



ICF Hindu Temple of Oklahoma Balavikas



श्वेतपद्मासना देवी श्वेतपुष्पोपशोभिता ।
श्वेताम्बरधरा निर्याता श्वेतगन्धानुलेपना ॥

Prayers Class 1 & 2

PRAYERS CLASS – 1

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Shlokas

- I **Vakratunda maha kaya soorya koti samaprabha
nirvighnam kurume deva sarva karyeshu sarvada II**

The Lord with curved trunk and a mighty body, who has the luster of a million suns, I pray to thee Oh Lord, to remove the obstacles from all the actions I intend to perform.

- II **Om bhoor bhuvasuvah tat saviturvarenyam
Bhargo devasya dheemahi dhiyoyonah prachodayaath | |**

We meditate on the glory of sacred light
Illuminating the three worlds.
May that divine light inspire our thoughts

- III **Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu gurur devo Maheshwarah
Guru sakshath Parabrahma tasmayi Sree Guruvenamaha | |**

Guru Is Brahmaa (Who plants the qualities of goodness) Guru Is Vishnu (Who nurtures and fosters the qualities of goodness) Guru Is Maheswara (Who weeds out the bad quality) Guru Is Supreme Brahman Itself Prostration unto That Guru

- IV **Tvameva mata cha pita tvameva tvameva bandhu cha sakha tva meva
tvameva vidya dravinam tvameva tvameva sarvam mama deva deva**

O Lord, You Are My Mother, Father, Kinsman And Friend.
You Are My Wealth Of Knowledge, Strength, Valour And Power.
You Are My All God Of Gods.

**V Karagre vasate Lakshmi karamadhye Saraswathi
karamoole tu Govindah prabhate karadarshanam**

Goddess Lakshmi is the symbol of wealth. Goddess Saraswati represents knowledge. Govinda is the God of Power. Hand is the symbol of human effort. So by placing the three divine powers on the tips, in the middle and at the base of the hand, this shloka suggests that all the divinity lies in human effort. Thus this shloka supports the need of human effort and self confidence.

**VI Gangecha Yamune chaiva Godavari Saraswathi Narmade
Sindhu Kaveri jalesmin sannidhim kuru**

In this water, I invoke the presence of holy waters from the rivers Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri.

**VII Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna hare hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama hare hare**

This Hare Krishna Mantra is actually a little prayer to God for taking away all the sorrows, pains and shortcomings of the chanter and provides him bliss and joy.

Om Namō Narayanaya ||
All glories to Lord Narayana

Om Namō Bhagavathe Vasudevaya ||

My respects for Vasudeva, the Supreme Lord (also called dvadasaksara- mantra)

**VIII Asathoma sathgamaya tamasoma jyotirgamaya
Mrithyorma amrutangamaya
Om shanthi shanthi shanthihi**

Lead me from Untruth to Truth,
From darkness to light, (from ignorance to enlightenment),
From Mortality to Immortality,
Om, Peace, Peace, Peace.

BHAJANS

1. Gauri Nandana Gajanana Girijanandana Niranjana
Parvathi Nandana Shubhanana Pahi Prabho Mam Pahi
Prasanna | |
2. Amba Devi Saraswathi Ananda Roopini Palayamam
Mayoora Vahini Saraswathi Ananda Roopini Palaya Mam
Veena Vadini Saraswathi Ananda Roopini Palya Mam
Vidya Dayini Saraswathi Ananda Roopini Palaya Mam | |
3. Manasa Bhajare Guru-Charanam | |
Sadguru-Charanam Pranamamyaham | |
Nirmala Hridaya Virajita Charanam | |
Sarva Characharavyapaka Charanam | |
Bhava-Sagara Uddharana Charanam | |
Sadguru-Charanam Pranamamyaham | |
4. Raghupathi Raghava Raja Ram Pathitha Pavana Seeta Ram
Sita Ram Jaya Sita Ram Bhaja Pyare Tu Sita Ram
Ratre Nidra Divase Kam Pyare Bhaj Tu Sri Bhagavaan
Eeshvar All Tero Nam Sab Ko Sanmathi De Bhagavan | |
5. Namami Shiva Lingam Namami Satatam Shivalingam
Smarami Shivalingam Smarami Satatam Shivalingam
Om Nama Shivaya Om Nama Shivaya Om Nama Shivaya | |
6. Choti Choti Gayya Chote Chote Gwal Chotoso
Mero Madan Gopal
Aage Aage Gayya Peeche Peeche Gwal Beech Mein Mero
Madan Gopal

7. Ghas Khati Gayya Dood Peeve Gwal Makhan Khave Mero
Madangopal
Kari Kari Gayya Gore Gore Gwal Shyam Varan Mero Madan
Gopal
Choti Choti Lakuti Chote Chote Haath Bansi Bajaye Mero
Madanogopal | |
8. Navaneeta Chora Nanda Ke Lala | | Natavara Bala Gopala | |
Devaki Vasu Deva Gopala | | Nanda Nanda Gopala | |
Shyama Gopala Nandake Lala | | Jaya Jaya Jaya Gopala | |
9. Gopala Radha Lola Murali Lola Nandalala | |
Keshava Madhava Janardhana
Vanamala Vrindavana Bala
Murali...
Ananda Mohana Niranjana
Vanamala Vrindavana Bala
Murali....
10. Om Tat Sat Sri Narayana Tu
Purushottama Guru Tu
Siddha Buddha Tu Skandha Vinayaka Savita Pavaka Tu
Brahma Masjda Tu Yahva Sakti Tu Esu Pita Prabhu Tu
Rudra Vishnu Tu Rama Krishna Tu Rahima Tao Tu
Vasudeva Go Vishvarupa Tu Chidananda Hari Tu
Advitiya Tu Akala Nirbhaya Atma Linga Shiva Tu | |

MORAL STORIES

THE MONKEYS AND THE CLEVER HAT VENDOR

Once upon a time there was a hat vendor. He used to sell his colorful hats to the people by going door to door. One day how much ever he tried, he could not sell a single hat, and so the hat vendor was tired of traveling and he sat beside a tree to relax, and he took a nap. The tree, where the hat vendor slept, was a shelter for many animals too. A bunch of monkeys were dwelling in that tree. The monkeys became curious to see the colorful hats and so, the moment the hat vendor slept, they all grabbed the hats. Now the hat vendor woke up from his sleep and was shocked for he has lost all his hats. He looked around and found that the monkeys are playing with the hats.

He thought for a while as to how to get his hats back and then he got an idea. He threw his own hat on the ground and looked at the monkeys. Now the monkeys too imitated him and they all threw their hats. The clever vendor collected all the hats and went for his job.

Moral: use your brains

THE WIND AND THE SUN

Once the Wind and the Sun came to have a quarrel. Either of them claimed to be a stronger. At last they agreed to have a trial of strength. "Here comes a traveler. Let us see who can strip him of his cloak," said the Sun.

The Wind agreed and chose to have the first turn. He blew in the hardest possible way. As a result, the traveler wrapped his cloak even more tightly around him. Then it was the turn of the Sun. At first he shone very gently. So, the traveler loosened his cloak from his neck.

The sun went on shining brighter and brighter. The traveler felt hot. Before long he took off his cloak and put it in his bag. The Wind had to accept his defeat.

MORAL: Fury or force cuts no ice where gentleness does the job.

ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

A lazy grasshopper laughed at a little ant as she was always busy gathering food. "why are you working so hard?" he asked, "come into the sunshine and listen to my merry notes." "But the ant went on her work. She said" I am lying in a store for the winter. Sunny days won't last for ever." "Winter is so far away yet, "laughed the grasshopper back.

And when the winter came, the ant settled down in her snug house. She had plenty of food to last the whole winter. The grasshopper had nothing to eat so; he went to the ant and begged her for a little corn.

"No", replied the ant, "you laughed at me when I worked. You yourself sang through the summer. So you had better dance the winter away."

MORAL: Idleness is a curse.

UNEQUAL FRIENDSHIP

A bear and a man were friends. They two were traveling through a forest. At noon they both sat at the shade of a tree. The man, though oppressed by sleep, could not sleep as a fly often flew over his face.

Seeing this the bear thought, "I shall kill this fly that troubles my friend." so thinking, he struck with his paw the fly that was on his face.

The stroke did indeed kill the fly; but at the same time tore the face of the man.

Moral: Therefore friendship with an unequal person is always dangerous.

WHO WILL BELL THE CAT (AESOP'S FABLES)

A small country mouse fell asleep in a farmer's wagon and was carried to a town, far away from home. At first he felt scared in the new place, but soon made friends with the mice living in a bakery.

As the small mouse was new to the place, he would keep quiet while the rest of the mice talked. They always tried to drag him into their

conversation and thought him very stupid when he had nothing to say. The small mouse used to grin and say, "Mice in my country are not big talkers."

One day, the baker bought a cat. A mouse saw it as soon as it came. He came back running to the others, very frightened and told all his friends what he had spotted. "It's definitely a cat. He is a big, black fellow with large green eyes and long whiskers and claws." All the mice shivered with the fright.

This was a very important matter which had to be urgently attended to. All mice sat together to discuss and find a solution. There was total confusion for a long time as no one could come up with a solution. At last, the oldest and the wisest mouse claimed to have thought of something. Every one was very happy and listened carefully to the solution. The old rat said, "A bell should be tied to the tail of the cat so that we all are aware of his movements."

All the mice thought it was a brilliant idea and praised the old rat. They decided that as the old rat had come up with the idea, it would be best if he himself would bell the cat. The old rat was quite reluctant to do so, saying that he was far too old,. Now the problem was how to bell the cat. No one came forward to do the job.

At last, the small mouse came up and said that he had another idea. In spite of the fact that he was only a country mouse and not as smart as the town mice, his idea was more practical. We can move to the pastry shop next door and as the lady of the house despises cats, we will be safe there," he suggested. All the mice were delighted by the solution and squeaked with joy.

They thought the small mouse was not so stupid after all. They all asked him how he had ever thought of such a splendid idea. The small mouse answered modestly; we mice in the country do much more than just talking. We believe in doing things."

Moral: Some things are easier said than done.

THE COCKEREL AND THE CATS (AESOP'S FABLES)

A cockerel once found a toy carriage in the farmyard. He was thrilled and danced round it with excitement. Attracted by this strange sight, some hens gathered round the cockerel. The cockerel said, "Now! Now! When I travel the world in this carriage and go visiting several countries. All of you shall bow to me."

In his enthusiasm the cockerel forgot that the carriage had to be pulled by someone. No one at the farmyard agreed to pull his carriage.

Just then a couple of crafty farm cars appeared. They said to the cockerel, "We have strong muscles. We can run like the best swift horses." At first the cockerel was hesitant to take them on, but later agreed to accept their offer. He set out on his journey the next morning. A broody hen passed by and warned the cockerel, "Beware! Cats and fowls can never be friends. Do change your mind and stay back with the hens." The cockerel refused to listen. He signaled to the cats to move on.

The cats sped off. On reaching a dense forest the carriage stopped with a jolt. The cockerel stuck out his neck through the carriage window and asked the cats, "Why have you stopped the carriage here?" The cats threw wicked glances at the cockerel. The cockerel got the message. He shrieked with fright. But he was far away from home and friends, and no one could help him. The cats gobbled him up and merrily returned to the farmyard.

Moral: Pride goes before a fall

THE WOLF AND THE SHEEPS

Once a wolf was roaming around in a forest in search of a prey. He came near a village that was located at the edge of the forest. There he saw a flock of sheep grazing in a pasture. While he was planning to kill a sheep, he found a sheep-skin lying by the foot-path. Seeing the sheep-skin, a wicked idea clicked him.

He thought of wearing it and slipping into the flock because then, it would be easy to get a prey. When the wolf got into the flock, the shepherd drove it to the village. Reaching there he enclosed it in the pen and shut the door immediately. Just then his wife came there and said; today I have nothing to cook for dinner. So, kill one sheep for me.

The shepherd went into the pen and looked for a meaty sheep. Mistaking the disguised wolf for a sheep, he killed him with an axe. The wickedness is its own punishment. The wolf wanted a sheep as his prey but himself became the food of the shepherd.

Moral: Wickedness ruins

STORY OF A WOOD CUTTER

Once upon a time there was a poor wood cutter. Every day he would go to the near by woods beside a stream and cut some wood and sell them in the market for their livelihood.

One day he was cutting a branch of a tree that stood just next to the stream. Accidentally the axe slipped out of his hand and fell in the stream. The wood cutter became sad for it was the only axe he had. Surprisingly a fairy came out of the stream.

She said "Look at this silver axe, is this is yours?" The honest wood cutter said "Oh no this is not mine". Then she went into the stream, and this time she came out with a golden axe. The fairy said "Is this golden axe is yours"? The wood cutter replied "Oh no this is not mine"

Now for the third time, the fairy went inside the stream and got his real iron axe and she said, "Is this iron axe is yours"? And the wood cutter jumped in joy, he said "yes, yes this indeed is my axe" The fairy was impressed by his honesty and so, she gave all the three axes to the wood cutter.

Moral: Honesty is best policy

THE BRAHMIN'S DREAM

Once upon a time, there lived a poor Brahmin by the name of Swabhavakripna in a village. Swabhavakripna was all alone and had no friends or relatives. He was known for his miserliness and used to beg for his living. Whatever food he got as alms, he kept in an earthen pot and hung it beside his bed. Whenever he felt hungry, he took out some food from the pot and ate it.

One day, the Brahmin got a quantity of rice gruel, so much that even after eating to his full, a pot full was left. Brahmin was very happy to get such quantity of food. As the night progressed, the Brahmin lay on his bed but he could not take his eyes from the pot. Soon, he was fast asleep. He began to dream that the pot is overflowing with rice gruel.

He dreamt that if a famine came to the land, then he could sell it for a hundred silver coins. With these silver coins, he would buy a pair of goats. They would have kids in every six months and soon he would acquire a herd of goats. Then he would trade the goats for buffaloes and cows. Then they would have their young ones. They would grow up and give lots of milk. He would sell the milk

in the market and make lots of butter and curd from it. Then he would sell that butter and curd in the market. Like this, he would become richer than ever before.

With this money, he would buy a large house with four buildings in a rectangle. A wealthy Brahmin after seeing his affluence would marry his daughter to him. Soon, the wife would deliver a son and he would name him Soma Sharma. The Brahmin would scold Soma, when he would play around all day making noise. But Soma would not listen and anxiously the Brahmin would pick a stick and run after him.

Buried in his dream, Brahmin picked up the stick lying near his bed. He started hitting in the air with the stick. While doing so, he hit the earthen pot with the stick, the pot broke and all the contents spilled over him. The Brahmin woke up to find that he was dreaming the whole situation. All his dreams got shattered at once.

Moral: One should not build castles in the air.

HANDS OF MIDAS

Midas was very greedy king. Was he so greedy that he started meditating and praying to god to deliver him a boon “Everything I touch should turn into gold.”

God also sanctioned the boon. On return from the temple, Midas wanted to test God's boon, He touched a flower in his garden. And it became golden flower. Midas was so happy. But his happiness did not last long. At the dining table, everything he touched became gold.

The cups, plates, spoons and even food and water turned into gold. Midas could not eat anything or drink anything. That night he saw his beautiful daughter fast asleep. Affectionately he touched his daughter, what sadness! The princess also turned into gold.

Now Midas was really sad. He felt for his greed and asked for repentance. God grew sympathetic and took back the magic touch. The princess turned alive. And Midas lived ever so happily with what he had, not wanting for more.

Moral: Greed gives sorrow

STORY OF UNITY OF BIRDS

Long ago a flock of birds were caught in a trap. They all were afraid that in few minutes they will be killed by the hunter who laid that trap. But the wise leader of the birds said, "Don't worry; all that we need to do is, fly together to a distant village where our rat friends live. And they shall help us to get rid of this net."

