NEW AGE PUROHIT DARPN
আধুনিক পুরোহিত দর্শন

Book 3
Durga Puja
দূর্গা পুজা

Purohit (priests)
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Ya devi sarvabhumeshu Shanti rupena samasthita |
Namastasai namastasai namastasai namo namah ||
You exist as peace in all the living creatures
I repeatedly offer my reverence to you

Purohit (priests)
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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to
The Children of Indian Immigrants –
The proud bearers of Indian heritage
Sharanagata deenarta paritran parayaney
Sarbasyartiharey devi Narayani namastutey ||
You rescue the poor who takes shelter under you
You take away all miseries Oh Goddess, Oh the betower,
I repeatedly bow to you with reverence.
FOREWORD

Through many thousands of years of sustained Vedic culture, Hindus focused on their spiritual approach through unique worship (puja) rituals. The priests learnt and chanted the prayers in Sanskrit, the ancient language of India, through *shruti* and *smruti* (hear and remember). When Sanskrit was replaced by other languages in course of time, the meaning of the chants got lost. Yet the hum continued to bridge the individual’s soul with its Creator. It did not bother the devotees for being ignorant of the meaning of those chants as their deep faith filled the void. Thus a single syllable “Om” could realize the presence of the Unknown, the *ekakshar* within us. Today the magical effect of *jap* (repetitive chanting) became a part of worship for all religions. Truly enough, the finest things of life have no language—love, kindness, compassion.

With the spread of Hinduism over the globe, the world is now inquisitive to know the meaning of those Vedic chants which we hear during puja rituals. Our children should not feel shy to explain to the world the thought behind those rituals howsoever it may look strange and repulsive. History records India’s great contribution in shaping World Civilization through ages and our coming generation has the responsibility to carry that torch.

It is so very satisfying to see that the Association of Grandparents of Indian Immigrants has taken the heavy responsibility to explain the rituals followed in Purohit Darpan. They notonly transliterated the mantras but touched on their history, significance and inner meaning of these in an understandable global language, English. It is highly commendable.

I pray to Lord Almighty for its success.

*Budha Deb Bhattacharaya*
Chief Priest of Kali Mandir
Washington, D.C., USA
Sharanagata deenarta paritran parayaney
Sarbasyartiharey devi Narayani namastutey
You rescue the poor who takes shelter under you
You take away all miseries Oh Goddess, Oh the betower,
I repeatedly bow to you with reverence.
VOICE OF NEW GENERATION

As a child of Indian immigrants growing up in the United States, I had never considered myself to be particularly religious. I identified myself as a Hindu by default simply because of my family ties. However, I never felt comfortable expressing this openly to my friends and classmates. As one of very few non-white, non-Christian students in my school, my main goal was simply to fit in and feel as if I were the same as everyone else. While my father taught me some simple prayers to recite each morning and evening, I shied away from performing this ritual when classmates visited my home for dinner – I did not want them to see me as different, and so I would try to hide this part of myself. The experience simply made me uneasy.

Despite the fact that my late father was a Maharashtrian Brahmin – a community known for its deep faith in the Hindu religion – and my mother the daughter of a Bengali priest, my family never forced Hinduism on me in any great way. At most, I enjoyed the comics of Indian folk stories, as well as the videos produced by my grandfather that brought these stories to life. However, these stories served mainly as entertainment for me and I did not seek any deeper meaning. Indeed, while my family would attend temple functions and pujas, I was never sent to “Sunday School” nor forced to learn Indian languages. In fact, I did not receive the so-called “Sacred Thread” in the Upanayan ceremony at the age most Brahmin boys do. And so I proceeded through life without giving it much thought. While I would now celebrate the opportunity to expose others to my culture, at the time I had no such desire.

However, when I was in ninth grade, my father was suddenly and unexpectedly diagnosed with malignant lung cancer. Over time, we learned he was beyond any medical treatment. Perhaps feeling a sense of spiritual duty before his passing, he made it priority only weeks before his death to arrange and perform the sacred thread ceremony for
my brother and myself. He approached my grandfather, the author of this book, to assist with this process. Thus my brother and I received our sacred threads in a small, rushed ceremony. My father died only weeks later.

While I was then officially inducted into the Brahmin fold, I still did not feel any specific change or desire to learn more about what had just happened. If anything, I was simply angry at everything that had happened; the seemingly unfair nature of my father’s passing. I still did not wear my sacred thread, for fear of seeming different from those around me. I continued to live as a typical suburban American child among my friends – this was my culture.

However, as I grew older and reflected on my past, I became increasingly curious about the purpose of that ceremony, and why my father had wanted it done so badly even though he had never pushed for it during the traditionally practiced time of adolescence. I hoped to find peace with the difficult events that transpired – a way to come to terms with the past. At the same time, I grew increasingly interested in the religious practice of my grandfather whom so many people in the community respected. And perhaps most importantly, I began to ask him questions – many, many questions.

Spending long rides in the car with both of my grandparents, I would continually inquire about their past. These incredible individuals led multifaceted lives as both academics and as religious leaders in their community. Through these conversations, my thirst to learn more about my culture heightened exponentially. Once in college, I took a class on Indian mythology, but that still did not satisfy my desire to learn more about cultural practices, and more importantly the reasons for their existence and the origins of the ideas. I discovered a deep-seated desire to connect the philosophical underpinnings of Hinduism with the practiced rituals. Over time, I realized that when I was young I could not develop an interest in the practices because I did not understand their significance. With the benefit of some small degree of emotional, intellectual, and spiritual maturity, I then found myself to be quite fascinated with the philosophy and associated ceremonies. While I still
take part in an academic and professional community where religion is a personal choice, I am now proud to share with my friends and colleagues the cultural background I possess and explain the underpinnings as much as I am able. Unfortunately, my own knowledge is limited, as are the resources available on the Internet – and so my inquisitions of my grandfather continue. Every chance an opportunity presents itself; I spend time with him to learn as much as I can about my past, my culture, and where I come from.

