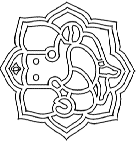


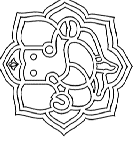


Saraswati Pooja 5th May 2007



Programme

Pooja of Lord Ganesh
Pooja of Goddess Saraswati
Ganesh and Saraswati Bhajans



Shloka: Saraswati Mata

Saraswati namas-tubyam varade kaamaruupini
Vidyaaarambham karishyaami siddhir bhavatu me sadaa

Yā kundendu-tusārahāra-dhavalā yā subhira-vastrāvrtā
Yā vināvaradandamanditakarā yā svetapadmāsana
Yā brahmācyuta-sam'kara-prabhrtibhirdevaih sadā punjītā
Sā mām pātu sarasvatī bhagavatī nihsesajādyāpahā

Translation

O Goddess Saraswathi; salutations to you, the giver of boons, the one who fulfills desires. I shall begin my studies. May there always be accomplishment for me.

May Goddess Saraswati, who is fair like the jasmine-coloured moon, and whose pure white garland is like frosty dew drops. Who is adorned in radiant white attire, and whose beautiful arm rests the veena, and whose throne is a white lotus,

Who is surrounded and respected by the Gods, protect me.

May you fully remove my lethargy, sluggishness, and ignorance.

Ganesh Bhajan: Jai Ganapati Deva

Jai Jai Jai Jai, Ganapati Deva
Jai Jai Jai Jai, Ganapati Deva

Jai Jai Jai Jai, Ganapati Deva
Jai Jai Jai Jai, Ganapati Deva

Gajanana, Gajanana
Gajanana, Gajanana

Gajanana, Gajanana
Gajanana, Gajanana

Gajanana Hey Ganapati Deva
Gajanana Hey Ganapati Deva

Gajanana Hey Ganapati Deva
Gajanana Hey Ganapati Deva

Jai Jai Jai Jai, Ganapati Deva
Jai Jai Jai Jai, Ganapati Deva

Maata Parvati, Pita Mahadeva
Maata Parvati, Pita Mahadeva

Maata Parvati, Pita Mahadeva
Maata Parvati, Pita Mahadeva

Gajanana Hey Ganapati Deva
Gajanana Hey Ganapati Deva

Gajanana Hey Ganapati Deva
Gajanana Hey Ganapati Deva

This is a bhajan in praise of Lord Ganesh, the giver of good luck and remover of obstacles.

Shloka: Ganesh

shri vakratunda mahaakaaya suryakoti samaprabha
nirvignam kuru me deva shubhakaaryeshu sarvadaa

O, Lord Ganesha of the curved trunk and massive body, the one whose splendour is equal to millions of Suns, please bless me so that I do not face any obstacles in my endeavours.

Saraswati Bhajan: Hé Shāradé mā

Hé Shāradé mā, hé Shāradé mā
Agñānatā sé hamé tāradé mā
Tū swar ki dévi, yé sangīt tujhsé
Har shabd téra hai, har gīt tujhsé
Ham hai akélé, ham hai adhuré
Teri sharan ham, hamé pyār dé mā

Muniyoñ né samjhi, guñjiyoñ né jāni
Védoñ ki bhāsha, purāñoñ ki vāñi
Ham bhi tū samjhi, ham bhi tū jāni
Vidyā ka hamko adhikār dé mā

Tū shwéta varāgi, kamal pé virajā
Hāthoñ me vījā, mukuṭa sir pé sājé
Man sé hamāré miṭāté andheré
Hamko ujāloñ ka sansār dé mā

Meaning

Mother Saraswati, remove us from ignorance.

*You are the Goddess of musical notes, this song comes from you.
Every sound is yours, every song is from you.
We are alone, we are lonely –*

We take refuge in you to give us love, Mother.

*Sages and doers of good deeds understand
The language of the Védās* and the brightness of the Purānas*.
You too, understand us and know us,
Give us the right to knowledge, Mother.*

*Dressed in pure white, sitting on the lotus flower,
Holding in your hands the veena, and with your head decorated by a
crown,*

*Please remove the darkness from our minds
And give us a world full of brightness, Mother.*

**These are texts of Hindu philosophy.*

Saraswati: The Goddess of Knowledge

Bharatiya Culture gives women the highest place of respect and recognition. Hindu scriptures are referred to as Mother Shruti, and we respect the Earth as Mother Earth. Knowledge itself is personified as a feminine deity- the goddess Saraswati. Saraswati literally means "one who gives the essence (*sara*) of our own self (*swa*)".

The goddess Saraswati is represented as sitting on a lotus. She holds the sacred scripture in one hand and a lotus in the other. With the third and fourth hands she plays the Veena.

The seat of the lotus indicates that the Goddess is firmly established in the experience of the supreme Reality. She is rooted in the Truth, which the lotus represents. By holding the lotus in her hand, Saraswati indicates to man the supreme goal that he should reach in his life time, the goal of self realisation. The path of that goal is shown by her other hands- the path of devotion (*Bhakti*) and the path of knowledge (*Gyan*).

