



## LAKSHAMI-----THE FIRST BORN

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Yesterday, there ,was a first- born,  
L-A-X-A-M-I, a girl child,  
Prototype of the Goddess,  
The very image of prosperity.  
A few days old,  
Baptized in gold,  
Was she on her 'barahi'1\*  
When-----  
Every guest,heaped a blessing,  
And none came empty hand---  
To tie her down to virtues,  
Like a hostage , in a den,  
As though, paragons of virtue,  
Each one gave his bit,.....  
'a true Diana,[greek goddess] may she be,'  
'a fortune to her parents,'  
'an asset to her husband,'  
'a slave to her in laws,'  
'a treasure to her children ,'  
A martyr to her righteousness,'  
'a cause to emulate,'  
May she live to be a Sati'2\*.  
Every one made-,merry  
Except ,,her mother-----  
Hiding her tears in a pallav,3\*  
Bearing a brave façade,  
Burdened ,under a cascade of thoughts-----

The years run their course...  
And as Nature, ensures,  
One ,who is born ,has to grow  
Laxami ,grew,

Into a belle  
Half-fed, ill clad, and denied.  
A nurturer to her siblings  
Attending to her mothers.' Urgencies...

.....  
Her father,toiled.....  
Saving coins by the day.  
To get her an entry  
into her 'sasural'<sup>4\*</sup>  
one day.  
Married, she was,  
Seventeen summers old,  
10 months later,  
A mother to be,  
Her thoughts ran amuck.....  
No, not a daughter,  
She did not wish that to be,  
No,no,no.....not another Laxami  
She had learnt of Hindu ways.....  
And their hypocracies.....  
Laxami was a name they gave,  
To soothe their sense of guilt---  
Laxami's place was not the alter,  
But the sod and the flith.

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\* 1 ' Barhi' is the first religious ceremony for new born babies performed on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
Auspicious day of the birth among Hindus

\* 2 'Sati'- self immolations of women on the pyre of their husband

\* 3 'Pallav' the last one meter of saree (Usually 6 meters) a Dress worn by Hindu  
women.

\* 4 'Sasural' – The Bride grooms family and extended family.