

Vedanshi

The part of the sacred knowledge

I will tell you of That which is to be known, because such knowledge bestows immortality. Hear about the beginnings Supreme Spirit - He who is spoken of as neither existent (sat) nor nonexistent (asat).

Chapter 13, Verse 12; Bhagavad Gita

A Monthly Newsletter

Issue No 48: December 2017

Significance of Sankalpa

Traditionally in Hindu religion before performing any work we undertake sankalpa which is a kind of declaration to ourselves and to the God within us. The Vedas says that whole Universe is evolved through a Sankalpa of Lord SriManNaaraayana.

Sankalpa is a Sanskrit word meaning a resolution; a free will or a determination. The word Sankalpa itself means good intention, an oath or a resolution to do something, a solemn pledge to do something good. In Sanskrit 'San' means good and 'Kalpa' means a Saasthra or a Veda. Sankalpa means proposal to do something good in a Vedic or a Saasthric way. In any religious ceremony or ritual generally we observe a person taking a sankalpa (firm resolve) to achieve the purpose of the ceremony. Sankalpa literally means taking firm decision to accomplish one particular thing in spite of facing troubles in its achievement.

Sankalpa cannot come all of a sudden. It is conception of a deep routed strong desire formed in the inner heart of hearts (subconscious mind); a seed that one consciously plant in his psyche. All Yagnas and worships are accomplished after taking a vow for its performance. Sankalpa is nothing but an expression of feeling which the Saadhaka (doer) has for accomplishment of a Saadhana (task). By making a pledge a person becomes committed towards the accomplishment of his goal. Taking an oath means becoming committed to something.

One would have observed that all elected political leaders; Government officers all over the world take pledge or oath of secrecy in the name of God before taking charge of their offices. Before elections political parties release their manifesto which is nothing but their sankalpa. In courts before commencement of a trial the witnesses are asked to take pledge in the name of God. In Hindu culture it is believed that when a person speaks something after taking an oath it becomes true. At the time of induction an employee is asked to sign an oath of secrecy. In a Corporate world it is the

Sankalpa of the promoter that gets manifested and results in the birth of a Company. All these are nothing but Sankalpa in different forms for different causes.

Mere Sankalpa alone is not sufficient to accomplish the deed. Besides sankalpa one should have strong dedication; determination (will power); discipline; accompanied by sincere hard work; persuasion to accomplish. Sankalpa acts as a foundation in accomplishing the task or reaching the goal. When Divinity is added to the Sankalpa; it gains strength and gets proper direction. We have several puranic and historical examples of the power of Sankalpa. Achievements of Lord Hanuman are best example. Other examples are that of Bhakta Prahlada, Bhakta-Dhruva, Bhakta-Markandeya, Bhagiratha, Sathi-Savithri etc. Nearest historical example is that of Mahatma Gandhi who could achieve freedom for India with his strong Sankalpa.

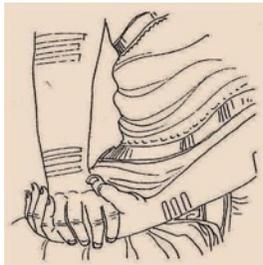
Sankalpa is performed by sitting in Padmasana by clasping the right palm over the left; rested on the right thighs near the knee. After chanting Sankalpa manthra usually some flowers and rice taken in the right hand palm are dropped in the Arghya pathra using water. Sometimes only water is used. A Vedic Sankalpa generally comprises of the elements of Time; Location; Almanac (Panchanga); Lineage; Purpose; Wish or desire; Target (the Deity); and nature or mode of karma.

Sankalpam in USA.

It starts with...

Sri: Govinda! Govinda! Govinda!

