Vijayadasami (IAST: Vijayadaśamī) also known as Dasara, Dusshera or dussehra is a major Hindu festival celebrated at the end of Navratri every year. It is observed on the tenth day in the Hindu calendar month of Ashvin, the seventh month of the Hindu Luni-Solar Calendar, which typically falls in the Gregorian months of September and October. Vijayadasami is observed for different reasons and celebrated differently in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. In the eastern and northeastern states of India, Vijayadasami marks the end of Durga Puja, remembering goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura to help restore Dharma. In the northern, southern and western states, the festival is synonymously called Dassehra (also spelled Dasara, Dashahara). In these regions, it marks the end of “Ramlila” and remembers God Rama’s victory over the demon Ravana, or alternatively it marks a reverence for one of the aspects of goddess Devi such as Durga or Saraswati.

Vijayadashami celebrations include processions to a river or ocean front that carry clay statues of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesha and Kartikeya, accompanied by music and chants, after which the images are immersed into the water for dissolution and a goodbye. Elsewhere, on Dasara, the towering effigies of Ravana symbolizing the evil are burnt with fireworks marking evil's destruction. The festival also starts the preparation for one of the most important and widely celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights, which is celebrated twenty days after the Vijayadashami.

Vijayadashami (Devanagari: विजयादशमी) (Kannada: ಭಕ್ತಿ ಶಿವು) (Telugu: విజయాదశమి) is a composite of two words "Vijaya" and "Dashami" (Dasham), which respectively mean "victory" and "tenth", connoting the festival on the tenth day celebrating the victory of good over evil. The same Hindu festival-related term, however, takes different forms in different regions of India and Nepal, as well as among Hindu minorities found elsewhere.

According to James Lochtefeld, the word Dussehra (Devanagari: दुस्सहरा) (Kannada: ದುಳ್ಳಾಹರ) is a variant of Dashahara which is a compound Sanskrit word composed of "dasham"(dasham) and "ahar" (ahar), respectively meaning “10” and “day”. According to Monier Williams, Dus (दुस) means "bad, evil, sinful", and Hara (हरा) means "removing, destroying", connoting "removing the bad, destroying the evil, sinful". 

**Etymology and nomenclature**

Vijayadashami is observed for different reasons and celebrated differently in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. In the eastern and northeastern states of India, Vijayadasami marks the end of Durga Puja, remembering goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura to help restore Dharma. In the northern, southern and western states, the festival is synonymously called Dassehra (also spelled Dasara, Dashahara). In these regions, it marks the end of “Ramlila” and remembers God Rama's victory over the demon Ravana, or alternatively it marks a reverence for one of the aspects of goddess Devi such as Durga or Saraswati.

**Also called** Dussehra, Dasara, Navratri

**Observed by** Hindus

**Type** Religious, cultural

**Significance** Celebrates the victory of good over evil

**Celebrations** Marks the end of Durga Puja or Ramlila

**Observances** pandles (stages), plays, community gathering, recitation of scriptures, immersion of Durga or burning of Ravana

**Date** Ashvin (September or October)

**2017 date** 30 Sep, Sat

**2018 date** 1 October, Thu

Part of a series on Hinduism

Concepts
Dasara is observed with the burning of Ravana effigies.

In most of northern and western India, Dasha-Hara (literally, "ten days") is celebrated in honour of Rama. Thousands of drama-dance-music plays based on the *Ramayana* and *Ramcharitmanas* (*Ramlila*) are performed at outdoor fairs across the land and in temporarily built staging grounds featuring effigies of the demons Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Meghanada. The effigies are burnt on bonfires in the evening of Vijayadashami-Dussehra. While Dussehra is observed on the same day across India, the festivities leading to it vary. In many places, the "Rama Lila", or the brief version of the story of Rama, Sita and Lakshamana, is enacted over the 9 days before it, but in some cities such as Varanasi the entire story is freely acted out by performance-artists before the public every evening for a month.

The performance arts tradition during the Dussehra festival was inscribed by UNESCO as one of the "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" in 2008. The festivities, states UNESCO, include songs, narration, recital and dialogue based on the Hindu text *Ramcharitmanas* by Tulsidas. It is celebrated across northern India for dussehra, but particularly in historically important Hindu cities of Ayodhya, Varanasi, Vrindavan, Almora and Madhubani – cities in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The festival and dramatic enactment of the virtues versus vices filled story is organized by communities in hundreds of small villages and towns, attracting a mix of audiences from different social, gender and economic backgrounds. In many parts of India, the audience and villagers join in and participate spontaneously, some helping the artists, others helping with stage setup, make-up, effigies and lights. These arts come to a close on the night of Dussehra, when the victory of Rama is celebrated by burning the effigies of evil, Ravana and his colleagues.
### Himachal Pradesh

**Main article: Kullu Dussehra**

Kullu Dussehra is celebrated in the Kullu valley of Himachal Pradesh, and is regionally notable for its large fair and parade witnessed by estimated half a million people. The festival is a symbol of victory of good over evil by Raghu Nath, and is celebrated like elsewhere in the Indian subcontinent with a procession. The special feature of the Kullu Dasara procession is the arrival of floats containing deities from different parts of the nearby regions and their journey to Kullu. [20]

### Southern India

Vijayadasami is celebrated in a variety of ways in South India. Celebrations range from worshipping Durga, lighting up temples and major forts such as at Mysore, to displaying colorful figurines, known as a golu.

