

How to change your flag(s) (jhanda(s)) and simple “DIY” puja & havan without the assistance of a priest



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This is a rather elaborate and lengthy article. It is groundbreaking and encompasses much information about the jhanda. Stay blessed and share this information with those that you know. Jai Hind. Jai Shree Hanumanji. Jai Shree Raam.

We, at Dipika, humbly prostrate to procure the sacred blessings of our divine supreme Mother Sarasvati in compiling this article. The reason behind compiling this article is that many hindus have become confused about the proper procedures and rituals with regard to hoisting a red flag (jhanda) and its significance. We pray that this humble rendition will shed more light, as opposed to confusion, on this pertinent topic.

We, as Hindus, should be proud of our “Jhanda” and should not think it archaic and simple-minded. I know of persons who attempt to degrade us awesome Hindus by saying, “Oh, why do you have this flag?” etc., and most Hindus aren’t equipped with the requisite knowledge to counteract such statements. Thus, we, at DIPIKA, are providing you with knowledge to defend and justify our religion (albeit in a rather peaceful way). Let us awesome Hindus stand up and be noted, as Lord Krishna states in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita 2.3: “O Arjuna, do not yield to

this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of the heart and arise.”

Have you ever noticed which deity is the most worshipped amongst us Hindus? Many would say Mother Durga, Lord Krishna, Lord Shiva or Lord Ganesh but NO - the most worshipped Hindu deity is the universe's greatest superhero, our very own Shree Hanumanji and that's why, around this universe - wherever there are Hindus - to show their love and devotion to Shree Hanumanji - Hindus hoist a lal (red) jhanda (flag). Now, in India, many Hindus hoist their jhanda at a local temple – however, in South Africa, Mauritius, Singapore, etc., a flag is hoisted at one's residence. Unfortunately, over time, many different theories cropped up and thus Hindus are really in a quandary nowadays due to all this confusion, which may lead to Hindus being lead astray. This article is meant to clarify such doubts and bring about awareness with regard to the jhanda puja. The principal element in the jhanda prayers is the hoisting of a red flag in glorification of Sanatan Dharma and Shree Hanumanji, a perfectly surrendered devotee of Shree Raam. In hoisting the flag of Sanatan Dharma and of Shree Hanumanji, one indicates - to the public and the world - their willingness to follow in the footsteps of this great, magnificent, flawless, etc. devotee of the Lord and live by the rules and ethics of Sanatan Dharma. The flag is a visual representation of the deity (Shree Hanumanji) worshipped. In the same way that the flag of South Africa represents the country and everything that it encompasses, the flag raised during the pooja and placed in one's yard (i.e. the jhanda/flag) represents the various deities that are worshipped. Therefore, the red flag of Shree Hanumanji represents the Lord Himself and all His shakti (power) is present within it. The red color of the flag of Shree Hanumanji represents courage and fearlessness. In the same way that the flag of Shree Hanumanji was placed on the chariot of Arjuna during the great Mahabharata war - bringing him victory (pictured above, at the beginning of this article) - the flag in front of one's yard (if possible) will also bring the devotee success. Since the flag is a symbol of Shree Hanumanji, it also acts as a reminder and as a source of blessing to the devotee on a daily basis. I would humbly suggest that the flag should be kept in front of one's residence (if possible). This way, as you leave, and return, home, you are always reminded of our superhero's presence and his grace. Shree Hanumanji is accepted as the spiritual guide and mentor of many Hindus, and the devotee thereafter follows the direct principles of devotional service to Shree Raam. When one erects a jhanda, one is symbolising that one has conquered the elements around oneself and it also signifies VICTORY. Another reason is to signify one is a Hindu, and when one visits to a Hindu home, one is welcomed regardless of demographics and circumstances - since our beautiful and awesome Hindu culture and scriptures state “Athiti Devo Bhavah” which means that even if an enemy comes to one's home, one has to welcome them in. We, awesome and amazing Hindus, are very much pacifists and accommodating people.

Many years back, when our Indian ancestors came to the shores of South Africa, they always hoisted one red jhanda. However, now we find up to eleven jhandas. I would think it interesting to learn the source of such incorrect information. Having more flags at one's residence does not equate to gaining more of the Lord's favour. Most definitely not. This is fabrication. One jhanda is sufficient. Please understand that we, as Hindus, should be like the great devotee himself – where Shree Hanumanji performed pious acts with no expectation of reward - as Lord Krishna advises in the Bhagavad Gita.

Whenever humans first travel to uncharted territory, they generally erect a flag (jhanda) to indicate that they have been there first and have “conquered” such place/area. In the great epic Ramayana, during Treta Yuga, when Lakshmanji was struck by the powerful Naga Ashtra (the deadly Snake arrow) by Indrajit, Shree Hanumanji saved Shree Lakshmanji's life by procuring the Sanjivani plant (the life-giving plant) from Dunagiri (also known as Drongiri or Dronagiri)

Mountain (this is one of the highest peaks of the Garhwal Himalayas in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand). Shree Hanumanji also erected a flag on the mountain as an emissary/ambassador of Shree Raam and of Sanatan Dharma.

In the same way, when the so called “modern” human Edmund Hillary first reached the peak Sagarmaathaa/Chomolungma (or as the westerners call it, Mount Everest) he and Sherpa Tensing (his guide) erected a flag. When the Americans completed the Moon mission in 1969, Neil Armstrong erected a flag to signify that the Americans reached the Moon. When humans “first” went to the South Pole and North Pole, they erected a flag. Most countries has a flag to denote their country’s heritage. In my personal experience, attending school, the South African flag was hoisted every morning. When a person of note or president of a country dies the flag is flown at half-mast. So, as you can see, the concept of the flag is used by people in many different ways. Thus, it is clearly a concept that has existed for quite some time.

