



Dear Marga-darshakah and more,

Festivals have always been a very key and an integral part of every culture. In our culture of Bharata, our entire year's calender (panchanga) glorifies the key time periods which are auspicious in particular.

The months of Ashadha (July), Shravana (Aug) and Bhadrapada (Sep), are very auspicious, as, in these months, we seek blessings of our different Rishis, Devatas and Pitrs (ancestors). Some key festivals in our culture are celebrated during these months. In Ashadha (July), we revere and seek blessings from our Rishis (during Guru Purnima) and we also pray to Bhagavan Vishnu in the form of Panduranga Vitthala. In Shravana (Aug), we celebrate the birth of Bhagavan Krishna and pray to Bhagavan Shankara on Mondays. In Bhadrapada (Sep), all the people across India welcome dear Ganesha to their homes and acknowledge and take blessings from their ancestors during Pitr paksha.

Thus, through the different festivals, we are performing different aspects of our 'BIG 5 - Pancha Maha Yajnas' our duties towards our Devatas, Rishis, Pitrs and of course towards Manushyas (people) and Bhutas (plants and animals and 5 elements) through the pujas, vidhis, rituals, food offerings and festive celebrations. We see our connections to all.

As we move into the months of Ashwin (Oct), Kartik (Nov) and Margashirsha (Dec), we shall be celebrating some more aspects of our 'BIG 5' duties by praying to the entire manifestation in the form of the Devi, celebrating knowledge in the form of lights, and much more.

Prayers and wishes that may all our children learn to enjoy, respect, adore and glorify these beautiful aspects of our dear Bharata's profound culture.

With love and prayers, Sonali Ambasankar

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The Significance of "Navaratri"

- by Mahidhar Yarra (Father of (Devansh-8years))



"Nava" means nine and "ratri" means night. The literal meaning of ratri is when one turns inwards, rests and becomes rejuvenated.

There are 3 types of afflictions that come to us in life:

1. adhyatmika (afflictions centred on one's body and mind),
2. adibhautika (afflictions caused by disturbances in the immediate environment).
3. adidaivika (afflictions caused by natural disasters).

Navaratri is all about praying intensely and seeking solace in Devi Durga who protects us from all kinds of afflictions. Devi represents Shakti. She fights various asuras and destroys them. It has a very beautiful deeper meaning. All of these asuras, if you see the names, are very symbolic:



- Madhu and Kaitabha stands for craving and aversion (Eg. I love chocolates and want them now; I hate cleaning up my room)
- Dhumralochana, literally means one whose eyes are smoky, whose vision is not clear (Eg. I don't understand why my mom regulates my playing video games)
- Raktabijasura, represents greed and desire (Eg. I want to play video games for the whole weekend)
- Shumbha and Nishumbha, could represent doubting oneself and others (Eg. Are my friends telling me the truth?)
- Mahishasura, stands for inertia, the dullness, laziness (Eg. I don't feel like getting up in the morning and doing any work)
- Chanda, one who opposes anybody, doesn't agree (Eg. My friend always keeps opposing my ideas and opinion)
- Munda, who doesn't listen to people, like having deaf ears. (Eg. My mom keeps telling me to clean my room and I never do it).



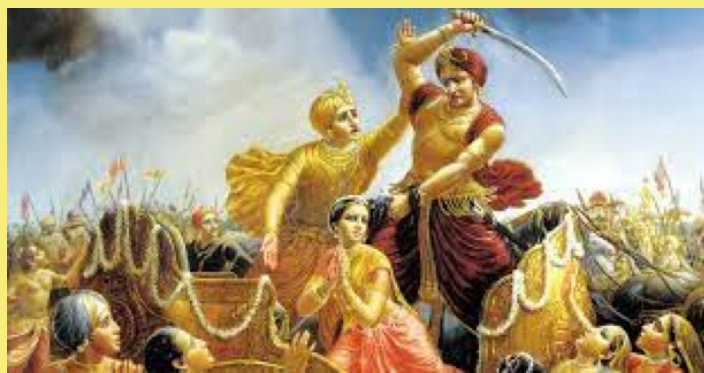
Celebrating Janmashtami

- By Shaurya (11 yrs)

Janmashtami, Hindu festival celebrating the birth (janma) of the god Krishna on the eighth (ashtami) day of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada (August–September). Krishna was the eighth child of his parents, Devaki and Vasudeva.