Sadly, I realize these opportunities will not last forever. For that reason I am grateful for his incredible commitment to produce this work. Never before has such a tremendous volume been constructed to explore the most important rituals in Hindu (or at least Bengali) culture. The line-by-line explanations, as well as the additional historical and philosophical context, offer an incredibly rich analysis of the ceremonies. I look forward with great anticipation to reading his entire works – in particular that on the Upanayan, which planted the original seed of curiosity – and I hope that you too will share in my admiration of my grandfather for this great feat.

September 12, 2013

Ashoke Khanwalkar
Grandson of the Priest
Oh the Goddess! You bless us as our well wisher.

Oh the wife of Shiva, allow us to attain our goal
In distress, Oh Gouri, the wife of the three-eyed Shiva,
I offer my deep reverence to Thee.

You are the Creator and the destroyer of the Universe,
You are the center of all powers, Oh the immortal!
You harbor all qualities as you endowed with all qualities.
Oh the goddess of wealth
You rescue the poor who takes shelter under you
You take away all miseries Oh Goddess, Oh the betower,
I repeatedly bow to you with reverence.
PREFACE

A series of ten books are compiled for Bengali immigrants with the goal of explaining the history, significance, and meaning of the mantras used in common Hindu puja rituals. A book like this is desperately needed as both the language used in the rituals, Sanskrit, and the script in which the rituals are transcribed, Bengali, are often foreign to immigrants and their children.

Unlike Hindu children growing up in India, children of Hindu origin growing up in the West are constantly challenged by their neighbors, peers, friends, and teachers to explain the basis of Hindu faith and belief. This problem I never faced when I was growing up in India in the 1920s. Hindu rituals had always been a part of life, no questions asked. Thus, I strongly feel I should share my thoughts with my beloved grandchildren, growing up outside India.

Priesthood was our family trade. I learned all the rituals from my father, and started to perform puja rituals soon after receiving my sacred thread (Upnayan) at the age of twelve. But, like many other professional priests, I had no knowledge of Sanskrit, the language of Hindu puja rituals. We were trained to hear and remember (sruti and smriti) and stay away from explaining. In addition, my childhood days were spent under British rule when Sanskrit scholars remained obscure and learning Sanskrit was not considered progressive. So I studied science and technology for a better future. Yet, the spirit of my ancestors never left me, and I had to perform pujas upon request from time to time. The community was satisfied with the ignorant priest as they devotedly watched Hindu rituals while praying in their own ways. God listened.

However, Hindus of the twenty-first century are not satisfied with this. They demand explanations of the rituals they inherited. My grandchildren are among them, and they regularly asked my late wife, Bibha Mukherjee, and me about the details of Vedic traditions. Instead of mimicking ritualistic actions, they want to understand the underlying
meaning. I was overwhelmed by their enthusiasm. This book is the outcome of that call.

Spirituality has many facets that accept the natural diversity of the human mind. Now I am eighty seven years old. I am not worried whether my grandchildren are believers, nonbelievers, agnostics, or atheists. But I feel immensely satisfied by telling them my own story of how I came to depend on my Invisible Caretaker who was always beside me when I needed Him.

I am thankful to the world community of open-minded spiritual seekers, Hindus and non-Hindus, who promoted this humble endeavor of mutual understanding. I have no words to express my gratitude for my coauthors and reviewers whose constant support made it possible to turn my dream into reality. In my advanced age and poor state of health I could not correct the mistakes that I see in the final product. I am sure these will be fixed eventually by future generations. My soul will rest in peace if I see this book promotes respect in our unique way to attain divinity and bring solace to Its seekers.

October 4, 2013
(মহালয়া, আলিন ১৭, ১৪২০)

Kanai L. Mukherjee
The chief priest
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Sarbadebamayim devim sarbaroga bhayapaham
Brahmesha Vishnu namitam pranamami pada Shivam ||
Vindhyastham vindyanilayam divyasthan nibasinim |
Joginim jogajananim Chandikam pranamamyaham ||

Goddess of all Gods, who removes the fear of all diseases
Worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar
I bow to you with reverence.
You stay in Vindyas where you have your divine place
Allow me to offer my reverence to that divine mother
Who is one with God,
the mother of consciousness for spiritual insight and Tranquility,
I bow to you Oh Chandi (Durga)!

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INTRODUCTION

Durga Puja is the most important festival of Bengalis. It comes during the month of Ashwin (September-October). Before Durga Puja, comes the Mahalaya, which is a fortnight after the new moon (Amavasya). During that fortnight, called Pitripaksha (Pitri – ancestor, paksha – fortnight), we remember our family ancestors and offer til (sesame seed) and water in their name. This is called the til tarpan. If one is unable to perform til tarpan for fourteen days, he does it on the day of Mahalaya, the last day of the ancestor fortnight. The procedure of tarpan is described in the booklet on ‘Rituals after death in Hindus’. After Mahalaya starts the Devi paksha (shukla paksha or waxing side of the moon). It is the fortnight of the celebration of worshipping Goddess Durga that culminates on the tenth day (dashami). Five days after is the Purnima, the day Lakshmi puja.

Durga puja is done for five days: Shashthi, Saptami, Ashtami, Navami and Dashami. Sandhipuja is done between Ashtami and Navami.

The mythological story behind the Durga Puja is that Durga, the goddess with ten hands, killed the demon Mahishashur. Mahishashur did years of penance to Brahma to become immortal. Brahma granted him the boon making the exception that he can only be killed by a woman. Mahishashur felt that to be as good as immortal, as he could not think of a woman who could be more powerful than him. So Durga took birth with the power of all Gods and Goddesses and slew Mahishashur. Five days of Durga Puja celebration marks the victory of righteousness over evil.

Traditionally Durga Puja used to be held during spring, which is still continued. But Rama prayed to Durga during this time in order to get her blessing and the weapon to kill Ravana (Read Indian epic Ramayana, originally written by Valmiki). Thus a new tradition was started since Rama’s time and Durga Puja was shifted to this time of the year. Hence it is often referred as akal bodhan that means untimely prayer.
In the following pages we will describe how the Bengalis celebrate Durgapuja spiritually.

