

The Importance of Dee (Deeha) Baba Worship in Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma)

We, at Dipika, humbly prostrate to procure the sacred blessings of our divine supreme Mother Saraswati 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 Dee (Deeha) Baba worship and his significance in Sanatan Dharma. We pray that this humble rendition will shed more light, as opposed to confusion, on this intriguing topic. We, at Dipika, shall carefully analyze different backgrounds with regard to Deeha Baba and we hope that this article will enlighten the public as opposed to causing further confusion. Jai Sairee devi-Deeha Baba. Jai Kshetrapaal Devi-Deva.

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Is Dee (Deeha) Baba and Madurai Veeran the same deity?



Madurai Veeran with his two wives Bommi and Vellaiyammal

NO, Madurai Veeran, also known as Veeran of Madurai (a city in south India), is a Tamil folk deity popular in southern Tamil Nadu, India. His name means, "warrior of Madurai". His weapon is a sword (Araval) and his mount is a white horse. He has two consorts named Bommi and Vellaiyammal. According to the Maduraiveeraswamikathai, Veeran was born to royal parents and was abandoned, and later adopted by a couple from the Arunthathiyar

community. He grew up among them and became a guard in the court of Bommanna Nayakan. When on duty as a guard of the chieftain's daughter Bommi, he fell in love with her. At night, he sneaked up to her room, and the two eloped. During their escape, Bommanna Nayakan led an army after Veeran, and the latter defeated the army and killed Bommanna. The two then fled to Tiruchi, where Veeran was requested by the local king to defeat bandits terrorizing his people, which he did so successfully. His fame brought him to Madurai, which was also troubled by bandits. Thirumala Nayakar requested Veeran to help him. Veeran then met Vellaiyammal, a royal dancer, who was attracted to him because of his looks and skill in various arts. She asked him to teach her the Natya Shastra (tenets of dancing). The king, who was himself attracted to Vellaiyammal, did not appreciate this development and viewed this as an affair. Some of his generals, who hated the closeness of Veeran to the king, used the opportunity to inform the king that the delay in suppressing the robbers was deliberate, as Veeran was conniving with the robbers themselves. Furious, the king ordered a traitor's death for Veeran, who was taken to the gallows and had alternate hands and legs chopped off (marukkal marukkai). Hearing of this, Bommi and Vellaiyammal attended the gallows to see the severed limbs and chastise the king for his injustice. The katha mentions that Veeran is brought back to life by the virtues of both his wives and was vindicated by the presence of the Celestials. Veeran thereafter retired to a cave beneath what is now the Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, south India.

Is Dee (Deeha) Baba and Muneeswarar the same deity?



NO, Muneeswarar, or Muneeswaran, is a popular Hindu deity within Hinduism and is worshipped by many, in countries such as India, Malaysia, Singapore and many more. He is sometimes referred to by different names, such as Muniyandi, Muniyappan, Muni Ayya, Ayya amongst many others. Muneeswarar is mostly considered a guardian or minor deity but is in some cases hierarchically considered to be on par with Lord Shiva. Although not much is known about the exact origins and history of Muneeswarar, he is often regarded to be related to Lord Shiva. His name is a combination of "Muni" (sage or saint), and "Ishvara", an epithet or title of Lord Shiva. Muneeswarar is often believed to be an old/middle-aged male deity. He is often portrayed wearing a large moustache and wielding weapons such as

a trident, Indian machete, whip and spear. His forehead and body are believed to be smeared with holy ash, an indication of his association with Lord Shiva.

