



Dear Yagya Friends,

Our yagya program this month focuses on Hanuman; one of the great heroes of the Ramayana; the divine monkey, son of the wind, who was essential in helping Rama to rescue his wife Sita, defeat the demon Ravana, and destroy Lanka.

These stories are ultimately a metaphor for the process of enlightenment in which we have to overcome our own demons in order for the light of spiritual unfoldment to dawn.

We are performing these Hanuman yagyas to prepare for the movement of Rahu/Ketu and Jupiter in May and Saturn in June. So this is an especially strategic month. You'll find a more detailed description of May's yagyas in this issue.

Also this month, you will find a series of photographs from the Family Yagyas that took place in Kanchipuram's Ekambeshwara Shiva/Parvati temple. Fantastic images.

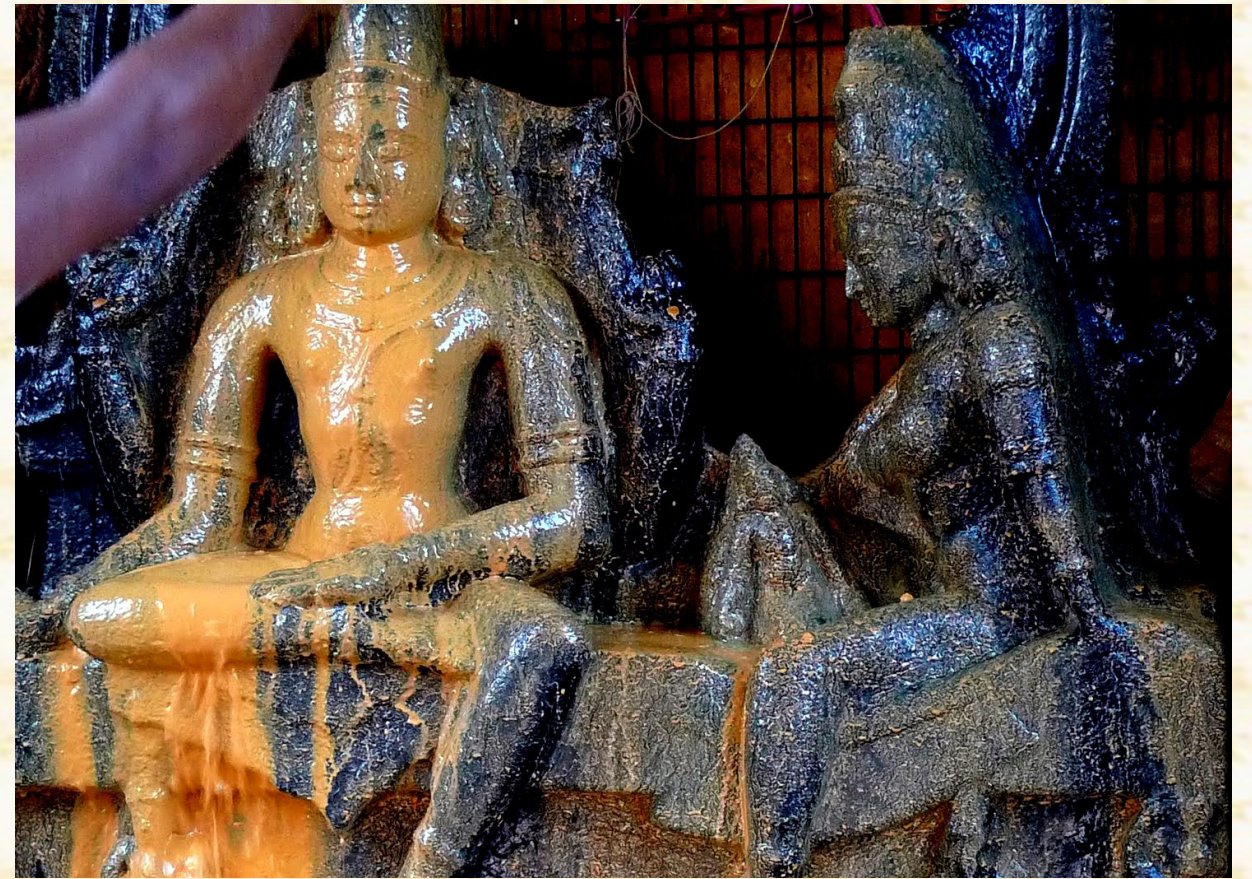
There are three articles written from the perspective of Jyotish; one on Jupiter and Dharma, another on techniques to strengthen Jupiter, and lastly the story of Hanuman and Saturn. Jupiter is the planet of dharma and Hanuman is one form of the divine which defends and strengthens it.

