

Shree Swaminarayan vijayteteram  
*Shree Nanarayandev Sahitya Series No - 49*

In the memory of new temple of  
Lord Shri Narnarayan Dev

# RELIGIOUS RITES



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Vedantacharya

By inspiration of Param Pujya  
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## **Introduction**

The rites perform by the devotees of uddhav sect are entirely according to shastra and shastrokta way. Hence this sect is entirely Vaidic sect already proved the shikshapatri written by Bhagwan Swaminaryan himself contains the rules, religious rules. Shree Satamand muni Virchit Satsangjivan is also included.

This book highlights the practice Urdava Pundra bearing putting kanthi along the neck and Nitya Puja is based on totally scientific way and classical system have the generation may ask some questions as to what is the benefit of Tilak and wearing kanthi around the neck and worshipping. What do they get by Bhakti. So Swamiji has explained the above questions in classical way the benefit, bodily mentally and financially. And next what ever we do, one must know the basic reason of our act so that we may know its' result.

I hope that N.R.I. people (living in abroad) may be benefited by this English booklet and may be benefited maximally that is my humble prayer at the pious feet of Shri Hari

Mahant Purani Swami  
**Shri Dharmanandan Dasji**  
Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Bhuj

## **Introduction**

This book is an interesting publication, coming from our Swaminarayan Sampraday in which Dr. Swami Satyaprasad Dasji, Ph.D, (Vedantacharya) has genuinely attempted to bring out the inherent significance of vast number of 'Religious Rites' performed by the adherents of the Sampraday. In this book, learned saint has provided a deep thoughts into the various aspects surrounding the observance of these rites and has offered explanations relating to their scientific importance and significance. The author has also extensively quoted the vedic passages which may be considered as the base or authority for the conduct of many of our religious practices; for example putting 'tilak', or wearing 'kanthi'; and more importantly for proper performance of 'pooja vidhi' (procedure of worship), a regular and faithful practice, which shall ensure a peaceful and divine happy life, in this world.

In today's contemporary society, a good majority of the people or community may

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not be genuinely aware of the importance of practicing these different rituals. However with the aid of this handbook, such aspiring members of the community shall have a very good opportunity to read and absorb the significance and essence of various religious practices prescribed in the Sampraday. Apparently, for a busy person, - in to -day's modern society- it may not be possible to find adequate time to study the great classical books works like 'Achar Samhita', 'Padma Puran' or 'Upanishads', which are a great and precious storehouse containing these practices. To overcome such difficulties facing today's community and still aid them in the sacred path of their spiritual pursuit, our Swamiji has taken considerable pains and efforts to explain these practices in their simpler perspectives, but without losing their contextual merit and significance for which the community should feel grateful. Swamiji has done his best in providing a very lucid and concise explanation in a simple language for the

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benefit of the community. Swamiji has also tried to explain the various fruits of prosperity and other benefits that shall accrue to such persons, who perform the sacred rituals with devotion and dedication. More importantly, such a devout individual is bound to invoke the grace of the supreme Lord, Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan, both in this life and hereafter.

I am hopeful that all sections of society will immensely gain valuable knowledge lying in store of this small handbook and realise true happiness, in life.

Navinbhai Narshi Pinara  
Gandhidham

## **Introduction of an author**

**Dr. Swami Satya prasad Dasji (Vedantacharya)**

After attaining Bhagwati mantra Dixa from **Acharya Tejendraprasadji Maharaj** and receiving religious course from honourable **Sataguru Swami Morlimanohar Dasji** and **Swami Premprakash Dasji** at Bhuj became their disciple in Samvat 2041 Bhadra sud 11. (E.V. 24-9-1985) Sanskrit Pathashala running in the temple premises and **K. Kasturi Rangacharya**'s guidance, after finishing primary education, proceeded to Melkote (Karnatak) for higher studies went to the abode of scholar so **K. S. Vardacharya** to study Vedant and finished his studies becoming Acharya in Vedanta Thereafter proceeded to Tirupati (Andhra pradesh) at **Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidhyapeth** to carry out research in research department. He Wrote Bhasya as **Shri Bhasyam by Shri Ramanujacharya** and **Brahamimamsa. by Shri Muktanand Swami**. He wrote **Shodhaprabandh** on above two Bhashyam due to it he was awarded "**Vidya Varidhi**" **Ph.D.**

He has written many religious extract books, being published by-Bhuj Temple Publishing House.

## CONTENTS

(1) Urdhva Pundra Dharana Vidhi	9
(2) Material To Be Used For Locations Of Four Pundras	14
(3) Fruits Of Urdhva Pundram	21
(4) Size Or Dimension Of 'Urdhva Pundram'	23
(5) Importance Of Tilak In Yoga, Meditation And Physical Fitness	24
(6) Part Played By Tilak In Obtaining Monetary Or Financial Gains.	27
(7) A True Incident Relating To The Power Of Tilak	28
(8) Kanti Dharn Vidhi	31
(9) Clarifications Of Doubts	34
(10) Prayer Offered When Adorning A Kanthi	37
(11) Poojã Vidhi	40
(12) Types Of Aasana	45



Shree Swaminarayano vijayteteram



PART – I

## URDHVA PUNDRA DHARAN VIDHI

(ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रधारणविधि)

(Ritual for wearing tilak on the forehead and other parts of the body)

Let us now seek to know relating to the procedures for wearing the ‘Urdhva Pundra’ (Tilak), Kanthi (Rosary) and performing the Pooja (worship), in a prescribed manner. These are ‘Dharmik Vidhis’ (Religious Rites) that need to be performed in a specific manner, as ordained in Vedic scriptures.

Before undertaking performance of these Vidhis(Rituals), certain questions like- ‘why

should one perform these dry rituals'; 'are they really needed to progress in this world'; 'can we not remain religious or virtuous even without performing these so called religious rites' etc.,- naturally tend to arise in the minds of the people, in particular those among the young generation of today's society. In fact, it is the aim and objective of this publication to address such questions and provide accurate answers in a most convincing and forceful manner and thus laying down the procedures as sanctioned in scriptures, for the benefit of one and all.

In the shikshapatri Lord Swaminarayan states that "All my male followers shall adorn the 'Urdhva Pundratilak' a chandlo on the forehead with ( a round mark) at the centre Married women shall wear only a red round mark on the forehead applied with kumkum. Widows shall however abstain from marking their foreheads with either Urdhwapundra mark or redmark with kumkum.

Thenafter both my male and female followers should mentally worship Lord Shree Krishna.

Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan proceeds to describe the procedure of performing the 'Puja Vidhi', in the following Shikshapatri verses :

कृष्णदीक्षां गुरोः प्राप्तेस्तुलसीमालिके गले ।

धार्ये नित्यं चोर्ध्वपुन्द्रं ललाटादौ द्विजातिभिः ( शि.प. ४१ )  
(Krishnadiksham guroh prāptaistulsimālike gale.  
Dhārye nityam chordhvpundram lalātādau dvijātibhihi.)

कर्तव्यमूर्ध्वपुन्द्रं च पुम्भिरेव सचन्द्रकम् ।

कार्यः सधवानारीभिर्भाले कुङ्कुमचन्द्रकः ॥ (शि.प. ५१)  
Kartvyamoordhvpundram cha pumbhirev sachandrakam.  
Kāryah sadhavānāreebhirbhāle kumkumchandrakah.

पुन्द्रं वा चन्द्रको भाले न कार्यो मृत्नाथया ।

मनसा पूजनं कार्यं ततः कृष्णस्य चाखिलैः ॥  
Pundram vā chandrako bhāle na kāryo mrutnāthayā.  
Mansā poojnam kārya tatah krishnsya chākhilaihi.)

