

A Monthly  
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of Spiritual  
Science



## BHAVANI AMMAN

The Goddess Who Celebrates the Sacred Aadi Month

- ★ Amazing Saints!
- ★ The Lamp Lit With Water!
- ★ For Relief From Problems!
- ★ The Secret Of The Herbs!

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# SATHVIDYA



It is also science to know about what we were doing in our previous birth and what we were thinking about! We may be able to learn about our earlier birth only if our memory is intense and widespread! Buddha didn't accept God but believed in our earlier birth. If you light a lamp, you can light another lamp from it and also many other lamps, one after the other, from it. The memories of our past birth keep following us, likewise. This is also the reason why many problems keep on chasing us. A lamp can become lightless and dark when not lighted next. Likewise, our brain, too, can give rise to new thoughts when it is able to forget the memories of the past. And only then we might be able to forget our problems and move towards a new path and a new life.

~ Dr. Baskaran Pillai

Dear SatVidhya Readers! The Aadi month, hailed and worshiped as the Amman Month, 'the Month of the Goddess' has already dawned. People are flocking to the temples and started their worships. Rains, nature's gift, also looks plentiful, and the farmers are getting ready for their agricultural activities like sowing. The rivers with their sandy beds are eagerly awaiting the torrents of the Aadi flow. And hopes have begun germinating in people's minds that things may look up from now on and there might be a bright future ahead!



'Oh God, enough is enough! Whatever be the waves of problems that come from now on, let them all dash against the shore and get neutralized. "Oh, Mother Goddess, you are our only protection!" Let us so rejoice, celebrate, sow the seeds of love, and live in the Dharmic way, the righteous path!

With Love  
(Printed and Published)  
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## **The Holy Place Where God Blessed Saint Thirugnana Sambandar with a Pearl Palanquin**

Once, Saint Thirugnana Sambandar was going to the Kodikkalam Theerthapureeswarar Temple along with his disciples for singing the sacred Thevaram hymns and worshiping the Lord there. On the way, he came to the present day Eraiyur, known earlier in the holy Thevara Thirumurais as Maranpadi, worshiped Dhaham Theertha Pureeswarar, ‘the Lord who quenched the thirst,’ enshrined in the temple there and stayed in that holy place itself.

The Lord got pleased with Thirugnana Sambandar and his disciples, provided them sumptuous food, and quenched their thirst that night. This is the reason the Lord of this place got the name Dhaham Theertha Pureeswarar, and the Goddess, who gave them food, came to be called Annapoorni.



This place is situated on the Chennai-Ulundurpet-Vriddhachalam route on the

Pennadam-Thozhudur-Vriddhachalam road, 20 kilometers from Thozhudur. If one were to take the Cuddalore-Vriddhachalam route, this place is 4 kms from Pennadam railway station. Dhaham Theertha Pureeswarar is located in that Eraiyur, also hailed as Maranpadi.

Besides, Lord Shiva was happy to know that Thirugnana Sambandar was coming to the Kodikkalam Theerthapureeswarar Temple for singing sacred hymns in praise of the Lord there and sent Vedic scholars to receive him the next morning. In addition, the Lord also provided the saint with Muthu Sivigai, the grand pearl palanquin, even without his asking for it, and arranged a memorable welcome with Vedic chants and music. Thus, the Lord of this place is the one who blessed Thirugnana Sambandar with a pearl palanquin, pearl umbrella, and other Shaivite symbols without any demand.

The name of the deity of this temple is Anandeeswarar, who is also called Arathurai Nathar. The Goddess is known in the names Ananda Nayaki, Tripura Sundari, Arathurai Nayaki. The holy water here is the Neeva River, and the sacred tree is Banyan.

This also remains the primary among the temples of Nadunadu, the central region. This is a very ancient place of Shiva worship called variously with devotion as Thirunelvoyil, Arathurai, Thiruvathurai, and Thiruvatturai. This is also a highly revered Shiva temple in praise of



whose Lord, saints Thirugnana Sambandar, Thirunavukkarasar, well-known as Appar, and Sundaramoorthy Swamigal have sung Thevaram hymns.

This is also believed to be a place where people can take a holy dip in the sacred waters and pray for the removal of their ancestors' sins. This, too, is regarded suitable for performing ancestral worships and ceremonies, and hence, people can receive immense ancestral blessings by worshipping in this place. This also happens to be the celebrated holy place where Gods, Devas, the celestial beings, and sages like Agastya offered prayers.

This Kodikkalam Sri Theerthapureeswarar Temple is in the Thozhudur- Vriddhachalam bus route 20 kms from Thozhudhur; and is in Kodikkalam on the Cuddalore-Pennadam road. Lord Shiva can be worshiped here in all his majesty and grandeur as Sri Theerthapureeswarar.

By  
Saiva Siddhanta Semmal  
Poet Cheenu Senthamarai  
Cuddalore



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## “THANNEER VITTAAN KIZHANGU” (THE TUBER THAT SHEDS WATER)

This Thanneer Vittaam Kizhangu is only one among the numerous natural herbs that Siddhars have shown to us! This belongs to the creeper variety of plants commonly seen on the fences.

Only 3 or 4 such creepers will be there, spread across a fence. But, if we search for its root, locate it and dig at that place, we may find an incredibly large number of tubers there.

These tubers can grow even in dry places and may appear in the form of long bundles. If we dry these in the Sun, their water content will evaporate completely, and these may become like dry leaves. Now we may understand why this tuber has got the name Thanneer Vittaam Kizhangu.

### Diseases It Can Heal:

This Thanneer Vittaam Kizhangu herb has the power to cure a variety of diseases or medical conditions like diabetes called ‘sugar’ in common parlance, venereal heat, body heat, the body turning pale because of poor blood circulation due to lack of iron supplements, etc.!

Its powder is available in stores selling traditional drugs. This can be consumed by mixing in honey or milk.

This herb is also available in the form of the Ayurveda medicine called Sadhavaari. People can use it in the right way under proper guidance and protect themselves from the much-feared and widely-spread diabetes.

Let us use this amazing herb, created by God and shown to us by the Siddhars, effectively and try to live healthy lives.



~ Ra. Panneerselvam

# RAMUDU SAMIYAR!

## The Saints who Live even after their Deaths

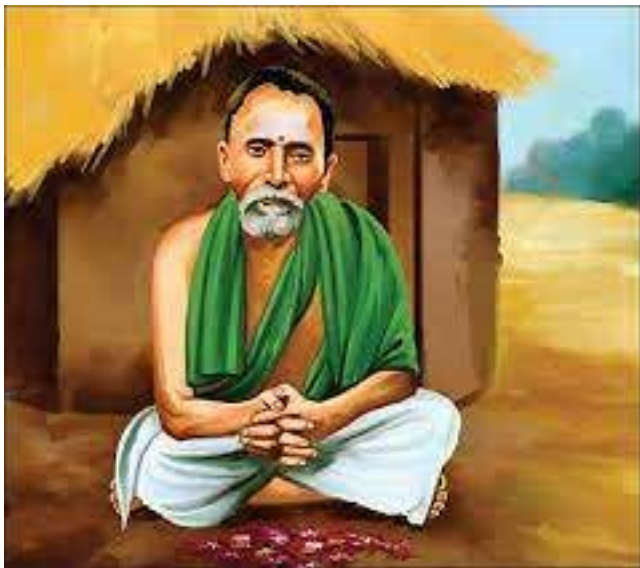


India is a spiritual land, for sure! Saints, the realized souls, keep coming to this land continuously, generation after generation. They are all nothing less than the institutions of divine wisdom.....

These compassionate souls have been taking birth from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, the Cape Comorin, from time to time. And it is only their divine grace that keeps protecting us at all times.

These people may not remain visible to our normal eyes, and they might also look only ordinary in appearance.

By God's grace, here we will learn about one such remarkable saint under the series 'The Saints who Live even after their Deaths.'



In the Mudhunagar area of Cuddalore town, the headquarters of Cuddalore district, once there lived a saint.

His name was Ramudu Samiyar, where the Tamil word Samiyar stands for the ascetic. He had a fair complexion, an unclean body covered with dirt, and a loincloth as his only dress. Nobody had seen him taking a bath, and it looked like he didn't take a bath for months together. Still, there was no foul smell at all around him, and instead, only the fragrance of the sandal paste will

emanate from his body.

He will be seen lying down in the Cuddalore Mudhunagar Kumarak Koil (temple), in the corner of the circumambulatory passage, facing the wall. He will not turn to look at anyone. If someone offers him food occasionally, he will accept and receive it in both hands, eat it, and wipe his hands in his head. He will not drink water.

He will walk along Kumarak Koil Street, through the marketplace, both in the mornings and evenings.

He will not ask for anything or speak to anyone. Many used to keep making fun of him, tugging

at his loincloth, and laughing at him with disdain. Some may also tease him, calling him ‘dumb Samiyar,’ and ‘dirty Samiyar.’

Ramudu Samiyar will not bother to look back. He will also not stretch out his hands to anyone seeking alms. Many may try to offer him bananas or some food items, but he will walk away laughing indifferently.

But on some days, he himself may choose to sit in some shops and even eat something there at times. And those shops may witness extraordinary sales on that day! Also, huge buildings stand today, at places where he so sat once.

This Ramudu Samiyar will speak well, and this he will do only with one person, and this person will only be that young boy. He will also eat only the food brought by that boy.