Once a cruel king Kamsa used to rule over the land of Mathura. The only person he truly loved was his sister Devaki. On the day of Devaki's marriage with a noble Vasudeva, Kamsa heard a thundering voice from the sky. The voice gave Kamsa a prediction of his future - "Oh cruel Kamsa, the very sister you are so devoted to, shall give birth to eight children. The 8th one will cause your death!"

This angered Kamsa and he was about to kill Devaki when Vasudeva said "Kamsa, please do not kill Devaki, we promise to give you all of our sons." Kamsa imprisoned Devaki and Vasudeva and also killed 6 of their sons but the seventh one was magically transported to the 2nd wife of Vasudeva, Rohini.

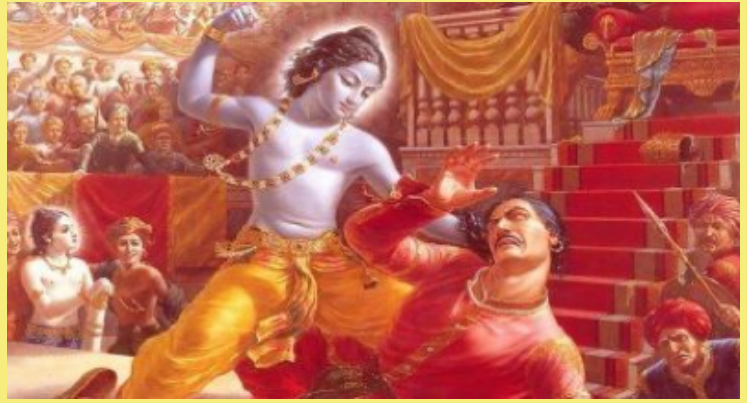


On the day of birth of the 8th child, Devaki and Vasudeva prayed for the child to be safe and unharmed, and magically the doors of the prison opened and the guards had fallen into a great slumber allowing Vasudeva to take the baby to Nanda's house in Gokul and switch the child with Nanda and Yashoda's

child and returned to the prison, the moment he returned the gates closed and the baby started crying alerting Kamsa, he attempted to kill the child but instead the child turned into goddess Vishnumaya and told Kamsa about his fate.

Meanwhile Krishna grew up in Vrindavana parented by Yashoda and Nanda. Kamsa made many attempts to kill him, but in vain. When Krishna was an adolescent, he received an invitation from Kamsa to Mathura.

Krishna and his brother Balarama (the child sent magically to Rohini) left for Mathura. Once they reached Mathura, they were challenged by Kamsa's wrestlers, who were killed by them, and finally Kamsa was killed by Krishna.



Celebrating Krishna Janma:

In my family, we don't sleep during the celebrations, instead we sing bhajans, traditional songs. Since Krishna loved milk and curds, for Janmashtami, we prepare meals from these ingredients. Some of the elders also choose to fast all day and night before, breaking the fast at midnight since Krishna was born at midnight.

Song, dance and drama are an integral part of the lively and colourful celebrations in my house. We enact plays enacting scenes from Krishna's early life. In temples and in some families, idols of Krishna are bathed and placed in cradles.

Another tradition which I love is the human pyramid: a young boy, who stands right at the top, is elevated by a group to reach a clay pot. The pot, known as a handi, is filled with buttermilk and curd. When the boy reaches the top of the pyramid, he smashes the pot and the buttermilk spills. I really love the energy of the people participating in and watching the human pyramid. I have also tried to participate in some of the local pyramids in our society.

**[TO DOWNLOAD A REVIEW OF THE ONLINE RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN
RELATED TO SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF INDIA PLEASE CLICK HERE](https://www.discoveratma.com/shine-for-parents-and-children/)**

Little Chants for daily offerings



Prayer to Bhagavan Krishna

Our namaskara to Bhagavan Krishna, the Lord and the teacher of the world. May the son of Vasudeva and the greatest joy of Devaki bless all of us with the knowledge that he gave to Arjuna. As the destroyer of Kaṁsa and Chaṇura, we pray that may Bhagavan Krishna destroy the demons we face.