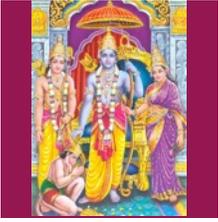
sri: maha: vishno: ra:gnaya,
pravartama:nasya, adya brahmanah, dwiti:ya
para:rdhe,



sri: swe:ta vara:ha kalpe:, vaivaswata manvantare:,
kaliyuge:, pradhama:de:,krouncha dwi:pe:,
ramanaka varshe:,
aindra khande:, meroho paschima digbha:ge: uttara
ameruka:ya:m,
Atlantic pacific sa:garayo:rmadhy de:she:,
rocky-mickelny parvatayormadhye:,
Misissippi - Missouri itya:di sho:dasa ji:va nadi:
pari:va:ha pra:nthe:,
-----ra:sthre: (State), ----- nagare: (City),
asmin varthama:na vya:vaha:rika cha:ndra
ma:ne:na,
prabhava:di shasthi samvatsara:na:m madhye:,
----- na:ma samvatsare:,
----- (uttara-from Jan 13 to June13/dakshina-from
june 13 to jan 13) ayane:,
----- ruthou (Season), ----- ma:se:
(Month),
----- (sukla/krushna) pakshe:, ----- tidhou,
----- va:sare: (week),
----- nakshatre: (star), -----yo:ge:,
----- karane:
ye:vam guna vise:shana visistha:ya:m asya:m
subha tidhou(mama kutumbasya/ asma:kam
sahakutumba:na:m),
kshe:ma sthairya dhairya vi:rya abhaya a:yuhu
a:ro:gya aishwarya
dhana kanaka vasthu va:hana putra
poutra:bhivrudhyardham,
dharma:rdha ka:ma mo:ksha:khya chaturvidha
phala purusha:rdha
sidhyardham,
a:dhya:tmika a:dhidaivika a:dhibhoutika ta:patraya
niva:rana:rdham,
mano:bhilashita ka:mana: sidhyardham,
samasta mangala:vyaptyardham sri: bhagavat
bha:gavatha kainkarya
ru:pam -----puja:m a:cha:rya
sri: hasthe:na adya ka:rayishye:

www.bhargavasarma.blogspot.com &
www.pravachanam.net

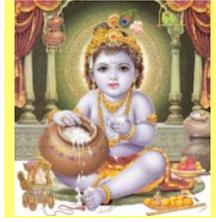
Sita Ram



Ganesh



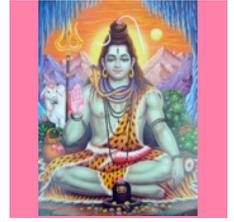
Krishna



Durga



Shiva



Sankalpa - Space and Time from Srimad Bhagavatam

During Sankalpa, we mention about the space and time that we live in. Lets look into how this space is defined first followed by time.

Space:

Where are we now? Lafayette, Louisiana. Where is Louisiana? It is in the southern part of United States. Where is United States? It is in the North American continent. Where is this North American continent? It is a part of Bhu-loka.

Bhulokam is also known as **bhu hu**. In this Bhulokam there are seven islands (Dweepams). Such as Jambudvipa (land of Indian berries), Plaksadvipa (land of fig trees), Salmalidvipa (land of silk cotton trees), Kusadvipa (land of grass), **Krouncadvipa** (land of kraunca birds), Sakadvipa (land of Saka people) and Pushkaradvipa (land of lakes).

Above this Bhu hu, there is another layer called Bhuvar loka, next layer Svar loka, followed by Mahar lokha, Jana loka and Satya loka. Below this Bhu hu there are Atala loka, Vitala loka, Sutala loka, Talatala loka, Mahatala loka, Rasatala loka and Patala loka. They are also called Sapta Urdhva lokas (seven upper worlds) and Sapta Adho lokas (seven lower worlds). These 14 lokhas together looks like an egg (andam). Who created these lokhas? Brahma, therefore this egg is called Brahma's egg (**Brahmandam**). This egg has a shell (avaranam). In between the egg and the shell there is a liquid layer called **avarana jalam**. Similar to the Amniotic fluid protecting the baby inside mothers womb during pregnancy.

So now imagine this entire Brahmandam is in a place where above this all the other lokhas such as vayu, agni, surya, chandra, nakshatra lokhas, and saptarishi mandalam all together in one place. Again imagine this entire set is inside an eye, an eye of a dolphin. In sanskrit this dolphin is called **Shimshumaram**. Now flip this dolphin upside down where in its eye this entire set of 14 lokhas along with surya, chandra, saptarishi mandalas are placed. Beside this Shimshumara chakra there is **Dhruva mandal**. This huge collection of lokhas and mandalas together in this format is residing as a spec of dust in **Maha Vishnu's belly button**. Thus the definition of space in which we resides



completes. Now we move on to the definition of time.