That boy used to address him affectionately as ‘Thatha,’ the grandfather, and the Samiyar used to tell him many devotional stories. He also taught the boy many good things and thus stayed in his heart.

Ramudu Samiyar was thus spending his time in the temple Kumarak Koil. He never used to go to anyone’s house but strangely went to the boy’s house in the Kumrak Koil Street, and there he ate the food they gave him, raised his hands, and blessed the boy’s family members.

The Samiyar, who was moving closely with that boy for many years, then went away somewhere and was not seen afterward.

The dilapidated temple where he stayed was later renovated beautifully, thanks to Ramudu Samiyar’s blessings. The street where he walked also became better now.

The boy’s house, too, has seen much better times and fortunes since then. That boy has also seen significant spiritual advancement! And that boy is my humble self.

By

Saiva Siddhanta Semmal

Poet Cheenu Senthamarai

Cuddalore



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## FOR RELIEF FROM PROBLEMS...

In our section, 'The Greatness of the Mantras,' we are seeing that every one of the Soundarya Lahari songs that sing the praise of the Mother Goddess has divine power.

And continuing, here let us learn about the greatness of the song that helps 'get relief from problems.'

### The Divine Song:

"Sudha Sindhor Maddhye Suravitapi Parivrtte

Mani Dvipe Nipopavanavati Chintamani Grhe

Sivaakaare Manche Paramasiva Paryanka Nilayam

Bhajanti Tvam Dhanyah Katichana Chidananda Laharim"

### Meaning:

The ocean of nectar; in its midst, is the island of precious gems in the form of a grove of Karpaga trees! In the Chintamani mansion therein, surrounded by the sweet-smelling trees; Oh, the wave in the ocean of divine wisdom, seated on Shiva's lap! Those who worship you will all be virtuous and blessed! Oh, divine mother, please remove all their problems!

### How to Chant the Mantra:

Mix sandal and saffron in a silver plate, grind it, spread the paste, and draw the Yantra, the spiritual diagram pertaining to this Mantra on it. Then light a sesame oil lamp and perform the Pooja.

Sit facing the Northern direction, and chant this Mantra 1008 times daily, for 16 days. It is better to perform the Durga Ashtothra Archana, the light and sound worship, using red flowers!

Make an offering of pepper rice along with Vella Payasam, the Kheer made of jaggery and coconut.

If we make oblations as above and chant this Mantra properly with devotion and faith, we can get relieved from all types of problems we are facing and get a peaceful life.

The Mother Goddess will bless us!



# ASHADA NAVARATRI, AND VARAHI AMMAN'S BLESSINGS!!



The Navaratri worships are performed as a form of venerating and praising the Goddesses in the Hindu religion. It has remained a practice to treat 9 auspicious days as Navaratri in line with the various seasons and offering prayers to Shaktis, the mighty Goddesses. Thithis, the Moon phases that occur from Amavasya, the New Moon day to Navami, the 9th phase every month in a year, are meant for the Goddesses. The scriptures say that there are 12 types of Navaratri in the 12 months, and of these 12, 4 are regarded as very important Navaratri.



**The Four Types of Navaratri:** The festival celebrated in the spring season is Vasant Navaratri. (9 days from the Amavasya of Tamil month Panguni (March-April))

Aashada Navaratri is the one celebrated in the Tamil month Aani (June-July) (9 days from Aani Amavasya)

The one observed in Purattasi Tamil month (September-October) is Sharada Navaratri (9 days from Purattasi Amavasya)

Shyamala Navaratri is celebrated in the Thai month (January-February) (9 days from Thai Amavasya)

**Ashada Navaratri:** People worship the Goddess in the Tamil months Aani and Aadi for agricultural prosperity and fertility.

There could be a generous flow of water in the rivers in this period. Ashada Navaratri is celebrated in this season only for offering sincere prayers to the Mother Goddess for improvement in agricultural activities and prosperity of the world. Ashada Navaratri is generally observed for better agricultural produce.

There is a belief that worshipping Goddess Varahi during Ashada Navaratri can bestow much prosperity. This Navaratri of Aani month lasts from Prathamai thithi that follows Amavasya to the Navami thithi.

Ashada Navaratri is well-celebrated in some places in the Northern parts of the country. In Tamil Nadu, Ashada Navaratri is observed with enthusiasm for Goddess Varahi (Varahi Amman) housed in a separate shrine in the famous Big Temple in Thanjavur. Abishekam, the hydration ceremony, and special decorations are done to her daily these days.

### Sri Varahi Amman:

Among the Sapta Kannis, the 7 divine maidens, Varahi sports a very different appearance and wields immense power. Goddess Varahi appeared as an aspect of Lord Vishnu, who took the form of Varaha, the wild boar, and retrieved the earth. She is a rare combination of brute, animal power, and divine characteristics. As she was born an aspect of Ambigai, the supreme feminine force, she combines in herself all the 3 features of Shiva, Hari, and Shakti.

Varahi Amman, who can subdue any force, holds the plow and pestle in her 2 rear hands, while her front hands display Abhaya, the protective and Varadha, the boon-giving postures. She is dark-complexioned and has buffalo as her mount.



She can help win over the enemies and clear obstacles, and people believe that those who worship Varahi will not face any difficulties at all in life. In the olden days, before proceeding on war, the kings used to pray to her for destroying their enemies and victory.

### Varahi Amman in Thanjavur Big Temple:

In the Brihadishvarar Temple in Thanjavur (Thanjavur Big Temple), Varahi Amman is seated in a separate shrine. Here, Varahi worship is regarded as significant and sacred. King Raja Raja Chozha, who built the big temple, will seek her blessings before starting any important activity. And he made it a practice to pray to her before starting on any war.

### Varahi Amman Worship:

The obstacles, complications, and unending enmities in the lives of those who worship Varahi Amman, will get resolved. People who continue to worship her can get relieved from evil energies like witchcraft and problems posed by enemies.

Her grace can also make agriculture-related businesses and activities more profitable, and matters concerning properties like houses and lands beneficial.

Varahi Amman's blessings may be definitely required for relief from long-standing litigations and legal complications. The saying 'Please don't enter into any argument with a Varahi devotee' bears testimony to her power in this regard.

If she is worshiped on Sundays, even chronic diseases can get cured. Likewise, worshiping her on - Mondays can clear mental disorders; Tuesdays can solve house and land-related issues; Wednesdays can remove debt problems; Thursdays can grant progeny blessings and good

education, and Fridays can fulfill desires.

Also, praying to her with sincerity and faith on Panchami thithi, the fifth lunar phase can bestow many benefits. It is believed that breaking the coconut into two and lighting the ghee lamp can make her bestow the desired boons.

#### Offerings to Varahi Amman:

The offerings made to Goddess Varahi should contain plants that grow under the ground like sugar-beet (sweet potato) and potato, along with garlic and onion. This is explicitly stated in the procedure for her Pooja.

The Goddess is believed to be very fond of delicacies like Ulundhu Vadai, made from black-gram without removing its skin and mixed with garlic, Navadhanya Adai, pepper mixed Vadai, curd rice prepared without removing the butter, and Dosai.

#### Varahi Gayatri Mantra:

Om Shyamalayai Vidhmahe

Hala Hastaya Dhimahi

Tanno Varahi Prachodayaat”

Let us chant this Varahi Amman Gayathri, pray to the Goddess, and receive prosperity and success.

Let us worship Varahi Amman during Ashada Navaratri and pray to her for a life of welfare and joy.

Om Shakti.. Para Shakti..

~ Su. Sekar

Thiruvavur

# THE GREATNESS OF PERUMAL!



The specialties about Lord Vishnu fondly referred to as Perumal, who is one among the Supreme Trinity of Gods and the God of Protection, are innumerable. Let us see a few among those here.



**Vaishnava Puranas:** While the Vaishnava Puranas, the legends on Vaishnavism, are 4 in number, they contain as many as 55,000 Grantas, the sacred texts. Of these, Vishnu Purana contains 6000 Grantas; Bhagavatha Purana, 18,000 Grantas; Naradhiya Purana, 25,000 Grantas; and Karuna Purana, 6000 Grantas.

**Divya Desams:** Only 108 sacred places of Vishnu worship are hailed as Divya Desams. Of these, 106 'Perumal Koil,' that is, Vishnu Temples, are there on this earth. The balance 2 cannot be worshipped in this world. These are Thirupparkkadal, and Thiru Paramapadam.

**Lord Vishnu and Number 3:** Lord Vishnu can be seen in 3 postures in the temples, and these are the standing, seated, and reclining postures. The

principal Mantras dedicated to him are- 'Om Namo Narayanayah,' the 8-lettered Ashtakshara Mantra; 'Sriman Narayana Charanow Charanam Praphadhyae,' and 'Srimathe Narayanaya Namaha,' the Dvaya Mantra and Charama Sloka.

Such is the greatness of Lord Vishnu, to whom devotees should surrender in 3 ways. These are -

**Swaroopo Samarpanam:** Appreciate that we exist only because of his divine grace and offer ourselves to the Lord. This is one way.

**Pala Samarpanam:** This is nothing but surrendering our efforts and the results we get to the supreme Lord, himself.

**Bara Samarpanam:** This is surrendering to the Lord, even those responsibilities that can give us divine experiences. 'Vishnu' is a 3 lettered word both in Sanskrit and Tamil, and he has 3 purposes to his incarnations. These are – protect those who take shelter in him, annihilate and drive out their enemies, and establish Dharma, the righteous way of life.