Muneeswaran is mostly worshipped in the form of statues (granite, metals, clay etc) depicting his physical appearance, or merely in the form of the weapons he is associated with. In some cases, he is also worshipped in the form of a rock, brick, lamp or nothing at all. He is sometimes accompanied by other minor deities and animals (bulls, horses or dogs), which are believed to be his vehicles. Muneeswarar is worshipped in both the orthodox Vedic ways as well as the non-Vedic ways. The former is based heavily on the Vedas, Agamas and other sacred Vedic texts. Muneeswarar worship in this regard is usually done elaborately and systematically, with many strict rules to be followed. For example, prayers and rituals are usually conducted in Sanskrit by qualified Brahmins, and only vegetarian food products are offered to the deity for prayers and rituals. The non-Vedic way on the other hand is less rigid and not heavily bounded to sacred texts like the Vedas and Agamas. Its worship methods sometimes involve the usage of many items and methods that are otherwise considered taboo in Vedic prayers. These include things such as animal sacrifices, the offerings of non-vegetarian food items, alcohol and tobacco. This form of worship sometimes also sees the innovation of deity through phenomena like Alaipu or trance. This style of worship can be found in non-Agamic temples, shrines and homes. Due to the differences in worship methods, Muneeshwaran has a variety of disciples from many various demographics.

The history of Muneeshwaran and his worship remains ambiguous and unclear. In Vedic sacred texts such as the Vedas and Puranas, there is no explicit mention of this deity. However, it is sometimes suggested that Muneeshwaran was present in most of these texts, but represented with a different name. Apart from this claim, most of the widely accepted histories of the deity stem from oral traditions, that have been passed down from one generation to another. Due to the lack of textual references, there is no way of verifying these claims and tracing their origins. Most of these oral histories, although not entirely the same, seem to share commonalities with many kathas from Vedic texts.

Is Dee (Deeha) Baba and Karuppu Sami/Sangani Baba the same deity?



Karuppu Sami/Sangani Baba - the deity of Justice, Guardian, Protection

NO, Karuppu Sami 'black deity' is one of the regional Tamil male deities popular among the rural social groups of Tamil Nadu and parts of Kerala, south India. He is one of the 21 associated folk-deities of Ayyanar, and is hence was one among the kaval deivams in the Dravidian folk culture. He is sometimes considered to be a form of Lord Shiva among Shaivas. Karuppu Sami temple is mostly found in the outskirts of a town. Usually, the whole town contributes to the maintenance of the temple. These temples/shrines do not have traditional Gopurams and have large statues of Deities with large eyes, holding weapons like bow and arrow, swords, sickle and other weapons. There could also be murthi's of seven Kannimar goddesses/Saptha Kanniyar (seven virgins) and animals, often a hunting dog, a lion and horse alongside the main murthi of Karuppu Sami.

Karuppu Sami worship is based on an ancient ancestral clan-based worship system, which has barely synchronized with Vedic tradition. For instance, most officiating priests are non-Brahmins, and derive from local lineages that had initiated the cult generations ago. The worship pattern is non-Vedic or non-Agamic through folk tales, songs and arts. The local priest might offer flowers or vibhuti (holy ash) to the worshipers and may play the role of an oracle for Shamanism. Various persons within the clan system are identified to play to the role of oracle on annual turn basis. They undertake vratham and maintain chastity and purity during the period. During the festivals, oracles get into trance state (Sami adudhal) and deliver counseling messages to the group assembled there without bias. The normal problems addressed are family problems, financial troubles and local community and social issues for resolving within the community group with the agreement of local ancestral deity through oracle. Whenever the wishes of the people are granted, they give their offerings to him based on what they vowed to offer. Karuppu Sami is widely worshipped in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, Guadeloupe, and Martinique under the name Dee Baba, Sangili Karuppan, or Sangani Baba. Vedic offerings like camphor, biscuits, butter, cloves, ghee and non-Vedic offerings of cigarettes and alcohol as well as a sacrifice of a black chicken or goat are made to him in these places.

Is Dee (Deeha) Baba and Aiyandar the same deity?



