

## THE FUNCTIONS OF GODDESS LAKSHMI

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### ABSTRACT

Lakshmi is one of the most important deities in Hinduism. She is considered the household goddess, meaning she is the most important deity to families, is always present in the home and is worshiped daily. The purpose of this article is to study the functions of the Goddess Lakshmi, who plays an important role in Indian mythology and Hinduism.

**Keywords:** Lakshmi, Mahalakshmi, Shri, Diwali, Goddess, functions, festival, myth, Indian culture.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Goddess Lakshmi, like every goddess, has her functions. One of these functions is Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. According to a source on the Internet, Indians worship Lakshmi at their most intense during Diwali, the festival of lights.<sup>1</sup>

The S.P. Upadhyay in his book “भारतीय पर्व और त्यौहार” says about the Diwali holiday:

“दीपावली का त्यौहार हर साल कातिक मास की अमावस्या को मनाया जाता है। दीप-मालाओं से वातावरण को जगमग-जगमग करने वाला यह त्यौहार सबके लिये प्रसन्नता और आशा का संदेश लेकर आता है। इस प्रकार दीपावली की चहल-पहल पाँच दिन तक बनी रहती है। दूसरे त्यौहारों की तरह दीपावली की उत्तर्पति से भी अनेक धार्मिक कथाएँ जुड़ गई हैं। पर वास्तव में वसंत की भाँति दीपावली भी ऋतु-परिवर्तन को सूचित करने वाला त्यौहार है। यह वर्षा ऋतु को समाप्ति की सूचना देता है। इस दिन बच्चों की क्रीड़ा-प्रतियोगिता का भी कार्यक्रम रख जाते हैं। कवि-गोष्ठियाँ आयोजित की जाती हैं जिनमें प्रायः वसंत को शोभा पर कविताएँ सुनाई जाती हैं। संगीत के भी कार्यक्रम होते हैं।”<sup>2</sup>

“The festival of Diwali is celebrated every year on the new moon day of Katik month. This festival, which illuminates the atmosphere with garlands of lamps, brings a message of happiness and hope to everyone. In this way, the excitement of Diwali continues for five days. Like other festivals, many religious stories are associated with the origin of Diwali. But in reality, like spring, Diwali is also a festival signifying the change of seasons. It signals the end of the rainy season. On this day, a children's sports competition program is also organized. Poetry seminars are organized in which poems on the beauty of spring are often recited. There are also musical programs.”<sup>3</sup>

Ashok Koshak's book “घर पर पूजित देवी देवता” also mentions Diwali and talks about the festival:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/lakshmi#Worship>

<sup>2</sup> एस० पी० उपाध्याय । भारतीय पर्व और त्यौहार । दिल्ली: साहित्य प्रचारक, १९८८. प०-३६.

<sup>3</sup> एस० पी० उपाध्याय । भारतीय पर्व और त्यौहार । दिल्ली: साहित्य प्रचारक, १९८८. प०-३६.

“महालक्ष्मी अथवा लक्ष्मी का पूजन यद्यपि दीपावली के अवसर पर होता है तदपि इसमें अनेक विवाद हैं। महालक्ष्मी पूजा का व्रत कोई-कोई भाद्रपद शुक्ल अष्टमी को करने का विधान करते हैं। इसमें प्रतिदिन लक्ष्मी की पूजा की जाती है तथा कथा सुनी जाती है। महाराष्ट्र में लक्ष्मी की पूजा आश्विन शुक्ल अष्टमी को की जाती है। परुषार्थ चिन्तामणि में इस व्रत के विषय में विस्तार से वर्णन किया गया है। उसके अनुसार इस व्रत को स्त्री तथा पुरुष दोनों ही कर सकते हैं। किन्तु कहीं-कहीं इसको केवल स्त्रियाँ ही करती हैं।”<sup>4</sup>

“Though the worship of Mahalakshmi or Lakshmi is done on the occasion of Diwali, there are many controversies in it. Some people make a rule to observe the fast of Mahalaxmi Puja on Bhadrapada Shukla Ashtami. In those days Lakshmi was worshipped every day and people listened to his stories. In Maharashtra, Lakshmi is worshipped on Ashwin Shukla Ashtami. This fast has been described in detail in Parushartha Chintamani. According to him, this fast can be observed by both men and women. But at some places only women do it.”<sup>5</sup>

The dates of this festival are based on the [Hindu lunar calendar](#), which marks each month by the time it takes the moon to orbit Earth. Diwali begins just before the arrival of a new moon between the Hindu months of Asvina and Kartika -which typically falls in October or November of the Gregorian calendar. In 2022, the five days of Diwali begin on October 22, with the most important festival date taking place on October 24.<sup>6</sup>

During the festival, the celebrants illuminate their homes, temples and workspaces with diyas (oil lamps), candles and lanterns. Hindus, in particular, have a ritual oil bath at dawn on each day of the festival. Diwali is also marked with fireworks and the decoration of floors with rangoli designs, and other parts of the house with jhalars. Food is a major focus with families partaking in feasts and sharing mithai. The festival is an annual homecoming and bonding period not only for families but also for communities and associations, particularly those in urban areas, which will organize activities, events and gatherings. Many towns organize community parades and fairs with parades, music, and dance performances in parks. Some Hindus, Jains and Sikhs will send Diwali greeting cards to family near and far during the festive season, occasionally with boxes of Indian confectionery. Another aspect of the festival is remembering the ancestors.<sup>7</sup>

In Sanskrit “Lakshya” means The Goal: every aim in existence. Our goals reflect our values and that which we value is our wealth. It is in this sense that Mahalakshmi is the Goddess of Wealth. She represents our goals, our values, and our aspirations. It is She whom we call upon to help us fulfil these goals.<sup>8</sup>

In another source, Hindus worship Lakshmi most feverishly during Diwali, the festival of lights. Diwali is a time in which people pray for material prosperity. Many Hindus, particularly businessmen, can be seen worshipping their account books. Meanwhile, farmers may offer sacrifices of goats and sheep in hopes of a bountiful harvest. In addition, they sometimes pay visits to dunghills collected to fertilize future crops, where they genuflect before it in the hopes of ensuring abundant crops in the future. Throughout Diwali, clay images of the goddess along with those of Ganesha are worshipped throughout Northern India, in hopes of inheriting some of the good luck meted out by each deity.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> अशोक कौशिक । घर पर पूजित देवी देवता । नई दिल्ली, १९८८. प०-१०९.

