



ŠRÎ SÂI LEELA

Šrî Shirdi Sai Bâbâ Temple

1449 & 1451 Abers Creek Road, Monroeville, PA 15146

Mailing: PO Box 507, Monroeville, PA 15146-0507

Phone: 412-374-9244 Fax: 412-374-0940 Website: <http://www.baba.org>

“Help Ever, Hurt Never”

Like us - www.facebook.com/pittsburghbabatemple

February 2017

“Soham Shivoham - I am That, I am Pure Consciousness - Šrî Sâi Bâbâ.”



Mahā Sivarātri Celebration

Feb Friday 23rd - Saturday 25th, 2017

23rd Thursday - PRADOSHAM

6.30 pm Ekavara Rudra Abhishekam, Siva Archana

24th Friday - MAHA SIVARATRI

6.30 pm – 12.00 am Ekadasa Rudra Abhishekam

Temple is Open all night for JAGARNA

25th Saturday 10.30 am Siva Parvathi Shanthi Kalyanam

Sri Aaruna Ketuka Savitru Surya Narayana Yagnam

Ratha Saptami Friday Feb 3rd - Sunday Feb 5th

Benifits: For health and to pay respect or expressing gratitude to the Sun, that is the source of all forms of life.

YAGNA SPONSORSHIP

Whole Yagna sponsors receive a blessed shawl (\$504)

1 day yagna - \$126 (Japa Homa Tarpana, abhishekam)

9.30 am Surya Archana/ Aditya Hrudaya Parayan

10.00 am Surya Homam - For Good Health (\$126)

Poornahuthi on Sunday (Feb 5th)

Trucha Arghya Purvaka SURYA NAMASKARAS

9.30am Saturday Feb 4th - All are welcome! (\$54 sponsors)



HINDU CALENDAR

Current Year of the Earth: 1,955,885,2016

Name of the Year: Sri Durmukhi

Ayanam: Uttarayanam ; Rutuvu: Sisira

Masam: Māgham till February 26th /Phālgunam

Krishna Niryanam (Kali Yuga): 5117

Gregorian Calendar 2017 A.D.



Leaf Sponsorship of the Sai Sanjeevani Tree

\$252 – One brick (1-3) - Name on website

\$1008 - Bronze Leaf

\$2500 - Silver Leaf

\$5000 - \$10,000 Gold Leaf

\$10,000 - Small picture (4.25" x 5.5")

\$100,000 - Gold Leaf, Medium picture (8.5"x11")

\$500,000 - Gold Leaf, Large picture (15"x 22")

\$ 1 million - Gold Leaf, Extra Large picture (24"x 36")

HAPPY RATHA SAPTAMI Friday Feb 3rd, 2017



Ratha Saptami marks the seventh day following the Sun's northerly movement (Uttarayana) of vernal equinox starting from Capricorn (Makara). It is symbolically represented in the form of the Sun God Surya turning his Ratha (Chariot) drawn by seven horses, with Arua as the charioteer, towards the northern hemisphere, in a north-easterly direction. The symbolic significance of the ratha and the seven horses reigned to it is that it represents the seven colours of the rainbow. The seven horses are also said to represent the seven days of a week starting with Sunday, the day of Sun god Surya. The chariot has 12 wheels, which represents the 12 signs (each of 30 degrees) of the Zodiac (360 degrees) and constituting a full year, named Samvatsara. The Sun's own house is Leo (Simha) and he moves from one house to the next every month and the total cycle takes 365 days to complete. The Ratha Saptami festival seeks the benevolent cosmic spread of energy and light from the Sun God.

Ratha Saptami also marks the gradual increase in temperature across South India and awaits the arrival of spring, which is later heralded by the festival of Ugadi or the Hindu lunar New Year day in the month of Chaitra.

Ratha Saptami also marks the birth of Surya to sage Kashyapa and his wife Aditi and hence celebrated as Surya Jayanti (the Sun-god's birthday). A legend is narrated by the Kamboj empire's King Yashovarma, a noble king who had no heir to rule his kingdom. On his special prayers to God, he was blessed with a son. The king's vows did not end with this, as his son was terminally ill. A saint who visited the king advised that his son should perform the Ratha Saptami pooja (worship) with reverence to rid of his past sins. Once the King's son performed this, his health was restored and he ruled his kingdom well. It is also said that sage Bhisma breathed his last breath fourth day after the Rathasaptahmi day on ekaadashi.

