

SRI SATHYA SAI CENTRAL COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA
National Spiritual Wing

R5 – VIJAYA DASHAMI

1. Name of religious event / Observance / Celebration:

Dasara or Vijaya Dashami or Nava Ratri

2. Picture:

2.1 Picture or symbol pertaining to the particular observance/celebration



2.2 The date/period of the religious event

“Dasara or Navaratri is a ten day festival, usually falling in the month of October”

<http://www.srisathyasai.org.in/Pages/AshramInfo/Dasara.htm>

3. About the festival:

“Dasara or Navaratri is a ten day festival, usually falling in the month of October, that is celebrated all over India in the worship of the Divine as the Mother principle. Bhagawan has explained that the festival of Dasara is a celebration of the triumph of good over evil signifying the vanquishing of the ‘six demons’ of lust, anger, attachment, greed, pride and jealousy within us.

Veda Purusha Sapthaha Jnana Yagna

Over the past many years the festival of Dasara in Prasanthi Nilayam has been closely associated with the ‘Veda Purusha Sapthaha Jnana Yagna’, the week-long sacrificial ritual conducted in the Divine Presence, for the welfare of the whole world.

After Bhagawan grants Darshan in Sai Kulwant Hall, pundits (Vedic scholars) followed by the students of Bhagawan clad in saffron silk dhotis and white angavastrams (traditional Indian attire consisting of a cloth wrapped around the shoulders) walk in procession to the Poornachandra Auditorium, the venue of the Yagnam, amidst vedam chanting and the auspicious tunes of the ‘Nadaswaram’. The Yagnam commences with the ceremonial churning and rubbing of wooden blocks to produce fire in the most natural way. The sacred fire thus produced, is placed in the ‘Yagna Kunda’ (sacrificial altar into which oblations are offered).

The most important component of the Yagnam is the Rudra yagam where the oblations are made in the Yagna Kunda to Lord Shiva while chanting hymns from the ‘Sri Rudram’. In addition to this, other rituals like – Surya Namaskara, Sahasralinga Archana, Srimad Bhagavatha Parayana, Ramayana Parayana and the Devi Mahatmyam are simultaneously performed. Amidst these rituals, a few pundits continuously chant various hymns from the Vedas, joined by Bhagawan’s students. The Yagna concludes with the ‘Poornahuti’ the final oblation that is offered amidst chanting of the ‘Chamakam’ on the Vijayadashami day

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Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha

The evening programmes are held in Sai Kulwant Hall, under the auspices of the Prasanthi Vidwan Mahasabha, where many speakers, primarily students and functionaries of Bhagawan's institutions, address the august gathering on many topics concerning spirituality and philosophy, Bhagawan's teachings and experiences of devotees. Following these talks, Bhagawan would bless everyone with His Divine Discourse

Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva

In addition to the Yagna, another very important aspect of the Dasara Celebrations in the recent years is the 'Grama Seva' (Village Service) where the students of Bhagawan's School and University visit Puttaparthi and surrounding villages and distribute Bhagawan's Prasadam consisting of food and clothes, as a symbol of Bhagawan's love and blessings to the people

4. Suggested programme or method of observing the event:

Suggestion/Guide for South Africa at centre level (a programme & other):

- Conduct a ten (10) day programme
- Conduct bhajans (3 Oms, bhajans, Aarathi)
- Chant / sing any Devi stotrams (hymns)
- Have a talk on Vijaya Dashami for about 10 minutes.
- Our Bal Vikas / SSE children could present a short cultural item/s.
- Total duration 60 minute EACH DAY.
- Grama Seva (food & clothes to the poor and needy)

5. Verbal dedication / prayer / chant / other - with meanings:

6. Any personal offering / sacrifice / practice

What should you do during these ten days of the Navarathri festival? Convert your will power (ichchaa shakthi) into a yearning for God. Convert purposeful action (kriya shakthi) into a force for doing Divine actions. Convert your power of discernment (jnaana shakthi) into the Divine Itself".

Divine Discourse: October 9, 1994

7. Other material for preparation / discussion:

7.1 Any other recommended material that could be used for additional information / preparation, such as VCDs, DVDS, books, charts, etc

8. Bibliography / Reference Section for all references used

1. <http://www.srisathyasai.org.in/Pages/AshramInfo/Dasara.htm>

9. Divine Discourse or extracts:

Excerpts from Bhagawan's Discourses:

“The life of a man who cannot respect and love one's mother is utterly useless. Recognizing one's mother as the very embodiment of all divine forces, one must show reverence to her and treat her with love. This is the true message that this nine-night festival (the Navaratri) gives us. The supreme Shakti manifests herself in the form of Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati. Durga grants us energy - physical, mental, and spiritual. Lakshmi bestows on us all forms of wealth - not just money but intellectual wealth, the wealth of character, and others. Even health is a kind of wealth. She grants untold riches to us. And Saraswati bestows intelligence, the capacity for intellectual inquiry, and the power of discrimination on us. The Navaratri festival is celebrated in order to proclaim the power of the goddesses to the world. One's own mother is the combination of all these divine beings. She provides us with energy, wealth, and intelligence. She constantly desires our advancement in life. So she represents all the three goddesses that we worship during the Navaratri festival.”

Divine Discourse: 14th October 1988

"Indians (Bharatiyas) have been celebrating the Navarathri festival from ancient times as a mode of worship of Devi, the Divine as mother. They worship Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati during those nine days. Who are these three? These three forms have fascinated man. Their esoteric significance is represented by three potencies (shakthis): karma, devotion (upaasana) and spiritual wisdom (jnaana).

The significance of Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati has to be rightly understood. The three represent three kinds of potencies in man: will power (ichchaa shakthi), the power of purposeful action (kriya shakthi), and the power of discernment (jnaana shakthi).

Saraswati is manifest in man as the power of speech (vaak). Durga is present in the form of energy and dynamism. Lakshmi is manifest in the form of will power. The body indicates purposeful action (kriya shakthi). The mind is the repository of will power (ichchaa shakthi). The Atma is the power of discernment (jnaana shakthi). Purposeful action comes from the body, which is material. The power that activates the inert body and makes it vibrant is will power. The power that induces the vibrations of will power is the power of discernment (jnaana shakthi), which causes radiation of energy. These three potencies are represented by the mantra, Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvaha. Bhur represents the earth (bhuloka). Bhuvah represents the life force, conscience in man. Suvaha represents the power of radiation. All three are present in man. Thus, Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati dwell in the human heart.

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