I've included an article on yagya results and a photo from last month's Ganga Yagya with a verse from the Atharva Veda.

If you have a few moments, it would be a great help if you would give some feedback on these newsletters. I'd like to know what you'd like more of or less of, what can be improved and anything that you feel just doesn't work. Your insights will be greatly appreciated.

Enjoy the yagyas!

Ben Collins



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Hanuman Dharma Yagyas - April 19 - 28

Hanuman is one of the great heroes of the Ramayana; the divine monkey, son of the wind, who helps Rama rescue his wife Sita, defeat the demon Ravana and his army, and destroys Lanka.

We are fortunate to be able to perform this yagya in a beautiful Kanchipuram temple where the Hanuman is almost 20 feet tall! You can see more photos of the 2010 Hanuman yagya by clicking [here](#).

The mantras used in this yagya enliven the qualities associated with Hanuman; strength, character, support of dharma (natural law), radiant health, devotion, and contentment.

Hanuman yagyas are particularly good for softening and balancing the influence of Rahu and Saturn, and for strengthening the planet Jupiter. This is particularly timely because in May Jupiter is changing signs as are Rahu and Ketu. Then, Saturn resumes direct motion in June. According to the vedic tradition, the best time to influence the planets is just before they change signs, so this is the perfect month for these yagyas and Hanuman is the perfect path to accomplishing our goals.

Please click [here](#) for more information and to sign up.





May Yagya Program

May 5-9 and May 19 -23

May will certainly be a busy month! Although it comes only a week after the April yagya series concludes, we have scheduled the first part of the May yagyas to coincide with Rahu/Ketu and Jupiter changing signs on May 5th and 9th.

That same week includes Akshaya Trittiya (the day of lasting achievements) which takes place on Friday, May 6th.

The first part of the May program will consist of a 5 day Navagraha Yagya for the planets and a special Lakshmi yagya for Akshaya Trittiya.

In January we focused on the Navagraha to bring balance to the year. In February we observed Shivarati to develop the deep silence and purity we associate with Shiva. In March we performed yagyas for the development and preservation of family harmony, and in April we are performing Hanuman yagyas to support our dharma. After all that work, Lakshmi, the source of universal abundance, would be the very appropriate focus of our yagya program in May. We all deserve some abundance!



The second half of the May program will be a five day Maha Lakshmi program that in addition to our daily program of yagyas will include five days of temple yagyas for added power.

The images above are from the beautiful Kachepeshwara temple in Kanchipuram where our Rahu/Ketu yagyas will take place. It is the largest Rahu/Ketu temple that I am aware of, with hundreds of Rahu/Ketu statues. As a part of the yagya our priests carefully wash and decorate each one before performing the yagya.

The Jupiter yagya will take place in the Navagraha temple on the grounds of this temple complex as well.



Shiva/Parvati Yagya Photos - Ekambeshwara Temple, Kanchipuram



This temple, in which one of our special family yagyas took place, is the largest temple in Kanchipuram. The image at the left, which is displayed on one of the entrance walls, shows Parvati clinging to a Shiva lingam as a river which originated in the far away Himalayas rushes past.

After the death of his first wife Sati, Shiva retired to the mountains to spend his time in meditation. After some time Parvati, who was just another form of his first wife, began to miss him. So she went to Kanchipuram and spent many years seated under the branches of a mango tree meditating and performing abishekam to a small lingam that she made out of sand. Her tapas continued uninterrupted until Shiva began to sense her growing power.