**IDOL WORSHIP**  
*Bibhas Bandyopadhyay*

Worship of an idol is the bridge between a human being and his or her salvation. To reach the final concept of formless God, the present idol worship is the guidance in front of the eyes of Hindu Faith believers.

Durga Puja comes from Hindu Holy Script called Markendaya Puran. According to the Indian mythology Devi Durga, the epitome of “Shakti”, the divine power, as presented in her ten arms, kills Mahishasura, the king of all Asuras, who are the evils.

Goddess Durga emerges out of the accumulated powers of The Holy trinities – Lord Brahma, the creator; Lord Vishnu, the preserver; and Lord Shiva, the destroyer of the universe. She personifies unity. She symbolizes unity needed for upliftment of mind and soul.

So Durga Puja is the worship of Goddess Durga, the Shakti, and the Power, which protects us from evil and brings peace, happiness, and prosperity in our lives. It is a great occasion for Hindu families to come together and share love in early fall every year.
Kalabau (Nabapatrika)

Kalabau, popularly known among Bengalis as Ganesh’s wife, in reality has no relationship with Ganesh. Our scriptures call her Nabapatrika or new leaves. Interestingly enough, Nabapatrika was actually a popular
ritual performed by the peasant folks for prosperous harvest. As idol worship was not common then, people worshipped Mother Nature. It was during the autumn (Sharat), the time for reaping crops (A mondhan); peasants worshipped Goddess Nabapatrika for good harvest. Later when Durga Puja became a popular festival of Sharat, all the nine holy rituals of the Nabapatrika, were added to the ceremonies of Durga Puja. In fact Nabapatrika represented the primitive form of Durga Puja. This primitive form of worship is still prevalent in some places.

The original nine plants of Nabapatrika are: banana plant (kalagaach), colocassia (kochu), turmeric (halud), jayanti, wood apple (bel gach), pomegranate (daalim gaach), arum (mankochu), rice plant (dhan), and the ashok tree.

Nabapatrika, which is worshipped during Bodhan (Shashti), is an important part of Durga Puja. These nine plants represent nine goddesses (Some are combined – Brahmani, Kalika, Durga, Rudrani, Jayanti, Kartiki, Shivani (wife of Shiva), Rakta dantika, Ahoka-Sokrahita, Chamunda-Lakshmi – which are the nine forms of Durga).

With the spread of Bengali culture around the globe, sticking to the above plants in building the traditional Nabapatrika does not seem to be justified. Instead we choose any nine branches of trees growing in the area, preferably fruit bearing. This is a compromise between the thought planted by our ancestors and the modification adjusted to the current environment of our lives.

**Introduction to Durga and Her Family**

**Origin of Goddess Durga**

During the days of mythology, Mahishasur was a powerful demon king who could change his form from human to buffalo. After many years of prayer he received a boon from Brahma that he could only be killed by a woman. As a result he became invincible to all men and terrorized
heaven and earth. The Gods finally went into conclave and created a nemesis in the form of a young beautiful woman. She was named Durga or the rescuer from trouble (पुरुष). After ten days of fight, Durga killed Mahishasur on the tenth day of the waxing moon. Thus Durga was called Mahishasur Mardini (slayer of the buffalo demon). Later, Durga, with Her divine powers became the wife of Lord Shiva and was known as Parvati (daughter of the mountain – parvat, whose name was Himavat, another name of Himalaya). They got four children – Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesh. Each of them had different divine attributes which made them different Gods and Goddesses. The mother, Durga-Parvati, visits the earth once a year along with Her children during the autumn season whose images (deities) are displayed on the puja mandap (stage).

Ganesh (Ganesha, Ganapati, Vinayaka, Ganesa, Vighneshvara)

God with elephant head; younger son of Shiva and Durga; one of the best known and most widely worshipped in the Hindu pantheon; revered as the remover of obstacles and entrusted for an auspicious beginning. Mouse is His pet animal.

Kartik (Kartikkeya, Subhramany, Kartikay, Skanda, Guha, Sanmukha)

Central deity of the Hindu tradition, God of war, elder brother of Ganesha and slayer of the demon Taraka. Peacock is His pet bird and vehicle of transportation.

Lakshmi

Beautiful and loving Hindu Goddess of Good fortune, wealth and prosperity (both material and spiritual). She is one of the daughters of Durga and sister of Saraswati. She brings eternal happiness, abundance, and good fortune. Owl is her pet bird.

Saraswati (Sharda, Vani, Vaakdevi)
Saraswati is the Goddess of knowledge, music, arts and science. She is the consort of Brahma. She is widely revered by the students dedicated to learning. White swan is her pet bird and transportation vehicle.

**Mahishasur**

Mahishasur was a powerful king of demons who had the ability to switch from human to buffalo. He was invincible by Gods that resulted in the creation of Goddess Durga by their contributed powers. After a ferocious fight Durga finally slayed the demon and brought universal peace. Thus Mahishasur is credited in the creation of Durga, the goddess who rescues the humans from troubles.

**Puja list**

The followings are only the most essential items. More are given in the addendum.

*Raised platforms:* The platform holds the display of Mother Durga with her four children and Nabapatrika on the left of Lord Ganesh. Make sure there is a picture of Shiva on the back drop. He is the husband of Durga. Durga comes to earth every year to spend time at her home on earth. She is the daughter of Himavyat (Himalaya), the king of mountains.


*Lamp plate:* Lamp stand and dhup stand and dhupbati.

*Puja accessories for priest:* Water conch, kosha-kushi (pot to hold water for the priest during the puja), bell, asan (priest to sit).

*Ghat and tekathi:* Pitcher filled with water placed on a bit of soil, five grains scattered on the top of the earth (panchashasya) if these are not available, use rice, five colored powder sprinkled over the earth (yantra or pattern is recommended), vermilion powder made into paste by mixing with oil (put the mark on the pitcher) – the design can be the Swastika or the Vastupurush (king of earth). *Tekathi* means three-headed sticks. Four sticks with three-headed
PART 1: Introduction

tops (made with pieces of dry palm leaves, resembling durba grass head) are placed around the pitcher. This will be explained later in details.

