

Vedanshi

The part of the sacred knowledge

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform - do that, O son of Kunti, as an offering to Me

Chapter 9, Verse 27; Bhagavad Gita

A Monthly Newsletter

Issue No 15: February 2015

The Eight Gunas

"Asprha" is the last of the eight qualities. "Sprha" means desire; a grasping nature. "Asprha" is the opposite, being without desire. Desire is at the root of all trouble, all evil and, all through the ages, it has been the cause for misfortunes.

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Maha Shivratri

February 17, 2015

Nishita Kaal Puja Time = 23:55 to 24:47+

Duration = 51 minutes

On 18th, Maha Shivratri Parana Time=After 06:49

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Hindu Rituals and Routines

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1. Why do we light a lamp?
2. Why do we have a prayer room?

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Holika Dahan Muhurta

March 4, 2015

Holika Dahan Muhurta = 22:46 to 24:19+

Duration = 1 hour 33 min

Bhadra Punchha = 18:06 to 19:26

Bhadra Mukha = 19:26 to 21:39

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Holika Dahan Muhurta Preference

One should avoid Bhadra Mukha and in no condition Holika Dahan should be done in Bhadra Mukha. Doing so brings bad luck for the whole year not only for individuals but for whole city and country.

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SANATAN HINDU



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Sriguruh Dakhsinamurtih

Citram vata-taromule vridhdah sisya gururyuva |

Gurostu maunam vyakhyanam sisyaustu chinna-samsayah |1|

It was strange to see aged students sitting before their guru who was very young and communicating to the students in silence and their doubts were all cleared up.

Om namah pranavarthaya suddha-jnanaika-murtaye |

Nirmalaya prasantaya daksinamurtaye namah |2|

Salutations to the dakshinamurthi, who is pure and calm, the embodiment of pure knowledge, and who is attainable through the symbol Om.

Nidhaye sarvavidyanam bhisaje bhavaroginam |

Gurave sarvavidyanam daksinamurtaye namah |3|

Salutations to the dakshinamurti, the abode of all learning, the physicians to all those allocated with the disease of worldly existence, the teacher of all.

Isvaro gururatmeti murti-bheda-vibhagine |

Vyomavad vyapta-dehaya daksinamurtaye namah |4|

Salutations to the dakshinamurti, who manifests in three different forms as God, Preceptor and Self and whose body is all pervading like the sky.



Sankatanasana Ganesha Stotram

Dvadasa Namani - Sri narada uvaca

Pranamya sirasa devam gauri-putram vinayakam |

Bhaktavasam smarenityam ayuh-kamarthasiddhye |1|

Prathamam vakratundam ca ekadantam dvitiyakam |

Tritiyam krsnapingaksam gajavaktram caturthakam |2|

Lambodaram pancamam ca satham vikatameva ca |

Saptamam vighnarajam ca dhumravarnam tathastamam |3|

Navamam bhalchandram ca dasamam tu vinayakam |

Ekadasam ganapatim dvadasam tu gajananam |4|

I respectfully offer my daily prayers to Lord Ganesha for a meaningful life and right guidance. I invoke Sri Ganesha with following descriptions; curved trunk, single tusk, dark eyes, elephant face, big stomach, giant structure, Lord of obstacles, grey-colored, moon like forehead, protector, Ganapathi (leader of forces) and Gajaanana.

Dvadasaitani namani trisandhyam yah pathennarah |

Na ca vighnabhayam tasya sarvasiddhikaram prabho |5|

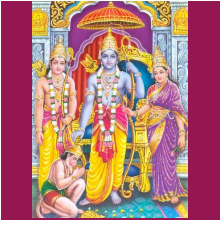
Anyone who will remember these twelve names of Ganesha three times (sunrise, mid-day and sunset) a day will have all his obstacles and fears removed and will be successful.

Assembly Prayers - Chinmaya Mission Austin

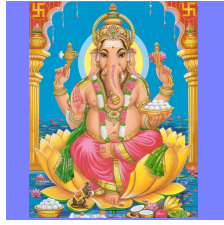


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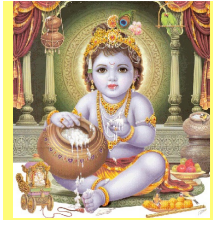
Sita Ram



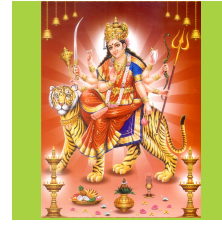
Ganesh



Krishna



Durga



Shiva



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The Eight Gunas

by H.H. Jagadguru Śrī Chandrasekarendra Saraswati Sankaracharya Swamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

The eight gunas or qualities are: daya, ksanti, anasuya, sauca, anayasa, mangala, akarpanya, asprha.

