



## Dear Yagya Friends,

Our Yagya Program this month focuses on the family with a 10 day series of yagyas to develop and support a balanced, satisfying and harmonious family life. There is still time to [sign up here!](#)

Each day during the series, the vedic mantras enliven the influence of different deities and provide a lasting and positive effect in all areas of family life and for all members of the family. Because the yagyas in this series are so varied, I've included a more detailed description of each day and the deity involved.

Also included in this newsletter are three articles on family life using Jyotish to examine the connection to Yagyas and spiritual development.

You will also find 4 sets of photos from the various Shivaratri Yagyas that took place in February. They are absolutely beautiful and the complete set of photo galleries are available on the puja.net site...well over 1,000 photos in all!

People frequently ask what they can do to enhance the effectiveness of the yagyas. Being regular with your usual spiritual practice is most important, but if you wanted to add something, mantra japa each day can be a very valuable enhancement. Mantra repetition can help connect you with the yagya on a profound level and I've included a powerful mantra for Narasimha, the form of Vishnu who protects families.

Another frequent question is, "Which is better, yagyas or gems?" I attempt to address this in the Yagya Results section.

Our newsletter concludes with a verse from the Atharva Veda.

The priests, pundits, and I want to thank you for your support and attention. Please enjoy the newsletter and this month's yagyas program.

*Ben Collins*



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## Family Yagyas - March 21-30

This month, for ten days we will perform a series of nine different yagyas, each focused on developing and supporting a balanced and satisfying experience of family life.

- For marital harmony and a balanced relationship - Ardhanarishwara Yagya, a form of Shiva that combines both male and female; half Shiva/half Parvati
- For the development of wisdom and clear thinking - Saraswati Yagya
- For the protection of the family especially children - Narasimha Yagya
- For your children's education - Hayagriva Yagya (a form of Vishnu dedicated to education)
- For enlightenment and deep silence - Meda Dakshinamurti Yagya, a form of Shiva who teaches without speaking.
- For health and contentment - a daily Mrytunjaya Yagya.
- For wealth, abundance and happiness - a daily Lakshmi Yagya.
- For balance and career success - a daily Navagraha Yagya.
- For those who desire marriage - a special Parvati Yagya at the huge Ekambeshwara Shiva temple where she did tapas in order to marry Shiva.

There is still time to [sign up here](#).



### Ardhanarishwara

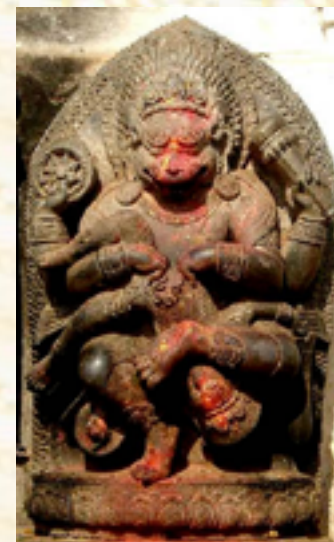
This is a unique form of Shiva, half male and half female. There are numerous stories as to the origin of this form but they all have in common the unity of male and female to demonstrated interconnectedness and equality. Performance of this yagya balances and harmonizes the male and female energies in the family.



### Saraswati

She is known as the goddess of wisdom, music and the arts and is the mother of the Vedas. She is the wife of Brahma the Creator and spends her time listening to the Vedas. Her yagyas bring insight, wisdom, and a deepening of spiritual values in the family.

Our yagya facility sits on top of the hidden Vegavati river, a form of Saraswati, and so she has a special connection with the puja.net yagyas.



### Narasimha

This is one of the forms of Vishnu, and the one most associated with the protection of the family. He saved his devotee Prahlada from his demon father Hiranyakashipu. Narasimha has the face of a lion and is usually shown killing Hiranyakashipu. His yagyas are a powerful source of protection and remove obstacles to family harmony. The Narasimha mantra, at the end of this newsletter is highly recommended.





### Hayagriva

Hayagriva is one of the lesser known forms of Vishnu. He has a horse's head and is usually depicted with Lakshmi sitting on his lap. He is associated with education and is supposed to have been a teacher to Saraswati. His yagyas help the members of a family to be successful in education and career.



### Navagraha Yagya

The nine planets are the delivery mechanism for our karmas. By performing Navagraha yagyas we bring peace and balance into our lives and those we associate with, especially other family members.