Two small bowls: (a) Yogurt with a few grains of mashkali (called Mashabhaktabali) (b) madhuparka – honey, ghee, sugar, milk and yogurt.

Others offerings: Two glasses of water, sweet candy (misri), raisin, spring water, fruit on pitcher (coconut recommended), five leaves from fruit bearing tree (mango recommened). Keep a stock of one jug of spring water or clean water. Kamandalu (if available).

Puja Layout

Before starting the puja arrange the puja materials in the puja place, the following diagram may help. Searching for the materials when the priest calls for it interrupts the smooth flow of the puja process. In this distraction, the purpose of the puja gets lost. Hence, go over the entire script and check whether all materials will be available when called for.

(\textbf{Note}: This elaborate list is modified according to ability. Your thought is more important that your materials. If nothing else, do the puja with a glass of water and imagine the rest of the offerings.)
1. Durga and her family on the dais (an image of Shiva should be displayed on the backdrop).
2. Offerings on display
3. Offerings on display
4. Seat for Tantradharak (assistant to priest or devotee)
5. Priest’s asan (seat)- a small patterned rug
6. Havan arrangement
7. Holy pitcher or Ghat: a pitcher filled with water placed on a bit of soil that symbolizes elements of life. Five types of grains (rice, wheat, barley, mashkalai or black lentils, black sesame) are scattered on the top of the earth (panchsashya). If five grains are not available, use rice. Five colored powders are sprinkled over the earth (yantra or pattern is recommended). Vermilion powder is mixed with a little oil to create a paste that is used to create the design on the pot—the swastika (14) or Vastupurush (King of Earth, 15). Five leaves of fruit bearing tree (mango recommended) are inserted around the neck of the pot, and a fruit (usually a coconut) is placed on the opening of the pot. Put a garland over the pitcher. Use four sticks to mark the corners of a rectangle around the pitcher (you can use clay or Play-doh to keep the sticks upright). Wrap a red thread around the tops of the sticks to create a rectangle around the ghat.
8. Lamp stand, incense (dhupbati) stand. In ancient times, the lamp was needed to see the deity. Literally, the incense provided a sweet-smelling fragrance.
9. Mashabhaktabali (yogurt) with few grains of mashkalai (black lentil).
10. Madhuparka (milk, yogurt, ghee, sugar and honey), a sweet offering.
11. Spare kosha and kushi for devotees
12. Puja bell: Heralds the progress of puja
15. Priest’s water vessel (kosha-kushi) – the water in this vessel is used for offering.
16. Swastika design.
17. Chediraj (King of earth).
18. *Pushpa patra* – plate for holding flowers. Also contains: sandalwood paste (for fragrance), *durba* (a special grass with three leaves that represents nature), *haritaki* (seed)*orsupari* (betel nut) (represents the growth of success), red thread (tied around wrists after puja for protection), *mashkalai* (black lentil, offering to spirits), wet rice and *til* (oily seed) (food offerings).
20. Jalasankha (water-conch)
21. Tamrapatra: Plate to make offerings of water, rice, flower etc.

Keep a stock of a jug of spring water or clean water in a *kamandalu* (pitcher with spout). As we use these items during the puja, we will try to explain the significance of these items and their symbolism.

**Chediraj Icon**

The icon of Chediraj symbolizes king of earth. Chedi was a powerful kingdom in the days of Mahabharata. It was rich in minerals and other natural resources. Hence, remembering Chediraj expresses the natural blessing of the earth. Chediraj, the king of Chedi, however, took the wrong side of the Mahabharata war, fighting against Pandavas. He was thus cursed. When we remember our ancestors during Nandimukh, we worship Chediraj as we do not want to forget the ones who made mistakes and pray for their forgiveness and wish their salvation. In a similar situation, we worship demon Mahashasur during Durga Puja thanking him for the appearance of Durga and whose blessing we seek today.
Sucharu dashanam tatbat pinonnata payodharam  
Tribhanga sthan sansthanam Mahishasura mardinim  
Mrinalayata samsparsha dashabahu samanwitam  
Trishulam dakshiney dhyeyam khargam chakram  
kramadadhah  

Her teeth are beautifully set and sharp;  
her breasts are full  
Standing gracefully on three bends she is killing the demon Mahishasur (buffalo demon).  
Like the stalks of the lotus, long and gentle,  
are her ten arms.  
On the top right arm is the trident,  
under that is the axe or sword  
and then is the (chakra) in sequence.
INVOCATION

Before starting any Hindu puja (worship) ceremony, Lord Vishnu, our preserver is remembered.

Vishnu Smaran

Achman (sipping of water)

Take a spoonful of water on the palm of the right hand forming a dip like a boat. The amount of water is said to be sufficient to immerse a mustard seed. Sip the water three times and each time take the name of Vishnu.

Om Vishnu! Om Vishnu! Om Vishnu!

Glory to Lord Vishnu

After the last sip, wipe your lips – right to left, with your right thumb. Wash the fingers with little water allowing the washed water to get soaked into the padded paper kept on the right for this purpose. Then offer your sensory organs in His prayers. Join the four fingers of the right hand (exclude thumb) and touch the various organs with the fingertips in the following manner. First the right nostril and then the left (smell), right eye and then left eye (sight), right ear and then left ear
(hearing). Finally touch the naval button (the starting point of your physical body) and wash the fingers again in the same way as described above. Wipe your right hand with a dry paper towel. Join the fingers again and touch your heart and right shoulder and then left shoulder.

