

F A L L 2 0 1 2



bhakti patra

The Fall season! – Brilliant foliage!

Halloween? Thanksgiving?

For Hindus all over the world, it is time for prayer and rejoicing! Starting with Navratri to Diwali, Hindus everywhere pray and rejoice with friends and loved ones.

The Hindu Temple of Tristates wishes everyone a Season of Bountiful Prosperity, Joy, and Peace!

SAVE THE DATES!

All events celebrated at 77 Knollwood Rd., White Plains, NY 10607
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**NAVRATRI POOJA
& RAAS GARBA**
Thursday, Oct. 18
7:00 PM

MATA KI CHOWKI
Sunday, Oct. 21
4:30 PM

KARVA CHAOUTH POOJA
Friday, Nov. 2
4:30 PM

DIWALI POOJA & DINNER
Wednesday, Nov. 14
7:00 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE EVENTS PLEASE
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www.hindutempleoftristates.com



Navratri Calendar of Pooja Events

Navratri Day 1 – October 16, 2012

Ghatsthapana

Navratri Day 2 – October 17, 2012

Chandra Darshan

Navratri Day 3 – October 18, 2012

Sindoor Tritiya

Navratri Day 4 – October 18, 2012

Varad Vinayak Chaturthi and Lalit Panchami

Navratri Day 5 – October 19, 2012

Upang Lalita Vrat

Navratri Day 6 – October 20, 2012

Saraswati Awahan in some regions

Navratri Day 7 – October 21, 2012

Saraswathi Puja - Maha Lakshmi Puja

Navratri Day 8 – October 22, 2012

Saraswathi Puja ends – Mahashtami - Annapoorna Parikrama

Navratri Day 9 – October 23, 2012

Saraswati Visarjan – Mahanavami

October 24, 2012

The tenth day is celebrated as Dasara or Vijaya Dashami.

Vidyarambham in Kerala.



THE NAVRATRI THALI

In India, Navratri is celebrated twice- once in Chaitra as Chaitra Navratrai and then in Ashwin as Shardey Navratri. In both these Navratri, the devotees of Maa Durga observe fast for the nine days and please Mata Rani with various sholkas and bhajans dedicated to her. A special aspect of the Pooja is the Pooja Thali and Vrat Bhijan Thali.

A Vrat Thali is basically the thali that includes of food items for the devotees who observe fast. During the fast, it is compulsory to eat only “**satvik**” food, *

A Vrat Thali may consist of items like Aloo Sabudane Ki Tikki, Palak Paneer, Sookhi Arbi, Dahi Pudine Wale Aloo, Makhane Ki Sabzi, Shakarkandi Ki Chaat, Pudina Raita, Aloo Papad, Sago Papad, Sawank Ke Chawal, Kuttu Ki Poori among others. You can thus also prepare the satvik thali or Navratri thali as per you own choice.



* A **sattvic diet**, also referred to as a **yoga diet** or **sentient diet**, is a diet based on foods which, according to Ayurveda, Yoga, and Jainism, are strong in the sattva guna, and lead to clarity and upeksa (equanimity) of mind while also being beneficial to the body.

Such foods include water, cereal grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, unpasteurized and unhomogenized fresh milk and fresh milk derivatives (mostly ghee, but also butter, cream, cheese (paneer), and yogurt(lassi)), and raw honey.

Navratri Katha

The festival of Navratri is celebrated twice in India. Once in the Hindi month of Chaitra which is the month of March-April according to the Gregorian calendar and again in the month of Ashwin i.e. September-October according to the English calendar. It is a nine days long festival in which the Goddess Durga is worshipped in nine different forms. People all over the country celebrate this festival with immense joy and enthusiasm. Devotees of Maa Durga observe a rigorous fast of nine days during this period. This festival in Hindu religion is considered to be an eternally enlightening festival. Like most of the Hindu festivals this worship also involves reading or hearing Katha or stories related to the festival.

Navaratri Story

The story associated with Navratri can be found in various Hindu religious texts like Markandeya Purana, Vamana Purana, Varaha Purana, Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, Devi Bhagavatam and Kalika Purana. The story of Navratri is the symbolic message of the fact that however glorious and powerful the evil become, at the end it is the goodness that wins over all of the evil. The story is associated with Maa Durga and Mahisasura, the buffalo headed demon.

