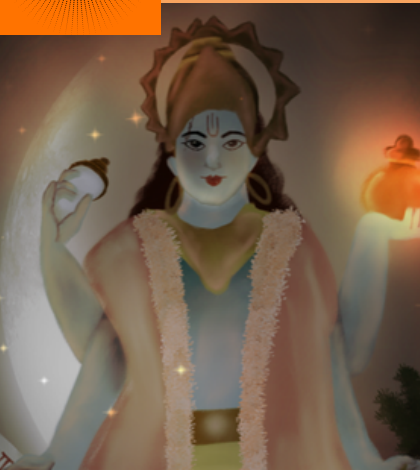


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DHANVANTARI

DEVA OF MEDICINE AND A MEMBER OF
DASHAVATAR





LORD DHANVANTARI IS SAID TO BE THE UNIVERSE'S AND THE GODS' PHYSICIAN IN THE ANCIENT HINDU SCRIPTURES.

THE DEVATAS AND ASURAS SOUGHT AFTER AMRIT, THE CELESTIAL ELIXIR AND ANTIDOTE TO DEATH, WHICH WOULD GRANT THEM IMMORTALITY, WHEN THE UNIVERSE WAS FIRST CREATED. ONLY CHURNING THE OCEAN COULD PRODUCE AMRIT. AS A RESULT, THE DEVATAS AND ASURAS WORKED TOGETHER TO STIR THE WATER. THE HUNDRED-HEADED SERPENT VASUKI SERVED AS THE CHURNING ROPE, AND MOUNT MADURA SERVED AS THE CHURNING POLE. THEY PULLED THE SERPENT BACK AND FORTH, SPLASHING THE WATER AS THEY WENT AROUND THE MOUNTAIN. AS THEY STIRRED THE OCEAN, IT BEGAN TO FOAM AND BUBBLE.



FOR A MILLENNIUM, THE CHURNING WENT ON WITHOUT ANY RESULTS. THE DEVAS AND ASURAS NEVER GAVE UP AND CONTINUED TO STIR. THEIR EFFORTS AT LAST PAID OFF.

ONE DAY THE WISH-FULFILLING COW KAMADHENU EMERGED FROM THE OCEAN. THEY WERE ECSTATIC WHEN IT SHOWED UP AND BEGAN CHURNING THE OCEAN WITH CONSIDERABLY MORE VIGOR. THE OCEAN GRADUALLY GAVE BIRTH TO A NUMBER OF CELESTIAL BEINGS, INCLUDING SHRI LAXMI, THE GODDESS OF WEALTH, WHO, AFTER BEING WORSHIPPED BY ALL THE GODS, DEMIGODS, ASURAS, AND EVERYONE ELSE PRESENT, WAS UNITED WITH HER HUSBAND LORD VISHNU.



OTHER CELESTIAL BEINGS AND OBJECTS INCLUDE UCCHAISSRAVA (THE WHITE HORSE), AIRAVATA (THE WHITE ELEPHANT)

SHRI LAXMI



UCCHAISRAVA



AIRAVATA



**KAUSTUBHAMANI (A RARE
DIAMOND), KALPAVRIKSHA**

LORD DHANYANTARI AT LONG LAST APPEARED. YOUNG AND POWERFULLY BUILT, HE WAS. HIS SKIN WAS BLUE BLACK, AND HE HAD A VERY WIDE CHEST. HE MOVED LIKE A LION, HAD POWERFUL ARMS, AND CRIMSON EYES. HE WAS DRESSED IN A VIVID YELLOW OUTFIT, HAD OIL APPLIED TO HIS CURLY HAIR, AND WAS SPORTING GLEAMING PEARL EARRINGS. HE CAME OUT WITH A CONCH, LEECHES, MEDICINAL HERBS, A CHAKRA (ONE OF LORD VISHNU'S HEAVENLY WEAPONS), AND A JAR OF AMRIT, THE CELESTIAL NECTAR.



TO CHOOSE WHO WOULD CONSUME THE AMRIT FIRST, THE ASURAS BEGAN FIGHTING OVER THE POT THAT CONTAINED IT. TO RESCUE AMRIT FROM THE ASURAS, LORD VISHNU ASSUMED THE FORM OF MOHINI, A STUNNING WOMAN WHO MESMERIZED THEM. NOTHING WAS LEFT FOR THE ASURAS WHEN LORD VISHNU SERVED AMRIT TO ALL THE GODS AND DEVATAS. THE ASURAS, WHO BATTLED WITH THE DEVAS IN AGONY, WERE ULTIMATELY VICTORIOUS.



LORD VISHNU INFORMED THE DEVAS THAT LORD DHANVANTARI WILL MAKE ANOTHER APPEARANCE IN THE GLOBE TO IMPART THE SCIENCE OF AYURVEDA TO THE HUMAN SPECIES. LORD VISHNU FORETOLD THAT LORD DHANVANTARI WILL BE BORN ON THIS PLANET. IN THE HOPES THAT LORD DHANVANTARI WOULD BE PLEASED WITH HIM AND GIVE HIM A SON, KING DIRGHATAMAS OF KASHI (BENARES) UNDERWENT STRICT PENANCE. DIRGHATAMAS REQUESTED THAT LORD DHANVANTARI BE BORN AS HIS OWN SON AFTER THE LORD ARRIVED AND GRANTED THE MONARCH A GIFT. HE RECEIVED HIS WISH FROM THE LORD. SOON AFTER THAT, LORD DHANVANTARI WAS BORN INTO KASHI'S ROYAL FAMILY AND GREW UP TO BECOME THE MONARCH.

HE DISPLAYED GREAT AUSTERITIES, WAS EXCEEDINGLY DISCIPLINED, AND HAD ASCETIC TENDENCIES EVEN AS A YOUNG CHILD. THE SAGES AND RISHIS (SEERS) WHO WERE HIS PUPILS RECEIVED ORAL INSTRUCTION IN AYURVEDA. THE AGNI PURANA HAS A CHRONICLE OF HIS TEACHINGS, ALONG WITH THOSE OF HIS FOLLOWERS SUSRUTA, PAUSKALAVATA, AURABHA, VAITARANA, AND OTHERS. DHANVANTARI JAYANTI IS A HOLIDAY HONORING THE BIRTHDATE OF LORD DHANVANTARI. EVERY YEAR, IT OCCURS TWO DAYS BEFORE DIWALI, THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, ON DHANTERAS. A DIYA (LIGHT) IS LIT AT THE FRONT DOOR OF THE HOUSE ON THIS DAY TO WELCOME LORD DHANVANTARI AND WISH HIM GOOD HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.

LORD DHANVANTARI IS CREDITED WITH SPREADING AYURVEDA. THE BIBLE STATES THAT EVERYONE WHO PRAYS TO LORD DHANVANTARI WILL BE HEALED OF ALL ILLNESSES. IN INDIA, LORD DHANVANTARI IS REVERED AS THE GOD OF MEDICINE.