



Purattasi 17th September - ends 17th October 2024



Shree Srinivasa Perumal

Amongst South African Telegu/Tamils this month long festival is the most important one dedicated to LORD VISHNU who takes on the form of LORD PERUMAL.

This year 2024 Purattasi is between 17th September - 17th October.

(I personally can't understand why South Indians only observe this month. We should stop this segregation and every one of us regardless should observe this very important month dedicated to Lord Vishnu). Purattasi occurs in September/October. Lord Vishnu is known by many names like Narayana, Venketeshwara, Perumalswami, Stinivasa, Govindaji, Balaji, and so forth. Thousands of people throughout the world go on to pilgrimage to the Tirumalai Hills in Tirupati, in south India during this period to seek the blessings of the Supreme Lord.

This fast is an abstinence of eating meat, smoking, consuming alcohol, some even do not sleep with their spouse and sleep on the floor, clean pots were no meat was cooked are used and so forth. Many faithfuls just have one meal for the day while others give up their favourite foods in dedication to the Supreme Lord. This fast should not be like a torturous burden. The abstinence increases one's will power and concentration to be able to pray to the Supreme lord even more faithfully. By fasting impurities are decreased and purity is increased which is so essential in the attainment of the Supreme Lord. The benefits are inconceivable if the fast is properly observed.

While the daily observance is observed, Saturday (due to time, place and circumstances) is reserved for prayer activities. On this day most people observe a Nirjala fast i.e. a fast where not even a single drop of water is taken. In the morning preparations are underway for the prayers in the evening. When preparing food items for the prayer the strictest of precautions are taken to ensure cleanliness and purity. I would highly recommend that no shoes should be worn while cooking and no talking as the saliva can go into the pot and thus contaminate the foodstuffs. Around the evening the food that was cooked, coconuts, fruits, milk, boiled whole gram and so forth are offered to Lord Venkataswara on a tray. Generally one goes to the temple, and at the temple songs are sung in praise of Lord Venkataswara. Some temples take out the Deity of Lord Vishnu on a procession during these Saturdays for worship by those who cannot come to the temple, (the sick

and elderly). After the prayer sessions, meals are served to all, especially the poor. The most important lesson that we should take from the fast of the Purattasi month is that we must have tolerance, decrease our false ego and increase our faith in the Supreme Lord Vishnu.

THE OBSERVANCE OR "PURATTASI VIRATHAM" AT HOME

In the South African context, on a Saturday fixed for the prayer, family and friends gather to offer worship to Lord Vishnu. The head of the household places the "naamum" on the forehead of the males, and places a kungu dot on the foreheads of the females. The offerings include cooked rice, a variety of curried vegetables, milk, fruit, coconut, betel nut, betel leaves, incense, camphor, flowers, kozhukattai (steamed rice cakes), vadhai (deep fried pattis made from pea dhal and seasoning), urandai, payasam, kadalai, etc. Tulsi leaves are used liberally in the worship of Lord Vishnu, as this is very dear to Him. When Tulsi leaves are on the food items Lord Vishnu immediately accept that food, which then becomes, prasada (blessed food). Once the offerings are made to Lord Vishnu, inside the house, everyone goes outside where camphor is lit and the Lord is welcomed into the house by the devotees calling out the lord's name or praise to Him "gwayndha govinda!" Once inside, devotional hymns praising the glory of Lord Vishnu are sung as the devotees offer prayer. At the conclusion of the prayer precaution is taken to make sure that the naamum is wiped out from the foreheads and the water disposed off in an unpolluted area as this symbol of Lord Vishnu is considered to be sacred. The strictest of rules, concerning hygiene, are followed during the preparation of the offerings. Further, the prayer is conducted with utmost piety and steadfast devotion. Source: "Tamil Festivals", Author: Mala Lutchmanan

Why place so much emphasis on Purattasi?: Granted, we have lost most of the deep meaning of this austere month, due to the natural degradation of information passed through the generations. So let's start retrieving the information again and let it flow again in this high tech age. The Vaishnavas of South India led the way in devotion to Lord Vishnu; (view the verse below from Srimad Bhagavatam). Devotion to Lord Vishnu/Keshava/Krishna was the established Vedic custom in the whole of India and specifically South India.

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM Canto 11 chapter 5 verses 38-40 "Men who live in Satya Yuga and other ages long to be born into this world in the age of Kali, O King. For it is in the Kali age that men who are wholly devoted to Lord Narayana will appear. O King, they shall be found everywhere, but they shall be found in large numbers in the Dravida country (South India) where the rivers Tamraparni, Kritamala, Payasvini, the extremely sacred Kaveri, and the great Vetravati (which flows to the west) flow. The men who drink the waters of these rivers will become pure of heart and devoted to Lord Keshava (another name for Lord Krishna)."

Between the fifth and ninth century, in the Tamil-speaking region of South India, these saints (known as Alvars) revitalized the Indian religious culture, sparking a renewal of devotional worship throughout the subcontinent. Traveling from place to place, from temple to temple, from holy site to holy site, they composed exceedingly beautiful poetry to their Divine Beloved, Vishnu, as an expression of their love for Him.

The relevance of Purattasi is that it falls during Caturmasya (the four rainy and auspicious months of the year in India). Whatever fasting, prayer and sacrifice done during these months; award greater benefit than all the other months.

This very rare 4 minutes 10 second video footage recorded by the Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanam 50 years ago as a promotional video for the Tirupati Balaji temple. You can see the abhishekam of the moola vigraha without any ornaments. If you have internet access you can download this video. Below is the link to this website. Copy and paste. But this Video is available on our website DIPIKA for viewing, or click on the URL below.

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[watch?v=RDKRHerBDhk&feature=Playlist&p=327D76309529CDCE&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=18](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDKRHerBDhk&feature=Playlist&p=327D76309529CDCE&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=18)

What are the benefits of observing Purattasi? There are so much of spiritual and material benefits that can be achieved in this holy Tamil month. Humans generally have a very mixed life - they have sometimes good and sometimes bad times. When one has problems it's like a downpour of rain but other times in one's life everything just seems to fall into the right place. Why you may ask. Well it's because of your Karma. When we go thro good times or bad times we forget that's its is temporary. So make sure you create good karma for your future - fast for Purattasi. You are the master of your own destiny and only you can change it for better or for the worse. Worship Lord Vishnu (Perumal) with devotion. It's a relentless and challenging world out there- spiritually, materially, and every other way - get all the advantage you can get - now.

Benefits from observing Purattasi.

1. The community becomes united during this period. We must strive at all times to be united.
2. The restrictions to a vegetarian diet is not only an act of self discipline but this abstinence has profound religious significance, which helps in the purification of the body, mind and soul. It helps to discipline the mind, removes waste and toxins from the body and helps to revitalize the body in its capacity to function well. It further helps the mind to become more alert and reflexes become sharper.
3. Devotion to God especially during this Kaliyug period is important. This period, which is characteristic of excessive greed for power, extreme hatred, jealousy, anger and intolerance have polluted the life of man in general all over the world. We must strive, seek and maintain the following virtues: truth, peace, righteousness and non- violence. This helps people in directing their thoughts towards God Realization.

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