

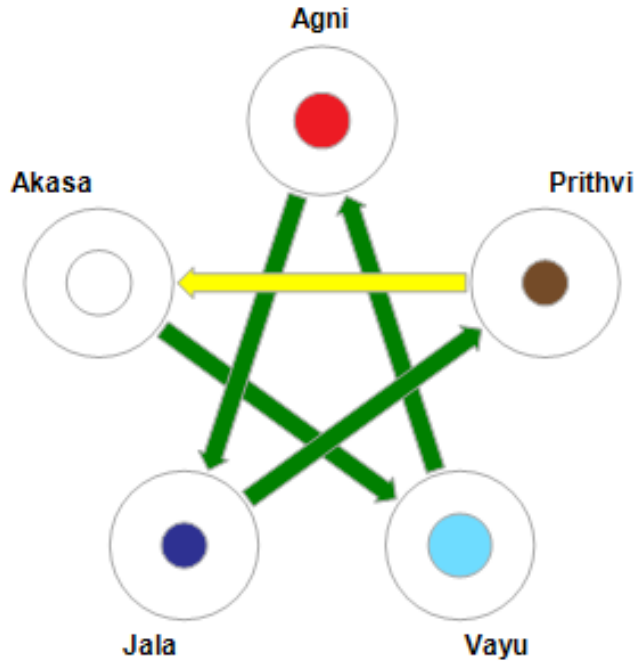


Maha Mariamman Puja

One of the most ancient and grandest festivals of the South Indian Community, the Mariamman Prayer Festival, is observed around July 17 and August 17.

The concept of Mother worship has existed since the beginning of time. Adi Para Shakthi, as Divine Mother, is portrayed as cosmic energy in its dynamic form, This Divine mother takes many forms, commonly known as Kali Amma, Muthumarie Amma, Meenakshi Amma, Durga Amma, Luxmi Amma, Saraswathi Amma.

Mother Adi Para Shakti comprises the Pancha Maha Butha or Five Elements, Fire (Agni), Water (Jala), Earth (Bhu/Pritivi), Air (Vayu), Ether (Akasha). Scripture states that Lord Brahma created the Universe, but Mother Adi Para Shakti gave the Life/ Energy/ Power to every existence.



Being the Mother of the universe, She is ever ready to heed the call of Her devotees. As such, in an instance, did this force manifest as Muthu Mari Amman, Muthu (Pearl); Mari (Rain); Amman (Mother), thus being titled as the Mother of Rain, that which is more precious than pearls.

In a time of great drought, a time when people were plagued with measles, mumps, small pox etc. did these people seek the help of the Divine Mother. This Mother, ever willing to help her children manifested in the form of a mysterious woman garbed in a yellow sari, carrying a pot of fermented porridge and a bunch of Syringa/Neem leaves. She suddenly descended on the State of Samayapuram, in the district of Thiruvekardu, in South India. Here, She fed the ill with the sacred porridge and nursed them with a mixture of Syringa leaves and



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turmeric paste. She continued healing the sick at the speed of light and when Her work was done, She retired to the forest. The people whom She had cured sought her and wanted to know the identity of this mysterious Atha(Aunt). They found Her seated under a Syringa (Verpallai) Tree. They humbly asked Her to reveal Her identity and wanted to know how She could be thanked for saving the lives of so many. She disclosed Herself as the Supreme Mother of the universe, the feminine aspect of Godhead who is the Divine Mother of Rain, agriculture and prosperity. She further requested that every year, in the time that She appeared, Her devotees gather in great numbers, worship Her with praise and thanks giving, and distribute freely divinely blessed porridge etc. to everybody assembled and She promised to be their guiding and protecting force and that She will neither leave nor forsake Her devotees. She suddenly disappeared leaving torrents of rain to bathe the earth and aid the growth of flora and vegetation. Thus She became known as Samayapuram Mariatha and Her divine scripture/ Lullaby, which is the recording of the spoken words of the great Saint, the Mariamman Thalathu. It is, therefore, in this great month of Adhi (July- August) that the Mother Mariamman is venerated as the protector and the healer of all sufferings and miseries of the nations of the world.

The Karagum symbolising Her crown is carried honoring Her as the Supreme Queen of the universe, Adhi ParaShakthie- Eternal everlasting Power.

Mariamman had healed the sick with fermented porridge. The question one would ask then is, WHY PORRIDGE? Fermented porridge has a cooling effect on the system especially in the hot months of summer in India. This porridge brings great relief to the digestive system.

Healing of Measles, Mumps, Small Pox etc.

Another meaning of the Tamil word " Muthu Mari" is small pox. This ailment is considered a divine visitation from the Goddess. When a child has this ailment, one should keep the child in an isolated room, which must be kept clean to honor the presence of Amma. All shoes must be removed; a brass vessel containing turmeric water and syringa leaves is placed at the doorway so that outsiders may sprinkle the water on themselves before entering the room, this is to purify or sanctify them. Syringa berry leaves is also hung at the entrance of the door and it is also placed under the bed sheet of the person having the ailment. As its been stated earlier, Mother Mariamman used the very same syringa berry leaves and turmeric powder to heal and cure the sick. The syringa leaves has great medicinal value and it is widely used in ayurvedic tonics. These leaves have antiseptic qualities. The turmeric powder is mixed with water and is given to the person with the ailment to drink daily. It serves as an antibiotic internally. After seven to nine days, when the sores have dried, a bath is given to the patient with turmeric water. On the same day, outside the house a korlam (pattern drawn with mealie meal or flour) is made for the patient to sit in, a vessel containing turmeric water and syringe leaves is turned around the head of the patient 3 times, a tray containing grounded rice balls is turned 3 times, camphor is lit and turned 3 times clockwise in the divine name of Maha Mariamman. Lastly 7 kinds of beans that have been boiled is turned around the patients head and thrown for the birds to eat.

