

Vedanshi

The part of the sacred knowledge

Know that both Purusha and Prakriti are beginningless; and know also that all modifications and qualities (gunas) are born of Prakriti

Chapter 13, Verse 19; Bhagavad Gita

A Monthly Newsletter

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Puja Vidhi

Preface: It is with deep gratitude and with Parmeshwara blessings, the translation of Bhramasri Chaganti Koteswara Rao Pravachan on Puja Vidhi is undertaken. The goal of this work is to reach out to greater Hindu community to introduce the concepts of Shastras as it is and given to us by our Rishis. Sri Chaganti is a great orator of Hindu scriptures and has given thousands of Pravachan (lectures) in his native language Telugu. A sincere effort is made through this publication to bring out the valuable lessons taught through Sri Chaganti Pravachans to the greater Hindu audience. This article will dig deep into the roots of important rituals on various occasions (thitis) that every Hindu should follow with the knowledge of why, where and how these rituals came into practice. *Sincerely - Srinivasan Ambatipati*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to the Shastras, living beings on this earth have a limited time to live. It is not possible to live for ever. Easwara will give a life span for all the living beings on earth. For a Jeeva there will be a birth day and a death day. The time between birth and death is the time where a Jeeva leads its life with a body. Among all the species, except human species no other species have the opportunity to seek higher consciousness and to reach higher lokhas and hence no path to lead to moksha. **Who is eligible to reach higher consciousness?** It is only the human. For humans Easwara will give three things to live by during the time between birth and death to reach higher consciousness. **What are these Three things?**

First is Shastras (Vedas), Second Guru - the one who can explain Shastras, Third is the desire to learn Shastras and live accordingly. Those who have these three are the only ones who can seek higher consciousness. If we don't have any one of the above it is not possible to reach higher consciousness. For example, Sometimes one will be interested in Shastras but he may not have a Guru

to guide him and in other times, there will be a Guru but the seeker may not be able to grasp the Shastras that is being explained. It might be due to various reasons like lack of concentration and in other times, there will be both Shastras and Guru available but there will not be a seeker.



If all these three are present then the actions performed by the human are counted either as Dharma and Adharma. **Why?** Based on the current actions the Jeeva will be directed towards the appropriate lokhas either he will be made as one of the

Devas or he will again take birth in this world to a parent who is well versed with the Shastras. If this has to happen, in this life he has to do Punya, **if you understand carefully Punya is nothing but Dharma.**

Dharma is nothing but an action to be performed according to the Vedas told by Easwara. For example an action can be to enjoy a pleasure but it should be performed within the limits, if we perform the action beyond the limits the same action becomes Adharma. Both actions of Dharma and Adharma of a human will be always observed by the Easwara.

Apart from following the Dharma and Adharma actions that one is doing, Easwara will also count the number of breathes that one takes from within. Because he is the only one to know how long the Jeeva will be inside the current body. While counting the number of breathes if he observes that the person is not properly using this life he will decide to exit the body. Once he exits the body, the Jeeva will not be able to do anything. For example, you will not be able to pray for Rama, not be able

to do any seva (service), will not be able to do any dharmic action, once the Jeeva leaves the body. In this way Easwara releases the jeeva from the body, by counting the number of breathes while counting the number of actions based on Dharma and Adharma from the time of birth to the time until the Jeeva has to stay, **this time in between is defined as the life span (Jeevitam) of the human being.**

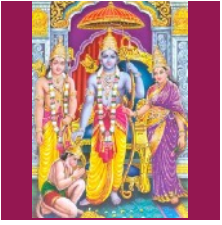
At certain date one enters into the body and he has to come out from Mother's womb. Coming out of Mother's womb is not enough, he will not know the Shastras and he will not have a Guru as soon as he comes out. **There is a remote chance to know Shastras by birth like Bhakt Prahalda.** First of all he has to know the Shastras and then he has to live according to the Shastras.

Knowing is different but living according to Shastras is too difficult. It is not important that in which Ashram (way of living) one is leading his life such as Gruhast Ashram, Sanyasi Ashram etc. The only thing important is whether he is following the Dharma of that Ashram, that is very difficult. **Most of them know the Shastras but how many are living according to Shastras.** That which is followed is Dharma and which is not followed is Adharma.