These yagyas steady the influence of the planets and burn up the karmas that they deliver so our lives have greater peace, fewer obstacles, and more success.



### Dakshinamurti

Dakshinamurti is a form of Shiva associated with deep spiritual learning. He is usually depicted seated under a tree, surrounded by rishis who are listening to him teach. He is considered to be the first Guru. Performance of Dakshinamurti yagyas bring the satisfaction of deep silence and attract good teachers who will provide the key to knowledge and success in life.



### Parvati/Ekambeshwara Yagya

Kanchipuram contains a huge Shiva/Parvati temple erected on the spot where Parvati did her long meditations to attract the attention of Shiva.

Inside the temple there is a special marriage shrine where pujas are performed especially for those who wish to attract a partner and get married and for those who want to increase the peace and harmony in their

marriage relationship.

Taken together, this series of yagyas supports and harmonizes all aspects of family life, both material and spiritual. You can always [sign up here](#).



### Mrytunjaya Yagya

Health is important to every member of a family. This form of Shiva is shown as the victor over death and fear. Performance of this yagya brings good health, steady progress towards enlightenment, and deepens our inner silence.

This is one of the best yagyas to perform when we are troubled by a difficult Saturn period.







## Hanuman Dharma Yagyas

April 19-28 - Kanchipuram

A special yagya series to enliven the values of Hanuman;  
Strength, power, health, devotion, and contentment

\$51

This yagya is an ideal way to soften and balance the influence of Rahu and Saturn, and to strengthen Jupiter, the planet of dharma



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

As such, he is the embodiment of strength of character, support of dharma (natural law), strength, radiant health, devotion, and contentment. He represents the power of conquering our lower qualities and at the same time, the humbleness of one who seeks to be of service.

The mantras used in this yagya enliven these qualities that we associate with Hanuman. The yagya will be performed over a period of 10 days ending with a beautiful temple yagya where the Hanuman is 18 feet tall!

We have arranged for 40 foot long fresh flower malas, 150 liters of milk for abhishekam, and a special mala made of lentil crackers that are a favorite of Hanuman's.

Hanuman yagyas are particularly good for softening and balancing the influence of Rahu and Saturn, and for strengthening the planet Jupiter.

This yagya series is particularly timely because in May both Rahu/Ketu and Jupiter are changing signs, and then later in June Saturn will resume his forward motion. This will be a significant time of change and the vedic tradition says it is always more effective to perform yagyas before the planets change signs rather than afterwards.



[www.puja.net](http://www.puja.net)