The following is a pastime between Shree Hanumanji and Bhima (of the Pandavas) from the Mahabharata - Vana Parva {Aranyaka/Aranya-parva} (The Book of the Forest) – 29-44: “Anxious to please his beloved Draupadi, Bhima went in quest of that plant. He went alone in the direction from which the fragrance seemed to be borne by the breeze, without wasting a thought on the wild beasts that crossed his path. He came to a garden of plantain trees at the foot of a mountain, and there he saw a huge monkey shining like blazing fire, which lay right across his path - blocking it. He tried to frighten the animal out of his way by shouting at it. It only half opened its eyes, lazily, and drawled: "I am indisposed and so I am lying here. Why did you wake me? You are a wise human being and I am merely an animal. It is proper that the rational man should show mercy to animals as inferior creatures. I am afraid you are ignorant of right and wrong. Who are you? It is not possible to go further along this mountain path, which is the path of the devas. Men cannot cross this limit. Eat what you like of the fruits of this place and if you are wise, go back in peace." Bhima, unused to being taken so lightly, grew angry and shouted: "Who are you, you monkey, that indulges in such tall talk? I'm a Kshatriya hero, a descendant of the Kuru race and a son of Kunti. Know that I'm the son of the Wind god. Now move away from the path or stop me at your peril."

Hearing these words, the monkey merely smiled and said: "I am, as you say, a monkey, but you will come to destruction if you try to force a way." Bhima said: "I do not want your advice and it is no concern of yours if I go to my destruction. Get up and move out of the way or I'll make you move out of the way." The monkey replied: "I have no strength to stand up, being but a very old monkey. If you have to go at any cost, jump over me." Bhima said: "Nothing could be easier but scriptures forbid it. Otherwise I should jump over you and the mountain in one bound, like Hanuman crossed the ocean." The monkey remarked as though in surprise: "O best of men, who is that Hanuman that crossed the ocean? If you know his katha, enlighten me." Bhima roared and said: "Have you not heard of Hanuman, my elder brother, who crossed the ocean, a hundred yojanas (1300 kilometres) in breadth, to seek and find Sita-devi, the wife of Lord Rama? I am equal to him in strength and heroism. Well, that is enough talk, now get up and make way and do not provoke me to do you some harm."

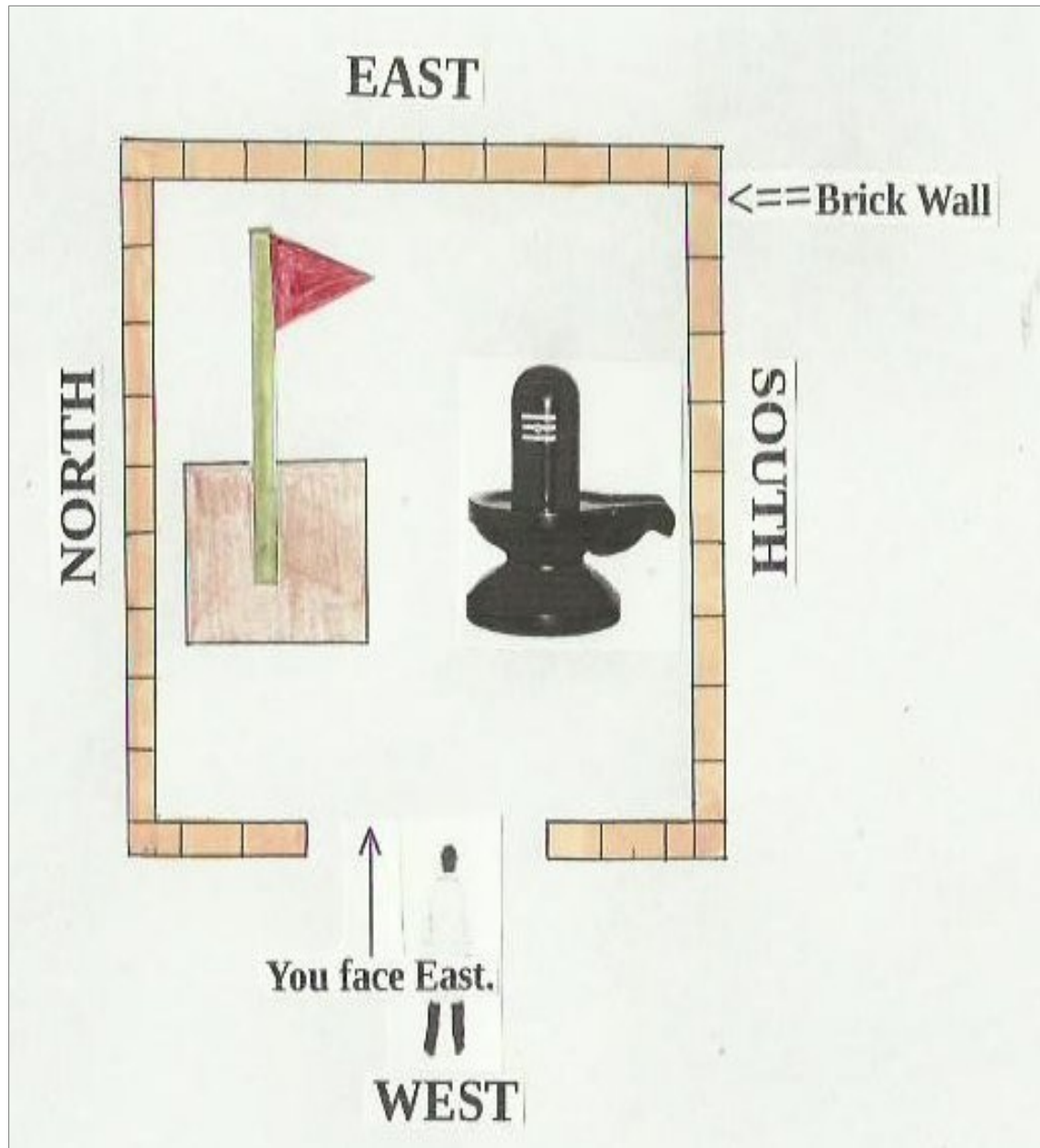
The monkey answered: "O mighty hero, be patient. Be gentle as you are strong, and have mercy on the old and weak. I have no strength to rise up, as I am old with age. Since you have scruples in jumping over me, kindly move aside my tail and make a path for yourself." Proud of his immense strength, Bhima thought to pull the monkey out of the way by it’s tail. But, to his amazement, he could not move it in the least, though he exerted all his strength. He gritted his teeth and strained every muscle till the very sinews cracked and he was covered with perspiration, but, still, could not move that tail at the least, a little bit up or down or sideways. In shame, he bent down his head, and then asked in a humbled mood: “Who are you? Forgive