Time:

How many seconds in a minute? 60. How many minutes in an hour? 60. How many hours in a day? 24. How many days in a month? 30 (average). How many months in a year? 12. This 12 months completes a year. Like this 4,32,000 years is Kaliyuga. Two times of 4,32,000 years = Dwvapar yuga. Three times of 4,32,000 years = Tretha yuga and four times of 4,32,000 years = Kritha Yuga. Therefore (1+2+3+4) times 4,32,000 years = 43,20,000 years which is cumulation of 4 yugas and is called **Chatur yugas**.

Thousand Chatur yugas is equal to a day for Brahma. Another thousand Chatur yugas is equal to a night for Brahma. Therefore 24 hrs for Brahma is equal to 2000 Chatur Yugas. Like this 365 days is equal to a year for Brahma and 100 years like this is the lifetime of one Brahma. After completion of 100 years a new Brahma will come. Wait for a second..... How do we know this? Everytime we say this in our Sankalpa (see Page1) but we say without knowing the details.

Who is the current Brahma? **Aadya bramhane**..... means the current Brahma is.... How old is he? His 100 years is divided into two parts. Each 50 years is called "Para". The first 50 is Prathama Para and the second 50 is Dwithiya Para. Therefore

we say in our current Sankalpa **Aadya bramhane... Dwitheeya Parardhe**, Our Current Brahma has finished is first 50 years and he is in his second 50 years.



What we learnt before is 1000 chatur yugas is equal to a day of Brahma and this 1000 chatur yugas is called a Kalpa. Our current Kalpa is called **Swetha Varaahe Kalpe**.... the day (Kalpa) in which Lord Vishnu took the form (incarnation) of Varaaha (great Boar). Now we slowly see how all the things that we say in our Sankalpa (on Page1) makes sense.

To rule this 1000 Chatur yugas Brahma needs some assistance, even though he has four heads, its too much work for him to handle all by himself.

Therefore he created 14 Manus to rule 1000 Chatur Yugas. Hence One Manu will rule **71.42 Chatur Yugas**.

The current Manu that is ruling us is the 7th Manu. Who is this current Manu? Surya Bhagavan he is also called Vivaswan. This manu is represented in the Sankalpa as **Vaivaswatha Manvanthare**....



In this 71.42 Chatur Yugas, we are in the 28th Chatur Yuga, **Asthavimashatithamey**, Astha means 8, Vimasthi means 20. Lets recollect little bit: We are in Brahma's 2nd half (51st year) of his lifetime, in the day of Swetha Varaahe Kalpa, ruled by the 7th Manu called Vaivaswatha Manvanthare and in the 28th Chatur Yuga Asthavimashatithamey...

Chatur Yuga means 4 yugas they are Kritha, Tretha, Dwapara and Kaliyugas. In the 28th Chatur Yuga we are now in Kaliyuga. What we know is Kaliyuga is comprised of 4,32,000 years. This 4,32,000 years is divided into 4 equal quarters. Each quarter consists of 1,08,000 years. In Sanskrit each quarter is called "Pada". Thats why in Sankalpa we say **Kaliyuge Prathamapade**. Now in this first quarter of Kaliyuga we have completed only 5000 years, therefore just to complete Kaliyuga we have to go another 4,27,000 years. What this means unless we take **Moksha (liberation)** in this birth, we have to again take birth to go through all this years.

As Explained in Srimad Bhagavatam about time and space.

Inspired and Translated from Sri Dushyant Sridhar Tamil Pravachanam by Srinivasan Ambatipati

Sanatan Hindu Sanskar Kendra

PO Box 80362, Lafayette, Louisiana - 70598
 110, Hapsburg Lane, Lafayette, Louisiana - 70506
 Email: shskendra@gmail.com, Website: sanatanlft.org



Significance of Ratha Saptami

“arka mandala madhyastham sūryakōti samaprabham |

brahmādi sēvya pādābjam naumi brahma ramā sakham” ||

“I salute to Lord Narayana who resides in the center of sun orb, who is the equivalent the brilliance of thousands times this sun, whose lotus feet are worshipped by Brahma.”

What is the purpose of observing Ratha Saptami?