Easwara will look into the life of a person and analyzes the actions to see if the Jeeva can be given another chance to be born in human form to further enhance his consciousness. It is also not true that if we assume that since we were born as humans in this life and will be born again in human form in the next life. This foolish assumption is not written anywhere in the Vedas, it is only said that Easwara will analyze the actions in the form of Dharma and Adharma and give the required form of birth. Also this is mainly dependent on the level of consciousness reached at the time of death, which defines the course of next birth and even Parameshwara will not have a say in this regard.

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Sita Ram



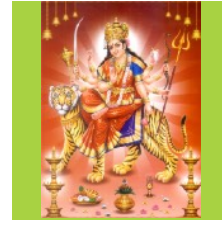
Ganesh



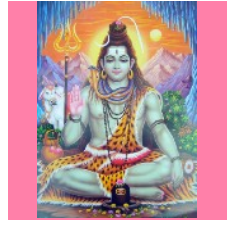
Krishna



Durga



Shiva



Puja Vidhi..... Contd.

The period in which this Jeeva goes through the actions of Dharma and Adharma from the time of birth till his death is called Kaalam (life span). **If you ask me what is my life span?** I know when I was born, but I do not know when I will leave this mortal body. The time until I leave this body is my life span. After that whether I will attain Moksha or will come back in some other form will purely depend on the kind of actions I take in this life span. If I ask Easwara to give some more time than the permitted life span, he will not give even a single additional breathe. Because whatever I have to do should be done in the permitted life span. **That's why we should use this life time very very carefully.**

There is another layer of difficulty added to the current life span. Based on the past life actions, Easwara will give Sukha (joy) and Dukha (sorrow) to this current life. If we become exuberant due to joy, it is a mistake because it is only given by Easwara. At the same time, someone becomes depressed because of sorrow, it is also a mistake and will move away from Easwara. One has to be beyond the stage of Sukha and Dukha to get close to Easwara. And that one will reach higher consciousness. But if someone thinks that joy and sorrow is the consequence of his own abilities, he is getting away from Easwara. If someone treats both Sukha and Dukha as equal knowing that one or the other is due to the actions of the past will be closer the feet of Easwara.

Why he will be closer to Easwara? He realizes that he did something good or bad in his past life to reap the benefits of joy and struggles of sorrow. **Therefore what did I learn from this?** Both Sukha and Dukha drag us from moving forward, because I have to struggle to go through sorrow and I have to enjoy to reap the benefits of joy in either way I have to experience it. To experience it I need a body, to have a body, I have to take birth again. **Therefore there is no need of Sukha and Dukha, in other words there is no need of punya and papam, the only need is to follow the path of Dharma.** Why, because it should be our desire to follow Dharma or to follow Easwara other than that we should not seek any other benefit. The one who seeks this path will be closer to Easwara and will attain higher consciousness and comes out of the cycle of birth and death. Therefore making use of the time during one's life span is the top most priority.

How will someone know when and what to do at a given time? For example, a student goes to School, his time table for the day will be setup by his teachers in which the student should follow. The student will not be able to choose this own time table. Likewise, for humans to achieve higher consciousness, the Rishis through their fore-thinking nature divided the time and told humans to follow a path leading to Easwara.

This path involves two routines, one is to do few routines everyday of one's life and the other involves carrying out certain routines on special occasions of the year. The routine that is followed on special occasions is of divine in nature and has some special importance at the same time everyday routine should also be carried out. Do not assume that the everyday routine has no significant benefit.

Everyday routine should be carried out without fail. For example, do I eat everyday or do I choose to eat only on very busy working day. As you know irrespective of whether I work or not I will always eat. Likewise one should do Nitya Karma (daily routine) everyday without fail. **What is the use of Nitya Karma?** By performing Nitya Karma one will get the desire to perform Naimittika karma (important occasional rituals).

In the next issue - More on Nitya Karma and Naimittika Karma, Explanation of how time is further subdivided into months, Pakshams, Rutus and Tithis are explained.