<sup>5</sup> अशोक कौशिक । घर पर पूजित देवी देवता । नई दिल्ली, १९८८. प०-१०९.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/diwali-history>

<sup>7</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diwali>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.shreemaa.org/worship-of-goddess-lakshmi/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/lakshmi#Worship>

Before Deepavali night, people clean, renovate and decorate their homes and offices. On Deepavali night, Hindus dress up in new clothes or their best outfits, light up diyas (lamps and candles) inside and outside their home, and participate in family puja (prayers) typically to Lakshmi. After the Lakshmi Puja, fireworks follow, then a family feast including mithai (sweets), and an exchange of gifts between family members and close friends. Deepavali also marks a major shopping period, since Lakshmi connotes auspiciousness, wealth and prosperity. This festival dedicated to Lakshmi is considered by Hindus to be one of the most important and joyous festivals of the year. A very sacred day for the worship of Goddess Lakshmi falls on Chaitra Shukla Panchami, also called, Lakshmi Panchami, Shri Panchami, Kalpadi and Shri Vrata. As this worship is in the first week of the Hindu new year, according to the Hindu calendar, it is considered very auspicious. Varalakshmi Vratam is celebrated by married Hindu women to pray for the well-being of their husbands. On Sharad Purnima night, goddess Lakshmi is thanked and worshipped for the harvests. Vaibhav Lakshmi Vrata is observed on Friday for prosperity.<sup>10</sup>

Another one of Lakshmi's functions Lakshmi and Vishnu are celebrated as the archetypal figures of marital bliss, and Lakshmi is recognized in her role as a devoted wife. Lakshmi is worshipped during the Kaumudi-purnima festival where women venerate her on a mound of new grain, recounting a story of Lakshmi's disappearance resulting in the subsequent deterioration of crops. With her return comes the return of abundance, and so the women who carry out these rituals acknowledge Lakshmi's ability to renew vigor in the crops. Likewise, Lakshmi is praised for this fecund ability during the Durga-Puja festival.<sup>11</sup>

The Glossary of Ancient Indian Culture states that Lakshmi's other name was Sri. Sri incarnates as the consort of Lord Vishnu in the last monuments.<sup>12</sup>

In Ashok Koshak's book " घर पर पूजित देवी देवता " it is said about Sri:

“लक्ष्मी अथवा विष्णु पत्नी का एक नाम । श्री शब्द को देवताओं और मानवों के सम्मानार्थे भी प्रयोग मे लागा जाता है । “श्री” का कोई मन्दिर नहीं है। लक्ष्मी के रूप में इनके अनेक मन्दिर हमारे देश में विद्यमान हैं।<sup>13</sup>

“A name of Lakshmi or Vishnu's wife. The word Shri is also used in respect of Gods and humans. There is no temple of “Shri”. In the form of Lakshmi, many of her temples exist in our country.”<sup>14</sup>

According to another source, this is what is said about "Shri":

“One of Mahalakshmi's names is “Shri,” which means the highest respect. “Sha” means peace, “Ra” means the mind, and “I” means the heart or intuition. When we can experience life with peace in our minds and peace in our hearts, we are offering our respect. This is the Ultimate Goal of Spirituality.”<sup>15</sup>

Another function of Lakshmi is that she is the protector of knowledge and wisdom. It primarily sponsors schoolchildren and students. The Goddess of science and art is the goddess Saraswati, but the goddess Lakshmi is also called विद्यालक्ष्मी - Vidyalakshmi, that is, the goddess of wisdom.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lakshmi>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Lakshmi#Worship>

<sup>12</sup> О.Н. Шоматов “Кадимги хинд маданиятига оид сўзлар луғати”. Т., 2005. С. 42.

<sup>13</sup> अशोक कौशिक । घर पर पूजित देवी देवता । नई दिल्ली, १९८८. प०-१४४.

<sup>14</sup> अशोक कौशिक । घर पर पूजित देवी देवता । नई दिल्ली, १९८८. प०-१४४.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.shreema.org/worship-of-goddess-lakshmi/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9B%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%88%D0%BC%D0%B8>

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According to another source, the goddess of beauty for the people of India is Lakshmi.<sup>17</sup>

According to some sources, Lakshmi was the most important female goddess in Jainism. In the past, Lakshmi was the goddess of abundance and prosperity in Buddhism. In the Buddhist sects of Tibet, Nepal and Southeast Asia, the role of Lakshmi is played by the goddess Vasudhara.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. CONCLUSION

Research shows that Goddess Lakshmi has had a variety of functions in the past, including the bestower of wealth, bestower of harvest, bringer of good luck, goddess of knowledge and wisdom, goddess of beauty, goddess of success, She was the goddess of abundance and prosperity, patron of the family and performed other functions. But today, her functions are clear, and she is considered the goddess of wealth and happiness.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://uz.tierient.com/gozallik-mabudasi-turli-mifologiyalardagi-sevgi-va-gozallik-mabudlarining-ismlari/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9B%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%88%D0%BC%D0%B8>