

OME: Outrageous Mantra Experiment

It is our desire to transform ourselves in connection with and in service to our community.

We have chosen a 40-day discipline within which to offer the fruits of our spiritual discipline to you, our friends and fellow adventurers and to ourselves.

When two or more gather in the name of anything, the efforts increase exponentially in their power.

In honor of summer, we have chosen to honor the bringer of abundance and prosperity: LAKSHMI

This experiment is being conducted for the highest good of all people involved.

To do:

Pick a “Laxmi” mantra that appeals to you.

Pick a discipline for your mantra.

Commit to your Self.

Gather your tools:

Mala Beads

Journal

A sense of humor

Your willpower

Say your mantra every day for forty days

(beginning Monday, May 22nd and ending Friday, June 30th)

Getting Started

Start by picking some aspect of your life you wish to improve or some vexing problem you would like to solve or dissolve. Then pick a mantra which seems, to you, to apply. Offer a prayer to God, in whatever way you relate to God. Ask for God's blessing in accomplishing your objective in doing this spiritual discipline.

Once you have decided to undertake the discipline and offered your prayers, then pick a place where you will say your mantra for a certain number of times each day. If possible, obtain a rosary (or mala) of some kind and do your mantras in some multiple of 108. If getting a rosary is not possible, then decide on a certain amount of time you will spend each day saying your mantra. It can be five minutes, ten minutes, twenty minutes or even an hour. For your first experience, any time up to twenty minutes is advisable.

The reason for taking things easy for the first 40 day commitment is due to the cumulative action of the mantra. For the first few days, all will probably go smoothly. Then as you progress, you may find that things start to get in the way of your doing the discipline: You oversleep; there is some minor emergency; you get a cold, whatever. This means that you are beginning to effect the inner 'something' for which you undertook the mantra. You are beginning to encounter inner resistance. That inner resistance manifests as outer obstacles to your discipline. It has almost become a joke in many spiritual circles in which the practice of mantra is common, that something of a very surprising nature happened on day 33 or 35 of a 40 day sadhana.

Develop a sense of humor about it, and be thankful. There is no better indication that your efforts are working than to have small upheavals in your life while you are in the midst of a 40 day mantra discipline. Ask anyone who has undertaken one and they will have some interesting stories for you.

A warning: These mantra formulas and the 60 day or 120 day programs should never be forced upon anyone. You should not even attempt to be persuasive about their use. If you feel drawn to use the mantra formulas, then by all means begin your discipline. If you find that you are thinking of someone who would benefit from this approach to changing inner conditions, then by all means recommend these methods. But remember you are working with karma. That means that nothing should be forced. As they say in the East, “You cannot rip the skin from the snake. It must shed by itself.”

Bija mantras (or seed mantras):

If you have a particular issue in your life, or a material or spiritual goal you wish to accomplish, pick a seed sound that seems to represent the energy you desire but have been lacking. Work with this mantra for 10 days, repeating it as much as you are able. Besides repeating it whenever you can (ie: in the shower, cleaning, cooking, walking, etc) you should consider setting aside 5 to 10 minutes twice a day to chant the mantra in a focused meditative way. If it agrees with you, continue for an additional 30 days. Then stop and wait to see results (if they have not already presented themselves during your practice.)

Bija Option #1: Shrim (pronounced: Shreem)

This feminine seed sound is for the energy of abundance in all forms, as expressed by the Sanskrit word Lakshmi, and personified as a goddess. Spiritual abundance, health, inner peace, financial wealth, friendship, the love of children and family: Lakshmi is the source for all of these, and then Shrim mantra is a powerful means of gaining any of them. Repetition of the Shrim mantra gives you the ability to attract and maintain abundance. According to Vedic teaching, if you pronounce Shrim a hundred times, your experience of abundance will increase a hundredfold. If you pronounce Shrim a thousand times or a million times, the result is correspondingly greater.

Bija Option#2: Klim (pronounced Kleem)

The seed mantra for the energy of attraction is neither masculine nor feminine. It is often combined with other mantras to attract an object of desire. To attract wealth, for instance, the abundance mantra can be combined with the Klim seed to form the mantra Om Shrim Klim Maha Lakshmiyei Swaha

Klim can also be used as a meditation. Find a quiet space where you're unlikely to be disturbed, and begin your meditation by lighting a candle or a piece of incense. Sit comfortably and gently direct your thoughts toward the object or condition you desire to bring into your life. Or, visualize it as you would like it to occur or manifest in your life. As you do this, softly chant the mantra Klim. As you chant with this intention, you increase the energy of your thought and attract more energy to yourself.

Longer abundance mantra options:

Laxmi Mantra #1: Om Shrim Klim Maha Laxmieh Swaha

Rough Translation:

'I offer this sound to Laxmi, the bestower of great wealth and abundance'

Om is the seed sound for the sixth chakra, where masculine and feminine energies meet at the center of the brow. Because om represents a conjunction of will and sound, it is commonly used as a prefix to mantras of all kinds. Of the millions of mantras that have originated in the far East over the past five thousand years, more than 95 percent begin with om.

Shrim is the seed sound for the principle of abundance, which is personified by the goddess Lakshmi in the Hindu Pantheon. She is often depicted sitting or standing on a lotus flower, beautiful beyond measure, with a stream of coins flowing from her hand. Behind the goddess, elephants are playing, with their trunks upraised. Elephants are a traditional symbol of good fortune, and the raised trunks indicate a propensity to retain the good fortune, rather than spilling it onto the ground.