The four hands of the Goddess represent the four aspects of the inner personality of man, namely mind (*mana*), intellect (*buddhi*), ego (*ahamkar*) and conditioned consciousness (*chitta*).

Saraswati is the consort of Brahma. Brahma is the creator. Creation is not possible unless the creator has the knowledge of what and how to create. Knowledge therefore is an essential prerequisite for creation. This idea is symbolised by the marriage of Brahma with Saraswati.

During the nine day festival of Devi-puja, goddess Kali (Durga) is worshipped on the first three days, Goddess Laxmi in the next three days and Saraswati in the last three days. Kali represents the power of destruction. By invoking Kali the devotee is said to draw her mighty power to destroy all his negative tendencies. Thereafter the worship of Laxmi, the goddess of wealth is meant to cultivate and preserve his noble qualities like self-control, tolerance, love. This is the true wealth of a person. Having cleansed the inner personality of negativities and substituting them with positive qualities the devotee is qualified to receive the knowledge of the self. The study of the scripture and of the Self is futile if one approaches it with an unclean mind. An unclean mind is ever agitated. Such a mind is not fit for study, and reflection on the highest truths of life. A pure mind and an enquiring intellect directed towards research of the Self brings about spiritual awakening. This is symbolised by the devotee worshipping goddess Saraswati in the last few days.

Story: Satyakam Jabala

In Pursuit of Knowledge

* * *

Many years ago, in a small village in India, lived a pious woman, by the name of Jabala. She lived a simple, peaceful and respectful life, and her son was duly brought up with these same qualities. Jabala believed in Satya – truthfulness – and hence she named her son 'Satyakam', so that he would always follow the path of truth.

Satyakam displayed signs of a fine intellect from a young age, and had an aura of brilliance about him. As grew older, he had an intense desire to find a guru (teacher) at whose feet he could gain knowledge. In order to fulfil this wish, he asked for his mother's permission to leave home and go to a sage's ashram.

When Jabala heard her son's wish she was overjoyed. Giving her blessings, she said: "Go and serve your Guru with love and respect, and return when you have gained knowledge about God."

Satyakam was delighted to hear such encouraging words from his mother. However, remembering the established principles of the ashram, he said to his mother: "maa, you know that a Guru does not impart knowledge of this sort to just anybody. He will want to know about my family background. So mother, please tell me about my father, and about my ancestors."

Jabala warmly embraced her son, and said to him "Satyakam, you know that your mother is a maid servant. I am unable to tell you your father's name. I don't know who your father is, and hence I am unable to tell you about your heritage. Explain this truthfully to your Guru. Tell him that you are Satyakam, son of Jabala."

Upon hearing these honest and proud words, Satyakam boldly got up, respectfully bowed to his mother for her blessings, and received her permission to leave. After a long and tiring journey, with many obstacles he arrived at the ashram of Maharishi Gautam. The atmosphere captivated Satyakam: the rustle of the leaves in the cool breeze, the melodious sounds of the young students reciting their evening prayers; there was a serenity and purity to the whole ashram.

After prayers, the students bowed to their Guru, and departed to their various responsibilities. Maharishi Gautam was seated under a tree, in the middle of the Ashram, deep in concentration. Satyakam slowly entered the ashram, approached the Guru and respectfully bowed at his feet. The sage looked at the child, from whom radiated the aura

of brilliance and determination, and raised him from his bowed position. Each word of Maharishi Gautam was the embodiment of Love: "Welcome, son! Where have you come from?" Satyakam excitedly expressed his intense desire for acquiring knowledge. "Guruji, I have come to you in the hope of learning from you, and appeasing my thirst for knowledge. Will you accept me as your disciple?" The Guru was delighted with the enthusiasm and eagerness evident in the youth. "Certainly, my child. Whoever comes here in search of knowledge and wisdom returns with their desires fulfilled. But first tell me who you are? Who is father and what is your lineage?"

Without hesitation, humbly and sincerely, Satyakam explained what his mother had told him: "Guruji, when I asked my mother this she said to me, 'Satyakam, explain to your Guru that your mother is a maidservant. She does not know who your father is, and hence cannot tell you about your ancestors.' I am Satyakam, son of Jabala, and I come with my mother's blessings."

Upon hearing such honest and innocent words spoken by the youth describing the circumstances of his parentage, Maharishi Gautam was very pleased, and he said, "Dear child, your voice echoes that of true Brahmin. I will initiate you with the sacred thread and teach you the Vedas."

Receiving the Guru's blessings, Satyakam performed the ceremony for his initiation as a student. Performing the rites in the presence of a holy fire, with the recitation of sacred mantra's from the Vedas, the Guru gave Satyakam his name: "Even though you do not know who your father is, and hence your ancestry, from today you will be known by your mothers' name: 'Satyakam Jabal'. You will become a great sage due to your intense desire for knowledge." Maharishi Gautam thus initiated Satyakam Jabal and endowed him with the knowledge of the Vedas.