Once the patient is completely healed, they must attend the temple of Mother Mariamman and give thanks & praise for Her Mercy and Grace.



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Significance of Maavilakku (a Lamp made of grounded rice & ghee) as a sacred offering unto Shree Mariamman

The Maavilakku was offered to the Divine Mother Mariamman by Lord Vishnu to pacify Her anger towards the sins or transgressions of mankind, as She wanted to infest the earth with pearls of small pox (Muthu Mari) The Maavilakku is made out of grounded white rice, honey, butter and elatchi which is mixed together and then moulded into a lamp. In the centre of the lamp, a cotton wool wick soaked in ghee is placed and lit. This Maavilakku is carried around the temple 3 times and then offered at the Lotus Feet of Shree Mariamman to appease Her and pacify Her anger for our transgressions. Devotees who suffer from some diseases of the eye, mouth, ears, stomach, hand, leg etc. will make an offering of a Maavilakku unto Amma once they are cured. In the famous Samayapuram Mariamman Temple in South India, a very special ritual concerning the Maavilakku is performed. The cured person lies on his or her back in front of the Deity of Amma, a leaf is placed on the affected part of the person's body. The Maavilakku is placed on the leaf and lit. After a while the Maavilakku is taken off and offered as prasadhum (blessed remnants). Please note that this divine Maavilakku does not have to be made in the month of Adhi only but it can be made at any time of the year and offered with sincere Love and devotion unto our Divine Mother Shree Mariamman.

Who is Adhi Para-Shakthi and why is it necessary to worship Her apart from Her counterpart Lord Shiva?

Sastra or God inspired scripture reveals that Adhi Para-Shakthie is power or energy in action "Eternal Everlasting Power". Divine Power, Supreme Power! Scripture further reveals this Shakthi to be the ultimate beginning. This Supreme Power or Great Breath created the Universe. "The Big Bang Theory". If only scientists would improvise the wisdom of Sastras, which is God inspired scripture, with their research of the birth of our universe and the origination of all life forms, they will discard of all speculation and recognize that the energy and power that holds the universe together is nothing else but Adhi Para Shakthi. This Divine Shakthi is the one who decorated the heavens and the earth. After moving over the darkness of the universe and brooding or hovering over it, Shakthi or Divine Energy expanded forth everything into the vibrant varieties of thriving life and existence that we know of today. Adhi Para-Shakthi is the Creator of the universe. Adhi means (Primal), Para means (Supreme), Shakthi is (Energy or Power). Thus, Duruga, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Bhavani, Ambika, Kameshwarie, Rajeshwarie, Maha Mariamman - all these are Her Divine Forms. She is One Supreme Being expanded into a multitude of varied manifestations. She is the Mother of all Creations. The pious and the wicked, the rich and the poor, the saint and the sinner are all Her children. She is the energy in the sun. She is the fragrance in flowers, She is beauty in the landscapes - She is colour in the rainbow, intelligence in the mind, potency in homeopathic pills, power in the ayurvedic tonics, devotion in the lovers of God. Her manifestations are countless. The names that describe the personal aspects of Adhi Para-Shakthi are innumerable.

This is why we need this Para-Shakthi in our life today. When you receive Para-Shakthi and you allow Mother to take charge of your life, it doesn't matter what your situation is, She will turn it around for your good. The same applies to other aspects of your life. As this Divine Supreme Energy is allowed to take control of your family, your

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business, your finances and your health, it doesn't matter what troubles you've been experiencing or what's been going wrong, you will begin to grow from strength to strength, from success to success, from greatness to greatness. Why? Because you are no longer operating on your limited natural strength but you are now operating through the unlimited supernatural energy and power of God, Adhi Para-Shakthi! As soon as this Divine Shakthi takes over your life, She will drive every sickness and disease out of your body. She will make right everything that was wrong. She will remove every infirmity from your body and transform you. You will operate in the divine and have your resources supplied by the storehouse of God Almighty, Adhi Para-Shakthi!.

Finally, worship of the Universal Mother Shakthie gives you not only grace of prosperity in this natural world, but also grace for spiritual liberation from all bondage which leads to knowledge of the self and thus the knowledge of the God within us. Adhi Para-Shakthi is all and everything and has complete dominion over everything in the physical and spiritual universes. She is the breath of the All supreme. She can make or mar, mend or end, create and annihilate. No one can free himself from the clutches of mind and matter without Her divine Grace.

Many other Pujas, worshipping Kali Amma can be learnt. Shree Kali Amman Mandir hosts many such festivals, glorifying and worshipping Kali Amma throughout the year. Follow www.skam.co.za or Shree Kali Amman Mandir FB Page. –Guru Prakash Diar

Vazhga Kali Amma Vazgha



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