**Obeisance**

**Pranam**

Then with folded hands pray to Lord Vishnu:

```
Jy jy jy jy
Jy jy jy jy
Om Tadavishnu paramam padam
Sada pashyanti suraya dibiba chakshuratatam
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As the widely open eyes can see the sky clearly without any obstruction, so the wise people always see Lord Vishnu on His Highest Place with their divine vision.
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```
Om Vishnu, Om Vishnu, Om Vishnu
As the widely open eyes can see the sky clearly without any obstruction, so the wise always see Lord Vishnu with their divine vision.
Hail to Lord Vishnu.
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Om apabitra pabitro ba sarbabashan gatopi ba
jahsmaret pundarikaksha sa baihya-abhyantarah suchi
Namaha sarva mangala mangalyam varayenam baradam shubham
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Narayanam namaskriya sorvakarmani kaarayet
He who, impure or pure, remembers lotus-eyed lord
Pundarikaksha, Vishnu,
```
in all situations, becomes purified inside and out.
We bow to Lord Narayana who is all auspicious, most adorable, beneficial and kind. Remembering His name we should begin all our work.

Offerings to Lord Vishnu and other Gods

Gandhadir archana

Take a flower, dipped in sandalwood paste, in your right hand. Chant the mantra and then discard it in the copper plate meant for offering (tamra patra).

Om Vishnabey namah ||
My reverence to you Oh Vishnu

Bong! Etasmai gandhadibhyo namah |
Etey gandhapushpey etadhipataye Sri Vishnabey namah |
Etat sampradanaya pujaniya devataganebhyo namah ||
Uttering the primordial sound of Bong, I am offering the scented flower at the feet of Lord Vishnu, and also offering herewith my deep respect to all the revered Gods.

Prayer for the Holy River Ganges

Ganga pranam

Sprinkle a little Ganges water on your head for sanctification while chanting (if Ganges water is not available, use any water):

সন্ধ্যঃ পাতক সংহৃতী সন্ধ্যা দুঃখবিনাশিনী।
Sadyah pataka sanghantri sodyo dukha binashini; 
Suhkoda mokhada Ganga Gangoiba parama goti.
Om gangawai namah! Om gangawai namah! Om gangawai namah!

In the name of that Almighty, Oh Holy Ganges!
Who takes away all the sin, and miseries and brings happiness.
You are the only way to attain salvation.

General Offer
সামান্যার্থী
Samanyargha

Lift up the kosha (with the kushi) with your left hand. Sprinkle little water on the floor and make a water mark of a triangle without a break. Then draw a continuous circle outside the triangle (see figure). The make the following sound conveying the thought – move out all the evil spirits of this place:

Phat
Place the kosha on the water mark.

Put a flower, some doorba grass and a little rice on the narrow edge of the kosha (facing to the front) and chant the following:

Om adharashaktaye namaha, Om Kurmaya namaha, 
Om anantaya namaha, Om Prithibai namaha.

I pay my reverence to my holder (Vishnu), the divine turtle which holds the earth, the supreme cosmos and the earth.
In case of Bisheshargha (done on the water-conch) add the following:
Put some flowers at the tip of the kosha and chant the following mantras while putting the flowers.

**Etey gandhapushpey**

Om Am arkamandalaya dadasha kalatmaney namah ||
Om Um Somamandalaya sorasha kalatmaney namah |
Om Mom banhimandalaya dashakalatmaney namah ||

*Herewith I am offering these scented flowers to the ten-fold solar system, sixteen-fold lunar system, and all the ten-fold planetary systems.*

**Sanctification of water**

*Tirtha abahan*

The water to be used for the puja is sanctified by calling the names of various sacred rivers of India.

Move the *kushi* (spoon), sitting in the *kosha* (copper vessel), in a way to make waves in the water of the *kosha*. Utter the mantra as you move the *kushi*.

**O gane cha yamuney chaiba godavari saraswati**

*Oh the waters of Ganga, Yamuna, Godaavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri, present yourselves in this place*
Sanctification of the Seat

Asanasudhi

The seat on which the devotee sits for the prayer needs to be sanctified. Put a flower under the asan (seat on the floor) and recite this prayer with folded hands:

Etey gandhapushpey Om adharshaktaye kamalasanaya namah |
Om Ashya asanamantrasaya Meruprishtha rishi Sutalam chhanda |
Kurmo Devata asana upabeshaney bintyogah ||
Om Prithwi twaya dhrita loka devi twam Vishnuna dhritah |
Twancha dharaya mam nityam pabitram kuruchasanam ||
I am offering this flower to the divine earth holding this asan (my seat) |
Meruprishtha, the sage who introduced the mantra of the seat sanctification, |
insutal meter, in the name of God Kurma (one of the incarnations of Vishnu), I am sanctifying my seat. Oh the goddess earth! Who is holding this world, and |
in tur, you are held by Lord Vishnu; hold me firmly and sanctify my seat.

Consecration of Flowers

Pushpasuddhi

The flower to be offered to the Goddess needs to be consecrated. Lovingly touch them with both hands and chant after removing the evils.

Owing Phat
Move out the evil spirits

ও পূষ্পকেতুরাজাইতে শতায় সম্যক সম্বন্ধয়ং 

*Om pushpaketu rajahartey shataya samyak sambandhaya hrang*

These bright beautiful flowers in plenty collected for the sacred offering

Sprinkle little water on the flowers kept for the puja and sanctify it with the following mantra

ও পূষ্পে পূষ্পে মহাপূষ্পে সুপূষ্পে পুষ্পসভে। পুষ্পসভার্কীর্ণে হং ফট বহা।

*Om pushpey pushpey mahapushpey supushpey pushpasambhabey*

Pushpacayabkirney hung phat swaha

May these flowers, great flowers, good flowers, and many flowers be sanctified for the offering.

Sanctification of Palm

কারসুদ্ধি

*Karasudhi*

Purify your hand by crushing a flower between the palms and throw the crushed flower on your left. Circle your right palm over the left palm and make the phat sound.

ফট

*Phat*

May the evil elements leave

Securing the directions

দশদিক্বর্ণন

*Dashadikbandhan*

Clap three times by hitting right the palm on the left and then snap with right hand fingers (চুটিকী) over the head three times.
**Obeisance to Sun God (Surya)**

The Sun is one of the primary gods of Hinduism and receives offerings at the very beginning of most rituals. He enlightens our soul.

