



Hindu Awareness Week
Arise. Awake.



NATIONAL HINDU
STUDENTS' FORUM (UK)

LAKSHMI

Lakshmi is the consort of Sri Vishnu and is the Goddess of fortune. Those who worship Her sincerely are said to be blessed with health wealth and prosperity.

- She is an ancient deity, mentioned in the oldest scripture the Rig Veda.
- She is said to reside in places of hard work, virtue and bravery. She is said to leave when these qualities are not apparent anymore. She is also referred to as Pranadayini (giver of vital life sustaining energy) as She can turn something dull into something blooming with life.
- She is worshipped by songs, Puja (ritual ceremonies), the chanting of Her holy names during Diwali and Navaratri, and at different times in different parts of India i.e. autumn in Bengal and after harvest in Orissa. Different communities may worship Her on a particular day of the week.
- She is depicted as a beautiful woman, standing on a lotus flower. The lotus signifies purity and spiritual power, rising above worldly contamination/ignorance. It is rooted in mud, yet blossoms beautifully above the water, uncontaminated the mud.
- **When worshipping her, we see not only her form but the virtues she stands for and the symbolism described above.**

CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

Indra offended Lakshmi by throwing a garland of flowers offered by a wise man onto the floor. She left the heavens and the world became a darker place without any blessings of success or fortune. In order to get Her back and restore order, Indra, the Devas (Gods) and Asuras (Demons), spurred on by the prospect of immortality, had to work together for many years churning the ocean.

Sri Vishnu incarnated as "Kurma", the tortoise, upon which a mountain was placed. Vasuki a great serpent was wrapped around it and used to churn the ocean. A host of divine objects came up; among these was Goddess Lakshmi, daughter of the King of the milky ocean. Finally "Amrit" the nectar of immortality came up. With this the *avatar* (incarnation) of Kurma ended and Vishnu took up the form of a beautiful maiden. He distracted the Asuras and so gave immortality to the Devas.

This story highlights the good fortune and success that Lakshmi bestows upon those who work hard and seek help sincerely. It also demonstrates that during times of success, one must never become complacent or arrogant as success has a way of slipping away.