

Why is "Red Water" turned around a person that returns from the hospital after an extended illness or an operation?

This ritual is based more in tradition rather than shastric principles, but South Africans generally tend to be drawn to traditions.

The logic behind the "turning of the red water" is to ward off negative spirits that may have followed someone home from the hospital. At the hospital, people are dying on a daily basis and many lost souls are constantly lingering around. Hospitals generally aren't cleansed from these negative energies, and this can then affect weaker individuals either physically, mentally or spiritually.

To ward off these negative energies, the following can be done upon returning from a prolonged hospital stay:

- take a cup/lota and mix 90% water, ¼ tsp hurdi powder, 1/8 tsp kungoo or red sindhoor powder. Then place a betel leaf on top of the water, add one tablet of camphor and two cloves on top of the betel leaf. (please view the photo on the next page of this set up)

*** Some families use limestone paste (chuna) instead of sindhoor or kungoo while others use Sindhur as that represents Singhaara (beautification, decoration make-up, adornment, embellishment). As I mentioned above that this is more tradition than scriptures.

- The loved one should stand or sit on a chair one metre away from the entrance of the door to the home. Another family member then lights the camphor and turns it in a clockwise direction 7 or 9 times.
- Then take the lota water and drop the contents in a clean place in the yard. From the few drops of remaining water from the lota, dot the affected person on the third eye (between the eyebrows).
- Thereafter, the loved one enters the house with her/his right foot being placed in first.

The significance of the items used in the above offering is as follows:

- Water represents Ganga devi.
- The brass, silver or copper metal lota (receptacle) or wooden cup brings forth auspicious earthly (Mother Earth) vibrations.
- Hurdi or kungoo or red sindhoor powders are synonymous with Devi as a married female.
- The betel leaf, camphor and cloves (kindly view at the end of this article on these three puja items) are all mentioned in the Devi Bhagavatam, and are mainly used in Devi worship as they are considered pleasing to Devi. Burning of the camphor and cloves removes the negative energies from the person and surroundings.

Note: DHAAR is NEVER offered, only Red water.

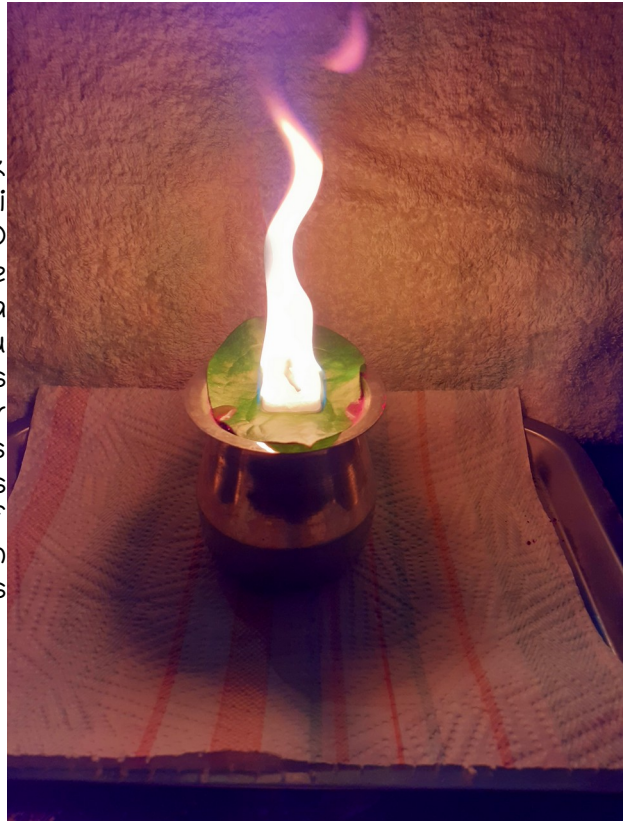
In addition, I also humbly suggest that the following be done if one chooses:

- Turning of salt with mustard seeds and chillies a day or so after the return.
- Burning of lobhaan at night and smoking the house.
- After a week or so, doing a simple Halwa Puri prayer at one's Devi Thaan. No priest is required.

This Red Water prayer is essentially a gratitude prayer to the Divine Mothers.