Pick up the *kushi* (spoon) with little water. Put in this a flower (preferred red in color) or dip the flower in red sandalwood paste and put in that a little rice from the *pushpapatra*. Holding the *kushi*, pointing side out, chant, while meditating on the rising sun:

```
ó nḿḥ vίśhvát e rāmaḥ ṭhāvāte vίśhvāravas te ṭaṃ svAYam svAYam hie ṭaṃ svAYam hie ṭaṃ svAYam hie ṭaṃ svAYam hie

Ehi Sυrjyo sahasthrangsho tejorashey jagatpatey
Anukampaya mang bhaktam grihanarghyam divakaram
Esha argha bhagabatey Shri Sυrjaya namah
```

Oh, the illuminator of the universe, who carries the energy of Lord Vishnu (the preserver), who inspires people to work, allow me to offer my reverence to you. Oh the Sun, the emitter of thousands of rays of light, the reservoir of energy, the lord of the universe, I am offering my reverence to thee, please accept it, Oh Lord, the Sun God.

**Obeisance to Sun God**

Close your eyes and imagine the rising sun as you pray:

```
ó jva kuṃmuṃ svAYam kvaŚvAYam kvaŚvAYam mahayujñāṃ
```
PART 2: Basic Puja (Bodhan)

Om jaba kusama sankasham kashyapayam mohadhuting: dhwantarim Sarbopapoghnam pronatyoshmi divakaram.
The super brightest illuminating star in the sky and sometimes resembling the color of red hibiscus, oh the powerful Sun, the remover of darkness, I pray to you.

Gayatri prayer

Gayatri jap

Light is a symbol of knowledge and wisdom. Many would like to meditate on light as a formless symbol of the Supreme divine. Gayatri mantra helps in such a meditation. This prayer is repeated 108 times. To keep track of which repetition (jap) you are on, mentally number the creases on the finger of each hand, starting with the second crease of the ring finger (see diagram below). Place your thumbs on crease 1 of both hands. When you have finished saying the prayer once, move your right thumb to crease 2. After the second iteration, move the right thumb to crease 3 and continue in this way. After the tenth repetition move your left thumb to crease 2 and your right thumb returns to crease 1. After the twentieth repetition, move the left thumb to crease 3 and continue. Thus when the left palm reaches the ten count, you have done jap 100 times.

Om bhurbhula swah, tat Saviturbarenyam, bhargo devasya dhimahi.

Gayatri prayer

Gayatri jap

Light is a symbol of knowledge and wisdom. Many would like to meditate on light as a formless symbol of the Supreme divine. Gayatri mantra helps in such a meditation. This prayer is repeated 108 times. To keep track of which repetition (jap) you are on, mentally number the creases on the finger of each hand, starting with the second crease of the ring finger (see diagram below). Place your thumbs on crease 1 of both hands. When you have finished saying the prayer once, move your right thumb to crease 2. After the second iteration, move the right thumb to crease 3 and continue in this way. After the tenth repetition move your left thumb to crease 2 and your right thumb returns to crease 1. After the twentieth repetition, move the left thumb to crease 3 and continue. Thus when the left palm reaches the ten count, you have done jap 100 times.

Om bhurbhula swah, tat Saviturbarenyam, bhargo devasya dhimahi.
Dheyo yonah prachodayat Om! ||
Om! In the three worlds – the physical (bhur), the mental (bhuvah) and the celestial/spiritual (svah) – you, that transcendental Paramatama, the adorable Sun (Savitur varenium), with divine effulgence (bhargo devasya), we meditate upon (dheemahi) thee; enlighten our intellect (dhiyo yonah prachodayat).

Note: Om, the primordial sound is customarily uttered before and after all mantras.

Gurupuja

Guru has a high position in the development of an individual. Each individual is born ignorant with the ability to learn with change of time. This is our natural process of development. It starts from the parents who teach us the basics of living. But the guru is the person who gives you a second life. He introduces his disciple to the Unknown. He/she is the spiritual teacher. So, he/she is respected like a God.

Literal meaning of the Sanskrit word “guru”: ‘gu’ means darkness and ‘ru’ means light. Guru is a person who represents the incandescent light of supreme consciousness which eradicates the darkness of ignorance.

In this step the spiritual teacher is remembered and worshipped. Offer a little water on the offering plate imagining that the water is poured on the Guru’s feet (padyam). If one does not have a spiritual guru, remember the parents.
Meditation

Gurudhyan

Take a small flower on left palm and hold it in Kurma mudra, covering with the right palm and meditate:

Dhyayachhirosi shuklabjaye dwinayetram dhibhujam Gurum;
Sweytambara- paridhanam shayetamallya-anulaypanam;
Bhrabhayokaram shantam kurunamaya bighraham;
Bamanotpalo-dharinyam shaktalingata bighraham;
Sayronnanam suprsannam sadhaka-avistha-dayakam.

Let me meditate on the glory of my spiritual teacher who represents the incandescent light of supreme consciousness, who is dressed in a white outfit with a white garland around the neck and sandal wood paste on forehead (signifying purity), with a calm, smiling face, forgiving attitude, holding a lotus in the left hand signifying symbols of blessings and whose feet rest on a lotus with one thousand petals.

Obeisance for Guru

Gurupranam

Pray with folded hands:

Akhandamandalakaram vyaptam jena characharam;
Tatpadm darshitam yena tasmai Shree Gurubey namah.