"Daya" implies love for all creatures, such love being the very fulfillment of life. There is indeed no greater happiness than that derived by loving others. Daya is the backbone of all qualities.

"Ksanti" is patience. One kind of ksanti is patiently suffering disease, poverty, misfortune and so on. The second is forgiveness and it implies loving a person even if he causes us pain and trouble.

"Anasuya" you know is the name of the sage Atri's wife. She was utterly free from jealousy: that is how she got the name which means non-jealousy. Heart-burning caused by another man's prosperity or status is jealousy. We ought to have love and compassion for all and ought to be patient and forgiving even towards those who do us wrong. We must not envy people their higher status even if they be less deserving of it than we are and, at the same time, must be mature enough to regard their better position as the reward they earned by doing good in their previous life.

"Saucu" is derived from "suci", meaning cleanliness. Purity is to be maintained in all matters such as bathing, dress, food. There is a saying often quoted even by the unlettered: "Cleanliness makes you happy and it even appeases your hunger". To see a clean person is to feel ourselves clean.

In Manu's listing of dharmas that are applicable to all, ahimsa or nonviolence comes first, followed by satya (truthfulness), asteya (noncovetousness; non-stealing is the direct meaning), sauca (cleanliness) and indriyanigraha (subduing the senses or even obliterating them).

The fifth Atmaguna is "anayasa". It is the opposite of "ayasa" which denotes effort, exertion, etc. Anayasa means to have a feeling of lightness, to take things easy.

One must not keep a long face, wear a scowl or keep lamenting one's hardships. If you lose your cool you will be a burden to yourself as well as to others. Anayasa is a great virtue. In many of our rituals there is much bodily exertion. When we perform a sraddha we have to remain without food until 2 or 3 in the afternoon. There is no end to the physical effort we have to put in to conduct a sacrifice. Here anayasa means not to feel any mental strain. Obstacles, inevitable to any work or enterprise, must not cause you any mental strain. You must not feel any duty to be a burden and must develop the attitude that everything happens according to the will of the Lord. What do we mean when we remark that the musician we listened to yesterday touched the "tara-sthayi" so effortlessly? Does it mean that he performed a difficult musical exercise with ease? Similarly, we must learn to make light of all the hardships that we encounter in life.

What is "mangala", the sixth guna? Well, "mangala" is mangala. There is mangala or an auspicious air about happiness that is characterized by dignity and purity. One must be cheerful all the time and not keep growling at people on the slightest pretext. This itself is extremely helpful, to radiate happiness wherever we go and exude auspiciousness. It is better than making lavish gifts and throwing money about.

To do a job with a feeling of lightness is anayasa. To be light ourselves, creating joy wherever we go, is mangala. We must be like a lamp spreading light and should never give cause for people to say, "Oh! He has come to find fault with everything". Wherever we go we must create a sense of happiness. We must live auspiciously and make sure that there is happiness brimming over everywhere.

Feb & March 15 Dates

Based on Lafayette, Louisiana, US Time

14 Saturday	Vijaya Ekadashi
15 Sunday	Vijaya Ekadashi
17 Tuesday	Maha Shivaratri
28 Saturday	Amalaki Ekadashi
04 Wednesday	Holi, Holika Dahan
05 Thursday	Rangwali Holi
13 Friday	Basoda, Sheetala Ashtami
14 Saturday	Meena Sankranti
16 Monday	Papmochani Ekadashi
19 Thursday	Surya Grahan
20 Friday	Gudi Padwa, Ugadi Chaitra Navratri

For more details please refer DrikPanchang.com

Maha Shivratri

February 17, 2015 (Tuesday)

Nishita Kaal Puja Time = 23:55 to 24:47+

Duration = 0 Hours 51 minutes

On 18th, Maha Shivratri Parana Time=After 06:49

Ratri First Prahar Puja Time = 17:54 to 21:07

Ratri Second Prahar Puja Time = 21:07 to 24:21+

Ratri Third Prahar Puja Time = 24:21+27:35+

Ratri Fourth Prahar Puja Time = 27:35+ to 30:49+

Hindu Rituals and Routines

Why do we follow them?