The festival played a historical role in the 14th-century Vijayanagara Empire, where it was called Mahanavami. The Italian traveller Niccolò de' Conti described the festival's intensity and importance as a grandeur religious and martial event with royal support. The event revered Durga as the warrior goddess (some texts refer to her as Chamundeshwari). The celebrations hosted athletic competitions, singing and dancing, fireworks, a pageantry military parade and charitable giving to the public. [23][24]

The city of Mysore has traditionally been a major center of Dasara-Vijayadashami celebrations. [23]

Another significant and notable tradition of several South Indian regions has been the dedication of this festival to Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge, learning, music and arts. She is worshipped, along with instruments of one's trade during this festival. In South India, people maintain, clean and worship their instruments, tools of work and implements of their livelihood during this festival, remembering Goddess Saraswati and Durga. [13]

### Western India

In Maharashtra, the deities installed on the first day of Navratri are immersed in water. Observers visit each other and exchange sweets. [25]

### Other scriptures

- Bhagavad Gita
- Agama (Hinduism)

### Other texts

- Vedangas
- Shiksha
- Chandas
- Vyakarana
- Nirukta
- Kalpa
- Jyotisha

### Puranas

- Vishnu Purana
- Bhagavata Purana
- Nāradeya Purana
- Vāmana Purana
- Matsya Purana
- Garuda Purana
- Brahma Purana
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- Padma Purana
- Agni Purana
- Shiva Purana
- Linga Purana
- Kūrma Purana
- Skanda Purana
- Varaha Purana
- Mārkandeya Purana

### Itihasas

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### Upavedas

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#### Meditation and Charity

- Tapa
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#### Yoga

- Sadhu
- Yogi
- Asana
- Hatha yoga
- Jnana yoga
- Bhakti yoga
- Karma yoga
- Raja yoga
- Kundalini Yoga

### Rites of passage
The festival has been historically important in Maharashtra. Shivaji, who challenged the Mughal Empire in the 17th-century and created a Hindu kingdom in western and central India, would deploy his soldiers to assist farmers in cropping lands and adequate irrigation to guarantee food supplies. Post monsoons, on Vijayadashami, these soldiers would leave their villages and reassemble to serve in the military, re-arm and obtain their deployment orders, then proceed to the frontiers for active duty.[26][27]

In Gujarat, both goddess Durga and god Rama are revered for their victory over evil. Fasting and prayers at temples are common. A regional dance called Dandia Ras, that deploys colorfully decorated sticks, and Garba that is dancing in traditional dress is a part of the festivities through the night.[28]

In Mewar region of Rajasthan, both Durga and Rama have been celebrated on Vijayadashami, and it has been a major festival for Rajput warriors.[23]

Eastern India

Main article: Durga Puja

Vijaya Dasami is observed after Navratri, on the tenth day, marked by a great procession where the clay statues are ceremoniously walked to a river or ocean coast for a solemn goodbye to Durga. Many mark their faces with vermillion (sindoor) or dress in something red. It is an emotional day for some devotees, and the congregation sings emotional goodbye songs.[29][30] When the procession reaches the water, Durga is immersed, the clay dissolves, and she is believed to return to Mount Kailasha with Shiva and cosmos in general. People distribute sweets and gifts, visit their friends and family members.[31] Some communities such as those near Varanasi mark the eleventh day, called ekadashi, by visiting a Durga temple.[32]

Nepal

In Nepal, Vijayadashami follows the festival of Dashain. Youngsters visit the elders in their family, distant ones come to their native homes, and students visit their school teachers. The elders and teachers welcome the youngsters, mark their foreheads with Tilak and bless them. The family reveres the Hindu goddess of wealth Lakshmi, hoping for virtuous success and prosperity in the year ahead.[33][34]

See also

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Garbhadhana · Pumsavana · Simantonayana · Jatakarma · Namakarana · Nishkramana · Annaprashana · Chudakarana · Karnavedha · Vidyarambha · Upayanayana · Keshanta · Ritushuddhi · Samavartana · Vivaha · Antyeshti

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References


2. 2017 Holidays National Informatics Centre (NIC), MeitY, Government of India


Durga image is Immersed into river on Vijayadashami in eastern regions of the Indian subcontinent.

11. † "Sanskrit spoken dictionary".
12. † "Sanskrit spoken dictionary".
14. † "Sanskrit spoken dictionary".
15. † "Sanskrit spoken dictionary".

Colorful floor patterns to mark Vijayadashami.

Youngsters greet elders and seek blessings on Dashain (Dashami) among the Hindu community in Nepal and Himalayan regions.
17. † Monier Williams (1872). 


19. † Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana. UNESCO


22. † "Dussera or Vijayadahami -- Why Do We Celebrate It?". 14 October 2013. Retrieved 3 April 2014.


Bibliography

Rituals of Dasara
Dussehra Celebration in Different Parts of India
Pictures and Videos of Dasara celebrations in Mangalore
Mysuru (Karnataka) Dasara Festival, Government of India
Dussehra in Telangana, Government of India

External links

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