## Ganga Yagya Photos - Varanasi





## Shivaratri Yagya Photos - Varanasi



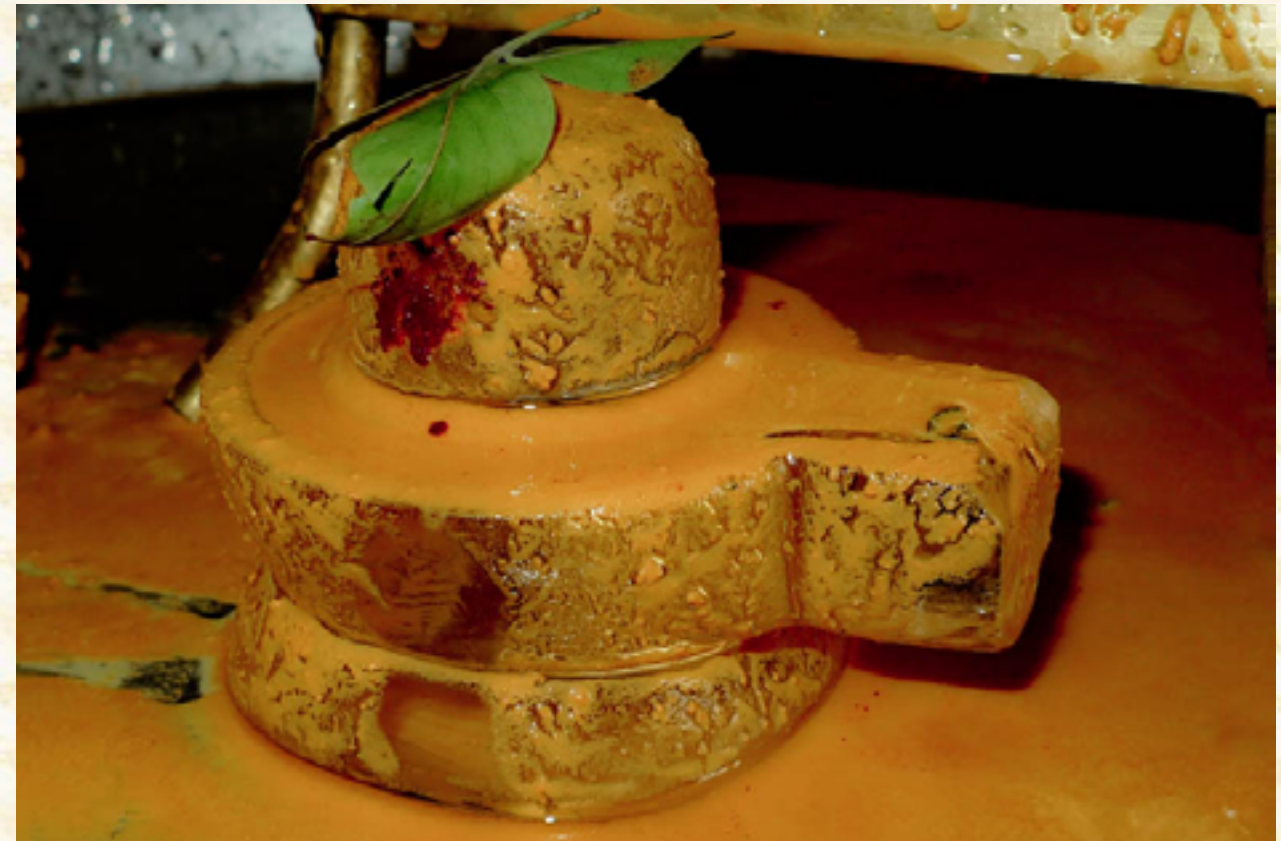


## Shivaratri Yagya Photos - Kanchipuram





## Maha Rudra Yagya Photos - Kanchipuram







## Enlightenment and the 4th House

by Ben Collins

After one studies Jyotish for some time, it becomes obvious that there are profound rules at work on a deep transcendent level. In fact the rules of Jyotish interpretation reflect the structure of the universe in some very interesting ways.

These rules can be very simple, for example Venus in the Ascendent of a woman will give charm and beauty, or Mars in a man's 6th house will give a love of sports and competition.

Of course, most of what one sees in an astrological chart is much more complex because it reflects the infinite diversity of human experience and personality. What is important to understand is that Jyotish reflects the structure of the universe in all its wonderful complexity.

The vedic tradition speaks of the fundamental areas of human existence as the four "purusharthas"; Dharma (career and worldly activity), Artha (gaining wealth), Kama (pleasure and enjoyment), and Moksha (liberation and transcendence).

Our life experience focuses, in varying intensity, on these general divisions of life. This is reflected in the placement of the planets and arrangement of the houses in our Jyotish chart. By looking at the influences in each of these houses, one gets a sense of the direction and focus of a person's life.

It is particularly fascinating to see how an individual's natural path to enlightenment is shown rather clearly in their Jyotish chart. The houses related to Moksha or liberation, are 12, 8, and 4. These assignments reflect the fundamental ways that people search for spiritual enlightenment.

The 12th house represents the ashram; areas away from society where the individual lives as a renunciate. The 8th house is the inner world; the world of samadhi, meditation, and profound transformation. Interesting and perhaps unexpectedly, the 4th house is also a moksha house.

Pick up any Jyotish text book and you will see that the 4th house is usually associated with things like the home that we live in, our mother, and our state of mind.

The fact that the 4th is included in the moksha houses tells us that by living in the world we are participating in the spiritual process as much as one who lives in an ashram, or spends their days deep in meditation. We need not feel that having a family and a career has shut us off from the spiritual growth that we all so deeply desire.

The strongest of the moksha houses is the 8th house. This deeply mystical house is the place where we see an individual's connection to and interest in mysticism and inner spiritual practices. If you are reading this, it is safe to say that you have a healthy and powerful 8th house. No doubt you are practicing some form of prayer, meditation or other spiritual practice that results in the deep inner peace. The world of the eighth house is easily accessed at any time. All we have to do is close our eyes and this can be done with equal ease by householder or renunciate alike.