me and reveal to me whether you are a Siddha, Deva or Gandharva." Bhima, like most strong men, was full of respect when he saw one stronger than himself, and spoke like a pupil addressing his master. The monkey replied: "O mighty-armed Pandava, know that I am your elder brother, Hanuman, the son of the Wind god, whom you mentioned a little while ago. If you go on this path, which is the road to the spirit-world where the Yakshas and the Rakshasas abide, you will meet with danger and that is why I tried stopping you. No man can go beyond this and live. But here is the stream with its depths where you can find the Saugandhika plant you came to seek." Bhima was overcome with delight: "I count myself the most fortunate of men in that I have been blessed to meet my elder brother. I kindly wish to see the form in which you crossed the ocean my brother," and he prostrated before Shree Hanumanji. Shree Hanumanji smiled and began to increase the size of his body and stood forth firmly to the world like a mountain seeming to fill the landscape.

Bhima was thrilled at actually seeing that divine form of his elder brother, the mere description of which had till then filled him with wonder. He covered his eyes, unable to bear the dazzling light radiating from that figure. Hanuman said: "Bhima, in the presence of my enemies, my body can grow still more." Then Hanuman contracted his body, assuming his former size. He tenderly embraced Bhimasena. Srila Vyasadeva said that Bhima felt completely refreshed and became much stronger than before by the embrace of Hanuman. Hanuman said: "O hero, go to your abode. Think of me whenever you are in need. I felt the same delight when I embraced you that I had in times of yore when I was fortunate enough to touch the divine body of Shree Raam. Ask any boon that you like." Bhima said: "Blessed are the Pandavas for I have had the good fortune to see you, my elder brother. Inspired by your strength, we are sure to conquer our enemies." Hanuman gave this parting blessing to his brother: **"While you roar like a lion in the battlefield, my voice shall join yours and strike terror into the hearts of your enemies. I shall be present on the flag of the chariot of your brother Arjuna. You will be victorious."** Hanuman pointed out to Bhima the stream nearby, where grew the Saugandhika flowers he had come to seek. This put Bhima at once in mind of Draupadi who was waiting for his return, and he collected the flowers and returned to her without delay.

The Srimad Bhagavad Gita (The Song of the Supreme Lord) is a part of the 6th Parva (book) of the Bhishma Parva (the Book of Bhishma), the Bhagavad Gita is chapters 25-42 (comprising 700 shlokas (verses)). In Bhagavad Gita Chapter 1 verse 20 it is stated that: **"At that time Shree Arjun, seated in the chariot bearing the flag marked with Hanuman, took up his bow and prepared to shoot his arrows."** The flag hoisted on Arjun's chariot, which was driven by Lord Krishna, carried the flag of Shree Hanumanji. The emblem of Shree Hanumanji on this flag indicated inevitable victory and auspiciousness. This was a display of imminent success.

Over time, many misconceptions have come about with regard to the "Flag". In addition to hoisting one red flag, now it seems that there is more than one red flag - a yellow flag, which is supposedly for Lord Shiva. One must understand that one must perform pujas according to our Hindu scriptures, and that there is no shastric proof of the yellow flag for Lord Shiva. It seems that the reasoning for incorrectly hoisting a yellow flag, or other flags, is due to flawed traditions, which are based on fear. The suggested means for replacing the yellow flag is - next to the red jhanda, one should have a Shiva Lingam that one should worship. A question that one may have is "what will happen if you stop hoisting the yellow flag for Lord Shiva?" (whose colour, by the way, is red and not yellow). Well, there should be no negative consequences if that is one's thought process, because one is supposed to be offering puja to the Shiva Lingam. The picture below is the proper configuration for your jhanda place.



----- The Jhanda Puja Proper -----

When hoisting your red jhanda for Shree Hanumanji it is auspicious to perform this puja in the waxing phase of the Moon (Shukla Paksha) and more so on a Saturday, as Saturday is also Shree Hanumanji's main day. The **2022** Shukla Paksha Saturdays are given below (excluding when Ekadashi falls on a Saturday).

January: 3rd - 17th

February: 2nd - 15th

March: 3rd - 18th

April: 2nd - 16th

May: 1st - 15th , 31st
June: 1st - 14th , 29th - 30th
July: 1st - 13th , 29th - 31st
August: 1st - 11th , 28th - 31st
September: 1st - 9th , 26th - 30th
October: 1st - 9th , 26th - 31st
November: 1st - 8th , 24th - 30th
December: 1st - 8th , 24th - 31st

Take note of the day on which one is performing the puja. Be certain **NOT** to perform your puja in these universal “inauspicious times” of Rahu Kalam and Yamagadam, which are:-

Sunday:- 12h00 – 13h30
Monday:- 07h30 – 09h00 and 10h30 – 12h00
Tuesday:- 09h00 – 10h30 and 13h30 – 15h00
Wednesday:- 07h30 – 10h30
Thursday:- 06h00 – 07h30 and 15h00 – 16h30
Friday:- 10h30 – 12h00 and 15h00 – 16h30
Saturday:- 06h00 – 07h30 and 16h30 – 18h00

* Make sure that the jhanda place is already cleaned and your jhanda pole is washed with hurdi (turmeric) water.

* There is no sastric proof of the Lord Shiva yellow jhanda so this part is left out (OPTIONAL).

A point of note: I personally advise using a steel pole as opposed to a bamboo pole. Keep in mind the fact that our Hindu ancestors were from India, and in India, many lived on farms where the bamboo plant was in abundance and free. The bamboo also represents growth and prosperity. However, the bamboo is an alien plant in South Africa and many restrictions are placed by the local authorities with regards to the bamboo poles. Furthermore, with regard to installing a new bamboo pole, one may wonder as to the use of the old pole. Some people dispose of the bamboo in their local river and thus pollute that river, further causing damage to the environment. I'm an extremely environmentally-friendly individual and very cautious so as not to cause further degradation to the environment. I humbly advise you to take this into consideration when installing a new jhanda pole.

Ideally, the flag should be placed in front of the home or building as well as at the Eastern side of the property, where feasible. However, this may not be possible. As long as the flag is not at/in the Southern direction, it should suffice. One should use one's discretion in such circumstances.