प्रणम्य राधाकृष्णस्य लेख्यार्चा तत आदरात् ।

शक्त्या जपित्वा तन्मन्त्रं कर्तव्यं व्यावहारिकम् ॥ (शि.प.५४)

Prañmya rādhākṛshnsya lekhyārchā tata ādarāt.  
Shaktyā japitvā tanmnttram kartvyam vyāvahārikam.

After anointing oneself with ‘Urdhva Pundram Lord Swaminarayan states that disciples shall bow down with devotion before the idol or painted image of Radhakrishna and chant the ‘Krishna Mantram’ to the best of their ability and capacity, and only then should their proceed to attend to their daily duties”.

In the above advice of Lord Shree Swami Narayan it evident that a desciple is only fit to perform pooja after adorning the Urdhva Pundra tilak. This has its basis in the ‘Pancharatra Samhita’, a renowned text authority.

यज्ञो दानं तपोहोमः भोजनं पितृतर्पणम् ।

सर्वं भवन्ति विफलाः ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रं विनाकृताः ॥

(Yagno danām tapo homah bhojanam pitri tarpanam. Sarvam bhavnti viphalāh urdhvapundram vinā krutāha.)

Yagna, Charity, Penance, daily rituals, taking food, offering libations of water to ancentors manes, etc., all become fruitless, if they are performed without applying the ‘Urdhva Pundram’. Similarly, Shri. Radhakrishna’s Pooja and chanting the Krishna Mantra too, shall become fruitless, if it is done without wearing the ‘Urdhva Pundram’. Therefore the Lord has thus instructed his disciples:

“My disciples, only after wearing Urdhva Pundaram shall worship Shree Radhakrishna”. The authority for wearing ‘Urdhva Pundram’ is as follows:

अयोर्ध्वं जाति कामानां ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रस्य धारणम् ॥

(Ayardhva jāti kāmānām urdhvapundrasya dhārnām.)

Those who seek to attain ‘Moksha’ (liberation from the cycle of births and deaths), must mark their forehead with ‘Urdhva Pundram’.

This subject is dealt with in this chapter, drawing substantially upon the authority of scriptures. ‘Urdhva’ is defined literally as “Vertical” or “Upwards”; ‘Pundram’ means a symbol, or sectarian mark. The vedic authority prescribing the procedure for applying the ‘Urdhva Pundram’ is as follows:

धृतोर्ध्वपुन्द्रः परमेशितारं नारायणं साङ्ख्ययोगाधिगम्यम् ।  
 ज्ञात्वा विमुच्यते नरः समस्तैः संसारपाशैरिह चैव विष्णुम् ॥  
 (Dhritordhvapundrah parameshitāram nārāyanam  
 sāṅkhya yogādhigamyam.  
 Gnātvā vimuchyeta narah samstaih samsāra  
 pāshairiha chaiva vishnum.)

Mahopanishad says that one who wears ‘Urdhva Pundram’ and who sincerely meditates upon Lord Shree Narayan, realises himself through his mind and attains liberation from worldly bondage.

**Another vedic authority says:**

धृतोर्ध्वपुन्द्रः परमेशितारं नारायणं पूजयति स्वभक्त्या ।  
 अर्घ्यादिभिः पौरुषसूक्तमन्त्रैः संप्राप्नुयात् विष्णुपदं महात्मा ॥

(Dhritordhvapundraḥ i parmeshitāram nārāyaṇam  
poojayati svabhaktyā.  
Arghyādibhiḥ pauruṣhasooktamantriḥ samprāpnuyāt  
viśṇūpadam mahātmā.)

One who worships Lord Shree Narayan, after wearing ‘Urdhva Pundram’ along with recitation of Puruṣa Suktha Mantras and offering of oblations (“Arghyas”) will surely attain “Moksha”. So, from the above texts which are based on authoritative sources, it becomes obvious that applying ‘Urdhva Pundram’ for the devout follow seeking Lord Shree Narayana is highly essential and sacrosanct.

### **MATERIAL TO BE USED FOR ‘URDHVA PUNDRAM’**

While it is important for the devotee to wear ‘Urdhva Pundram’ before worshipping Lord Shree Narayan, it is equally important to know, as to what kind of sacred materials shall be specifically used or those materials which constitute ‘Urdhva Pundram’. These aspects are also carefully dealt with in a number of authoritative scriptural texts. Some of these texts are mentioned here.

The following shloka from the Shikshapatri provides valuable information about the materials to be used for 'Urdhva Pundram'.

तत्तु गोपिचन्दनेन चन्दनेनाथवा हरैः ।

कार्यं पूजावशिष्टेन केशरादियुतेन च ॥ ( शिक्षा.)

(Tattu gopichandanen chandanenāthavā hareh.  
Kāryam poojāvashishten kesharādiyuten cha.)

Tilak, the holy mark shall be made out of the white clay, called 'Gopi Chandanam', or even could be of sandalwood paste. If required, this paste can be mixed with saffron etc. According to Shikshapatri Bhashya, there are many other types of materials which could also be used for 'Urdhva Pundram'.

The Bhramhandapurana recommends the following, relating to the sourcing of the materials, which are to be used for 'Urdhva Pundram'.

पर्वताग्रे नदीतीरे मम क्षेत्रे विशेषतः ।

सिन्धुतीरे च वल्मीके तुलसीमूलमाश्रिते ॥

(Parvtāgre nadeeteere mama kshetre wisheshatah.  
Sindhuteere cha walmeeke tulsimoolmāshrite.)

According to the above, the holy marks shall be made of white clay, which shall be sourced

from either a top of a hill or from river bank, or sea coast, or the clay may be brought from an ant hill (termite mound), or from the roots of the tulsi plant garden.

The 'Urdhva Pundaram' shall be applied in a straight line manner on the forehead, on the chest and also on the two arms. The sacred clay materials should be first offered to Shree Hari and then used for 'Urdhva Pundram' application.

Configuration or Shape of the 'Urdhva Pundaram'

Having prescribed the material for usage in 'Urdhva Pundram' application, it is equally important to know the shape or configuration in which the 'Urdhva Pundram' has to be worn on an individual. In this connection, Shree Shatanand Muni quotes extensively from a number of Achar Samhitas, Brahmand of Achar Madhav, Achar Mayuka, Padma Puranam and Vasudev Upanishad, in the Shiksha patri Bhashya, for the benefit of the devotees.

Some of the shapes or configurations prescribed for 'Urdhva Pundram' application are as follows:-



- 
- (१) हरिपादाकृतिः - (Haripada Kritih) Shape of the lotus feet of Lord Shree
- (२) वेळुपत्राकृतिः (Venupatra Kritih) Leaf of a Bamboo tree.
- (३) दीपाकृतिः (Deepa Kritih) Flame of a lamp.
- (४) दन्डाकृतिः (Danda Kritih) Shape of a wooden stick.
- (५) शङ्खाकृतिः (Shankha Kritih) Shape of a conch.
- (६) पद्माकृतिः ( Padmākar) Shape of a lotus leaf.
- (७) मत्स्याकृतिः (Matsya Kritih) Shape of a fish.
- (८) कूर्माकृतिः (Koorma Kritih) Shape of a tortoise.

After examining all the above recommended shapes for 'Urdhva Pundram', Shree Shatanand Muni concludes that, the most appropriate shapes for usage are Haripaada Kritih and Dhanda Kritih, in support of which is a quotation from the following sloka of Shree Padma Purana.

महाभागवतः शुद्धः पुन्द्रं हरिपदाकृतिः ।

दन्डाकारं तु वा देवी धारयेदुर्ध्वपुन्द्रकम् ।

इति युक्तयः उक्त । उपरि किञ्चित् विस्तीर्णत्वे पदाकृति ज्ञेयं समत्वे तु दन्डाकृतिः ।

(Mahābhāgavatāh shuddhah pundram haripādākriti dandākāram tu vā devi dhāryedoordh vapundrakam.