The scriptures proclaim that the word “ratha” is symbolic of the mind. The mind is the chariot. Innumerable thoughts arise in the mind. These thoughts are like different horses, which pull the mind in many different directions. To enable the mind to progress toward the divine, the right set of horses should pull it in the right direction. This, indeed, is the spiritual insight and the deeper meaning of Ratha Saptami.

Ratha Saptami festival is celebrated on the seventh day of the bright half of the lunar month, Magha. The Sun’s northerly movement according to Hindu astrological reckoning is called Makara Sankranti. The seventh day is the time when the Sun starts gaining momentum in the zodiac after the culmination into Capricorn. This Northernly movement, Uttarayana, is “brahma mārga”–the direction towards the Divine. It is said that we should pull the ratha, which is our “mind”, to follow the brahma marga. It is also the wish of paramātma the Supreme.

Lord Narayana is worshipped as Surya. In this form, the sun as Narayana is “ūpasya” - worshipped, “and “ūpāsana dvara”, meaning the Sun’s outer orb is the entry point to Narayana at the center.

How do we observe Ratha Saptami?

- Early morning snānam (bath)
- Worship and offering
- Experience the divine presence by going to the temple. Witness pulling of a chariot, if there is one.

snānam

“ārunōdaya vēla thasyā snānam maha phalam” - Vishnu smriti

The month of Magha is precious for early morning bath and highly rewarding. It is believed that all bad deeds will be washed off. Using the leaves of the “arka” plant and doing snāna on ratha saptami, wards off sins done in the previous 7 births and are pardoned by the grace of Surya Narayana. When taking bath in the flowing waters, it is advised to do so in the early morning hours, before anyone else starts using the stream. It is a practice to use sesame oil and light a lamp made in clay. While keeping a container on top with the “arka” leaf on the head, recite the snāna mantra given below and pray to Surya Narayana. The light is then set afloat in water.

The light of the lamp represents the divine who is splendid and has the brilliance of thousands of suns. The head - śiras also called sahasrār – is the culmination point, which connect with the supreme. The lamp is like śātāri– the lord’s feet which bless us. Keeping this lamp on the head connects us with the divine. It is said that arka leaf has the effect of expanding the nerve centers, enabling us to perceive and receive divine ordinance.

snāna mantram

“yada janma krutam pāpam mayā janmasu janmasul

tanmēy rōgam ca śōkam ca mākarihantu saptami||”

“yētatjanmakrutam pāpam yacca janmāntarārjitam|

manōvākkāyajam yacca jnātājnātēy ca yē punah||”

“iti sapta vidham pāpam snānmēy sapta saptikēy|

sapta vyādhi samāyuktam hara mākari saptami||”

“May the entirety of my sins accumulated in my present and previous births, on account of conscious and unconscious acts or those perpetrated by my vocal or mental roots, be dissolved on this makhara saptami and may this sacred snānam with my earnest and heartfelt supplications and obeisance to you, Surya Dēva!, in the form of seven kinds of sins and seven types of diseases be destroyed forever!”

arghya mantram

“sapta satpēvāhaprīta, saptalōka pradīpan |

saptami sahitō dēva! grihāNarghyam divākara ||”

“May you, Divākara!, who is fond of the number seven, riding on the chariot drawn by seven horses with seven names, bestow splendor to seven worlds, O Dēva! May I have the privilege of offering ‘arghya’ on this saptami tithi – seventh day - to mark my reverence!”

What is offered for worship?

Sesame seeds have the ability to absorb and emit high amounts of “sattva” – virtuous frequencies. This seed is a favorite of sun and therefore sweet made out of sesame seeds are offered as naivedyam. In addition, the lamp is lit using sesame seed oil. The food grain associated with sun god is the wholesome wheat. This pudding is prepared using wheat or pounded rice – avalakki

“The sun - Surya- is the visible presence, the vision of the divine, lord of excellence and wisdom, and the cosmic symbol of the Supreme. He is the divine light and presence that fills all the worlds” – RgVeda. As we know, physically there is no other brilliance equivalent to Sun. He is also the source of inner enlightenment as the famous gāyatri mantra suggests. He is the renewal of life on earth.