The story begins from the life of two sons of Danu called Rambha and Karambha who performed austerities by to gain extreme power and authority. When their prayers became deeper and austerities became exceptional, the King of the heaven God Indra got perturbed. Out of fear, he killed Karambha. Rambha, who came to know about his brother's death, became more stubborn to win over the Gods. He increased the intensity of his austerities and finally got several boons from gods like great brilliance, beauty, invincibility in war. He also asked a special wish of not being killed by either humans or Gods or Asuras.

He then considered himself immortal and started freely roaming in the garden of Yaksha where he saw a female-buffalo and fell in love with her. To express his love, Rambha disguised in the form of a male-buffalo and copulated with the female buffalo. However, soon after that a real male buffalo discovered Rambha mating with the she-buffalo and killed him. It was due to Rambha's inflated ego that killed him, out of which he has not asked his death to be spared from the wrath of animals. As the pyre of Rambha was organized, the female-buffalo, who was copulated with him jumped into the funeral pyre of Rambha to prove her love. She was pregnant at that time. Thus, demon came out of the with the head of a buffalo and human body and he was named Mahisasura (the buffalo headed demon).

Mahishasura was extremely powerful. He defeated the gods and the demons and acruierd power over the entire world. He even won over the heaven and threw devtas outside it. He captured the throne of Indra and declared himself to be the the lord of the gods. The gods led by Brahma approached Vishnu and Shiva and evaluated them of the situation. In order to save the Gods, the three supreme deities emerged a light of anger, which combined to the take the shape of a terrible form and this was Durga. All the gods then granted this Goddess of power with all the supreme weapons they had. This is why; Durga is called the brilliance of all the Gods.

When the goddess was seen by Mahishasura, he was mesmerized by her beauty. Her then fell in love with her and proposed to marry her. The goddess said she will marry him, if he defeated her in the battle. Then began a scary and terrible battle between both of then which continued for nine days. Finally, on the last day, Durga took the form of Chandika and stood over the chest of Mahishasura and smashed him down with her foot. She then pierced his neck with her spear and cut off his head off with her sword. It is the day when Vijaydashmi is celebrated.

<http://festivals.iloveindia.com/navratri/katha.html>

Mata Ki Chowki, Jagran Puja, Bhajan & Kirtan

Maa Durga is the embodiment of the divine energy and the creative power. Maa Durga reigns as the Mother Goddess, amongst the Goddesses worshiped by Hindus. Although there are innumerable forms of Goddesses and ultimately all are one, yet Durga-form is the most popular one. In **Vedic Mantras**, the Mother is the Prime God. Mother not only creates a child from her body and energizes but becomes the biggest and the most effective teacher of her child to mould his future. It is revealed that without her even lord Shiva is a lifeless Body [Shav].



The **blessings of Maa Shakti** are needed to negotiate the rough course of life. One should perform **Mata's Chowki** or **Jagran** to get blessed by her divine powers and get one's wishes fulfilled. There is no caste or creed discrimination at Mata's Darbar [Court]. According to Vedas, Maa Durga has nine dimensions as **SHAILPUTRI, BRAHMACHARINI, CHANDRAGHANTA, KUSHMANDA, SKANDAMATA, KATYAYANI, KALRATRI, MAHAGAURI** and **SIDDHIDATRI**. During **Navratris**, these **nine shakthi's** are worshiped to gain her blessings.

Mata ki Chowki and Mata ka Jagran

Mata ki Chowki is a religious get together, through Chowkis. Mata Ki Chowki is short time kirtan which can be performed at any time throughout the day, anytime of the year. In Mata Ki Chowki, the group preaches about Mata, sings "Jagrata" and motivates devotees all over the world to pay their respects through their prayers.

Jagran is a holy event which consists of all night kirtan of the Mother Goddess Durga where her devotees worship her by singing her praises and her bhents which includes spiritual awakening for attainment of link up with Supreme Power. This is a holy event that can be held any time of the year.

Both Mata ki Chowki and Mata ka Jagran starts with an invocation mantra of Ganesh-worship. Mata's Jagran was started by Rani Taramati and thus it is said that without the '**Amar Katha of Tara Rani**' a Jagran is not considered complete. **Jagran and Chowki** both are performed by a lead singer accompanied by group of musicians and chorus. In the final stage, the person/family who requested 'Mata Ki Chowki' or 'Mata Ka Jagran' gives the final offering (antim-ardaas) to the Mother Goddess followed by rest of the devotees. As per tradition, Prasad of Halwa and cooked (salted) black grams is served at the closure of the holy event.



