

Individual Preparation Required Before Ritualistic Worship

Preface

A unique feature of Sanatan Hindu *Dharma* is the deep thinking behind acquisition of *Chaitanya* through every action in human life. The various *sanskārs* (ceremonies done to imbibe different impressions) from birth till death, *Dharmik-kruti* (Religious rituals), and rituals after death such as *Shrāddha* are all beneficial for God-realisation, while rituals like *Pūjā*, *yadnyas* and other ritualistic worship can help us actually realise God. *Pūjā* is the simplest ritualistic worship that can be regularly performed in every house. We can easily acquire *Chaitanya* through this act. If the *pūjak* is able to generate maximum *sāttviktā* in him before the *Pūjā*, then he will be able to acquire *Chaitanya* through the *Pūjā*. The *pūjak's* individual preparation helps increase his *sāttviktā*.

Before the *Pūjā* why should a man wear *sovalē-upamā*, in-stead of a shirt and pant and a woman should wear a nine-yard *saree*, instead of a six-yard *saree*, why should the *pūjak* wear dark clothes, why should the *upamā* be draped on the left shoulder, why should women cover their heads with the *saree* - spiritual answers to these and other such questions if studied through this Holy text, will help us realise the importance of individual preparation for worship. Understanding the importance of a certain action helps in performing that action with faith, with the result that such an action is more fruitful. Many are aware about applying *kumkum* (vermillion), *gandh* (sandalwood paste), *shēndur* (orange colour powder), *bhasma* (Holy ash from a *yadnya*) before *Pūjā*, but they do not know how and where to apply them. This text also gives scientific guidance on such Topics.

The important Principle in Spirituality is - 'God exists where there is *Bhāv*'. Preparation before *Pūjā* and actual *Pūjā* helps in developing devotion and *Bhāv*. The shell of an oyster is very important till the formation of a pearl; but once in possession of that pearl, the shell no longer has any importance. After developing *Bhāv* or at a higher spiritual level, following ritualistic worship meticulously is not very necessary. In the next stage, performing *Pūjā* is also not necessary, since such a seeker is constantly in communion with God. But till we reach that level, we should focus on preparation before the *Pūjā* and the actual *Pūjā* as an important aspect of following *Dharma*.

We pray at the Holy feet of Sri Guru, that through this text may we realise the importance of individual preparation before the *Pūjā* and act accordingly and may we acquire maximum *Chaitanya*.

- Compilers

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