Hinduism is not a religion but a way of life. Unlike other religions, Hindu dharma has many specialties. This is not known as a religion, it is known as the dharma; Sanaathana Dharma. Sanaathana means, according to Bhagavath Geetha, which cannot be destroyed by fire, weapons, water, air, and which is present in all living and non living being. Dharma means, the way of life which is the 'total of all *aacharaas* or customs and rituals'.

Sanaathana Dharma has its foundation on scientific spirituality. In the entire ancient Hindu literature we can see that science and spirituality are integrated. It is mentioned in the 40th chapter of the *Yajurveda* known as *Eesaavaasya Upanishad* that use scientific knowledge for solving problems in our life and use the spiritual knowledge for attaining immortality through philosophical outlook.

Remember that in each and every *aacharaa* there will be a component of spirituality in it. Without spirituality, nothing exists in Sanaathana dharma. Generally everyone bear a wrong impression that this spirituality is religion. Spirituality is different in Hindu dharma. Here the question of religion does not exist at all, because Hindu dharma was not created by an individual, prophet or an incarnation. Spirituality is a part of every Hindu custom in the normal life of a Hindu.

Aacharaas are to be followed based on their merits available from the self experience; you need not blindly follow a teacher or someone who gives advice without reasoning. All these *aacharaas* are mentioned for the prosperity of the human beings and it should be the prime focus for practicing the Hindu *aacharaas*.

*Achaaryaath paadam aadatthe
paadam sishya swamedhayaa
paadam sa brahmachaaribhya
sesham kaala kramena cha*

This is an important advice given in *smruthies*. It means a person can get only one quarter of knowledge from *Achaarya* - the teacher, another quarter by analyzing self, one quarter by discussing with others and the last quarter during the process of living by method addition, deletion, correction, and modification of already known *aacharaas* or new *aacharaas*.

*Aachaaraath labhathe hi ayu:
aachaaraath dhanamakshayam
aachaaraath labhathe suprajaa:
aachaaro ahanthya lakshanam*

Aacharaas are followed for the psychological and physiological health and long life; *Aacharaas* are followed for prosperity and wealth; *Aacharaas* are followed for strong family and social bondage and following the *Aacharaas* give a fine personality,

dharmic outlook and vision, says our *dharmasastra*.

In India everyone followed *Aacharaas* for the above mentioned psychological, physiological, family relation, social benefits and national integration based benefits. It is your right and duty to understand scientifically, rationally and logically the meaning of each and every *Aacharaas* and follow the same in your life systematically.

1. Why do we light a lamp?



In almost every Indian home a lamp is lit daily before the altar of the Lord. In some houses it is lit at dawn, in some, twice a day – at dawn and dusk – and in a few it is maintained continuously - Akhanda Deepa. All auspicious functions commence with the lighting of the lamp, which is often maintained right through the occasion.

Light symbolizes knowledge, and darkness - ignorance. The Lord is the "Knowledge Principle" (Chaitanya) who is the source, the enlivener and the illuminator of all knowledge. Hence light is worshiped as the Lord himself.

Knowledge removes ignorance just as light removes darkness. Also knowledge is a lasting inner wealth by which all outer achievement can be accomplished. Hence we light the lamp to bow down to knowledge as the greatest of all forms of wealth.

Why not light a bulb or tube light? That too would remove darkness. But the traditional oil lamp has a further spiritual significance. The oil or ghee in the lamp symbolizes our *vaasanas* or negative tendencies and the wick, the ego. When lit by spiritual knowledge, the *vaasanas* get slowly exhausted and the ego too finally perishes. The flame of a lamp always burns upwards. Similarly we should acquire such knowledge as to take us towards higher ideals.

Whilst lighting the lamp we thus pray:

*Deepajyothi parabrahma
Deepa sarva tamopahaha
Deepena saadhyate saram
Sandhyaa deepo namostute*

I prostrate to the dawn/dusk lamp; whose light is the Knowledge Principle (the Supreme Lord), which removes the darkness of ignorance and by which all can be achieved in life.

2. Why do we have a prayer room?

Most Indian homes have a prayer room or altar. A lamp is lit and the Lord worshipped each day.



Other spiritual practices like *japa* - repetition of the Lord's name, meditation, *paaraayana* - reading of the scriptures, prayers, and devotional singing etc are also done here. Special worship is done on auspicious occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, festivals and the like. Each member of the family - young or old - communes with and worships the Divine here.

The Lord is the entire creation. He is therefore the true owner of the house we live in too.

This prayer room is the Master room of the house. We are the earthly occupants of His property. This notion rids us of false pride and possessiveness.