Puja Vidhi - Pravachan by Brahmasri Chaganti Koteswara Rao - Translated from Telugu to English by Srinivasan Ambatipati

March 2018 Dates

Based on Lafayette, Louisiana, US Time

01 Thursday	Holika Dahan, Phalguna Purnima
02 Friday	Holi
12 Monday	Papmochani Ekadashi
17 Saturday	Chaitra Navratri
18 Sunday	Gudi Padwa, Ugadi
25 Sunday	Rama Navami
27 Tuesday	Kamada Ekadashi
31 Saturday	Hanuman Jayanti, Chaitra Purnima

For more details please refer
DrikPanchang.com

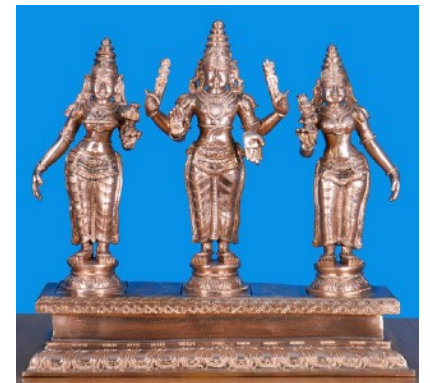
SHSK Panchaloha Utsav Moorthies



Balaji, Sridevi, Boodevi



Ram, Sita, Lakshman, Hanuman



Karthikeya, Valli, Devayanai

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A Solution for Depression - From the Inside Out

Q: I see it happening all around us that as we grow older, depression becomes a natural emotion within all of us, and takes a toll on human beings. How do we adjust to this situation which is inevitable and happening all the time?

Sadhguru: Once you declare that depression is a natural process, there is no way out. When you were a child, being joyful was natural to you, not being depressed. So do not declare that depression is natural.

Depression means you are unable to maintain the exuberance of life in you. It happens even in your body. If you are depressed, even the physical body flops. Life within you is not exuberant – it has just gone down and lost its exuberance because you are not doing the right thing with it. You are imposing too much outside nonsense upon the inside. You have not done anything to keep your life energies high.

The Source of Depression

Depression is a kind of agony. If you have become agony and not ecstasy, it is because a large part of your life energy is happening compulsively, not consciously. It is happening as a reaction to external situations. Once you are happening compulsively, becoming depressed is very normal, because external situations are never hundred percent in your control. There are so many things happening in the world; if you compulsively react, getting lost and becoming miserable is natural. The more exposed you are to life, the more miserable you will become.

When people are unable to handle life outside, they try to curtail their life and withdraw. But even that goes out of control, doesn't it? There is one part of you which is constantly seeking expansion – you want to constantly increase the boundaries and areas of your activity. There is another part of you which is getting depressed every time something does not go the way you think it should go. Getting depressed is subject to the non-fulfillment of your expectations.

If the stock market gets depressed today, so many people will get depressed. Many of them may never have even touched that money, but every day

they were watching the graphs rising and their mood was in ascendancy. Now they see the graph falling, so their mood is falling. It is just that what they expected to happen, did not happen.

Fixing the Inside

People can cause depression in their mood in so many ways. If you take away what they think is precious, they become depressed. The tragedy with a lot of people, especially in affluent societies, is that they have everything and yet they have nothing. Depression means somewhere, a certain hopelessness has set in. If you go to some very poor village in India, they are really impoverished, but you will see joyful faces because they have hope – it is going to be better tomorrow. In affluent societies that hope is gone. Depression has set in because everything that can be used externally has been fixed. There is food, there is housing, there is clothing, there is everything, but still there is something wrong. They just do not know what.

Depression is a global phenomenon and is the leading cause of disability worldwide and more than 300 million people all over the world suffer from depression.

A poor man may think, "Tomorrow, if I get a new pair of footwear, everything will be fine." If he gets a new pair of footwear, he will walk like a king with great joy on his face because he has hope; the outside is not yet fixed. In affluent societies, the outside is fixed, but the inside is not fixed, so there is hopelessness and depression.

As we work on the outside, we must also fix the inside. Then the world would be beautiful. What we call as a spiritual process is just this – not just fixing the objective aspect of your life but taking care of the subjectivity of who you are. If that is not taken care of, you will have everything, and you will have nothing.

<http://isha.sadhguru.org/>

Ash Gourd (Winter Melon), the "Cool" Vegetable: Benefits



What is Ash Gourd?

Ash gourd, *Benincasa hispida*, is a unique melon eaten mostly in India and China. It is often cubed and added to soups in Asian cooking. However, the yogis of India have long regarded ash gourd as one of the most naturally energizing foods due to its high quotient of what yogic science refers to as "prana", or vital life energy.