Interestingly, the weakest of the moksha houses is the 12th house. Often times when an individual with a spiritually oriented chart has their 12th house activated astrologically, they will go on a retreat, or spend more time alone. Perhaps this is because the path of genuine renunciation is appropriate for very few individuals. Their charts will show a powerful focus on the 12th house and very little strength in the areas of the chart related to day to day life like money and career.

An individual with a strong and balanced 4th house will find themselves to be happy, nurturing, and spiritually alive. They embrace their role in worldly life and see each day as a potential step towards their ultimate goal of enlightenment.

Since the 4th house also represents the home, the search for enlightenment will take place in a supportive environment where their spiritual practices can be pursued in comfort.

Meditate, participate in yagyas, and when you want to spend \$500 on a comfortable meditation chair, the universe says its okay! After all, It's the blessing of the 4th house. It really is okay to be comfortable.





## The Four Purusharthas and the 4th House

By  
Steve Hubball

### Introduction

Our Vedic birth chart is a map of the karmas that we bring into this world, based on our past actions (the word karma literally means 'action'). Every thought, word and deed creates a vibration in the Universe that must return to us – this is the Law of the Universe, the Golden Rule ("as you sow, so shall you reap") taught by all the great saints and spiritual teachers.

### Four Purusharthas

Every soul, therefore, enters this world with karmic bondage. How can we get free of this karmic bondage and attain the state of moksha, liberation or enlightenment? Let us first identify the houses of moksha in the Vedic horoscope. Classification of these houses is based on the four Purusharthas, or primary goals of human life, which are *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*.

Dharma is right living; living in harmony with Nature. The concept encompasses our duty and responsibilities in our personal and professional life. It also has a spiritual value that could be described as righteousness; that which upholds growth and evolution of the soul.

Artha is usually translated as 'wealth', but it is broader than that and refers to all our resources and support in life. It is what we own and what we earn and accumulate. The vedic tradition does not frown on the accumulation of wealth, and in fact regards it as the blessings of Lakshmi.

Kama is usually translated as 'desire', the inference being sex, one of the strongest of human desires. In fact it is more than that because pleasure or enjoyment can come from education, family, activities, as well as desire for spiritual knowledge.

Moksha is said to be the ultimate destination of life; The accomplishment of spiritual enlightenment and freedom from rebirth. Moksha is generally thought to be rarely attained by anyone other than ascetic monks who spend their lifetimes in meditation. But the vedic tradition holds that it is equally available to those who have a family and are active in the world.

### Moksha

There is much confusion about the state of enlightenment and how to achieve it. Essentially, moksha is freedom from delusion (moha), illusion (maya) and the play of the three fundamental components of existence, called the gunas (sattva/creation, rajas/action and tamas/destruction). What is clear from the Bhagavad Gita is that one does not have to be a renunciate, monk or recluse to achieve this state of consciousness.

Spiritual texts frequently speak in terms of detachment, but true detachment is not detachment from the world, but a detachment from the frequently overwhelming and stressful effects of being active in the world.

In the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2 verse 45) Krishna teaches Arjuna to "be without the three gunas" ("nistraigunyo bhavarjuna"), meaning that he should maintain a state of consciousness in which the mind is no longer at the mercy of the karmic forces of creation (the three gunas). Through our spiritual practices, mantras, pujas and meditation, and guidance from a good teacher, this door of Self-realisation gradually opens to us.

The Gita teaches that there are two paths to moksha, the path of the recluse and the path of the householder. For the path of the householder, it means that we have a role in society, based on our dharma or natural role in life. The Gita teaches that marriage and family are the foundations of society.

Marriage and family life uphold dharma in society, and this is why the 7th house of marriage in the Vedic chart is 11th from the 9th house of dharma, as the 11th from any house are "the fruits" of that house.

The fruit of dharma (9th house) is marriage (7th house), and the fruits of marriage are children (5th house is 11th from the 7th house).



In Vedic times, many great saints were married with families, and so the path of the householder is about being fully integrated into society, fully accepting one's familial responsibilities, and of course being fully committed to one's sadhana, or spiritual practice.

The dharma of marriage is about seeing the divine in our spouse, and since our partner is always our mirror, it is about realizing that our partner will give us everything that we need to attain liberation or spiritual maturity.

