

Hinduism

Religion



Goddess Lakshmi - The Embodiment of Beauty, the Ideal Wife Hinduism preaches about many gods. Some bring bad luck while others harbor and bestow blessings and wealth. Among Hindu gods, the concept of goddess Lakshmi is unique as it represents the ideal or the greatest woman. There is absolutely nothing wicked or impure about her. She is not only powerful and giver of fortunes, she is very beautiful and appears and heavenly dresses and colors. In Hindu religion, Goddess Lakshmi represents the highest rank and quality an ordinary wife can reach.

Sri is a Sanskrit word and a title for an honorable man or God. In the poem ' Hymn to Sri' or Sri Suktam this title is used for the goddess Lakshmi. Such is the her greatness that the kings and all other men seek help from her as she is the one praised by all the gods;

“ The one who manifests as the moons beautiful luminosity, the one celebrated by all of the gods.” (Invoking Lakshmi: Stanza 5, page 122)

Goddess Lakshmi holds a dominant position in the hierarchy of Hindu gods. She is called many things such as; the sacred fire, the golden one, the one garlanded in silver and gold, are some of her attributes. Her arrival means good news for the people and her procession brings good luck and happiness for them. When the goddess approaches the poet it brings them comfort. Her sacred fire looks fierce but it glistens like smooth cool water. She herself is very content and also bestows contentment on her people. She is also the protector of people; the poor seek refuge in her presence. Her arrival is glorified in the original Sanskrit poems so much so that it appears that the concept of happiness and comfort is her creation. The poem tells that worldly pleasures like gold, cattle, horses and even loyal friends become the destiny

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of her followers when she arrives. It is as if when the goddess gives attention to the one invoking her she bestows contentment, love, satisfaction and worldly pleasures onto that person;

" Upon whose arrival I shall be blessed
with abundant gold, cattle, attendants, horses,
and loyal friends." (Invoking Lakshmi: Stanza 15, p. 123)

Be it the common people or the king, everyone bows before the goddess Lakshmi and seeks her help. The poem praises her beauty and calls her the ' sun brilliant'. The poem says that through her austerity the bilva tree springs up and gives fruits that has the power to dispel Alakshmi (the goddess of misfortune). Later the poem also asks the goddess to bestow fame and give wish fulfilling jewel. The fame and fortune is also in her powers to bestow upon the common people. Goddess Lakshmi does not only provide worldly pleasures and wealth. She also gives the peace of mind, the pleasure and the truthfulness in speech. When goddess Lakshmi's daughter, Kardama, dwells in a person it will make Lakshmi dwell in his home. The Lotus garlanded Shri is also her title. Lotus is considered a very beautiful flower in Indian culture and mythology. Lakshmi represents absolute purity and beauty.

From the poem it is evident that the believers of Hinduism want gods and goddesses to inhabit someones home for prosperity and protection. Many times the poem wishes and prays that the goddess Lakshmi would come in and stay in his home. This pure desire is so strong that the poem asks Lakshmi's daughter to convince her mother to come and inhabit the place. Dwelling in house might also represent the quality of an ideal wife. Shri-Lakshmi is the model wife.

Reference

Constantina Rhodes. Invoking Lakshmi: the goddess of wealth in song and ceremony. State University of New York press. 2010. Print.