



Shloka



Saraswati Mantra

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

Ya kundendu-tusarahara-dhavalaya subhra-vastravrta
Ya vinavaradandamanditakara ya svetapadmasana
Ya brahmacyuta-sam'kara-prabhrtibhirdevaih sada punjita
Sa mam patu sarasvati bhagavati nihsesajadyapaha

Translation

O Goddess Saraswati; salutations to you, the giver of boons, the one who fulfils 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.

A Saraswati Bhajan: Hé Sharadé ma

Hé Sharadé ma, hé Sharadé ma
Agñanata sé hamé taradé ma
Tu swar ki dévi, yé sangit tujhsé
Har shabdh téra hai, har git tujhsé
Ham hai akélé, ham hai adhuré
Teri sharan ham, hamé pyar dé ma
Muniyon né samjhi, guniyon né jani
Védon ki bhasha, puranon ki vani
Ham bhi tu samjhi, ham bhi tu jani
Vidya ka hamko adhikar dé ma
Tu shwéta varani, kamal pé virajé
Hathon me vina, mukuta sir pé saje
Man sé hamaré mitaté andhéré
Hamko ujalon ka sansar dé ma

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 Védas* and the brightness of the Puranas*.
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.



Stories



ARJUN THE FAVOURITE

One day Guru Dronacharya decided to test the Pandavas and the Kauravas. He made a mud pigeon and hid it amongst the leaves of a tree. He lined them up and asked them to find the pigeon and take aim at its head. Everybody did as instructed. Then Dronacharya walked over to Yudhistir and asked, "Yudhistir what do you see down the shaft of your arrow?"

"I see the bird, the tree, its leaves, its branches and its flowers. I see the sky, the cracked earth and I see you, my guru, standing by my side" he replied.

Dronacharya smiled and moved on, asking each student a similar question and receiving similar replies. Only Arjuna said that he saw nothing else but the bird. Dronacharya then asked, "What part of the pigeon do you see?"

Arjuna's answer made Dronacharya beam with delight; "I see only the pigeon's eye Guruji."

"Excellent! You may fire." Said Dronacharya.

Moments later the head of pigeon lay on the ground, its eye pierced by Arjuna's arrow.

"Look and learn!" Instructed Dronacharya, "There is a time and a place to appreciate life's beauty. When you have a goal then you must see your goal and only your goal. Only thus can you be sure of success."

THE GURU and THREE DISCIPLES

In a traditional ashram, deep in the jungle lived a learned guru with his three disciples. They had learnt well, but before their graduation their guru decided to give them one final test. He gave a wooden bowl to each of his disciples and asked them to fetch some water from a nearby river. However the bowl was full of small holes.

The first disciple looked at the bowl in despair: 'I cannot fetch water in this. It will all leak out!' and sat down.

The second followed his guru's instructions precisely. He went to the river, filled the bowl and raced back, but the water leaked out. So he went back to the river and repeated the process. After many hours, as a result of the dampness, the wood swelled and covered the holes and the disciple could then carry the water.

The third disciple immersed the bowl in water and waited patiently. While he waited he relaxed by the riverside, enjoying the sun and the cool stream flowing by. Once the holes in the bowl had swollen and closed he brought water to his guru.

The first disciple failed the test because he became disheartened by the apparent difficulty of the task and lost faith in his teacher. The guru also failed the second disciple because he used his knowledge blindly. Only the third disciple passed because he used his knowledge with skill and ingenuity.



*Cambridge University
Hindu Cultural Society*

Saraswati Pooja



The Saraswati Pooja is devoted to the Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of mystic sounds, intelligence, intuition and wisdom. Revered by the well educated, she is believed to have endowed man with the power of speech. It is common for schools, colleges and parents to organise prayers to her for students sitting exams.

The idol of the deity is clothed in a white sari seated on a white lotus, a symbol of purity. She is accompanied by a white swan as 'Vahana' a symbol of righteousness. She holds a 'veena', an Indian string instrument, and books in her four hands representing the traits that she symbolises.

Programme

Invocatory Prayers
Explanatory Discourse
Musical Interlude
Pooja
Archana
Arthi and Prasadam

Many Thanks to:

Sangam Paneer for providing the mithai as prasadam

Our Guest Musicians

Dr. Vick, Our Chaplain