Maha means great. In this context it denotes both quantity and quality. When we speak of the quality of abundance here, we are referring to its harmony with dharma or divine law. Abundance of any other kind is more like a burden than a blessing. Imagine, for example that someone presents you with a large amount of money. Now you have abundant financial resources---but if the money has been stolen you could be implicated in this crime. The prefix maha is intended to prevent this kind of difficulty.

Lakshmi, again, is the principle of abundance. The goddess is such a powerful feminine force that continued use of her Sanskrit name generates great creative energy. But in the simplest terms, she is the personification of wealth. She holds aloft the torch of prosperity in all its forms and for all beings.

Swaha, in this context means I salute. It is also related to the manifestation of energy at the solar plexus chakra. Mantras exist in masculine, feminine, and neutral forms. Here Swaha, provides a feminine ending.

Buddhist Mantra #1: Nam Myoho Renge Kyo

Rough Translation: Devotion to the mystical law of cause and effect.

The phrase NAM-MYOHO-RENKE-KYO is taken from the title of the greatest teaching of the first historically recorded Buddha, known as Siddhartha Gautama or Shakyamuni Buddha, who lived in India around 500 years before Christ was born. This teaching, called the Lotus Sutra, declares that all living beings, regardless of gender or intelligence (that means everyone - including you and me!), have the potential to attain Buddhahood. In the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha teaches that inside each one of us a universal truth known as the Buddha nature. Basing our lives on this Buddha nature enables us to enjoy absolute happiness and to act with boundless compassion. Such a state of happiness is called enlightenment. It's simply waking up to the true nature of life, realising that all things are connected, and that there is such a close relationship between each of us and our surroundings that when we change ourselves, we change the world.

In the 13th Century, a Japanese priest called Nichiren (1222-1282) realised that the message of the Lotus Sutra was summed up by its title, NAM-MYOHO-RENKE-KYO, which can be translated as *the teaching of the lotus flower of the wonderful law*. Nichiren declared that all of the benefits of the wisdom contained in the Lotus Sutra can be realized by chanting this title NAM-MYOHO-RENKE-KYO. Since the time of Nichiren many, many millions of people have followed his advice, chanting NAM-MYOHO-RENKE-KYO regularly as a means of improving their health, happiness, wisdom and compassion. The goal of chanting NAM-MYOHO-RENKE-KYO is to manifest the enlightenment of the Buddha in our own lives. We can then realise our own creative

potential as individuals and, in so doing, create thriving and peaceful families, work places and communities. Eventually this gradual transformation of individuals will create peace and prosperity in societies throughout the world.

Nam

The word *nam* derives from Sanskrit, a close translation of its meaning is "to devote oneself." Nichiren established the chanting of *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo* as a means to enable all people to put their lives in harmony or rhythm with the law of life, or Dharma. In the original Sanskrit, *nam* indicates the elements of action and attitude, and refers therefore to the correct action one needs to take and the attitude one needs to develop in order to attain Buddhahood in this lifetime.

Myoho

Myoho literally means the Mystic Law, and expresses the relationship between the life inherent in the universe and the many different ways this life expresses itself. *Myo* refers to the very essence of life, which is "invisible" and beyond intellectual understanding. This essence always expresses itself in a tangible form (*ho*) that can be apprehended by the senses. Phenomena (*ho*) are changeable, but pervading all such phenomena is a constant reality known as *myo*.

Renge

Renge means lotus flower. The lotus blooms and produces seeds at the same time, and thus represents the simultaneity of cause and effect. The circumstances and quality of our individual lives is determined by the particular of causes and effects, both good and bad, that we accumulate (through our thoughts, words and actions) at each moment. This is called our "karma". The law of cause and effect explains that we each have personal responsibility for our own destiny. We create our destiny and we can change it. The most powerful cause we can make is to chant *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*, the effect of Buddhahood is simultaneously created in the depths of our life and will definitely manifest in time.

The lotus flower grows and blooms in a muddy pond, and yet remains pristine and free from any defilement, symbolizing the emergence of Buddhahood from within the life of an ordinary person.

Kyo

Kyo literally means sutra, the voice or teaching of a Buddha. In this sense, it also means sound, rhythm or vibration. Also, the Chinese character for *kyo* originally meant the warp a piece of woven cloth, symbolizing the continuity of life throughout past, present and future. In a broad sense, *kyo* conveys the concept that all things in the universe are a manifestation of the Mystic Law.

English Mantra #1: Thank you for all the abundance in my life

English Mantra #2: I am abundant.

Basic Mantra Approaches:

OPTION 1. Repetition of the mantra as often as possible over a specific amount of time. This approach means that you will remember to say the mantra as many times as possible throughout each day. While doing household chores, you will say the mantra. In the shower, on a walk, while driving your car you will say the mantra (NOTE: IF YOU FIND THAT THE PRACTICE OF MANTRA WHILE DRIVING MAKES YOU “SPACE OUT” THEN DISCONTINUE AT ONCE.

If you choose this approach, sit down with a watch, check the time and repeat the mantra for five minutes while counting how many you do. You can use your fingers, beads or whatever you prefer. Then multiply the results by twelve. You now have a figure of how many times you say the mantra in an hour.

During the day, keep track of how many hours you say the mantra. Keep a small notebook in which you record your daily amount of time in mantra repetition. Tally up the totals and that is the total amount of repetitions for this period.

The minimum number of days for this kind of discipline is TWENTY ONE.