Salutations to my respected Guru, who gave me the vision to look for the
Great power that pervades the entire universe.
Offerings

Panchopacharey puja

Place a sandalwood dipped flower on the holy pitcher and chant:

एतेह गांधापुष्पे नमः प्रीतिबरे नमः।
Eteh gandhapushpey namah Shri gurobey namah
I am offering this flower in reverence to my guru

Offer a small amount of water on the offering plate and chant:

एतद पादं नमः प्रीतिबरे नमः।
Etad padyam namah Shri gurobey namah
I am offering this water for washing my guru’s feet

Offer a small amount of rice with durba grass on the offering plate. This symbolizes welcome to a respectable guest:

एष अर्घ्यं नमः प्रीतिबरे नमः।
Esha arghyam namah Shri gurobey namah
I am offering this argha (rice with durba grass) in gesture of welcoming my guru

Offer a small amount of water towards the incense sticks and chant:

एतं धुपं नमः प्रीतिबरे नमः।
PART 2: Basic Puja (Bodhan)

_Etat dhupam namah Shri gurobey namah_
_I am offering this incense in the name of my revered guru_

Offer a small amount of water towards the lamp and chant:

_এত দীপঃ নমঃ শ্রীগুরঃ নমঃ।_
_Esha deepam namah Shri gurobey namah_
_I am offering this lamp in the name of my revered guru_

Offer a small amount of water on the food platter (naivedya) and chant:

_Etat naivedyam namah Shri gurobey namah_
_I am offering this food platter in the name of my revered guru_

Offer a small amount of water, with the _kushi_, on the glass of water placed as _achmania_:

_Etat paniya jalam namah Shri gurobey namah_
_I am offering this glass of water in the name of my revered guru_

_Jap_

_ওকম্ভর_
_Gurumantra_

After the prayer one repeats the name of the guru several times to express respect. The process of counting is shown in Gayatri.

_জয় গুরু_
_Jai Guru_
_Hail to my guru_

Following japa pay obeisence to the Guru by taking a small amount of water in the right palm and drop it off on the offering plate after chanting the mantra:
Seeking Blessing of Assembly

Seeking the blessings of various Gods for the successful completion of the prayers.

Take the kushi and put in that – little water, haritaki, flower, touch of sandalwood paste, durba (or kush) and little rice. Hold it between two palms and chant the mantra. Pour the content of the kushi in tamprapatra after completing the prayer.

Om kartebeyshmin Barshik Saratakalin Shri Bhagawat Durga puja karmani
Om punyaham bhabanto broobantu, Om punyaham bhabanto broobantu,
Om punyaham bhabanto broobantu
As part of my solemn duty I resolved to perform the annual Puja of Goddess Durga,
Oh the assemblage, bless me that my act be holy.

Response of the assembly (devotees)

Priest and others will throw rice towards the holy pitcher in response to the wish of the devotee:
PART 2: Basic Puja (Bodhan)

ও পুনঃহম, ও পুনঃহম, ও পুনঃহম ॥

Om punyaham, Om punyaham, Om punyaham ॥
Let holiness shower on you

ও কর্তবোহশ্চিন বার্ষিক–পরিকাঠিন গ্রীতাকালুপূজা করমনি ॥

Om kartebyahshmin Barshik Saratakalin Shri Bhagawat Durgapuja karmani

As part of my solemn duty I resolved to perform the annual Puja of Goddess Durga,
Let my act be auspicious.

Response of the assembly

ও ভঃ, ও ভঃ, ও ভঃ ॥

Om swati, Om swasti, Om Swasti
Let it be auspicious

ও কর্তবোহশ্চিন বার্ষিক–পরিকাঠিন গ্রীতাকালুপূজা করমনি ॥

Om kartebyahshmin barshik Saratakalin Shri Bhagawat Durga puja karmani ॥

As part of my solemn duty I resolved to perform the annual Puja of Goddess Durga,
Let my prayer bring properity.

Response of the assembly

ও ভাবাত্ম, ও ভাবাত্ম, ও ভাবাত্ম ॥

Om rhidhyatam, Om rhidhyatam, Om rhidhyatam ॥
Wish you for prosperity

25
Seeking Divine Blessing

Take rice in your hand and offer it to the names of various Gods controlling the environment, appealing to them to bring success in the completion of your puja offering. While chanting the mantra throw the rice three times in the offering plate, coinciding with the last mantra (Om swasti).

Divine Witnesses

With Folded hand in front of your chest chant and pray:
Om Surjah somo Yahmah kalah sandhaye bhutanaha-kshapa;  
Pabano dikpatir bhumir-akasham khachara marah ।  
Bramham shasanomasthaya kalpadhwamihaa sannidhim.  
Om tatsat.  
Om ayamarambho shubahaya Bhabatu ॥

The Sun, the Moon, the Yama (death), the Time, the Morning, the  
Evening, the Twilight,  
the Living creatures, the Day, the Night, the Wind, the Guardians of  
the directions,  
the Earth, the Sky, the flying creatures, the Gods and Goddesses may  
you all come here to witness my pious act, Let the beginning be  
auspicious.

Alternate:  
The spirits in all the planets, all the visible and invisible Gods and  
Goddesses, whereever they are, no matter what time it is now I pray for  
everybody’s presence.  
Let the holy occassion begin.

Resolution

The mantra declares the goal of the puja after identifying the time,  
place and the name of the devotee. If the priest is doing the puja, take  
your name and then the name of the host and at the end say “করিষ্যামি”  
(which means I am doing for someone else). If the devotee is making  
the offering himself, take your own name and at the end say, “করিষ্যো”  
(which means I am doing it).

