



S.K.S. SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE (LONDON) – BAL YUVAK MANDAL

Westfield Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9EA Est. 1966 Charity Reg. No. 271034

Tel: 020 8909 9899 Fax: 020 8909 9897 Email: balmandal@sksst.org

Diwali

Dhan Teras

- First of the 5-day Diwali celebration
- Dhan=wealth, Teras=falls on the 13th day of the month Aso
- Houses are cleaned and decorated to welcome Laxmiji-Goddess of wealth
- Lamps are also lit to welcome Laxmiji, and houses are decorated with rangoli's
- In village's cattle are adorned and worshipped as they are their, main source of income.

Kali Chaudas

- Second of the 5-day celebration
- Falls on the 14th day of the dark half of the month
- We sing Hanmanji's arti and do his puja for protecting us from evil spirits
- Coconuts and ladhus's made of sesame seeds, rice and ghee are offered to Hanumanji

Laxmi Pujan and Diwali

- Third of the 5-day celebration
- The word 'Diwali' comes from the Sanskrit word 'Deepavali' – Deep=light Avali=row
- The day celebrates Ram Bhagwan's journey back to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile. **(Ask group what they no about the story, clarify points not mentioned)**
- Also celebrates Ram Bhagwan's victory after killing Ravan and rescuing Sitaji
- Devotees of Ram Bhagwan lit lamps to direct him back to Ayodhya, and made rangoli's to celebrate the joyous occasion

- Laxmiji only enters those houses which are clean, decorated with lamps, rangoli's and are pure.
- Also known as, Chopada puja- Businesses and home accounts are balanced on this day and a puja is down for Laxmiji to thank her for her presence and blessings.
- Lord Shri Krishna left his mortal form on Earth on this day.

Story-

A princess lost her necklace, and poor woman found it but did not know who it belonged to. The news of the necklace spread and the king said that whoever found out would get a reward. Hearing this poor woman went to the palace to handed it in, when the king



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offered the reward, the woman refused and said she only did her duty by returning the necklace to the owner, but she requested that no one in his kingdom should light a lamp on this day except her. By midnight, Laxmiji found only her house lit up with lamps and knocked on her door, when she saw the poor woman, she asked her what she wanted, and the woman asked Laxmiji to never leave her house.

Ankooth – Bestu Varas

- The fourth day is known as 'Padwa', which marks the coronation of King Vikramaditya and vikram-samvat was started from this day.
- Govardhan puja- the people of Gokul used to do puja of Indradev at the end of each monsoon season, one particular year, the young Krishna stopped them from doing so. Indradev got angry and made it rain so much for 7 days, Krishna saved Gokul by lifting the Govardhan Mountain with his little finger on his left hand so that everyone could shelter under it.
- The monsoon season brings new harvest, which is used to make the ankoot. As our Shastra's say we should always offer food to Bhagwan before we eat it our self.
- A mountain of different foods, sweets and savories are made for Bhagwan and put before him, Bhagwan is dressed in beautiful garments and jewellery
- On this day we should greet family and friends by saying Jay Swaminarayan to them.
- 'Nutan Varsh' literally means 'dawn of the New Year', also called 'Bestu Varsh'. The Hindu New Year's day, of the Vikram era is Kartik sud 1.

Origin

The monsoon, which commenced in Ashadh will have grown new crops by the end of Aso. Therefore, the new harvest brought home is first used to cook exquisite foods for the Lord. In Gokul it was a tradition to offer these as thanksgiving to Lord Indra - deity of rain. Observing these preparations, the child Krishna questioned his father Nandbaba, of the purpose. Nandbaba replied that, 'It has been a tradition to thank Lord Indra, who graces rain which grows crops. That is why we live happily'. Hearing this Shri Krishna pointed out that the cause of man's happiness and miseries are his karmas. The supreme God bestows the fruits of these karmas. He added, 'Since we are forest dwellers, pujan of this Mount Govardhan, the cows and Brahmins, is greater than Indra's puja.' He then commanded everyone, 'From now onwards, fodder shall be offered to cows and food to Govardhan. Everyone accepted his 'agna'. Through Govardhan, the Lord then availed all the food offered. When Indra discovered that his puja had been stopped, and instead, pujan offered to Govardhan in Gokul, he unleashed his wrath by deluging Gokul with rain to destroy it. However to demonstrate



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the Lord's power, Shri Krishna raised Mt. Govardhan merely with his little finger, thus sheltering the residents and cattle of Gokul underneath. Over the ages, these sentiments have been consolidated by offering Govardhan puja. This is also known as 'Annakut', 'Anna' meaning food and 'kut', mountain.

Rituals that Satsangi's do

- People go to mandir for the darshan of God.
- People greet each other on this day by uttering, 'Jay Shree Swaminarayan'.
- In all Swaminarayan mandirs 'Annakut' is offered to the deities on this day. A vast array of vegetarian foods is traditionally arranged in tiers or steps, in front of the Swaminarayan Bhagwan. The sweets are placed nearest to the Lord. As the tiers descend, other foods such as 'dal', vegetables, pulses and fried savory foods are arranged. A mound of cooked rice, symbolic of Mt. Govardhan, is placed in the center. In all Swaminarayan mandirs, sadhus and devotees then sing 'Thaal' - Kirtans composed by the poet paramhansas of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. This is followed by a grand Arti.
- The Annakut is left for darshan for the devotees till evening, and then the items are taken down. The now sanctified prasad - of sweets and dry foodstuffs are distributed as prasad.

Bhai Beej

- The fifth and final day of the celebration
- Bhai=brother, beej=2nd day of the bright half of the month Kartik
- Legend goes that Yamunaji (divine form of the River Yamuna) invited her brother Yamraj for a meal to her home quite often, but it was on this day that he was able to accept the invitation. Yamunaji was pleased and welcomed him by performing arti and putting a tilak on his forehead. She then served him with an elaborate meal. Yamraj was so pleased with his sister that he blessed her and granted her a boon; he said 'a brother who has a meal at his sister's house on this day shall have eternal happiness'.

Origin

Once Yamunaji, the manifest form of river Yamuna, invited her brother Yama Raja and his attendants to have a meal at her home. However, work prevented him from accepting her invitation. Finally, on Kartik Sud 2, he was able to visit her. She welcomed him warmly by performing his puja with sandalwood paste, exotic perfumes and rich garments. She then served him sumptuous food in a golden dish. After the meal, Yama Raja shared his sibling love by gifting her expensive garments. He then requested her to ask him for a boon. She asked, 'Every year on this day you should have a meal in my home. You should also release all those who are in Yampuri



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(Hell). And to those who have food at their sister's on this day, you should grant happiness.'

Importance

By serving food to her brother, a sister strengthens the sibling bond they have shared. As for her, the scriptures ordain that she shall not become a widow. Those who do not eat at their sister's home on this day lose all the 'punya' accumulated during the past year and experience misery. Those who do not have a sister may have a meal at a cousin's house or that of a friend's sister.

Rituals that Satsangi's do.

Therefore, a woman invites her brother to have food and consolidate the sibling bond. The sentiments are similar to 'Raksha Bandhan', when a woman visits her brother to tie a 'Raksha' (rakhi).