OPTION 2. Forty day discipline:

A discipline of forty days is the time given for practicing mantra in the Eastern Texts. Sages taught this process centuries even before Noah walked the earth.

Place: In addition to saying your mantra as often as possible, you should set aside a specific place where you will practice your spiritual discipline twice every day.

Time of Day: It is recommended that you perform your practice in the morning upon rising and in the evening before bed. While any time is appropriate for practicing mantras, the periods just before dawn and dusk are reported to be especially good.

Completing the Practice: If you are in the middle of your discipline and the telephone rings, do not answer it. Better yet, before you begin, turn the volume down on your ringer and answering machine. You should strive to complete your daily disciplines without interruption. If you miss a day, you should be aware of the circumstances which lead to your miss and begin again.

Option 3: Siddhi Attainment

Siddhi is a general term for spiritual power or ability. Therefore, some power or ability deriving from the saying of the mantra should become evident. The generally accepted time for achieving mantra siddhi is universally given in texts and references as a minimum of 125,000 repetitions. To say a short mantra like Om Gum Ganapateyei Namaha it is fairly easy to repeat the mantra, say 1500 times/hour. At this rate it would take 83.3 hours to complete 125,000 repetitions. This could easily be accomplished in forty days. Short mantras lend themselves easily to a forty day discipline. Driving on the highway or riding the subway provides a great opportunity to work with mantras and it is much cheaper than talking on the cell phone.

What Is a Mantra and How Does It Work?

A Selection from *Healing Mantras*

Definition # 1: Mantras are energy-based sounds.

Saying any word produces an actual physical vibration. Over time, if we know what the effect of that vibration is, then the word may come to have meaning associated with the effect of saying that vibration or word. This is one level of energy basis for words.

Another level is intent. If the actual physical vibration is coupled with a mental intention, the vibration then contains an additional mental component which influences the result of saying it. The sound is the carrier wave and the intent is overlaid upon the wave form, just as a colored gel influences the appearance and effect of a white light.

In either instance, the word is based upon energy. Nowhere is this idea more true than for Sanskrit mantra. For although there is a general meaning which comes to be associated with mantras, the only lasting definition is the result or effect of saying the mantra.

Definition #2: Mantras create thought-energy waves.

The human consciousness is really a collection of states of consciousness which distributively exist throughout the physical and subtle bodies. Each organ has a primitive consciousness of its own. That primitive consciousness allows it to perform functions specific to it. Then come the various systems. The cardio-vascular system, the reproductive system and other systems have various organs or body parts working at slightly different stages of a single process. Like the organs, there is a primitive consciousness also associated with each system. And these are just within the physical body. Similar functions and states of consciousness exist within the subtle body as well. So individual organ consciousness is overlaid by system consciousness, overlaid again by subtle body counterparts and consciousness, and so ad infinitum.

The ego with its self-defined "I" ness assumes a pre-eminent state among the subtle din of random, semi-conscious thoughts which pulse through our organism. And of course, our organism can "pick up" the vibration of other organisms nearby. The result is that there are myriad vibrations riding in and through the subconscious mind at any given time.

Mantras start a powerful vibration which corresponds to both a specific spiritual energy frequency and a state of consciousness in seed form. Over time, the mantra process begins to override all of the other smaller vibrations, which eventually become absorbed by the mantra. After a length of time which varies from individual to individual, the great wave of the mantra stills all other vibrations. Ultimately, the mantra produces a state where the organism vibrates at the rate completely in tune with the energy and spiritual state represented by and contained within the mantra.

At this point, a change of state occurs in the organism. The organism becomes subtly different. Just as a laser is light which is coherent in a new way, the person who becomes one with the state produced by the mantra is also coherent in a way which did not exist prior to the conscious undertaking of repetition of the mantra.

Definition #3: Mantras are tools of power and tools for power.

They are formidable. They are ancient. They work. The word "mantra" is derived from two Sanskrit words. The first is "manas" or "mind," which provides the "man" syllable. The second syllable is drawn from the Sanskrit word "tra" meaning to "protect" or to "free from." Therefore, the word mantra in its most literal sense means "to free from the mind." Mantra is, at its core, a tool used by the mind which eventually frees one from the vagaries of the mind.

But the journey from mantra to freedom is a wondrous one. The mind expands, deepens and widens and eventually dips into the essence of cosmic existence. On its journey, the mind comes to understand much about the essence of the vibration of things. And knowledge, as we all know, is power. In the case of mantra, this power is tangible and wieldable.

Statements About Mantra

1 Mantras have close, approximate one-to-one direct language-based translation.

If we warn a young child that it should not touch a hot stove, we try to explain that it will burn the child. However, language is insufficient to convey the experience. Only the act of touching the stove and being burned will adequately define the words "hot" and "burn" in the context of "stove." Essentially, there is no real direct translation of the experience of being burned.

Similarly, there is no word which is the exact equivalent of the experience of sticking one's finger into an electrical socket. When we stick our hand into the socket, only then do we have a context for the word "shock." But shock is really a definition of the result of the action of sticking our hand into the socket.

It is the same with mantras. The only true definition is the experience which it ultimately creates in the sayer. Over thousands of years, many sayers have had common experiences and passed them on to the next generation. Through this tradition, a context of experiential definition has been created.

2 Definitions of mantras are oriented toward either the results of repeating the mantra or of the intentions of the original framers and testers of the mantra.