**The Duties of a Vaishnava, the Vishnu Devotee:** What are the principal responsibilities as per the



traditional worship procedures?

**Abhigamanam:** Praying to Lord Vishnu for the successful discharge of that day's responsibilities.

**Upadhanam:** Collecting the materials for Pooja with a pure heart.

**Ijjai:** Offering respects and performing worships as per laid down traditional procedures.

**Suvaathyayam:** Observing the profound and secretive Thirumandhiram, Dvayam, and Charama Slokam.

**Yogam:** Meditating on the lotus feet of the Lord, constantly.

**The Physical Traits of the Lord:** The state of the truth of ever unchanging nature; the undiminishing state of divine wisdom; the Ananthathva state that is beyond the matter, place, and time; the state of Anandha, eternal bliss; and the faultless Amalathva state – these are the 5 divine states of Lord Vishnu, the resident of the great celestial ocean of milk!

**Divine Qualities:** This Supreme Lord of protection hailed as 'Nam Piran,' graces with noble qualities like Vatsalyam, Swamitvam, Sowseelyam, Soulabhyam, Gnyanam, and Shakti.

**Perumal's Avatars, the Incarnations:** While Lord Mahavishnu took so many incarnations to protect the devotees, the following 18 Avatars of his are highly acclaimed:

Matsyam, Kurmam, Varaham, Narasimham, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Balarama, Krishna, Kalki, Dattatreya, Dharma, Mohini, Hayagriva, Kapila, Vyasa, Dhanvantri, and Purusha.

Our Perumal has many such celebrated attributes to him!

~ Gitamani

## THE RARE SPIRITUAL INFORMATION



We all know that the town of Kasi (Varanasi) has the greatness of being the holy place that survived without destruction even during Pralaya, the great deluge. Similarly, there is a place in Tamil Nadu, too, not affected by the deluge!

That is a beautiful place called Thiruvaniyam! It is in the Thiruvarur district. Initially, the Linga image of the presiding deity, Vanchinatha Swami, was facing the West, but it turned towards the East during Pralaya, says the place's legend. That is why Arti is shown to the main idol on both sides, front and back.

The sacred tank located in this temple has its own significance. As per legends, the holy river

Ganga left only one of her 1000 strands in Kasi and merged with all the remaining 999 strands of water in this tank. This is the reason this is considered equal to Kasi and remains a highly efficacious holy place.

Another specialty of this temple is that there is no Navagraha shrine here! Instead, there is a single, powerful sculpture with planets Rahu and Ketu together! Those having Rahu, Ketu Dosha can perform Abishekam, the hydration ceremony, and remedial Poojas here and get relieved of all the afflictions caused by the snake planets Rahu and Ketu.

It is the Ganapati shrine which is in a prime position in all temples! But here, it is the shrine for Yama, the God of Death, that occupies that position. In the sanctum, Lord Yama Dharma, and Chitragupta, his accountant, are enshrined side by side. It is a specialty that Nandi, the bull, is seated in front of this shrine.

Ganga, the sacred river Ganges removes the sins of those who take a bath in her, but in the process, she herself accumulated many sins; prayed to Shiva and surrendered to him here for clearing her sins. Legends say that likewise, sins accumulated on Lord Yama on account of his taking the lives of the living beings, and he did penance here for relief from his sins and found a place for himself in this temple.

People pray to Lord Yama in this shrine and light as many ghee lamps as their age in years. It is a miracle happening here with the blessing of Lord Shiva that Yama himself removes the fear for life and blesses devotees with healthy lives.

A large number of devotees light ghee lamps daily here, perform Archana worship, get their fear of death removed and feel happy.

Further, acceding to the request of Yama that he should be the carrier of Shiva, the Lord has taken Yama as his divine mount here.

Goddess Mahishasura Mardini, enshrined here, is said to be efficacious for destroying enemies. This Goddess is eight-armed, and her blessed looks can remove sins and problems created by enemies.

Thiruvanjiam is a sacred place that has so much of greatness attached to it. People can visit the temple, offer worship, receive all happiness, and rise to higher levels in life.

~ Ra. Panneerselvam

# Benefits that Theipirai Ashtami can bestow!



Ashtami and Navami, the 8th and 9th lunar phases, respectively, occur in all the Tamil months. Here, let us learn in particular about the benefits that Theipirai Ashtami, the 8th lunar phase in the dark fortnight of the Moon, can bestow, month-wise.

These Theipirai Ashtamis are special in that they carry a unique name each month.

## Chithirai Month

The name of the Theipirai Ashtami that comes in this month is Sadasiva Ashtami. This day can help unite the minds of the married couples and also remove mental confusion.

## Vaikasi Month

Called Bhagavatha Ashtami, this Theipirai Ashtami can help clear debts.



## Aani Month

This is Jaya Ashtami and can help excel in education.

## Aadi Month

Aadi is known for its festivals and celebrations. Neelakanta Ashtami of this month can enhance the power of Goddess Lakshmi's grace and grant much wealth.

## Aavani Month

This Theipirai Ashtami is known as Sthanu Ashtami and can clear planetary afflictions.

## Purattasi Month

This is Sambhuka Theipirai Ashtami, which can grant longevity and destroy Pitru Dosha, the ancestral afflictions if any.

## Aippasi Month

This month's Ishwara Ashtami can clear misunderstandings and enmities with siblings and create harmony.

## Karthigai Month

This is Rudra Ashtami, which can enhance income and improve financial condition.

## Margazhi Month

Called Sankara Theipirai Ashtami, this occasion can help expand the business.

### Thai Month

This month's Theipirai Ashtami is Devatha Ashtami. This is capable of bestowing a high position and removing unnecessary fears.

### Masi Month

Maheshwara Theipirai Ashtami of this month can give opportunities for winning in competitions.

### Panguni Month

This last month's Theipirai Ashtami is Triyambaka Ashtami and can remove marriage obstacles. As per legends, for reaping the benefits that all the Theipirai Ashtamis can give, people have to take a bath in the mornings on all those Ashtami days without fail, pray to Lord Shiva, and also take Dharshan of Lord Kala Bhairava at Sunset.

~ Gitamani



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## THE LAMP LIT WITH WATER!



Once upon a time, those belonging to the Jain religion were making many serious attempts to uproot Shaivism and drive it away from our land!

That was the time when the Jains were trying to convert the followers of Shaivism to their order and trouble those who refuse to do so in many ways. The life of this Nayanmaar, the Shiva devotee, is an excellent example to show how Lord Shiva protected those who were his ardent worshippers!

Naminandi Adigal was that Nayanmaar. This Naminandi Adigal was born in Emapporur, a beautiful, sacred place en route Thiruvarur to Thiruthuraipoondi.



Naminandi Adigal is a staunch Shiva devotee. In accordance with the saying 'worshipping the Lord's feet thanks to his own grace...', Naminandi got the Lord's blessings for praying to him. But he had no means to contribute to any service in the Shiva temple; for, he was quite poor. So, in a sense, his life outside was dark; still, his heart inside remained lighted with the

Lord's infinite grace. Hence, he always had a strong urge to do something or the other for him.

He was always chanting and meditating on the 5-letter Mantra, Om Namah Shivaya, and was singing his praise. Many were surprised at his intense devotion, while a few made fun of him, too.

But Naminandi Adigal was not bothered about the happenings in the outside world but was always thinking only about the Lord who resided within him. Such was his devotion towards Shiva, which was just immeasurable! But ignorant of the greatness of his devotion, some Jains made fun of him, but he remained unaffected. But the Lord, who attached immense value to his devotion, became angry at those who ridiculed him. So, he thought of demonstrating to them the greatness of Naminandi's divine service!

The world knows how attached Shiva is to his sincere devotees. So, then, will he be sitting idle when Naminandi was facing trouble? Shiva was determined to perform a divine act to show to the world Naminandi's pure devotion. And the day that play of the Lord was to take place also came!

That day, Naminandi went to the Araneriappar temple in that village. It was evening time, and it

started getting dark, while Naminandi kept worshiping the deity and chanting his praise in his heart. But as the light was fading, the deity's image started slowly vanishing from his eyes. His God stayed very much in his heart, and so, he can worship him even in darkness without eyes, but how will others see and worship the deity in the temple, he thought.

Hence, he wanted to light a lamp in the sanctum so that others can worship the image comfortably. So he looked around for oil or ghee and asked many people for it, but of no avail.

At that time, he was happy to see a house near the temple, thought of requesting for ghee there so that a lamp could be lighted in the temple, and rushed towards the house. From the looks, it was apparent that well-to-do people were staying there; so, Naminandi became confident about

getting ghee or at least oil there.

Hearing Naminandi's voice, a man came out. He looked at the poor Naminandi, who wore only a loincloth on his waist and had nothing above it to cover his body, other than stripes of holy ash at many places and a rosary of Rudraksha beads around his neck!

This made the man look at Naminandi with hatred and disdain,

but concealing his anger, he asked Naminandi a series of questions.

"Who are you? What do you want? Why this excitement?"

Naminandi explained politely that he was unable to bear the sight of the Lord of the nearby Araneriyappar temple plunging into darkness and so wanted to light a lamp so that everyone can have the Darshan of the Deity. And he pleaded with the man to kindly give him some ghee for this purpose.

But the man of the house was quite disdainful and started teasing him with his inquiry.

"So you want everyone to have the pleasure of worshiping the compassionate Lord, Is that all? And for that, you want ghee from me, with which you will light the lamp and the deity will then be visible to all; right?"