Take the kushi (spoon) on the left palm. Put a yellow flower, with a  
touch of sandalwood paste. Place a little rice inside the spoon and (if  
available) a haritaki or supari – beetle nut (a dry fruit), symbolizing the
fruitfulness of the goal. Then cover the spoon with your right palm and chant:

ॐ नमः श्रीश्रीरुपरुप नमः

_Om namah Shri shri Durgawai namah_

_Hail to Goddess Durga!!!_

Vishnurom tatsat adya --- (month and tithi) --- gotra Shri --- devasharma --- (name of the priest) sarbapa-shantipurbaka dirghayu atula bibhuti kamah sambatsara sukhakamo Barshik Sarat kaleen saparibar

_Shri Bhagavat Durga puja karma-aham karishey_

_(doing for someone else, karishyami)_

_In the name of Lord Vishnu, on this auspicious day of (month and tithi or the day by lunar calendar- see Bengali almanac),_

_I of ____ Gotra ____ born by the grace of God (devasharmana) performing this worship with the goal of bringing peace for all, their long life, good name, peace for the whole year, I am performing this Annual Autumn time Durga Puja with all her entire family (Or, performing for someone else. State the identity of the person for whom you are doing the prayers)._

_(Note: Gotra is the family identity. (In Hindu society, the gotra broadly refers to people who are descendants in an unbroken male line from a common male ancestor, which is usually the name of a sage – Kashyap, Bharadwaj, Agastha etc.).)_

After the completion of the chant, turn over the spoon (kushi) on the offering plate (tamrapatra) and sprinkle some water on the spoon. Use your right hand forefingers to pick up water from the pot container
(kosha). Then chant the following mantra seeking His blessing to complete.

**Seeking God’s Grace**

**Sankalpasukta**

This is the prayer, seeking His grace for the successful completion of the worship.

> ও দেবো বে প্রভিশোভা পূর্ণঃ বিষ্ট্রাসিচ্যে ।
> উজ্জ নিশ্চিত মূল বা পূর্ণ মাদিয়া দেব ওহেত ।
> Om devobo dravinodah purnam bibastasicham |
> Udhwa sinchadwa mupa ba prinadhwa madidwo deva ohatey ||

*I seek the blessing of illustrious Agni with devotion. May he help me to fulfill my goal by His grace. I call Him with my utmost humility.*

> ও অসা সচ্চিতার্থর্ষা সিদ্ধিরস্ত ।
> ও আয়মারভা শুভরহ শুভতু ॥
> Om asya sankalpitarthasya sidhirasthu.
> Om ayamarambha shubhaya bhabatu ||

*In the spirit of divinity may my goal be successful. May this be an auspicious beginning.*

**Welcome of the Priest and Tantradharak (helper of priest)**

> ও সাধু ভবানান্তম ।
> Om Sadhu bhabanastam
> Welcome Oh the pious one

> ও সাধুহ মাসে ।
> Om sadhwaha masey
> Thank you. I am comfortable
Om archayishyamo bhabantam
I would like to make offerings to you

Om archaya
Go ahead with the offering

Etani gandha-pushpa-vastra-yagyopabitani Om Brahmanaya namah
With humility may I offer this flower, cloth, sacred thread and others to the honored Brahmin

Om Swasti
I accept your gift

Worship of the Gods at the Entrance
Dwardevata puja

The house is considered as a temple guarded by the Gods at the entrance (Vastudevata, ভাস্তুদেবতা). These gods help in removing the hurdles (Ganesha) or bring good luck and wealth to the family (Lakshmi and Kuber). Hence before the core of the puja, they are worshipped.

Take two flowers, dip hem in sandalwood paste and offer them to the Gods of entrance. Ask a family member to take the flower to the entrance door and leave them on the step. The entrance is usually decorated with water pots, marked with vermilion powder and contains banana sapling or any green foliage. Some families decorate the floor as well which is symbolizes to invitation of divinity.
**Etey gandhapushpey om Dwaradevatabhyo namah**

*I offer my scented flower to the guardian Gods of the entrance.*

Following the reverence to the guardians of entrance, the house is worshipped.

**Prayers to the Spirits**

বিদ্রোহনারণ

*Bighnotsaran*

Before starting the puja ritual, all efforts are made to remove the hurdles that may interrupt the puja process. It is done in several steps.

**Removal of evil spirits around the worship area**

তুতাপসরন

*Bhutapasaran*

Special offerings are made to all invisible spirits. It is believed that invisible spirits that previously occupied the place of worship, need to be satisfied before you intrude in their domain.

Sprinkle white mustard around the puja area or put them in the offering plate.

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ও নেতাসাচ পিশাচাচ রাক্ষাচ সরীসুপাঃ
 অপসর্পন্ত তৈ সর্বে দুশ্চিন্তৈব তাড়িতাঃ।
 ও অপসর্পন্ত তৈ ভূতাং শ্যে ভূতৈ ভূনি সংহিতাঃ।
 সে ভূতা বিগত্তাচাং নিশ্চৈত্য নিশ্চিতং।
```

*Om betalascha pishachascha rakshasascha srisupah |
Apasarpantu tey sarbey Durgastreynaiba taritah ||
Om apasarpantu tey bhutah jey bhuta bhumi sansthitah |
Jey bhuta bighnakartarastey nishyantu Shivagaya ||

*The evil spirits that are residing on this ground may please clear out.*

*The evil spirits of residence may please move out*

*Under the commands of Lord Shiva*
Show five welcome mudras (explained earlier).

ও তৃতীয় ইহাসন, ইহাসন, ইহাসন, ইহাসন, ইহাসন ইহাসন ইহাসন ইহাসন
অরাহিনান কুকু, মম পূজাত্ম গৃহাম।

Om Bhutadaya iha gacchata iha gacchata
Iha tishthata Iha tishthata Iha sanniruddha, iha sanniruddhadhyam।
Atradhisthanam kuru mama puja grihmana
Oh the spirits come, establish here, come close and stay close to me,
Rest here and accept my offerings.

এতৎ পাদঃ ও তৃতীয়েন্দ্রন নমঃ
Etat padyam Om bhutaganebhyo namah
I am offering this water for washing your feet, Oh Spirits!

এতৎ অর্থঃ ও তৃতীয়েন্দ্রন নমঃ
Etat arghyam Om bhutaganebhyo namah
I am offering the rice in your reception, to all the spirits that reside here.

এতৎ পুষ্পঃ ও তৃতীয়েন্দ্রন নমঃ
Etat pushpam Om bhutaganebhyo namah
I am offering flower to all the spirits that reside here.

**Offerings to the spirit**

Mashabhaktabali

Take a flower (preferably red) and place it into the small container with a spoonful of yogurt and mashkalai (black lentil). This is called mashabhakta bali (মাষভক্ত বলি).