In Sanskrit, sounds which have no direct translation but which contain great power which can be "grown" from it are called "seed mantras." Seed in Sanskrit is called

"Bijam" in the singular and "Bija" in the plural form. Please refer to the pronunciation guide on page 126 for more information on pronunciation of mantras.

Let's take an example. The mantra "Shrim" or Shreem is the seed sound for the principle of abundance (Lakshmi, in the Hindu Pantheon.) If one says "shrim" a hundred times, a certain increase in the potentiality of the sayer to accumulate abundance is achieved. If one says "shrim" a thousand times or a million, the result is correspondingly greater.

But abundance can take many forms. There is prosperity, to be sure, but there is also peace as abundance, health as wealth, friends as wealth, enough food to eat as wealth, and a host of other kinds and types of abundance which may vary from individual to individual and culture to culture. It is at this point that the intention of the sayer begins to influence the degree of the kind of capacity for accumulating wealth which may accrue.

3 Mantras have been tested and/or verified by their original framers or users.

Each mantra is associated with an actual sage or historical person who once lived. Although the oral tradition predates written speech by centuries, those earliest oral records annotated on palm leaves discussed earlier clearly designate a specific sage as the "seer" of the mantra. This means that the mantra was probably arrived at through some form of meditation or intuition and subsequently tested by the person who first encountered it.

4 Sanskrit mantras are composed of letters which correspond to certain petals or spokes of chakras in the subtle body.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a direct relationship between the mantra sound, either vocalized or subvocalized, and the chakras located throughout the body.

5 Mantras are energy which can be likened to fire.

You can use fire either to cook your lunch or to burn down the forest. It is the same fire. Similarly, mantra can bring a positive and beneficial result, or it can produce an energy meltdown when misused or practiced without some guidance. There are certain mantra formulas which are so exact, so specific and so powerful that they must be learned and practiced under careful supervision by a qualified teacher.

Fortunately, most of the mantras widely used in the West and certainly those contained in this volume are perfectly safe to use on a daily basis, even with some intensity.

6 Mantra energizes prana.

"Prana" is a Sanskrit term for a form of life energy which can be transferred from individual to individual. Prana may or may not produce an instant dramatic effect upon transfer. There can be heat or coolness as a result of the transfer.

Some healers operate through transfer of prana. A massage therapist can transfer prana with beneficial effect. Even self-healing can be accomplished by concentrating prana in certain organs, the result of which can be a clearing of the difficulty or condition. For instance, by saying a certain mantra while visualizing an internal organ bathed in light, the specific power of the mantra can become concentrated there with great beneficial effect.

7 Mantras eventually quiet the mind.

At a deep level, subconscious mind is a collective consciousness of all the forms of primitive consciousness which exist throughout the physical and subtle bodies. The dedicated use of mantra can dig into subconscious crystallized thoughts stored in the organs and glands and transform these bodily parts into repositories of peace.

Note from the author:

A saying from the Vedas claims that "Speech is the essence of humanity." All of what humanity thinks and ultimately becomes is determined by the expression of ideas and actions through speech and its derivative, writing. Everything, the Vedas maintain, comes into being through speech. Ideas remain unactualized until they are created through the power of speech. Similarly, The New Testament, Gospel of John, starts "In the beginning was The Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God..."

In mainstream Vedic practices, most Buddhist techniques and classical Hinduism, mantra is viewed as a necessity for spiritual advancement and high attainment. In The Kalachakra Tantra, by the Dalai Lama and Jeffrey Hopkins, the Dalai Lama states, "Therefore, without depending upon mantra...Buddhahood cannot be attained."

Clearly, there is a reason why such widely divergent sources of religious wisdom as the Vedas, the New Testament and the Dalai Lama speak in common ideas. Here are some important ideas about mantra which will enable you to begin a practical understanding of what mantra is and what it can do.



Lakshmi: Goddess of Wealth & Beauty!

Goddess Lakshmi means Good Luck to Hindus. The word 'Lakshmi' is derived from the Sanskrit word *Laksya*, meaning 'aim' or 'goal', and she is the goddess of wealth and prosperity, both material and spiritual.

Lakshmi is the household goddess of most Hindu families, and a favorite of women. Although she is worshipped daily, the festive month of October is Lakshmi's special month. Lakshmi Puja is celebrated on the full moon night of Kojagari Purnima.

The Lakshmi Form

Lakshmi is depicted as a beautiful woman of golden complexion, with four hands, sitting or standing on a full-bloomed lotus and holding a lotus bud, which stands for beauty, purity and fertility. Her four hands represent the four ends of human life: *dharma* or righteousness, *kama* or desires, *artha* or wealth, and *moksha* or liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Cascades of gold coins are seen flowing from her hands, suggesting that those who worship her gain wealth. She always wears gold embroidered red clothes. Red symbolizes activity and the golden lining indicates prosperity. Lakshmi is the active energy of Vishnu, and also appears as Lakshmi-Narayan - Lakshmi accompanying Vishnu.

Two elephants are often shown standing next to the goddess and spraying water. This denotes that ceaseless effort, in accordance with one's [dharma](#) and governed by wisdom and purity, leads to both material and spiritual prosperity.

A Mother Goddess

Worship of a mother goddess has been a part of Indian tradition since its earliest times. Lakshmi is one of the mother goddesses and is addressed as *mata* (mother) instead of just *devi* (goddess).

As a female counterpart of Lord Vishnu, Mata Lakshmi is also called 'Shri', the female energy of the Supreme Being. She is the goddess of prosperity, wealth, purity, generosity, and the embodiment of beauty, grace and charm.