Iti vuktayah uktah. Upari kinchit vistirñatve padākriti gneyam smatve tu dandākriti.)

Accordingly the ‘Urdhva Pundram’ shall be worn in the form of Haripada Kritih (Shape of lotus feet of Lord Shree Hari) or Dhanda Kritih (Shape of a wooden stick).

ऊर्ध्वपिन्द्राणि च गृहस्थैः साधुभिश्च ललाटे हृदि बाहोश्चेति चत्वारि वासुदेवसङ्कर्षणप्रद्युम्नानिरुद्धनाम - मन्त्रैर्धार्याणीत्युक्तं दीक्षाविधौ ।

(Urdh vapundrāṇi cha grihsthaih sādhubhishcha lalāte hradi bāhvoshcheti chatvāri vāsudev sankarshaṇ pradyumnāniruddhanām mantrairdhāryāṇēetyuktam dikshāvidhau.)

## LOCATIONS OF FOUR PUNDRAS

The prescribed locations or positions for application for four pundras on a devotee’s person are as follows:

ॐ श्रीवासुदेवाय नमः [Om Shree Vasudevaya Namah]

1. Forehead – placing Lord Shree Vasudev,

ॐ श्रीसङ्कर्षणाय नमः [Om Sri Sankarshanaya Namah]

2. Chest – placing Lord Shree Sankarshan,

ॐ श्रीपद्युम्नाय नमः [Om Shree Pradyumnaya Namah]

3. Right Shoulder – placing Lord Shree Pradyumna,

ॐ श्रीअनिरुद्धाय नमः [Om Sri Aniruddhaya Namah]

4. Left Shoulder – placing Lord Shree Aniruddha,

Now, after wearing the four Urdhva Pundra's as recommended above, one should proceed with the application of 'kumkum' in the middle of the Pundra's as follows:

The 'kumkum' powder of sandalwood mixed with saffron or 'Kumkum' offered in worship to Radhaji or Lakshmiji should be applied in the middle of the Pundras. Shikshapatri provides the correct guidance for applying 'kumkum' or 'Shreechurnam' as follows:

तन्मध्य एव कर्तव्यः पुन्द्रद्रव्येण चन्द्रकः ।

कुङ्कुमेनाथवा वृत्तो राधालक्ष्मीप्रसादिना ॥ (शिक्षा)

Tanmdhya av kartvyah pundradravyeñ chandrakah.

Kumkummenāthava vritto rādhālkshmiprasādinā.

With kumkum powder or similar paste material, a round shaped mark ('0' like mark) shall be applied in the centre of 'the Urdhva Pundra'. This paste shall however be offered to Radhaji or Lakshmiji, before using the same.

“ चन्द्रविधानं तु स्वसम्प्रदायद्योतकम्” ।

(Chandrak vidhānam tu svasampradāydyotkam.)

The application of this round shaped “kumkum” generally signifies the particular sect to which the person belongs.

In this regard, Brahmand Purana is of the view that :

ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रस्य मध्येतु विशाले अतिमनोहरे ।

लक्ष्म्या सार्धं समासीनः रमेहं तत्र निर्वृतः ॥

(Urdhwapundrasya madhyet vishāle atimanohare.  
Laxmyā sārđham samāseenah rameham tatra nirvritah.)

The ‘Urdhva Pundram’ which is wide and good looking is where Lord Shree Narayan resides, with goddess Lakshmi in middle.

निरन्तरालं यः कुर्यात् ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रं द्विजाधमः ।

स हि तत्र स्थितं विष्णुं श्रियं चैव व्यपोहति ॥

(Nirntalam yah kuryāt urdhwapundram dvijadhāmah  
Sa hi tatra sthitam vishñum shriyam chaiv vyapohti.)

However, one who wears ‘Urdhva Pundram’ without leaving adequate space in the centre for applying kumkum or Shreechurnam, is considered a Brahmin of the lowest order, since he neglects the presence of Lord Vishnu and Shree Lakshmi who always reside here.

IN SARASANGRAH

In the Sarasangrah this aspect is once again highlighted as follows:

श्रीअनिरुद्धाय ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रस्य मध्ये तु हरिद्राचूर्णकुङ्कुमम्।  
 धारेयत् वैष्णवो नित्यं कमलाप्रीतये नृप ॥  
 ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रस्य मध्ये तु लक्ष्मीस्थानं प्रकल्पयेत् ॥

(Udhvapundrasya madhye tu hridrāchoorṇakumkumm.  
 Dhāryet vaishnwo nityam kamalāpreetye nrip.  
 Udhvapundrasya madhye tu Laxmishānam praklpayet.)

All devout Vaishnava's, seeking the divine grace of Goddess Lakshmi shall wear Haridrahchurna kumkum in middle region of 'Urdhva Pundram'. The mid-region of 'Urdhva Pundram' is attributed to be the abode of Lord Shree Lakshmi.

## FRUITS OF URDHVA PUNDRAM

वर्णाङ्गुलिभेदेनोर्ध्वपुन्द्रफलभेदो प्युक्तः

(Varṇāṅgulibhedenordhvapundrafalbhedopyuktah.)

It is also believed that 'Urdhva Pundram' Thilak, applied on a person in different colours or hues, using different fingers of the hand shall yield different results. Thus, Tilak worn in blackish color will bestow peace of mind to the wearer, while reddish color will establish control or supremacy over others. Yellow colored Tilak will bring wealth and prosperity, but Vaishnavas are recognised by white Tilak on their foreheads. Is regard to the usage of various fingers for the

application of the 'Urdhva Pundra', the following sloka is relevant.

श्यामं शान्तिकरं प्रोक्तं रक्तं वश्यकरं भवेत् ।

श्रीकरं पीतमित्याहुर्वेष्णवं श्वेतमुच्यते ॥

(Shyāmam shāntikaram proktam raktam vashyakram bhavet.

Shrikaram peetmityāhuh vaishñvam shvetmuchyate.)

If the 'Urdhva Pundra' is applied by the devotee on his forehead using his thumb, it results in nourishment; if applied using the index finger, middle finger and ring finger these in turn bestow on the wearer wealth, happiness and emancipation. However, it is important to bear in mind that in the process of using these fingers for applying 'Urdhva Pundra', the nails shall not come into contact (with 'Urdhva Pundra').

In Sakand Margasheersha Mahatmya it is said-

एतच्चादर्थादि दृष्ट्वैव कार्यम् ।

वीक्ष्याऽदर्शो जले वापि यो विदद्यात्मप्रयत्नतः ॥

उर्ध्वपुन्द्रं महाभागः स याति परमां गतिम् ।

(Etchchādarshadi drishtvaiv kāryam.

Viskhyādarsho Jale vāpi yo vidadhyātprayatntah.

Urdhvapundram mahābhāgah sa yāti parmām gatim.)

In Satsangi Jeevan, it is said:

प्रासादिकेन रूपचिं दृष्ट्वाऽऽदर्शसचन्द्रकम् ॥

(Prāsādiken ruchiram drishtvādarsh schandrakam.)

Those persons, who wear ‘Urdhva Pundra’, together with the round shaped kumkum in the middle will surely attain Moksha by witnessing its image in a mirror or in water.

## SIZE OR DIMENSION OF ‘URDHVA PUNDRAM’

Apart from wearing the prescribed configurations of ‘Urdhva Pundram’ marked in the mid-region with kumkum/Shreechurnam, the devotee shall also adhere to prescribed size or dimensions of ‘Urdhva Pundram’, aspects of which are discussed here.

