

## THE UTSAV

### SHRI KRISHNA'S FESTIVE YEAR



#### SANJHI

Sanji are symbolic pictures of Vraj and Krushna lila. Made from various materials, are very artistically arranged to represent the places where Krushna conducted some of his most exciting lilas in Vraj.

Prior to Navratri, the dark fortnight of Bhadra is used by the vaishnavs of Pushti Marg, to perform a virtual Vraj Yatra. Much is made of yatra in our scriptures, but not all of us are able to perform the pilgrimages we would want to. The vacant period of Bhadra, when no other religious activities may be carried out, was used as an ideal period to do the virtual Vraj Yatra ! This period is also known as Pitrupaksha. We remember our ancestors during this period.

There are several legends attached to why sanjis are created during this period.

1) At one time, Shri Radhaji was told that if she performed the puja of Sandhya devi (the goddess of the evening) with flowers, she was sure to get a wonderful husband. Hoping to wed the handsome son of Nandarai, Shri Radha made all the preparation for the puja. Shri Krushna, hearing the manner of the puja, decided to help. The only problem was, only women were allowed to participate ! Ever resourceful, Krushna dressed up as a woman and entered the palace of Shri Radhaji with basket of flowers to help with the puja. All the sakhies were rather surprised by the skill and artistic talents of the new lady in their midst. After the designs were made, the sakhis offered consecrated food to the sanjis and performed arti. After the evening puja, it was rather late to go home, and thus Krushna managed to stay the night with his beloved sakhies !!

2) At one time a daughter of a divine being performed intense tapa to attain the Lord Vishnu as her husband. The Lord, pleased by her devotion, he placed her as the star Arundhati in the heavens. The Lord blessed the star and said, "Those who worship you in the dark fortnight of the pitrus, will get an excellent husband." Over the years, sanjis have evolved and are now made of various materials, including flowers, dry / fresh fruits, coloured powders, plantain leaves - cut into various shapes, dry pulses, rice etc. Bhog and arti are offered to the sanji. At Nathadwara, the sanjis are made from leaves of the plantains and cut into various shapes. Placed in the Kamal chok after the sandya arti. There are set designs created on each days of the sanji. Here is a list of shapes that are usually made on the following days.