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## 'ART & SOUL Reflections of divinity

Mirrors in many parts of the world are associated with goddesses, writes  
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**Kannati Bimbam: Contemporary sculpture in stainless steel by Balan Nambiar**

**T**HERE is something that connects divinity with mirrors, I am sure: something that is elusive and deep and mysterious. For there are legends and myths about these connections in all parts of the world: from Greece and Rome to Japan and Africa. And there are signs of it everywhere in India.

I do not know how many people have seen the complete, preparatory ceremonial of a puja in a North Indian temple. Long before the image of the deity is revealed to the devotees for 'darshans', priests go about, even before dawn breaks, their appointed work: the 'waking up' of the deity, the lustration, the covering with raiments, the *shringara*. All to the accompaniment of the chanting of sacred *mantras*. But when all this is finished, the priest takes a mirror in his hand and holds it up to the deity, as if asking him or her to look into it. It is not a long 'conversation' with the deity, but an important one, both for deity and devotee. For only then follow other rituals: the burning of incense, the ceremonial waving of the lamp, the offering of flowers, the presentation of sweets. And then, the day proceeds on its own course.

In southern parts of India, Kerala in particular, the mirror becomes the subject of veneration when it is associated with Goddess Bhagavati. There are moving