Ayyanar - Guardian deity

Ayyanar is a Vedic deity venerated in South India and Sri Lanka. His worship is prevalent among the Dravidian folks. He is primarily worshipped as one of the guardian folk deities of Tamil Nadu. The temples of Ayyanar in the countryside are usually flanked by gigantic and colourful murthi's of him and his companions riding horses or elephants. Another name of Ayyanar is Sastha who meets the same dispute. Although he appears as Sastha in Sanskrit scriptures, ancient Tamil records mention him as Chattan. Sastha started to appear in Sanskrit sources from the Brahmanda Purana. It narrates the history of Hariharasuta, son of Hari and Hara, who was born to Lord Shiva during his copulation with Mohini murthi, the feminised form of Lord Vishnu, after the churning of the milk sea. Many temples are dedicated to Ayyanar that can be seen all over south India as well as Sri Lanka. Almost all cities of Tamil Nadu would have an Ayyanar kovil (temple). Ayyanar shrines are usually located at the peripheries or boundaries of rural villages and the deity is seen riding a horse with a sword or whip. Ayyanar has both types of temples - temples constructed in Agamic style and non-Agamic open air shrines. Ayyanar in Agamic temple is usually called Sastha or Dharma sastha. Kerala retains its Ayyanar temples as Sastha temples. Ayyanar's weapons are the chentu (whip), sceptre or sword. His mount are either the white elephant, horse, bull and his consorts are Puranai and Puskalai.

Who is Lord Kaal Bhairava? Is he a Kshetrapaal?

Bhairava (Sanskrit meaning 'frightful') or Kaal{a} (dark) Bhairava is a Shaivite and deity worshipped mainly by Lord Shiva devotees. In Shaivism (worshippers of Lord Shiva), he is a powerful manifestation, of Lord Shiva associated with annihilation. Generally in Hinduism, Kaal Bhairava is also called Dandapani, as he holds a rod/long pole or Danda to punish sinners, and Svashva, meaning "whose vehicle is a dog".



Lord Kaal Bhairava

Generally in Lord Shiva temples, murthi's of Lord Bhairava are situated in the north direction, facing Western direction. He is also called Kshetrapaala. He appears in a standing

position with four hands. His weapons are drum, paasha (noose), trident and skull. In some forms of Lord Bhairava, there are more than four hands. He appears with a dog. His weapons, the dog, protruding teeth, terrifying looks, and a garland with red flowers all give him a frightening appearance. In all Lord Shiva temples, regular puja (reverence) rituals begin with Surya-deva and end with Kaal Bhairava. Devotees offer what is understood to be favoured by Kaal Bhairava namely a ghee bath (abhisheka), red flowers, ghee lamp, unbroken coconut, honey, boiled food and fibrous fruits (berries, avocados, apples, dried fruits) etc. If a Lord Bhairava murthi is facing west, it is auspicious; facing south is moderate; facing east is not auspicious. The appropriate time to pray to Lord Kaal Bhairava is at midnight. At midnight it is said that Lord Bhairava and his consort Bhairavi devi will bestow darshana (appearance) upon their devotee/s. The most appropriate time is a Friday midnight. Lord Bhairava is also called upon as protector, as he guards the eight directions of the universe. In Lord Shiva temples, when the temple is closed, the keys are placed before Lord Bhairava. Lord Bhairava is also described as the protector of women. He is described as the protector of the timid and in general women who are timid in nature. It is generally believed that worshipping Lord Bhairava gives prosperity, success and good progeny, prevents premature death and gives solution to debts and liabilities.

Who is Sairee Devi and Dee/Deeha Baba?



Dee (Deeha) Baba and Sairee Devi

The explanation of the concepts Kshetrapaal, Dashadikpaala and Deeha

There is often much confusion about the differences between Kshetra-paal, Dasha-dikpaala and Deeha. We are going to address these terms below.

Kshetrapaal literary means protector of the field. Kshetrapaal is a manifestation of the Supreme God. According to one katha, Lord Shiva created Kshetrapaal along with others to organise the army for Mother Kali when she went to fight the demon Daruka. Kshetrapaal is the guardian deity of a temple compound. The temple of Kshetrapaal is generally

constructed on the northeastern corner of temples devoted to Lord Shiva, and he is worshipped before each ritual to ensure the efficacy of that particular ritual.

Sanskrit dictionaries provide the following meaning of Kshetrapaal.

1] In the COSMIC DRAMA of the SUPREME GOD, "Kshetrapala" is a minor deity- Devata of this "EARTH" having very limited role on earth and not in the cosmos as a whole.

2] KSHETRAPALA: are the manifestation of the Supreme GOD -The cosmic creator and director.