The Ratha Saptami worship procedure is designed to imbue us with gnaana (knowledge of the Divine) and launch us towards the divine.

surya dhyāna mantram

“japā kusuma-sankāṣam kāṣyapēyam mahā-dyutim |

tamōgnam sarva-pāpaghnam pranatōṣmi divākaram ||”

“Let us chant the glories of the Sun god, whose beauty rivals that of a flower. I bow to him, the greatly effulgence son of Kaśyapa, who is the enemy of darkness and destroyer of all sins”.

A common hymn that are used to worship the sun is the āditya hridhayam (In the rāmayana yuddha kanda, Sage Agastya advises SriRama to recite āditya hridhayam before the battle). Additionally, there are the twelve names of āditya that correspond to the twelve months and twelve zodiac signs that he is seen as passing through. Chanting these verses is supposed to invoke the benevolence of the Lord in all actions one does for the rest of the year.

www.srichintanam.weebly.com



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

Why Eating Food During Lunar Eclipse is Harmful

Sadhguru explains why consuming food during a lunar eclipse can have a negative impact on the system.

Sadhguru: During lunar eclipses, what would happen in 28 days over a full lunar cycle is happening in a subtle way over the course of two to three hours of the eclipse. In terms of energy, the earth's energy is mistaking this eclipse as a full cycle of the moon. Certain things happen in the planet where anything that has moved away from its natural condition will deteriorate very fast. This is why while there is no change in raw fruits and vegetables, there is a distinct change in the way cooked food is before and after the eclipse. What was nourishing food turns into poison.

Eclipse Effect: Food Once Eaten, Turns To Poison!

Poison is something that takes away your awareness. If it takes away to a certain minor level, that means you are dull. If it takes away your awareness to a certain depth, that means you are asleep. If something takes away your awareness completely, that means you are dead. Dullness, sleep, death – this is just a progression. So, cooked food will go through the phases of its deterioration much more rapidly in a subtle way than it does on a normal day.

Eclipse Effect: Can We Eat Raw Food?

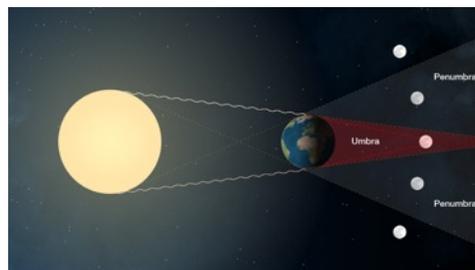
If there is food in your body, in two hours' time your energies will age by approximately twenty-eight days. Does that mean you can eat a raw food

diet on such a day? No, because the moment food goes into your body, the juices in your stomach attack and kill it. It becomes like semi-cooked food and will still have the same impact.

This is not just about food. This is about the way you are itself. If you have moved away from the natural dimension of who you are in anyway, you become more susceptible to these forces. If you are in your natural state, you are least available to these forces.

Eclipse Effect: The Moon & The Human Body

The cycles of the moon have an impact upon the human system, physically, psychologically and energy-wise. This is evident in the way our mothers went through their cycles. I am talking about our mothers because we are here only because our mothers were in tune with the moon. If our mothers' bodies were not in tune with the moon we wouldn't be here today. When the moon is going through a whole cycle in two to three hours' time, there is a little bit of confusion in all our mothers' bodies. This is also happening in a man's body, because your mothers are present in a certain way – not physiologically but in other ways.



Eclipse Effect: When The Body is Confused...

When the body is in a confused state, the best thing is to keep it as empty as possible, and as conscious as possible. One of the simplest ways to be conscious is to not eat. Then you will constantly be conscious of at least one thing. And the moment your stomach is empty, your ability to be conscious becomes so much better. Your body becomes more transparent and you are able to notice what is happening with your system much better.

www.isha.sadguru.org

January 2018 Dates

Based on Lafayette, Louisiana, US Time

12 Friday	Shatila Ekadashi
14 Sunday	Makar Sankranti
16 Tuesday	Mauni Amavas
21 Sunday	Vasant Panchami
23 Tuesday	Ratha Saptami
24 Wednesday	Bhishma Ashtami
27 Saturday	Jaya Ekadashi
31 Wednesday	Magha Purnima, Chandra Grahan Purna

For more details please refer
DrikPanchang.com

Thank you for your support and blessings.

Sri Krishnaarpanamasthu
Srinivasan Ambatipati, Editor