A Domestic Deity

The importance attached to the presence of Lakshmi in every household makes her an essentially domestic deity. Householders worship Lakshmi for the well being and prosperity of the family. Businessmen and women also regard her equally and offer her daily prayers.

On the full moon night following Dusshera or [Durga Puja](#), Hindus worship Lakshmi ceremonially at home, pray for her blessings, and invite neighbors to attend the *puja*. It is believed that on this full moon night the goddess herself visits the homes and replenishes the inhabitants with wealth

Maha Laxmi mostly wears red. Red is the color of action, and Mother is the Goddess of prosperity. The message is that to obtain true prosperity in life, we must engage in action.

Laxmi is the Beloved of Lord Narayan, also popularly known as Lord Vishnu. And you may forcibly and/or by foul means try to keep 'Laxmi' with you. But She will not stay, for longer than She needs to, until you accord the respect to Her Dearly loved Lord Narayan, as much if not more, than that, you extend to Her.

According to the sculptures and paintings that have come down from ancient times, if the Goddess Laxmi travels alone, she travels on an owl. If she travels with Lord Vishnu, she travels on the Garuda (Eagle). Swami Nirmal Chetan explains the above symbolism thus: An owl is supposed to be blind during the day and a wealthy person without the right kind of intellect cannot see beyond his richness. Therefore whenever Laxmi (The Goddess of Wealth) travels without Lord Vishnu she makes the person whom she visits metaphorically blind. However when the Goddess Laxmi travels with Lord Vishnu, She travels on a Garuda, which is the symbol of wisdom.

On a lighter vein the word 'Daulat' (wealth) is derived from the word 'Do Laal' (Two kicks) When 'wealth' knocks on the door of someone without the right sense of discrimination, he gets one kick, which makes him blind. When 'wealth' decides to make its exit it gives the person another kick -- that of blood pressure or heart attack, or some such select illness, which mostly tends to strike 'the wealthy ones'.

Moral of the story: Let us pray to Laxmi but let us not forget the worship of God, and She will grace us with Her presence forever.

A certain degree of prosperity is essential in order for us to be effective catalysts on the planet, able to serve well ourselves and others. In Indian teachings prosperity carries a positive connotation and is represented by the lovely Goddess Lakshmi who embodies not merely outer wealth but also emotional, mental and spiritual wealth and well-being. Let us put aside for a moment any negative beliefs we may hold regarding abundance, viewing this concept with fresh eyes and considering Lakshmi as an approachable mentor ready to help us succeed and manifest our dreams.

A feminine energy form, Lakshmi is not only associated with prosperity, but also with beauty, purity, generosity and devotion. The word "Lakshmi" is derived from the Sanskrit word "laksya" meaning "aim" or "goal" and suggests that Lakshmi rules both material and spiritual aspirations. According to Hindu philosophy, the supreme God has the power to create, sustain and destroy (personified by the deities Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva). Goddess Lakshmi is the consort of Lord Vishnu, the sustaining aspect of this divine force, and it is in partnership with Lakshmi that Vishnu fulfills his mission to maintain life, demonstrating the fundamental importance of Lakshmi's role. Therefore, we may conclude that life exists where there is abundance and expansion, but where there is lack or contraction, life struggles to exist. Vishnu and Lakshmi working dynamically together express this notion, indicating that sustenance and prosperity are forever interconnected.

As a deity, Goddess Lakshmi is charming and graceful, emanating an aura of contentment and celebration. She sits on an immense lotus flower, a symbol of spiritual harmony, fertility and truth and has four arms depicting her many abilities. She holds lotus flowers as tokens of spiritual knowledge and a pot containing divine nectar from the heavens. Gold coins spill forth from one hand as symbols of the material wealth she bestows. Her four hands represent righteousness (dharma), desires (kama), wealth (artha), and liberation from the cycle of birth and death (moksha), as well as the four directions (east, west, north, south), showing that the Divine is omnipresent. While the fronts of her hands pertain to the physical activity we must do on earth, the backs of her hands indicate the spiritual activity we must do in order to evolve. Sometimes Lakshmi is accompanied by elephants, symbols of strength, or by an owl, a powerful image of wisdom and clairvoyance. She wears beautiful jewelry and opulent clothing, showing her love of luxurious things and reminding us to honor our bodies as temples of God.

Embodying the feminine, creative principle that rules all life, Lakshmi may ultimately be regarded as the divine mother, loving and compassionate and always ready to assist us in our endeavors. Actually Lakshmi teaches us the principles of manifestation, for when we picture what we desire and act to create it, the abundant, infinite Source responds. Lakshmi encapsulates the great lesson of co-creation, urging us to use our innate abilities to draw towards us what we need. That is why it is said in India that Lakshmi comes only upon invitation.

It is important to emphasize that Lakshmi represents not merely outer wealth but also inner wealth. In the West when we speak of prosperity we immediately think of money. However, the Hindu concept of prosperity stresses a richness of spirit as the ultimate goal. Accumulating material wealth may help us derive personal comfort and enable us to give to others, but the ultimate quest is for the wealth of the soul. This may be why in

India great emphasis is placed upon donating money for constructing temples, spiritual ashrams, schools, hospitals and orphanages. By supporting good causes, we act in alignment with dharma (right action) becoming truly wealthy and ultimately free.