All the birds agreed and before the hunter could carry the net, they all flew together to a distant village along with the net to their rat friends. The rats tore the net into pieces by their sharp teeth and freed their bird friends.

Moral: Good friends are for ever

TIGER AND THE WOODPECKER **(A STORY FROM KEYURABAHU CHARITRAMU)**

One day as a tiger was devouring the game he had killed; a bone got stuck in his teeth. A woodpecker who lived in the branches above watched him eating the game but did not realize what had happened. This bone out" said the tiger. Days passed by and he was getting weaker and weaker. The woodpecker was wondering, what was wrong with the tiger?

"What is the matter with you? Why are you keeping your mouth open?" asked the woodpecker. The tiger beckoned to the woodpecker to come near and he pointed to the bone in his teeth.

"Oh! You are in a lot of pain" said the woodpecker. "I can remove the bone only if you promise to give me a portion of the flesh of the animal you hunt." The tiger tried and tried but could not get the bone out. "I will not be able to eat anything unless I get nodded his head as he could not speak.

The woodpecker flew into the tiger's mouth, caught the bone firmly with his strong beak and came out of the tiger's mouth at full speed. Then the woodpecker perched on a tree. He dropped the bone on the tiger's head. "I better get myself some food, I am starving" said the tiger.

A few hours later the tiger killed an animal and began to eat. The woodpecker tried to remind the tiger of his promise to share his food. But the tiger looked at the woodpecker and pretended to have never seen him.

"Who are you? Why should I offer any part of this?" said the tiger.

The woodpecker was shocked. The tiger was so ungrateful. He came down from the branches and said, "Don't you remember me? I pulled the bone out from your teeth! How could you forget me?"

The tiger laughed and said, "You know I am a wild animal. I could have easily eaten you up when you entered my mouth. Be grateful that I let you free."

The woodpecker was furious. "That's it. I must teach him a lesson. He took advantage of me. He thinks I am weak. But I have my sharp beak. "The woodpecker patiently waited for the tiger to doze off after a heavy meal. "Now is the time," said the woodpecker.

The woodpecker swooped down and pecked at one of the tiger's eyes blinding it. The tiger roared with pain "You have pierced my eyes. How can you be so cruel?" roared the tiger in pain.

"You know, I have a sharp beak. I could have easily blinded both eyes but I didn't, be grateful for that and stop roaring."

Moral: wickedness ruins

THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE

A Hare one day ridiculed the short feet and slow pace of the Tortoise , who replied, laughing" Though you be swift as the wind, I will beat you in a race" The hare believing his assertion to be simply impossible ,accepted the proposal;

They agreed that the Fox should choose the course and fix the goal. On the day appointed for the race, the two started together. The tortoise never for a moment stopped, but went on with a slow but steady pace straight to the end of the course.

The hare, lying down by the way side, fell fast asleep. At last waking up, and moving as fast as he could, he saw the tortoise had reached the goal.

Moral: Slow and steady wins the race.

THE BRAHMAN AND THE GOAT

One day a Brahman called Mitra sharma was returning home from a neighboring village. He was carrying a plump goat on his back. Just then, three hungry crooks happened to see him they thought of tricking him. The first crook walked up to the Brahman and said "O Brahman how can you defile yourself by carrying a dog on your shoulder?"

The Brahman said "You fool! Don't you know a Goat from a Dog"? Now the first crook said "Now, now! Keep your temper. You are welcome to carry the dog if you wish" For a moment the Brahman thought if his eyes are playing trick on him? No to be sure it's a Goat he confirmed.

After a while the second crook stopped him. Why holy sir! This dead calf may have been dear to you? Must you carry it on you shoulders? Have you forgotten that you are a Brahman? To this, the Brahman said "Are you blind? Can't you see that this is a live goat and not a dead calf?" But now the Brahman really had his own doubts about the goat.

As he walked a little, he met the third crook who said "O Brahman drops the donkey before anyone sees you! People will talk."

Now the Brahman was really scared, and he pulled the goat off his shoulders, flung it to the ground and ran away as fast as he could. The Brahman thought that he was carrying a goblin which kept changing its shape. As soon as he was out of sight, the three crooks carried the goat to their home.

Moral: Trust yourself before you trust others.

THE LION, THE JACKAL AND THE CAVE

In a certain part of the jungle, there lived a lion, by the name of Kharanakhara. One day, he felt hungry and wandered everywhere looking for food, but he could not catch a single animal.

"At sunset, he went into a big cave, thinking to himself, 'Some animal is bound to be living here and will certainly return during the evening. I shall hide in the cave and wait for him.'

"Sure enough, after a short time, a jackal, by the name of Dadhiputchha, arrived on the scene. He noticed that a lion's footprints were leading into the cave but not coming out. He thought to himself, 'Now I am dead! It is almost certain that there is a lion inside. But how can I know for sure? What can I do to find out?'

Suddenly an idea struck him. He stood at the entrance of the cave and began to shout, 'Hello, Cave! Cave!' He waited in silence for some time. Then he cried, 'Ho, Cave! Don't you remember the agreement we came to, that when I arrive here, I shall first call you and you will reply, and only then will I come in? Now, as you are not replying, I shall go to some other cave. '

"When the lion heard this, he thought to himself, 'The cave really replies to the jackal when he returns, but today, for fear of me, it is keeping quiet. As they say: "When fear takes a hold on you, you are paralyzed, not a word will come out of your mouth." 'So, I shall invite him in myself and when he enters. I'll make a meal of him.'

"With this idea in mind, the lion replied to the jackal. 'Hello, jackal! It's all right for you to come in.' "The cave echoed with his roar so loud that even animals far away were frightened. The jackal too bolted saying to himself, 'He who anticipates the coining of a disaster, and acts accordingly, is spared, but he who fails to anticipate it, comes to grief:

Moral: To be fore warned is to be forearmed

Ref: (www.marketforus.com)

THE BUFFALO

Forbearance exists only if there is an opportunity to show it. Knowing this, the virtuous appreciate those who would harm them, considering them benefactors. Once the Bodhisattva took birth as a wild buffalo in a remote forest. The buffalo's very nature was compassionate.

Now a proud and malicious monkey, aware of the buffalo's natural goodness, liked nothing better than to tease the Great Being.

Sometimes while the Great Being calmly slept or nodded in drowsiness, the monkey would suddenly leap on his neck. At other times the monkey would climb upon the buffalo's back and swing back and forth from his horns. Or noting the buffalo's hunger, he would stand right at his feet, to keep him from grazing. And now and then he would poke the buffalo's ears with a stick.

And the Bodhisattva, that Great Being, all the while endured these tricks without displeasure, anger, or annoyance, being quite untroubled, for in fact he considered them a benefit. So it is that the wicked consistently walk the path opposed to discipline, while the good-hearted, due to their practice of virtue, patiently aim to benefit even the wicked.

One day a yaksha, wishing to discover what the Bodhisattva could possibly be thinking to let these indignities occur, he said. “Why are you so patient with that creature? Are you the slave of that wicked monkey? Did he buy you or win you at a game of chance? Or are you for some reason afraid of him? Don’t you know your own strength? Why do you allow him to abuse you and make you his riding animal? What is going on, my friend?”

The Bodhisattva gazed steadily at the yaksha and spoke soft words “Of course I know this monkey is devious, unstable, and powerless, but it is for this very reason that I put up with him. What is patience when directed toward one of greater strength, or toward one impossible to conquer? What is there to endure when encountering those firms in virtue and decent behavior? We ought to endure injuries by those weaker than ourselves, though we have the power of putting them off. Better to bear insults than to lose all one’s virtue.

“Ill-treatment displayed by the powerless is the best opportunity for displaying virtue. Why should the lover of virtue use his strength to lose his firmness of mind? Besides, an opportunity to show patience is difficult to obtain, depending as it does on others. Who then would resort to anger? Would I not be ungrateful if I did not summon patience against those who act to clear away my shortcomings, all the while ignoring the damage to their own well-being?”

“Then you will never be free from his persecutions,” said the yaksha. “How can one subdue a rascal without laying aside humble patience?” The Bodhisattva replied: “Desiring to destroy the source of one’s suffering or desiring happiness by inflicting grief on another will never bring good. Happiness cannot be achieved in such a way. My persistent patience is an attempt to awaken his conscience. If he does not learn, he will sooner or later attack some creature with a hasty temper who will no doubt turn him from his misdeeds. After he has been ill-treated in turn, he will no longer do these things to me: Once punished, he will not act this way again. And so will I be rid of him.”

These words amazed the yaksha and filled him with joy. Respectfully he exclaimed: “Well said, well said!” and, bowing his head to the Bodhisattva and snapping his fingers, he praised the great being with kind words:

“How is it possible for a beast to possess conduct such as this? How do you come by such regard for virtue? You are animal in form alone; you must actually be a higher being practicing austerities in this forest!”

With this, the yaksha threw the wicked monkey off the back of the buffalo, and, after teaching the buffalo a protective charm, vanished on the spot.

From this story one can see how forbearance exists only if there is some opportunity for showing it. The virtuous appreciate even the one who harms them, deeming such harm a great service. This account is also appropriate when describing real patience, and when demonstrating the imperturbable tranquility of the Bodhisattva even when in the state of a beast. How could a human being or one who has vowed to lead homeless life lack patience? This story may also be told when praising the qualities of the Tathagata and when explaining the importance of listening with attention to the teaching of the Dharma.

THE JACKAL WHO FELL IN TO A VAT OF AN INDIGO DYE

Once upon a time, a jackal while roaming around in search of food on the outskirts of a town fell into a large wooden vat of indigo dye. All his efforts to get out of it failed. The next morning, when the jackal heard the dyer's footsteps, he lay very still and pretended to be dead.

When the dyer noticed the jackal, he indeed thought he was dead. So he picked him up and threw him out on to the ground. No sooner had the dyer thrown him out of the vat than the jackal sprang to his feet and ran for his life into the forest. When the jackal saw his new blue color, he thought to himself, "Now I took different. Why shouldn't I make the most of it?"

He invited all the other jackals to come over and then said to them, "The Goddess of this forest has anointed my body with her own hands. Look at my color! So, from this day onwards, I am the master of the forest and you will carry out my orders."

The jackals looked at his peculiar color with awe, bowed respectfully before him and said, "We will do as your Majesty commands!" As time passed, other animals, living in the forest, came to recognize him as their king as well. In due course, even the lion and the tiger became his followers.

This added to the jackal's pride. He became so arrogant that he refused to allow his kith and kin to be a part of his retinue.

When an old jackal noticed that his fellow jackals were sad, he said to them, "Don't feel dejected. We are clever and yet we have been put to shame by this so-called king jackal.

You'll see, he will pay for this! The lion, the tiger and the other animals don't realize that he is a mere jackal and so they've accepted him as their king. We must act in such a way that they come to know the truth. I know how to do

that. Let's get together this evening and start howling at the same time. This king is sure to join in and howl, because after all, he is a jackal."

That evening, the jackals got together and began to howl. True to his inborn nature, the blue-colored jackal also started howling and his game was up. Immediately, the lion, the tiger and the other animals knew that they had been taken for a ride. They pounced on him and killed him.

Moral: It doesn't pay to deceive; truth will triumph in the end

TALKATIVE TURTLE(PANCHATANTRA)
RETOLD BY ROHINI CHOWDHURY

Once, in a certain lake, there lived a turtle and a pair of swans. The turtle and the swans were friends. They would spend all their free time together telling each other stories, and exchanging news and gossip. The turtle especially loved to talk and chatter, and always had something to say.

One year, the rains did not come, and the lake began to dry up. The swans became worried. Supposing it did not rain at all, and the lake dried up completely? Where would they live in that case? But the turtle had a plan. She suggested that the swans fly in search of a lake that still had plenty of water. Once they found such a lake, all three of them could move there.

The swans agreed and flew off. After flying for several hours they found the perfect lake. They returned to the turtle with the good news. But now another problem arose: the new lake was too far for the turtle to walk. How was the turtle to get there? The swans did not want to leave their friend behind.

The turtle thought for a while and came up with another plan. She asked the swans to find a strong stick that they could hold in their beaks. The turtle would then hang on to the stick with her mouth, and the swans could fly with her to the new lake.

The swans liked the idea, though they were worried that the turtle might begin talking and fall off the stick. 'You must be careful not to open your mouth while we are flying with you,' they warned her. 'Do you think you will be able to be quiet for such a long time?' 'Of course,' said the turtle. 'I will be careful - I know when to stop talking.'

So the swans did as she asked. They found a strong stick and each swan held one end of it in its beak. The turtle held on to the middle with her mouth, and away they flew, all three of them.

It was the most exciting thing that had ever happened to the turtle. She was amazed at the way the world looked so far above the ground. She was longing to say something, but remembered in time to keep quiet.

At last they reached the lake the swans had found. It was a beautiful lake, large and blue, with plenty of water. 'Oh look!' the turtle began in excitement, remembering much too late to keep quiet. The stick slipped from her mouth and down she fell from the sky onto the rocks below.

The swans were sad to see the end of their friend - the turtle did not live to enjoy the lake, only because she did not know when to stop talking.

Moral: Always be alert

GOD STORIES

PARVATHI CREATES GANESHA

Once while Parvathi was going for her bath, she rubbed off the dust and oil from her body and out of it created the figure of a young boy. She infused life into the figure and told him he was her son and should guard the entrance when she went to take bath.

Soon after, Shiva came to see Parvathi but the young boy blocked his way and would not let him in. Shiva, unaware that this lad was his son became furious and in great anger fought with the boy whose head got severed from his body in the ensuing battle. Parvathi, returning from her bath, saw her headless son and threatened to destroy the heavens and the earth, so great was her sorrow. The gods and Shiva pacified her and the latter sent out his ganas, or helpers, to bring the head of the first living being with his head towards the north.

They did so and the first living creature they found sleeping with its head to the north was an elephant. They brought the head of this animal and Shiva placed it on the trunk of Parvathi's son and breathed life into him. Parvathi was overjoyed and embraced her son, the elephant-headed boy whom Shiva named Ganesha. "The Lord of Ganas."

STORY OF GANESHA AND KARTHIKEYA

Once upon a time, Shiva and Parvati received the gift of a ripe mango. Their children Ganesha and Karthikeya both wanted the full fruit. The parents were in a dilemma and decided to give them a test: the winner would get the fruit. They announced, "Whoever goes round the world and reaches back first will be the winner." Karthikeya immediately set off on his vehicle the peacock. Ganesha with his vehicle *Mooshika* (mouse) prostrated himself in front of his parents, went around them once and claimed the prize. To the question of how, Ganesha said, "Our parents are the whole world to us. So by going around them once, I have gone around the world." The happy parents gifted the fruit to Ganesha.

STORY OF DURGA AND MAHISHASURA

Long ago there was a Demon called Mahishasura. He performed severe penance to propitiate Lord Brahma. Pleased by his austerities Brahma appeared before him. The Demon asked for immortality.

Brahma said "It is difficult to give such a boon for one who was boon has to die one day or the other".

Now the Demon thought for a while and he said " If I must die let it be at the hands of a woman." for he thought woman are weaklings and this boon would be as good as immortality. Brahma granted the boon and disappeared. Now with the help of boon he became powerful and then started troubling devas and humans alike.

The Asura rushed to heaven with his horde to attack devas. With his new found energy, he drove Indra and devas from Amaravathi, and Mahis ascended Indra's throne.

He declared him self to be the lord of the lords and asked everyone to stop worship Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Mahishasura's men began to harass those pious men who continued to worship Vishnu and shiva.

Meanwhile, the devas assembled at Kailas to request the lord to save them from the wicked Mahishasura. That is when, an intense light issued forth from the enraged faces of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma.