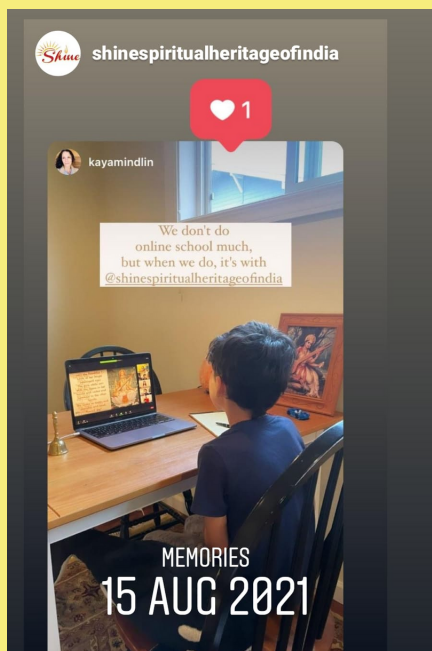
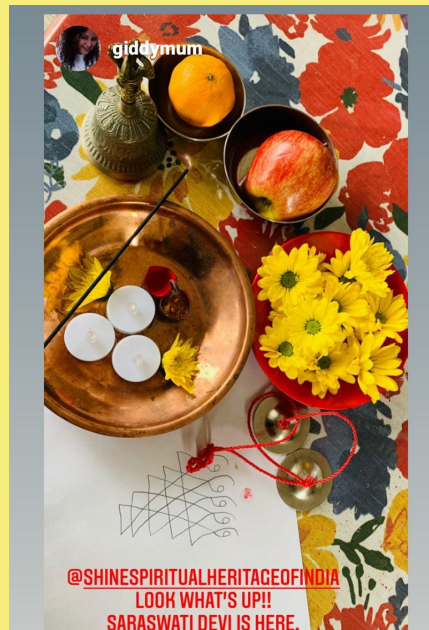
Highlights across SHINE classes from July to Sep 2021

SHINE 8 to 12 yrs old (India) : Significance of festivals celebrated in July, Aug, Sep: Guru Poornima, Ashadhi Ekadashi, Krishna Janmastami, Gaṇesh Chaturthi, Pitr paksha. Learning to chant Hanuman Chalisa. Learning about the Indian panchanga, understanding Bhagavan, are there many Gods or only one?, getting to know one's 'Ishta' devata.

SHINE USA : Learning to chant simple shlokas for Guru, Gaṇesha, Saraswati, Krishna and Devi with their meanings. Learning to sing simple bhajans on Gaṇesha and Krishna. Getting to know more about Gaṇesha and Saraswati. Introduction to Sanskrit sounds and phonetics of each sound. Celebration of festivals, Krishna Janmastami, Gaṇesh Chaturthi, Pitr paksha. Writing letters to and/or calling up and speaking to grandparents. Making a family tree.

SHINE 5 to 7 yrs old (India) : Introduction to Sanskrit sounds and phonetics of each sound. Learning to chant simple shlokas for Guru, Gaṇesha, Saraswati, Krishna, Devi, Rama and Hanuman with their meanings. Learning to chant the Gaṇesha Sankatanashana Stotram. Story telling about the different devatas as related to the festivals. Finding out names of grandparents and speaking to them.

Glimpses of SHINE classes from July to Sep 2021



To learn more about SHINE classes, do write to shine@discoveratma.com



Swaraj (9 yrs), Mumbai

During Ganesh Chaturthi I feel very excited to welcome our beloved Ganapati bappa. When we go to bring Ganesha to my home I feel very happy. When he comes in our house, I feel very loved and cared for as he protects us from all problems in our day-to-day life. He is one of my favorite gods because he is the god of knowledge. Lord Ganesha's looks are so cute and adorable that we all kids love him. He is also known by many names such as Ekadanta, Vakratunda, Lambodara. Chanting his name, shlokas or mantras gives me and my brother positive energy. I love Shree Ganesha a lot.