Although Lakshmi may be invoked daily, October is the special month in which she is celebrated with enthusiasm on the auspicious day of Diwali, the festival of lights. At this time Lakshmi represents both material blessings and the victory of light over darkness in the universe. Fireworks are ignited in the streets and oil lamps are lit in homes and temples. People even draw tiny, symbolic footprints on the ground as an invitation for Lakshmi to visit and bestow health, wealth, happiness and spiritual prosperity.

There are many ways in which to access Lakshmi and her prosperity gifts. Gazing upon a picture of her, meditating on her attributes, or writing affirmations allow us to tap into her energies. Chanting Lakshmi mantras represents an especially empowering way to become aligned with the goddess as we allow sacred Sanskrit incantations to magically change our vibrational field, making manifestation occur more easily and effortlessly.

For both material and spiritual success we may turn to Lakshmi. With her optimistic demeanor, Goddess Lakshmi teaches us to expand our energies and embrace this plentiful world. Goddess Lakshmi is fullness personified, asking us to enjoy life and its beauty, ultimately recognizing ourselves as embodiments of the divine and powerful co-creators. Om Sri Maha Lakshmyai Namaha - Salutations to Goddess Lakshmi !

In **Hinduism**, Lakshmi or **Laxmi** (is the goddess of wealth, light, wisdom and fortune, as well as (secondarily) luck, beauty and fertility. Representations of Lakshmi (or Shri) are found in **Jain** and **Buddhist** monuments, in addition to **Hindu** temples.

In **Puranic Hinduism** Lakshmi is the Mother of the Universe and Vishnu's **Shakti**. Lakshmi is married to **Vishnu**, and also married his incarnations **Rama** (in her incarnation as **Sita**), **Krishna** (as **Rukmini**) and **Venkateshwara** (as **Alamelu**). Lakshmi has a son named **Kama**. Lakshmi may also be referred to as Narayani which is the equivalent of "The wife of **Vishnu**".

Origins

Goddess Lakshmi's origins are found in the great Sri Sukta ("Hymn to Sri") that was added to the Rig-Veda sometime between 1000 and 500 B.C.E.

In **Hindu mythology**

The birth of goddess Lakshmi is related to an ancient story. **Durvasa** the short-tempered sage once presented **Indra**, the king of the gods, with a garland of flowers which would never wilt. Indra gave this garland to his elephant, **Airavata**. Sage Durvasa saw the elephant trampling the divine garland and, short-tempered as he was, cursed Indra, for he had shown disrespect to the sage. The sage cursed Indra that he and all the gods would lose their power because it had made them so proud and vain. Due to the curse, the demons vanquished the gods out of the heavens.

The defeated gods then went to seek refuge to the Creator Lord [Brahma](#) who asked them to churn the ocean of milk, to obtain the nectar of immortality. The gods then went to Lord Vishnu, to seek his assistance. Lord Vishnu took the [Avatar Kurma](#) (Tortoise) and supported the Mandarachal mountain as a churning rod, while the king of the serpents, [Vasuki](#), became the churning rope. The gods and the demons (under the leadership of the pious and wise King [Mahabali](#)) both helped each other in churning the ocean of milk. Amongst the host of divine gifts which appeared from the ocean, goddess Lakshmi appeared and then chose Shri Vishnu as her consort, as only He had the power to control [Maya \(illusion\)](#). Because of this, Lakshmi is also called the daughter of the sea; since the moon also appeared from the ocean during the churning, the moon is called her brother. Goddess Lakshmi is incorrectly connected only with money, and the popular public perception is that she is the goddess of money. This, however, is incorrect: the holy goddess is also the goddess of prosperity, divinity and purity. She is also the goddess of Brahma-vidya (divine knowledge) and one of her names is "Vidya" - which literally means knowledge. She is the goddess of whom we ask for happiness in family, friends, marriage, children, food and wealth, beauty and health. Hence she is a very popular goddess who is worshipped by every Hindu. As she is the goddess of prosperity, she is also called as Dharidranashini (destroyer of poverty) and Dharidradvamshini (one who opposes poverty).

Names of Lakshmi

Lakshmi is also known to very closely associated with the [Lotus](#). Her many names are connected to the flower, such as:

- _ **Padmapriya**: One who likes lotus,
- _ **Padmamaladhara devi**: One who wears a garland of lotuses,
- _ **Padmamukhim**: One who is as beautiful as a lotus,
- _ **Padmakshi**: One whose eyes are as beautiful as a lotus.
- _ **Padmahastam**: One who holds a lotus
- _ **Padmasundari**: One who is as beautiful as a lotus
- _ **Bhargavi**: As an incarnation of the daughter of Sage Bhrigu

Sculpture of Lakshmi

Physically, goddess Lakshmi is described as a fair lady, with four arms, seated on a lotus, dressed in fine garments and precious jewels. She has a benign countenance, is in her full youth and yet has a motherly appearance.

The most striking feature of the iconography of Lakshmi is her persistent association with the lotus. The meaning of the lotus in relation to Shri-Lakshmi refers to purity and spiritual power. Rooted in the mud but blossoming above the water, completely uncontaminated by the mud, the lotus represents spiritual perfection and authority.

Furthermore, the lotus seat is a common motif in [Hindu iconography](#).

Hindu gods and goddesses, typically sit or stand upon a lotus, which suggests their spiritual authority. To be seated upon or to be otherwise associated with the lotus suggests that the being in question: god, human being-has transcended the limitations of the finite world (the mud of existence, as it were) and floats freely in a sphere of purity

and spirituality. Shri-Lakshmi thus suggests more than the fertilizing powers of moist soil and the mysterious powers of growth. She suggests a perfection or state of refinement that transcends the material world. She is associated not only with the royal authority but with also spiritual authority, and she combines royal and priestly powers in her presence. The lotus, and the goddess Lakshmi by association, represents the fully developed blossoming of organic life.