VIJAYADASHMI CELEBRATION

Vijayadashmi is among the most auspicious days in the Hindu calendar and which also known as Dasara. It is celebrated in various forms in different parts of India, Nepal and Bangladesh. It comes as the finale of the Nava-raatri, observed on the tenth day (dashami) of the bright half of the lunar month of Aashwayuja. Vijaya means “victory” and dasami means “ten”, meaning the tenth day of victory. Dasara is derived from Sanskrit word “dasa hara” meaning remover of bad fate or remover of ten heads of ravana. The day marks the victory of Goddess Durga over demons and also celebrates the victory of Rama over Ravana.



In Ramayana, Rama had performed Chandi Homa and invoked the blessings of Durga who blessed Rama with secret knowledge of the way to kill Ravana. On the day of Ashvin Shukla Dashami, Rama defeated Ravana and hence termed as Vijaya Dashami. Many people perform rituals to get rid of ten bad qualities, which are represented by ten heads of Ravana; Kama (Lust), Krodha (Anger), Moha (Delusion), Lobha (Greed), Mada (Over Pride), Matsara (Jealousy), Manas (Mind), Buddhi (Intellect), Chitta (Will), Ahankara (Ego).

At one stage, the gods felt powerless against the onslaughts of the demons headed by Mahishaasura. To face him Gods agreed to give a portion of their divine powers to form a new goddess. Thus “Durga” was created with the combined might of innumerable gods and goddesses. The demon Mahishaasura was slain by Mahishaasura Mardini on the day of Vijaya Dashami, after a ceaseless fight of nine days. Nava means “nine” and ratri means “night”. We worship the feminine form of the God, Mother Goddess, and the Cosmic Power who embodies the totality of the universe.

In Dwapara Yuga, the Padavas, lost to Kauravas in a game of dice, and both spent twelve years of Vanawas, or exile to the forest, followed by one year of Agnyatawas. The brothers hid their weapons in a hole in a shami tree before entering Agnyatawas and on Vijayadashmi, they recovered the weapons, declared their true identities and defeated Kauravas, who had attacked King Virat to steal his cattle. Since that day, Shami trees and weapons have been worshipped and the exchange of Shami leaves on Vijayadashmi has been a symbol of good will and victory.

The story of Mahishaasura Mardini has a unique message “even the good and the righteous can succeed against the evil forces only when they come together in an organized endeavor”.

This message is significant in Hindu society. Because of the lack of unity, Hindus faced hundreds of years of foreign invasions, enslavement, persecution, mass conversions, and continue to face challenges to this day. “Sanghe shaktih kalau yuge”—Organization holds the key to strength in Kaliyuga. The auspicious occasion of Vijay Dashami reminds us that through organization and unity, we will always achieve victory, and that Dharma will always triumph.

These nine days are divided into three sections, three days each; the first three days are dedicated for



1. Durga or Maha Kali, Durga is "durgati harini", who removes all the evil tendencies or tamoguna. We invoke her to give us the strength to destroy pride and shame (shumbha and nishumbha), craving and aversion (Madhu Kaitabh), ego (Raktabeejasura), other durgunas (chanda, munda, doomralocha) and finally Mahishasura (laziness, darkness, ignorance and inertia). We invoke that Divine Power within us to destroy our animalistic tendencies.

Contd. on Page 6

(Contd. From page 5)

2. The second three days for Maha Lakshmi.

Lakshmi is the Goddess of Aishvarya: divine wealth. She is the embodiment of Love, charity, kindness, devotion, peace, tranquility, honesty, courage and faith. Once we annihilate all the durgunas, the vacancies created by the elimination of the negative qualities must be filled in by these positive traits and the purification of the mind is obtained through the worship of Lakshmi Devi

3. The last three days for Goddess Maha Saraswati.

Victory over the mind can be gained only through knowledge, through understanding; and it is Goddess Saraswati who represents this highest knowledge of the Self. Once we gained that knowledge, we say "tatvam asi".

