



All across the world Shree Ram Navami is celebrated as the appearance of Lord Ram, one of the most familiar and loved deities in the Hindu Religion.

Lord Ram is known as the seventh incarnation of Vishnu Bhagwan and was born to Raja Dasharatha and Queen Kausalya of Ayodhya.

Ram Navami festival falls in the Shukla Paksha on the Navami, the ninth day of the month of Chaitra according to the Hindu calendar.

The nine days leading up to Ram Navami are days of fasting and prayer for the devout, and the day of the festival itself is marked by pujas and satsangs and is dedicated to Durga Maa

The period is also known as Shri Rama Navratra and Shree Ram Navami is a major festival for Lord Ram's worshippers.

Dasharath, the King of Ayodhya, had three wives, Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi, but did not have any children.

During this time Ravan was the King of Lanka, and he had acquired great power because he had obtained from Brahma Jee, the boon that he would never die at the hands of Gods, or Gandharvas, or Yakshas (demigods) or Demons.

As he was not afraid of men he did not care to include men in the list of his potential slayers.

So Brahmadev declared that Ravan would die at the hands of a man. Then the Devtas went to Vishnu Bhagwan with the request, "Dasarath is a glorious king. Please, take birth in the wombs of his three queens in four different degrees of your divinity."

Simultaneously King Dashrath was very worried as he had no children to take over his Kingdom. After consultation with his Family priest Vashistha Muni He was then led by Maharshi Rudhya Shringa Muni into a Yagya named the Puthra Kamesti Yagna.

As a consequence Yagneshwar appeared and gave Dashrath a vessel of kheer that he was to give his wives.

The result was all three wives had sons. Ram was born to Kausalaya. Bharat was born to Kaikeyi and Laxman and Shatrugan were born to Sumitra as twins.

The purpose of Ram's birth was to protect his devotees and destroy the Asura named Ravan who was causing all kinds of problems wherever he went or sent his emissaries.

The celebrations on Ram Navami festival begins early morning by praying to the Sun.

It is also considered auspicious to undertake a fast on this day. The more religious ones fast for all nine days preceding the day of Rama Navami.

The fast is kept to seek perfection as a human being and is considered as an exercise to build up will power and self-discipline.

Although this festival is celebrated everywhere in India, there are two cities- Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh and Pondicherry which are especially renowned for their Ram Navami celebrations.

Both these places are mentioned in the Ramayana with Ayodhya being the place where Lord Ram was born. Pondicherry is famous for its Ram Naumi Celebrations as during the festival resplendently decorated Rath Yatras are carried through the town.

The main attraction of these processions are lavishly decorated chariots carrying four people dressed up as Lord Ram, his wife Sita, brother Laxman, and his disciple Hanuman.

The chariot is followed by many other people dressed up as King Ram's soldiers. These rath yatras take place all over north India and continue for two days, accompanied by much fanfare and rejoicing.

During the processions participants sing religious songs and praise the happy days of Ram's reign.

Other sacred places like Ujjain and Rameshwaram also draw thousands of devotees from all over the country. People visit Rameshwaram to take a ritual bath in the sea before paying homage at the Ramanatha Swamy Mandir. Ujjain is home to one of the Kumbh Melas

Fairs are hosted in various places in north India in connection with this festival that end in spectacular fireworks on Rama Navami.

Though Rama Navami is a major festival for Vaishnavites, it is widely celebrated by worshippers of Shiva, too.

It is believed that listening to the story of Rama cleanses the soul. Meditating on the noble Rama and chanting his name is believed to ease the pains of life and lead one to moksha, or liberation.

Happy Ram Naumi and Jai Shree Ram