It was joined by similar rays of light from Indra and other devas. The next moment out of that light a female form with a thousand arms came into being! It

was Devi Durga. Every one bowed down to Devi Durga saying “O devi you are the origin of all the worlds, Source of all strength. Destroy Mahisha and protect us.” All the devas drew forth a weapon from their own weapon and offered it to durga.

Now Devi Durga mounting a Lion emitted a blood curdling roar. There was fierce fight between Durga and Mahishasura. Mahisha and his hordes were no match for Durga.

Mahisha assumed different forms during the fight. He became a buffalo, and Durga flung noose at him. He shook himself with all his might and transformed into Lion. Durga chopped off the head of the lion. Then he rose in his own form and charged, later he assumed a form of a n elephant. Durga chopped off the trunk with her sword. Now he assumed the form of a buffalo again and snorted. But Durga leapt upon him and pinned him down. Mahisha struggled to free himself. As half of him emerged from the mouth of a buffalo, Durga raised her sword, and killed him.

Devas were overjoyed. They praised Durga “O Durga, upholder of virtue, destroyer of evil, we humbly salute you. O Devi, continue to protect us.”

KRISHNA AND NARAKASURA

Long ago Lord Varaha lifted bhoomi Devi from the depth of the ocean and they had a son called Naraka. Even though born of a devine parents, Naraka was turned out be very wicked and troublesome.

He became king and troubled every one. He would take away the maidens and put them in prison. Likewise he kept 16100 women in his prison. Once he rode to Amaravathi, the capital of Indra (the king of devas) and he took away his four tusked elephants, he snatched the varunas umbrella and even he took the shining earrings of Mother Adithi.

Now helpless Indra could not stop him but he went to Dwaraka to inform Krishna of Naraka’s misdeeds. Indra pleaded to Krishna to save everyone from wicked Narakasura.

As Naraka had a boon that he could be killed only by his mother, Krishna took Sathya bhama (incarnation of Bhoomidevi) with him to kill Naraka . Krishna mounted Garuda and with his weapons (Shankha chakra, Gada) and along with Sathyabhama rode to Pragjyotisha.

He crossed all the hurdles of fire, water and weapons to reach Pragjyotisha. There he killed a five headed Asura called Mura who was guarding the gates of

Naraka's Palace. Lastly with the help of Sathyabhama Krishna killed Narakasura. All the Devas showered flowers on Krishna. Till today, we celebrate this day as Diwali, the festival of lights.

THE STORY OF RAMAYAN

Ramayan in a shloka "Aadau Rama Tapovanadi gamanam, hathva mrugam kaanchanam Vaidehi haranam Jatayu maranam Sugreeva Sambhashanam, Vali nirdalanam, samudra taranam lanka puri daahanam Pashchad Ravana Kumbakarna hananam Yettaddi Ramayanam

There was a king named Dasaratha in Ayodhya. He had three wives. They were Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumithra. Four sons were born to them. Rama the first among them was the son of Kausalya. Bharatha the second was the son of Kaikeyi. Lakshmana and Shatrughna, the third and the fourth were the sons of Sumithra.

By the demand of kaikeyi and command of his father Rama left for the forest. Lakshmana and Sita followed him. A Rakshasa (Demon), Ravana by name, took away sita. A vulture named Jatayu died trying to save her.

Ravana kept Sita at Lanka. Rama made friendship with Sugreeva the king of monkeys and Hanuman. Rama killed vali, the wicked brother of Sugreeva. Hanuman jumped over the sea and saw Sita at Lanka, and burnt many parts of lanka.

The Monkeys built a bridge over the sea. Rama went to lanka and killed Ravana. Then he returned ayodhya with Sita. The coronation of Rama was celebrated at Ayodhya.

BALARAMA

Krishna and Balarama spent their childhood in Gokul. One afternoon they all went in search of some fruits in the forest and they found a grove where tree bore luscious berries. When they got near, one of the Gopa's said, that the grove belong to an asura called Dhenukasura. And no cattle which enter that place return home alive.

Krishna and Balarama asked the cowherds, "Do you want to eat the berries?" "Yes we do" replied their friends.

Now Balarama shook the tree with all his might and hundreds of berries fell on the ground. On listening, the sound of falling berries Dhenukasura assumed the form of a wild donkey and shot out of the cave.

All the cowherds ran away looking at him except Krishna and Balarama. Dhenukasua lashed at Balarama and about to lash out once again with his hind legs, when Balarama caught hold of his legs and swirled him in the air and threw him away.

All the cowherds hiding near the shrubs came out to eat the berries but again they heard the thumping sound of Dhenukasura's hordes and were afraid. Now Krishna and Balarama asked their friends not to worry, and together they sent all of them to their master.

Thus did Rama secure new territory with lush green grass for the cattle of the village to graze on.

HANUMAN GOES TO LANKA

Hanuman is the son of wind God. He has utmost devotion to the feet of Lord Rama. Rama was in search of his wife lady Sita who was abducted by a Demon called Ravana.

Hanuman with his tremendous strength leaps over the ocean. On the way he meets a Demoness Sursa who wanted Hanuman to enter her mouth. Hanuman quickly enters her mouth and comes out; Sursa appreciates his smartness and bless him to succeed in his mission.

Then a mountain menaka appear before him and him to rest for while but Hanuman says he would not rest until he finish his task of finding lady Sita. Now he reaches Lanka. There he finds a demoness Lankini who was guarding the doors of Lanka. She stops the intruder Hanuman. But Hanuman defeats her.

He meets Vibheeshan in Lanka and who was chanting the name of Lord Rama and he was the younger brother of Ravana. Then he goes to Ashoka Watika where Sita was sitting under a tree repeating the name of Lord Rama.

Hanuman gives her the ring of Lord Rama and in return she gives him choodamani. Hanuman then uproots many trees in Ashoka vatika and kills many demons. Meghanad, the son Ravana binds him and take him to the court of Ravana. There they lit his tail with fire. Hanuman wisely jumps from one house to other and burnt the entire Lanka. Then he went to the sea to cool his tail.

SHIVA AND MARKANDEYA
(REF: BALA GOKULAM)

Mrikandu was a great rishi. Marudvati was his wife. For a long time they had no children. The rishi prayed to God Shiva. God Shiva appeared to him, and said, "I am pleased with you, Mrikandu. Tell me, do you want a hundred sons, who will live for a long time, but will all be foolish? Or, do you want one very intelligent son, who will live for only sixteen years?" The rishi at once said, "God, give me that one intelligent son."

God Shiva said, "Good! You shall have him." Soon the rishi got a son. He named him Markandeya. The boy grew to be very intelligent and handsome. The rishi invested him with the sacred thread. Markandeya learnt the Vedas and Sastras, easily. Every one liked him.

As the boy was getting on to be sixteen, Rishi Mrikandu became sadder and sadder. One day Markandeya asked his father: "Father, why do you look so sad?"

The rishi said, "Son! What shall I say? When God Shiva gave you to me, he said you would live only sixteen years. You are now about to reach that age. How can your mother and I bear to lose you as we will at the end of this year?"

Markandeya said, "Father! Is that the reason? God Shiva is very kind to His devotees. You yourself told me that. He has saved many from death before. I have read about it in the Puranas. I shall therefore worship God Shiva day and night from today. I am sure, He will save -me too! "

Rishi Mrikandu was very happy to hear his son say this. He blessed his son. Markandeya built a Shiva-Linga at a spot on the sea-shore. He started worshipping Shiva morning, noon and night. He sang bhajans, and often danced in joy. On the last day, Markandeya was about to sing bhajans, when Yama, the God of Death, came to him. Yama rode on a buffalo. He held a noose in his hand. He spoke to Markandeya, "Stop your bhajan! You boy! Your life in this world is over. Be ready to die."

Markandeya was not afraid. He clung to the Shiva-Linga as one clings to one's mother. Yama threw his noose round the boy's neck, and pulled him along with the Shiva- Linga.

Then the Shiva-Linga burst open and God Shiva came out of it, and said, "Yama, go away! Don't touch this boy. He is my beloved devotee. He will live for ever!"

Yama went away crest-fallen. Markandeya then prayed to God Shiva more fervently than ever. This prayer says at the end of each line, "What can Death do to me?" Many people recite this prayer even now.

Markandeya came home, and fell at the feet of his parents. They embraced him, and wept with joy. Markandeya became a great rishi, and lived very long.

THE COW (SACRED ANIMAL)

The cow is a domestic animal

The cow gives us milk.

The cow eats grass grains and straw.

The milk of the cow changes into curd.

The people churn the curd and make butter and butter milk.

On melting butter we get ghee.

The milk, curd, butter milk and ghee are good for health.

The cow is being worshiped by the people of India.

They treat cow as one of the seven mothers, for she gives nutritious milk.

Protection of cow leads to prosperity.

Cow dung is used in Indian villages to sanctifying, purifying purposes. Also they consider cow as divine animal and they worship her.

Lord Krishna loved cows.

Once Brahma, Indra and the other devas called on Lord Vishnu to know who the greatest devotee of the Lord is. Then the Lord replied "Rantideva" Now all the devas wanted to know why did God consider Rantideva as the greatest devotee. So they went on earth to test him. At that time Rantideva fasted for 48 days and was about to break his fasting on 49th day.

It is difficult to practice charity when one is hungry, so all the devas decided to test him on that day. And they all went to him in disguise of human beings. Rantideva was Praying to God before he could eat the food, and then there came a Brahmin who said "Holy one, I am hungry, give me something to eat".

"May the lord be pleased! Take half of what is mine "said Rantideva. Then came a farmer who said," Holy one I am dying of hunger".

"You shall share what I have", said Ranthideva and gave away some more from his food. As Rantideva was about to eat what was left "Maste, do you have something for

me and my poor dogs “, said a beggar. “What little I have is yours “, said Rantideva and gave away all food he had.

Rantideva was happy for he served the hungry and now he wanted to break his fast by drinking water. The devas tested Rantideva and now the lord of Death, Yama wanted to test him. So he disguised himself as an untouchable person. He went to Rantideva and said, “ Master I am thirsty”.

Now Rantideva offered him his kamandalu to quench his thirst, but the visitor hesitated. The visitor said, “ I should not touch your kamandalu as people call me an untouchable”. Rantideva replied “How can you pollute anything? Doesn't the all-pervading Vishnu reside in you too, brother? “

Saying so, Rantideva gave water to the visitor. Next moment, Vishnu and the other devas appeared before Rantideva and Lord bestowed him Moksha.

STORY OF SHABARI

On the Banks of river Pampa was the Ashram of Shabari, an old tapasvini. She was the disciple of sage matanga, who told her that she would experience the supreme bliss of the darshan of Sri Rama an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

So, Shabari stayed on, spending her days in prayer and austerity. Till at last Rama and Lakshmana reached her ashrama on the banks of Pampa. Shabari, her old body and wrinkled, her hair completely white trembled as she welcomed Rama to her ashrama.

“O Lord,” she said.” I am indeed blessed that you have made my ashrama holy with the touch of your feet. I am old and foolish and wash your feet with my tears. Lord, what should this humble tribal woman offer you? Here, in love have I gathered some forest fruits. That you may not find any fruit bitter or sour, I have tasted each one before placing it before you. My humble offerings please accept. Thus with folded hands and bowed head she requested Rama. How simple, how innocent above all, how high and pure her devotion to Rama. Shabari is yet another example of Supreme Bhakti. Rama ate the fruits with great relish. His love for his Bhakta flowed out from his eyes. Withered old Shabari felt its embrace. The Lord always accepts whatever little we offer unto Him, provided we offer it with pure, untainted love.

Draupadi and Krishna (Annam na nindhyath)

Once Pandavas and Kauravas played the game of dice and whoever was defeated would have to give up the whole Kingdom and remain in the forest for twelve years, and then for another year live incognito (that is, without being recognized by others). If they were recognized by anybody during that period, then they had to repeat the twelve years' stay in the forests and spend a year incognito. This was the condition of the match.

Yudhisthira was defeated. The Pandavas gave up their royal robes and put on clothes made of bark of trees. Draupadi followed her husbands, giving up her life of luxury in palaces. So the forest life of the Pandavas began.

Lord Krishna was the beloved God of Draupadi. He did not forget his devotees in the forest, but visited them now and again. Many sages also visited the Pandavas now and then and guided them. The Sun-God gave Yudhishtira an *Akshaya Patra* (magic vessel). This vessel would not become empty until Draupadi's meal was over.

During the exile when Pandavas were in Kamyaka Forest, Duryodhan sent the short-tempered but highly knowledgeable sage Doorvasa and his thousand disciples to visit Yudhishtira. His intention was to get the Pandavas cursed by the sage Doorvasa.

Yudhishtira invited the sage and his disciples to dine, for he was sure that by the virtue of the Akshaya Patra, he had received from the Sun, they would be able to feed the sage and his disciples. Everybody at that time, even Draupadi and Kunti had taken their meal and the Akshaya Patra was empty.

Sage Doorvasa went to take a bath in the Ganges. Draupadi got worried and she again prayed to Krishna to save her and her husbands from the wrath of Doorvasa when he would find out that the Pandavas had nothing to offer him and his disciples as a meal. Lord Krishna reached the hut of Draupadi and ate the single grain of rice in the Akshaya Patra. There at the river bank, sage Doorvasa and his disciples felt as if they had a sumptuous meal with many delicacies. Doorvasa rishi blessed the Pandavas and they decided to change their course silently. This way Lord Krishna taught a lesson to the world that we should never waste the food as every grain is precious.

Story of Yudhishtira

Yudhishtira the first prince among the Pandavas, always spoke the truth through out his life. They even went through many hardships in their life but he always embraced the truth. Once Yudhishtira his brothers and wife started journey to heaven.

On the way a dog accompanied them. One by one they all died, for it was no easy path. But Yudhishtira and the dog went on to reach the gates of heaven. Their, the doorkeepers, asked yudhishtira that they can only allow him to enter into the heaven but not the dog Yudhishtira said, then he would not want to go to the heaven, if there is no place for the dog, who sincerely accompanied him all through out his difficult journey.

Now Yama, the Lord of death, who was in disguise of a dog appeared before him and blessed Yudhistira for his virtues and reverence for all life.

Story of Pundalika

Pundalik was a devoted son to his parents Janudev and Satyavati. They lived in a forest called Dandirvan. But after his wedding, Pundalik began ill-treating his parents. Tired with their son's misbehavior and ill treatment, the elderly couple decided to leave for Kashi.

Upon hearing of their plans, Pundalik's wife decided to join them and make a pilgrimage. Pundalik and she then joined the same group of pilgrims on horseback. The ill treatment of the old couple continued at the hands of Pundalik.

On the way to Kashi, the group reached the ashram (hermitage) of a pious and venerable sage named Kukkutswami. That night, when all were asleep, Pundalik by chance lay awake.

Just before dawn, he saw a group of beautiful, young women, dressed in dirty clothes, enter the ashram, they went to the prayer-room of the hermitage. When they reappeared after prayer, their clothes were spotlessly clean.

Then, they vanished as inexplicably as they had appeared. Pundalik felt a deep sense of peace as he witnesses this scene. It remained on his mind the whole day, and he resolved upon remaining awake the next night, to be sure that what he had witnessed was not merely a dream. This time however, Pundalik was very curious. He approached the beautiful women and asked him them on who they were.

They said, they were the Ganga, Yamuna and other Holy Rivers of India in which were revered for their holiness and pilgrims thronged to have a dip in their holy waters to wash away their sins. The holy rivers explained that their clothes were dirty and unclean due to the sins of the bathing pilgrims. "But O Pundalik, you, with your ill-treatment of your parents, are the greatest sinner of them all! " This incident completely shocked Pundalik and got a transformation in him. He realized his mis- deeds and became devoted to his parents. He made all efforts to make his parents comfortable. And left no stone unturned to make his parents happy, even at the cost of his own comfort.