In Achar Mayukha, it is said:

ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रमृजुं सौम्य कनिष्ठङ्गुलिमत् स्मृतम् ॥

नासादिकेनशपर्यन्तं प्रयत्नात् धारयेत् जनः ॥

(Urdhvapundramrijum saumya kanishthangulimat smritam.

Nāsādikeshparyntam prayatnat dhāryat janah.)

Again Padma Purana, endorses a similar view:

आरभ्य नासिकामूलं ललाटे विलिखेन्मृदा ।

समारभ्य भ्रुवोर्मूलमन्तरालं प्रकल्पयेत् ॥

(Ārbhya nāsikāmoolam lalāte vilikhanmridā.

Samārabhy bhruvormoolamantarālam prakalpyet.)

In the view of Satsangi Jeevan:

सच्छिद्रं नासिकामूलालाटे त्वाक् चोदयात् ॥

(Sachchhidram nāsikāmoolāllalāte tvāḱ chodyāt.)

All the above spiritual texts uphold the view that the ‘Urdhva Pundra’ shall be applied using the tip region of the fingers, starting from the base of the nose passing through the forehead region of the face, and terminating at the top of the forehead, i.e, near the parting of hair.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THILAK IN YOGA, MEDITATION AND PHYSICAL FITNESS**

The precise position where the round shaped ‘Tilak’ along with ‘Urdhva Pundram’ is applied, is called the ‘CENTER OF ORDER’ or ‘AGNA CHAKRA’. When the person who applies Thilak on his forehead on the Agna Chakra or Center of Order, mixed with sandalwood or any other type of prescribed sacred clay, the mind of such person attains a state of total calmness or tranquility. By cultivating this practise regularly, one finds it easier and relatively simpler to concentrate. If one were to follow the signs of anatomy, the two sacred nerves ‘IDA’ and ‘PINGALA’ pass through the forehead region of



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every human being and by regular application of the holy 'Urdhva Pundra', tilak both the 'IDA' and 'PINGALA' nerves would be further developed.

Regarding the need and desirability of development of both these vital nerves, it is said that this will lead to upliftment of the living self. The celebrated 'UPANISHADS' recommend that the practise of Dhyana and meditation with the mind concentrating on the Agna Chakra, centered in the forehead should be undertaken daily. By a rigour of regular practise, 'Dhyana' (meditation) for the Brahman becomes relatively easier. The 'PRANA SHAKTI' or the vital 'Living Force', accumulates to an enhanced level in the region of the forehead. According to 'YOGA SHASTRA', our life span increases with the application of the above 'Tilak', which will further take us towards submission to God, Almighty. We are all actually 'Dasas', that is servants of God, But when we genuinely accept and turn ourselves into the state of Dasas, the benevolent God spontaneously comes to our rescue and will be instrumental in our spiritual upliftment, besides taking care of our worldly problems.

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Sri (Mahalakshmi), the celebrated goddess of wealth, is known to reside in the forehead region of a devotee, and hence by applying 'TILAK' of haldi and kumkum, the flow of wealth will also correspondingly increase. Through 'SADHANA' i.e. worship of 'AGNA CHAKRA', one naturally becomes happy in life. The 'Jeeva' (soul) lives in the heart, and according to 'Yoga Shastra', the heart is compared to a divine temple where the divine idol of God is installed. Applying the 'CHANDAN' or 'FLAVORED CLAY', has a cooling effect on the heart where God resides. By Applying 'AGAR CHANDAN' on the heart region of the person, one can attain the twin benefits of both mental peace and physical fitness. In pursuit of achieving these virtues, everyone should practise applying of 'Tilak' regularly.

It is also well known that both of our arms are symbols of strength. The nerves running underneath the arms are by nature UGRA type, which are very sensitive. Due to this unique combination of nature, at times this could lead to certain events which may be termed as destructive in nature, which could happen in one's life. Therefore in order to minimise the potential of this

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counter-productive adverse effect, and to canalyse the above power for beneficial purposes, the application of 'TILAK' becomes most significant.

## **PART PLAYED BY TILAK IN OBTAINING MONETARY OR FINANCIAL GAINS.**

The application of 'URDHVA PUNDRA TILAK' is considered to be a positive virtue in the eyes of the society. It may also be compared to the third eye which helps to distinguish between the good and the evil in our society. There is a popular proverbial saying in the 'UDDHAV' (SWAMINARAYAN) 'SAMPRADAY', that '*Kusangi ke fen fatur mein satsangi ki roti*', meaning that money spent by addicts is well served, if he starts applying 'TILAK' on his forehead. From the point of view of freeing oneself from the clutches of vices, one should apply 'TILAK' on his person. It is a well known truth founded on practical wisdom and experience, that when you apply 'TILAK', you find that your conciousness will win you or take you away from

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falling into the traps of many vices, such as drinking, consuming tobacco, smoking, hashish etc. In fact, a person wearing 'TILAK' on his forehead would shy away or feel ashamed of practising any activity of vice, since his conscience would constantly rebuke or admonish him saying 'are you not ashamed of doing such evil things, even when you are wearing the TILAK on your person?'. Thus by abstaining from vices, such as indulging in tobacco, wine etc, one truly benefits such as saving money, which shall rightfully go towards the upliftment of the family and other justified obligations. Apart from this the person who gives up such viceful practices, would re-establish himself and achieves a respectable position in the eyes of the society. If any 'TILAK' bearer is tempted to carry out practices of vice, he will first remove the 'TILAK' from his person and only then will he down to perform bad or evil things. Such is the magical power of 'TILAK'.

## **A TRUE INCIDENT RELATING TO THE POWER OF TILAK**

A long time ago, the writer of this article was travelling by train from Baroda to Chennai in

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a reserved compartment. His co-passenger was a friendly young man, who had applied 'URDHVA PUNDRA TILAK' and who was regularly uttering 'JAI SWAMI NARAYAN'. This writer soon came to learn, that his co-traveller was a ('Hari Bhakt'), and he was in the business of supplying raw materials to a factory dealing with plastic goods. On one occasion his boss, who had in his possession Rs.3 lakhs handed over to him Rs.2 lakhs towards some payments while actually his intension was to give him only Rs.1 lakh, for the same purpose. Later, the boss left the factory for some routine work elsewhere leaving behind only Rs. 1 lakh in his office, Following his departure there occurred a theft in the office, and on coming to know the incident, the boss soon lodged a complaint with the police reporting a theft of Rs.2 lakhs instead of 2 lakh. However, on return to the office, the co-passenger learnt of the whole story, but was in an acute dilemma, whether to reveal or not about receiving the additional Rs.1 lakh. However, at this point of time he was strongly prompted by an inner voice which urged him to be honest and thus he decided to reveal the truth and return Rs.1 lakh to his boss, which he did.

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The boss was highly pleased by his assistant's truthful and responsible behaviour and he was overwhelmed and offered him Rs.50,000 as a token of his honest gesture. But the young man, politely declined to accept the gift of money his boss offered him. Never theless the boss was so pleased to have such an employer he promoted that Hari bhakt as an officer in his Chennai office. This entire episode shows the great potential of application of 'URDHVA PUNDRA TILAK' by individual, and how it guides in leading a righteous life, full of virtues and benefits.

PART – 2

## KANTI DHARN VIDHI

### (कण्ठीधारणविधि)

कृष्णदीक्षां गुरोः प्राप्तैस्तुलसीमालिके गले ।

धार्यं नित्यं चोर्ध्वपुन्द्रं ललाटादौ द्विजातिभिः ॥

(Krishñdikshām guroh prāptaistulsimālike gale.

Dhārya niyam chordhva prundram lalātādau dvijātibhih)

My followers who are Dwiji– i.e those who are twice-born - , shall receive initiation into the Krishna from an ‘Acharya’, and following this shall wear a double stranded rosary around their neck and also apply a ‘Tilak’ U shape on their forehead as well as on the chest and on both the arms.

