

WHY 108 ARE SO SACRED FOR HINDUS

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When we see number of beads in vara mala/vrata mala, number of names of God and Goddess, I always wondered there should be some prominence for 108 which I do not know. Why do we give so much importance to 108 in Hinduism? Why 108 are so sacred for Hindus? Here is a brief explanation of the use and importance of this number:

The diameter of the Sun is 108 times the diameter of the Earth.

The distance from the Sun to the Earth is 108 times the diameter of the Sun.

The average distance of the Moon from the Earth is 108 times the diameter of the Moon.

In Ayurveda, there are 108 "Marma" points that are vital for giving life to living beings.

The powerful Sri Chakra yantra intersects in 54 points each with a masculine and feminine quality, totalling to 108

In Indian astrology we have 12 houses and 9 planets. 12 times 9 equals to 108.

In Tantra, it is estimated that every day we breathe 21,600 times out of which 10,800 are solar energy and 10,800 are lunar energy. Multiplying 108 X 100 is 10,800.

The famous saint Bharata wrote "The Natya Shastra" which has 108 karanas (Movement of hand and feet)

There are 54 letters in Sanskrit each can be mentioned as masculine (Shiva) and feminine (Shakti) aspect, totalling to 108.

There are 108 Puranas and 108 Upanishads.

9 times 12: Both of these numbers have been said to have spiritual significance in many traditions. 9 times 12 is 108. Also, 1 plus 8 equals 9. That 9 times 12 equals 108.

Powers of 1, 2, and 3 in math: 1 to 1st power=1; 2 to 2nd power=4 (2x2); 3 to 3rd power=27 (3x3x3). $1 \times 4 \times 27 = 108$

Harshad number: 108 is a Harshad number, which is an integer divisible by the sum of its digits (Harshad is from Sanskrit, and means "great joy")

Desires: There are said to be 108 earthly desires in mortals.

Lies: There are said to be 108 lies that humans tell.

Delusions: There are said to be 108 human delusions or forms of ignorance.

Heart Chakra: The chakras are the intersections of energy lines, and there are said to be a total of 108 energy lines converging to form the heart chakra. One of them, sushumna leads to the crown chakra, and is said to be the path to Self-realization.

Pranayama: If one is able to be so calm in meditation as to have only 108 breaths in a day, enlightenment will come.

Sri Yantra: On the Sri Yantra there are marmas where three lines intersect, and there are 54 such intersections. Each intersection has masculine and feminine, shiva and shakti qualities. 54 times 2 equal 108. Thus, there are 108 points that define the Sri Yantra as well as the human body.

Pentagon: The angle formed by two adjacent lines in a pentagon equals 108 degrees.

Time: Some say there are 108 feelings, with 36 related to the past, 36 related to the present, and 36 related to the future.

Astrology:

There are 12 constellations, and 9 arc segments called namshas or chandrakalas. 9 times 12 equal 108. Chandra is moon, and kalas are the divisions within a whole.

River Ganga: The sacred River Ganga spans a longitude of 12 degrees (79 to 91), and latitude of 9 degrees (22 to 31). 12 times 9 equal 108.

Gopis of Krishna: There were said to be 108 gopis or maid servants of Krishna.

1, 0, and 8: Some say that 1 stands for God or higher Truth, 0 stands for emptiness or completeness in spiritual practice, and 8 stands for infinity or eternity.

Silver and the moon: In astrology, the metal silver is said to represent the moon. The atomic weight of silver is 108.

Numerical scale: The 1 of 108, and the 8 of 108, when added together equals 9, which is the number of the numerical scale, i.e. 1, 2, 3 ... 10, etc., where 0 is not a number.

Meditations: Some say there are 108 styles of meditation.

Paths to God: Some suggest that there are 108 paths to God.

Jain: In the Jain religion, 108 are the combined virtues of five categories of holy ones, including 12, 8, 36, 25, and 27 virtues respectively.

Sikh: The Sikh tradition has a mala of 108 knots tied in a string of wool, rather than beads.

Buddhism: Some Buddhists carve 108 small Buddhas on a walnut for good luck. Some ring a bell 108 times to celebrate a new year. There are said to be 108 virtues to cultivate and 108 defilements to avoid.

Chinese: The Chinese Buddhists and Taoists use a 108 bead mala, which is called su-chu, and has three dividing beads, so the mala is divided into three parts of 36 each. Chinese astrology says that there are 108 sacred stars.

Stages of the soul: Said that Atman, the human soul or center goes through 108 stages on the journey.

Meru: This is a larger bead, not part of the 108. It is not tied in the sequence of the other beads. It is the guiding bead, the one that marks the beginning and end of the mala.

Praiseworthy souls: There are 108 qualities of praiseworthy souls.

Japan: In Japan, at the end of the year, a bell is chimed 108 times to finish the old year and welcome the new one. Each ring represents one of 108 earthly temptations a person must overcome to achieve nirvana.

108 signifies the wholeness of the divinity, perfect totality.

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