3] KSHETRAPALA: has jurisdiction on Earth up to 30-40 km. of the area (temple compound).

A Kshetrapal is the guardian deity of a temple compound. Every temple can have one or more Kshetrapalaks.

The followers of the Sanatan Dharma believe that God protects from all ten directions. Hence Kshetrapaal is also referred to as Dashadikpaala - he who protects from all ten directions (east, west, north, south, south east, north east, south west, north west, the upper region and the lower region).

During a prayer, the devotee appeals to the Supreme Lord in His different manifestations for protection from all ten directions. This appeal is contained in the following Vedic hymn:

Praacheem rakshatu govinda aagneyeem garudadvajah/
yaamyam rakshatu vaaraaho narasimhastu nairrteem/
keshavo vaaruneem rakshedvaayaveem madhusoodanah//
udeecheem shreedharo rakshedeeshaaneentu gadaadharah//
oordhavam govardhhanadharo hyadhastaaddaraneedharah/
evam dashadisho rakshed vaasudevo janaardanah//
yajnaagree rakshataacchankhah prshthe padmam tathottamam/
vaamapaarshve gadaaraksheddakshine cha sudarshanah//

In the above mantra, the devotee appeals to ...

Govinda (Lord Krishna, the pleaser of one's senses) to protect from the **East**,

Garuda-dwaja ("the eagle carrier Garuda-bannered deity" i.e., Lord Vishnu) to protect from the **South**,

Varahadeva (the boar incarnation of the Lord) to protect from the **south-east**,

Narsingha deva (half lion-half man incarnation of the Lord) to protect from the **south-west**,

Keshava (Lord Krishna, "the one with beautiful long {unshorn} hair" or "killer of the Keshi demon") to protect from the **West**,

Madhusudhana (Lord Krishna, "the destroyer of the demon named Madhu") to protect from the **north-west**,

Shridhar (Lord Krishna, "the one who wears wealth") to protect from the **North**,

Gadhadhara (Lord Krishna, the one who wields the mace; one who has gadaa (club) as His weapon) to protect from the **north-east**,

Govardhana (Lord Krishna, 'Go' translates to 'cows', and 'vardhana' translates to 'nourishment', increases the senses, increases devotion to Krishna) to protect from the **upper regions**,

Dharanidhara (Lord Krishna, the one who upholds the earth"), to protect from the **lower regions**.

In this way may I (the devotee) be protected from all ten directions by Vasudeva Janardana. May my Yagya (a sacrificial rite or performance of duty) be protected. May I be protected by Sudarshana (Lord Vishnu who wields the Chakra (disk), named Sudarshan).

The image of Kshetrapaal is said to be awe-inspiring. He is displayed wielding a number of weapons and accompanied by shvaanas (dogs).

In South Africa, Kshetrapaal is commonly referred to as "D-BABA". However, the word "D-BABA" is a mispronunciation of the word Deeha. Deeha means protector of the village/town/city.

डीह is pronounced as Deeha. The "D" is pronounced as the tip of the tongue touches the roof of the mouth.

Many Hindus (Sanatani's) around the world, worship "Dee (Deeha) Baba", as the Kshetrapaal {Kshetra (land) Paal Protector} Deity. He is known as the Boundary Master or the Master of the land as well as the guardian deity of the Oceans, Rivers and Lakes. There are depictions of Deeha Baba having thick long hair and a thick moustache and carrying a sword. Some other depictions show he carries a whip or a trident or a mace. Deeha Baba is worshipped as a Guardian (Protector) of Mariamman-Kaliamman and Shakti-Shakta temples. He masters all land and is a warrior who blocks all evil from entering a boundary. Deeha Baba is perceived as the protector of the land from dangerous forces. Offerings to him are based on what a person vows to offer.

Sairee Devi is the consort of Deeha Baba. A Kshetrapaal is always worshipped first before Devi prayers. When they are first worshipped they afford that family protection from demonic forces, protection of their property and the like. Without inviting his wife, Dee Baba do not attend any prayers as they work as a team. Sairee Devi is a partial expansion of Mother Parvati and Deeha Baba is a partial expansion of Lord Shiva. So one is actually worshipping Parvati-Shiva. This does make sense as Lord Shiva and Ma Kali generally roam about protecting people and their land.