In order to test her devotion, he sent a raging river down to wash her away but she simply clung to the sand lingam until the waters receded. Suitably impressed Shiva came and they were, in due course, married.

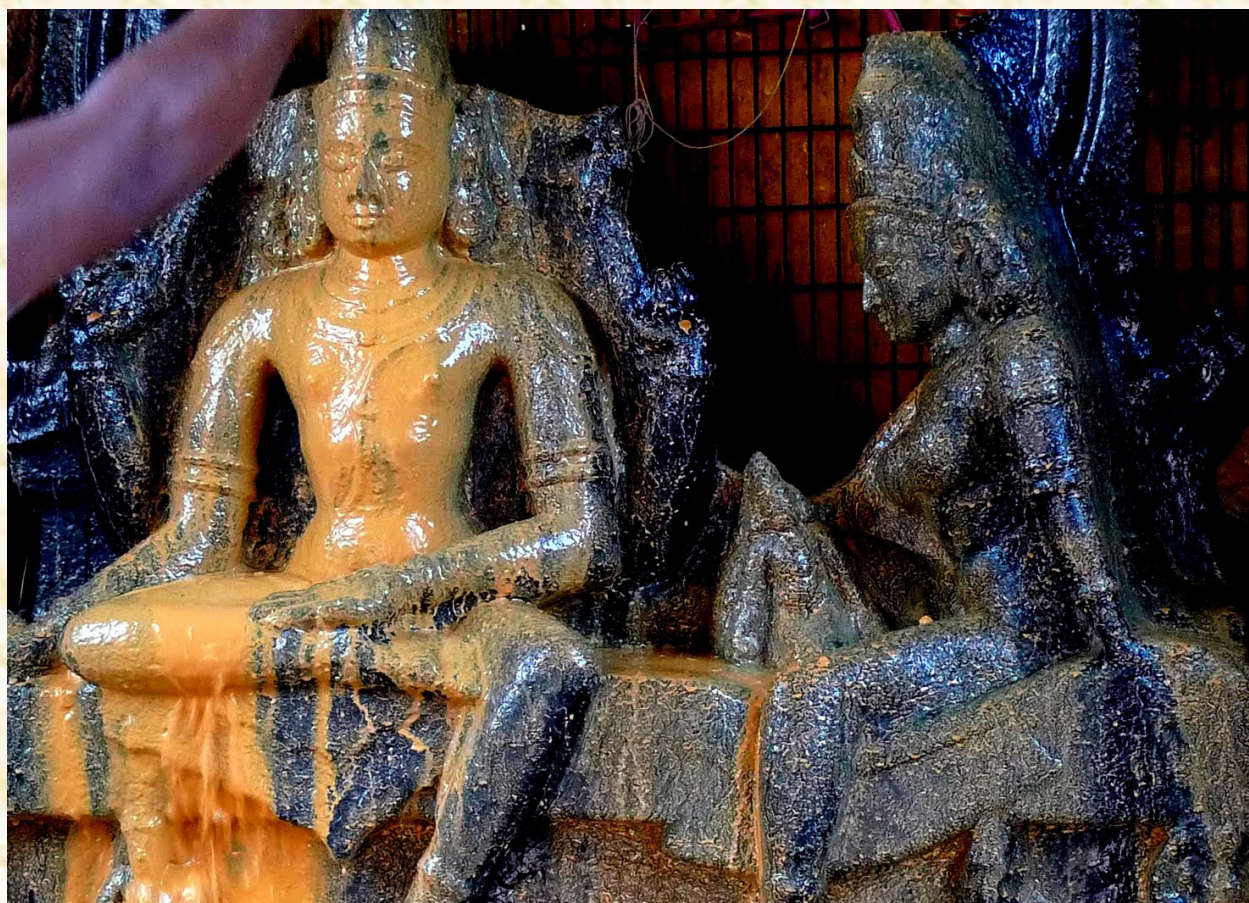
