

# 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, in abiding by Dharma (Righteousness); hence, always endeavour to abide by it'. Through the medium of various religious rituals, *sanskārs* (Subconscious impressions), Festivals, Vowed religious 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) do 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, they become *samashṭi sādhanā* (Spiritual practice for the spread of Spirituality in the society). This 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, performing the ritual of *Shānti* (Peace) as per one's age and social rituals such as inauguration, lighting inaugural lamp, felicitation, condolence meetings and related rituals. When a ritual is performed with complete faith after understanding the underlying spiritual science, the benefit obtained is more. 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 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 extinguishing 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, and other common practices. How these acts do not bestow *Chaitanya* (Divine consciousness) and are spiritually detrimental has been explained in this Text along with the underlying spiritual science.

We pray at the Holy feet of Shrī Guru – May everyone progress spiritually, at the *vyashṭi* (Individual) as well as the *samashṭi* (Society) level by performing the rituals according to the underlying spiritual science as mentioned in this Text and may pride for Dharma and culture be awakened in Hindus. - **Compiler**

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