God Vishnu in his form as Surya (the Sun-God) is usually worshipped on this day. Usually, Rathasapthami begins in households with a purification bath (bathing is also done in a river or sea) by holding several Ekka (Calotropis Gigantea) leaves on their head while bathing and chanting a verse which is supposed to invoke the benevolence of the Lord in all that one indulges in during the rest of the year. Argyam or

(Tharpanam) (water held in the palms) is offered to the Sun God on this day while chanting hymns are performed to the Sun God. It also involves doing a puja with the ritual Naivedhya (food offering to God), and offering of flowers and fruits. Important prayers offered to the Sun god on this occasion are the Adityahridayam, Gayathri, Suryashtakam, Surya Sahasram namam. The preferred time for the pooja is within one hour after sunrise. In places like Mysore and Melkote, ceremonial processions carry the Surya Mandala - the icon of Surya.

Ekka leaves (in Kannada), are also known as Arka (in Sanskrit, meaning a ray or flash of lightning) leaves, Jilledu in Telugu, Erukku in Tamil and Calotropis Gigantea (bowstring hemp) in English. Arka is also a synonym for Surya or Sun. Its significance to Sun God could be compared to the significance of Tulsi (Ocimum tenuiflorum) leaves to Vishnu. Arka leaves are also used for worship of god Ganesha known by the name Arka Ganesha and also for Hanuman worship. Its stems, called samidha (sacrificial offerings of wood) are used for the Yagna ritual as a sacrificial offering to a ritual fire. Its shape is said to represent the shoulders and chariot of Sun God. Its use during the ritualistic ceremonious bath involves placement of seven leaves - one on the head, two on the shoulders, two on the knees and two on the feet. On this day, in South India, Rangoli is drawn with coloured rice powder depicting a chariot and seven horses as symbolic of the Ratha Saptami. Cowdung cake is also burnt at the centre of this depiction and milk boiled on the fire is offered to the Sun God. In some of the important Vaishnavite temples such as the Tirumala, Srirangam, Srirangapattana and Melukote, Ratha Saptami is one of the important festivals of the year.

The Festival of Chariot (Ratha Saptami) A chariot festival is common for all temples. The chariot is bedecked with flowers and festoons, and the Utsava Murtis are installed in the high seat of the chariot. The chariot is tugged along by the devotees by the ropes tied to it. Some of the temple chariots are so huge and heavy that they require the pulling of hundreds of devotees. The chariot is pulled along the four streets around the temple to the accompaniment of vedic chantings and Nadaswaram. The car is periodically stopped for Archanas. This is also an occasion for the devotees - who for some reason or other are unable to go to the temple to have the glimpse of the Deity and get the blessings. The whole town wears an air of festivity on this day. A chariot festival is held on this day. The colossal chariot will be gorgeously decorated with flags and festoons, stalwart bands of men will draw the chariot to the music of blowpipe and conches, acrobats dance in groups chanting minstrels. Thousands crowd around the holy chariot and line the streets. Their attention is necessarily drawn towards the entertainments provided, but they feel the happiest when they fold their palms and bow before the Idol installed in the chariot.

