

## **SOME MAJOR HINDU FESTIVALS**

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**INTRODUCTION:** Hinduism is the contemporary word used for “Sanatana Dharma” which means Eternal Order. The joy and peace in human life is based on observance of this eternal order. In Hindu approach, an integration of spirit, mind and body is emphasized for pursuit of happiness. A festival plays very important role in Hinduism as it manifests this integration. Each Hindu festival is a joyful synthesis of spirituality, religion, philosophy, culture and social values. Each Hindu festival has mythological stories associated with it. A Hindu festival enriches and refines all aspects of human life. Festivals are to be celebrated both at home to bind the family and at temples to bind the community. In the words of Sriranga Sadguru, a yogi-seer, “The planetary positions on the day of festivals are very favorable for spiritual development and one should make use of that opportunity”. There are large number of Hindu festivals only some major festivals are noted below.

**MAKARA SANKRANRTI:** The day on which the earth starts its northward part of the rotation around the Sun. (*January*)

**SHIVARATRI:** The special worship of Lord Shiva is done all night with chants and rituals. (*February*)

**HOLI:** It is known as festival of colors. Effigies of evil are burnt in fire to signify the victory of good and colors are sprayed on family members and friends. (*March*)

**YUGAADI:** This festival marks the beginning of New Year (Samvatsara) referring to another rotation of the earth around the Sun. The celebration includes having a special bath, pooja, listening to reading of panchanga, and eating neem leaves with jaggery. The planet of that day will be the planet of the year. (*March-April*)

**RAMANAVAMI:** This is the celebration of the birth of Rama. Rama is the human incarnation of the Supreme Being. In this incarnation the ideals for humans are shown. (*April*)

**JANMASHTAMI:** This is the celebration of the birth of Lord Krishna. The young and old alike love the life of Lord Krishna. The Bhagavad-Gita is well known. (*August*)

**GANESH CHATURTI:** This is the celebration of the birth of Lord Ganesha. The clay icon of Lord Ganesha is worshipped and then immersed in water. (*September*)

**DASSARA (Navaratri):** The festival is celebrated for 10 days. In Nine nights, the goddesses Lakshmi, Durga and Saraswati are worshipped. Dolls are arranged in houses and friends and relatives visit each other. The tenth day Vijaya Dashami is auspicious to start new study or venture. The materialistic and spiritual prosperities are prayed. (*October*)

**DEEPAVALI:** This is festival of lights. The lamps are lit to show victory of the light of knowledge over darkness of ignorance and also for new beginnings. (*November*)

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