

Spiritual science underlying familial religious and social acts

Preface

There is a proverb in Sanskrit – ‘सुखं न विना धर्मात् । तस्मात् धर्मपरो भवेत् ॥’ which means, ‘Happiness in the true sense (*Ānand*) is possible only by being religious, that is, by following *Dharma* (Righteousness); hence, always endeavour to follow it’. Through the medium of various religious rituals, *sanskārs* (Subconscious impressions), Festivals, Vowed observances etc., Hindu *Dharma* has shown how to be religious while continuing to lead a materialistic life. Hindu *Dharma* has conveyed its message of being religious through not only daily ritualistic worship or acts related to worship during Holy and Religious festivals, Vowed religious observances etc., but also through various familial and social rituals.

Only when a designated act is supported by rituals as prescribed by Hindu *Dharma*, meaning the course defined by rituals that have a spiritual basis is adhered to, that we obtain the grace of Deities. This also helps in protecting us from negative energies. Along with the individual, such acts bestow benefit upon the society too, and hence, it becomes *samashṭi sādhanā* (Spiritual practice for the spread of Spirituality in the society). This Holy text elaborates upon the objectives, the correct method of performing a ritual and the underlying spiritual science of familial religious ritual such as birthday celebrations, *aukshaṇ* (The ritual of waving a lit lamp), gifting, performance of the ritual of *Shānti* (Peace) as per one’s age and social rituals such as inauguration, lighting of an inaugural lamp, felicitation, condolence meetings etc. When a ritual is performed with complete faith after understanding the underlying spiritual science, the benefit derived is greater. Importance of reciting Sanskrit *shlokās* (Holy verses) and information on which *shlokās* to recite during spiritual discourses, book exhibitions, condolence meetings, rallies etc. is also provided in this Holy text.

In today’s times, Hindus are more influenced by western culture. The combined effect of forgetting our own *Dharma* as well as our culture, coupled with the fascination for western culture, is the reason for large-scale influence of western culture on our religious rituals. This is quite clear from a number of practices such as celebrating a birthday by cutting a cake and blowing candles instead of performing *aukshaṇ*; inaugurating a premises by cutting a ribbon instead of purifying the place by breaking a coconut; lighting the ceremonious lamp with a candle and not with a wick of an oil lamp etc. That these acts do not bestow *Chaitanya* (Divine consciousness) and are spiritually detrimental has been explained in this Holy text along with the underlying spiritual science.

We pray at the Holy feet of Shrī Guru that let everyone progress spiritually, both at the *vyashṭi* (Individual) and *samashṭi* (For the sake of the society) level by performing the rituals according to the underlying spiritual science as mentioned in this Holy text and let pride for *Dharma* and culture be awakened in Hindus. - **Compiler**

Chapter 1 : Index

(An asterisk [*] sign has been placed alongside important points)

1. Birthday	18
* Spiritual meaning History and importance	18
* Importance of celebrating the birthday as per the <i>tithī</i> (Lunar day)	21
* Method of celebrating a birthday	24
* Spiritual experiences during birthday celebrations	30
* Acts prohibited on a birthday and the spiritual science	31
* A Saint's birthday	39
* Birthday celebration of children, people of the same age, the elderly and Saints	39
2. Aukshaṇ	42
* Spiritual meaning and importance of <i>aukshaṇ</i>	42
*On whom & where should the <i>aukshaṇ</i> be performed ?	42
*Spiritual science underlying the acts during <i>aukshaṇ</i>	48
*Reasons underlying the various methods of <i>aukshaṇ</i> and the effect on a <i>jīva</i> (Embodied soul)	58
*Actual worship, <i>aukshaṇ</i> , mental worship, remembrance and mental recitation	60
3. Presenting a gift	61
*Meaning of the word gift	61
*What should be the <i>bhāṅ</i> (Spiritual emotion) while presenting gifts ?	61
*Why are <i>haldī</i> (Turmeric) and <i>kumkum</i> (Vermilion) applied to the gift ?	62
4 Ritual of Shānti	62
5. Satyanārāyaṇ-pūjā (Worship of Deity Satyanarayan)	73

Chapter 2 : Index

(An asterisk [*] sign has been placed alongside important points)

1. Inauguration	77
* Definition	77
* Importance	77
* Rituals in inauguration	77
* Why is the western tradition of inaugurating by cutting a ribbon inappropriate ?	79
2. Lighting a ceremonious lamp	82
* Importance of lighting a ceremonious lamp	82
* Spiritual science underlying lighting a ceremonious lamp and breaking a coconut when inaugurating a programme on the stage	83
3. Felicitation	92
* Who should do the felicitation ?	93
* What should be avoided during felicitation ?	97
* Comparison of felicitation of a deserving <i>jīva</i> , a Saint and an Idol of a Deity	97
4. Granth-prakāshan (Book release)	98
* Why should we not release a book by first tying it with a ribbon and then untying it ?	99
5. Why is it necessary to recite Sanskrit <i>shlokās</i> at functions on various topics, and which one to recite when ?	101
6. The composition of a stage programme of one or two sessions	104
7. Condolence meeting	106