

## calendar

The difference between a Solar year and a Lunar Year is about 10.896 days per year. Thus in about three years, the Lunar calendar will trail behind the Solar calendar by about a month. Thus an intercalary month occurs every 32 to 33 months to bridge the gap. In 2010, the Intercalary month (Adikamasa) operates during the Solar month of Mesha (April – May), when we come across two New Moon days in a single Solar month. There are actually 26 Ekadashis in 2010.

# MALA MASAM AND ADHIKA MASAM

## Principles underlying Intercalary months.

By Dr. E. S. Neelakantan

**T**HE word “Mala” means “Unclean”, “Contaminated”, “Fit to be rejected”. The word “Adhika” means “excess”, “superfluous”. So what do we mean by Adhikamasa or Malamasa? Are they good or evil, auspicious or inauspicious? How do they arise? Some of these crucial issues we will discuss in this dissertation.

We know that the two luminaries are the Sun and the Moon – the former emanates both light and heat, while the latter reflects the light from the Sun, thereby giving the appearance of a luminary. The scientific basis of Hindus is borne out of the fact that it attempts to fuse calendar with the movements of luminaries. Adhika-masa and Mala-masa bear ample testimony to the scientific approach towards calendar-making in ancient India.

### Definitions:

- Adhika-masa — This refers to a Solar month in which two New Moons occur.
- Mala-masa — This refers to a Solar Month in which two Full Moons occur.

### Kshayamasa

This refers to a Solar month, in which there is no New Moon. In other words, this refers to a phenomenon, where there are two Solar Ingresses in a Lunar Month. To explain this in a more lucid manner, this is a lunar month in which the Solar Ingress takes place after the New Moon and before the next New Moon day, another Solar Ingress would have taken place.

### Principles underlying Intercalary Months:

#### Solar Month

Before we venture to discuss this topic, we need to know what exactly is a Solar Month and how it differs from a Lunar Month. The (apparent) movement of the Sun into Capricorn is called Sankaranthi. This is what is celebrated in Tamilnadu as “Pongal” and the same is celebrated in different ways in different parts of the Country. The Annual sojourn of the Sun around the zodiac takes place in 12 months. The first six months is called Uttarayana and the rest is called Dakshinayana. According to Surya Siddhanta, length of the Solar Year is 365 days, 6 hours and 13 minutes.

#### Lunar Month

A Lunar month corresponds to a period of 29 days, 12 hours and 44 minutes. Hence 12 Lunar Months equals 354 days, 9 hours. Thus the difference between a Solar year and a Lunar Year is about 10.896 days per year. Thus in about three years, the Lunar calendar will trail behind the Solar calendar by about a month. Thus an intercalary month occurs every 32 to 33 months to bridge the gap. Lunar Months are two types.

Amantha - Ending on a New Moon Day

Pournimantha - Ending on a Full Moon Day.

Amantha is common, while Pournimantha is followed in some parts of India. For Adhikamasa calculations only Amantha is taken into consideration.

#### Mathematical Adjustments.

- 1) For 423 Solar months, there will be 436 Lunar months, resulting in an excess of 13 months.
- 2) For 1920 Solar months as per normal rules, we will get 60 Lunar months as Adhika-masa; whereas we need only 59.
- 3) To suppress this excess of one month, Kshayamasa is introduced.

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## MALA MASAM AND ADHIKA MASAM

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### Legends:

In India, all spiritual traditions bear a very close nexus with movements of heavenly bodies. The legend goes that Mala-masa approached Lord Krishna and complained that all despise and condemn him, since they cannot carry on any auspicious activity. "So I surrender to you and take shelter. What should I do?" - This was the petition of Mala-masa to Sri Krishna.

Sri Krishna's famous comment on surrender is worthy of recollection here. "Abandon all Dharmas, seek refuge in me alone; I shall liberate you from all sins; grieve not" (*Bhagavad Gita 18/66*) The same assurance which he gave to Arjuna, he invoked in the case of Mala-masa also.

Sri Krishna said "I will myself

become the presiding deity of this month. From now on, Mala-Masa will be known as "Purushothama Masa" The Purushothama Masa Vrata (vow) is almost similar to Kartika Vrata. For those, who observe this vow, all desires will be fulfilled.

In 2010, the Intercalary month (*Adikamasa*) operates during the Solar month of Aries, i.e. 14 April to 14 May 2010, where we come across two New Moon days in a single Solar month. Therefore by the principles discussed above this becomes an Adhikamasa. (*There are actually 26 Ekadashis in 2010.*)

### Antidote for Adhika Masa Dosh

- 1) Jupiter should be in Sagittarius, Pisces or Cancer, without being combust.
- 2) Sun should be in its Northern

Course (*Uttarayana*)

- 3) Sun should be in Friends' house, Own house or Exaltation.

When all the three conditions above are cumulatively satisfied, Adhika Masa dosha gets cancelled.

### Brahmotsava and Adhika Masa

Year after year, the Brahmotsava of Lord Venkateswara is celebrated with increasing fanfare and gaiety. This started in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and once in three years, the Navarathri Brahmotsava is conducted, in view of Adhikamasa. Time of Brahmotsava is when Sun enters Virgo (*from Aswayuja Shudda Padyami to Aswayuja Shudda Dasami*) during September / October. The festival is originally supposed to have been celebrated by Lord Brahma himself.