जितिन्द्रियः स्वधर्मसंस्थितः इत्यादि शास्त्रेषूक्तलक्षणयुक्तः ।

यः आचार्यः (गुरुः) तस्मात् कृष्णदीक्षां प्राप्य तुलसीमालिके

(कण्ठी) धारयेत् ।

(Jitendriyah svadharmsansthithah Ityādi shāstre-shooktalakshanyuktah yah āchāryah (guru) tasmāt krishñdikshām prāpyah tulasimālike (kanthim) dhārayet.)

We should receive initiation from an Acharya i.e. preceptor who has fully conquered his senses, who is established in his own religion

and shastras, who in turn is also initiated by a Guru, who has obtained Krishna Deeksha and adorns a Tulasi-rosary :

The vaidik authority for the procedure of wearing the two-line rosary:-

धारणीया कण्ठदेशे तुलसीकाष्ठमालिके ।

वैष्णवेन विशेषेण भगवत्प्रीतिवर्धनी ॥

(Dhāraṇīyā kanthadeshe tulasikāshth mālike.

Vaiṣṇāvena vishesheṇa bhagvat preetivardhani.)

“**In the Skanda Puranam**” -

Devotees of Lord Vishnu shall wear a double stranded rosary around their neck, made of tulasi this is because Tulasi is divinely bound with Lord Vishnu.

It is said in Agama authoritative religious texts; as follows:

यज्ञोपवीतवद्भार्या तुलसीकाष्ठमालिका इति ।

(Yagnopavitvatdhāryā tulsikāshth mālikaiti.)

The sacred thread i.e, Yagnopvita, shall not be removed at any time, and in any kind of circumstances. Likewise the rosary of Tulasi must always be worn around neck but not be removed under any circumstances.

**आक्षेपः OBJECTION**

True beloved devotees of Lord Shree Hari



are those who wear double stranded rosary of Tulasi around their neck, not only during worship(Pooja) or meditation(Dhyaan), sandhya vandan, i.e, prayers offered during dawn or dusk but also during daily chores.

पूजाकाले तथा ध्याने सन्ध्यादौ नित्यकर्मणि।

तुलसीं दधते कण्ठे चे भक्ता हरिवल्लभाः॥

(Poojākāle tathā dyāne sanshyādaу nityakarmṇi.  
Tulsim dadhte kanthe te bhakāt harivllabhāh.)

However It is said in the Padma Puranam :-

भोजने शयने चैव मलमूत्रविसर्जने ।

तुलसी धार्यते चेत् विष्णुद्रोही स उच्यते॥

(Bhojane shayane chaiva malamootravisarjane.  
Tulasi dhāryte chet vishṇudrohi sa ucchyate.)

According to the views expressed by some sages in the 'Padma Puranam', it is said that the Tulasi Rosary must be worn around the neck only while doing worship, i.e, puja, meditation i.e Dhyana etc, as otherwise such rituals do not yield success or the desired results.

It is therefore very essential to wear the rosary at the the time of worship or meditation. However a view is also expressed in Padma Puranam, that one who wears tulasi rosary, while going to bed, or during the movement of bowels

or urine excretion, would be offending Lord Vishnu (Vishnu Drohi). That is to say, that a person who has worn Tulasi rosary while eating food, or while going to bed, or during the acts of excretory processes, cannot be accepted as a true devotee of Lord Shri Vishnu.

अतः पूजासमय एव तद्धारणमुचितम् न तु सर्वदेति

(Atah poojāsamay ava taddhāraṇāmuchitam na tu sarvdeti.)

Therefore rosary must be worn only during observance of religious rituals, including daily pooja and Dhyān, but should be excluded at other times always.

## CLARIFICATIONS OF DOUBTS

Those sentences dealing with prohibiting the wearing of rosary, etc shall apply only to such rosaries, which are not offered to Shri Hari. Hence, there is no sin attached if one wears the rosary at all times always, which has been offered to Lord Shri Hari.

( समाधानम् )

तेषां निषेधवाक्यानां भगवदसमर्पितमाला धारणविषयत्वात्

(Teshām nishedhavākyaṅāṅ bhagavdasamrpitmālā dhāraṇāvishyatvāt.)

अतः स्कंदपुराणे..... It is said in ‘Dwarikamahatmya’

in 'Skandapurana' as follows:

निवेद्य हरये मालां तुलसीकाष्ठसंभवाम् ।

वहते यो नरो भक्त्या तस्य नैवास्ति पातकम्॥

(Nivedhya harye mālām tulsikāshthsabhvām.

Vahte yo naro bhakyā tasya naivāsti pātakam.)

There is no sin attached if a devotee of Lord Shri Hari wears the tulasi rosary at all times around his neck, if the same has been first offered to Lord Shri Hari.

Another Pauranik authority of Uttarkhand in Padma Puranam says,

शयने भोजने स्नाने स्नाने तथा चोत्सर्गकर्मणि।

न त्यजेत् तुलसीमालां त्यजंस्तां दोषभाग् भवेत्॥

Sayane bhojane snāne tatha chotsargakarmaṇi.

Na tyajet tulsimsism tyajanstām dosbhāg bhavet

One shall not take off his rosary, even while having ablutions i.e, bathing, eating, sleeping or during excretory periods, those that give up wearing rosary, will be offending Lord Shri. Vishnu. That is to say, those who want liberation from the world and attain Moksha, must wear a rosary (Tulasi Kanh) constantly and always.

Another Pauranik authority in Garuda Puranam says:

तुलसीं कण्ठसंलग्नां विसर्गाद्येऽपि न त्यजेत्।

नाशौचं धारणे तस्य यतः सा ब्रह्मरुपिणी॥

(*Tulsim kanthsmlagnam visrgādhyepi na tyajet.*

*Nāshaucham dhārne tasya yatam sã  
brahamrupiñee.)*

We should not give up wearing the Tulsi rosary(Kanthi) at any time, at any location, under any circumstances. By its very nature, the rosary(Kanthi) can never become polluted or unholy, because it is essentially, the sacred form of 'Bramhan'. That it is to say, that the Rosary(Kanthi) is ever as holy as Brahman, and hence it can never become tainted or polluted.

ननु मालाद्वयधारणे को हेतुरिति ?

(*Nanu mālã dvaydhārne ko heturiti.*)

However, let us try to know as to what is the purpose in wearing the two-lined-rosary(*Bevadi Kanthi*) in Shree Swaminarayan Sampraday.

श्रीराधाकृष्णाख्ययुगलस्वरूपोपाकत्वसूचनार्थमित्यवगम्यताम्।

(*Shri rãdhãkrishñãkhya yugalaswaroopopãsakatva  
soochanãrthmityavagmyatãm.)*

The double lined rosary is perceived as a of Radha and Shri Krishna being together, thus indicating the worship of Shri Krishna with His consort Radha (i.e Lord Narayan with Shri. Lakshmi).

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 तुलसीकण्ठीधारणप्रार्थना।(Tulsi Kanthi Dhārna prārthnā,)

## PRAYER OFFERED WHEN ADORNING A KANTHI

It is said in Vishnu Dharma:

तुलसीकाष्ठसंभूते माले विष्णुजनप्रिये

बिभर्मि त्वामहं कण्ठ कुरु मां कृष्णवल्लभम्।

(Tulsikāshtha sambhoote male Vishnujanpriye,  
Bibhirmi tvamham kanthe kuru mām  
krishnavallabham,)

Oh Rosary of Tulasi! - the beloved of the devotees of Vishnu, I wear you around my neck, so be pleased and make me dearer to Shree Krishna.