Goddess Lakshmi's traditionally accepted vehicle, the owl (*Ulooka* in Sanskrit), is a bird that sleeps through the day and prowls through the night. In a humorous vein it is said that owing to its lethargic and dull nature the goddess takes it for a ride! She could be attained only by those who know how to control it; how to make best use of her resources, like the Lord [Vishnu](#). But those who blindly worship her are verily the owls or *Ulookas*.

Celebration in Hindu Society

Hindus worship Lakshmi the most on [Diwali](#), the festival of lights. According to tradition people would put small candles outside their homes on Diwali and hope Lakshmi will come to bless them.

The prefix Sri (also spelt as Shri, pronounced as shree) renders as 'one who takes delight in Sri' **Lakshmi**, meaning wealth, wealth of any kind. Primarily eight kinds of wealth are established, associated with goddess Lakshmi. They are:

- 1) [The main goddess]
- 2) [Granary wealth]
- 3) [Wealth of courage]
- 4) [Elephants, symbols of wealth]
- 5) [Wealth of progeny]
- 6) [Wealth of victory]
- 7) [Wealth of knowledge]
- 8) [Monetary wealth]

Any thing that need be affluent gets the auspicious prefix or suffix 'Lakshmi', or 'Sri' like *Rajya Lakshmi* (Wealth of Empire), *Shanti Sri* (Wealth of Peace), etc. In modern [India](#), common titles standing in for the English Mr. and Mrs. are Shri (also Sri or Shree) and Shrimati (also Srimati or Shreemati), as in "Sri Gupta" or "Srimati Mangeshkar". Goddess Lakshmi is worshipped by those who wish to acquire or to preserve wealth. It is believed that Lakshmi (wealth) goes only to those houses which are clean and where the people are hardworking. She does not vist the places which are unclean/dirty or where the people are lazy.

In [Uttaranchal](#), after the worship of the goddess on [Diwali](#) night, the *Shankh* or Conch is not blown. This is because the shank is also from the ocean like the goddess herself, so it is given a day of rest.

Laxmi is the patron goddess of [Kolhapur](#) city, [Maharashtra](#).

Contrary to the popular perception, Laxmi is not the goddess of wealth. **She is the goddess of good fortune and the capable personality, the forceful ability and the manifold skills that confer the right to rule. Sri also means in another sense glory, brilliance, glow and beauty.** Wealth is just the external manifestation of these attributes. It is perhaps understandable that people should jump to the conclusion that Laxmi is the goddess of wealth, seeing as how all the illustrations show rivers of gold coins flowing out of her hand. Kubera, the Yaksha King is the God of Wealth, and so surprisingly is Ganapati. To make matters even more interesting, Laxmi, Kubera and Ganapati are all Yaksha deities absorbed into Hinduism about a thousand years ago. That is another story, to be dealt with when I cover the Yakshas.

Laxmi is actually two goddesses in one. The Yaksha deity has merged with the Vedic concept of SRI - the power of good fortune that enables a king to rule. When Sri deserted a king, he lost his physical, intellectual and even moral powers to rule, and went rapidly into decline. Sri has deserted even Indra, chief amongst the gods. Sri is that unmistakable air of authority and competence that sits upon somebody at the peak of their powers, when they are in midseason form and performing wonders. Mozart for instance was blessed with Sri all his life, his genius and superiority being unmistakable, but money was not part of the equation. Fame and acclaim, two boons of Sri Laxmi, were to be his lot as well as an enduring name. Somehow it is almost irrelevant today that he had no money. However, it is not commonly known that Laxmi has a fearsome dark side to her, a veritable Shadow of Shadows called A-Laxmi, the anti-Laxmi. This is not the mere absence or desertion by Sri, it is a real presence that brings bad luck like a perpetual hex. Fortunately this Laxmi is easily mollified - once the reasons for her appearance are understood and acknowledged. It is a brilliant concept to illustrate poverty consciousness and the lack of integrity that is punished by the universe.

Today Laxmi has become safely domesticated as the wife of Vishnu, perpetually watching over her sleeping husband in mythological carvings. There are many complaints about this situation in the regional literature of devotion. Poets afflicted with poverty, as all poets always are, loudly complain about the eternal old man who is unable to control the capricious whims of his young wife, who bestows fortune and money on the undeserving while the worthy struggle. Hence one of the epithets is Chanchala, 'the unstable'. (Not 'fickle' as is often mistakenly translated.) At a time when fortunes disappear overnight because men's expectations outrun their prudence, i.e. at any time at all in history, such complaints become common. Laxmi, therefore, has been very popular, but a little undercurrent of bitterness against her unstable nature has ensured she is worshipped in almost every home, but there is not one single major temple built in her name. The sole exception is Mahalaxmi temple in Mumbai City, the only city in India that is unapologetic about making money and more importantly believes it can be generated, not snatched from others. Mahalaxmi temple is certainly an ancient Yaksha shrine and look where it has taken the city. Mumbai city alone pays over 80% of the income tax generated in India. Not kidding!