They say, devotion in any form reaches God immediately. Seeing this immense devotion of Pundalik to his parents, Lord Vishnu was very pleased. God was so happy with him that He wanted to bless Pundalik immediately, so he left from Vaikuntha (Lord Vishnu's abode) for bhoolok (Earth) and Pundalik's ashram. Lord knocked Pundalik's door. At that time Pundalik was serving his parents food and was busy. Pundalik heard the door knock and realized it was God who had come to see him. But such was his devotion to his parents, he wanted to complete his duties and only then attend to the visitor, irrespective of whether it was even God at his doorstep. Pundalik threw a brick outside for God to stand on and wait for him until he finishes attending to his parents.

Seeing this devotion & commitment to his parents he was extremely impressed. And the ever-loving God waited for his devotee. When Pundalik came out and begged God's pardon, Lord Vishnu replied that far from being displeased, he was pleased with his love for his parents and granted a boon to him. Pundalik requested God to stay back on Earth and bless all his numerous devotees. Lord agreed to stay back as Vithoba, or God who stood upon a brick. Along with Vithoba, Rakhumai (Mother Rukmini) is also worshiped. A temple was built at the place where Lord Vishnu stood on the brick.

Ganesha chaturthi

On the fourth day of Bhadrapad month, we celebrate Ganesha chaturthi as it is the birthday of Lord Ganesha. Lord Ganesha is worshipped before starting any work or auspicious ceremony. He is the remover of all obstacles and bestows knowledge. He is the son of Lord Shiva and Parvathi. We make many sweets and savories during Ganesha chaturthi and offer it to the God with devotion. Modaka is one of his favorite sweets. Ganesha has many names, the important name among them are Vakratunda , Ekadanta , Krishna Pingaksha , Gajavakra,

Lambodara , Vikata ,Vighna Rajendra , Dhoomravarna,,Balachandra, Vinayaka , Ganapathi Gajanana, Those who worship him with devotion will attain all their desires.

Navarathri

In the month of Ashvij, 9 days are celebrated praying to goddess Durga. We pray first three days to Maha kali next three days to Maha lakshmi and the last three days to Saraswathi. First three days we cleanse our heart from thoughts of ill will, for which we need the blessings of Maha kali. The next three days we meditate upon pure thoughts for which we take the blessing of Goddess Lakshmi, Now we are ready to take the divine knowledge and thus we pray to Goddess Saraswathi for knowledge during the last three days.

Tenth day is celebrated as Vijaya dashami as it is the day when Goddess Durga got victory over wicked demon Mahishasura. Also it is the day when Lord Rama killed Ravana. So, we make a huge puppet of Ravana and burn it to symbolize victory of good over evil.

Makar Sankranthi or Pongal

It is the festival which marks the commencement of Uttarayan pada, when the Sun turns from the South to North and enters Makara Rasi (Capricorn). It falls on 14th day of January. Since this day is calculated on the solar calendar the date remains the same from year to year.

In Tamil Nadu, it is celebrated as pongal. It is the harvest festival honoring the Sun God who gives us heat and light and makes life possible on earth. The pooja for sun God is done outside the house where sun is visible. This is also the last day of Margasirsa month. Which is the auspicious month among all the other months?

The spiritual aspect of Sankranthi is turning or a change in life from the materialistic to spiritual path. Thus Sankranthi represents the spiritual awakening of man. In different parts of India we exchange til gud symbolizing friendship. In north India colorful kite flying is a favorite activity at the time of Sankranthi.

Hanuman jayanthi

Hanuman Jayanti is the birthday of Lord Hanuman and it is observed on the full moon (Purnima) day in the Hindu month of Chaitra (March – April). He is a Chiranjeevi – one blessed with immortality.

Lord Hanuman symbolizes strength and unparalleled devotion and selfless service. He is the greatest devotee of Lord Ram and he is a Brahmachari (celibate) and humility is his hallmark.

The greatness of Hanuman is explained by Lord Ram in the Ramayan. Lord Ram said to Hanuman, 'I am greatly indebted to you, O mighty hero. You did marvelous, superhuman deeds. You do not want anything in return. You have not asked for anything at any time. You threw away the precious garland of pearls given to you by Sita.

How can I repay my debt of gratitude to you? I will always remain deeply indebted to you. I give you the boon of everlasting life. All will honor and worship you like myself. Your idol will be placed at the door of my temple and you will be worshipped and honored first. Whenever my stories are recited or glories sung, your glory will be sung before mine. You will be able to do anything, even that which I will not be able to!'

Devotees chant Hanuman Chalisa and Hanuman Ashtak on the day. Most Hindu devotees also fast on the day or on the previous day. Hanuman Jayanthi Vrat is observed on April 8, 2009 in some regions.

It must be noted here that Hanuman Jayanti is observed during different period by different communities. In Andhra Pradesh, Hanuman Jayanti is observed as a 41-day Hanuman Jayanti Deeksha and it begins on Chaitra Purnima. In Tamil Nadu, Hanuman Jayanti is observed during the Margazhi month (December – January).

Holi

Holi is the most colorful festival of the Hindus and falls on the full moon day in the month of Phalgun (March). Holi heralds the arrival of spring.

In south India it is said that this day Lord Kama deva was burnt to ashes by Lord Shiva.

Other Mythological story says this day Putana the demoness, who tried to kill Krishna, got killed as he sucked her breasts till blood started flowing and she succumbed to death. Hence, on the previous evening of the Holiday bonfires are lighted to celebrate the victory of Krishna and the death of Putana.

Shivarathri

Maha Shivratri, the night of the worship of Shiva, occurs on the 14th night of the new moon during the dark half of the month of Phalguna (Feb / March) when Hindus offer special prayer to the lord of destruction.

Lord Shiva was married to Devi Parvati on Shivratri. Shiva without Parvati is pure 'Nirgun Brahman'. With his illusive power, (Maya, Parvati) He becomes the "Sagun Brahman" for the purpose of the pious devotion of his devotees.

It is also believed that on Shivratri, Lord Shiva became 'Neelkantham' or the blue-throated by swallowing the deadly poison that came up during the churning of "Kshir Sagar" or the milky ocean. The poison was so deadly that even a drop in His stomach, which represents the universe, would have annihilated the entire world. Hence, He held it in His neck, which turned blue due to the effect of poison. Shivratri is therefore also a day of thanksgiving to the Lord for protecting us from annihilation.

The absolute formless God, Sadashiv appeared in the form of "Lingodbhav Moorti" exactly at midnight on Maha Shivratri. That is why all Shiva devotees keep vigil during the night of Shivratri and do "Shivlingam abhishekham" .

Ram navami

Rama Navami falls on the ninth day of the shukla paksha, or bright phase of the moon, in the lunar month of Chaitra (April-May). The first day of Chaitra, or Ugadi, also marks the beginning of the Indian year.

Rama is one of the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu, and one of the two most popular, along with Krishna. Consequently, Rama Navami is widely celebrated, though not on the scale of festivals like Diwali or Dussehra.

According to legend, Rama was born at noon. Rama is the epitome of perfection, the uttama purusha, fulfilling all his duties towards both family and subjects.

It is considered auspicious to undertake a fast on the day in the name of Rama. The more devout fast for nine days, from Ugadi to Rama Navami. The objective of the fast is not to ask for special favours of the deity but to seek perfection as a human being. Devotees perform elaborate pujas and chant the name of Rama. Temples of Rama have special services and bhajan sessions through the day.

Ugadi

The Telugu and the Kannada New Year falls on the first day of the month of Chaitra (March-April). People in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka states in the South of India believe that Lord Brahma began the creation of the universe on this auspicious day of Ugadi.

People prepare for the New Year by cleaning and washing their houses and buying new clothes.

On the Ugadi day they decorate their houses with mango leaves and "rangoli" designs, and pray for a prosperous new year, and visit the temples to listen to the yearly calendar - "Panchangasravanam" as priests make predictions for the coming year. Ugadi is also an auspicious day to embark on any new endeavor. In Maharashtra it is called Gudi Padwa; People hang "gudhis" on their windows on this day to celebrate Mother Nature's bounty. A "gudi" is a decorated pole with a brass or a silver vessel placed on it.

PRAYERS CLASS II

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Shlokas

- I. **Shri Saraswathi namastubhyam varade kamaroopini
Vidyarambham karishyami siddhir bhavatu mein sadaa**

Meaning

=====

O Goddess Saraswati, salutations to you, the giver of boons, the one who fulfills all desires. I begin my studies. May there always be accomplishments for me.

- II **Shuklam baradharam vishnum shashi varnam
Chaturbhujam prasanna vadanam dhyayeth
Sarva vighnopa shantaye**

Meaning

=====

We meditate on Lord Ganesha - who is clad in white (representing purity), who is all pervading (present everywhere), whose complexion is gray like that of ash (glowing with spiritual splendor), who has four arms, who has bright countenance (depicting inner calm and happiness) and who can destroy all obstacles (in our spiritual and worldly path).

- III **Agajaanana Padmaarkam Gajaananam Maharnisham
Anekadam tham Bhaktaanaam Ekadantam Upasmahey**

Meaning

=====

I worship day and night that elephant faced Lord Ganesha who is like sun to the lotus face of Mother Parvati. Giver of many boons, the single tusked Ganesh, I salute Thee to give me a boon.

**IV Gurur Brahmaa Gurur Vishnuhu Gurur Devo Maheswarah
Gurur Saaksaat ParaBrahma Tasmai Shri Gurave Namaha**

Meaning

=====

"Guru Is Brahmaa (Who plants the qualities of goodness) Guru Is Vishnu (Who nurtures and fosters the qualities of goodness) Guru Is Maheswara (Who weeds out the bad quality) Guru Is Supreme Brahman Itself Prostration Unto That Guru"

**V Brahmaarpanam Brahma Havihir
Brahmaagnau Brahmanaa Hutam
Brahmaiva Tena Gantavyam
Brahma Karma Samaadhinaa**

Meaning

=====

[This is 24th verse from the 4th chapter of Bhagavad Geetha] The act of offering is Brahman. The offering itself is Brahman. The offering is done by Brahman in the sacred fire which is Brahman. He alone attains Brahman who, in all actions, is fully absorbed in Brahman. (As we chant this prayer we are offering the different types of food to Brahman).

**VI Karacharana kritam vak kayajam karmajam vaa ;Shravana nayanajam vaa
Manasam va aparadham; Vihitam avihitamva ; Sarvamedhakshamasva;
Jayajaya Karunabhdhe shree Mahadeva shambho.**

Meaning

=====

Oh Lord! Please forgive me for all the wrong actions that I have committed knowingly or unknowingly with my hands, feet, speech, body, ears, eyes and mind. Victory to you, Oh Lord of compassion and Mercy.

**VII Manojavam marutha thulya vegam,
 Jithendriyam budhimatham varishtam,
 Vathathmajam vanara yudha mukyam,
 Sree Rama dhootham sirasa namami.**

Meaning:

=====

I bow my head before,
The servant of Lord Sri Rama,
Who is faster than mind,
Who is as fast as the wind,
Who has won over his wishes,
Who is wisest among the learned,
Who is son of God of wind,
And who is the chief among,
An army of monkeys.

**VIII Karpooragauram Karunavataram
 Sansarsaram Bhujagendraharam
 Sadavasantam Hridayaravinde
 Bhavam Bhavani Sahitam Namami**

Meaning:

=====

Pure white like camphor, the incarnation of compassion,
the essence of existence , whose necklace is the king of serpents
always dwelling in the lotus of the heart, to Shiva and Shakthi i bow | |

reference: sloka kids : Ranjani Ramanan; tilak pyle.com

BHAJANS

I

Gauri nandana gajanana girijanandana niranjana
Parvathi nandana shubhanana pahi prabho mam pahi prasanna | |

II

Amba Devi saraswathi Ananda roopini palayamam
Mayoora vahini saraswathi Ananda roopini palaya mam
Veena vadini saraswathi ananda roopini palya mam
Vidya dayini saraswathi Ananda roopini palaya mam | |

III

Manasa bhajare guru-charanam
Sadguru-charanam pranamamyaham
Nirmala hridaya virajita charanam
Sarva characharavyapaka charanam
Bhava-sagara uddharana charanam
Sadguru-charanam pranamamyaham | |

IV

Raghupathi raghava raja ram pathitha pavana seeta ram
Sita ram jaya sita ram bhaja pyare tu sita ram
Ratre nidra divase kam pyare bhaj tu Sri Bhagavaan
Eeshvar all tero nam sab ko sanmathi de bhagavan | |

V

Namami shiva lingam namami satatam shivalingam
Smarami shivalingam smarami satatam shivalingam
Om Nama shivaya Om Nama shivaya on Nama shivaya | |

VI

Choti choti gayya chote chote gwal chotoso mero madan gopal
Aage aage gayya peeche peeche gwal beech mein mero madan gopal

Ghas khati gayya dood peeve gwal makhan khave mero madangopal
Kari Kari gayya gore gore gwal shyam varan mero madan gopal
Choti choti lakuti chote chote haath bansi bajaye mero
Madanogopal | |

VII

Navaneeta chora nanda ke lala | | natavara bala gopala | |
Devaki vasu deva gopala | | nanda nanda gopala | |
Shyama gopala nandake lala | | jaya jaya jaya gopala | |

VIII

Gopala Radha Lola Murali Lola Nandalala | |
Keshava Madhava Janardhana
Vanamala Vrindavana Bala
Murali...
Ananda mohana Niranjana
Vanamala Vrindavana bala
Murali....

IX

Om Tat sat Sri Narayana Tu
Purushottama Guru Tu
Siddha Buddha Tu Skandha vinayaka Savita Pavaka tu
Brahma masjda tu yahva sakti tu esu pita prabhu tu
Rudra Vishnu tu Rama Krishna tu rahima tao tu
Vasudeva go vishvarupa tu chidananda hari tu
Advitiya tu akala nirbhaya atma linga shiva tu | |

Story of Ganesha

Once Parvathi was going for her bath, she rubbed off the dust and oil from her body and out of it created the figure of a young boy. She infused life into the figure and told him he was her son and should guard the entrance when when she went to take the bath.

Soon after, Shiva came to see Parvathi but the young boy blocked his way and would not let him in. Shiva, unaware that this lad was his son, became furious and in great anger fought with the boy whose head got severed from his body in the ensuing battle. Parvathi, returning from her bath, saw her headless son and threatened to destroy the heavens and the earth, so great was her sorrow.

The Gods and Shiva pacified her and the latter sent out his ganas, or helpers , to bring the head of the first living being with his head towards the north(the auspicious direction associated with wisdom).

They did so and the first living creature they found sleeping with its head to the north was an elephant. They brought the head of this animal and shiva placed it on the trunk of Parvathi's son and breathed life into him.

Parvathi was overjoyed and embraced her son, the elephant headed boy whom Shiva named *Ganesha* the lord of ganas.

Story of Ganesha and Parvathi

As a child Ganesha teased a cat by pulling its tail, rolling it over the ground and causing it great pain as naughty young boys are wont to do. After some time, tired of his game he went to Kailas to his mother Parvathi.

He found her in great pain and covered with scratches and dust all over. When he questioned her, she put the blame on him. She explained that she was the cat whom Ganesha teased.

This story is to teach us that all beings are part of divinity. Hurting ones fellow creatures, human or animal, means hurting God himself just as Ganesha hurt Parvathi by hurting the cat.

Ganesha learnt his lesson just as we need to do so here on earth.