Thus, at Navaratri, Goddess Durga is invoked first to remove impurities from the mind. The Goddess Lakshmi is invoked to cultivate the noble values and qualities. Finally, Saraswati is invoked for gaining the highest knowledge of the Self.

"Ya devi sarvabhuteshu shakti -roopena samstiita Namas tasyai, Namas tasyai, Namas tasyai namo namah. Ya devi sarvabhuteshu buddhi – roopena samsthita, Namas tasyai, Namas tasyai, Namas tasyai namo namah. Ya devi sarvabhuteshu siddhi – roopena samsthita, namas tasyai namas tasyai namas tasyai namo namah".

या देवी सर्व भूतेषु शक्ति रूपेण सस्तिता
नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमोनम
या देवी सर्व भूतेषु बुद्धि रूपेण सस्तिता
नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमोनम
या देवी सर्व भूतेषु सिद्धि रूपेण सस्तिता
नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमोनम

In most of northern India and some parts of Maharashtra, Dasha-Hara is celebrated more in honor of Rama. During these 10 days many plays and dramas based on Ramayana called Ramlila are performed. In eastern part of India including Bangal, it is celebrated as Durga Puja and western parts like Gujarat celebrate with Garba with nine days if celebration.

Vijayadashami is celebrated in various ways in different parts of South India. Celebrations can take many forms, ranging from worshipping the goddess Chamundeshwari (Durga) to exhibiting colorful toys-, celebrated as Golu in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu from Navratri onwards.

There is a legend related to the exhibition of toys that is known as "Bombe habba" in Karnataka, "Bommala Kolu" in Andhra Pradesh and Golu or Kolu in Tamil Nadu. Since the goddess Durga needed tremendous power, all other gods and goddesses transferred their power to her and they all stood still as statues. To respect the self-sacrifice of these deities during the festival days, Hindus revere morities, which are small statues in the shape of particular gods and goddesses. Golu ends on Dasara.

Vijayadashami is also the auspicious day for starting their formal education. Students keep their books and workers their tools for puja on the ninth day of Navratri these are taken back and used after puja on the tenth day (Vijayadasami). The practice is so old that in many parts of south India, even non-Hindus follow this tradition. In 2004, many churches in Kerala formally adopted the same tradition of introducing young children to education on Dasara day.

The legend associated with the sami tree finds commemoration during the renowned Mysore Dasara & Navratri celebrations at Mysore. The Mysore celebrations also strongly emphasize the Durga legend described above, as may be expected in the city built at the very site of the events of the Durga legend. On Vijaydashami day, at the culmination of a colorful 10-day celebration, the goddess Chamundeswai is worshiped and then borne in a grand procession on a Golden Ambari or elephant-mounted throne through the city of Mysore, from the historical Mysore Palace to the Banni Mantapa.



Prepared by Dr. Jayasree Nair

DIWALI

5 Days Of Diwali

Deewali is a festival of joy, splendor, brightness and happiness. It is the festival of lights. The uniqueness of this festival is its harmony of five varied philosophies, with each day to a special thought or ideal. When people celebrate each of its five days of festivities with true understanding; it will uplift and enrich the lives.

The 1st Day of Diwali: Dhanteras

The first day of Diwali is called Dhanvantari Triodasi or Dhanwantari Triodasi also called Dhan Theras. It is in fact the thirteenth lunar day of Krishna Paksh, the dark fortnight of the month of Kartik. On this day, Lord Dhanwantari came out of the ocean with Ayurvedic for mankind. This day marks the beginning of deepawali celebrations.

On this day at sunset, Hindus should bathe and offer a lighted deeya with Prasad (sweets offered at worship time) to Yama Raj, the Lord of Death and pray for protection from untimely death. This offering should be made near a Tulsi tree, the Holy Basil or any other sacred tree that one might have in their yard.

The 2nd Day of Diwali: Choti Diwali

The second day of dipawali is called Narak Chaturdasi. On this day Lord Krishna destroyed the demon Narakasur and made the world free from fear. On this day, one should massage the body with oil to relieve it of tiredness, bathe and rest so that Diwali can be celebrated with vigour and devotion.

On this night, Yama Deeya should not be lit. The Shastras (Laws of Dharma) declares that Yama Deeya should be offered on Triodasi night with Prasad. Some people mistook it to mean that because Yama Deeya was lit on that night, that it should always be lit on the night before deepawali. This is absolutely not true. It is advisable that one consults with a learned Pandit or Hindu Astrologer for proper guidance on this matter.