In the area around Varanasi (Banares), Bharat (India), the village guardian deity is called "dih (Deeha)" (or diha, dihwar, or dihwarin, and may be of a male or female valence). The "dih" is the protector of the entire village and all its activities; it usually has a name; and the villagers look to it to mediate the influence of all supernatural energies and spirits. Sometimes, they call the minor deity Dih Baba and he may be honoured with a mound; his function is to be the village protector, police chief, village head, and regional guardian. Ideally Dih Baba is worshipped at least once a year and is honoured at weddings and births.

Kshetrapaal worship and mantras to appease him or her

Kshetrapaal as described earlier is the protective deity who guards a specific place or region from all kinds of dangers or even preventing the entry of malefic entities into that place. Many devotees worship the Kshetrapaal and chant a mantra or prayer or even perform a ritual in order to appease the Kshetrapaal for obtaining success in the prayer. The Kshetrapaal is also sometimes described as the spirit or mystical being who has the responsibility of protecting a particular place, which might include a shrine, temple, village, town or even a mountain, farm or an any other specific area or location. The word "Kshetra" is very broad term and it literally mean a place or territory and might include even countries, the world, the solar system and so on. Hence, it is also applies the same logic to the area/ domain that is said to be guarded by a Kshetrapaal.

We are providing two mantras that appeases the Kshetrapaal and receive his blessings.

ॐ खं क्षेत्रपालाय नमः ॥

Om Kham Kshetrapaalaaya Namah

ॐ क्षां क्षीं क्षूं क्षौं क्षः क्षेत्रपालाय नमः ॥

Om Kshaam Ksheem Kshoom Kshoum Kashah Kshetrapaalaaya Namah

Both these Mantras for appeasing the Kshetrapal are broad mantras that may be chanted to invoke and obtain the blessings of the Kshetrapal of any place. These mantras may or may not be a part of any special Mantra Sadhana that needs the blessings of the Kshetrapaal of that particular location. Some people have identified the Kuldevta/Kuldevi or the family deity and the Ishta Deva/Devi or favored deity with the Kshetrapaal. However, I do not subscribe to this view and in my opinion these are all different deities.

How to set the Halwa Puri offerings for the prayers



Sairee Devi's Halwa Puri offerings are on the right (when you face the set), and Deeha Baba's Halwa Puri offerings is on the left.

How to set the Halwa puri as in the photo above?

Firstly, I advise using a polystyrene tray or foil base. On this base cut a banana leaf to the shape of the tray/base. Next place the 2 hot puri's on the banana leaf. Then place a large betel leaf (with the tip) on top of the puri. Then place some halwa on the betel leaf, then place some Sweet rice (kheer) on the betel leaf. Thereafter place three types of cut fruits. Then place 3 types of mittai. Then place one whole clove on the betel leaf. Then place one whole elachie on the betel leaf. Then place three boiled Channa dal. Then place one flat (black betel nut) on the betel leaf. Then place one Tikli on the puri. Then dot the Puri with sindhur (Red). Then place 2 bangles over the preps. Then cut a little serviette and tuck in the puri like in the picture. Finally place one whole flower and then decorate with some flower petals. Two cups/Lota Dhaar is placed behind the Halwa Puri.

The above set-up is for Sairee Devi. For Deeha baba's set is without two bangles, Tikli and sindhoor dot.

Is Halwa Puri is mentioned in our Vedic scriptures? Yes. It is mentioned in the Devi Bhagavatam chapter 11 verses 38-40 which states: "The devotee should offer food consisting of the six Rasas (tastes), the plates and dishes for chewing, sucking, licking and drinking, that is, all kinds of food solid, and liquid, mountain-like high. Always offer food on flat plates and cups and various delicious sweet juicy nice heavenly fruits, nicely arranged on trays, cups and saucers."

