SARASWATI PUJA

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Publication #1

Cyber Grandpa
In collaboration with Bengali Association of Greater Nashville (BAGN), TN, USA

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agii2000@aol.com
Others publications in the making

Introduction to Hindu Puja rituals

Bengali Puja Rituals

1. Our daily prayers
2. Basic puja for all occasions
3. Saraswati Puja (In collaboration with BAGN, Nashville, TN)
4. Satyanarayana (In collaboration with Sanskriti, Washington, DC)
5. Lakshmi Puja (In collaboration with New Jersey Bengali Association)
6. Kali Puja (In collaboration with Prantik, Baltimore)
7. Durga Puja (In collaboration with Birmingham Bengali Association)

Dashakarma

8. Marriage (Probassee, Bengalee Association of New Zealand)
9. Grihaprabesh (Atlanta?)
10. Annaprasan (Cincinnati?)
11. Upanayana (In collaboration with Sanskriti, Washington, DC)

Last rites

12. Last rites (In collaboration with Bengali Association of Allentown, PA)
13. Shraddha (In collaboration with Bengali Association of Allentown, PA)
14. Tarpan (In collaboration with BAGN, Nashville, TN)

Addendum

15. Frequently asked questions about Hindu Puja rituals

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PREFACE

This book is compiled with the goal of explaining to children (and their parents) of Bengali origin, who have immigrated to the United States, the hidden history, significance and meaning of the mantras used in common Bengali 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 both foreign to these children and their parents.

Unlike the children growing up in India, children in the west are constantly challenged by their neighbors, peers, friends and teachers to explain the basis of Hindu faith and belief. This I never faced when I was growing up in India (1920s). “We were born as a Hindu and died as a Hindu”. No questions were asked. Thus, I felt strongly as “Cyber Grandpa” to share my thoughts with my beloved grandchildren, growing up outside India, before it is too late.

I was born in a priest family. I started to perform puja rituals soon after receiving my sacred thread at the age of twelve. Now I am 86 years old. Priesthood was our family trade. But, like all 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, in my childhood days under the British rule, learning of Sanskrit was looked down upon and Sanskrit scholars remained obscure. So I moved to science and technology for a better future. Yet, the soul 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 professional priests as they devotedly watched Hindu rituals while praying in their own ways. God listened.

The problem came with my grandchildren, the budding new generation of the twenty-first century. Hindu students at universities were disappointed with the local temple priests who could not speak their language (English) or explain the meaning and significance of the rituals. They were eager to reestablish India’s pride as the spiritual leader of world civilization. Here, “Faith” is not the key word; instead it is “Human Reality”. 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. I am not worried whether my grandchildren are believers, nonbelievers, agnostics or atheists. But I feel immensely satisfied to tell them my own story of how I came to depend on my Invisible Care Taker who was always beside me when I needed Him.

Fifteen such booklets will be published during the next three years. They will then compile into one final book after we receive the feedbacks. I am grateful to the World community of open minded spiritual seekers, Hindus and non-Hindus, to provide support for this humble endeavor of mutual understanding.

Cyber Grandpa
CONTRIBUTORS

Priests
Kanai L. Mukherjee, Bengali Association of Greater Nashville (BAGN), TN
Bibhas Bandyopadhyay, Sanaskriti, Washington, DC,
Pijush Bhattacharyya, BAGN, Nashville, TN

Translator
Ratna De, BAGN, Nashville

Transliterator
Dilip Das, Probasee, Bengalee Association of New Zealand

Bengali Script Writer
Sujit Das, BAGN, Nashville

Technical Assistants
Amitabha Chakrabarti, BAGN, Nashville, TN
Shuvajit Das, BAGN, Nashville, TN

Editors
Arundhati Khanwalkar (Allentown, PA)
Henry Arthur Pallerin III (Durham, NC)
Monisha Chakravarthy, Rohini Chakravarthy (BAGN, Nashville, TN)
Tara Chattoraj, Maya Chattoraj (Chicago, IL)