॥ Ganpati Bappa Morya ॥



Parth (6 yrs), Mumbai
Click [HERE](#) to listen



Swaraj (9 yrs), Mumbai



Anya (9yrs), Pune



Anya (9yrs), Pune



Raghav (11 yrs), Mumbai



Kanish (9 yrs)

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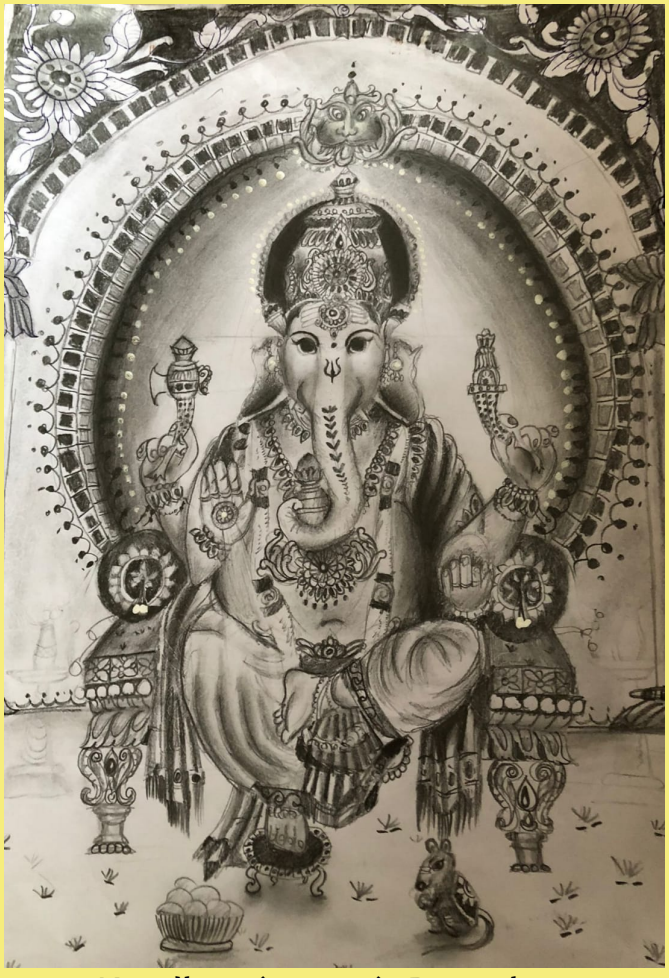
Spandan (9yrs), Mumbai