The 3rd Day of Diwali: Lakshmi Puja on Diwali

This is the day when worship unto Mother Lakshmi is performed. Hindus cleanse themselves and join with their families and their Pandit (priest) and they worship the divine Goddess Lakshmi to achieve the blessings of wealth and prosperity, the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness.

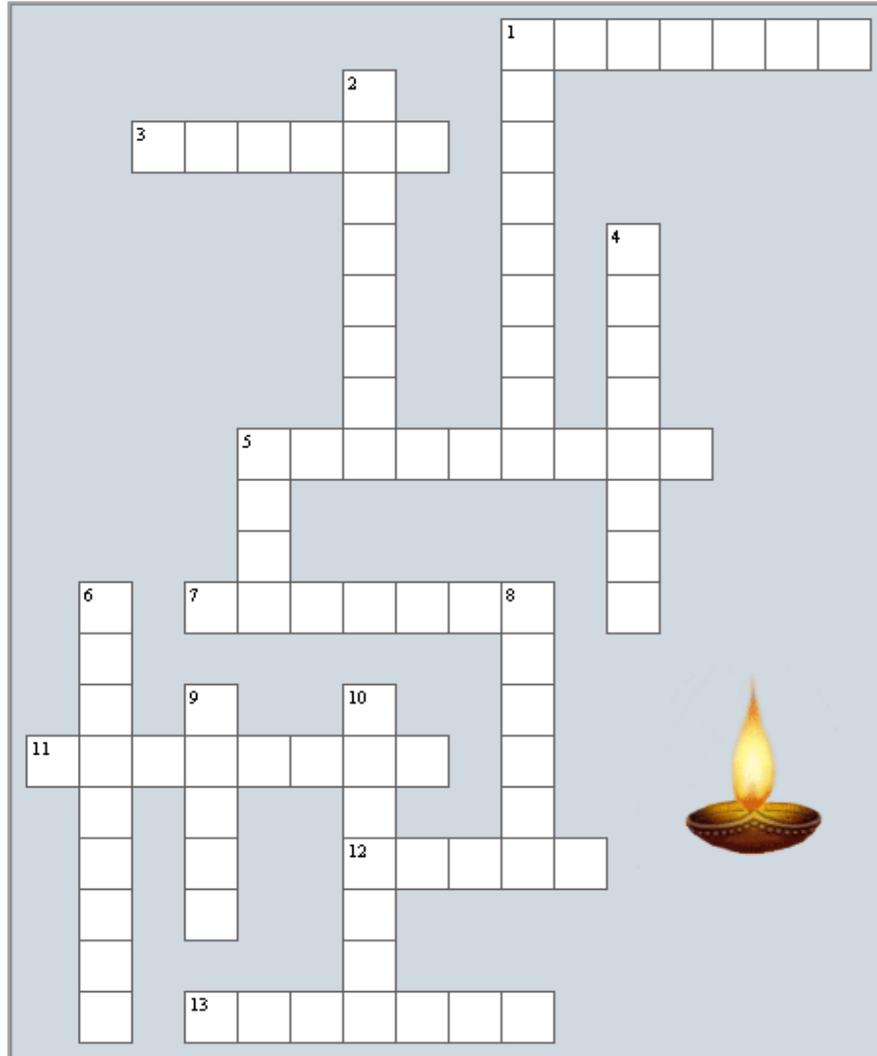
The 4th Day of Diwali: Padwa & Govardhan Puja

On this day, Govardhan Pooja is performed. Many thousands of years ago, Lord Krishna caused the people of Vraja to perform Govardhan Pooja. From then on, every year Hindus worship Govardhan to honour that first Pooja done by the people of Vraja.

The 5th Day of Diwali: Bhai Duj

The fifth day of the Diwali is called Bhai teeka. This is the day after Goverdhan Pooja is performed and normally two days after Diwali day. It is a day dedicated to sisters. Many moons ago, in the Vedic era, Yama (Yamraj, the Lord of death) visited his sister Yamuna on this day. He gave his sister a Vardhan (a boon) that whosoever visits her on this day shall be liberated from all sins. They will achieve Moksha or final emancipation. From then on, brothers visit their sisters on this day to enquire of their welfare. This day marks the end of the five days of deepawali celebrations. This is also known as Bhai fota among Bengalis. Bhai fota is an event especially among Bengalis when the sister prays for her brother's safety, success and well being.

