



Yoga Mythology: Lakshmi

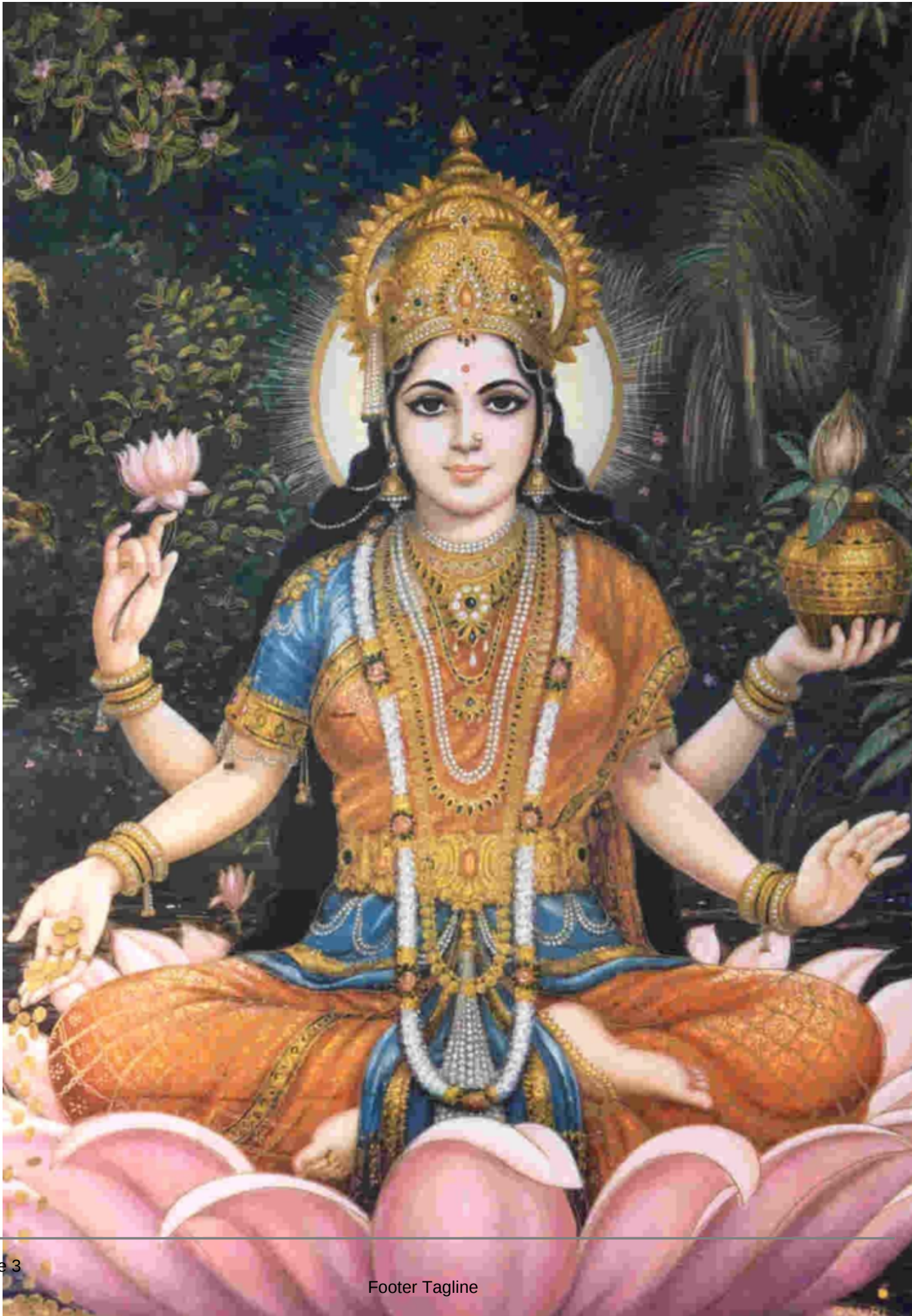
Description

Questions Answered Here



1. What are the primary qualities associated with Goddess Lakshmi?
2. What other qualities does she represent?
3. Where does Lakshmi reside?
4. Describe the popular story of her re-birth.
5. Describe her appearance and its symbolism.
6. What yoga practices might you utilize to support a focus on Goddess Lakshmi?

Goddess of Prosperity & Abundance



Qualities

Some of the qualities that Lakshmi is associated with include:

- Abundance
- Prosperity
- Worldly & Spiritual Success
- Harmony
- Happiness
- Beauty
- Love
- Good Luck & Fortune
- Kindness

Key Points

- Associated with abundance and prosperity, Lakshmi is known for bestowing both worldly and spiritual blessings.
- She is the consort and active energy of Lord Vishnu (The Preserver).
- She is said to reside in the Anahata (Heart) Chakra.
- She is also known as Shri or Padma.
- A popular story tells of her re-birth with the Churning of the Milky Ocean.
- It is said that she will not support those displaying laziness or trying exploit her in selfishness.