"Yes, Sir," Naminandi replied in a piteous tone and once again pleaded with him for some ghee.

"Then, you need not beg me so much for that," the man quipped.

While Naminandi gave him a surprised look, the man continued in an arrogant tone.



“You see I am an ordinary man, while you say that the one residing in the temple is an ocean of compassion and an all-bestowing Karpaga tree. Then why don’t to go to such a one himself and request for the ghee?”

Only then Naminandi realized that the man was only teasing and taunting him. The man, who professed the Jain religion, went on further in a similar vein.

“So sir, you go and ask the amazing ‘Karpaga tree’ for ghee; if he is not giving then ask that ‘ocean of compassion’ at least for some water. Try to light the lamp with it, if possible. Will the lamp glow with water?” he mocked and laughed loudly.

Naminandi could not take it anymore, closed both his ears with his hands, and staggered towards the temple. He began wondering if his wish of lighting the temple for devotees to worship the deity will get fulfilled or not and started weeping in his heart.

“Naminandi!” suddenly, he felt like someone was calling his name, and the voice came from heaven above.

The voice continued, “I only called you. Now you need not run around anywhere asking for ghee. Take out some water from the nearby temple tank, pour it in the lamp and light it. It will glow! Don’t worry, go!”

Naminandi was moved to tears as he rushed towards the tank, took water in the small container he had, poured it in the lamp, lit the wick, and the flame started glowing brightly!

And the deity could be worshiped in all his glory in that glowing flame of light, and Naminandi bowed to him overwhelmed with tears.

The devotees assembled in the temple raised a cry of joy in utter surprise. Their “Om Namashivaya” shouts traveled beyond the temple precincts and echoed in the sky.

Overcame with emotion, many devotees hailed Naminandi as ‘the pure one who lit the lamp with water,’ and fell at his feet.

Soon, the news about Naminandi lighting a lamp with water in the Shiva temple reached the king, and quite impressed, he gave many grants to the Araneriappar temple for the worships to take place without any impediments there. In addition, he also gave Naminandi the responsibility of heading the services done to the deities in the famous Thiruvavur Thyagaraja Swamy temple.

Thus, Shiva enacted a divine drama to highlight Naminandi’s devotion to the world and the greatness of Shaivism to the Jains by making a lamp glow with water. He also raised Naminandi to the level of a revered Nayanmaar! The noble devotee Naminandi thus remains part of ‘Arubaththu Moovar,’ the celebrated group of 63 supreme devotees of Shiva.

~ Ra. Panneerselvam

# Mariamman Yantra Worship For Fulfillment Of All Desires



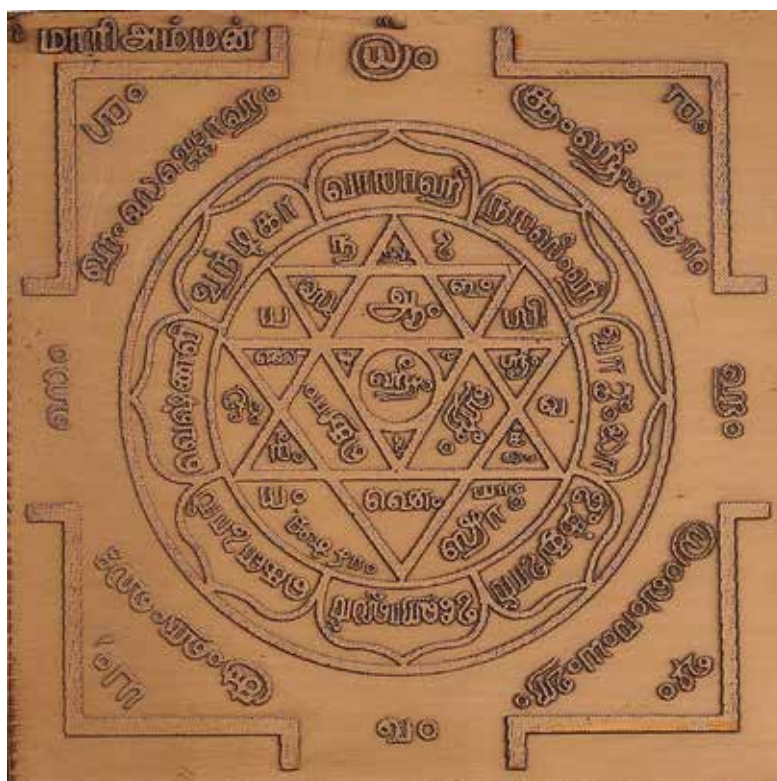
Yantra is a divinely-empowered geometrical diagram, and the Mariamman Yantra is regarded as very powerful. This Yantra worship can pave the way for fulfilling all desires in respect of lands, buildings, vehicles, and other properties. This apart, this Yantra can help those looking for spiritual advancement to make good progress. Further, it also has the capacity to remove the obstacles that arise in the efforts to fulfill our desires. The Mariamman Yantra worship can greatly help us protect ourselves from the negativities surrounding us like voodoo, witchcraft, etc., and overcome our enemies. And this aspect remains the primary significance of this Yantra. This Mariamman Yantra is so very efficacious, and it should be kept in the Pooja room or altar facing East or North and worshiped daily with Crossandra or Firecracker (Kanakambaram) flowers, incense, and lighted camphor. Devotees should also chant the following Mantra 108 times, and this can help them fulfill all their desires and also protect themselves from enemies and evil forces:

## Mariamman Gayatri Mantra:

Om Pishasadhwaaya Vidhmahe

Kadga Hastaya Dhemahi

Tanno Mari Prachodayaat



~ AstroVed Astrologer Mu Senthil Nathan



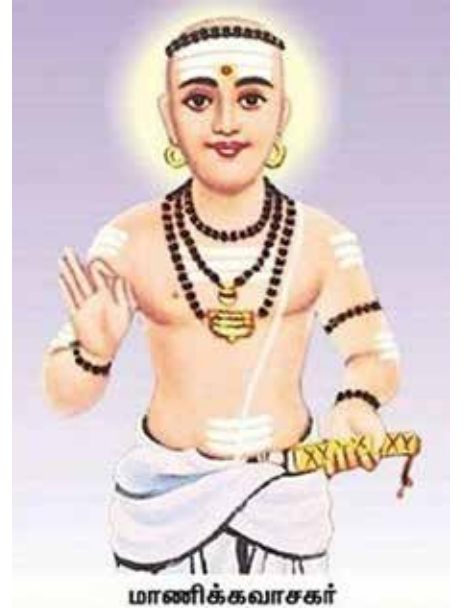
# AANI THIRUMANJANA FESTIVAL FOR NATARAJA

(Continued from the last issue)



The world was fortunate, and Siva Thandavam, the wonderful divine dance of Lord Shiva, took place soon in Chidambaram, as sung by the saint-poet Manikkavasagar. Once, there was a dance competition between Thiru Moolattaaneswarar, the Shiva of 'Thillai' Chidambaram, and Goddess Kali Devi of the same place for proving who is the best dancer in the world. On hearing this, all divinities and celestial beings, including Brahma, Saraswati, Mahalakshmi, and Vishnu assembled there, for witnessing this rare event.

It was a tough competition when Shiva suddenly and deliberately made his earring fall to the ground. Then with extraordinary skill, he picked it up with the toes of one of his legs as part of a smart dance movement, raised the leg towards the sky, and fixed the ring in his ear, as before. But Kali, being a lady, felt too shy and embarrassed to raise her leg as Shiva did and so had to concede her defeat. This dance of Shiva is known as Urdhva Thandavam.



As Shiva had decided about this dance contest earlier itself and made it known to others, sages Vyakyapadhar and Patanjali could come to Chidambaram at that time, witness and greatly enjoy the contest. So later, as per Shiva's directions, Kali Devi took her abode to the North of Chidambaram, as Ellai Kali, Goddess Kali of the border.

'Thillai' Chidambaram, one of the sacred places where Shiva danced merrily, is regarded as 'Potrsabai,' the golden stage. As per the temple legend, there are 5 stages for dancing in this temple, which are Chithsabai, Kanakasabai, Devasabai, Nruttasabai, and Rajasabai, and Shiva took abode here as Thiru Moolattaaneswarar.

Shiva occupies his heavenly abode of Kailash majestically, surrounded by Shivaganas, his attendants. The sacred Chidambaram, too, is similar, with the 3000 'Thillai Vaazh Anthanargal,' the holy men of Thillai, assuming the role of the Shivaganas of Kailash. Hence, it can well be said that Chidambaram has become the Kailash on earth. There are so many such interesting pieces of information and mythological accounts about this place.

Now let us learn something about this temple worship.

It is only on the holy stage of Chithsabai, known as Thiru Chitrambalam, that Lord Nataraja has taken his abode in the dancing posture. This itself remains his sanctum sanctorum, where he appears wearing the garland made of Brahma's heads. His consort Goddess Sivakama Sundari is enshrined to his left.

This Thiru Chitrambalam has a roof built with bricks made of gold, while the Ponnambalam section stands majestically with 9 Kalasas, the pot finials, and 64 handrails.

There is a small entrance to the right of the Shiva image in Chithsabai, outside which there will be a screen hanging. Behind the screen stands the mysterious, cosmic, and highly sacred Akayalingam, representing the infinite space. This is known famously as the 'Chidambara Rahasyam,' the 'secret or mystery of Chidambaram.' There will be no image or Linga idol there; all one will find there will be a semicircular, decorated arch. This will be dressed with some special perfumes like Punugu (civet) once a year, while only 2 Abishekams, the hydration ceremonies will be performed.