### Summary

The 4th house is thus a primary house for moksha, and it is also the house of home and mother – that is why the 4th house is a real key to moksha in the chart of the householder.

The 4th house is also the house of the mind and heart. A healthy 4th house gives happiness and a warm nurturing personality. Of course malefic planets here can be a real problem, giving confused and deluded thinking (Rahu), coldness (Saturn) or anger and aggression (Mars, Sun, Ketu).

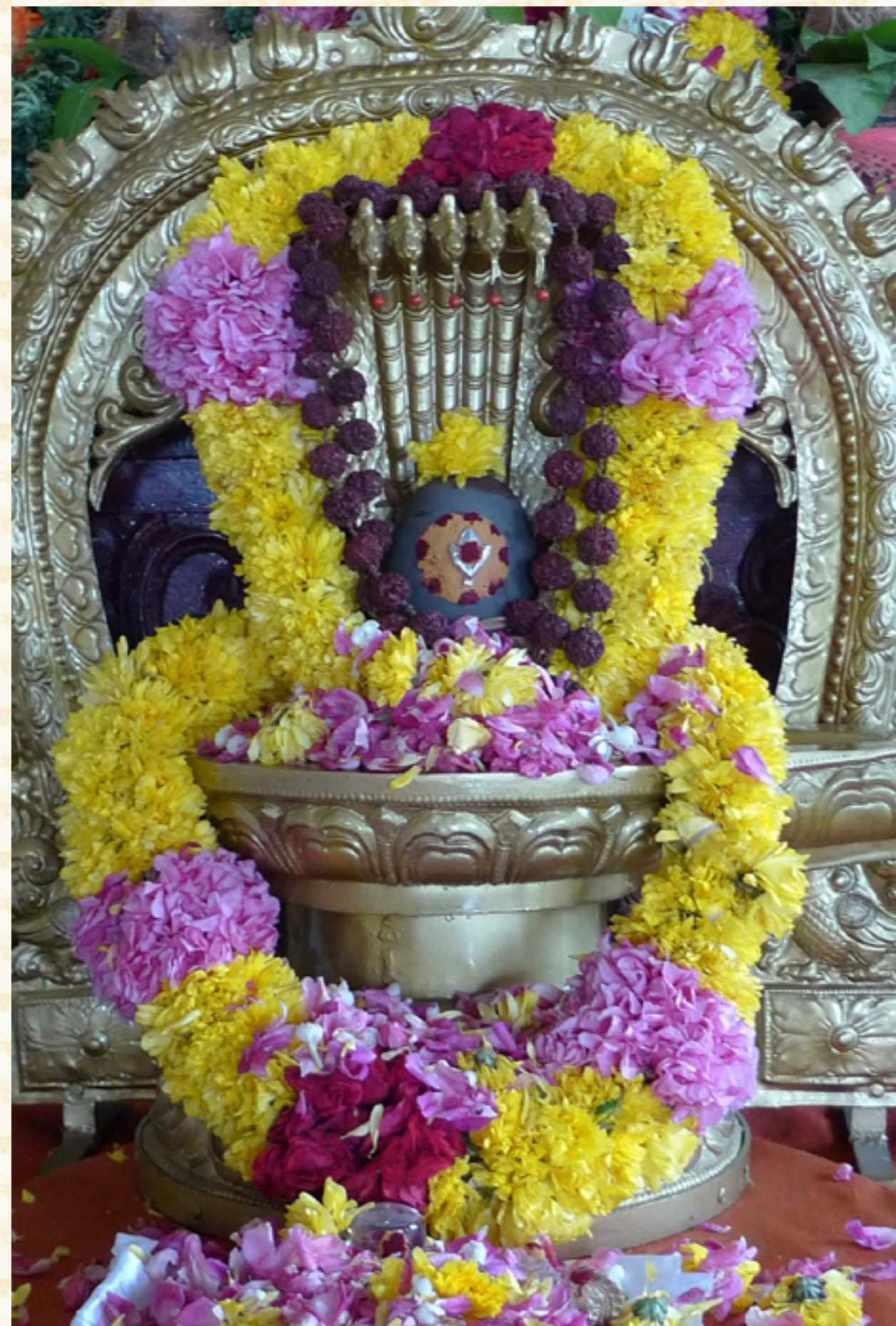
The state of our mind and heart (4th house), our 'internal happiness', is also a main factor in determining whether we will marry or not, and the way we interact in all our relationships, not just with our mother.