कण्ठी अधारणे को दोषः ?

(Kanthi adhārne ko doshah ?)

A question may arise- what is the sin is not wearing a kanthi ?

न धारयन्ति ये मालां हैतुलाः पापबुद्धयः।

पतन्ति ते तु नरके दण्ड्यः कोपाग्निना हरेः॥

न च यस्य पशोः कण्ठतुलसीमालिका भवेत्।

तस्यान्नं मांससदृशं जलं च मदिरासमम्॥

(Na dhāryanti ye malām haitukāh papabuddhayah.  
Patnti te tu narke dandyāh kopāgninā hareh.

Na cha yasya pashoh kanthe Tulmsimālikā bhavet.  
Tasyananm mams sadrusham jalam cha madirāsamam,)

Those, who do not wear a Kanthi around their neck, are prone to evil thinking, or they are sinful persons. Therefore at the displeasure and anger of Shree Hari, they will descend to hell as a punishment. One who does not wear Kanthi around his neck, in par to a beast or animal. Therefore his daily food is only comparable to meat or flesh, and also the water he drinks would be equivalent to taking intoxicating spirits or drinks.

अतः श्रीहरिप्रसन्नतार्थं पापमुक्त्यर्थञ्च

मालामवश्यम् धारयेत्।

(*Atah Shri Hariprasannatārtham papamuktyarthancha malamavashyam dhārayet.*)

Therefore Kanthi of Tulasi, must always be worn constantly which will benefit the wearer on two ways pleasing Shree Hari and also achieving liberation from sins.

Several kinds of Kanthi are suggested and some of them are as follows:

तुलसीसंभूता

(*Tulsi sambhootā,*) made of Tulasi

चन्दनसंभूता

(*Chandana sambhootā*) made of sandal wood

पद्मबीजसंभूता

(*Pradmabij sambhootā,*) made of lotus seed

सुवर्णमयी

(Suvarnamayi) made of gold(golden)

स्फटीकमाला

(Sphatika mālā) made of rock crystal

पिपलसंभूता

(Pipal sambhootā) made of holy pipal tree.

Amongst the different Kanthis mentioned above, it is concluded that the Kanthi of Tulasi is the most holy and fruitful, because all the Vaidik Scriptures endorse the Tulasi Kanthi. Hence, it is necessary that the Kanthi of Tulasi be worn by all devotees of Lord Vishnu.

The rosary made from other types of wood, can also be worn but only when Tualsi rosary is not available. It is important to remember that all types of kanthi should first be offered to God, and then received with the blessings of God, for wearing on one's person.

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## PART – 3

# **INTRODUCTION TO POOJA**

(पूजा विधि)

## **POOJĀ VIDHI**

Pooja is an important task of our daily life and should be performed every day with a complete sense of humility and servitude.

Performing daily Pooja involves waking up in the early hours of the day, preferably at day break, and worshipping the beloved Lord. The essence of Pooja is to lovingly welcome the Lord Almighty to reside in the idol placed in front of us, with complete faith that it is Lord himself in front of me and not a statue made of stone, metal, etc., one bow down at His feet and offers pooja to him in the form of flowers, fruit, sandal, perfume, etc. 'My followers shall perform pooja daily in the morning', says Shree Swaminarayan Bhagawan in the Shikshapatri. Hence the Pooja case must always be carried with us when travelling away from home so we may perform morning pooja according to Lord's command. It is also necessary that prior to and during performing Pooja,



neither water nor any food, should be consumed by the devotee.

(After dispersing (*Alwar-???*) from God, the soul must present itself to God, and such presentation to God is called 'Bhakti'). In the authoritative texts of Hinduism there are elaborate discussions on the element of 'Bhakti', and accordingly, nine types of 'Bhakti' are prominently described as follows:

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनं।

अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम्॥

(Shravnam keertnam vishnoh smarnam pādsevanam.  
Archanam vandanam dāsyam sakhymātmanivedanam)

Among the nine types of Bhakti, 'Archana' i.e. 'Pooja' is the fifth one, which is considered as the best and easiest approach to realise God. In regards to 'Pooja', one is expected to perform 'Pooja', five times a day. If that is not possible then one should perform pooja three times a day. If that too is not possible then one should perform pooja, wholeheartedly and with total dedication, at least once in the early hours of the morning.

तदुक्तं हारितमुनिना- (*Taduktam hāritmuninā*)

Haritmuni thus says:

पञ्चकालं त्रिकालं वा श्रद्धया विष्णुमर्चयेत्।

अशक्तस्त्वेककालं वा शुद्धभावेन शक्तिः॥

(Panchakālam trikālam vā shraddhyā vishnumarchayet  
Askaktastvekakālam vā shuddhbhāven shaktitah)

Although one shall perform Pooja to Vishnu, five times or three times a day, those who are unable to do so shall offer Pooja worship at least once, but with pure devotion and to their capacity after purifying themselves with a bath.

Purification of one's body by bathing before undertaking Pooja has been considered to be very important, as otherwise one can not be considered as fit or qualified to perform Pooja Vidhi.

**तदुक्तं (Taduktam.) It is said**

अस्नात्वा नाचरेत्कर्म जपहोमादि किञ्चाञ्चन।

लालास्वेदसमाकीर्णः शयनादुत्थितः पुमान्॥

(Asnatvā nācharetkarm japahamādi kinchan  
Lālāsvedsamākeernah shaynādutthitah pumān)

अत्यन्तमलिनः कायो नवच्छिद्रसमन्वितः।

स्त्रत्येव दिवा रात्रं प्रातःस्नानं विशोधनम्॥

(Atyantamlinh kāyo navchchhidrasamanvitsh  
sraatyeva divārātram prātah snānam vishodhanam)

During the course of our daily lives, our body is prone to collection of many impurities,

like saliva, sweating, dirt etc. Therefore it is important and necessary to cleanse oneself from these impurities by the bathing, before doing Pooja. Otherwise the person is not entitled to perform regular duties like 'Japa' and 'Homa'.

As our body consists of nine openings or outlets, which are constantly extracting unwanted waste products, the morning bath is absolutely essential for cleansing our body before engaging ourselves in Pooja worship to God.

**(1) शिक्षापत्र्याम् - In the Shikshapatri it says :**  
Shikshapatri, it says :

प्रत्यहं तु प्रबोद्धव्यं पूर्वमेवोदयाद्रवेः ।

विधाय कृष्मस्मरणं कार्यः शौचविधिस्ततः ॥

Pratyaham tu praboddhvyam poorvmevodyādraveh.

Vidhāya krishñasmarñam karyah shauchavidhistatah.)

One must get up daily before sun rise and offer prayer to Lord Krishna Only thenafter should one proceed for 'Shaucha', i.e purification.

**(2). Oral and bodily purification.**

उपविश्यैव चैकत्र कर्तव्यं दन्तधावनम् ।

स्नात्वा शुच्यम्बुना धौते परिधर्ये च वाससी ॥

(Upavishyaiva chaikatra kartvyam datdhāvanam.

Snātvā shuchyāmbunā dhaute paridhārye cha vāssi.)

Thereafter, one must sit at an appropriate

place and clean the teeth(preferably using Babool or Neemstick), and after taking bath with clean and pious water, one should – wear a ‘Dhoti’ as the lower garment and another cloth as the upper garment on the body.

पवित्रजलम् उक्तं पादौ - (Pavitrajalām uktam Padme,)

नद्यां नदे वा सरसि तडागे वापिकूपयोः ।

स्नानं प्रशस्तमुदितमद्भिः शीतभिरन्वहम् ॥

(Nadyām nadevā sarasi tadāge vāpikoopayoh,  
Snāna prashastmuditamadbhīh shītabhisnvaham.)