The car which you carry has to be treated thus. Instead, men are wildly milling in dreary circles, from births to deaths, pulled by wishes and pulled by needs. No milestones on the pilgrim road are crossed, no bridges are negotiated, and no progress is registered. The very process of journey is ignored. One yearns to escape the consequences of birth and aftermath of death and desires peace and joy. This is possible only when one identifies with the Atma and earns a reward for one's activities of mind and body. Symbolically, the body itself is a chariot and intelligence is its charioteer. Desires are the roads through which the chariot is drawn by the rope of sensual attachment. Moksha (liberation) is the goal and Mula Virat Swarupa (the primal all-pervasive Divinity) is the Master of the Chariot. The Sruti reveals the benefit of taking bath with arka leaf and berry (regu fruit) preferably in a holy river on the day of Ratha Saptami. The following episodes (Vedasara Ratnavali by Brahmasri Uppaluru Gapati Sastri Garu, 1985) are interesting. Kasyapa Prajapati had two wives Kadruva and Suparni. Once they had a contest as to who was more beautiful. It was agreed that the loser will be a slave to the other. Kadruva won the contest, but told Suparni that she would be released from the bondage if she brought Somalatha (the Soma plant) from the heaven. Trishup and Jagati Chandasas, the two older brothers went to the heaven in search of Somalatha and were defeated by the guards Svannadhis. The third son Gayatri Chandas was however successful in bringing the plant. Suparni was thus released of her bondage. Now, Gayatri became proud of his achievement and was duly punished for his pride by Vashakara, a divine entity. The essence of Gayatri's body fell into equal halves on the earth and on the animals. Thus Aja (the goat) is the essence of Gayatri Chandas (spiritual science or breakthrough as in a scientist's laboratory). Arka Tree Development: This is described in the namakam, rudro va yesha agnihi. Once Angirasas saints earned their entry into heaven by their yajas. As they approached the heaven, they poured boiling ghee (clarified butter) from the mud pot (called Mahavira) on the goat Aja. In great pain, the goat shed its skin which grew into an Arka tree. Thus, Arka tree is the essence of Gayatri Chandas; it is charged with the mantras of ghee and as it emanated from Aja, the Gayatri itself, the tree is worthy of worship.

Creation of the Berry: Once, the Soma creeper was crushed to obtain Soma Rasa (juice). By his unusual powers (Indra Samarthiyam), Indra expressed his sense capacity through the essence of Soma Rasa in ten different ways. He then spat three times to create the date-fruit, the small berry and the bigger berry. The fruit of berry tree which was created out of Indra's sense capacity increases the acuity of our senses. Berry taken from the Arka leaf on Ratha Saptami

day provides light particles all over the body, increases the complexion and enhances the power of senses as effectively as the Gayatri Chandas.

MAHA SHIVARATRI

Maha Shivaratri is a festival celebrated annually in reverence of the god Shiva. It is the day Shiva was married to the goddess Parvati. The Maha Shivaratri festival, also popularly known as 'Shivaratri' (spelt as Sivaratri, Shivaratri, Sivarathri, and Shivarathri) or 'Great Night of Shiva', marks the convergence of Shiva and Shakti. Maha Shivaratri is celebrated on the Krishna Paksha Chaturdashi of Hindu calendar month Maagha as per Amavasyaant month calculation.

The festival is principally celebrated by offerings of Bael leaves to Shiva, all-day fasting and an all-night-vigil (jagaran). All through the day, devotees chant "*Om Namah Shivaya*", the sacred mantra of Shiva. Penances are performed in order to gain boons in the practice of Yoga and meditation, in order to reach life's highest good steadily and swiftly. On this day, the planetary positions in the Northern hemisphere act as potent catalysts to help a person raise his or her spiritual energy more easily. The benefits of powerful ancient Sanskrit mantras such as Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra increase greatly on this night.

On Maha Shivaratri, Nishita Kala is the ideal time to observe Shiva Pooja. Nishita Kala celebrates when Lord Shiva appeared on the Earth in the form of Linga. On this day, in all Shiva temples, the most auspicious Lingodbhava Puja is performed, which is generally performed starting at midnight. The worship of Lord Shiva consists in offering flowers, Bilva leaves and other gifts on the Lingam, which is a symbol of Lord Shiva, and bathing it with milk, curd, ghee, honey, sugar, coconut water, butter, and rose-water.

How Shiva got the NEELA KANTHA (blue throat)

According to a legend of Samudra manthan, Shiva saved the world from the disastrous effects of a poison that emerged as a by product of the churning of the sea (Samudra manthan), by consuming the whole of the poison. Shiva could arrest the poison in his throat by his Yogic powers and it didn't go down his throat. His neck turned blue due to the effect of the poison on his throat and henceforth he is also known as Neela Kantha or The Blue Throated.