One day Guru Gautam said to Satyakam Jabal, "I have taught you the Vedas. Now take these four hundred cows and come back to me when they have become a thousand." Satyakam Jabal, having full faith in his Guru, set off for the forest without hesitating or questioning the real reason behind the command.

Satyakam Jabal passed several years in the forest, tending to the cows, during which he accumulated abundant knowledge about the universe. The trees, plants and shrubs were his teachers, the rivers and streams his guides and the animals and birds his mentors. Satyakam Jabal realised the vastness of the universe by observing the sun, moon and distant stars. He learned fortitude and stability from the mountains. Solitude gave him fearlessness. He came to understand Nature's silent wisdom, and acquired immense knowledge.

Satyakam Jabal put his mind, heart and soul into his learning, and Mother Nature duly extended to him a vast treasure trove of knowledge. He would keenly observe everything that he saw, heard and experienced, and ponder and deliberate upon it constantly. Satyakam accomplished all this whilst tending to the cows, and his knowledge grew with the years.

One day, Satyakam counted that he now had a thousand cows. Then Brahma, the supreme creator appeared to him in the form of Nandi, the sacred bull, and blessed him with the highest knowledge of the Self. On the next day that followed, Brilliant Light illuminated the four directions around him, and revealed to him the presence of God in all directions. On the second day, Agni, the god of fire showed him the presence of God on earth, heaven, sea and horizon. On the third day, Surya, the Sun God, showed him the divinity of the moon, the sun, lightning and fire. On the fourth day, God manifested to him in the form of a swan and he learned about God's presence in the body, in the soul, in the eyes, ears and mind.

Satyakam had developed to such a level that he now had the realisation of the Supreme Lord present in everyone and everything. The meaning of the revelation "*Aham Brahmasmi*"- I am Brahman, became known to him. With this knowledge, Satyakam returned to Maharishi Gautam and bowed his head to him in reverence. The Guru realised that Satyakam had attained the Ultimate Knowledge, and blessed him with the seal of approval- "*Tatva Tvam Asi*"- That Thou art.

Satyakam returned to receive his Mother's blessings, and then went to the people, sharing knowledge about the gift that is human life, and helping them live a life full of virtues and with a sense of purpose.

Satyakam was indeed a special character. Despite not knowing who his father was, or who his ancestors were, he was still able to attain the ultimate realisation, due to his intense desire for gaining knowledge. Satyakam did not want to learn for gain of material things; instead he had a deep curiosity to understand how everything in this world works. His love for knowledge also extended to understanding himself in the larger frame of reference. With this knowledge he was able to explain to people the answers to the questions "Who am I? Where am I? Why am I here?" and hence help them to lead a life of dignity, morality and purpose. Such knowledge, can be called true knowledge, that helps sustain and nourish life, and live with a higher purpose, and Satyakam is a perfect model in cultivating a love for such knowledge.

* * *

Arti:Om jai jagdish hare

Om Jai Jagdish hare
Swami jai jagdish hare
Bhakt jano ke sankat
Das jano ke sankat
Kshan men door kare
Om jai jagdish hare

Jo dhyaive phal pave
Dukh bin se man ka
Swami dukh bin se man ka
Sukh sampati ghar aave
Sukh sampati ghar aave
Kasht mite tan ka
Om jai jagdish hare

Maat pita tum mere
Sharan padoon main kiski
Swami sharan padoon main kiski
Tum bin aur na dooja
Prabhu bin aur na dooja
As karoon main jiski
Om jai jagdish hare

Tum pooran Paramatama
Tum Antaryaami
Swami tum Antaryaami
Paar Brahm Parameshwar
Paar Brahm Parameshwar
Tum sabke swami
Om jai jagdish hare

Shloka

Karpur gauram karunaa avataaram, Sansaar saaram bhujendra haaram,
Sadaa vasantam hridayaarvinde, Bhavam Bhavaani sahitam namaami

Mangalam Bhagawaan Vishnu, Mangalam Garuda Dhwaja
Mangalam Pundari Kaaksha, Mangalaaya Tanno Hari

Sarva Mangala Maangalye, Shive Sarvaatha Saadhike
Sharanye Trayambake Gauri, Naaraayani Namastute

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Tum karuna ke saagar
Tum paalan karta
Swami tum paalan karta
Main moorakh khala kami
Main sevak tum swami
Kripa karo bharta
Om jai jagdish hare

Tum ho ek agochar
Sab ke praan pati
Swami sab ke praan pati
Kis vidh miloon dayamay
Kis vidh miloon dayamay
Tum ko main kumati

Om jai jagdish hare
Deen bandhu dukh harta
Rakshak tum mere
Swami rakshak tum mere
Apne haath uthao
Apni sharan lagao
Dwaar pada hoon tere

Om jai jagdish hare
Vishay vikaar mitao
Paap haro deva
Swami paap haro deva
Shradha bhakti badhao
Shradha bhakti badhao
Santan ki seva
Om jai jagdish hare