Ayodhya after slaying Ravana. Since a symbol of victory is always held high, so is the gudhi (flag). It is believed that this festival is celebrated to commemorate the coronation of Lord Raam's post His return to Ayodhya after completing 14 years of exile. So, people celebrated victory of Lord Raam every year by raising the Gudi. The Gudi is a symbol of victory of Lord Raam.

- The Gudhi is believed to ward off evil, invite prosperity and good luck into the house.

The Gudhi is positioned on the right side of the main entrance of the house. The right side symbolizes active state of the soul.

### Method of raising the Gudi

Position of the Gudi: Care should be taken to raise the Gudi next to the main entrance of the house. The spot selected should be on the right side (when sighted from the house) of the entrance. The right side symbolizes active state of the soul.

1. The place for raising the Gudi should be cleaned and then a Swastika rangoli should be drawn on the ground. Turmeric and vermilion (Hurdi-kumkum) should be offered at the center of the Swastik.
2. While raising the Gudi, the 'ShivaShakti' element in the Universe should be invoked. This enables all the constituents of the Gudi to accept divine elements.
3. The Gudi symbolizes the 'Sushumna nadi' of our body. Hence, the Gudi should be raised at the entrance. And it should be kept tilted at an angle.

Prayer: 'O Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu! Please enable me to absorb the elements of creation, fire and Sun present in the atmosphere. Let the Divine consciousness present in these elements be preserved constantly. Let the energy thus received, be used for my spiritual practice.'

### Reason for raising the Gudi during war

The Gudi is a symbol of victory. Amongst the various qualities of God, 'Being Victorious' is one and it symbolizes that God has achieved victory at the outset and at various levels. To symbolize this at every level of war, a Gudi is hoisted.

Festivities: On this festive day, yards are will be swept clean and plastered with fresh cowdung (of course this is practiced in India and not South Africa). Even in the city, people take the time out to do some spring cleaning. Women and children work on intricate rangoli designs on their doorsteps, the vibrant colours mirroring the burst of colour associated with spring. Everyone dresses up in new clothes and it is a time for family gatherings.

Traditionally, families are supposed to begin the festivities by eating the bittersweet leaves of the neem tree. Sometimes, a paste of neem leaves is prepared and mixed with dhaniya (coriander) leaves, gur (jaggery), and tamarind. All the members of the family consume this paste, which purifies the blood and strengthen the body's immune system against diseases.

Also some families prepare Puri or Puran Poli (is a traditional type of sweet flatbread) on this day, a variety of Kheer made of sweet potato, coconut milk, jaggery, rice flour, etc and Sanna (spongy steamed savoury rice cakes) are prepared and eaten.

## Celebration of Gudi Padwa

Ablution with oil (abhyangsan) an auspicious bath: On this day one should wake up early in the morning and take an oil bath. With an ordinary bath the raja (mode of passion) and tama (mode of ignorance) components decrease by 1/1,00,000 % and the sattva (mode of goodness) component increases by the same amount for a duration of only three hours. However with an oil bath it lasts for four to five hours. An oil bath consists of an oil massage to facilitate the absorption of oil by the skin followed by a warm water bath. Oil should be applied to retain the elasticity of the skin. Warm water is auspicious and pleasing to the body. Bathing after an oil massage retains only that amount of oiliness that the skin and hair require. Hence an oil massage is necessary before a bath. Application of oil after a bath is inappropriate to say the least.

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