Story of Gokarna (shiva linga)

Once the demon, Ravana, undertook the most difficult tapasyas (Austerities) and when Shiva appeared before him, he asked as a boon that neither he nor his kingdom should ever be destroyed or harmed. Shiva then gave him a Shiva Lingam, the symbol of Shiva, and said that he should take it to his kingdom and set it up in a shrine with proper rituals. Only then would he become invincible. But there was one condition – on no account should the Lingam be placed on the ground as it would then become immovable. Ravana was overjoyed and received the Lingam.

However, the Devas (Demigods) were frightened with the consequences of Ravana obtaining all this power, and prayed to Ganesha. Varuna, the god of the waters, entered Ravana's abdomen forcing him to stop en route.

Desperately, not wanting to keep the Lingam down, Ravana hailed a young boy who was passing by and asked him to hold onto the stone Lingam for a few minutes. Ravana had barely left when the boy called out to him thrice and when there was no reply, kept the lingam on the ground.

When Ravana returned, he tried hard to remove the fixed lingam, under his might the Lingam got twisted and took the shape of a cow's ear – Gokarna. Now Ravana was furious and chased the boy, threatening to kill him. The boy took his true form as Ganesha, and over-powering Ravana, rolled him into a ball and threw him into the sky and played with him. Ravana realized his limitations and also as to how all-powerful Ganesha was.

This spot where the Lingam was placed by Ganesha is Gokarna on the west coast of Karnataka. It is worshiped to this day.

Story of Krishna and Narakasura

Long ago there lived a wicked king called Narakasura. He took pleasure in terrorizing the inhabitants of all the three worlds. Even though he was born to Bhoomi Devi his deeds were that of an asura.

Kings and sages, rakshasas and devas alike, feared him. He and his hordes would attack kingdoms and capture maidens. Like wise he captured 16,100 maidens and kept them in captivity at his capital Pragjyotisha.

Once Narakasura rode on Amaravathi, Indra's abode. He took all his elephants, but Indra could do nothing. After that the asura was quiet for some time. So the Devas were happy and they celebrated the peace with best ornaments assembled watch apsaras perform.

Suddenly, Narakasura came there with his hordes, they were searching for varuna's umbrella, and a dazzling flash blinded him for a moment. The mother of devas aditi wore her precious earrings. Immediately naraka rushed forward and snatched the ear rings. Then they headed towards Varuna and seized his umbrella too.

Seeing at all this Indra mounted airavatha and rushed to dwaraka, where Krishna was seated with Sathyabhama. He retold the entire story to Lord and begged to kill Asura Naraka.

Lord Krishna said "Narakasura has invited his own death by daring to lay his hands on mother aditi's earrings. Mounted on Garuda he swung even Sathyabhama besides him and flew towards Pragjyotisha. On the way, Garuda met many hurdles. Huge mountains blocked them; Krishna swung out his mace and shattered them. Then they had to face barrage of weapons, Krishna shot the arrows in quick succession.

The garuda moved forward only to face huge waves of water, Now Krishna raised his finger, next moment his flying discus cut through the waves. Breaking them in to gentle life giving rain then came huge blaze of fire but the whirling discus with its momentum cut through the flames.

Then they were confronted with wildest gales but the discus whose momentum whirled through the opposite direction, thus the stormy winds were tamed and garuda flew on.

On the outer gates of naraka's palace, there was five headed asura called Mura deep in sleep. Krishna raised his conch shell and sent out a triumphant blare and he woke up with a start. Mura charged towards Krishna. Krishna sent his stinging arrows in to the mouths of Mura, blasted his mace and killed him.

Finally naraka himself came to fight with Krishna. Krishna hurled his chakra and killed naraka. From heavens shower of flowers fell upon Krishna. Meanwhile bhoomi Devi came towards Krishna with aditi's ear rings and varuna's umbrella.

She was accompanied by Naraka's noble son Bhagadatta. They praised the lord with hymns and asked for protection. Krishna blessed them and installed bhagadatta on his father's throne. Then they entered the palace where they were greeted by 16,100 maidens, who pleaded to take them along with Krishna away

from the palace. Krishna asked Bhagadatta to send those damsels to Dwaraka, properly escorted.

The elephants were returned to Amaravathi. Thus everyone celebrated this day with lights. So this day is called Deepavali. Even today people take oil bath on this day and lit the lamps remembering victory of good over evil.

Story of Durga

Mahishasura the demon was born as a union of Rambha and a she buffalo (Mahishi) and consequently was a half man and half buffalo. The mighty demon was rendered more powerful as a result of a boon from Lord Brahma, according to which he could be killed by a woman only. He managed to wreak havoc in heaven by chasing away all Gods from there.

All the Gods then approached Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva who were aware that only a woman could kill Mahishasura.

They decided to create a Goddess out of the collective powers or 'Tejas' of all the Gods and so was born a Goddess who combined in herself all that was mighty and powerful in each God.

She was armed by a trident from Shiva, Chakra from Vishnu, a Lion from Himalayas and bows and arrows from Vayu. The Goddess filled with combined power and anger of all the Gods was fierce to behold and her very sight scared the demons.

Mahishasura on the other hand, waged a valiant fight against her and assumed the form of a buffalo, a lion, a man carrying a sword, an elephant and lastly again as a buffalo.

The battle raged for ten thousand years and finally the Goddess was able to pin down Mahishasura and chop off his head. The Gods, rid of the demon, showered the Goddess with innumerable praises and with reverence prayed her to appear every time they were in need of her.

Granting the same to the Gods, she disappeared to appear again when called with devotion. During Navarathri we pray to Goddess Durga.

Veda Vyaas

Veda Vyas is one of the greatest writers of Ancient India. He was very learned and a great Scholar. He wrote the 'Mahabharata'. The Geeta is a part of the Mahabharata. In fact it is said that if the book of the Mahabharata can be

compared to a necklace, then the Bhaagvad Geeta is the beautiful pendant. Despite the fact that Ved Vyaas had written so many great books, he was very dejected.

Naarada told Ved Vyaas the reason for his dejection. Naarad told Ved Vyaas that even though the Sage had written about great truths, he needed to feel love, and spread it. Krishna is full of love, mischief and fun. So Naarada asked Veda Vyaas to write a book about Shri Krishna and his life.

Only then would Ved Vyaasji feel happy and have a lot of peace of mind. So Ved Vyaas wrote the Great Puraana, The Shrimad Bhaagvatha. The Shrimad Bhaagvatha is considered 'Narain-Svaroop' The Lord God Himself. In the Shrimad Bhaagvatha there are the stories of the Great Incarnations of God.

Do you know what an Incarnation of God is?

Incarnation means when God takes birth in the form of a Human Being. Sri Krishna and Sri Ram are 2 of the Incarnations of Lord Vishnu. In the Shrimad Bhaagvath 20 Incarnations have been mentioned.

(Ref: www.dalsabji.com)

GAJENDRA MOKSHA

Gajendra, in his previous life was a great devotee called Indradyumna who was also a great king. One day, Agastya, a great sage came to visit the king. Indradyumna did not receive the Sage with the respect that the latter expected. The enraged Agastya cursed the king to become an elephant in his next birth, as he sat heavy on his seat and did not rise to greet him.

The crocodile in its last life was a king called HuHu in the Gandharva planet. Once while enjoying himself in the waters, he pulled the leg of a sage. The enraged sage cursed the king to become a crocodile in his next life. The repentant HuHu asked for pardon. The Sage proclaimed that though he could not retrieve the curse, the crocodile would be liberated from the cycle of birth and death when Gajendra would be saved by the Lord God Himself.

King Indradyumna became Gajendra who was the King of elephants. One hot day, he proceeded to the lake with his family to cool off in its fresh waters. But from within the lake a crocodile appeared who attacked him and would not let go of him.

When the family and relatives saw 'death' coming close to Gajendra, and everyone realised that everything was lost, they left Gajendra alone.

Gajendra prayed: 'Please help me O Lord! Save me from the clutches of Death!' How can an ordinary mortal recognize you, when great sages find it hard to achieve you? You are all merciful. Take me to a place where there is no fear and death!

I am not asking you to save me from the clutch of the crocodile, or that I should survive this attack! I am aware that I not only have a body of an elephant but also a fat mind of an elephant! What is the use of keeping this life? I want to be liberated from my Ignorant Mind which hides the resplendent soul! I can only be saved by Your Grace!

It is said that if one recites the Gajendra Prayer, one achieves liberation and freedom from frightening dreams! The Lord rushed to Gajendra's aid. The latter offered the Lord a lotus flower. God attacked the crocodile and saved His Loved One.

The Lord is close to those who call out to Him in full faith. It does not matter if you have the body or intellect of an animal, all you require is a loving heart and the conviction that God is closer than we can possibly believe!

(Ref: www.dalsabji.com)

RAMAYAN

DASHARATHA

Many years ago there lived in India, a king called Dasharatha. He was a very good king, but he was very unhappy because he had no children. So he prayed and prayed until God granted him 4 sons. King Dasharatha had three queens. The eldest Queen Kaushalya became the mother of Rama. Queen Kaikeyee became the mother of Bharat. Queen Sumitra became the mother of twins, Shatrughna and Laxman.

SEETA

Seeta was a beautiful princess. Her father, King Janak, wanted a husband for Seeta worthy of her good qualities and beauty. Therefore the king invited suitors to his court. King Janak promised that he would give Seeta in marriage to one, who could pick up, string and break a very heavy Bow. Sri Rama married Seeta after succeeding at picking and breaking the heavy bow.

KAIKEYEE

Queen Kaikeyee had saved King Dasharatha's life. The King urged Kaikeyee to ask for anything that she desired in return. Kaikeyee however said, that she would ask for what she wanted, when the time was right.

RAMA'S CORONATION

After Rama completed his education, the time came that he should be crowned king. Everyone in the kingdom was very happy as Rama was very capable. However, at that time Kaikeyee decided to ask Dasharatha that her wishes be granted.

She asked king Dasharatha that her son Bharat should be crowned king instead of Rama. She also asked that Rama should be banished to the forest for 14 years. King Dasharatha was very unhappy, but Rama told his father that he must keep his promise. So Rama, along with his wife Seeta and brother Laxman left for the forest.

In the forest Seeta was kidnapped by a demon king called Ravana. Rama urged Ravana to return Seeta unharmed. But Ravana refused. Hanuman, the monkey God flew to Lanka and found Seetha there in Ashoka vatika. He gave her the Lord Ram's ring and Rama with the help of Hanuman, the monkey God and his army, marched against Ravana, who lived in the golden city of Lanka.

After a very fierce battle, Ravana was defeated. The defeat of Ravana is celebrated in India as Dassera. Seeta was safe with Rama. They both returned to their kingdom after 14 years and reigned for a very very long time. Rama and Seeta's triumphant home coming is celebrated as Diwali.

(Ref:www.dalsabji.com)

Story of Ganesha and moon

Once Ganesha part took of a huge meal of modaka and was riding home on his vehicle, the mouse. Suddenly the mouse was tripped by a snake. Ganesha fell off his back and his over-full stomach burst open and out tumbled modakas. Seeing this comic sight, Chandra, the Moon, burst into laughter. Ganesha got up, picked up the snake and tied it around his broken waist-line.

He then threw his broken tusk at the Moon and cursed him so that he would never again shine at night nor appear in the heavens. Without the moon there was no night, no moon light and no twilight.

The Gods found life in the heavens intolerable as human beings found the earth without the Moon. The Gods rushed to Ganesha and pleaded with him. The kind hearted Ganesha relented but said that the Moon would no longer shine in full glory every night. He would wax and wane from a bright fortnight to a dark fortnight ending with the full Moon and the New Moon alternatively.

Also it would not be lucky to see the Moon on Ganesha Chaturthi day in the month of Bhadrapad, as one who does will have an unlucky day.

If by mistake any one look at the moon on that day should read the story of Krishna and shyamanthaka Mani which will evade the unluck.

Story of Shyamantaka Gem

This legend is derived from the 10th Canto of the great Bhagavata Maha-purana: Book 10, Chapter VII.

Over 5,000 years ago, at the end of the Dvarpara-yuga or the "Copper Age," the 8th Incarnation of Lord Vishnu appeared on the Earth as Lord Krishna. During the latter part of His sojourn on this planet Krishna was involved in a misunderstanding over a wonderful ruby known as the Shyamantaka gem.

There was a King named Satrajit who was a devotee of Surya, the Sun-god. After many years of worship King Satrajit was finally blessed by the Sun-god who gave him a fabulous ruby as a reward for his dedication.

This ruby was named "Shyamantaka" and it had the power to produce one hundred seventy pounds of gold daily for its owner. Such was the great brilliance of this gem that people mistook King Satrajit to be the Sun-god himself where ever he wore the jewel.

One day Satrajit went to visit Lord Krishna on His island Kingdom of Dvaraka. Krishna, understanding Satrajit's inflated ego and attachment, asked him for the gem. When Satrajit refused, Krishna relented and said nothing further about the matter. But the devoted denizens of Dvaraka were surprised and soon gossip spread throughout the Kingdom.

Later, the brother of Satrajit, Prasena, borrowed the gem and went boldly into the forest to hunt. Unknown to anyone, Prasena was killed by a great lion that was in turn killed by Jambavan, the King of Bears, who took the Shyamantaka jewel into his cave and gave it to his child to play with.

Soon the news of the gems disappearance turned into ugly rumors that perhaps Krishna was responsible for the theft. Sensing the people's doubt, Lord Krishna ventured out to search for the gem accompanied by a large group of followers. Later they found the dead bodies of both Prasena and the lion.

Finally they came to the cave of Jambavan and Krishna entered the cave alone, leaving his associates out side. Seeing Krishna and not knowing his true greatness, Jambavan engaged Him in mortal combat.

After the fighting had continued unabated for over 14 days and nights Jambavan began losing strength while Krishna was still strong and getting stronger. At this point Jambavan realized Krishna's true identity and offered Krishna the jewel and his daughter in apology.

When Krishna returned triumphantly to Dvaraka the truth became known and the Lord returned the Shyamantaka gem to King Satrajit. The legend of the gem continues, but the most memorable part of the legend involves Lord Krishna.

Shravan Kumar

Long long ago there lived a very good boy whose name was Shravan Kumar. Shravan Kumar was a very devoted son. He loved his mother and father very much. Unfortunately his parents were blind and old.

The mother and father of young Shravan Kumar wanted to go on a pilgrimage. So, Shravan Kumar made them sit on baskets and carried them. One day, the old mother and father felt thirsty, so young Shravan Kumar went looking for water in the forest.

Now in that same forest, King Dashratha, was out on a hunting spree. He was so proficient in the art; that he could aim, at his target, only by hearing a sound. As he heard the sound of someone, maybe drinking water, King Dasharatha thought that the sound was coming from the act of a deer, drinking water. So, he fired. By mistake King Dasharatha's arrow hit Shravan Kumar. The boy was about to die when Dasharatha approached him, and asked Shravan Kumar what the king could do for him ;

Shravan's last wish was that the king should take water for his thirsty parents. King Dashratha was very sad for what had happened.

King Dashratha repented for his hasty action, but the old parents cursed him. They prophesied that King Dashratha would give up his life pining for his son, just like the two old helpless people were about to do.

Thus, King Dashratha died pining for his son Rama when the latter was banished to the forest for 14 long years though no fault of his. Shravan Kumar is remembered till today, as one of the best sons ever born!

(Ref:www.dalsabji.com)

STORY OF GANGA

Bhageeratha was a valiant king of the Ikshvaaku line. He was one of the Rama's ancestors. He was childless. Moreover, cursed by Kapilamuni, the ashes of his ancestors were lying in Patala. Therefore leaving his kingdom in the hands of able ministers, he left for Gokarna to perform austerities. After many years of strict tapas, Brahma appeared before Bhageeratha and granted him his two boons the birth of a son and the descent of Ganga to wash away the ashes of his ancestors lying in Patala. He added, but there is one snag. The earth will not be able to stand the force of Ganga's descent. Only Lord Shiva will be able to do it. Therefore, direct your tapas to him.