Reviewers
Raktima Datta (BAGN, Nashville, TN), Arnav Ghosh (Mumbai),
Aurin Chakravarthy (Washington DC), Saoni Ghosh (BAGN, Nashville, TN)
Smriti Bardhan (BAGN, Nashville, TN)

Global Communication
Dilip Som (Washington, DC)
Amitabha Chakrabarti (BAGN, Nashville, TN)
Volkmar Dierolf (Allentown, PA)
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrangement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently asked questions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invocation prayers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayatri prayer</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narayana puja</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary puja procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer of Holy Ganges</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer of Sun and others</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auspicious beginning</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Witness</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of obstacles</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knot of security</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gods at the Entrance</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalasasthapan</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification of dais</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling for sacred water</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification of environment/body</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification of flowers</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship of Guru</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship of Ganesh</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship of Lakshmi</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Puja</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation and infusion of life</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offerings</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushpanjali</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benedictory prayers</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arati</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Holy Pitcher</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace chant</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarding Priest</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addendum</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puja for individual families</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiation of study</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things required</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Symbols of Hindus</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber Grandparents, project leader</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Publication (#2): SATYANARAYANA BRATO
Saraswati Puja is the Hindu goddess of learning, eloquence (Bagdevi) and wisdom. In Bengal, the deity of Saraswati is depicted as a beautiful woman, with two hands, who sits on a lotus holding veena (a musical string instrument) playing music of love and ever expanding knowledge. In some parts of India the Saraswati deity has four hands. The other two hands hold a book (representing the Vedas or knowledge) and a lotus, the icon of peace. She is dressed in a beautiful white outfit and she is accompanied by a white swan, symbolizing purity, wisdom and tranquility. Worship of Saraswati by the Hindus is symbolic of our constant search for knowledge and respect for creativity in art, music and speech.

শক্তি ও বুদ্ধির সমেলনে সূন্দর সৃষ্টি - এই সরস্বতী

Goddess Saraswati represents the union of power and intelligence from which arise all beautiful creations.

Saraswati puja is most popular among students, the seekers of knowledge. Many families bring their five-year-old children to the goddess to seek Her blessing before the child commences his or her education.

Saraswati Puja comes during the month of January-February, heralding the coming of spring season (basant). It is a colorful season of blooming flowers. Hence, on the day of Saraswati Puja, people traditionally wear clothes of basanti, a yellowish color like that of marigold.

The four components of Saraswati Puja are listed here. In the following pages we will elaborate on the process and thought that goes with it.

1. Invocation prayers
2. Main puja of Goddess Saraswati
3. Offerings from devotees
4. Concluding prayers (Benediction)
ARRANGEMENT

Puja list

Raised platform: Saraswati deity, a raised platform, book, inkpot, pen,
Pushpapatra (flower plate): flower, sandalwood paste, durba, wet rice, haritaki, durba,
til, mashkalai, Supari, Red thread.

Lamp plate: Lamp stand, 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 (for priest to sit).

Ghat and tekathi: Pitcher filled with water placed on a bit of soil, five grains scattered on
top of the earth (panchsashya) if not available, use rice, five colored powder sprinkled
over the earth (yantra or pattern is recommended), vermillion powder pasted in oil (put the
mark on the pitcher) – the design can be the Swastika or the Vastupurush (king of earth).

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

Two glasses of water, sweet candy (misri), raisin, spring water, fruit on pitcher (coconut
recommended), five leaves from fruit bearing tree (mango recommended).

Keep in stock a few drinking water bottles, a small bottle of oil to feed the lamp, few extra
incense sticks and a match box.

Layout

Before starting the puja, arrange the puja materials in the puja place. Following diagram may
help. Searching for the materials you need disturbs 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.