Bathing in cold and clean water of a river, lake, pond or well is considered to be pious. After taking bath, one long piece of cloth should be worn to cover the lower part of the body, and another worn on the upper part of the body. In this manner piece of cloth two pieces of clothes should be worn whilst performing the Pooja. Thus performing Pooja to God with only one piece of cloth on the person is recommended only for devils and deemed inappropriate for devout human beings.

तदुक्तं कृत्यचिन्तामणौ -

(Taduktam krityachintamanau)

एकवासा जपेद्यस्तु सद्दानि जुहोति च ।

तत्सर्वमसुरेन्द्राणां ब्रह्मा भागमकल्पयेत् ॥

(Ekavasa japetyastu yaddadati juhوتي cha,  
tatsarvmasurendranam brahma bhagamkalpayet.)

After adorning two pieces of cloth on the body one should sit comfortably on a pious 'Asan' places on flat ground facing the East or North direction and proceed to perform the Pooja, as described in the 'Shikshapathi'.

**(3) The above is elaborated in the following sloka:  
Preparing for Pooja:**

उपविश्य ततः शुद्ध आसने शुचिभूतले ।

असंकीर्ण उपस्पृश्यं प्राङ्मुखं वोत्तरामुखम् ॥

(Upavishya tatah shuddha Āsane shuchibhootale.  
Amakirna upasprishya prānmukham vottarāmukham.)

After placing 'Asan' on the pious ground, we must sit facing East or North direction. Facing the devotee, a separate 'Asan' should be spread out on the ground. On this asan one should place murti or idols of God.

## TYPES OF ASANA

There are many types of asans of available: So, which type of Asana should be used?

व्यासेन उक्तम् - (Vyāsen Uktam,)

कौशेयं कम्बलं चैवाजिन पद्ममुत्तमम् ।

दारुजं पत्रजं कौशमासनं परिकल्पयेत् ॥

(Kausheyam kambalam chaivājinam padmamuttamam,  
Dārujam patrajam kaushamāsanam parikalpayet.)

तस्य फलमपि उक्तम् - (Tasya Phalampi uktam.)

सर्वान् कामानवाप्नोति मनुष्यः कम्बलासने ।

कृष्णाजिने भवेन्मुक्तिः तपः श्री व्याघ्रचर्मणि ॥

(Sarvān kāmānvāpnot manushyah kambālane,  
krishnājine bhavenmuktih tapah shri vyāghracharmani.)

कुशासने भवेज्ज्ञानमारोग्यं पत्रनिर्मिते ।

वस्त्रे श्रियामवाप्नोति भूमौ मन्त्रौ न सिध्यति ॥

(Krishāsane bhavejgnyānmārogyam patranirmite,  
Vastre shriyamvāpnoti bhoomau mantrō na sidhyati.)

In summary it may be said, that performance of Pooja by a devotee seated on plain ground without an asan, does not yield full benefits. Specific varieties of seating materials have been recommended here for deriving the maximum desired results. In regards the direction in which one should face during Pooja or offering prayers, East and North are two directions recommended, e.g, facing East is always considered progressive, as the sun also rises in the East and progresses throughout the day Hence facing East during Pooja is regarded to be very positive.

North is also a divine direction in our Shastras, and hence facing this direction is also preferred for performance of Pooja in our tradi-

tions.

उक्तं शिवगीतायाम् - (*Uktam shivgitāyam* -

पाङ्गमुखोदङ्गमुखो वापि जपपूजांसमाचरेत् ।

*Pāggamukhodggamukho vāpi japapujāsmāchret*)

In performing Pooja considerable emphasis is placed not only on our external cleanliness, but also on our internal cleanliness, and detailed procedures are given as to how to attain both of these states of purity before proceeding to perform Pooja by the devotee.

External cleanliness can be achieved by bathing, but internal purification can be realised by performing ‘Achamana Vidhi’, which is equivalent to taking small quantities of holy water in the palm of one’s hands, as described in religious texts.

A little quantity of water is taken on one’s right palm and chanting the following ‘Mantra’ consecutively, this water should be taken in the mouth three times.

१ ॐ वासुदेवाय नमः Om, Vāsudevāya namah.

२ ॐ नारायणाय नमः Om, Nārāyañāya namah.

३ ॐ विष्णवे नमः Om, Vishñave namah.

याज्ञवल्क्येन उक्तम् - (*Yagnyawalkyena uktam-*)

माषामज्जनमात्रं तु संगृह्य त्रिः पिवेदपि ।

तदाद्यमनं वामहस्तश्पर्शपूर्वकमेव कार्यम् ॥

(Mashamajjanmatram tu samgruhya trih pibedapi.  
Tdachamanam vamhastshprshapurvakameva karyam.)

यमदेवेन उक्तम् -

तावन्नोपस्पृशेत् प्राज्ञो यावत् वामं न स्पृशेत् ।

(Tāvnnopasprset prognh yāvadwamam na samsprset.)

याज्ञवल्क्येन उक्तम् - (Yagnyawalkyena uktam-)

अन्तर्जानुः शुचौ देशे उपविष्टः उदङ्मुखः ।

प्राग्वा ब्राह्मणेन तीर्थेन द्विजो नित्यमुपस्पृशेत् ॥

(Antrjānuh shuchau deshe upvishth udggmukhah  
prāgwā brāhmeṅ tirthen dvijo nityamupsprishet.)

Water should be put on the left palm and touching the right hand to left hand, one should sip it in the holy mouth until right hand is not touched, that water should be taken further.

Sitting a crossed legged position with hands in front between the knees (i.e. not on one side) the holy water should be collected in the palm. The palm is called 'Brahmtirth' and the water is thus taken from 'Brahmatirth' to our mouth subsequently. 'Urdhva Pundra' or 'Tilak' should also be applied on forehead.



#### (4) Urdhvapundra TILAK and Red dot with kumkum

कर्तव्यमूर्ध्वपुन्द्रं च पुम्भिरिव सचन्द्रकम् ।

(Kartavyamoordhva pundram cha pumbhiraiva sachandrakam.)

Male devotees should apply as their foreheads Urdhva Pundra Tilak Gopichandan and a chandlo in its centre using gopichand or kumkum on their forehead , followed by wearing Urdhva Pundra Tilak on the chest region as well as on right and left arms.

While wearing the above Tilak the following Mantras should be uttered.

1. Applying Tilak on the forehead

(१) ॐ श्री वासुदेवाय नामः । (Om Shri Vasudevāy namh.)

2. Applying Tilak on the chest

(२) ॐ श्री सङ्कर्षणाय नमः । (Om Sri sankarshañāy namh.)

3. Applying Tilak on the right arm

(३) ॐ श्रीप्रद्युम्नाय नमः । (Om Sri pdhyumnāy namh.)

4. Applying Tilak on the left arm

(४) ॐ श्री अनिरुद्धाय नमः- (Om Sri Aniruddhāya namh.)

कार्यः सधवानारीभिर्भाले कुंकुचन्द्रकः ।

(Karyah sdhavanāreebhirbhāle kumkumchandrakah)

A married woman, whose husband is alive,

should wear only a red dot with kumkum on the forehead and should perform pooja daily, as routine.

पुण्ड्रं वा चन्द्रको भाले न कार्यो मृतनाथवा ।

(Pondram vā chandrako bhāle na kārya mritanāthayā.)

However, a widow not apply Urdava pundra tilak chandlo on her forehead, but can continue to perform daily pooja, as before.

### (5) MANASA POOJA OR MENTAL POOJA

मनसा पूजनं कार्यं ततः कृष्णस्य चाखिलैः ।

(Mansā poojnam karya tatah krishnasya chākhilaih.)