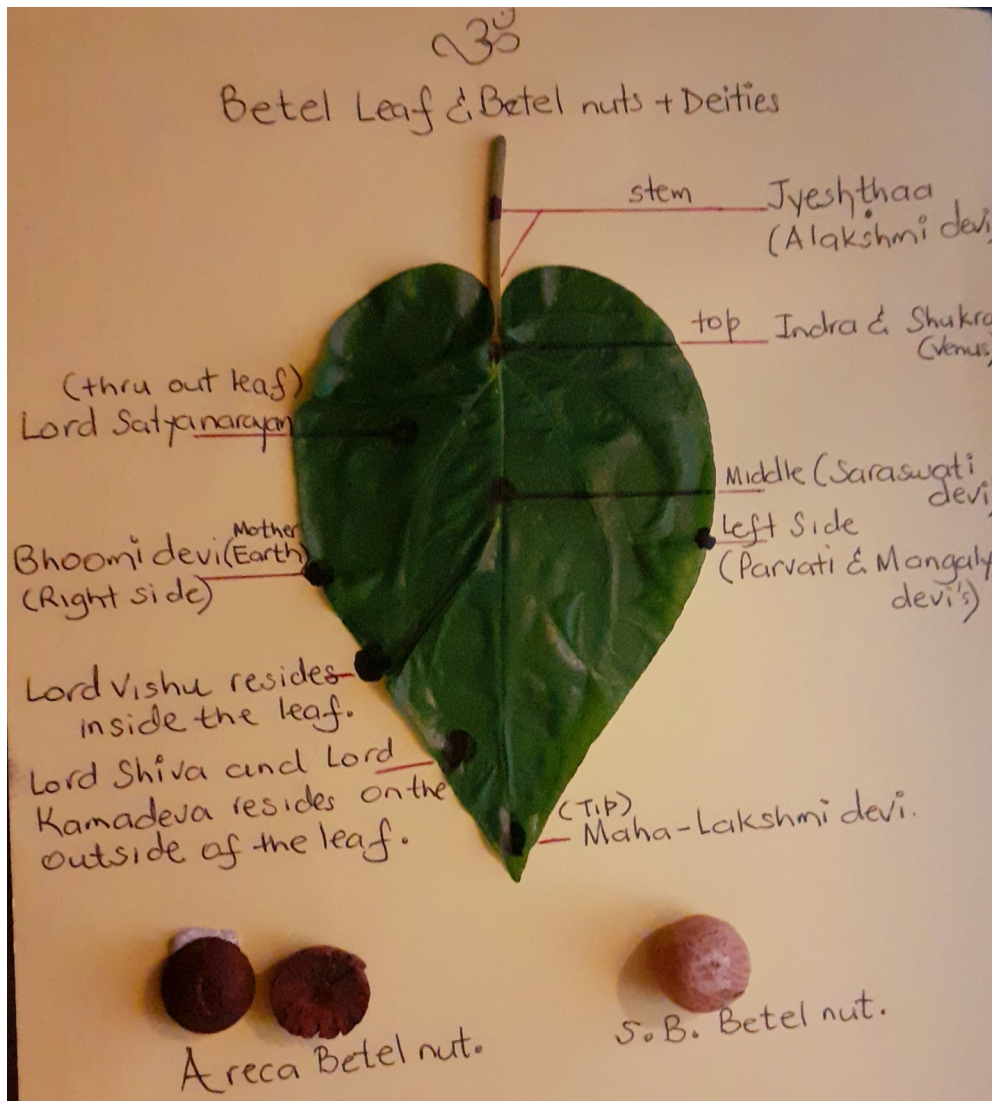
Srimad Devi Bhagavatam, The 11th Book chapter 18 called "The greatness of Devi Puja". Verse 33. Narada Muni spoke: O Bhagavan! I'm now very eager to hear the special puja of Shree Devi." Lord Narayana said: O Devarsi! I shall now speak to you how Mother Bhagavati (Durga) is worshipped. The devotee should offer heaps of food consisting of the 6 Rasas mountain-like high. Lord Narayana states that one should offer Devi "Betels (leaf and nut) with camphor, cardamom (elachie), cloves, and various delicious scents".



According to the Skanda Purana, the betel leaf was obtained by the Celestials during the churning of the ocean for the nectar of immortality, the amrita, from the depths of the cosmic ocean. The main reason that it is used in pujas, however, is that various deities reside in the betel leaf.

Thus:

- Lord Indra (the king of the heavens) and Shukra deva (The planet Deity Venus) are present in the top portion of the betel leaf.
- Mother Saraswati devi resides in the middle part of the betel leaf.
- Mother Mahalakshmi devi resides in the lower tip of the betel leaf.
- Mother Jyeshthaa-Lakshmi (Alakshmi Devi - the elder sister of Lakshmi devi) resides in the part that connects the betel leaf to the stem.
- Lord Vishnu resides inside of the betel leaf.
- Lord Shiva and Lord Kama-deva (the Deity of love) reside on the (epidermis) outside of the betel leaf.
- Mother Parvati and Mother Mangalya Devi live on the left side of the betel leaf.
- Mother Earth (Bhoomi-devi) lives on the right side of the betel leaf.
- Lord Surya-Narayana is there throughout the betel leaf.



Kindly note that if you don't have a betel leaf, then these leaves namely perilla leaves, shiso leaves, grape leaves, spinach or other large leafy greens are used BUT the results are not the same as using the sacred Betel leaf as the Deities mentioned above are not on these leaves.

My take on this is that if you know you are performing prayers then outsource the betel leaves. I find it unacceptable that Hindus look for prayers items last minute and then conveniently say I don't have this and that item and can I substitute this or that item.

The betel leaf is perfectly Heart shaped. Anything we offer the divine mother should be with love and devotion. Need I say more?

The betel leaves for your prayers should not be torn, weathered, diseased or have holes in it.

Question: Is having a betel leaf tree allowed to be grown in ones yard?

Answer: YES, most certainly. From the information provided above it is most auspicious to grow Betel leaf in ones yard as there are so many deities that presides in the betel leaf. Do plant a natural snake repellent plant like the SNAKE PLANT around the betel leaf tree to keep snakes away.



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