Spandan (9yrs), Mumbai



Aarav (9yrs), Mumbai



Nandhan (9years), Bangalore



Anugrahi (11 yrs), Mumbai



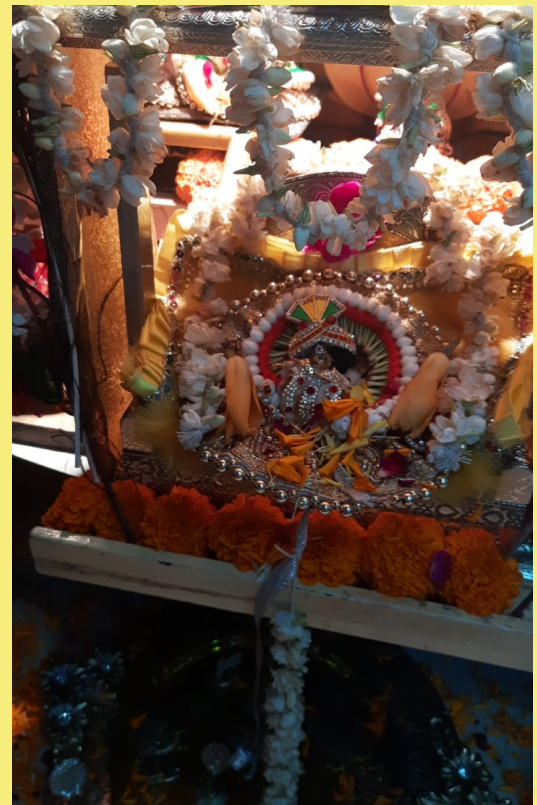
Ira (9yrs), USA



Ira (9yrs), USA
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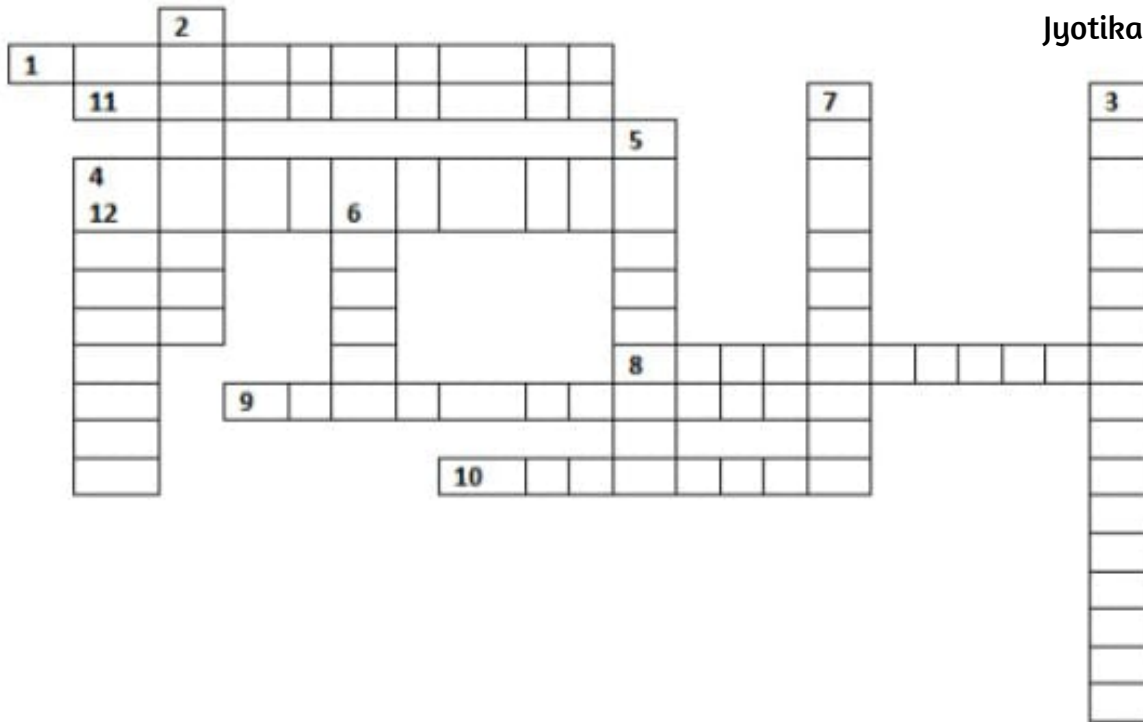
Ira (9yrs), USA



Riddhya (10 yrs), Mumbai

We invite parents & children to contribute their reflections, writings, drawings, any creative expressions they want to include in the newsletter. Selective works will be included. Send in by August 31, 2021 to shine@discoveratma.com.

Crossword based on Sankatanashana Ganesha Stotram



Jyotika (12 yrs), Mumbai

ACROSS

- 1 One with the curved trunk.
- 4 One who has expansive mouth.
- 8 One who has a smoky complexion.
- 9 One who adorns a moon on the forehead.
- 10 One who has all the features of a leader.
- 11 One who is the leader of all ganas.

DOWN

- 2 One tusked.
- 3 One with dark complexion and has smoky eyes.
- 5 One who has a large belly.
- 6 One who frightens his enemies.
- 7 One who removes all obstacles.
- 12 One whose appearance is that of an elephant.

Answers to the CROSSWORD – 12 NAMES OF GANESHA

12 GAJANANA	6 VIKATA
11 GANAPATHI	5 LAMBODARA
10 VINAYAKA	4 GAJAVAKTRA
9 BHALACHANDRA	3 KRISHNAPINGAKSHA
8 DHUMRAVARNA	2 EKADANTA
7 VIGHNARAJA	1 VAKRATUNDA

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Made with ❤ by Rashmi Kaikini (rashmi@discoveratma.com) and editorial team.