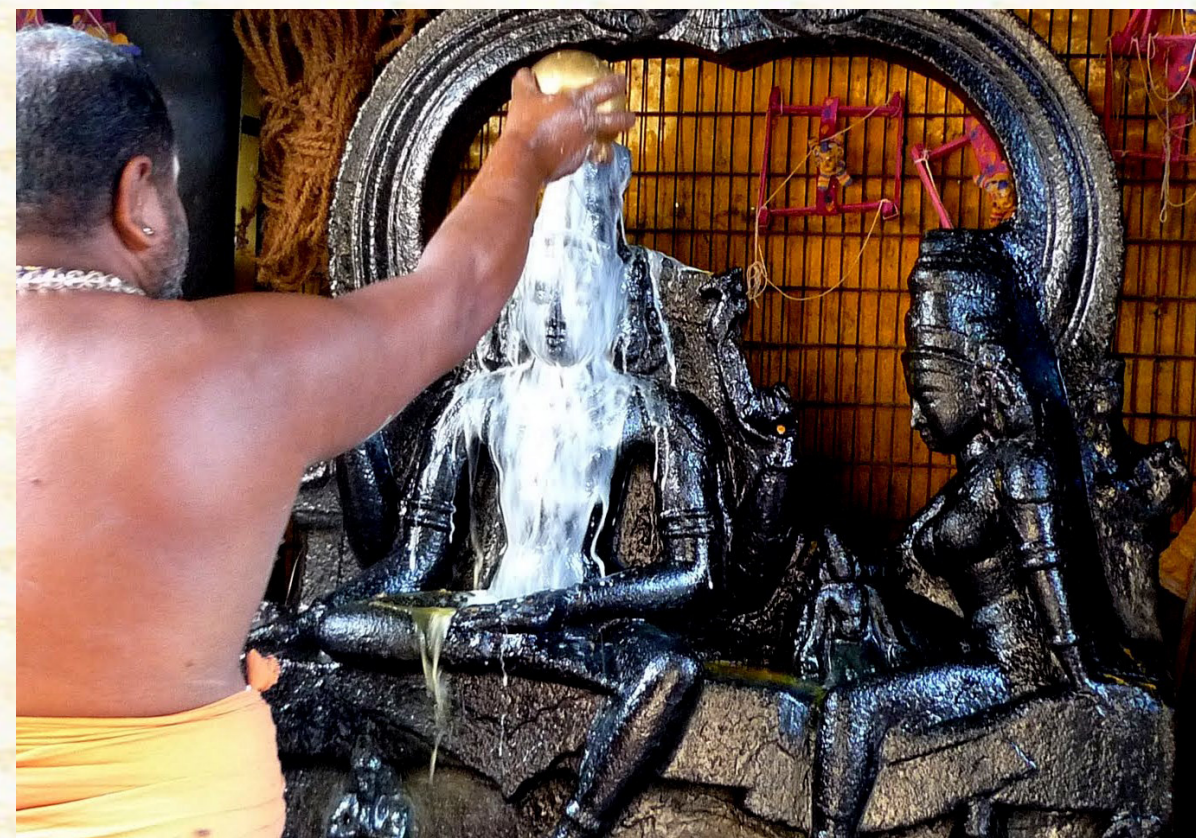
The main sanctum is built around what is said to be her sand lingam. Off to the side, there is a small temple that is dedicated to the family. Pujas are performed here by couples wishing to be married and to have children.





