



In Hindu religion, Shankh, or Shankha, is of great importance and symbolizes luster, brilliance, purity and auspicious beginning. It is a pious article and is used in all religious rituals. The most famous Shankha is the Panchajanya of Lord Vishnu. In the Mahabharata, Lord Krishna and the five Pandavas had a separate conch shell and it is referred in the beginning of the Bhagavad Gita. In religious rituals, Shankh is used to announce the beginning of a prayer or arrival of deity and in some places sacred water is collected and distributed in it.

Shankh literally means 'pacifying the inauspicious.' In Hinduism, origin of the conch shell took place during the Samudra Manthan or churning of ocean. There are two types of Shankha – left handed conch shell and right handed conch shell. Valampiri Shankha or Lakshmi Shankha is the right handed conch shell and is considered auspicious.

Shankha is blown at every festival and auspicious beginning and the sound ushers in freshness and

new hope. Right handed conch shell is kept at home by many people as it is believed to bring wealth and prosperity. It is also associated with Kubera, god of wealth. Many institutions and organizations employ conch shell as their symbol.

Shankha is closely associated with Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi. [Image of Lord Vishnu](#) always has him holding a conch shell. It is believed that during the Samudra Manthan, first conch shell appeared and it was followed by Goddess Lakshmi.

Usually, right handed conch shell is used for worship. The shell is thoroughly cleaned and is placed on a clean cloth, usually red cloth. Normal puja is performed. In some places, conch shell is placed on a silver or clay pot. A cloth is used to cover the mouth of the pot and it is placed on it.



People usually collect and keep water in conch shell and is sprinkled while performing pujas. While performing Lakshmi Puja, conch shell is filled with milk and then it is poured over the idol. Water collected in Shankha is offered while worshipping sun.

Shankha is also part of classical Indian musical instruments and there is also a mudra based on it in classical dance. There are also numerous legends and myths associated with the conch shell in the vast Hindu literature.