Diwali Crossword



Across

1. Eighth Avatar of Vishnu
3. Sweets offered at worship time
5. The first day of Diwali is called Dhanvantari Triodasi or...
7. This God is the remover of all obstacles
11. "Hari Deepavali" is celebrated in
12. In Nepal, Diwali is known as
13. Goddess of wealth and fortune

Down

1. Lamp or "Deep" is the symbol of this
2. In Kolkata, Diwali is observed as
4. Diwali is celebrated on a No-moon day or...
5. A popular earthen lamp used in Diwali celebrations
6. "Narak Chaturdasi" commemorates the killing of this demon
8. Lord Rama was the ruler of this empire
9. A popular Diwali sweet
10. Bhaubeej is dedicated to...

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Across: 1. Balarama 3. Prasad 5. Dhanteras 7. Ganesha 11. Malaysia 12. Tihar 13. Laxmi
 Down: 1. Knowledge 2. Kalipuja 4. Amavasya 5. Diya 6. Narakasur 8. Ayodha 9. Laddu 10. Sisters

Diwali

Word Search Puzzle

Instructions -

Search out the listed words from the puzzle.

Z	S	Y	E	I	E	Z	L	Z	C	Q	C	L	Y	B	X	H	F
D	E	E	P	A	V	A	L	I	T	K	F	Q	P	L	M	P	Q
W	V	Q	T	S	O	J	E	K	T	O	L	X	G	E	P	S	P
J	M	C	H	T	P	Q	R	A	U	D	A	O	W	X	P	S	B
R	Z	I	A	G	O	H	E	R	C	W	M	W	T	E	I	C	B
Q	V	O	L	A	L	K	H	T	M	N	P	D	I	T	I	V	Y
C	W	S	I	N	H	Y	D	I	B	U	N	P	Y	B	W	R	I
R	C	N	F	E	H	X	O	K	R	C	L	A	K	S	H	M	I
A	M	J	M	S	U	N	J	A	R	N	P	K	A	S	C	Q	W
C	M	T	M	H	J	U	O	J	Y	Q	E	J	D	T	Y	P	A
K	I	B	Q	A	D	W	W	P	S	F	W	A	D	S	Q	F	B
E	E	Q	I	I	J	R	U	U	N	E	P	U	X	D	Q	K	G
R	D	W	B	L	O	H	O	F	I	S	C	V	R	D	H	U	X
S	S	W	E	E	T	S	U	T	P	T	J	W	A	F	W	F	G
O	Z	B	C	N	L	C	G	X	G	I	D	D	M	Y	C	B	B
I	X	K	L	Y	V	N	V	S	K	V	G	A	A	N	Y	K	G
P	G	R	Y	L	X	A	Y	P	U	A	O	D	F	J	A	K	C
R	W	B	V	R	R	U	N	R	D	L	R	S	U	A	W	Q	S

Word List

SWEETS

LAKSHMI

GANESHA

THALI

DEEPAVALI

CRACKERS

KARTIKA

FESTIVAL

RAMA

LAMP

Tip: When you spot any word, make a circle around it with a pen to separate from the jumble.

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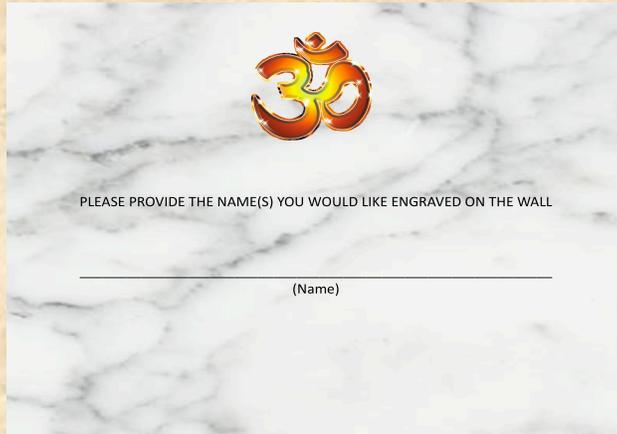
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