

Preparations before worshipping a Deity

Preface

Pūjā of Deities is an easy way of abiding by *āchārs* (Conducts) set by *Dharma* to facilitate regular *sādhanā* (Spiritual practice) of a worshipper. *Pūjā* of a Deity creates a centre of devotion and *bhāvin* the mind of the worshipper. It results in showering of grace by the Deity and makes the home environment more *sāttvik*. It also creates a *sanskār* (Impression on the subconscious mind) of *Dharma* on the future generation. Preparation for a *pūjā* is truly the foundation for the ritual of *pūjā*. It not only purifies the worshipper, but also equips him to imbibe *Chaitanya* that is emitting from the *pūjā*; hence, the necessity of preparations.

Performance of a religious act is a kind of scientific experiment in the science of Spirituality. Preciseness is the key to success of an experiment. Religious activities are no exception to this rule. Obviously, only when religious activities are performed with precision can we benefit from them. Precision comes from perfection, and hence, it is equally important to understand the spiritual science underlying religious acts. Acts performed after understanding the underlying spiritual science generate faith. Similarly, *Dharma* says that 'if a good deed is performed in an unscientific manner, the unscientific performer too gets the benefit, though marginal'. Hence, it is essential that the religious acts be performed as per the spiritual science. Keeping in view this aspect, this Holy text elucidates the preparations to be made before a *pūjā* and their underlying spiritual science.

Various aspects that this Holy text focuses on include the importance of reciting *stotrās* (Holy hymns), chanting *mantras* (Please see Glossary) and the Name of God before the *pūjā*, purification of the venue and implements in *pūjā*, drawing a *rangoli* to match the Principle of the Deity, various types of *āsans* (Seats) to be used during the *pūjā*, appropriate methods of removal of the *nirmālya* (Withered flowers and leaves, which have been offered earlier to a Deity) and wiping the pictures and Idols of Deities; so also the importance of *āchaman* (Sipping water from the palm), *Prāṇāyām*, pronunciation of *dēsh-kāl* (Name of the place, date and time), making a *sankalp* and *nyās* (Assigning various parts of the body to various Deities by specific postures of fingers) and the importance of *pūjā* of a *kalash* (A metal water container), the *shankh* (Conch), the *ghanṭī* (Bell) and the *deep* (An oil lamp) just before the commencement of *pūjā*.

Our earnest prayer at the Holy feet of the Guru is - 'May the worshipper understand the importance of preparation for *pūjā* after reading this Holy text, and perform *pūjā* with sincere *bhāv*; may he get utmost *Chaitanya* from the *pūjā*'.

- Compiler

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(An * sign has been put along with important points)

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