*** Camphor and cloves are mentioned in the 11th chapter of the Devi Bhagavatam, hence offered during the prayers.

It's very important that utmost cleanliness is observed. In this period no meat is consumed. When preparing the prashad offerings one should not wear shoes etc and not chat as saliva can enter into the food thus contaminating the preparations.

The D.I.Y prayer procedure to worship Sairee devi Deeha Baba.

This prayer process is very simple and cost-effective. If you cannot pronounce the Sanskrit mantras then do read the English translations provided.

Lord Ganesh Prayer Procedure.

At the prayer place, place a Lord Ganesh murti or photo. Firstly offer an agarbatti, lamp (with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor), a flower (or all three on a tray) to Shree Ganesh (turn seven times clockwise around the murti or photo).

Then offer Lord Ganesh Naivedhyam (either sweet rice, Soji, sugar candy or fruits, etc).

Finally pray to Shree Ganesh, praying to him to remove all obstacles in the path of your prayer that follows.

Sairee-Deeha Prayer Procedure.

At the prayer place, place a Sairee-Deeha murti or photo.

The Halwa puri offerings are optional. You may just offer prayers below. But we shall include the Halwa puri offerings for those who wish to offer the Halwa puri and Dhaar.

Now chant the following:

1) Hold your palms in the Namaste position and chant:

Om swagatam su swagatam - Om Sairee Maata Deeha deva namo namah
(Swagatam means "O Sairee devi and Deeha baba I welcome you both".)

2) Offer one or three incense stick/s (dhoopam) by turning it seven times clockwise around Sairee-Deeha murti or photo.

Om tato dhoopam aghraa-payaami - Om Sairee Maata Deeha deva namo namah
O Sairee devi and Deeha baba I offer you both this incense, kindly accept my offering.

3) Then offer a clay or brass lamp (deepam) with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor by turning it seven times clockwise around the deity/photo.

Om prat-yaksha deepam darshayaami - Om Sairee Maata Deeha deva namo namah
O Sairee devi and Deeha baba I offer you both this lamp offering, kindly accept my offering.

4) Then offer flower (pushpam) or flower petals by turning it seven times clockwise around Sairee-Deeha murti or photo.

Om idam pushpam - Om Sairee Maata Deeha deva namo namah
O Sairee devi and Deeha baba I offer you both this flower, kindly accept my offering.

5) Then offer cut fruit or sweetmeats or sweet rice (Naivedyam). It should be in a small bowl with a teaspoon. Turn the bowl seven times clockwise around the deity/photo and

bring the bowl near the lips of murti or photo suggesting they partake in the food offering. Then leave this in front of the deity/photo. This is later consumed by the family as Prashad. Om naivedyam samar-payaami - Om Sairee Maata Deeha deva namo namah
O Sairee devi and Deeha baba I offer you this food offering, kindly accept my offering.

6) On a tile or brick, place two camphor tablets and on each tablet place a few cloves on it. Now light both and pray to the couple for what you desire (within reason). You may offer a few more cloves on the camphor after a few seconds.

Then the Lota/cup of dhaar to your right by the Halwa Puri turn three times around the camphor on your right and drop three drops of dhaar in front of the camphor fire. Now do the same to the left side for Dee Baba.

O Sairee devi and Deeha baba I offer you this lota of Dhaar offering, kindly accept my offering.

Symbolic offerings of fruits and vegetables (pumpkin, lime, sugarcane etc) can be offered now. Do read below for more information.

* (What is DHAAR?. I have included more information below).

** Dhaar is generally offered only to Devi's but Deeha Baba is an exception.

7) Offer prayers for forgiveness

Om yaani kaani cha papani janmaantara kritaani cha
taani sarvaani nashyanti pradakshina pade pade //

"O Compassionate Couple! Victory to You! Please do forgive all the errors committed by me with the hands, legs, speech, body, through actions, through the ears, eyes, mind or by not doing ordained actions or by doing prohibited actions".

Then offer your personal prayers to Sairee devi and Deeha baba. Ask the couple for whatever you desire (within reason) and them being merciful will grant what you desire. But be careful what you desire for. Bow down and leave the prayer place.