The mango tree is said to be derived from the original root stock from Parvati's time. as it ages, new trees are grafted onto the old roots, so the tree is at least several hundreds of years old. The courtyard is at the center of the temple is a bright sunny place that feels warm and inviting. It makes a nice place to linger and enjoy the atmosphere of peace and happiness.

The temple itself is relatively small, but that gives it an inviting intimacy. The colorful decorations at the top and on the sides of the temple show Parvati and her two children, Ganesha and Subramanya

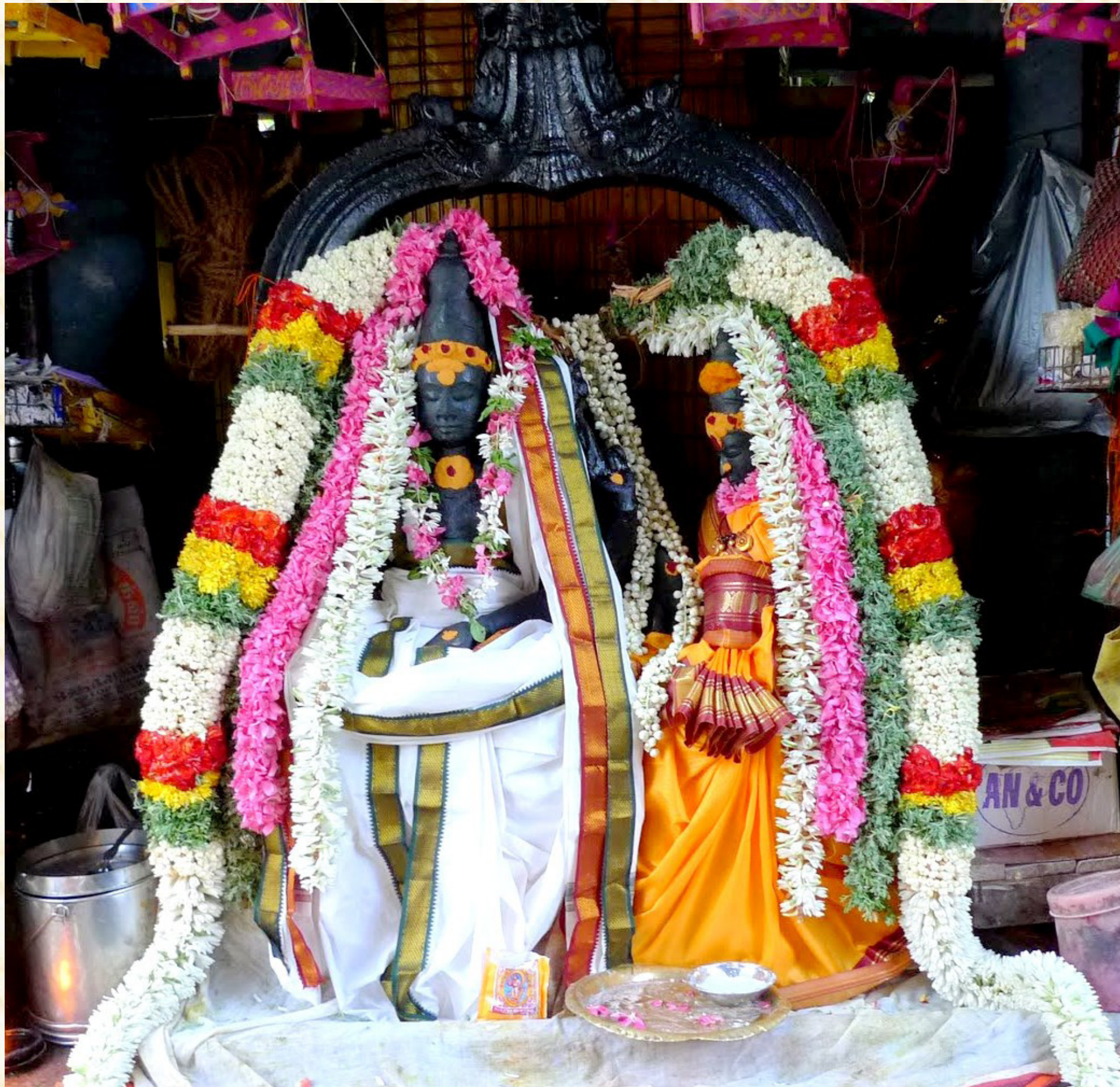


The process of an Abishekam yagya is a lengthy one in which the deities are liberally coated with sesame oil. When all is ready the names of the sponsors and their families are read as a part of the “Sankalpam” or statement of purpose.