The ideal attitude to take is to regard the Lord as the true owner of our homes and us as caretakers of His home. But if that is rather difficult, we could at least think of Him as a very welcome guest. Just as we would house an important guest in the best comfort, so too we felicitate the Lord's presence in our homes by having a prayer room or altar, which is, at all times, kept clean and well-decorated.

Also the Lord is all pervading. To remind us that He resides in our homes with us, we have prayer rooms. Without the grace of the Lord, no task can be successfully or easily accomplished. We invoke His grace by communing with Him in the prayer room each day and on special occasions.

Each room in a house is dedicated to a specific function like the bedroom for resting, the drawing room to receive guests, the kitchen for cooking etc. The furniture, decor and the atmosphere of each room are made conducive to the purpose it serves.

So too for the purpose of meditation, worship and prayer, we should have a conducive atmosphere - hence the need for a prayer room.

Sacred thoughts and sound vibrations pervade the place and influence the minds of those who spend time there. Spiritual thoughts and vibrations accumulated through regular meditation, worship and chanting done there pervade the prayer room. Even when we are tired or agitated, by just sitting in the prayer room for a while, we feel calm, rejuvenated and spiritually uplifted.





Makar Sankranti Celebrations on January 17th at Sanatan Hindu Sanskar Kendra Location 110, Hapsburg Lane, Lafayette, Louisiana

Eight Gunas (Continued)

"Akarpanya" is the next guna. Miserliness is the quality of krpna or miser. "Akarpanya" is the opposite of miserliness. We must give generously and wholeheartedly. At Kuruksetra Arjuna felt dejected and refused to wage war with his own kin. In doing so, according to the Gita, he was the guilty of "karpunya dosa". It means, contextually, that he abased himself to a woeful state, he became "miserly" about himself.

Akarpanya is the quality of a courageous and zestful person who can face problems determinedly.

"Asprha" is the last of the eight qualities. "Sprha" means desire; a grasping nature. "Asprha" is the opposite, being without desire. Desire is at the root of all trouble, all evil and, all through the ages, it has been the cause for misfortunes. But to eradicate it from the mind of men seems an almost impossible task. By performing rites again and again and by constantly endeavoring to acquire the Atmic qualities one will eventually become desireless. Says Valluvar:

Tirumular goes a step further. "It is not enough, he says, "to be attached to Isvara who is without attachment and be free from other attachments. You must be able to sever yourself from the attachment to Isvara himself".

The Buddha calls desire thirst. Intense desire for an object is "trsna". (The Buddha calls it "tanha" in Prakrt). His chief teaching is the conquest of desire.

Desirelessness is the last of the eight qualities. The first one, daya, is the life-breath of Christianity. Each religion lays emphasis on a particular quality, though all qualities are included in the teachings of Buddha, Jesus Christ, the Prophet Mohammed, Guru Nanak, Zoroaster, Confucius and the founders of all other religions. Even if these qualities may not have been pointedly mentioned in their teachings, it is certain that none of them would regard people lacking them with approval.

Holika Dahan Muhurta Preference

According to Hindu scriptures Holika Dahan, which is also known as Holika Deepak or Chhoti Holi, should be done during Pradosh Kaal (which starts after sunset) while Purnimasi Tithi is prevailing. Bhadra prevails during first half of Purnimasi Tithi and all good work should be avoided when Bhadra prevails.

One should avoid Bhadra Mukha and in no condition Holika Dahan should be done in Bhadra Mukha. Doing so brings bad luck for the whole year not only for individuals but for whole city and country.

Choosing right Muhurta for Holika Dahan is more important than choosing right Muhurta for any other festivals. For other festivals doing puja at wrong time will not bring puja benefits but doing Holika Dahan at wrong time would bring suffering and misfortune.

For more details please refer DrikPanchang.com

Holika Dahan

March 4, 2015 (Wednesday)

Holika Dahan Muhurta = 22:46 to 24:19+

Duration = 1 hour 33 minutes

Bhadra Punchha = 18:06 to 19:26

Bhadra Mukha = 19:26 to 21:39

Purnima Tithi Begins = 09:27 on March 4th

Purnima Tithi Ends = 12:05 on March 5th

Timings for Lafayette, Louisiana, USA

We invite you to participate in Holika Dahan ritual on March 4th at 6 pm at 110, Hapsburg Lane, Lafayette

The Holi/Dhulandi day when people play with colors is always next day of Holika Dahan.



SHSK wishes you happy and colorful **Holi**

Thank you for your support and blessings.
Srinivasan Ambatipati, Editor