In the end, it is our unhealthy thinking in both head and heart, that is the root cause of much of our suffering. As we progress spiritually and remove our blockages and stress, we begin to unlock the healing potential of the 4th house.

A wonderful mantra to help dissolve any harshness or coldness in the head or heart is that of Chamunda Devi or Durga:

**Om Aim Hrim Klim Chamundaye Vichche.**

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## Saturn Retrograde.... and Remedies

by Anne Beversdorf

As you are probably aware, Saturn went retrograde earlier this year. This means that for some time, this slow moving planet will appear to be moving backwards in the sky.

Why does this matter? Planets are stronger when retrograde. KN Rao teaches us that retrograde planets make aspects from their sign and from the previous sign, meaning they will give twice as many aspects when they are retrograde. And a strong planet is not necessarily a good planet. It is stronger to do what it will, whether that be good or bad.

What do we generally think about Saturn? Well, this planet usually gets a bad rap. Saturn offers some unique and valuable gifts and it must be respected.

Here are qualities of Saturn when it's strong in a positive way: Authoritativeness, discipline, responsibility, conservatism, practicality, realism, durability, constancy, consistency, perseverance, prudence, frugality, endurance, industry, thrift, power to keep secrets, stability, self-control, dutifulness, faithfulness, chastity,

ability to concentrate, and longevity.

Here are problems that come from Saturn being strong and bad: Pain—especially bones, muscles, ligaments, joints, teeth; diseases due to coldness, consumption, paralysis, chronic illness, bone diseases, eczema, timidity, diffidence, anxiety, fear, bad dreams, poverty, instability, shame, delays, humiliation, inhibition, loneliness, isolation, depression, mental or physical rigidity, stinginess, disappointments, resignation, melancholy, suspiciousness, doubt, difficulties, laziness, lethargy, idleness, tendency to be easily discouraged, sorrow, misfortunes, death, and excessive use of the “good” expressions—e.g., too much discipline, authority, etc.

If you are experiencing too much Bad Saturn or not enough Good Saturn, you must befriend this greatest of all visible planets. The easiest way is to have Puja. net to do Saturn pujas for you. In addition, you can and should take action yourself.

The principle for propitiation is to give a Saturn-related item to a Saturn related person or place on nine consecutive Saturdays.

For example, you can give your TIME and visit the elderly, shut-ins, or prisoners on Saturday, bringing them dark-colored foods (think coffee or rye bread) or purple flowers. You can give these things to a homeless person on Saturdays, or feed crows dark seeds or rye bread.

You can light a dark blue candle on Saturday morning, surrounding it with pictures of old people, grandparents, laborers, renunciates, and with purple flowers, rye seeds and blue stones.

Take a few moments to recite at least nine repetitions of Mrytunjaya Mantra every day. Or spend two minutes repeating Om Nama Shivaya. You will be surprised at how quickly the situation begins to improve.

*Anne Beversdorf is a vedic astrologer who also uses western astrology in her practice. You can visit her website, [www.stariel.com](http://www.stariel.com) for more remedies or contact her directly ([anne@stariel.com](mailto:anne@stariel.com)) to arrange a personal consultation.*





## Narasimha Mantra

Narasimha is a fierce form of Vishnu who protects the young man Prahlada from his evil demon father, Hiranyakashipu. The father had gained a boon from Brahma that he would not be killed indoors or out, or by man or beast or during the day or night.

As these stories tend to go, the demon set out to torment the gods and cause trouble on earth. He became quite a problem and eventually acquired a kingdom on earth. As King he decreed that only he was to be worshipped, not any god.

Unfortunately for him, his son (seen in the lower left of the image above) had been sent to study with a rishi who taught him about Vishnu and the vedic traditions. The son was exceptionally intelligent and devoted, much to the annoyance

of his father.

One day the father had tied his son to a pillar in his castle, asking the son where was Vishnu to rescue him? The son replied that he was everywhere. In anger, the father kicked a pillar in the hall saying that if he was indeed in the pillar he should come out and show himself.

At that time, Vishnu assumed the form of a man with a lion's head and emerged from the pillar. He grabbed Hiranyakashipu and sat in a doorway, waiting for twilight and when the time arrived, disemboweled Hiranyakashipu. Images of this can be quite gory!