Water, milk, sandalpaste, turmeric, coconut water, and rosewater are slowly poured over the deities while sacred mantras are recited, a process that can take a couple of hours. Finally, the deities are dried off and dressed elaborately. Shiva receives a fresh new cotton dhoti while Parvati enjoys some of the silk that Kanchipuram is famous for. They are adorned with yellow sandalwood and red dots of kumkum as well as elaborate fresh flower malas.

A final offering of the light from burning camphor is made while more mantras are chanted. At the end the feeling is one of unmistakable purity and refreshment. The spiritual light that one senses in the temple is refined and intensified and the effects last for days.

As you will see in the next image, Shiva and Parvati look young, almost like new-lweds and their eyes are closed in a subtle reminder that peacefulness is always found within.





Dharma

By Steve Hubball

What is the meaning of the Sanskrit word dharma? The word is derived from the Sanskrit root 'dhr' which means to hold up, to support, or to sustain. Therefore, the word dharma refers to "that which upholds, supports or sustains the Universe". It is that which upholds evolution or Natural Law, both individually and universally.

In this way, the evolution of human society is sustained by each individual member performing his own dharma, which may be different for different individuals. For example, if you are a parent, then your dharma is to support and protect your children, but if you are a monk then your dharma may be to meditate and serve your Guru. If you are a student, then your dharma is to study, acquire knowledge and respect your teachers, and if you are a teacher then your dharma is to teach and serve your students.

We see that the word dharma is linked to the concept of 'duty' and Natural Law, as well as to religion, virtue and righteousness, and everything that upholds the

evolution of society. It is thus the dharma of a King or Prime Minister to serve and protect his citizens, while the dharma of a cow would be to yield milk, for the benefit of both calves and humans.

Where do we see dharma in the Vedic horoscope and how do we know what our dharma is? The two planets that rule over dharma are Jupiter and the Sun. Jupiter is also the karaka (significator) for knowledge, wisdom and spirituality and rules the two zodiac signs Sagittarius and Pisces. Sagittarius, the 9th sign of the zodiac, is strongly connected with dharma and religion, while Pisces is more concerned with spiritual liberation and moksha, being the 12th or last sign of the zodiac. The 9th house of the Vedic horoscope is where we study dharma.

The Sun (who is also karaka for truth and order) rules the sign Leo, which is the 5th sign of the zodiac, and if you count zodiacally, you will find that Leo is the 9th sign from Sagittarius. We say that they are "in trines" to each other. The 5th house is therefore also connected with dharma, especially the good karma (purva punya) that we have brought with us from our past incarnations.

Therefore, the primary house of dharma in the Vedic horoscope is the 9th house, and the two planets Jupiter and Sun are the two 'significators' (called karakas) for this house. To study dharma in the horoscope we would need to examine the 9th house, its ruler, the two karakas Jupiter and Sun, as well as a special Chart we call The Navamsha Chart which is constructed by dividing each sign into 9. Note the significance of the number 9 here!

The Bhagavad Gita is really an exposition of the meaning of dharma, and this is very clear right from the beginning, as the first word spoken in the Gita (Chapter 1, Verse 1) is 'dharma'. The Gita specifically refers to the collapse of dharma in society, called adharma, and this period around 3000 BC heralds the beginning of Kali Yuga, the Dark Age of Ignorance, as predicted in the Puranas.

Essentially, the Gita teaches that there are two paths to moksha, the path of the recluse and the path of the householder, and that the dharma of each will be different. For the dharma of the householder, it is about accepting that we each have an important role, as citizens, partners and parents, in maintaining the evolution of our society. In fact, the Gita teaches that marriage and family are the foundations of society, and that when there is collapse in family life, then adharma will prevail in society, as witnessed today in Kali Yuga.

How can this be explained by Jyotish, the science of the Cosmos? There is a prin-

ciple in Jyotish where we count from one house to another to obtain 'a derived house'. For example, the 9th house is the house of dharma, and the 11th house is said to be the house of gains or 'fruits' in life. Therefore, if we count 11 houses from the 9th house, we will obtain the house that rules over "fruits of dharma", and this happens to be the 7th house of marriage.