Going Deeper

MOST SOUGHT-AFTER

Of all the Goddesses in the yoga tradition, Lakshmi, the Goddess of love and good fortune, is perhaps the most sought-after throughout the world. She is called upon for harmony in relationships, wealth, beauty, power, fame, royalty, recognition, and regal grace. That is Lakshmi's domain and yet she is so much more. She is the divine inner spark, the radiant power of grace, and the ocean of abundance within every single person. One of the most concise ways to describe Lakshmi is in Sanskrit: bhukti-mukti pradayini, or "she who bestows both worldly success and spiritual liberation." • Sianna Sherman

DYNAMIC ENERGY OF LORD VISHNU

Mata Lakshmi is the dynamic energy of Lord Vishnu. She bestows one with wealth, prosperity, luxury and abundance. She is believed to relieve all sorrows caused by dearth of money. She is worshiped by different names: Padma, Kamala, Vishnupriya, Kalyani, Vaishnavi, etc. She is shown as having four hands representing the four goals of a man's life: Dharma (Righteousness and Duty), Artha (Wealth and Prosperity), Kama (Worldly Desires) and Moksha (Salvation). She carries a lotus in her hand signifying beauty and consciousness. Her palms are always open; sometimes coins are seen pouring from them signifying she is the giver of wealth and prosperity. • Vedic Rishi



DOES NOT SUPPORT LAZINESS OR SELFISHNESS

Lakshmi is the goddess of light, beauty, good fortune and wealth. Being the consort of Vishnu, the preserving principle, Lakshmi also signifies love and grace. Lakshmi often expresses her devotion to Vishnu by massaging his feet as he lies on the coils of the snake Shesha. While Lakshmi is generally worshiped to achieve success, she does not reside long with anyone who is lazy or desires her only as wealth. â?? Sanatan Society

WITHOUT HER, WEâ??RE IMPOVERISHED

All the goddesses confer power. Shakti, after all, is power. The fierce goddesses offer us the power to fight our battlesâ??the inner ones and the outer ones. The wisdom goddesses give us inspiration and insight and the skill of speech. Lakshmi and her queenly sister goddess Tripura Sundari embody the skills of successâ??worldly and spiritual. They also carry the inner qualities that make life lovely: love, harmony, kindness. When we have Lakshmi, the old mythic texts tell us, we have everything, inner and outer, for a beautiful life. Without her? Well, without her weâ??re impoverished, both inwardly and outwardly. Without her, the world is a desert. â?? Sally Kempton

SHRI: CUSHION REPRESENTING KUNDALINI SHAKTI

The oldest references simply refer to Lakshmi as Shri (Shree). In early Vedic hymns, Shri is she who bestows capability, power, and skillful means that manifest as beauty, luster, glory and high rank. The later writings such as the Lakshmi Tantra refer to Shri as the ruling power, dominion, and majesty of kings and queens. In some texts, Shri is referred to as a cushion upon which the royal ones sit. Those who are schooled in Eastern mysticism will recognize immediately that this cushion represents the kundalini shakti residing at the base of the spine in us all. In this context, to sit upon her cushion means to rest upon the power that she can and will provide, if only we know how to invoke or activate it. â?? Thomas Ashley-Farrand

THE CHURNING OF THE MILKY OCEAN

One of the most compelling stories in Hindu mythology is that of the Churning of the Milky Ocean. It is the story of the gods versus the demons and their fight to gain immortality. It also tells of the rebirth of Lakshmi. [In an act of arrogance,] Indra, the warrior godâ?| upset Lakshmi, who left the world of the gods and entered into the Milky Ocean. Without her, the gods were no longer blessed with success or fortune. The world became darker, people became greedy, and no offerings were made to the gods. The gods began to lose their power and the *asuras* (demons) took control. Indra asked Vishnu what should be done. He told Indra that the gods would need to churn the Milky Ocean to regain Lakshmi and her blessingsâ?| The story of the Churning of the Ocean tells of how the gods worked together to churn the ocean. [Most versions of this story include both the gods and demons working together to churn the ocean.] They churned for many years, but it was 1,000 years before anything rose to the surface. Finally, the treasures began to rise to the surface. Among them, a beautiful woman standing on a lotus flower. This was Lakshmi, who had returned to the world. With her presence, the gods eventually defeated the demons and chased them out of the world. This story highlights the good fortune and success that Lakshmi bestows upon those who work hard and seek help sincerely. It also demonstrates that during times of success, one must never become complacent or arrogant, as success has a way of getting away from people. â?? BBC.co.UK



GODDESS OF THE HOUSEHOLD

For most Hindu families today, Lakshmi is the goddess of the household. The scriptures describe her as the goddess of prosperity, splendor, luminosity and fortune. Her auspicious nature and reputation for granting fertility, good fortune, wealth and well-being attract devotees in every Indian village. Lakshmi is also commonly associated with kings, and in this connection is known as Raja Lakshmi, or royal opulence. She never leaves Vishnu. It is therefore said that no one trying to exploit her for selfish ends will ever succeed. Krishna Dharma

A FAVORITE OF WOMEN

Goddess Lakshmi means Good Luck to Hindus. The word Lakshmi is derived from the Sanskrit word Lakshya, meaning aim or goal. Lakshmi is the household goddess of most Hindu families, and a favorite of women. Although she is worshiped daily, the festive month of October is Lakshmi's special month. Lakshmi Puja is celebrated on the full moon night of Kojagari Purnima. hinduism.about.comshmi