So Bhageeratha prayed to Shiva who in his graciousness, consented to receive Ganga on his head. Now Ganga became arrogant and thought she would sweep Shiva with her to patala. Shiva decided to teach her a lesson. When she came down, he imprisoned her in his matted locks. And try as she would, she could not come out. Bhageeratha pleaded with to Shiva to release her. When Shiva thought she had been sufficiently punished for her pride, he let her out in seven gentle streams. Three of them flowed east and three of them flowed west. The seventh one followed Bhageeratha.

As she was flowing merrily behind Bhageeratha, Ganga accidentally knocked the Yagna platform of the rishi Jahnu. He took up the whole river in his palm and sipped her up. Bhageeratha now begged for mercy of Jahnu. The rishi let her through his ears and so she is also known as Jahnavi.

Finally Ganga reached the Ashram of Kapila muni and purified the ashes of Bhageeratha's ancestors. So she is called Bhageerathi. That is why even today any great persistence is compared with Bhageeratha's persistence.

Story of Lord Shiva, Fire God, wind God

Once there was an argument between Wind God and Fire God regarding superiority. Wind God said, he is superior to all the gods, as he is very powerful and can blow anything that comes under his vicinity.

Fire God said he is very powerful as he can burn anything that comes under his vicinity. Now while they were arguing Lord Shiva came there in disguise of an old man to test them, and he showed them a small twig.

The Old man said “whoever blows away or burn this twig is the superior of all.” The Wind God and the Fire God laughed at this. The Wind God tried to blow the twig, it did not budge, then with all his might wind god blew air but nothing happened to the twig.

Now it is Fire God's turn, he tried to burn it, but nothing could even move the twig and they accepted their defeat. They bowed down to the old man and requested to reveal himself. The old man was none other than Lord Shiva himself. The Lord told them that there is a superior energy which is the source of all other energies. Thus both Wind and Fire God's pride was humbled.

Story of Vrikasura

Once there was a demon called vrika. He propitiated upon Lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva appeared before him and asked for a boon.

The demon asked a strange boon that on whomsoever he keeps his hand shall burn to to ashes. Shiva gives boon to his devotees without thinking of the consequences. So he is also called Bholenath.

The demon wicked vrika wanted to try the boon on Lord Shiva and chased him.

Now Lord Shiva started running, and he did not know how to evade the demon.

Meanwhile Lord Vishnu took a form of a brahmin and appeared in front of Vrika.

Due to the long chase, vrika was tired. The brahmin asked him to sit for while and asked why was he running? Then vrika narrated everything to the brahmin.

The brahmin asked vrika to try for himself if the boon is true or false.

The foolish vrika listened to the innocent looking brahmin and kept his hand on himself and was burnt to ashes. Lord Shiva thanked Lord Vishnu for helping him.

Kaliya Daman

Krishna and Balaram spent their childhood in Gokul. They played with their cowherd friends while they tended the cows in day time. Everybody loved Krishna and balaram in gokul. When Krishna played flute, gopi's would stop their chores and would listen to him. Even the birds and animals used to swing to the tune. Such was the melody in Krishna's flute.

Once Krishna was playing with his friends besides Yamuna River.

A huge serpent called Kaliya was residing with his family in that river and was poisoning the water. People were afraid to go near Yamuna River, as many cattle and people died of drinking its water.

Krishna wanted to put an end to this problem. He climbed a kadamba tree near by, and jumped into the Yamuna river. All his friends cried with fear and they told yashoda about the incident. Everybody in gokul gathered near the banks of yamuna to see Krishna.

Now Krishna and Kaliya had a fight in water. Not knowing who Krishna is, Kaliya tried to kill Krishna by coiling around him. But Krishna grew big and started hitting Kaliya. Kaliya could not withstand, and he grew dizzy. Now Krishna started dancing on his hood.

Mother Yashoda father Nanda and other friends were watching on the banks of Yamuna and were very happy to see Krishna alive. Kaliya's wives came forward; they prostrated in front of Krishna and started praising him. They begged for his mercy. They asked Krishna to pardon their husband for his ignorance. Krishna who was all compassionate asked them to leave Yamuna River and go to the ocean.

Kaliya was afraid of Garuda who may kill him. But Krishna assured them that Garuda will not trouble them as Kaliya has the footprints of Krishna on his hood. Kaliya and his family moved to the ocean .Thus, by the grace of Krishna, peace returned to Gokul.

Dhruva

The Vedic name of the Pole Star is Dhruva Nakshatra, named after Dhruva, Let us hear the story of Dhruva which is taken from the Bhagawat Purana. Dhruva's father, King Uttanapad, was a great ruler of ancient India. He had two queens. The elder one, Queen Suniti, was Dhruva's mother. Queen Suruchi, the younger one, did not like her stepson, Dhruva and wanted her own son, Uttam, to become king.

Unfortunately, King Uttanapad liked Queen Suruchi better than Queen Suniti and did not want to disagree with her even though Dhruva was older and was the rightful heir to the throne.

One day, little Dhruva went to sit on his father's lap along with his stepbrother, Uttam. But he was stopped by Queen Suruchi's cruel words. "You are not allowed in your father's lap," she scolded. "Only my son is allowed to sit on the King's lap. Pray to Lord Vishnu that you should die and be reborn as my son if you want to sit in your father's lap!" Deeply hurt, Dhruva went crying to his

mother. But Queen Suniti was helpless. "Pray to Lord Vishnu," she said. "He will surely help you if you can pray long and hard enough."

Dhruva made up his mind that he would go deep into the jungle to meditate on Lord Vishnu and would not return to the kingdom until the Lord had answered his prayers. On his way to the jungle, he met the eternal sage, Narada. Narada was concerned that Dhruva was too young to be in the jungle alone. He tried to dissuade Dhruva, warning him that he would be eaten up by wild animals if he stayed. But Dhruva was steadfast in his resolve.

Satisfied that Dhruva had the mental strength to remain in the jungle; Narada taught Dhruva the art of meditation. \par \par Little Dhruva meditated for many months, giving up all worldly comforts. He even stopped eating. Lord Vishnu was amazed at the little boy's determination and finally appeared before him. He blessed the boy and told him to return to his kingdom.

In the meantime, King Uttanapad repented the injustice done to Dhruva. He was heartbroken at the thought of little Dhruva being devoured by wild beasts. Narada consoled him, telling him that Dhruva's resolve was firm and that he would receive Lord Vishnu's blessings. Narada was sure that Lord Vishnu would protect the boy from the wild animals.

When Dhruva finally returned safely home after receiving Lord Vishnu's blessings, King Uttanapad went personally to receive him. Queen Suniti was overjoyed at her son's safe return. In the course of time, when King Uttanapad became old, Dhruva was crowned king, and ruled wisely for many years. The story of Dhruva is a lesson to us all. We do not have to wait until we are old to attain spirituality. Sincere, steadfast, meditation on God helped such a young child overcome the obstacles thrown in his way. It can help us all.

Ref: www.indolink.com

Prahlad

The mythological story of Prahlad is described in Vishnu Puran as the fourth incarnation of Vishnu, **Nara-simhavatar**.

Prahlad was the son of the Asura king Hiranyakashipu. He performed severe penance to seek blessing of Brahma for immortality.

Brahma, however, declined, saying "All living beings must face death Hiranyakashipu. You can, however, choose your death wish." Hiranyakashipu then asked for three conditions, as his death wish, "He be killed by someone who is neither human nor a beast, in a time which is neither during the day nor during

the night, and in a place which is neither inside nor outside." Brahma agreed and Hiranyakashipu got his death wishes granted. Thus he became practically immortal.

Hiranyakashipu, with his new powers, attacked heaven and subdued all the gods. He then declared himself to be the king of all the three worlds. He soon ordered all people to worship him and no one else. His hostilities knew no bounds. The gods approached Lord Vishnu for His help. Vishnu assured that He will take rebirth when the time comes.

Soon Hiranyakashipu got a son. He was named Prahlad. Prahlad grew up to be a lovely boy. His father was unaware of the fact that Prahlad was an ardent devotee of Vishnu. Hiranyakashipu, however, wanted his son to be the king of the Asuras, strong and ruthless. One day Hiranyakashipu lovingly asked his son, "Dear Son, what do you think is the best thing in life?"

Prahlad replied, "To renounce the world and seek refuge in Vishnu." Hiranyakashipu was shocked to hear this. He could not tolerate the idea that his son loves the sworn enemy of the Asuras, Lord Vishnu. He felt that someone deliberately trying to brainwash his son, undermining his future dreams. To find this out, Hiranyakashipu sent Prahlad to his teacher.

The teacher lovingly asked Prahlad, "Who has taught you about Vishnu?" Prahlad calmly replied, "Vishnu himself." The teacher was furious. He called for his cane and beat Prahlad mercilessly.

Prahlad stayed quiet and completed his education. He quietly shared his feelings with his friends without the knowledge of his teacher. His serene behavior and thoughts of divine happiness appealed the young students. They believed that Vishnu is all prevailing, caring and the true preserver of the universe.

Hiranyakashipu raged in anger and ordered his subordinates to kill Prahlad. They tried different means but Prahlad stayed in deep meditation of Vishnu and nothing hurt him.

Impatient Hiranyakashipu could not bear any longer. He pulled out his sword and challenged Prahlad, "I will see how Vishnu can protect you." Hiranyakashipu pointed towards the pillar outside the hall and shouted, "Is He present in this pillar?"

"Yes father" was the calm reply from little Prahlad. Hiranyakashipu outrageously ran towards the pillar shouting, "I will first kick the pillar to prove that you are wrong and then I will kill you."

When Hiranyakashipu kicked the pillar with great force, to his utter surprise, he saw the pillar burst open and Lord Vishnu emerged as Nara-simha, half human and half lion. Hiranyakashipu remembered his first death wish, "To be killed by some one who is neither human nor beast." It was also the twilight hour, neither day nor night, the second death wish.

Nara-simha caught Hiranyakashipu and carried to the threshold of the courtroom. The place was neither inside nor outside. This was Hiranyakashipu's third death wish. There Hiranyakashipu was killed by the fourth incarnation of Vishnu, Nara-simha. . After killing Hiranyakashipu, Narasimha sat at his thrown and peace came back to the earth.

Ref: www.indolink.com

Bheema and Hanuman

Arjuna had gone to the Himalayas in quest of Divine weapons from Indra.. The other four Pandavas and Draupadi came to the Narayanasrama forest. One day, Draupadi felt a deep desire to possess a fragrant flower known as Saugandhika.

She requested Bhima to get her that flower. Bhima was only too pleased to satisfy her least desire. He forthwith set out in the direction from which the fragrance came. The way through the forest was far from easy. Before long at the foot of a mountain he saw a huge monkey resting on his path, blocking his way.

He asked the monkey to get up and clear the way for him. The monkey was in no mood to oblige. It said: "I am too old and weak to move. You can jump over me" Proud Bhima, incensed by this insolence, again asked the Monkey to move.

He said 'you old monkey, you don't know who you are talking to. I am a Kshatriya from the Kuru race. I am the son of Kunti and the Wind god. I am Bhima, brother of famous Hanuman. So, if you offend me any Further, you will incur my wrath.

The monkey said "If you are in such hurry, you can move my tail aside and go ahead." Bhima's threats did not have any effect on the monkey. In stead, it asked "Who is Hanuman. Tell me what is so great about him. What did he do?" Bhima told him "How can you be so silly and ignorant? Have you not heard of the mighty Hanuman who jumped over to Lanka, across the sea, one Hundred yojanas wide, to find Sita, Rama's Wife? Indeed you are ignorant"

The monkey only smiled. Finding no other way, Bhima tried to pull the monkey's tail aside .But he could not move it even a little bit. He put all his might in the endeavor, but to no avail. He was all perspiration.

He felt very humiliated and subdued. He told the monkey "You are no ordinary monkey. Please tell me who you are. I accept defeat and bow to you". Hanuman said "Bhima, I am that Hanuman which name you mentioned a little while ago.

I am your brother. Your path ahead is perilous. So I came to caution you. I knew you have come to collect the Saugandhika flower. I shall show you the pond, where this flower grows. You can collect as many as you want and go back. Bhima was happy. He bowed to Hanuman and requested him to show his huge form in which he jumped over the sea.

Hanuman increased his size till he seemed to occupy the whole landscape, like a hill. His form was dazzlingly white; so Bhima had to cover his eyes. Resuming his normal form, Hanuman embraced Bhima and blessed him.

He also assured him that he will be there on the flag of the chariot of Arjuna .You will be victorious".

Hanuman wanted to free his brother Bhima from his ego and to give him greater strength to fight his enemies. Hanuman then took leave of his brother after blessing him. Following Hanuman's advice, Bhima collected many Saugandhika flowers from the pond and went back to present them to Draupadi, anxiously waiting for his return.

Ref: kvakutty.sulekha.com

Ganesha chaturthi

On the fourth day of Bhadrapad month, we celebrate Ganesha chaturthi as it is the birthday of Lord Ganesha. Lord Ganesha is worshipped before starting any work or auspicious ceremony. He is the remover of all obstacles and bestows knowledge. He is the son of Lord Shiva and Parvathi. We make many sweets and savouries during Ganesha chaturthi and offer it to the God with devotion. Modaka is one of his favourite sweets. Ganesha has many names, the important name among them are Vakratunda , Ekadanta , Krishna Pingaksha , Gajavakra, Lambodara , Vikata ,Vighna Rajendra , Dhoomravarna, Balachandra, Vinayaka , Ganapathi Gajanana, Those who worship him with devotion will attain all their desires.

Krishnashtami

On the eighth day of Shravan month, we celebrate Krishnashtami as it is the birthday of Lord Krishna. Krishna is the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Krishna means "most attractive". In this incarnation Lord killed many demons and brought peace to the world. Krishna was born in Dwapara Yuga. The Gopi's of Brindavan loved Krishna. He played flute and used to steal butter. Sometimes he would break the pots of milkmaids and on other times he would carry their clothes away on branches of the tree while gopi's were bathing. Such were the pranks of Krishna in his childhood. He helped Pandavas who were his ardent devotees. Bhagavad Gita is a scripture in which, Lord Krishna gives discourse upon the true way of living to Arjuna.

Navarathri

In the month of Ashvini, 9 days are celebrated praying to goddess Durga. We pray first three days to Maha Kali next three days to Maha Lakshmi and the last three days to Saraswathi. First three days we cleanse our heart from thoughts of ill will, for which we need the blessings of Maha Kali. The next three days we meditate upon pure thoughts for which we take the blessing of Goddess Lakshmi, Now we are ready to take the divine knowledge and thus we pray to Goddess Saraswathi for knowledge during the last three days. Tenth day is celebrated as Vijaya Dashami as it is the day when Goddess Durga got victory over wicked demon Mahishasura. Also it is the day when Lord Rama killed Ravana. So, we make a huge puppet of Ravana and burn it to symbolize victory of good over evil.

Diwali

Diwali is a festival of lights, celebrated in India. It is celebrated for 5 days in North India. First day is Dhanteras, People purchase things in preparation of the festival. Second day is Naraka Chaturdashi, reminds us of the victory of Lord Krishna over demon Narakasura, Third day is Lakshmi Pooja, Fourth day is Anna Koot in North India and Bali Padya in South India, Fifth day is Bhai Dooj meaning the festival of brothers meeting sisters. Diwali also commemorates the return of Lord Rama from Lanka after defeating the demon Ravana. Thus Diwali conveys the message of victory of good over evil. The spiritual aspect of Diwali is to lit the lamp of love in one's heart.

Makar Sankranthi or Pongal

It is the festival which marks the commencement of Uttarayan pada, when the Sun turns from the South to North and enters Makara Rasi (Capricorn). It falls on 14th day of January. Since this day is calculated on the solar calendar the date remains the same from year to year.