We can repeat this process and count 11 houses from the 7th house to obtain the "fruits of marriage" and this is the 5th house of children.

Essentially then, as extolled in the Gita, it is marriage and family life that uphold dharma in society. In Vedic times, many great saints were married with families, and so the dharma of the householder is about being fully integrated into society, fully accepting one's familial responsibilities, and of course also being fully committed to one's sadhana, or spiritual practice.

Steve is a Professional Vedic Astrologer and Jaimini Scholar, studying under the guidance of Pandit Sanjay Rath. He is a member of BAVA and CVA, and is the UK Teacher for Dirah Academy International, which offers email correspondence courses in Vedic Astrology. Steve is also available for private consultations: Tel: +44 (0)1228 674225, email steve.hubball@btinternet.com, website: www.vedicastrology.org.uk





Making Friends with Jupiter

By Anne Beversdorf

Jupiter, or Guru, is the planet associated with the greatest good fortune. Each of us has Jupiter in our birth chart, but not all of us have great good fortune. This is where Upayas, or Astrological Remedies can be a valuable supplement to yagya participation.

Ganesha is the remover of obstacles in the form of a deity, while Jupiter is the planetary form. In order to be successful, obstacles to getting started, and obstacles to success must be eliminated. As a general rule, befriending Ganesha is a good idea and the most simple Ganesha mantra is: *OM Ganapataye Namaha*. The mantra for Jupiter is "*OM Vrim Brihaspataye Namaha*"

Repeating one or both on a regular basis is a surprisingly powerful discipline. You can do 108 repetitions once or twice a day outloud or mentally. Doing pujas or yagyas for Jupiter or Ganesha is powerful and effective, and you can do these through Puja.net.

The principle of planetary remedies is to do activities that give you more of what

you want and less of what you don't want. Jupiter's primary difficulty is "too much of a good thing", so we don't often think of difficulties with this planet. However, too much of a good thing can definitely bring difficulties, as you'll see below.

The qualities of a strong Jupiter/Guru:

Growth and expansiveness, mildness, soft-heartedness, humanitarian and spiritual outlook, wisdom, optimism, faith, geniality, generosity, joviality, humor, idealism, good judgement, nobility, benevolence, fruitfulness, buoyancy, good relation with father, teachers.

The qualities of a weak Jupiter/Guru:

Obesity, liver disease, diabetes, difficulties with children or difficulties conceiving children, lymphatic and circulatory congestion, ear problems, difficulties with teachers, difficulties with educational opportunities, overconfidence, over-indulgence, extravagance, immorality, greed, "always right" attitude, immodesty, overly optimistic, tendency to entertain false hopes, carelessness, debts, bad speculations, bad judgement.

To improve your Jupiter:

It is best to do Jupiter activities on Thursday because it is Jupiter's day. You don't have to do all of the remedies. Start with something easy that appeals to you, and add more later on as you feel motivated to do so. The important thing is to get started and then be consistent. So, on nine consecutive Thursdays,

1. Light a yellow candle, surrounding it as many of the following that you are able to; yellow flowers, gold, saffron, pictures of great teachers or your father, and spend a few minutes repeating the Ganesh or Jupiter mantra before it.
2. Gold is the color of Jupiter, so give yellow or golden colored objects to your father, a respected teacher or spiritual guide.
3. Spend some time being artistic using imagery of the divine (eg. Ganesha, Shiva, etc) or use stories about your father or great teachers, as your inspiration.

If you start this now, it won't be long before you see an increase of good and a decrease in difficulties related to this planet. Good luck, and remember to have fun with this.

Anne Beversdorf is an astrologer using western and vedic astrology in her practice. You can learn more about remedies at her web site, www.stariel.com, or contact her at anne@stariel.com



Hanuman and Saturn

Hanuman is well known to be a good source of protection from the adverse effects of Saturn. Regular performance of Hanuman yagyas is advised when one is experiencing the seven and one half years of Sade Sati when Saturn is near the birth Moon. It is also recommended when Saturn returns to the same place he was found at birth.