Wash the pole – with hurdi (turmeric) water – where the Jhanda is going to be hoisted. And the pole will dry in the mean time whilst the prayers is being performed. The Lingam is also washed with water and let to dry.

Another point of note: Many perform the hoisting of the red flag first, however this is incorrect. One must first perform Ganesh puja and then Navagraha puja before commencing with the hoisting of the red flag.

* **How to make Panchamrit for the puja below:** In a standard size cup (250 ml), add three-quarters cup milk, 2 teaspoons of yoghurt (or maas), 1 teaspoon of sugar, 1 teaspoon of honey, a

drop of ghee. Mix this well and this will be the complete Panchamrit. You can add some coconut water and sliced fruits like banana, apple, pear etc. . This is optional.

Make a kusha ring with a kusha grass. Prepare one kusha ring for every person participating in the prayer.



Prior to the puja proper, after having a bath, you should wear clean clothes. Then, at your prayer place, sprinkle water to purify the place. Then sprinkle Ata (all-purpose or general white flour) on a clean board/tile (or see what you can use – use your discretion). This is called a mandala/bedi (a place where the prayer is going to be performed). Place a Lord Ganesh Murti or picture on the bedi and next to the picture of Lord Ganesh, place a picture of Lord Vishnu (you can use the picture given below), and next to the picture of Lord Vishnu on the right side when you are facing the picture, place your Lakshmi Lamp.



We have provided a picture here, illustrating how the items should be set.

On a tray (#1) (for the size of the tray kindly use your discretion) kindly have these items on the tray for the puja that will be performed.

One standard size cup fill three-quarter with water with one teaspoon in the cup, one medium sized towel, 200 grams white (uncooked) rice, flower petals (the flowers should be as per season and availability. In South Africa, marigold is generally available in most parts of the year hence used), fifteen betel leaves, fifteen round betel (S.B.) nuts, fifteen flat (black coloured) betel nuts, fifteen coins (for example in SA denominations 5 cents), Panchamrit – kindly read on this in the previous page, chandan (mixed with water and a make a paste), seven incense sticks, one saucer with a clay lamp and wick with ghee in it, a small bowl of sweet rice (kheer/payasam) with a teaspoon, 100g sugar candy, a few laddus, a small bowl of sweet rice (kheer), one box matches, five Tulsi leaves and three Bael leaves.

Sit facing east or north by the Bedi.

Take a little water from a clean cup using a teaspoon. Each time, put a little water in your right hand palm and sip it, chanting “OM VISHNU”. Wash your hands and repeat this twice more. Now wash your hands one last time. Then take a little rice and flower petals and say in English “O Lord Shiva and Shree Hanumanji on this day (which ever day you are performing the puja), month (which ever month you are performing the puja), your name, I am performing my Lord Shiva and Shree Hanumanji Puja to praise, honour and worship You all. Please accept my prayer unto You all”. Now leave this down on the bedi.

Take a betel leaf, betel nut, coin, rice and flower petals and chant Shree Ganeshji's mantra “Om ganapataye aavaaha-yaamee stha-payamee” and keep on the bedi in front of the Lord Ganesh murti/picture. Pray to Lord Ganesh to remove all obstacles in the path of your prayers. Offer, on the betel leaf offered to Lord Ganesh on the bedi, four drops of water, Panchamrit, Chandan dot (on the betel leaf), sprinkle rice and then flower petals (on the betel leaf), turn incense and lamp seven times (clockwise, around the betel leaf), offer half a teaspoon of sweet rice on the betel leaf and then offer a betel leaf with a betel nut and place in front of the first betel leaf, then finally offer lamp seven times clockwise around the murti. Then offer Lord Ganesh his favourite food - kheer (sweet rice), sugar candy and laddus.

* Do note the lamp above (offered to Lord Ganesh) is a clay lamp on a saucer, which has a cotton wick and ghee in it. This is different to the Lakshmi Lamp.

Take another betel leaf, betel nut, coin, rice and flowers and pray to the nine planets. Leave on the bedi. Take a little rice and every time you chant namah, offer the rice on the betel nut.

Om sooryaaya namah

Om somaaya namah

Om angaarkaaya namah

Om budhaaya namah

Om brihaspataye namah

Om shukraaya namah

Om shanaish-charaaya namah

Om raahave namah

Om ketave namah

Offer, on the betel leaf offered to the nine planets on the bedi, four drops of water, Panchamrit, chandan dot (on the betel leaf), sprinkle rice and then flower petals (on the betel leaf), turn incense and lamp seven times (clockwise, around the betel leaf), offer half a teaspoon sweet rice on the betel leaf and then offer a betel leaf with a betel nut and place in front of the first betel leaf, and then finally offer lamp seven times clockwise around the nine planets betel leaf.

Now proceed to your jhanda place. Take with the tray that you just used for the prayers. On another tray (#2) the following there should be one red flag, two thin red pieces of cloth (separate from the flags) for tying the flag, two flower garlands – approximately 30 centimeters in length (to fit the jhanda pole and the Shiva Lingam) and a relatively wide cloth (kangan) on which you should have a betel leaf, betel nut, coin, rice and flower petals. Knot the kangan cloth with it's contents, which will be tied later on the jhanda pole. On a saucer, have a little chandan mixed with water, a little sindhur mixed with water (approximately a quarter teaspoon of each, to be used to make a paste for anointment), on another saucer have plain (un-cooked) white rice and flower petals, three Tulsi leaves and one Bael leaf (the Bael leaf is optional). Additionally, prepare two lota's/chumbhu's – one filled with milk and another with water for Hanumanji and Lord Shiva each, a pinch of kungum powder on a saucer made into a paste, one box of matches and two clay lamps (which should have ghee and a wick in each), one large banana leaf and finally two trays (#3, #4) (thari's/thamil thate) of prashad/prasadham (which should consist of five or seven Rhot, Panjeri (recipes are given below), three types of fruits (cut), Halwa/Suji,

three types of sweets (mittai/sweetmeats), one betel leaf, one flat (brown) betel nut, one elachie (cardamom) and one clove. Only on Shree Hanumanji's tray you place one Tulsi leaf and **NOT** on Lord Shiva's tray. In Shree Hanumanji's lota of water and lota of milk put one Tulsi leaf each. I recommend using small round silver mini-tart/pie containers for the Panjeri and Halava/Suji. It makes the prayer preparations look rather professional and presentable.