To give a simple spiritual and philosophical explanation, this Chidambara Rahasyam denotes nothing but 'the unity of the soul and Shiva!'

The Lord of Chithsabai-Ponnambalam is present there in 3 different philosophical states – with form as Sakalam, formless as Nishkalam, and both, with and without form as Sakala Nishkalam. Here, the Shiva image is Sakalam, Chidambara Rahasyam is Nishkalam, and Spatika Lingam, the crystal Linga there, is Sakala Nishkalam!

The 'Ethirambalam' that lies near and to the front of Chithsabai is called Kanakasabai. Lord Chandramouleeswara is housed here in the form of a Spatika Lingam, offered Pooja 6 times daily, and is worshiped by the people.

Devasabai, called Perambalam, is located outside the central hall of the temple. The processional deities and Pancha Murthies are housed here.

Nruttasabai, the Ther Ambalam, comes next. This is to the South of the flag mast and contains 56 exquisitely carved pillars.

In the sanctum of this Nruttasabai are the famous Urdhva Tandava Moorthy and Goddess Kali in dancing pose.

Rajasabai, the Devaragiya Mandapam, is the thousand-pillared hall in this Shiva temple, where many legendary and scriptural events have taken place. This contains many admirable, intricately carved sculptures.

The next significant aspect of attraction for the devotees here is the Lord Govindaraja shrine, located on the raised platform near Ponnambalam. Referred to as Chithrakoodam, this temple remains a shining example of the Shaiva Vaishnava unity.

In the work Pundarika Mahatmiya, it is stated that Lord Vishnu came and took abode here, only to enjoy the dance of Shiva.

As Nataraja is the principal deity of 'Thillai' Chidambaram, many particulars were discussed only

about him till now. So here, let us try to learn in brief about other deities and saints who remain part of the temple.

Let us start our worships with Lords Ganapathi and Subrahmanya, housed outside the South entrance.

Kotta Vinayakar, Kotta Dakshinamurthy, Nandi Deva, Subrahmanya, Mukkuruni Vinayaka, Karpaga Vinayaka, Muthu Kumaraswamy, Meenakshi Sundareswarar, Otraiikkaal Mandapa Vinayakar, Sivakami Amman in separate shrine, Akilandeswari, Durgai Amman, Pandiya Nayakar, Shanmugar, Sivakama Sundari Amman in separate shrine, Chitragupta, Nadukkam Theertha Vinayakar, Subrahmanya with consorts Valli and Devasena, Saint Adi Shankara, Sapta Mathaas, Chandikeswari, Navalingas, Purusha animals, Shiva Urdhva Tandava Moorthy, Kaala Samhara Moorthy, Sarabeswara, Dhandayudhapani, Thayumanavar, Thirumurai Kaattiya Vinayakar, Shaiva Santana preceptors, the 4-saints of Thevaram, Thundi Vinayakar, Arubaththu Moovar, Arunachaleswarar, Sekkizhaar, Nambiyaandaar Nambi, Vyaakyapaadar, Patanjali, Sastha, Dakshinamurthy, Parvati Devi, Mallikeswarar, Chandikeswarar, Arumugar, Pichchadanar, Kala Bhairava, Navagrahas – with all of them enshrined in the temple, it looks like there is no divinity who doesn't find a place here.

Many festivals are celebrated every month here, throughout the year. Of these, the Aani month festivals hold much significance.

#### Aani Thirumanjanam Festival

This festival, held with great pomp continuously for 10 days, begins with flag hoisting on the first day, whereas Abishekam, the hydration ceremony, will be performed to the temple deities daily, on all the days. Then, starting from the 2nd day till the completion of the festival, there will be a series of celebrations like processions involving different mounts, Yagasalai and Pancha Murthi worships, chariot festival on the 3rd day, Sachidananda Natana Darshan of Lord Nataraja with Goddess Sivakami on the 10th last day, and then bringing down the flag - will all be held in this temple with great fervor and devotion.

The most famous event of these festivities is the Aani Thirumanjanam Festival held on the last day.

After completing the procession on that day, Lord Nataraja and Mother Sivakami will come to the 1000-pillared hall known as the Rajasabai. Then the deities will be carried in procession through the hall called Nadana Panthi, with Lord Nataraja performing the dance Sachidananda Natanam and will arrive at Chithsabai hailed as Gnayna Akasam, along with his consort. This is another important event of the Aani Thirumanjana festival.

The grand Abishekam that is performed to Nataraja that night is known as Gatabishekam. Then the festive flag of the temple is brought down.

Likewise, in the current Pilava Tamil year, Aani Uttara Abishekam is being held in the Panchami thithi on the 30th day of Aani month. This will be performed at midnight on 14th July for the Lord and the Goddess. On the following day of Aani 31st, special Abishekam, the hydration ceremony will be performed again for those deities, and the devotees can then have the Aani Uttara

Dharisanam of the deities as the high point of the festival.

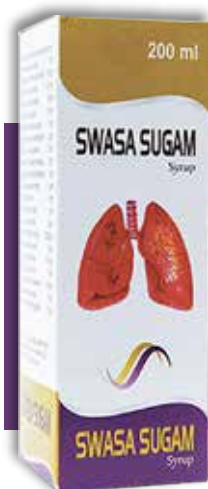
Poojas are held 6 times daily for Lord Nataraja in the temple. The temple timings for worship are Morning 6 AM to 12 Noon and evening 5 till 10 in the night.

The holy town of Chidambaram is located 270 km south of Chennai, on the rail route. This huge Shiva temple is at the center of the town, about 1 km from the railway station. Taxi, auto, and town buses are available here, in plenty.

The saints and the spiritually advanced have declared that Nataraja starting from Chithsabai here, denotes the function of creation; his holy bath, protection; the ultimate Deepa worship, destruction; the Vellai Sathupodi worship, concealment; and his processions in the streets and giving Madaiyadi Dharshan, denotes his grace.

So great is Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram. Let us worship him in person and get many blessings, merits and virtues.

~ Gitamani



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# The Dharmic, Righteous Mind



“What he did - is it Dharma (right)? Please tell yourself.”

“Justice, honesty, Dharma (righteousness) – Where have all these gone?”

“If we come to power, we will definitely bring in a Dharmic (virtuous) rule.”

“See the way they gave him Dharma Adi (a free-for-all beating), there in that meeting.”

“Oh Dharma Pathni (virtuous wife), is what you did, right?”

We have heard many people making such comments in different situations.

‘What is this Dharma all about?’ Aren’t you becoming interested to know what it is?

Manu Smruthi says the following about Dharma: Dhruthi, the determination; Kadimai, the forgiveness; Dhamam, the control over senses; staying away from vices like stealing; purity in thoughts, words, and actions; self-control; wisdom; scholarship; truth; control over anger – those who possess these characteristics, can all be termed the followers of Dharma!



Looking at this from another angle, the text Meemamsa Dharisana claims – ‘Something that is asserted by the Vedas, and sought after by those whose only purpose is to raise themselves to higher levels both in this life and in the other, is Dharma.’

However, the work Vaichoshitha Dharisana (1 -1 -2) ‘The one because of which there can be betterment in this world and later Moksha, the salvation, that is called Dharma.’

Would the great sage-poet Valmiki have kept quiet on this crucial subject? No. If we turn to the pages of his epic work Ramayana, we can see that he has given his views on Dharma in the section Aaranya Kandam, as under:

‘Dharma is the greatest thing on earth. It is only on Dharma, that truth rests.’ (Ayodhya Kandam – 21, 41)

‘Material riches are obtained by observing Dharma, while comfort and pleasure also come from Dharma. It is from Dharma that all things are obtained. The essence of this world itself is Dharma!’ (Aaranya Kandam – 9-30- 31)

How is ‘Yuga Dharma?’

Surya, the Sun, remains primary among the Navagrahas, the 9 planets. It attracts all other 8 planets, which revolve around it, including our earth. The earth takes one day to rotate around itself

and 365 days (one whole year) to go around the Sun. Likewise, planet Saturn takes 30 years to go round the Sun once.

The Sun remains as the Pingala aspect in people's breath, while Chandra, the Moon, shines as Ida. It is only the 'Dharmic mind' of God that has created this sort of 'Yuga Dharma,' the universal order. Sacred texts claim that these are 4 worldly aspects, which are 'Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. Vedic scholars have hailed those who observe these aspects as eternal, committed performers. Of these 4, Dharma comes first, which should never leave us. Artha is money, and Kama is pleasure. Our desires to earn money and enjoy pleasures could leave us someday; for, these are temporary and petty, by nature. But even in times when we enjoy these, we should ensure that 'Dharma,' remains firmly with us.

In all, 'Dharma' doesn't leave anyone, even when he becomes an ascetic. In that case, it becomes Sanyasa Dharma, the sacred responsibilities of the ascetic.

Dharma follows a person who rises to a high level as his shadow. Its nature is to always stick to him and manifest itself in his actions.

"Marital life is enjoying wealth and pleasures in a righteous way. This starts with marriage," says 'Kanchi Periyavar,' Saint Shankaracharya of Kanchi, in this work 'Deivaththin Kural.' The life of one who follows the householder's Dharma can always be blissful.