There are many stories about Saturn and how he causes trouble for the various deities, but there are few in which Saturn loses in the end.

One day Saturn came to Hanuman and mentioned that the time was fast approaching when Saturn would be visiting Hanuman for his seven and one half year sade sati. It is often referred to as the time when Saturn comes and sits on your head. But Saturn was a little intimidated by Hanuman's reputation for strength and invincibility, so he approached Hanuman and said "I am coming to visit you for some time, but you are great and powerful so I will allow you to choose what part of your body I will sit on."

Hanuman, who had a sense of humor, told Saturn that he could sit on his tail. But when Saturn did, Hanuman flipped him over and held him down so that he could neither move nor gaze upon Hanuman. In due course Saturn gave up and went away, although years later the portion of Hanuman's tail that held him down was burned severely when he set fire to Lanka.

Another story has Saturn coming to Hanuman and again giving him the choice of where Saturn will sit. Hanuman with his monkey cleverness, asks that Saturn sit on his head. Having done so, Hanuman whose strength was limitless, spends the day uprooting mountains, tossing them high into the air and letting them fall on himself. Of course they hit Saturn first who quickly grew tired of the game and decided to leave Hanuman alone.

Not even Shiva could defeat Saturn. When faced with his own Sade Sati, he dove beneath the Ganga river and spent the time deep in meditation samadhi. So the implied lesson is that by aligning ourselves with Hanuman we gain a powerful ally who will help us conquer the problems that Saturn brings.

Hanuman represents selfless service, self reliance, determination, and devotion. By cultivating those qualities we align ourselves with Hanuman and gain protection from the effects of Saturn.



Understanding Yagya Results

The Puja.net program is different from most. As you are well aware, the cost of participation is very modest and one reason for this is our focus on yagya subscriptions. With a large group of participants we are able to organize and support very large events at minimal cost to each individual.

But make no mistake about it, our events are performed with great care using all the traditional ingredients. Our priests are highly trained specialists most of whom have been working together for many years. It is a cohesive and dedicated group.

Over the years, we've come to understand that the yagyas are as much a process as they are an event intended to solve a specific problem. Certainly they can be used that way and we offer private yagyas specifically for that purpose.

Participation in the various yagya programs month after month builds a momentum, a deep connection with the yagya mantras and energies. Like watering the roots of a plant, all areas of life gain the nourishment and flourish

automatically.

Certainly problems will still arise in life, but our reaction to them changes. Gradually we see that along with the problem, we find solutions. We are not so overshadowed and stressed out by the constancy of life's ups and downs. Many participants have described this as a sense of "spiritual protection"

Because the monthly or daily yagyas provide a constant source of support, when problems arise, they are easily solved with an additional and smaller scale yagya than would otherwise be the case. For example the following quote comes from a long term participant in the Maha Sponsor program who was facing quite serious opposition from a governmental agency.

"Just to let you know the following : you remember the yagyas we had done last year for our difficulties with the Justice Department here -- the process we were engaged in has finally come to an end and the results have been far, far more positive than we imagined. Enemies have become friends. The discus of light [Sudarshana] has had profound effects."

And from another participant:

"I am REALLY liking this Soma yagya very much, it is smooth yet strong. Feels like a lot is happening on a subtle level, a distinct feeling of absolution, especially on the first day. I can definitely tell when this yagya starts and stops each day."

"Things from the past are coming up, but they simply fade away or they just don't have the same emotional impact anymore. The trip to India this year helped me with a big one from many years ago, but it's still not completely gone. Much, much better, but not yet gone. I'm hoping this yagya fixes it completely, once and for all."

Yagyas are a process in which repetition supports growth and the dissolving of karmas so they don't trouble us any more. It takes time, but the freedom and peace make it worthwhile. A little patience and consistency will bring considerable success.



**“May the divine protect our happiness; may each radiant dawn be propitious to us.
May the clouds bless our people with rain; may the sovereign Lord of the universe bless us with happiness.”
-Atharva Veda**