

DEEPAVALI

This pooja falls on Aswija Bahula chaturdasi. It is believed that those who do not take oil bath on this day are destined to go to hell.

Pooja procedure : People take oil bath on this day. Children enjoy bursting crackers. In many places, new broomsticks are bought, cleaned with water, kumkum and haldi applied and floors are cleaned with it. Oil lamps are lit and placed one before the tulsi and one near the water-tap, two in the open and one near the God for prosperity.

Story of Deepavali

Deepavali or Diwali is very enthusiastically celebrated all over India for five continuous days. Each day has its own significance with a number of myths, legends and beliefs.

1. The first day is called DHANTRAYODASHI.
2. The second day is called NARAKA CHATURDASHI
3. The third day is called LAKSHMIPOOJA
4. The fourth day is called VARSHA PRATIPADA
5. The fifth day is BHAVU – BHEEJ or BHRATHRU DWITEEYA or also called YAMA DWITEEYA

Significance of each day's celebration and the legend behind them are as follows :

DHANTRAYODASHI

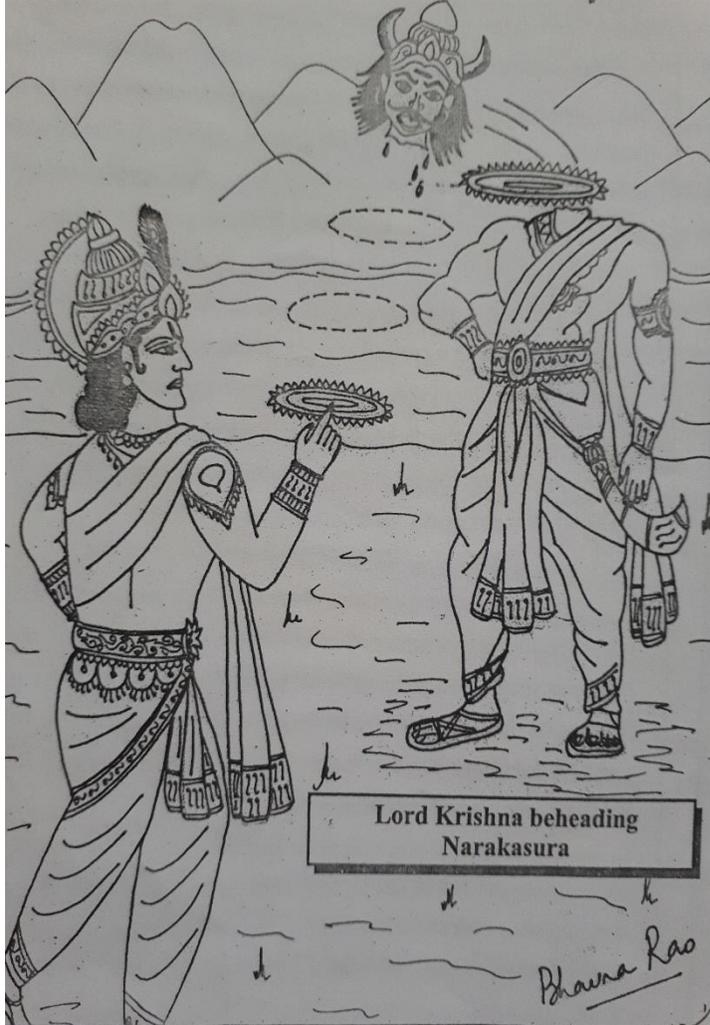
King Hima had a sixteen year old son. According to his horoscope he was destined to die due to a snakebite on the fourth day of his marriage. Coming to know of this information, on the fourth day of his marriage, his wife did not allow him to sleep. She laid all ornaments, lots of gold and silver coins in a heap at the entrance of the bedroom and she kept on singing. Yama, the God of death appeared in the guise of a serpent. His eyes were getting dazzled by the bright light of the ornaments. He got on to the top of the heap and sat listening to the princess's melodious songs and in the morning, he quietly left. Thus the princess saved her husband from the clutches of death. This day therefore, came to be known as YAMADEEPDAN.

NARAKA CHATURDASHI

Narakasura was a wicked demon-king of Pragjyotisha. He was born to Goddess Earth (Bhooma devi) as her son and hence also called Bhaume.

Once he assumed the form of four tusked elephant and carried off the daughter of Vishwakarma and outraged her. He also seized the daughter of Gandharvas, Gods, men and the nymphs themselves. By such wicked acts he collected more than 16000 damsels in his harem.

Having come to know of his wicked deeds, Lord Krishna, riding on his garuda vahana, with Sathyabama on his lap entered the city of Pragjyotisha, killed all the wicked forces in fierce battle. So much blood flowed from the several bodies that literally



converted the city of Pragjyotisha into a city of blood, Sonitapura, which became the new capital. Mura, a demon loyal to Narakasura challenged Krishna again and in a stiff fight Krishna beheaded him. Then in a bloody battle, Narakasura himself came out, but he was also beheaded by Lord Krishna with his chakra (discus). Krishna granted him liberation and saved him from Naraka (Hell or sufferings of samsara).

LAKSHMI POOJA

This story is from Kathopanishad. A small boy called Nichiketa believed that Yama, the God of death, was as black as Amavasya. But when he met Yama, he was surprised to see him as a dignified calm person. Yama explained to Nichiketa that on this Deepavali day (Lakshmi pooja day), only by passing through the darkness of death man sees light of highest wisdom and enlightenment. Nichiketa realized the importance of material life and the significance of

death. All his doubts were cleared.

VARSHA PRATIPADA

In Vishnu Purana, mention is made of how people of Gokul used to celebrate this day in honour of Lord Indra worshipping him at the end of every monsoon. One particular year young Krishna stopped this practice. Angered by this, Lord Indra sent a huge deluge to submerge Gokul. Krishna saved his Gokul by lifting up the Goverdhan mountain by his little finger and holding it over his people as an umbrella.

BHAVU BHEEJ

Yama, the God of death invited his sister, Yami on this day. She put the auspicious tilak on his forehead, garlanded him and arranged for a feast and both enjoyed well. Yama, while going back, gave her a special gift as a token of affection and in return, Yami also did the same. Yama announced that this day is auspicious to maintain cordial relations between brothers and sisters. Therefore, this day is also called "Yama Dwiteeya". It becomes imperative for the brother to go to his sister's house on this day to celebrate Bhavu bheej.