* The one lota dhaar is offered on the outside of your yard and the other on the inside of your yard.

** The food offerings are eaten as prashadam.

Question: Are females allowed to partake in the prayers and also eat the Halwa puri.

Answer: Yes. Prashad is blessed food offerings and is to be eaten by anyone. In South Africa the Neanderthal mentality is that only men can eat this prashad which this is NOT correct.

What is DHAAR? Unfortunately, there is no direct English translation of Dhaar from Sanskrit. The nearest being "The Divine Wine". Now I said wine, but it does not refer to the famous wines we produce here in South Africa, rather this beverage - the "wine" - is especially Devi's favourite. Dhaar is mentioned in the Devi Bhagavatam but especially in the Markandeya Purana chapter two and three of the Durga Saptashati. Sairee devi being a devi is thus offered Dhaar while her husband Deeha is also offered. No other male deity is offered Dhaar except Deeha Baba.

What offerings should or should not be offered to Sairee - Deeha Baba?

The information the follows, maybe controversial. However it is our duty in compiling this article to share these controversies impartially.

For some reason, in South Africa, the worship of Kshetrapaal, Dashadikpaala or Deeha is unfortunately misunderstood. Kshetrapaal, Dasha-dikpaala or Deeha deva is generally associated with Devi/Kali Pooja or prayer, as this puja is performed before Devi puja. Devi or Kali pooja is the general pooja that we engage in when we offer flowers, incense, prashad and so forth. This pooja should be done with the utmost purity and non-violence.

The Kali Chalisa states:

"maalaa aura phala phoola chadaave, maasa khoona se nahee chuvaave"

This means offerings made to Devi or Kali devi must be free of meat or blood. Rather Maalaa (chanting her name), offering of Phala (fruits) & Phoola (flowers) are offered (chadaave) to the Mother. Chadaave means turning the prayer items 3 times around Devi.

Maasa/mansa (non vegetarian foods) and khoona (blood) are not to be offered (chuvaave) to the Mother.

Should pumpkin, cucumber etc replace animal sacrifice in the puja?

In recent times, Durga Puja committees especially in Bharat (India) have been sensitized against animal sacrifice and Puja pandals (place where the prayer is being performed) are NOT offering any "patha bali (animal offering)" on prayer days. Sacrifice is an essential aspect of Deeha Baba or Devi Puja, as "bali" is the symbol of power. Bali invokes power. And since we are worshipping Devi, who is the embodiment of shakti (power) or Deeha Baba, it is essential to incorporate bali in puja. However, it does not necessarily have to be an animal sacrifice.

"In earlier times, our ancestors preferred animal sacrifice due to certain socio-economic reason, but now-a-days many temples in Bharat (India) are preferring to use vegetables or fruits in temples. Incidentally in recent years, even West Bengali temples do not offer animal sacrifice to the great goddess Kali devi. Many temples are now offering symbolic sacrifices like that of gourd, white pumpkin, sugarcane, cucumber and so forth."

Bali (sacrifice offering) of white pumpkin, sugarcane and cucumber are offered. Kushmanda means pumpkin and Devi likes the sacrifice of pumpkin. This is the other reason that she is known by the name of Devi Kushmanda who is worshipped on the 4th day of every Navaratri. In recent times the Boiti-Kakharu (pumpkin) sacrifice has replaced the animal sacrifice in various parts of India.



In this photo, pumpkin, squash, cucumber, jaifar (nutmeg), sugarcane, lime and so forth was offered in the prayers after the camphor and cloves was offered. While chanting (Maalaa) Sairee devi and Deeha baba's names, one should then offer (chadaave) of Phala (fruits) and Phoola (flowers) to the couple. Chadaave means turning the prayer items 3 or 7 times around the couple.

[Www.DIPKA.org.za](http://www.DIPKA.org.za) has compiled a 26 pages article named <https://dipika.org.za/mother-kali-symbolic-bali-daan-non-blood-prayers/> and this article comprehensively addresses "Symbolic bali daan - non blood prayers".

HOWEVER, here follows the controversial part.