Now, two of the family members (as per one's circumstances) hold the pole. One member of the family sprinkles the rice and flower petals on the pole from top to bottom and then anoints (mark/place some sindoor paste) the pole with sindoor. Then tie the flag (jhanda) at the top of the pole and tie the garland on the top of the pole on the jhanda cloth. Then tie the kangan cloth half way on the pole. Once this is completed, all present should hold the pole and place the pole in the hole that has already been dug up. All chant **SHREE HANUMANJI KI JAI three times**, and place the jhanda in the hole that has been prepared, then cover the hole which now has the jhanda in it.

* If you wish to hoist a yellow flag, then follow the paragraph above. The same procedure is followed, except for the sindoor paste. Thereafter, the yellow flag is hoisted first followed by the red flag.

In front of the pole, place a banana leaf. Next to the jhanda pole for Hanumanji, place the Shiva Lingam. Place the two lamps - one in front of Hanumanji's pole and the other in front of the Lingam. Firstly, light Lord Shiva's lamp and then offer the tray of prashad (**KINDLY VIEW THE PICTURE ON THE NEXT PAGE**) to the Shiva Lingam chanting the Maha Mritunjaya mantra while turning the tray three or seven times around the Lingam in a clockwise direction. Then offer the lota of milk on the Lingam and then the lota of water. After the water has been offered, with the chandan paste on the saucer mark the Lingam with three lines and on the middle line dot with kungum, place the Bael leaf on top of the Lingam and finally place a yellow or red cloth around the Lingam and then garland the Lingam.

Next is Shree Hanumanji's puja. Light Shree Hanumanji's lamp and then offer the tray of prashad (**KINDLY VIEW THE PICTURE ON THE NEXT PAGE**) to the pole chanting the "Om Hum Hanumate namah" mantra while turning the tray three or seven times around the pole in a clockwise direction. Then, offer the lota of milk (which has a Tulsi leaf in the milk in the lota) on the pole and then the lota of water (which has a Tulsi leaf in the water in the lota as well). All present should now bow down to Lord Shiva's Lingam praying for his blessings and then repeat this to the jhanda pole of Shree Hanumanji.

* However, one may ask - "what about camphor and cloves?" This is compulsory for Devi puja but **NOT** for Deva prayers. Only Dee Baba is an exception to this rule.



(On the tray above is (top) 3 or 5 Rhot, (left side) a foil tray of Soorjee, Halwa, on the right side a foil tray of Sweet rice (kheer), panjeri, in the middle of the tray is 3 kinds of fruits and a foil of coconut and dates and in the front of the tray is 3 kinds of Mittai (sweets).
(Kindly note that is just an example and you may adjust accordingly.)

Now proceed back to your bedi inside the house.

Once everyone has been seated, commence with Lord Shiva's puja. Take a betel leaf, betel nut, coin, rice and flowers and pray to Lord Shiva "Om shivaye aavaahayaamee sthapayamee" and keep on the bedi. Offer, on the betel leaf offered to Lord Shiva on the bedi, four drops of water, Panchamrit, chandan dot (on the betel leaf), sprinkle rice and then flower petals (on the betel leaf), turn incense and lamp seven times (clockwise, around the betel leaf), offer half a teaspoon of sweet rice on the betel leaf and then offer betel leaf with a betel nut and place in front of the first betel leaf then finally offer lamp 7 times clockwise around the Betel leaf. After this is done, you can chant the Shiva Chalisa (optional) (which is available on www.Dipika.org.za - our website).

Now commence with Shree Hanumanji's puja. Take another betel leaf, betel nut, coin, rice and flowers and pray to Shree Hanumanji "Om hanumate aavaahayaamee sthapayamee" and keep on the bedi. Thereafter, on the betel leaf offered to Shree Hanumanji on the bedi four drops of water, Panchamrit, chandan dot (on the betel leaf), sprinkle rice and then flower petals (on the betel leaf), offer one Tulsi leaf, then turn incense and lamp seven times (clockwise, around the

betel leaf), offer half a teaspoon sweet rice on the betel leaf and then offer betel leaf with a betel nut and place in front of the first betel leaf then finally offer lamp seven times clockwise around the Betel leaf. When this is done, chant the Hanuman Chalisa now (which is available on www.Dipika.org.za - our website).

THE HAVAN PROPER

Requirements for the Havan: A havan kund should be placed on a rectangular metal tray. Place four equal length Kusha (Kush grass/Darbha grass) on the outside of the four sides of the kund, add about 3 handfuls of clean sand in the havan kund (this is done so that the ghee is less likely to leak from the Kund), and place the wood neatly in the kund. On top of the wood sprinkle some red sindhur powder.

In a small bowl add 100g or about six teaspoons of ghee with a tablespoon, 3 small pieces of sandalwood sticks. Keep next to the kund.

One small bowl of sweet rice (kheer) and 1 large betel leaf.

On a medium size tray (#5) (thari/thamil thate), keep 3 incense sticks, 3 flowers, 1 clay lamp and 1 saucer, and 1 box of matches.

Camphor for the fire is kept on another small tray.

A deep bowl for the samaghree.

The samaghree ingredients consist of: 200g white rice, 100g jaw/jau (barley seeds), 100g til (sesame seeds), 100g navdhan (nine types of grains in a small packet), one small packet lobhan/Samarani, 100g jaggery (aka goor/gur/vellum), 100g gugal (googal/gukkulu). Optional items you can also use include elachie, cloves, cinnamon sticks, dried rose petals, etc. Mix the above ingredients in your deep bowl. This is your havan samaghree. I would advise to refrain from adding the ready-made (store-bought) havan samaghree as, recently, it seems that such samaghree is of poor quality and not appropriate for prayers.

Now place a camphor tablet on a tablespoon, then light and kindle the camphor tablet and place in the havan kund while you chant "Om Bhoor Bhuvah Swaahaa", repeat twice more i.e. (placing) two more camphor tablets and chanting the mantra twice more.