In Tamilnadu, it is celebrated as pongal. It is the harvest festival honoring the Sun God who gives us heat and light and makes life possible on earth. The pooja for sun God is done outside the house where sun is visible.

This is also the last day of Margasirsa month, which is the auspicious month among all the other months. The spiritual aspect of Sankranthi is turning or a change in life from the materialistic to spiritual path. Thus Sankranthi represents the spiritual awakening of man.

In different parts of India we exchange til gud symbolizing friendship. In north India colorful kite flying is a favorite activity at the time of Sankranthi.

Holi

Holi is the most colorful festival of the Hindus and falls on the full moon day in the month of Phalgun (March). Holi heralds the arrival of spring. In south India it is said that this day Lord Kama deva was burnt to ashes by Lord Shiva.

Other Mythological story says this day Putana the demoness, who tried to kill Krishna, got killed as he sucked her breasts till blood started flowing and she succumbed to death. Hence, on the previous evening of the Holiday bonfires are lightened to celebrate the victory of Krishna and the death of Putana.

One more story says that holika the sister of Hiranya kashipu tried to kill Prahlad, the greatest devotee of Lord Vishnu and was killed herself. Lord Vishnu protects his devotees at all times. Holy too depicts the victory of good over evil.

Shivarathri

Maha Shivratri, the night of the worship of Shiva, occurs on the 14th night of the new moon during the dark half of the month of Phalguna (Feb / March) when Hindus offer special prayer to the lord of destruction.

Lord Shiva was married to Devi Parvati on Shivratri. Shiva without Parvati is pure 'Nirgun Brahman'. With his illusive power, (Maya, Parvati) He becomes the "Sagun Brahman" for the purpose of the pious devotion of his devotees.

It is also believed that on Shivratri, Lord Shiva became 'Neelkantham' or the blue-throated by swallowing the deadly poison that came up during the churning of "Kshir Sagar" or the milky ocean. The poison was so deadly that even a drop in His stomach, which represents the universe, would have annihilated the entire world. Hence, He held it in His neck, which turned blue due to the effect of poison. Shivratri is therefore also a day of thanksgiving to the Lord for protecting us from annihilation.

The absolute formless God, Sadashiv appeared in the form of "Lingodbhav Moorti" exactly at midnight on Maha Shivratri. That is why all Shiva devotees keep vigil during the night of Shivratri and do "Shivlingam abhishekham".

Ugadi

The Telugu and the Kannada New Year falls on the first day of the month of Chaitra (March-April). People in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka states in the South of India believe that Lord Brahma began the creation of the universe on this auspicious day of Ugadi. People prepare for the New Year by cleaning and washing their houses and buying new clothes.

On the Ugadi day they decorate their houses with mango leaves and "rangoli" designs, and pray for a prosperous new year, and visit the temples to listen to the yearly calendar - "Panchangasravanam" as priests make predictions for the coming year. Ugadi is also an auspicious day to embark on any new endeavor. In Maharashtra it is called Gudi Padwa; People hang "gudhis" on their windows on this day to celebrate Mother Nature's bounty. A "gudi" is a decorated pole with a brass or a silver vessel placed on it.

Ram navami

Rama Navami falls on the ninth day of the shukla paksha, or bright phase of the moon, in the lunar month of Chaitra (April-May). The first day of Chaitra, or Ugadi, also marks the beginning of the Indian year.

Rama is one of the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu, and one of the two most popular, along with Krishna. Consequently, Rama Navami is widely celebrated, though not on the scale of festivals like Diwali or Dussehra.

According to legend, Rama was born at noon. Rama is the epitome of perfection, the uttama purusha, fulfilling all his duties towards both family and

subjects. It is considered auspicious to undertake a fast on the day in the name of Rama. The more devout fast for nine days, from Ugadi to Rama Navami. The objective of the fast is not to ask for special favors of the deity but to seek perfection as a human being. Devotees perform elaborate pujas and chant the name of Rama. Temples of Rama have special services and bhajan sessions through the day.

Hanuman Jayanthi

Hanuman Jayanti is the birthday of Lord Hanuman and it is observed on the full moon (Purnima) day in the Hindu month of Chaitra (March – April) . He is a Chiranjeevi – one blessed with immortality.

Lord Hanuman symbolizes strength and unparalleled devotion and selfless service. He is the greatest devotee of Lord Ram and he is a Brahmachari (celibate) and humility is his hallmark.

The greatness of Hanuman is explained by Lord Ram in the Ramayan Lord Ram said to Hanuman, 'I am greatly indebted to you, O mighty hero. You did marvelous, superhuman deeds. You do not want anything in return. You have not asked for anything at any time. You threw away the precious garland of pearls given to you by Sita.

How can I repay my debt of gratitude to you? I will always remain deeply indebted to you. I give you the boon of everlasting life. All will honor and worship you like myself. Your idol will be placed at the door of my temple and you will be worshipped and honored first. Whenever my stories are recited or glories sung, your glory will be sung before mine. You will be able to do anything, even that which I will not be able to!'

Devotees chant Hanuman Chalisa and Hanuman Ashtak on the day. Most Hindu devotees also fast on the day or on the previous day.

Moral Stories

Yogi and the Serpent

Once upon a time, in a village there came a yogi, who was very gentle and kind. He stayed there and was happy with the hospitality of the villagers. He promised them, that he would visit them again some time in future. As he started to the other village, the villagers asked him not to tread the regular path to the next village, for there is a huge serpent on that way which would kill him for sure.

But the Yogi was very calm and confident about his faith in God and he said, he would rather like to meet the serpent which is troubling the villagers. The yogi met the serpent and with kind and gentle words he explained to the serpent to be gentle with the villagers and be good. The words of the yogi were so profound that it entered the heart of the serpent and the serpent became very calm and quiet from that time.

Everybody was surprised to see the behavior of the serpent. Even a child would throw a stone at the serpent and the serpent would not do any harm. Thus after few months the Yogi visited the village again. He asked the welfare of the people and it reminded him of the serpent which used to trouble them.

Everybody in the village said that the serpent has changed a lot and would not harm anybody even if they hurt him. Now the yogi again went to see the serpent. The serpent was badly bruised and was bleeding, for kids took undue advantage of its lenience.

The serpent told the sadhu "O sadhu, I listened to your words of wisdom and so after you left, I did not hurt anyone even when they hurt me"

Sadhu said "My dear serpent, I asked you not to bite anybody but I did not say that you should not hiss at anybody".

Sadhu further explained that if anybody tries to hurt him, he should definitely hiss at them for defense. Thereafter the serpent and the villagers lived happily respecting each other.

Moral: Be good but defend yourself.

Thief and the sadhu

Once there was a group of sadhus, who halted near a king's palace. Everyday they would sing the glory of God. Many people visited the sadhus and took their blessings.

The princess of that kingdom used to see these sadhus every day and was fascinated by their dedication and love for God. She thought "how I wish, I could marry one of these sadhus"

She told her choice to her father, the king. The king made an announcement in his kingdom that all sadhus should visit his palace before leaving his kingdom.

A thief who was passing by heard the announcement and hatched a plan. He thought, by posing like a sadhu he can get into the palace and even have a chance to marry the princes.

Thus he went with other sadhus to the palace. The king asked the sadhus one by one if they would like to marry his daughter. They all denied, saying they have no love for material pleasure and they have dedicated their life for the service of the God, and so they cannot marry the princes.

When the thief's turn came, even though he wanted to marry the princes, he became thoughtful. He thought, just by posing like a sadhu, I will be gifted with a kingdom and the princes. Surely, if I become real sadhu, I will get much more precious things than these riches. Thus he too denied to marry the princes and join the group of sadhus and went on singing the glory of the God.

Moral: Good association is always fruitful.

Noble man and a tiger

Once a noble man met a tiger that was in the cage. The tiger pleaded the man "Please relieve me from this cage and I shall be indebted to you for my life". The man laughed, and said "If I release you, you will kill me for sure". But the tiger pleaded again and promised that it will not kill the man.

Taking pity over the tiger, the noble man released the tiger from the cage, immediately the hungry tiger tried pounce upon the man. Now the man said "How could you do this, just now you promised me of not killing me". Now the tiger laughed and said "Man has always been ungrateful to the nature and to the fellow animals and so now it is time to pay off".

The tiger also said "you can ask any one, for what I am saying is absolutely right".

On the way there was a tree, on hearing the story of both the sides the tree approved what the tiger says is too true as the man is so ungrateful that he cuts the tree which gave him shade and fruits. Then they came across a bull, which too said that the man is ungrateful as he use the bull as long as it was strong and when it grew old he sent it to the slaughter house.

Now the noble man was terrified, for no one was taking his side. Then they met a fox. The fox heard the story of both the sides and said "I wonder how the tiger was in a cage!

Then the tiger went inside the cage to show how he was in the cage. Immediately as quick as a wink the fox closed the door and locked it as before.

The tiger was locked once again. The noble man thanked the fox and happily took to his journey.

Moral: Take pity on one, who is worthy of it.

Jackal and Otters (Jataka tales)

Once a jackal wanted to eat some fresh Rohita fish. He went to the river and was wondering how he would catch one when he saw from a distance that two otters had dragged a big Rohita fish to the bank. He drew nearer and overheard their conversation.

Each otter was asking the other to cut the fish in half because their rule was that the one who doesn't cut the fish gets to pick his piece first. The jackal decided to step in. Hello my friends, he said. What is the matter? We can't decide who should cut this fish to divide it between us, the otters replied." How about if you do it for us? One of the otters suggested.

The jackal was waiting for this opportunity and replied, Certainly, I have settled many such disputes before. The jackal then cut off the head and the tail and gave a piece to each otter.

This is good, the otters said. But what is he going to do with the middle portion, which has most of the meat? The jackal picked up the middle portion and put in his basket. This I shall keep as my fees, he announced. The jackal ran off with the best portion of the fish!

If only we had trusted each other instead of inviting an outsider to settle our dispute, the otters sadly said to each other.

Moral: When we quarrel among ourselves, outsiders take advantage

The value of friendship

In a forest there were four friends, a deer, a tortoise, crow and a mouse. Who lived near a pond? The crow lived on a near by tree, the mouse lived in the same tree hole, the deer took shelter below the tree and the tortoise lived in the pond.

Once a hunter placed a net to catch a wild animal, unfortunately, the deer fell in that net and was struggling to get out of it. The mouse, the crow and the tortoise noticed him and they all came for his help.

The mouse started cutting the net and the crow kept a watch for the hunter. The moment the crow saw the hunter coming, they the mouse hurriedly bit the net into pieces and released the deer. They all ran away to their respective spots.

But the tortoise could not go in to the pond quickly, thus was caught by the hunter. The hunter put the tortoise in a bag and started go back. That is when all his other friends thought of a plan to save the tortoise. The deer pretended to be dead near the pond and the crow pretended to peck the deer.

The hunter was happy and thought that he did not loose his bait after all. He kept tortoise bag down and moved forward to get the deer. Immediately the tortoise came out of the bag and slowly slipped into the pond where as the crow signaled the deer to get up and the deer ran away from the spot.

Moral: Friendship is for ever.

Story of Gopal

Long ago there was a poor boy named shyam who lived in a village near a forest with his mother. The young boy was put to school which was on the other side of the forest and the boy had to cross the forest to reach the school.

Now the boy asked his mother, if she could accompany him as he is afraid of darkness, but his mother lovingly told him that she has many chores to do at home. Why doesn't he call for his elder brother gopal who lives in the forest? By Gopal she meant Lord Krishna. Shyam was happy for he never doubted his mother.

The next day Shyam started to his school with enthusiasm. And he found himself on the lonely road in the evening. As he walked on, Shyam grew afraid. "Gopal, please come and walk with me!" he shouted into the darkness and waited for his brother.

Suddenly he heard a melodious tune. An older boy appeared before him, playing a flute. Shyam looked at him in wonder. The newcomer was the most beautiful person he had ever seen in his life. His skin was dark as the sky and his eyes were kind and mischievous at the same time. A garland adorned his neck and he had a peacock feather on his crown.

"Hi Shyam," he addressed Shyam in a sweet voice. "I have come to take you home safely. Let's go!" Shyam was over joyed. He caught hold of his brother Gopal's soft hand and walked with him till he could see his hut.

"Here's your home, Shyam," whispered Gopal and went back into the forests. Everyday, his brother Gopal walked with him till he came to the end of the forests.

One day, Shyam's school teacher invited his students for a feast at his home. The children started to buy gifts to give their teacher. On returning home, Shyam told his mother about the feast and asked her to give him a gift for his teacher.

As before, his poor mother used the same trick on Shyam. "Why don't you ask your brother, Shyam?" He decided to take up her advice. That day, as he was walking in the forests with his brother, Shyam asked Gopal about a suitable gift for his teacher.

Brother Gopal thought for a moment. "I have a bowl of curd with me," he said. "You can give it to your teacher". Shyam accepted his brother's offering and took it with him. On the day of the feast, he offered it to his teacher with love and affection. The teacher knew Shyam was poor, so he tasted a big helping of curd to appreciate his gift.

Moral: Life is all about faith and love.

Why beg from beggars?

A holy man was in need of some help for an orphanage he was running. He came to see the king of the realm and was told that the King was in his prayer room, offering worship to God.

Quietly, the Holy man came and stood outside the door of the prayer-room. The King was praying thus: "So bless me, Lord that my years on earth may multiply, my wealth may increase, the borders of my realm may widen evermore....."

The holy man listened and turned back. When they asked him, "O holy man! Why are you going away without receiving any help?" He answered:" I did not know I was coming to beg from one who himself is a beggar! From today I shall beg of Him at whose door kings stand as beggars.

Moral:God is the greatest giver

The Monkey's heart

Once upon a time, while Brahmadata was king of Benares, the Bodhisatta came to life at the foot of the Himalayas as a monkey. He grew strong and sturdy, big of frame, well to do, and lived by a curve of the river Ganges in a forest haunt. Now at that time there was a crocodile dwelling in the Ganges. The crocodile's mate saw the great frame of the monkey, and she conceived a longing to eat his heart. So she said to her lord, "Sir, I desire to eat the heart of that great king of the monkeys!"

"Good wife," said the crocodile, "I live in the water and he lives on dry land. How can we catch him?" "By hook or by crook," she replied, "he must be caught. If I don't get him, I shall die."

"All right," answered the crocodile, consoling her, "don't trouble yourself. I have a plan. I will give you his heart to eat."

So when the Bodhisatta was sitting on the bank of the Ganges, after taking a drink of water, the crocodile drew near, and said, "Sir Monkey, why do you live on bad fruits in this old familiar place? On the other side of the Ganges there is no end to the mango trees, and labuja trees, with fruit sweet as honey! Is it not better to cross over and have all kinds of wild fruit to eat?"

"Lord Crocodile," the monkey answered. "The Ganges is deep and wide. How shall I get across?"

"If you want to go, I will let you sit upon my back, and carry you over." The monkey trusted him, and agreed. "Come here, then," said the crocodile. "Up on my back with you!" and up the monkey climbed. But when the crocodile had swum a little way, he plunged the monkey under the water.

Good friend, you are letting me sink!" cried the monkey. "What is that for?" The crocodile said, "You think I am carrying you out of pure good nature? Not a bit of it! My wife has a longing for your heart, and I want to give it to her to eat."

"Friend," said the monkey, "it is nice of you to tell me. Why, if our heart were inside us, when we go jumping among the tree tops it would be all knocked to pieces!"

"Well, where do you keep it?" asked the crocodile. The Bodhisatta pointed out a fig tree, with clusters of ripe fruit, standing not far off. "See," said he, "there are our hearts hanging on yonder fig tree." "If you will show me your heart," said the crocodile, "then I won't kill you." "Take me to the tree, then, and I will point it out to you."

