

Spiritual science underlying familial religious and social acts

Preface

There is a proverb in Sanskrut – ‘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, *aukṣaṇ* (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 Sanskrut *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 *aukṣaṇ*; 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 *vyashti* (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. Aukṣaṇ | 42 |
| * Spiritual meaning and importance of <i>aukṣaṇ</i> | 42 |
| *On whom & where should the <i>aukṣaṇ</i> be performed ? | 42 |
| *Spiritual science underlying the acts during <i>aukṣaṇ</i> | 48 |
| *Reasons underlying the various methods of <i>aukṣaṇ</i> and the effect on a <i>jīva</i> (Embodied soul) | 58 |
| *Actual worship, <i>aukṣaṇ</i> , mental worship, remembrance and mental recitation | 60 |
| 3. Presenting a gift | 61 |
| *Meaning of the word gift | 61 |
| *What should be the <i>bhāv</i> (Spiritual emotion) while presenting gifts ? | 61 |
| *Why are <i>haldi</i> (Turmeric) and <i>kumkum</i> (Vermilion) applied to the gift ? | 62 |
| 4. Ritual of <i>Shānti</i> | 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 Sanskrut <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 |