Appearance

Immature ash gourd is coated in fine hairs which disappear as the gourd ripens. The exterior color can vary between dark green to a pale gray. Mature gourds are coated in a distinctive white ash. This powdery coating is where the melon derives its other common name, "ash gourd". The shape of the gourd can also vary between round and oblong.

The taste of ash gourd is very mild, like a cucumber. It has virtually no taste of its own, so it is easy to incorporate into all kinds of salads, smoothies, and juices on hot days. On colder days, you can add either honey or black pepper to the melon to reduce the natural cooling qualities in the fruit while retaining its raw energy boost. To retain maximum vital energy, ash gourd should be eaten raw.

History of Ash Gourd

Ash gourd's ancient roots make it difficult to trace a precise origin, though botanists speculate that the gourd likely originated in Japan, Indonesia, China, or Indo-Malaysia. In all of these regions, ash gourd has been in use for thousands of years. Descriptions of the gourd's medicinal value can be found in Chinese texts from the 5th-6th century AD.

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SHSK Temple, Lafayette, Louisiana - Targeting April 2018 for completion and Inauguration

Ash Gourd: Benefits

Sadhguru describes some of the lore surrounding ash gourd's qualities and uses in Indian tradition

Sadhguru: They have told you this is a very auspicious vegetable. If you build a new house, you hang it in front of your house. If you want to do any ceremony, it comes into your house. Traditionally it was fixed up like this, that even if you happen to grow an ash gourd in own house, you should not eat it. You must give it away as a dana to a Brahmin. If you give it away to a Brahmin, you will get punya somewhere, but he will get good food right here.

A shudra was not supposed to eat ash gourd. If a shudra was found to eating an ash gourd, he would be killed, because they said if a person eats ash gourd, he will become articulate and sharp in his head. So a shudra should not be allowed to eat ash gourd. Today you have no such problems. Everyone can choose and eat what they want.

Traditionally, this vegetable has been put to use in so many ways. One reason why it is hung in front of new homes is, when you enter a newly built building, sometimes certain negative energies get trapped. So they advised people to hang an ash gourd because it creates so much positive vibration that it clears the negativity. I think it is better to put it into your body. Now instead of putting it in front of your house, if you put it into your stomach, you will become a source of good vibrations. Wherever you go, everything is fine with you.

Nutrition of Ash Gourd

While ash gourd is composed primarily of water (about 96%), it also boasts a variety of beneficial vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C and B-complex vitamins such as niacin, thiamine and riboflavin. Ash gourd is also a valuable source of minerals like iron, potassium, zinc, calcium and magnesium. The gourd also provides a good amount of protein, carbohydrates and dietary fiber.

Ash Gourd Benefits

Sharpness of Mind

Sadhguru: Just drink one glass of ash gourd juice in the morning and you will see tremendous



amount of coolness in the body, while at the same time it brings alertness into you. Daily consumption of ash gourd greatly enhances your intellectual capabilities. Especially children must drink ash gourd juice. If you drink it for one week, you will notice a distinct change in the sharpness of your mind. This is very highly pranic. Every day, if you drink a glass of ash gourd juice in the morning, you will see it will do wonders for your intellect. Your intellect will be very sharp and it brings

energy without agitation in the system. Daily consumption of ash gourd will do miracles to you.

Increased Energy

Sadhguru: Consumption of ash gourd brings an enormous amount of energy, at the same time it keeps your nerves very calm. If you drink coffee, it gives you energy with agitation. If you drink a glass of ash gourd, it gives you enormous amount of energy, and still keeps you calm.

Constipation, Piles, Boils

Sadhguru: If you consume a little bit of ash gourd juice, it cools down the system. This is beneficial for people who has excess heat in the body, which can produce problems like boils, piles (hemorrhoids) and constipation problems.

Cooling Caution

Sadhguru: People who are susceptible to problems such as colds, asthma, and sinusitis should be a little careful with ash gourd because it creates too much sheeta, or coolness, in the system. Such people should always mix it with honey or pepper and drink it, so that the cooling effect is neutralized to some extent.

<http://isha.sadhguru.org/>

Happy Holi and Blessed Ugadi !!!

Thank you for your support and blessings.

**Sri Krishnaarpanamasthu
Srinivasan Ambatipati, Editor**