When the fire is nicely lit, put your two palms together and pray to Agni-deva, inviting Agni-deva to enter into the kund and kindly accept the grains that you will be offering shortly, chanting, "Om Agni-devata aa-vaa-hayaa-mee sthaapa-yamee, Om Agni-deva namah".

Now offer the three sticks of incense (turn the incense sticks around the fire seven times in a clockwise direction, and place in the fire, next offer the clay lamp on a saucer (which has a small piece of camphor in it, light it) and turn the lamp around the fire seven times in a clockwise direction, offer a betel leaf, with a spoon of sweet rice on it, into the fire, offer some flower petals into the fire and then finally offer the clay lamp (seven times around the fire) to end.

Next, sprinkle water around the havan kund three times in a clockwise direction.

Take three small pieces of sandalwood sticks, dip the three sticks in the ghee, and then offer one stick into the fire while chanting "Om Bhoor swaahaa", the second stick with the mantra "Om bhuvah swaahaa" and the third and final stick with the mantra "Om svah swaahaa".

Place the bowl with the havan samaghree in it in front of you. Do remember that every time you chant swaahaa offer samaghree and/or ghee. Now you can commence with the main part of the havan - chant each of these mantras (the number of times indicated below) while offering samaghree/ghee each time.

Om ganapataye swaahaa (once)

Om agnaye swaahaa (once)

Om somaya swaahaa (once)

Om praja-pata-ye swaahaa (once)

Om indraya swaahaa (once)

Om bhuh swaahaa (once)

Om bhoovah swaahaa (once)

Om svah swaahaa (once)

Om bhoor bhuvah svah swaahaa (once)

Om sooryaaya swaahaa (once)

Om somaaya swaahaa (once)

Om angaarkaaya swaahaa (once)

Om budhaaya swaahaa (once)

Om brihaspataye swaahaa (once)

Om shukraaya swaahaa (once)

Om shanaish-charaaya swaahaa (once)

Om raahave swaahaa (once)

Om ketave swaahaa (once)

Om aim hreem kleem chaamun daayai vich chai swaahaa (nine times)

Om trayam bakkam yajaa-mahe sugan-dhim pushti-varadhanam urvaa-rooka-miva bandha-
naam mrityor mooksheeya maamritaat Om swaahaa (eleven times)

Om Shivaye swaahaa (once)

Om Maheshwaraye swaahaa (once)

Om Sarvaye swaahaa (once)

Om Ugraye swaahaa (once)

Om Kapaline-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Bhimaye swaahaa (once)

Om Sadas-hivaye swaahaa (once)

Om Virabha-drave swaahaa (once)

Om Mritun-jayaye swaahaa (once)

Om Rudraye swaahaa (once)

Om Bhutapataye swaahaa (once)

Om Mahadevaye swaahaa (once)

Om Hanumanye swaahaa (once)

Om Anjanisunuh-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Vaayuputra-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Mahabalaha-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Rameshtaha-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Phalguna Sakhaha-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Pingaaksha-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Amita-vikra-maha-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Udh-dhi-krama-nas-chaiva-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Seeta-soka-vina-sa-kaha-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Lakshmana prana data-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Dasagrivasya darpaha-ye swaahaa (once)

Om Shreem Mahaa-lakshmi-yai swaahaa (once)

Om Vishnave swaahaa (once)

Sprinkle water around the havan kund three times.

Offer samaghree seven, nine, eleven or twenty-one times while chanting the Maha Mantra “Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare” to atone for any mistakes committed during the havan.

Finally place two puris on top of each other, place the remaining samaghree on top of these puris, on top of this place a betel leaf, a betel nut, a few drops of ghee, one whole banana and place whole into the fire while chanting

“Om sarvam vai poornam swaahaa”

Place this in the middle of the fire. Offer the rest of the ghee into the fire.

Shanti Paath Mantras: Put your two palms together in the Namaste position, and chant...

Om Dyauh Shanti
Ranta-riksha Gwam Shanti
Prithvi Shanti Rapah Shanti
Rosha-dhayah Shanti
Vanas Patayah Shanti
Vishva Devah Shanti
Brahma Shanti Sarva Gwam Shanti
Shanti Reva Shanti Sama Shanti Redhi
Om Shanti-Shanti-Shanti Om

Now take the four kusha grass around the kund and your kusha grass ring and mix with the remainder of the ghee in the ghee bowl and offer into the fire.

Once this is complete, kindly request Lord Shiva, Shree Hanumanji and Lord Vishnu and the rest of the Devis and Devas to forgive you for any shortcomings and mistakes committed while you performed the puja and havan and then request them to kindly return to their divine abodes, and chant the Maha Mantra (above) three times to end. Bow down to the bedi and havan kund.

A point of note: The puja items used in the puja above (for example, the excess flower petals, etc.), place those into the havan kund and make sure all the contents in the havan kund is fully burnt after the prayer. I would advise you to, instead of disposing of the remnants into a local river, bury the burnt samaghree in the four corners of your yard (where one is able to dig up their property) thus binding/protecting your yard from malevolent forces. This is DIPIKA'S stance on taking care of Mother Earth. Jai Hind.

Next, in this article, is a guide on how to prepare rhot and panjeri. However, before you read that, there is something that I highly recommend that you do. When you are preparing the items, make sure you have had a bath beforehand and are wearing clean clothes. Try to abstain even from water – over and above solid food (according to one's capacity). When making the preparations, be sure to refrain from speaking and suggest this to others present as well. Attempt to chant, in your mind, mantras for Shree Hanumanji. Play mantras on your CD player or cell phone. The reasoning behind such a suggestion is that, when making the preparations, it is imperative that your mind is entirely focused on what you are preparing as everything in this universe operates on vibrations. If your body, mind and soul is directed towards making these preparations to Shree Hanumanji then Shree Hanumanji becomes elated as the vibrations in the offerings are pure and fit for our superhero to consume. Additionally, a reason for refraining from speaking is that, when one speaks, saliva, albeit a small amount of it, may contaminate

the preparations thus rendering the offerings to Shree Hanumanji as soiled and thus unacceptable.

How to prepare Rhot, Panjeri and Mittai (sweet) Puri

Rhot

Five cups of all-purpose white flour
Two cups of white sugar
One cup of butter ghee
One cup of milk
One-quarter of a teaspoon of crushed cardamom (elachie)

Method: Do remember this little secret - the ingredients should always be in a ratio of 5:2:1 meaning five cups flour to two cups of sugar to one cup of butter ghee. This is something my awesome mother taught me.