There is no such thing as one religious tenet in Hinduism. Certain sects in Hinduism allow things which are considered adharmic in other sects of Hinduism. For example those that follow the Tantrik path are allowed Himsa ("injury") as it is part of their rituals to sacrifice animals, while other Hindus follow Ahimsa (non-injury). So the question begs which path is correct?

This generally turns out to become a major confusion in Hindu theology, meaning if one path of Hinduism says that you will be punished for doing a certain prayer ritual, and the other says that it is actually part of worship to do that same prayer ritual, which is a sin in the other part of Hinduism, then which path is correct? However, both these paths are supported in Hindu scriptures.

Hinduism has two main branches, which are known as Vama Marga and Dakshina Marga. Vama marga is the "*left handed path*" which tantriks follow and are rajastic (mode of passion) and tamastic (mode of ignorance) practices. Tantriks practice Himsa - sacrificing of animals. While Dakshina marga is the "*right handed path*" which is sattvic and practice Ahimsa - non-violence.

There is a belief system in South Africa and parts around the world, that an animal (rooster), cigarettes and alcohol must be offered to Deeha Baba. Such practices are not supported by "sattvic" Vedic or Agama scriptures.

* The Manusmriti declares that one should 'refrain from eating all kinds of meat,' for such eating involves killing and leads to karmic bondage [5.4-9].

* The Rig Veda, mentions "O vegetable, be succulent, wholesome, strengthening; and thus, body, be fully grown."

* The Yajur Veda mentions "Do not injure the beings living on the earth, in the air and in the water."

* The Thirukural, the 2,000-year-old masterpiece of ethics, speaks of conscience: "When a man realizes that meat is the butchered flesh of another creature, he must abstain from eating it."

* Support for non-killing of animals, either for religious reasons or other, is found in the Bhagavad Gita, when Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: ahimsaa satyamakrodhastyaagah shaantirapaishunam "non-violence/non-injury, truthfulness", these qualities belong to godly people endowed with divine nature.

The roots of non-injury, non-killing and non-consumption of meat are found in the Vedas, Agamas, Upanishads, Dharma Shastras, Tirumurai, Yoga Sutras, and dozens of other sacred texts of Hinduism.

Here are two verses from the Rg Veda:

1) Protect both our species, two-legged and four-legged. Both food and water for their needs supply. May they with us increase in stature and strength. Save us from hurt all our days, O Powers! (Rig Veda Samhita 10.37.11. VE, 319).

2) One who partakes of human flesh, the flesh of a horse or of another animal, and deprives others of milk by slaughtering cows, O King, if such a fiend does not desist by other means, then you should not hesitate to cut off his head. (Rig Veda Samhita, 10.87.16, FS 90).

Yet, those who follow the Tantrik path can also quote copiously from the Rg Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda, Brahmasutra, Karpuradistotra, Kalika Purana and so forth.

The Brahmasutra states: "*Asuddhamiti cen na sabdat*". The performance of sacrifices is based on scriptural authority and it is part of the quest for self realisation. So how can it be called an impure act? How do we determine whether or not an object or an act is impure or whether it is good or bad? We do so by judging it according to the authority of Vedic shastras. Srila Vyasadeva goes on to state in his Brahmasutra that animal sacrifice is not sinful since the act is permeated by the sound of the Vedas. What is pure or impure is to be known by the authority provided by the Vedas or rather their sound called Sabdapramana. If sacrifices were impure acts according to the Vedas, they would not have accepted them as part of the Atmic quest. Even if the sacrificial animal is made of flour (the substitute according to Srila Madhvacharya) it is imbued with life by the chanting of the Vedic mantras. Would it not then be like a living animal and would not offering it in a sacrifice be taken as an act of violence?

Finally, whether one follows the Vama (left handed) Marga (path) or the Dakshina (right handed) Marga (path), no one has the right from either side to condemn or criticise each other. Each individual is on their own journey and thus should be respected.

*** Pages 6/7/12, was information procured from the article titled "KSHETRAPAAL" by the Shree Lakshmi Narayan Temple of Mobeni Heights (South Africa)

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