Lord Shiva's favorite day:

After earth's creation was complete, Parvati asked Lord Shiva which devotees and rituals pleased him the most. The Lord replied that the 14th night of the new moon, in the dark fortnight during the month of Phalgun, is his favorite day. Parvati repeated these words to Her friends, from whom the word spread to all creation.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - FEBRUARY 2017 Māsam: Māgham till February 26th /Phālgunam

Feb 1 Wed Magha Sukla (Madana) Panchami

09.30 am Sri Saraswathi Abhishekam \$54
10.00 am Sri Sai Saraswathi Homam \$126
Sri Sai Archana \$11 / Sahasranamam \$21

Feb 2 Thur Magha Sukla (Māsa Skanda) Shashti

09.30 am Subrahmanya Abhishekam \$54
Subrahmanya Archana \$18
Oil lamps (6) \$12

Feb 3 Fri Magha Sukla (Ratha) Saptami

9.30 am Surya Archana \$18
10.00 am Surya Homam - For Good Health \$126

Feb 4 Sat Magha Sukla Ashtami

Māsa Durgāshtami & Krittikā deepam

10.30 am Durga Homam \$126
Durga Archana \$18

Feb 6 Mon Magha Sukla (Bheeshma) Ekādasi

10.00am Vishnu Sahasranama Homam \$126

Feb 8 Wed Magha Sukla Trayodasi- PRADOSHAM

10am & 6.30 pm Ekavara Rudra Abhishekam \$36
Siva Archana \$18

Feb 10 Fri Māgha Sukla Poornima (Mahāmāghi)

LUNAR ECLIPSE - Visible in USA

in the Star Ashlesha, From 5.32 pm EST to 9.55 pm

TEMPLE CLOSES AT 4 pm

Feb 11 Sat 9.30 am Sarva devatha Abhishekam \$108

10.30 am Ashlesha Nakshatra Homam \$126

11am/ 6pm Sri Sai Satyanarayana Vratam \$54

Sri Sai Archana \$11 / Sahasranamam \$21

Flower Service \$36 / 7.00pm Jyoti Arati \$108

Feb 14 Tue Magha Krishna(Sankatahara)Chaturthi

09.30 am Ganapathi Abhishekam \$54
10.00 am Ganapathi Homam \$126
06:30 pm "GA" kara Sahasram \$36

Feb 15 Wed Kumbha Sankramanam

6.00 pm Veda Parayana \$21

Feb 23 Thur Magha Krishna PRADOSHAM

10am & 6.00 pm Ekavara Rudra Abhishekam \$36

Siva Archana \$18

Feb 24 Fri Magha Krishna Chaturthi- Mahâ Sivarâtri

Feb 26 Sun Magha Krishna Amâvâsya

8.00am Deva Rishi Pitru tarpanam \$27

Solar Eclipse - Not visible in USA

Sri Maha Siva Ratri Celebration

Thurs Feb 23rd - Sat Feb 25th, 2017

Full Sponsorship: \$504

Feb 23 Thu 23 PRADOSHAM

6.00 pm Ekavara Rudra Abhishekam \$36

Siva Archana \$18

Feb Fri 24 MAHA SIVARATRI

06.00 pm Mahanyasam

07.30 pm Ekadasa Rudra Abhishekam \$252

360 Siva Linga Archana \$108

11.30 pm Bilva Archana \$126

Ekavara Rudra Abhishekam \$36

12.00 am Jyothi Arathi \$108

Feb Sat 25 09.00 am Sri Rudra Yagna Poornahuthi

10.30 am Sri Shiva Parvati Kalyanam \$54

All are welcome to Participate and perform
abhishekam to Sri Sai moola vigraham.

Sponsored Puja: _____ Date: _____ Donation: _____

Payment Method : Check Cash Credit Card ;Please make check payable to:SRI SHIRDI SAI BABA TEMPLE

Name _____

Names & Birthstars: _____

Address _____

1. _____

City, State, Zip _____

2. _____

For Credit Card: Card No. _____ Exp _____ CVC _____ Zip: _____

Signature: _____

Gotram _____