The spiritual world points principally to 2 'protectors of Dharma.' It is Yudhishtira, called Dharma in Mahabharata, and Rama, in Ramayana.

We have seen in an earlier chapter how Rama and Sita happily enjoyed looking at each other. It is interesting to note what Rama's Dharmic mind thought when he was returning to his place of stay, thinking about Sita.

"Yes! I have seen Sita and have fallen in love with her; but is that right? In case she happens to be someone else's wife, then isn't it a great sin? I should be the one to condemn such acts of desiring other's spouse, and can I myself indulge in such a sin?"

"But my mind will not take the wrong path. And since I have taken a liking for her, she must only be an unmarried girl."

By observing Dharma even in his thoughts, Rama shines brightly as a paragon of dignity.

The great national poet Mahakavi Bharathiar sang passionately about the terrific vow that Panchali, the celebrated Pandava queen Draupathi took. Driven by the natural inclination he had towards Dharma, the righteous way of life, he laments badly in his work 'Panchali Sabadham' while singing about the terrible event - of Dussasana, on the instructions of his elder brother Duryodhana, who won over the chaste Draupadi, the wife of his another brother, treacherously in a game of dice, dragging her to the open court in a most heinous act of Adharma, the injustice. Elsewhere, the book 'Saraka Samhithai' gives the Dharmic advice that spending should always be

less than the income. But will this sane counsel fall in the ears of people of the present times who go for the likes of huge loans like housing loan, ostentatious marriages, and credit cards? Dharma is permanent, like an inscription carved in a rock, while Adharma is only transient like a rainbow. Dharma can be compared to the virtuous baby born to the couple – a justice-loving mind and impeccable character. Poet Villipuththurar calls Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava prince, an excellent example of this.

Once, when the Pandavas were in exile in the forest, they had to face a difficult situation. On a hot afternoon, Yudhishtira, the embodiment of Dharma, felt very thirsty, and he sent his younger brother Sahadeva to bring water. As he could not find water anywhere near, he got on top of a hillock and saw a spring with fresh water at a distance. So he rushed there and started drinking water eagerly, but the next moment he fell dead.

As there was no trace of Sahadeva, Yudhishtira sent the next brother Nakula and then Arjuna, for water, and they also met the same fate on the banks of that poisonous spring. Then Bhima volunteered to bring water, landed at the same place after much searching around, and was shocked to see his 3 brothers lying dead there.

He guessed that only the water of the spring must be responsible for their death, wrote on the sand nearby that ‘this water is poisonous,’ then went ahead, drank the water himself, and he, too, fell down dead.

Time was flying, no one who went came back, and so, the worried and thirsty Yudhishtira himself went, at last, looking for his brothers and water. And fate took him, too, to the banks of that same spring.

There he was deeply distressed to find all his brothers lying flat on the ground, and he was struck with a deep conscience of guilt that he alone is responsible for their fate. He thought that this, too, must only be the conspiracy of the evil Duryodhana. But he didn’t want to live after losing all his younger brothers, knew about the poisonous water from what Bhima had written there, and went ahead to drink the water and give up his life.

Then, a thunderous voice was heard from the heavens.

“Oh Yudhishtira, the Dharma! Do answer some of my questions, before you proceed to drink water.”

Yudhishtira told the voice immediately to ask questions, and the divine voice started with the first question.

“Which is the best book in the world?”

“It is only the Vedas, which contain the truth not found in any other work!”

“What is the one meant for marital life?”

“Wife with virtuous characteristic traits”

“Which is the best among the beautiful garlands?”

“It is the garland strung together with Jadhupoo, good mace flowers.”

“Which is the greatest penance?”

“Virtuous behavior”

“Who is the God worshiped by the sages?”

“It is Lord Vishnu, adorned with the sweet smelling Tulsi, the basil leaf garlands.”

“What should be the prime trait of women?”

“Shyness and modesty”

“Do you know what men find sweet to hear?”

“It is only the sweet prattle of their children.”

“What is permanent?”

“Fame”

“What is to be obtained?”

“Education”

“Finally, please reply to this important question without fail: What is it that protects the rich?”

And that Pandava prince, an embodiment of compassion and charity, replied immediately – It is Dharma, only Dharma, and Dharma alone!”

The voice, that is, the questioner, was none other than Lord Yamadharma. Happy to receive the correct answers from Yudhishtira, he brought the 4 Pandava princes back to life.

So, those with a Dharmic mind need not fear even Yama, the Lord of Death, isn't it?

\*

“Oh, Guruji!” a disciple called his teacher.

“What dear?” asked the Guru with concern.

“I have a doubt.”

“What is it about?”

“It is said that everyone should follow Dharma, and that is our Yuga Dharma... What wrong can happen, if one doesn't have such a Dharmic mind?”

“Ok, I will reply you later. Before that, please wash both my Dhotis in the river and return to me,” instructed the Guru.

Accordingly, the disciple washed the Dhotis well and returned to him with those wet clothes.

Then the Guru told him, “Dry one of these 2 clothes in the hot Sun, and the other in that airless, dark corner.” The disciple did as he was told.

Then that immature disciple thought that perhaps his Guru himself did not know the answer. Later in the evening, the Guru told him to bring the 2 Dhotis to him, and when he did so, asked him if he found any difference between them.

“Sir, this cloth left in the shade has not yet dried properly, while some bad smell is also coming from this”

Then the Guru explained with a smile, “My dear boy! The first Dhoti dried in the Sun is like the person with a Dharmic mind, whereas the other left in the dark place is otherwise. Do you see the difference, now?” And the disciple understood clearly.



Illango Adigal, the poet who gave us the Tamil epic Silappadhikaram, thought and believed that people should follow Dharma and live a just and righteous life and laid great stress on these in his work.

When the chaste woman Kannagi established with proper evidence before the Pandya king in the open court that her husband Kovalan didn't do any wrong, the king, who was giving a just and fair rule to his citizens till then, got thoroughly rattled.

"Oh God, I have strayed from the virtuous path of Dharma," he trembled and lamented heavily.

He cursed himself for his thoughtless act and castigated himself as a thief. Then he tumbled down from his throne and died. His faithful wife and the chief queen Perundevi was unable to digest the fact that her husband had committed an unjust act and punished himself by giving up his life right in front of her. She clung to his feet and breathed her last, too.

It is only because of such Dharmic-minded, righteous people that the world still exists.

But, can a person abandon both Dharma and Adharma in his life? Isavasya Upanishad offers an answer to this question -

'The truly conscious Gnani or wise man sees his own soul in all things and also sees all things in his soul. All are equal to him, and so there are no differences for him. This type of person alone is free from the duality of Dharma and Adharma. He may then become the self-illuminated great soul.'

What is Aram (Dharma)?

Aram or Dharma is nothing but the principle or laid down moral code of action. It is like an ocean that has no limits.

'The person who thinks that everyone in this world should enjoy all the good things that he himself possesses or experiences, is the one with Dharma in his heart,' says Saint Thiruvalluvar. This is how the Dharmic mind thinks, and this is also what Saint Thayumanavar seeks from God.

The Dharmic-minded Harischandra led a life of honesty, never wavering from the truth. But what he experienced in the earlier part of his life was suffering and hardships. He separated from his wife, lost his son, forfeited all his wealth, even lost his honor, but ultimately he was victorious, thanks to his unflinching faith in Dharma. In the process, he regained all that he lost and also brought eternal fame to himself and Dharma!

Let us recollect here what the Tamil scholar N. E. Ramalingam has asserted in the chapter, 'Araththaal Varuvathe Inbam' in his celebrated work, 'Thirukkural Theliporul Agaval' -

'Virtues like good character, honesty, and truth remain the fundamental principles of righteousness; so, people who live by these traits will receive all benefits in life. Also, apart from leading great lives themselves, they will help others, too, to live so.'

Yes, Dharma is immortal and indestructible!

~ Aroor R. Subramanian  
Deputy Collector (Retd.)

# Navratri Festival and King Krishna Deva Raya



It is well known that the Navratri festival is celebrated as 'Dasara,' from the olden times to the present day. For Krishnadeva Raya, the king of the Vijayanagara empire, it was his most favorite festival, and he celebrated it with great pomp and grandeur.

On each day of the festival, in the mornings, Krishnadeva Raya would arrive with his entourage at Vijaya Mahal, a majestic part of his palace. A statue of Goddess Durga would be installed and consecrated there following the necessary rituals. The priests would have started the Pooja in a large hall, even before the king arrived.

As soon as he entered Vijaya Mahal, the king would go straight to the Goddess and pray to her with devotion. Then those in high positions in the kingdom, the female dancers, and other employees would bow to the king and greet him.



Some of the finest royal horses, which the king was very fond of, would be standing on one side, all well-decorated. Behind them there would be 4 richly-decorated elephants. A priest, holding a large silver tray filled with white rose flowers, would follow the king, as he approached the horses. Then the king would take some flowers from the tray and throw them at the horses, thrice. He would do the same thing to the elephants. Then, he would offer incense and perform the Arti to the horses and elephants. Following this, the priest would perform Archana to the animals, while chanting the sacred Mantras.

Once these rituals conclude, the king would make his way to the Pooja chamber and occupy his seat there. Outside the chamber, 24 buffalos and 150 goats would be sacrificed one after the other, which the king would witness from inside, through a window.