Appearance & Symbolism



Lotus Bud

- Bud: Purity, fertility and beauty
- Lotus: While living in the world, enjoy its wealth without being obsessed with it

Four Arms

- Represent the four great aims of life described in the Vedas, dharma (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (pleasure) and moksha (liberation)
- Or, the four directions thus symbolizing omnipresence
- Front hands represent activity in the material world and the back hands represent spiritual activities



Gold Coins

- Associated with wealth

Open Hand

- Bestowing blessings

Red & Gold Clothes

- Red color symbolizing activity
- Gold color representing the prosperity that arises as a result

Two (or Four) Elephants Spraying Water

- Denotes that ceaseless effort (represented by spraying water), in accordance with one's dharma and governed by wisdom and purity, leads to both material and spiritual prosperity
- When there are two elephants, said to represent that we should not earn wealth for fame or materialistic desire only, but to share with others
- If four elephants, they represent the four desires noted above (under Four Arms)

Sources

- Beauty, Power and Grace: The Book of Hindu Goddesses
- about.com
- Kashmir Overseas Association,

Mudras



- One option might be to simply face palms upward, hands softly open in a gesture of openness, giving and receiving.
- Or, a hand [mudra](#) that can honor Goddess Lakshmi and/or the themes associated with her is the Padma Mudra.

Padma Mudra

- Lotus Mudra or Lotus Flower Mudra
- Also called Pakajmudra
- Common in Hindu, yoga, Tantric and dance, Padma Mudra is one of the 32 traditional Gayatri Mudras
- Associated with [Anahata \(Heart\) Chakra](#) and is a symbol for purity
- Said to settle the mind, increase concentration, help with meditation, ignite spiritual devotion, and help with depressive and lonely feelings

Instructions

1. Take hands in front of heart center.



2. Join heels of palms; spread fingers out and up, keeping them straight.
3. Create space between palms.
4. Pinkies and thumbs may touch or stay slightly apart.
5. In comfortable seated position, soften chest and belly; breathe slowly and smoothly.
6. Softly gaze into center of lotus flower made with hands.
7. â??Discard all contrivance and release all ambitions that are not in harmony with your â??heart of hearts.â?? Do this with honesty within yourself. Resolve to make your life an offering for the benefit of all beings. Stay with this feeling!â?• (Cain and Revital Carroll)
8. Another option: Maintain mudra for 4 breaths, then close fingers together into a lotus bud for 4 breaths and then open again. Repeat.

Sources

- Advait, Mudras: 25 Ultimate Techniques for Self-Healing mudra #22
- Cain Carroll and Revital Carroll, Mudras of India
- Hirschi, Gertrud, Mudras: Yoga in Your Hands

Affirmations & Visualizations



Affirmations



Consider an [affirmation](#) such as one of these.

As my breath moves in and out, I am energized with love.

I am open to love.

I am open to love again.

I open myself to nature.

I open to the good that exists in every being.

I open myself fully to life.

I open my heart fully to living.

I open myself to the Divine.

I am blessed.

I give my love unconditionally.

This is it. Love has arrived.

I live in harmony with all Beings.

I am open to new ideas.

I am open to life again.

Visualizations

FLOWER IN YOUR HEART

Imagine the bud of a lotus flower (or a water lily) in your heart. With every inhale, the flower opens a bit more, until it finally is completely open and can absorb the full sunlight into itself. It lets itself be filled with light, lightness, warmth, love, desire, and joy. â?? Gertrud Hirschi

SUNRISE OF YOUR HEART

True wealth is generosity of heart. At the beginning of your day, go outside and turn your face to the morning sun. Ask for the sunrise of your heart to illuminate your inner vision and guide your every thought, word, and action. Try this practice: Visualize a lotus opening in the center of your heart with the Goddess Lakshmi seated on it in total radiance. â?? Sianna Sherman

Mantras & Chanting



Om Shantiyei Namaha

(ohm shahn-tee-yea nahm-ah-hah)

Om and salutations to She who is the giver of peace. (Thomas Ashley-Farrand)

Om Shrim Maha Lakshmiyea Namaha*

(ohm shreem mah-hah lahk-shmee-yea nam-mah-hah)

Om Shrim Maha Lakshmiyei Swaha*

(ohm shreem mah-hah lahk-shmee-yea nam-mah-swah-hah)



Om Salutations to She who is that Great Abundance we salute and invoke. Om (Thomas Ashley-Farrand)

Om, I offer salutations to the great goddess of good fortune. Om (Sally Kempton)

**Ashley-Farrand notes that the mantra ending in Om namaha Om is for those over age 29 and the one ending in Om swaha Om is for ages 29 and younger. Kempton and many authors simply note the first.*

To Listen

- [Om Shrim Maha Lakshmiyei Namaha](#) by Deva Premal
- [Om Shrim Maha Lakshmiyei Namaha](#) kirtan
- [Om Shrim Maha Lakshmiyei Namaha](#) another rendition

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