Mix the flour and elachie together, and add ghee until crumbs form. Add the sugar and mix well. Add the milk to the flour mixture to form a smooth dough. Knead well until the dough appears rich and shiny and has an oily texture. Divide the dough into little portions and make rounds shapes to desired thickness and size. Deep fry in medium to hot ghee until flaky and lightly crisp, but evenly coloured to a pale golden colour. Drain well and allow to cool.

When one visits India, one is unlikely to find a preparation called Rhot. So how did this food item come to be one of Shree Hanumanji's favourite preparations? Well, this begs the question "What is Shree Hanuman-ji's favourite food?". Well, since Shree Hanumanji is a Vanara (an advanced race similar to that of monkeys and primates), his favourite foods will be similar to that of a monkey. Most monkey species are primarily herbivorous. The diet of monkeys varies - including fruits, leaves, flowers, plants, seeds, nuts, grains, bamboo, and corn. Corn is considered a treat to a monkey. Several species of figs are among the favourite types of fruit eaten by primates. One preparation that is also offered is called Anaaj or grounded grains. This is what rhot is made from. When our Indian ancestors came from India to South Africa they were mainly farm workers - hence they were very simple, yet devout people. From Anaaj (grounded grains), they made a preparation called Rhot - which is made of grains, ghee, sugar, milk etc., and made circular like the sun (because Shree Hanumanji attempted to swallow the Sun). Rhot, when prepared properly, looks like a shortcake (or biscuit as it is called in South Africa). So Rhot is a purely proudly South African product to Shree Hanumanji since Rhot is made nowhere else in the world :) Jai Ho.

Panjeri Recipe

One non-stick cooking pan and a wooden stirring spoon are needed for this preparation.

Cook Time: 15 minutes, **Total Time:** 15 minutes, **Yield:** About 20 servings

Ingredients: 1 cup ghee or 0,225 kilograms of unsalted butter, 1 cup cake flour (atta), 1 cup sugar, one quarter of a teaspoon of black pepper corn, two pinches of elachie powder.

Preparation: Measure all ingredients. Bring the pan to a reasonable heat, add about half a cup of ghee or butter and once the ghee/butter is melted, add one cup of cake flour. You have to continuously stir at the bottom of the pan so that the flour doesn't burn. When the ghee is almost absorbed into the flour you add more ghee as per one's discretion. After about fifteen or so minutes the flour should be brownish in colour and will smell a tad burnt. This should indicate that the preparation is almost complete. Next, empty the ingredients onto a flat metal tray to cool down. After a little while, it will be slightly warm to the touch. Then add the elachie

powder, crushed pepper corn and sugar. Mix well and thereafter, it will be ready to be offered to Shree Hanumanji. I advise using those small round silver mini-tart/pie containers for the Panjeri to be offered to Hanumanji as it will look presentable and professional.

Sweet Puri Recipe

In South Africa Hindu's favourite offerings to our Superhero are Rhot and Panjeri. In our motherland India however, Hindu's offer Mittai Puri a.k.a Sweet Puri. Below is the recipe and directions on how to prepare this very simple Bhoga (un-offered food). I would suggestedly advise you to add this Mittai Puri to the Rhot and Panjeri and other preps one makes for the offering to Shree Hanumanji in the Jhanda Puja offerings.

The sweet puri can be prepared in two ways. One way is dusting jaggery / gur (raw sugar) on the puri (as stated in number 11) and the other one is dipping the puri in sugar syrup. If you prefer it less sweet then you may want to sprinkle the jaggery instead of dipping it in the syrup. The one with sugar sprinkle stays longer than the other one.

Ingredients

- 450g wholemeal chapati or plain flour
- 250ml cold water
- butter ghee for spreading
- jaggery / gur (raw sugar) for sprinkling

Method

1. Set aside 200g of the flour and reserve for shaping the puri's.
2. Place the remaining flour in a deep bowl. Fill another bowl with the cold water.
3. Add the water to the bowl of flour, a little at a time, kneading as you go, until you have a soft, elastic dough. The longer you knead the dough the softer the puri's will be.
4. Sprinkle a little of the reserved flour onto a flat surface or board.
5. Divide the dough into eight and shape each piece into a ball.
6. Flatten the balls slightly, then place one onto the floured board.
7. Roll it out into a flat disc approximately 15cm (6 inches) in diameter, flouring the board when necessary.
8. Heat a griddle or a shallow frying pan. Lay the chapatti on the griddle or pan and cook for about 20-30 seconds or until the surface is bubbling.
9. Turn it over with tongs and cook the other side for 10-15 seconds. As soon as brown spots appear on the underside, the puri is done.
10. Repeat with the other seven balls, using the remaining flour to roll them out. Stack them up as they are cooked, placing a sheet of kitchen towel between each one to absorb any moisture.
11. Spread butter ghee and sprinkle Gur (Jaggery) on the Puri.
12. Place a Tulsi leaf on top of the Puri.

Preparing the Sugar Syrup:

Put 1 cup of sugar in a thick bottom vessel.

Pour water to the sugar. Mix well and heat in a burner till it becomes 1 string consistency. Then when the puri is ready to be dipped after number 10. then Dip the puri while it is warm in the sugar syrup. Leave it inside the syrup for 1/2 minute. Then remove and place on a paper towel to remove the excess syrup.

*** Kindly refrain from talking when preparing the above. The goodies from your mouth will just soil the preps and thus rendering it not proper for our Superhero to consume. Also I suggest playing bhajans or mantras of our dearest Lord while the food is being prepared to create an ambiance of positivity.



Other offerings to Shree Hanumanji

Red and yellow fruits (banana, mango and red apple) are among his favourite

Nuts, roots and bulbs

Rice / wheat offering

Chick peas (chana)

Urad dhal vadha, with (chill, ginger)

Payasam

Milk

-----Questions and Answers-----

QUESTION: What about person/s residing in an apartment/flat/or (RESIDING IN A NON HINDU COUNTRY), renting or residing in a place where they cannot dig the earth/ground and hoist a jhanda or bury the ashes, etc. .