After the sacrifice, Krishnadeva Raya would leave the Pooja chamber and proceed to the large Darbar hall. As he climbed his exalted throne majestically, the Pundits assembled there would greet him, hail his greatness, and shower many flowers on him. Then the king would take off the

diamond-studded, luminous crown from his head, and prostrate fully on the ground. This would happen on all the 9 Navaratri days, without fail.

What we have seen so far are the events that took place in the mornings; now we will take a look at the king's evening activities!

The evening program of the Navratri celebrations would begin at 3 pm itself, in the palace. The crowds were regulated to avoid chaos, and people in small numbers at a time were permitted inside. Even before the program began, the wrestlers, soldiers, and dancing girls would have occupied their appointed seats.

The chief minister Saaluva Thimmarasu, who brought up the young Krishna Devaraya and whom the king addressed respectfully as Appaji, would be given the principal honor during the Navratri festivities. Appaji would be present in the hall even before the king arrived, and from his seat at the center of the hall, he would be giving instructions regarding the conduct of the various activities. Once everything was in order, Appaji would send word to the king.

Krishnadeva Raya would then enter the large hall accepting the greetings, salutations, and shouts of praise raised by those assembled there in his honor. The king would be attired in a brilliant white, silk robe studded with golden roses. On his chest, many necklaces made of diamonds, precious gems, and pearls would jostle for space!

The image of Goddess Durga installed there would also be tastefully decorated and ready for worship. People would be fanning the Goddess from both sides, with great devotion.

~ Gitamani



## MOOVAR SAMADHI, THE SACRED TOMBS OF THE THREE SAINTS



Srivillipuththur is the birthplace of Kodhai Nachiyar or Andal, the divine maiden who gave the superb piece of devotional poems, Thiruppavai, to the Tamil world! In this Siddhar Bhoomi section, we are going to learn about the Moovar Samadhi, or the tombs of three saints located here.

Who are these Siddhars? What are their unique features? And what are the miracles occurring in

these tombs, even in these days, long after these saints have departed from earth?

We will find out all these here!

The Moovar Samadhi, or the three saintly tombs are in a secluded and picturesque spot about 2 kms from the Srivillipuththur bus stand. It is said that the three saints who are interred here are Swami Sankaranandar, Manikkam Swamigal, and Madurai Muneeswaran Swamigal. That is why this is said to have got the name



Moovar Samadhi, 'the tombs of three saints,' but the locals call it 'Moovar Temple,' 'the three-saint temple.' This shows that people are worshipping these saints as Gods.

These tombs are located near the crematorium, far removed from the town.

The huge banyan tree present here indicates the antiquity of the Samadhis. The tree's large underbelly has a cave-like natural formation, in which people have hung Swami Sankaranandar's photo. It is said that the Swami did penance in this place.

Here is some interesting information about this tree! It is said that if those without progeny, or people afflicted with diseases, debts, or livelihood problems, go round the banyan tree 12 times, and pray, their wishes are fulfilled! Many have claimed that they were blessed with children after doing this ritual here. This reveals the greatness of Siddhar Sankaranandar!



The first sacred tomb found here is that of Swami Sankaranandar, which is in the form of a tile-roofed house. There is a Shivling on top of the tomb, and a picture of the saint hangs on the wall. Sankaranandar belonged to Seththur on the Srivillipuththur- Thenkasi route. He came here, did silent penance for 12 years, and guided and blessed people by writing his advice on a slate. About 50 years ago, he was said to have chopped off his nose, ear, and tongue, so that the place would get much-needed rain. So, the people used to call him 'Mookarundha Swami,' or 'the saint who cut off his nose.' He is said to have attained Jiva Samadhi in 1977.

People also say that a lady who prayed at this tomb got cured of cancer, and she lives in good health today. It is believed that Sankaranandar can cure any disease of those who come and pray here, and so, many devotees keep coming to seek his grace and get well. There is also a belief that people can get anything they aspire for by meditating in this Samadhi.

Next is the small Jiva Samadhi of Manikka Siddhar (Manikkam Swamigal). He hailed from Vasudeva Nallur, lived in Madurai for some time, and then came here. It is said that this saint had not taken a bath or brushed his teeth for about 40 years. He even wore the same clothes! When he attained Samadhi, his mortal remains were placed outside, and it is said that the heavens opened up, and his body was washed clean by the rains! Those who benefited from his grace claim that people can be relieved of not only their health problems but also debts if they worship him! He is said to have entered Jiva Samadhi in 1992.

Next is Madurai Muneeswara Swamigal's tomb. He had a modern look, as he used to wear pajamas, pants, etc. A miracle is attributed to him, too. Once, when a medical equipment imported from abroad malfunctioned at the Apollo Hospital in Chennai, he supposedly touched it with his hands and made it work! It is believed that if anyone prays to him with sincerity and faith, their wish will be granted, and the person would receive a message to that effect immediately over the phone!

Hence, we can see large crowds of devotees always thronging the 'Moovar Samadhi,' also known as the 'Moovar Temple,' housing the tombs of these powerful saints.

Many come here hoping that their illnesses, debts, and poverty will vanish if they worship these saints. Some also come for progeny blessings.

By praying to these 3 saints, we may also be able to lead a good life!

~ Ra. Panneerselvam

# The Many Shiva Temples that Celebrate the Aadi Month



There is a deep connection between the sacred Tamil month Aadi and Shiva temples. It is during Aadi that people offer special worship, particularly to the Goddesses, called Amman, or Ambal, enshrined in these temples, and celebrate grand festivals for them. This has been happening since ancient times.

Aadi is regarded holy even from the times of the Mahabharata and other scriptures. The terrible Mahabharata war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas started on the first day of Aadi and was fought till the 18th of that month. In the fierce war, the evil Kauravas were routed by the virtuous Pandavas. It is believed that Aadi Pandigai is celebrated on 18th Aadi, to commemorate this great victory of good over evil.

As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, Aadi assumes significance wherever the state's principal river Cauvery flows.

'It is water that sustains life in the world,' declared Saint Thiruvalluvar. Accordingly, people living in areas that lie on the banks of the Cauvery, that helps the land to flourish and cultivation to thrive, express their gratitude and devotion to the river by organizing celebrations in its honor during Aadi. Let us explore some sacred abodes of Lord Shiva where people perform such Aadi celebrations.

## Sankaran Koil

Sankaran Koil is in Thirunelveli district. The presiding deity here is Lord Shankara Narayana, who combines in himself both the aspects of Shiva and Narayana, that is, Vishnu. This temple was built in 1022 CE.

Here, Goddess Gomathi Amman can be worshipped as Lord Shankara Narayana, and later as Shankara Linga, during the Aadi festival. This worship is celebrated as 'Aadi Thapasu,' the Aadi penance.

Starting on the Uttiradam star day of Aadi month, the Aadi Thapasu festival is celebrated for 12 days with immense enthusiasm. The Goddess is taken around in a chariot procession during this festival. To witness it, thousands of devotees assemble here.



## Kolli Malai

Kolli Malai, the Kolli Mountain, lies on the border of three districts – Salem, Namakkal, and Trichy.

There is a reference to this place in the epic Kamba Ramayanam.

This is a place where five rivers meet. Shiva is worshipped as Arappaneeswarar in the temple. Fish of many colors can be found in the river here. However, as there is a belief among the people that this temple Lord resides in the form of a fish, they will not catch any fish from this river. Also, on Aadi 18th, people will feed the fish with a lot of food items.



On such occasions, it is a practice for some to catch the big fish in their hands, put nose rings on them and worship them. Then they are returned to the river. This has been happening for many years.

### Dindigul Kottai Mariamman

Goddess Kottai Mariamman temple is more than 200 years old. The Goddess is not installed on a separate pedestal, but is seen buried and enshrined below ground level in this temple.

Starting on the 2nd Friday of Aadi, a grand festival will be celebrated here for five days, and many special Poojas will be conducted for the Goddess. On the 3rd day, she will be taken in procession in the streets, and there will be a Manjal Kappu Abishekam, the hydration ceremony with turmeric paste, on the 5th day.

Many devotees who participate in this festival will be offering 'Koozh,' or porridge, to the Goddess.

'Offering of porridge' is a tradition practiced by the devotees with fervor. Those suffering from diseases like chickenpox would pray to the Goddess for a cure. Once they are cured of the disease by the Goddess' grace, they offer porridge to her to express their gratitude.



### Bhavani Kuduthurai Vedanayaki Amman

Bhavani Kuduthurai is a holy place in Erode district. While the Cauvery and Bhavani rivers meet here, the invisible Amir river is also believed to join the other two at this place.

The temple of Lord Sankhameswara and his consort Goddess Vedanayaki, and also the temple of Lord Adikesava Perumal with Sridevi and Bhudevi, and his consort Goddess Soundaravalli Thayar, are located on the banks of Kuduthurai.



On the first and 18th days of Aadi month, newly married couples will come to the Cauvery river at

Kuduthurai and worship Mother Cauvery. On this occasion, the women will also change their 'Thali,' the auspicious yellow threads worn around their necks during their marriage. This is a sacred practice that has been observed for a very long time. It is believed that this ritual can help them earn the virtue of visiting the very holy site of Kasi and also free them from all their sins. Hence, thousands of people come to this Kuduthurai on these days.

### Periyapalayam Mother Goddess Bhavani

Goddess Bhavani Amman of Oothukkottai Periyapalayam is worshipped with love and devotion simply as 'Periyapalayaththaal.' Seeking relief from their sorrows, people wear dresses made of neem leaves, circumambulate the Goddess here, and offer worship to her during Aadi month, especially on Fridays. Those who have taken vows also carry fire-pots and offer Kavadi worship by carrying it on their shoulders.

