

Hindu Temple and Cultural Society of USA Inc.
Sri Venkateswara Temple (Balaji Mandir) and Community Center
1075 Route 202/206, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807
(908)725-4477

<http://www.venkateswara.org/>

Maha Sivaratri

Maha Sivaratri is one of the most important Hindu festivals. Maha Sivaratri is celebrated on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight (Krishna Paksha) of Magha month. (The religious events that take place for Lord Siva every month on this day is called Masa Sivaratri). As is evident from the name, this festival is celebrated to honor Lord Siva. One legend says that Lord Siva married Goddess Parvati on this auspicious day. It is also said that this is the night when Lord Siva performed the Tandava dance of primordial creation, preservation and dissolution.

Maha Sivaratri being a moonless night, people worship the God who has the crescent moon as an adornment in his head, The Siva. Part of Maha Sivaratri celebrations include fasting and chanting bhajans in honor of Lord Siva. He who utters the names of Siva during Sivaratri with perfect devotion and concentration is freed from all sins.

During Maha Sivaratri our Temple is open whole day and night. The day starts with Maha Ganapati Homam and Rudra Homam. Morning celebrations also include Sri Siva abhishekam and Parvati Abhishekam. Starting early in the evening abhishekams are performed to Lord Siva, The Siva Linga (an universal form of Lord Siva), in four phases at different time intervals. First abhishekam is performed following Mahanyasa Parayanam (Chanting to invoke Lord Siva in us). Rudra Trisati nama archana (300 names of Lord Siva which are extracted from Sri Rudram) is performed after the first Abhishekam. Bilva (bilva leaves) ashtottara satanama archana is performed after the second abhishekam. Phase three abhishekam covers Siva Sahasranama archana (1000 names of Lord Siva). Nandeeswara (Bull, the divine vehicle of Lord Siva) abhishekam, Siva Ashtottara Satanama Archana and Lalita Sahasranama archana form part of the fourth phase. Following each abhishekam, special alankarams are made for Lord Siva during which time devotees sing Bhajans in praise of Lord Siva. Harati, Mantrapushpam and Prasadam are offered at the conclusion of each abhishekam.

May the Blessings of Lord Sri Venkateswara and Sri Mahalakshmi be with you and your family.

HTCS