ANSWER: This will be a common question in this day in age due to urbanization. The prayers may be performed at a local temple. If it is in any way possible to perform the prayers in your apartment then by all means do so. Some apartments have a balcony and if that is so the purchase an approximately half a metre to a metre in height. The plant pot is filled with sand and the jhanda pole is hoisted in this pot in the balcony. If you do not have a balcony then I humbly suggest performing the prayers at your local temple. Many temples does cater for these circumstances. If not then a pot plant with sand in it, a one metre stick is erected with a small red flag and placed next to your lamp/puja place.

QUESTION: Can one perform a Katha and Jhanda Puja and Homam (havan) on Ekadashi*?

ANSWER: NO-NO-NO!!! This is forbidden as Lord Shiva and Shree Hanumanji observe Ekadashi (the day the occurs twice a month on which one abstains from grains). Remember that the rhot and panjeri is made of wheat (or similar) grain flour which is a grain. If you perform your jhanda puja on Ekadashi, Lord Shiva and Shree Hanumanji may not attend your puja and certainly won't accept your grain preparations.

*For more information on the Ekadashi fasting day, control+click ([HERE](#)) to find out.

QUESTION: Can a female perform the jhanda puja and can she hoist the jhanda as well?

ANSWER: Yes, of course. Shree Hanumanji is a pure devotee of the Lord and is above identifying with the self. He does not distinguish between male and female. He sees everyone with equal vision. Yes, on a material platform, males and females are different and at the same time neither is higher than the other. Can a male conceive a child? Of course not! That is going against the laws of nature. So how can males and females be equal? Males and females have special roles to play in society **BUT** on a spiritual front the soul is neither male nor female – it

is genderless. This means that the soul is neither male nor female and this is what Shree Hanumanji sees. He sees a spirit soul. He is the **TRUE** and **ONLY** pundit in this world, as Lord Krsna says in the Bhagavad Gita chapter 5 verse 18: - "The humble sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcast]". This is a true Pundit and this is our awesome Shree Hanumanji himself. In my experience as a priest, I have been asked many a time as to the reasoning for such discrimination against females with regard to Shree Hanumanji pujas. This unfounded and unjustified behaviour is quite irksome – keep in mind that, often, females, as well as, males prepare the food for the prayer and otherwise assist in the prayer. A female has as much right as a male to perform pujas to Shree Hanumanji. Such statements may be seen as controversial, however, us Hindus should be more realistic and open-minded. Hinduism is above fanaticism. We are a practical and beautiful culture and that's why we have survived for thousands of years.

QUESTION: Are females allowed to hold the jhanda pole and can a female perform the puja with her husband?

ANSWER: Yes, absolutely. Remember that prayer should be performed as a family. "A family that prays together stays together". We should not be encouraging segregation - rather congregation. The previous question and answer, relates to this question as well.

Question: Can a female, during her menstrual cycle, pray to Shree Hanumanji (by the jhanda and prayer place) and chant the Hanuman Chalisa?

Answer: Shree Hanumanji is a pure devotee of the Lord and is above identifying with the self. He does not distinguish between male and female. He sees everyone with equal vision. In my experience as a priest, I have been asked many a time as to the reasoning for such discrimination against females with regard to the menstrual cycle. Remember that Shree Hanumanji is a Mata (Mother) devotee as he worships the lotus feet of Mother Sita, and that a female has as much right as a male to perform pujas to Shree Hanumanji - "clean" or not (i.e. whether in the menstrual cycle or not). Another point to mention is that many females feel embarrassed to let anybody know about being in a menstrual cycle. However, why should they? It's a gift from God. It's a cleansing time. This may raise a question, such as "can a female chant Hanuman Chalisa when she is experiencing a menstrual cycle?" - most definitely, yes, and the answer is in the Hanuman Chalisa itself. "Bhoota pishaacha nikata nahin aavai / mahaaveera jaba naama sunaavai." meaning that when Hanumanji's (Mahaveer's) name is chanted all ghosts and the like run and disperse from that place. Wherever a female in her monthly cycle goes she leaves a "trail", that is above the human sense of smell but is very pleasing to these Bhuta's (ghosts), pisacha (a certain type of ghost that trouble young children). As the female walks, they follow her and "smell" and "eat" this odour. Yes, they "consume" the trail of odour. (That's why one is advised to burn lobhan or incense at night - because if there are any negative forces lurking around, the smell from the lobhan or agarbatti neutralizes their intentions). This is also why the Hanuman Chalisa should be chanted, especially during the menstrual cycle. Such statements may be seen as controversial, however, us Hindus should be more realistic and open-minded. Hinduism is above fanaticism. We are a practical culture and that's why we have survived for thousands of years.

QUESTION: When one moves into a new house, what does one do with the old jhanda pole?

ANSWER: If the pole is a metal pole, then one can take it with to the new residence. Place a piece of camphor in front of the Jhanda and pray to Shree Hanumanji, requesting the Lord to accompany you to your new home and remain the guardian of your new place. Remove the pole and take one teaspoon of the sand at your jhanda place and place in a small container or plastic bag. This sand is deposited in your new jhanda place at your new premises. If you had a bamboo

pole I would suggest burning the old pole and disposing of the ashes in one's yard (where possible).

QUESTION: What one does with an old bamboo pole and flag?

ANSWER: I highly suggest burning the pole and flag and then burying it in a clean corner of your yard (i.e. where nobody is likely to walk upon the place where the ashes are buried). You can dispose of the items into a river but only as a last resort.

QUESTION: What you do with an old Hanumanji murti or old Shiva Lingam that has been damaged/chipped?

ANSWER: This I suggest disposing of in a river (not a beach as it will be washed up to the shore again). You can bury the murti in a clean part of your yard that nobody is likely to walk on, etc., but this is generally not feasible, hence my suggestion to dispose off the murti in a deep river.

DISCLAIMER: 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 organizations 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 Shree Hanumanji, Jai Shree Mahadeva-ji.

Shree Mahadeva Bhagavan Kee Jai

Shree Hanuman Bhagavan Kee Ji

Shree Lakshmi-Satyanarayan Bhagavan Kee Jai.

Compiled (for the upliftment of Sanatan Dharma- the Eternal Religion)

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