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Folklore of our “Lady Justice”

The blindfolded “*Insaaf ki dev*” is familiar to everyone’s mind whenever we think of law but most of us are unaware about her significance in the field. The Lady Justice is a metaphorical personification of the moral force in judicial systems. She was originally known as the goddess Themis.

In Greek, Themis means 'order'. Her other names are *Justicia* or Justice. She is also associated with the Goddesses Astraea, Dike, Eirene, Eunomia, Fortuna, Tyche, and Ma'at. Her attributes are a blindfold, a balance, and a sword. Although these three are universal attributes, there are certain regional variations on her precise depiction, like a snake, a book, the different clothing etc.

Our laws and law systems are believed to be derived in essence from her stories and ideals. She was Goddess of 'the order of the natural world'. That means she ordered and organized things like the seasons, the path of a person's life such as its beginning and end etc. It is said that Kings, aristocrats and ordinary people sought her advice and counsel on all the laws of nature as well as the laws of man's other concerns. Interestingly in a traditional male dominated ancient world she was a predominant and coveted authority of prophecy, advice and law. In her time she was the final decision maker on the laws of man and nature.

The Scales of Justice represent the balance of the individual against the needs of society and a fair balance between interests of one individual than that of another. The scales represent that the story of both sides are taken into account & the claims of each side are judiciously weighed.

The double-edged Sword represents the enforcement measures of Lady Justice. It emphasizes that for justice to be carried out and the law enforced, there must be power behind the laws. Themis stands ready to obligate faithfulness to her decision of reason and justice by the parties.

The Blindfold, her most famous symbol – ‘*Andha kanoon*’ or Blind Justice is the theory that law should be viewed objectively with the determination of innocence or guilt made without bias or prejudice, that the decisions shall not be influenced by wealth, politics, popularity or infamy etc.

The snake under her foot represents evil, and lies, and **the book** is the law, the constitution from which justice is administered.

The first written record of word “justice” can be traced during the 12th Century from English, French and Latin words. However, in India, the common parlance can be drawn from the word “Nyaya”. *Nyaya* is a Sanskrit word which means “Rule” or “Method”. It is interesting to note that the concept of *Nyaya* has been kindred in our Indian philosophy since ancient times and its lineage dates back 2nd century BC.

The Symbol of the Mother and Child in Supreme Court of India

A black bronze sculpture of 210-centimeter height made by Mr. Chintamani Kar was installed on the lawn of the Supreme Court on February 20, 1980.

Can you guess what it denotes?



For more such legal trivia

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