The crocodile brought him to the place. The monkey leapt off his back, and, climbing up the fig tree, sat upon it. "Oh silly crocodile!" said he. "You thought that there were creatures that kept their hearts in a treetop! You are a fool, and I have outwitted you! You may keep your fruit to yourself. Your body is great, but you have no sense." And then to explain this idea he uttered the following stanzas:

Rose-apple, jack-fruit, mangoes, too, across the water there I see;

Enough of them, I want them not; my fig is good enough for me!

Great is your body, verily, but how much smaller is your wit!

Now go your ways, Sir Crocodile, for I have had the best of it.

The crocodile, feeling as sad and miserable as if he had lost a thousand pieces of money, went back sorrowing to the place where he lived.

Moral: Luck favors the witty

Clever son (Jataka tales)

Once there was a man called Ramayya who had an old father to look after.

He did not want to take care of his old father and so he decided to bury him alive.

Ramayya asked his father to sit in a cart. So that he can take him to a distant place and bury him there. At that time, there came Ramayya's son and asked his father where is he taking his grandfather to?

Ramayya replied "your grand father has become old, so I am taking him to a place to put him to rest. The innocent son insisted that he too will accompany them as he loved his grandpa very much. In spite of Ramayya's denial, the son came along with them.

All the three went to a place and Ramayya started to dig a pit. The son asked the father, why is he digging a pit.

Unable to explain his evil intension of killing his old father, Ramayya replied "I am digging a pit and your grandpa will rest here for ever.

Surprisingly, even Ramayya's son started to dig a pit next to him. Ramayya asked his young son what he is doing. The son replied "I am digging a pit for you father, when you grow old, I shall put you in this pit, so that you too can rest for ever." Ramayya realized his mistake and immediately he apologized to his father and took him back to his house never to repeat such stupidity.

Moral : you reap what you sow.

THE MONKEYS AND THE GARDNER

Once upon a time a king gave a holiday to all the people in one of his cities. The king's gardener thought to himself: "All my friends are having a holiday in the city. I could go into the city and enjoy myself with them if I did not have to water the trees here in this garden. I know what I will do. I will get the Monkeys to water the young trees for me." In those days, a tribe of Monkeys lived in the king's garden.

So the gardener went to the Chief of the Monkeys, and said: "You are lucky Monkeys to be living in the king's garden. You have a fine place to play in. You have the best of food--nuts, fruit, and the young shoots of trees to eat. You have no work at all to do. You can play all day, every day. To-day my friends are having a holiday in the city, and I want to enjoy myself with them. Will you water the young trees so that I can go away?"

"Oh, yes!" said the Chief of the Monkeys. "We shall be glad to do that." "Do not forget to water the trees when the sun goes down. See they have plenty of water, but not too much," said the gardener. Then he showed them where the watering-pots were kept, and went away.

When the sun went down the Monkeys took the watering-pots, and began to water the young trees. "See that each tree has enough water," said the Chief of the Monkeys.

"How shall we know when each tree has enough?" they asked. The Chief of the Monkeys had no good answer, so he said: "Pull up each young tree and look at the length of its roots. Give a great deal of water to those with long roots, but only a little to those trees that have short roots."

Then those stupid Monkeys pulled up all the young trees to see which trees had long roots and which had short roots. When the gardener came back the next day, the poor young trees were all dead.

Moral: A clever foe is better than a stupid friend.

The crow and the sparrow

Once upon time there was a crow and a sparrow. Crow built a house of cow dung, and was feeble but sparrow built a house of tree sap and was strong. Once it rained heavily and the crow's house washed away in the rain. The crow was wet and hungry; he did not know what to do and where to go.

At last he thought of going to sparrow's house for temporary shelter. He went to sparrow's house and knocked the door Crow said, "Sparrow, sparrow , will you please open the door"?

The Sparrow replied "Wait, I am giving bath to my children". Again crow said "Sparrow, sparrow, will you please open the door"? The Sparrow replied "Wait, I am giving food to my children".

Again crow said "Sparrow, sparrow, will you please open the door"? I am wet and hungry. This time sparrow took pity upon the crow and she open the door.

Crow came in and dried himself with a towel and had a nice meal at sparrow's house and then sparrow asked the crow as where will he sleep? Will you sleep in the kitchen? asked the sparrow. "No I cannot take the aroma of spices" said the crow Will you sleep in the hall? asked the sparrow. "No, I am afraid to sleep all alone" said the crow. Will you sleep in my kid's room? asked the sparrow "Oh , yes said the crow ". And slept in kids room.

That night crow swallowed sparrow's kids one by one. Next morning sparrow did not find her kids and the crow's belly looked terribly big . Now the sparrow understood what had happened and was very angry with the crow. She brought one hot spatula and quickly kept it on crows mouth.

The crow vomited all the sparrow's kids out and ran away from sparrow's house never to return again.

Moral: Wickedness ruins

Story of the little lamb

Once upon a time there was a lamb who lived with his mother near a forest. One day he told his mom, that he would like to meet his grand mother who stays across the forest. His mother asked him to be careful, as the way to grandma's house was really dangerous.

The little lamb started his journey, on the way he met many ferocious animals like tiger, bear, lion and even a fox. They all wanted to devour the little lamb. But the lamb was very brave and witty. He told everybody that he is going to his grandma's house. There he will eat nice food and become plump. So they can devour him while he returns from his grandma's house. They all agreed and let him go.

The lamb stayed with his grandma for few days while returning he became thoughtful as he would meet those hungry wild animals who are ready to eat him up. His grandma was very clever. She put the lamb in a pumpkin and carved two holes to it and rolled the pumpkin towards the way to lambs house.

The lamb started to roll over. As he met the Lion he said, “Gudu gudu gummata raya is coming give me way, give me way” The Lion got scared and moved away. The pumpkin rolled on. Now the lamb met the Tiger. Again he sang the same song, “Gudu gudu gummata raya is coming give me way, give me way”

The tiger has never seen a pumpkin rolling all by itself. So it got scared and moved away. The pumpkin rolled on. Now he met a bear. The lamb repeated, “Gudu gudu gummata raya is coming give me way, give me way”. The bear has never witnessed such strange looking pumpkin who could talk, so he too moved away.

Finally fox came forward. The lamb continued singing, “Gudu gudu gummata raya is coming, give me way, give me way”. Now the fox too could not identify what animal could that be, who look like a pumpkin and can talk and roll! So he too ran away. Thus the little lamb tricked all the mighty wild animals with its wit and reached home safely.

Moral: Never give up.

Faith in god

Once there was a business man who lived in a village with his wife and a child. He praised the lord in rain and in sun, in happiness and in difficulties. He had complete faith in God. One day, he went to the city to sell some goods and get some grocery. He sold the goods at a very good profit and thus he praised the lord.

Then he purchased some sweets for the the child and wife , and gunny bag full of sugar ,for he thought that sugar was expensive in the village and if he purchase sugar in the city and sold it in the village, he can make some money. Thus the business man was happily started walking back to the village. Suddenly it started to rain heavily and all the sugar in the gunny bag was washed away. Even though the business man spent all his profit money purchasing the sugar, he had faith in god and so he praised the lord any way.

Now the businessman was passing through the forest and bunch of thieves stopped him and shoot at him so that they can run away with his belongings, but

surprisingly the gun did not work. The thieves wondered why the gun did not work and later realized that their arms and ammunitions got wet in rain. The robbers just thrashed the businessman and ran away with his little money. The businessman praised the lord for the rain, without which he would have been killed.

Moral: Have faith in God.

The greedy barber

Once there was a rich gentle man called Govinda. Friends and relatives often used to visit him. He had enough money to entertain them. Eventually he gave his money in charity and welfare of the society. Slowly he lost all his money. There after people stopped visiting him. This made him very sad.

One night as he was sleeping, he had a strange dream. A bhikshu (Buddhist monk) appeared in his dream and said, "Next morning a person similar to me will be there outside the door, hit hard on his head, and he will be changed in to the sack of gold coins."

Next morning when Govinda woke up and opened the door, for his surprise there was a monk standing, similar to the one whom he saw in the dream. Govinda hit the monk with a stick and immediately he turned in to a sack of gold. Govinda was very happy and he narrated this incident to a barber.

The greedy barber thought that he too will get lot of gold coins, if he hit on any monk's head. Thus he invited many monks in the city to his house for lunch and when they arrived, he locked them in the house and started hitting. Poor monks ran out of his house with great difficulty and complained about him to the king. The king punished the barber for his foolish act.

Moral:greed, a curse

Story of Punya koti , the truthful cow

This is the story of punyakoti who believed in truth as God. In the heart of place named Dharani Mandala in Karnataka state lived a Shepard by name Kalinga.

He takes bath in river and sat below the mango tree in the wee morning hours and played his flute to call all the cows. He cried loudly to call the cows Gange, Gauri, Tungabadre and Punyakoti. All the cows gathered hearing his voice and the tumbler was soon filled with their milk.

There lived a tiger by name Arbhuda in the near by surrounding forest hill who was hungry for food. All the cows were scattered when he sprang with a roar of thunder and anger.

Cow Punyakoti on remembering the hungry cry of its calf was in a hurry to return in order to feed her baby. The cruel tiger quickly sprang to stop the cow thinking that he got his food for the day. The cruel tiger roared in anger and said "I'm hungry; I will split you apart right now".

The cow said "Oh humble tiger, my hungry baby is waiting for me back at home. Give me a minute; I will be back once I feed my baby." The tiger said "You are lying to me; you will escape if I leave you. I'm not a fool to loose my delicious pray." The cow said "Please believe in me. Truth is everything to me, I swear upon my parents and relatives. God will not forgive if we lie".

It returned back to baby after convincing its promise to the tiger who wanted to kill it and told the baby about the incident. The baby cried "With whom will I stay if you leave? Whose milk will I drink? With whom will I sleep? With whom will I live? Who will take care of me?" The cow requested its group people and said "Oh my mothers and sisters please take care of my orphan baby as your own child. Please don't pierce your horns at him if he comes in front of you and don't kick him if he comes behind you." Then the cow embraced its baby and cried in pain thinking that it's going to be orphan.

Without making any further delay the cow left the calf and was soon standing in front of tigers den.

The cow said to the tiger "Oh tiger, I have returned back as I promised, I offer this body to you, my flesh, bones and hot blood are all yours, have them all and be happy". The tiger repent and tears rolled down on listening to what the cow said. It realized the sacrifice the cow had made for the sake of truth. It realized that God would never forgive him if he killed such a truthful cow and would never be happy by hurting such an innocent soul.

The ashamed tiger said "you are like a sister to me, what will I achieve by killing you", saying thus the tiger sprang and committed suicide. Happy with this, punyakoti returned to feed its baby calf. Called the Shepard and said "All my cow siblings and in your Shepard siblings may worship lord Krisna in sankranti". He is the only gracious one who protects.

Moral: Be truthful, for God is Truth

The mongoose and the farmer's wife

Long time ago there lived a farmer and his wife. They had a new born son. The farmer's wife wanted to have a pet animal to protect the child which would also be a companion to the child. They had a talk and decided upon a mongoose. So they brought a mongoose and started rearing it.

A couple of months later, one day the farmer and his wife wanted to go out of the house leaving the child at home. The farmer thought that the mongoose would take care of the child while they were away. So they left the mongoose and the child at home and went out.

The farmer's wife returned earlier and on returning home found that the mouth of the mongoose was stained with blood and she immediately inferred that the mongoose had killed the child. In anger she threw a box on the mongoose and the mongoose was hurt badly. She then rushed inside to see what happened to the child. She was surprised to find a dead snake lying in the room. She could guess that the mongoose had saved the child's life by killing the snake. Realizing the mistake she went out of the room only to find the mongoose dead on the floor. She cried out loud at her hasty action.

Moral: Think before you act

Story of unity (Birds)

Once upon a time there was folk of birds, who went every where with their king and always lived together. One day they were flying over a city and suddenly the king bird noticed a patch of grains on the floor. He suggested all the birds to land on the patch so that they all can relish the grains.

All the birds landed on the patch and started to eat. Only after a while they realized that they were caught in a trap, and all their legs were stuck in a net. They all became sad and thought that; soon the hunter would come and carry them away. But the king bird did not give up. He thought over the situation and soon found a solution. He said, "All of you should start to fly together, as if we are a huge bird. We shall fly, along with the net to a place where our rat friends live" All the birds agreed and before the hunter could come and catch them, they all flew together to their rat friends. There, the rat friends bit the net into pieces by their sharp teeth, and released their bird friends from the net.

Moral: unity is strength

The foolish monkey (Panchatantra)

Once upon a time, there was a king who kept a monkey as a pet. The monkey served the king in whatever way he could. He had a free run of the royal household because he was the king's pet. One hot day the monkey sat fanning by the side of the king who was sleeping. He noticed a fly on the chest of the king and tried to swish it away.

The fly would go away for the moment and come back again to sit on the king's chest. The monkey could take it no longer and decided to teach the fly a lesson. He looked for a dagger to kill it and when he found it, brought it down with all force on the fly. The fly flew away but the king died as result of the dagger blow delivered by the monkey.

Moral: Everyone cannot do every task.

The Brahmin's gift (Panchatantra)

Once there lived a pious brahmin in a village. He used to perform religious rituals. On one occasion he was rewarded with a cow by a rich man for his service. The brahmin started to bring the cow to his home.

On the way, three rogues saw the brahmin bringing the cow. They were lazy and wanted to cheat the brahmin so that they could take away the cow. They hatched a plan.

The first person approached the brahmin and said, "Are you a washer man that you're pulling a donkey." The brahmin was annoyed at being mistaken for a washer man. He went on. A little later he was met by the second of the three. The second person asked him why being a brahmin he needed to pull a pig. Now the brahmin was confused but he went on.

Some distance later he was met by the third person who asked him why he was pulling along a wild animal. Now the brahmin was totally confused and also afraid. He thought that it was a devil animal which took different forms. He ran away leaving the cow behind. The three tricksters laughed at the brahmin at having obtained the cow from the brahmin.

Moral: Believe in yourself

The Donkey and the Dog (Hitopadesha)

This is another interesting story / tale from the Hitopadesha Collection. Once upon a time, there lived a Washer man in a village. He had kept a donkey and a dog to serve as his pets. The Dog used to guard his master's house and escort him wherever he went. The Donkey used to carry stack of clothes on his back to and fro the river. Both of them slept in the washer man's courtyard. Like this, they were leading their life under the kind shelter of the Washer man.

On one unfortunate night, when everyone was sleeping, a thief managed to get into the house. Even after seeing the thief, the Dog didn't bark. When the Donkey saw the thief entering the house, he asked the Dog, "Dear Friend, Didn't you see that a thief had entered the house? Why don't you bark to awake our master?"

The Dog answered, "Mind your own business. Don't talk to me about my duties; I know how to guard my master. I have been guarding this house for long, but master doesn't care for me. From the past few days, he doesn't even feed me properly. He doesn't know my worth. I won't wake him up. When this thief will steal valuables from his house then only he will recognize my importance".

The Donkey irritatingly said, "You fool! This is not the time to complain. This is the time for action. Be fast and do something to wake up the master". The Dog replied angrily, "No. As he doesn't care for me even I won't care for him". The Donkey shouted, "O wicked creature, you are full of ingratitude towards your master. You are ignoring your duty just when you're required most. Fine, I will do your duty and wake him up".

Hence, the Donkey brayed at the top of his voice which made the washerman to wake up. The thief quickly ran away from the scene. The Washer man looked around but could find anyone. He got furious at the Donkey who had disturbed his sleep. The Washer man thrashed the poor Donkey with a stick. The Donkey was left with pain for months.

Moral: It is always better to mind your own business.