These apart, there are many more holy places, especially those where Lord Shiva has made his abode. At these places, Aadi festival is celebrated with devotion and enthusiasm.



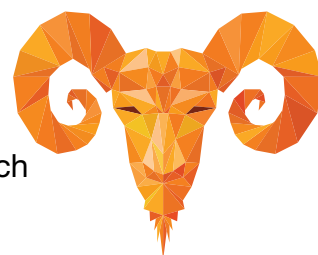
~ Gitamani

# Astrological Predictions

## August 2021



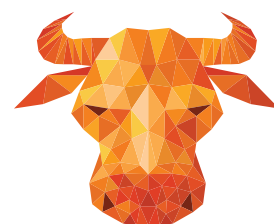
- The employed may perform very well in their jobs and create a good impression in the minds of their superiors.
- Those doing their own business might be required to put in more effort to reach their targets.
- This could be the right month for eligible singles to get suitable life partners.
- Avoid arguments for peace in the family.
- By being accommodative of each other, couples may be able to enjoy better intimacy.
- Your economic condition, too, looks good this month, with an increase in income.
- You could expect more profits in the stock market
- Students are likely to succeed in their educational pursuits, and so, this might well be a favorable month for them.
- Your health may require some attention. Daily physical exercises can help you maintain your fitness well.



### Aries



- There are chances for those in government employment to develop differences of opinion with higher authorities. Hence, it is better to avoid arguments.
- Those engaged in clothing or food industries can hope for job promotions.
- Professionals in the banking, education, media and entertainment sectors are likely to do well.
- This also appears to be a favorable month for businesspersons and traders. They can expect more profits in their vocation.
- You could also make profits now, thanks to your past investments. Your money flow may witness a considerable increase, too.
- Avoid making new investments this month.
- Students might have better absorption skills and emerge victorious in their examinations.



### Taurus





- There are good chances to get a promotion in your job.
- You can also expect due recognition from superiors in office.
- Partnership businesses may yield profits.
- Be careful before signing any documents related to business agreements.
- Some might get some foreign business or trade opportunities, in which they could succeed and make gains.
- Do not make any significant decisions related to any stock trading operations this month as there are chances for you to suffer losses.
- Students are likely to focus on their studies, and so, this could prove a good month for them.
- Those pursuing higher education may learn many new things.
- You could maintain sound health now; still, you might experience some tension in your mind. So, be cautious in your food intake.



- The employed can hope for progression in their jobs and better financial status.
- There could be more income from trading operations, while your economic condition, too, may witness an upswing.
- Those doing their own businesses can consider starting new ventures for enhancing their income, and these might prove successful.
- There could be handsome profits in partnership businesses.
- There might be misunderstandings in love relationships.
- The married may enjoy better harmony with their spouses.
- There could also be peace and harmony in the family.
- Spiritual inclination might increase, while some may undertake pilgrimages.
- Engineering students are likely to perform well in their examinations and score good marks.
- School students may overcome lapses in their concentration and progress in their educational pursuits.
- There could be a general improvement in your fitness levels; however, you may have to pay attention to the health of the elderly.



- Partnership businesses could yield more income.
- But, before taking any crucial business decisions, try to weigh the pros and cons carefully.
- The married may enjoy a good conjugal life. They could also resolve their differences of opinion and experience more intimacy.
- You may also maintain cordial relationships with relatives and friends
- Money flow might increase, and expenses could also be under control this month. These can enable you to manage your day-to-day needs with ease and also save for the future.
- However, students may get distracted by lapses in concentration, and so might have to pay more attention to their studies.
- You should be careful regarding your health, now.
- There are chances for a few of you to suffer from kidney ailments. Please consume a sufficient quantity of water to overcome this problem.



## Leo



- The employed might hope for some advancements in their career, this month.
- There are possibilities for those looking for foreign employment, to get them now.
- This could be a good time for partnership businesses and joint ventures. This month might prove particularly beneficial for businesses related to foreign lands.
- Money flow may be less, and this could make you anxious. So it's better to curb your expenditure.
- There are also chances for differences of opinion between spouses, and this could be over money matters, in particular.
- This might prove a lucky month for students. Those wanting to pursue education abroad are advised to follow their parents' advice, and this can help them succeed in their endeavors.
- Proper physical exercise and nutritious food may help you maintain good health. Also, avoid fast food items.



## Virgo

- It is advisable for the employed to work hard and also maintain cordial relationships with colleagues. This can help you enhance your reputation and earn a good name at the workplace.
- You are likely to discharge your responsibilities well in the office.

- This may be a favorable month for those in creative fields and government sectors.

- Please do not take any new loans or make hasty decisions on financial matters this month.

- You may, however, receive support from friends and family members.

- Students might feel relaxed and put in determined efforts with a clear mind. This could help them do well in their studies

- Your health looks good this month, overall. Still, some of you might suffer from minor issues like migraines. So, please don't ignore your fitness. Also, undertake regular exercises.



## Libra



- The employed might get recognition for their hard work. There could be better gains for you if you work elsewhere instead of your native place. You may enjoy more comforts now.

- If you are tactful at work, you can hope for job progression and increment.

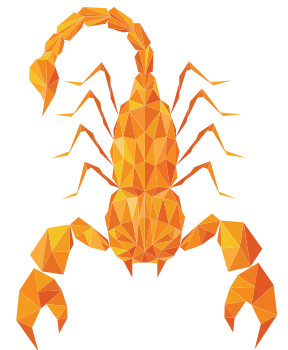
- But those in government sectors, business, and IT fields may feel some tension at work.

- Married couples might be sensitive, accommodative, and sincere towards each other.

- Students might feel less self-confident. However, they may pay more attention to their studies now than earlier.

- Those who completed their college education could pursue research work.

- Health might witness ups and downs. Minor fitness concerns may keep troubling you; still, you might be able to overcome those and be comfortable.



## Scorpio

- The employed may be required to put in determined efforts to excel at work.

- Those in the medical, legal, and writing fields could make a considerable income.

- Merchants can witness an increase in their sales.

- Businesspersons can also make more profits.

- Those engaged in foreign trade or import-export businesses could get opportunities to travel abroad for work.

- The relationship between spouses might become stronger and more cordial. You may devote enough time to your life partner and fulfill their needs.

- But students may have to work pretty hard to excel in their studies.

- Your health is unlikely to be okay now, when you might be troubled by fatigue and laziness. So, please do pay enough attention to your fitness.



## Sagittarius



- You are likely to come up with an excellent performance and also develop a good rapport with superiors.

- Businesspersons should avoid making all their investments in a single business. If you divide and invest in a variety of ventures, there are chances for your business to expand well.

- Those engaged in foreign-related businesses could make significant gains.

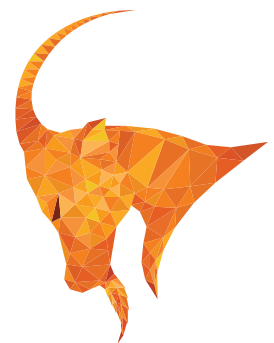
- The husband-wife bond might become more cordial, and there could be better harmony in their marital relationship.

- There might, however, be differences of opinion and conflicts with family elders; so, be careful with your verbal communication

- There are also chances for your mother to suffer some illness, and so her health may require attention.

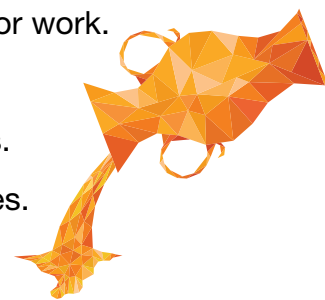
- But students are likely to excel in their studies and perform with confidence. Some of them can hope to get educational assistance, too. Overall, this might well be a promising month for students.

- You may keep encountering some minor fitness concerns now. A few might suffer from stomach or intestine-related problems. Try to consume healthy and nutritious food, and this can help you avoid problems related to the stomach region.



## Capricorn

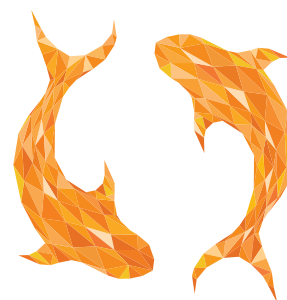
- There are possibilities for the employed to shift to some other place for work.
- They may also be required to do some running around for work.
- But you may make more investments towards new business ventures.
- This might also be a suitable month for expanding your old businesses.
- Partnership businesses, too, could prove more profitable.
- There could be better harmony in the relationship between spouses.
- Family atmosphere is also likely to be joyful. All money-related problems in the family, too, might get resolved.
- This month looks suitable for shifting to a new place of residence.
- There are chances for some to buy old properties or vehicles.



## Aquarius



- You might be discussing with your higher authorities about your future plans regarding your work.
- This could be a good month both for business and trade, with businesses yielding more profits.
- Good fortune may smile on some of you, and you can hope to buy land or property. If you had applied for any loan, you might get that now.



## Pisces

- Avoid expenditure on luxurious items, and instead, go only for essential expenses.
- Past investments can give you profits, while money flow may also see a considerable increase.
- There could be more intimacy between spouses.
- There may be some issues with your siblings; so, be cautious.
- It may prove beneficial for students to heed the advice of teachers and parents and act accordingly.
- Students about to complete their higher education might get suitable employment.