Thenafter, sitting in 'PADMAASAN' position with eyes closed, our should perform Manasa Pooja or Mental Pooja. During this Pooja, one should not think about anything other than God, pondring over divine features and behaviour In this mental pooja one should lovingly offer his service to his beloved God. One should imagine that he himself is awakening the Lord form his sleep. Giving the Lord datan to brush with. Bathing him with water suited to the weather. Clothing the Lord with rich garments, again suited to the season. Adorning Him with golden jewellery and flower garlands. Applying fragrant perfumes. Performing His arti.

Thus is performed the Manasa Pooja or

Mental Pooja to God.

**(6) INVITATION**

प्रणम्य राधाकृष्णस्य लेखार्चा तत आदरात् ।

(Pranmya radhākṛṣṇasya lekhyārchām tat ādarāt.)

After performing Mental Pooja, the idols of God should be well arranged on the aasan, with folded hands one should bow down to him, inviting him for Pooja by reciting the following ‘Mantras’

उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ गोविन्द उत्तिष्ठ गरुडध्वज ।

उत्तिष्ठ कमलाकान्त त्रैलोक्यं मंगलं कुरु ॥

(Uttishthottishth govind Uttishth garuddhvaj.

Uttisha kamalākānta trailakye mangalam kuru.

उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ हे नाथ स्वामिनारायण प्रभो ।

धर्मसूनो दयासिन्धो स्वेषां श्रेयः परं कुरु ॥

Uttishthottishth he nātha swāminārāyan prabho.

Dharmsoono dayāsindho sweshām shreyah param kuru.

आगच्छ भगवन् देव स्वस्थानात्परमेश्वर ।

अहं पूजां करिष्यामि सदा त्वं सम्मुखो भव ।

Āgachchha bhagavan deva swasthānāt parameshwara.

Aham poojām karishyāmi sadā tvam sanmukho bhava.)

**(7)** While reciting the above Mantras, the idols should be cleaned with a clean and pious piece of cloth. Thereafter ‘Naivedhya’(holy offering) should be offered to Him. शक्त्या जपित्वा तन्मत्रम् ।  
(Shktyā japitvā tanmatram)

**(8)** Thereafter one 'MALA' should be performed chanting the 'DIKSHA MANTRA' which is taught by our 'ACHARYA/GURU'. Then the meals should be performed chanting the "Swaminarayan" mantra. For every single head the Swaminarayan mantra should be chanted.

**(9) Penance Mala.**

Thereafter one MALA should also be performed standing on the left leg with the right foot raised towards the left thigh and keeping both arms in the upward direction.

In Pulahashram, Shri NeelKanthvarni, also performed penance in this manner pleasing Lord Swaminarayan (the sun God).

It is believed that the SUN GOD is easily pleased by such acts of devotion and our faith in God always remains strong and positive.

**PRADAKSHINA**

One should then perform mala while calmly walking around the God's idol in a clockwise direction. This is called Pradikshna. During pradikshna ones mind should concentrate on the form of God, having His darshan from all four directions.

**(11) SASHTANG DANDAVAT PRANAM**

Bowing down or prostrating at the Lord's

feet, with the operation of the eight parts of the body is called 'SASHTANG DANDAVAT PRANAM'. Male satsangi's must perform five Sashtang Dandavat Pranams normally and one additionally for seeking pardon for faults committed knowingly or unknowingly while performing the Pooja.

पद्भ्यां कराभ्यां जानुभ्यामुरसा शिरसा दृशा ।

मनसा वचसा चेति प्रणमोष्टाङ्ग ईरितः ॥

(Padbhyām karābhyām jānubhyāmurasā shirsā drishā.

Manasā vachasā cheti pranāmoshtānga Iritah.)

Hands, feet, knees, chest, forehead, vision, mind and speech, these being the eight parts (elements) of the body touching the ground while prostrating before the idol of God is called "Sashtang Dandavat Pranam"

Women devotees should perform Panchang Pranam, which involves five elements of the body touching the ground.

कराभ्यां शिरसा दृष्ट्य, मनसा वचसा च सा ।

(Karābhyām shirasā drishyā mansā vachasā cha sā.)

Hands, head, vision, mind and Speech are the five elements or parts of the body of women, which should touch the ground while performing 'Pranams' before the idol of God, and this is called 'Panchang Pranam'.

Following the above, one should perform 'Arati', (Pooja by lighting ghee lamps).

तदुक्तम्

मन्त्रहीनं क्रियाहीनं यत् कृतं पूजनं हरेः ।

सर्वं संपूर्णतामेति कृते नीराजने शिवे ॥

(Mantrahīnam kriyahīnam yat krutam poojanam hareh,  
Sarvam sampoorṇatāmeti krute nirājne shive.)

The glory of arti is so described that the worshipper not having undertaken any of the above pooja rituals or mantra recitation, nevertheless experience a great sense of bliss. This highlights the importance of arti in pooja worship. 'Nirajanam' is another word for 'Arti' which should be carried out by lighting a number of 'Dhoop' sticks and 'deep' items. The 'Nirajanams' are offered by making frontal rounds before the idol of the God, providing perfect visibility of each and every divine parts of the idol of God, thus giving the benefit of great enjoyment to the devotee.

## (12) PRAYER

अपराधसहस्रत्रिंशत् क्रियन्तेऽहर्निशं मया ।

दासोहमिति मां मत्वा क्षमस्व पुरुषोत्तम ।

(Aparadhshsrāṅi kriyanteharnisham mayā,  
Dāsohamiti mām matvā kshamsva purushottama.)

While praying to God, it is essential to keep both the hands together, saying “ Oh Maharaj! Kindly forgive me for all my faults – which will be thousands in number – committed constantly by me knowingly or unknowingly, However, kindly grant me with intellect ,health, wealth and happiness. Oh, Maharaj! Kindly protect me from the four types of bad elements. Help me always to save - my parents and your staunch followers followers with my body, mind and wealth.“Oh God, kindly be merciful to me, and enable me to worship you all the while and keep you in mind constantly”.

Finally completing the Pooja, the following Mantra should be recited, which actually requests God to be with you, wherever and whenever remembered or called upon to once again accept your Pooja offering, as described below:

स्वस्थानं गच्छ देवेश पूजामादाय मामकीम् ।

इष्टकामप्रसिद्धर्थं पुनरागमनाय च ॥

(Svasthānam gachchha devesha poojāmādāy māmkim.

Ishtakām prasiddhrtham punarāgamnāya cha.)

After reciting the above sloka, the Pooja can be stored away by duly touching the feet of the Idol of God.

**(13) Shikshapatri Path****(Reading of Shikshapatri)**

शिक्षापत्र्यां प्रतिदिनं पाठेऽस्या मदुपाश्रितैः ।

कर्तव्यो नक्षरज्ञैस्तु श्रवणं कार्यमादरात् ॥

Shikshāpatryāḥ pratidinam pāthosyā madupāshritaiḥ.  
Kartvyaonakshargnaistu shravnam kārymādarāt.)

वक्त्रभावे तु पूजैव कार्याऽस्याः प्रतिवासरम् ।

मद्रूपमिति मद्वाणी मान्येयं परमादरात् ॥

(Vaktrabhāve tu poojaiva kāryāsyāḥ prativāsaram.

Madrupamiti madvāni mānyeyam paramādarat.)

After performing the Pooja, it is essential that atleast five slokas of the Shikshapatri are read. For those who are unable to read they should listen to the Shikshapatri being read. However, if there is no one to read Shikshapatri, it can be placed in the Pooja, with full faith and devotion towards it, believing it to be the Lord Himself.

कर्तव्यं व्यावहारिकम् ।

(Krtawyam vyāvharīkam.)

After performing the above said Pooja, devotees may attend to their secular or household duties in compliance with the Dharmic life order.

\* END\*