Afterwards, Narasimha was so wound up that the gods were afraid that he would destroy the cosmos, so they asked Lakshmi to join him. She sat on his lap and spoke sweetly to him, calming him down. In this form he is called Lakshmi Narasimha. There is another form where he is seated in a yoga posture and he is called Yoga Narasimha.

There is a very simple Narasimha Mantra which attracts his protection and is wonderful for defusing tense or intractable situations affecting the family. It is one of the few mantras that seem to release its power quickly and without long practice.

You can use this mantra in a number of different ways;

- Perform simple mantra japa once or twice a day. Using a mala you can count 108 repetitions as you recite the mantra mentally or softly out loud and with eyes closed or open.
- If you prefer to use the mantra as more of a meditation mantra, sit with the eyes closed and repeat it silently for a period of 10-15 minutes. The repetition should be without strain as you just listen to the sound of the mantra. There is no goal for number of repetitions, just the time of repeating it in a relaxed manner.
- To remove a specific obstacle or support a family member, have the desired result in mind, or the individual in mind as you repeat the mantra with your attention gently resting on the area of your heart for about 5-10 minutes.

**OM Narasimha TA VA DA SO HOOM**







## Are Yagya Better Than Gems?

Not necessarily! Gems can be an effective way to work with the energies present in one's jyotish chart, and they certainly look nice. If you visit India you'll likely notice that the priests seem to enjoy wearing astrological rings. Nothing wrong with hedging your bets!

I like yagyas because unlike gems, you do not have to worry about trying to balance influences. Yagyas simply and directly add purity (sattva) and dissolve karmas, whereas wearing a gem will strengthen both the good and the bad aspects of a planet depending on the houses the planets owns. It can be very tricky to balance the effects of a gem and care must be taken to get it right otherwise there can be unfortunate consequences.

Remember that every planet except the Sun and Moon, own two signs. The complication comes when one of them is good and one is bad. For example, if you have a Virgo ascendent, then Saturn rules the 5th house of luck, fun and romance. It would be nice to strengthen that! But at the same time Saturn owns the 6th house of obstacles, confrontation, stubbornness, and ill health. Do you really want those qualities to be stronger?

In general we can imagine that our karma is like a bank account. We always have

a certain positive balance available to us and this is called punya (good karma) in Sanskrit. When a "bill", called papas (bad karma) in Sanskrit, comes due, we can use our bank account balance to offset the debt and simply pay it and be done with it. On the other hand, if our account balance is not sufficient, then we have to go to work to pay off the bill, which is not nearly as enjoyable.

In our analogy the yagyas work in two ways. First of all they add to our positive account balance through the increase of good karmas (punya) and at the same time they decrease the bad karmas (papas); more money and fewer bills. The Vedas are actually quite clear about this and there is a beautiful section in the Gita in which Krishna explains how through the performance of yagyas we feed the gods and they in turn feed us. Indeed yagya is at the core of the whole vedic tradition and is mentioned in the first passage of the Rig Veda, the oldest and largest of the Vedas.

When things go wrong, it is just because our positive karmic balance has not been sufficient to offset the bill that has come due. To the extent that the yagyas added to the positive balance, they have worked for us, but that doesn't always mean that the entire bill has been paid off. Things still go wrong, but they go less wrong than they would have otherwise.

Obviously we are in times that are generally very difficult for many people. Astrologically I think there is good reason to be hopeful because as the year progresses both Jupiter and Rahu/Ketu will change signs, and then when Saturn goes direct again in June, things will start to move in a more positive direction for the world and us as individuals.

In summary, yagyas work by dissolving karmas and once they are gone they are gone for good. They empower us to attract good solutions in our lives and to make better choices. The inner silence that develops helps to keep us grounded and even when problems arrive we are not so shaken by them. Yes, yagyas can solve specific problems, but they are also a spiritual practice that increasingly develops a level of spiritual protection, and momentum towards enlightenment.

***"Through yagya you sustain the gods and those gods will sustain you. By sustaining one another, you will attain the highest good."***

***- Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, chapter 3, verse 11***





**"I hereby bring about unity of your hearts and unity of minds, free from malice.  
May each one of you love the other as a cow loves its new-born calf."  
–Atharva Veda**