In the earliest myths about Sri we learn that Prajapati, the Cosmic Father created her - and instantly made the other gods jealous. They proceeded to steal her qualities from her,

a list of virtues that vary in different accounts, but usually agree on these ten. Food, Kingly rule, Power that glows, Noble rank, World domination, Beauty, Plentitude, Good fortune, Physical power and Purity. It is a pretty comprehensive list and explains why there are always a group of devotees who claim supreme goddess status for her. The Sri-sukta section of the Rig-Veda praises her in extravagant terms and for the first time you have a goddess described in Kingly terms with Kingly attributes like a throne, elephants and chariots to ride on. This is almost certainly a borrowing from the extant Yaksha mythology of the time. What impresses you straight away is the constant glow or luster that the poet is never tired of referring to. She radiates power like the sun, and has the usual quota of over-ornamentation that is so beloved of Sanskrit literature. The Sri sukta is important for being the first to refer to her as a goddess who grants fertility, both animal and vegetable, again a Yaksha attribute. From that association with the soil has grown the myth of Sita, avatar of Laxmi and found in a furrow ploughed by the Sage-King Janaka. It is a perfect amalgamation of all the mythological attributes, Janaka being pre-eminent both in wisdom as well as wealth, Janaka, foremost in prestige and teacher of rishis, and surely in abundant possession of Sri, so much so that she has to be referred to as his daughter!

Sri Laxmi is by far the most popular form of god to be associated with the lotus, which is itself an integral part of the cultural consciousness of Asia. She is even called Padma or Lotus as a result. The symbolism of fertility as well as the religious overtones of the lotus have provided many commentators with endless work and speculation. The lotus is a symbol of the entire universe in creation and Sri Laxmi is the glowing lustrous heart of it. Another popular form of Laxmi is the Gaja-Laxmi, the elephant Laxmi. This means that elephants attend her, not that she is fat! Elephants are another fertility symbol, clouds with their life giving rain being the elephants of the sky, as well as symbolizing the grace and power of Kingship. A picture of Laxmi seated on a lotus, showered with sacred water by elephants around her while a river of gold issues forth from her hand or a sacred vessel may seem trite today, but there was a time when it was a powerful archetypal figure. Even today, meditating on the many layers of meaning veiled in that image is an extraordinary experience.

While poets may moan of Laxmi's peculiar conferring of favors, the scriptures are unanimous in declaring her to be the kindest goddess of all. So forgiving and compassionate is Laxmi that she protects even those who persecute her! When Hanuman wanted to kill the rakshashis who were planning to make dinner of Sita, she peremptorily ordered him to forget about it. Even if they had apologized out of fear for their worthless skins, they had asked for protection and it would not be denied. This infinite kindness is what led Sri Aurobindo to make the perceptive remark that it is best to worship the mother as Laxmi. Kali, the Black Mother, makes life too hectic and exciting for her devotees, unless you are a hardy soul with a natural bent for such things. Durga, the White Mother, is of such a terrifying dignity and superiority that it intimidates and sometimes even disheartens the worshipper. Only Laxmi, the Red Mother, is the right blend of love and power for the average devotee.

The best-known origin story of Laxmi is a curiously flat one. She emerged like another Aphrodite from the churning of the Ocean of Milk, looked around for a suitable mate, and found only Vishnu to be her equal, if not superior. She garlands him as her choice of husband. End of Story. While there is no doubt that Laxmi is now the spouse of Vishnu, her power as Sri seemed to retain this embarrassing habit of sneaking off and favoring the mortal enemies of the gods, the asuras. The explanation given is that as long as you are virtuous and deserve success because of your actions, it cannot be denied to you. You lose your Sri when you let your power and glory go to your head and act arrogant and foolishly. Laxmi has nothing to do with either situation. In the Mahabharata she is made to state, "I dwell in truth, giving gifts, austerities, vows, strength and virtue."

In the Vaishnava schools of South India, Laxmi grew to become the greatly merciful mediator between weak humanity and a justly stern Vishnu. She intervenes for the worshipper and coaxes out of Vishnu the act of prasada, the grace that saves. It is an act of love and forgiveness, not a conferring of just deserts. Were that so, many people would be in deep trouble. Sri has therefore been called karunyasima, the 'ultimate in compassion' or, more literally, 'compassion without limit'. The great poet Desika has argued the entire process is implicit in her names thus.

Sriyate: She who is resorted to

Srayate: She who resorts (to the Lord)

Srnoti: She who listens (to humans)

Sravayati: She who compels listening (from the Lord)

Srnat: She who removes (past karmas, faults et al)

Srinati: She who makes perfect

Popular worship of Laxmi is universal all over India and there are millions of little shrines, though no major temples traditionally exist as already stated. The most popular festival in her honor is the only real pan-Indian festival, Diwali - the festival of lights. The festival of Diwali is also the New Year from a religious perspective. There are a plethora of nature festivals, which are in some way or the other associated with Laxmi, especially, though not particularly, in the state of Orissa. Nobody is sure of the number, as they seem to multiply all the time. The lighted lamp to respectfully take leave of Laxmi seems to be the only common feature. The worship of Laxmi is so popular and it answers such genuine needs that it inevitably brings everybody under its spell. Even the great Adi Shankara, austere proponent of Vedanta, came under the irresistible sway of Laxmi and composed one of the best hymns in her praise. Given the realities of society, Laxmi worship will only increase. A clear indication is the remarkably strange Ashta Laxmi Koil (temple of eight Laxmis) that sprang up in 1974 in Chennai City. Here we have the eight primary manifestations of Sri and the central shrine has Vishnu and Laxmi together. Vishnu is unmistakably only the consort here! Sri Laxmi and Hinduism are amazing in their ability to mutate.