(Note: This elaborate list is modified according to your 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.)
SARASWATI PUJA

1, 2, 3 – The deity, inkpot, pen, and books (icons of knowledge) all rest on a raised platform.
4 – Ghat is 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 (17) or Vastupurush (King of Earth, 18). Five leaves of a 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 (see picture on page 28). 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.
5 – Lamp, lamp stand, incense (dhupbati) and incense stand. In ancient times, the lamp was needed to see the deity. Literally, the incense provided a sweet-smelling fragrance.
6, 13 – Offerings- two small glasses of water, plus a variety of fruits, nuts, sweets, misri (sweet candy), raisins, etc.
7 – Priest’s asan (seat)- a small patterned rug
8 – The bell and conch heralds the puja.
9 – The host’s water vessel and spoon are used for offering.
10 – Host’s asan (seat)- a small patterned rug
11 – Priest’s water vessel (kosha-kushi) – the water in this vessel is used for offering.
12 – Tamrapatra – a plate to hold the offered water
14 – Mashabhaktabali (yogurt) with a few grains of mashkalai (black lentil) is given as an offering to the spirits of all ancestors.
15 – Madhuparka- (honey, ghee, sugar, milk and yogurt) a sweet offering
16 – Pushpa patra – plate for holding flowers. Also contains: sandalwood paste (for fragrance), durba (a special grass with three leaves that represents nature), haritaki (seed) or supari (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)
19 – Paper towels for hand drying and spills
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

To which direction the devotee/priest should face, while performing the puja?

By tradition, the priest faces east for all deities. In case of a Goddess, facing north is recommended. The author, however, believes that the above tradition may be not be emphasized on a global scale in the new age. A convenient location and a sincere heart is all that is needed to serve the Lord.

Use of “Om”

Om or Aum is the basis of all sounds, the universal symbolic word for divinity. Hence every mantra begins with Om, connecting our thoughts with divinity.

Aum became the sacred word in Vedas, Hum of the Tibetans, Amin of the Muslims, and Amen of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Jews and Christians. Amen in Hebrew means “Sure” and “Faithful”. Aum is the all-pervading sound emanating from the Invisible Cosmic Vibration (Holy Ghost of Christians), God in His aspect of Creator; the “Word” of the Bible, the voice of the creation, testifying the divine presence in every atom. Aum can be heard within you (Anahata) as you plug your ears, close your eyes, and focus on the sound that is vibrating within your body. In biological terms, it is the sound of the inner function of the body that includes the heartbeat.

In the imagination of the prehistoric sages, Om originated as the primordial sound, the sound that took place at the time of the Creation of the Universe, which the scientists of the modern era call “Big Bang” in the theory of creation by Sir James Jeans.

Mulamantra

While performing Saraswati Puja, you will come across the word “ॐ”. Like Om, which is of general use, the primordial sound “ॐ” is designated to Goddess Saraswati. It is called as her mulamantra (মূলমন্ত্র). Likewise, each God and Goddesses is associated with similar primordial sound; for Lord Ganesha, it is ॐ and for Lakshmi it is ॐ. 
INVOCATION PRAYERS

Obeisance to Lord Vishnu

The goal of this ritual is to purify the inside of the body with the sanctified water, the basic element of life, with the name of Lord Vishnu, Our Preserver. All auspicious work starts with reverence to Lord Vishnu, our preserver.

Sip water in the name of Vishnu

Sipping water in the name of Vishnu: Take a spoonful of water in 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 and say this mantra.

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.

With folded hands in front of your chest say
PRAYER OF GAYATRI

SANDHYA

This is a personal prayer of the priest. For others, this can be optional.

Sandhya means “at the junction (sandhi, সংধি).” It focuses on the prayer for the Goddess Gayatri.

According to ancient tradition, Sandhya is done three times a day – at the junction of night/morning, high noon/afternoon, and at sunset (day/night). Sandhya is taught at the time of sacred thread. The new Brahmin usually follows it for a year. Hence, it is desirable for the new-age Brahmin to start any puja ritual by performing the Sandhya in order to fill in his undone commitment.

INTRODUCTION TO GAYATRI

Gayatri mantra is a highly revered mantra based on a Vedic Sanskrit verse from a hymn of the Rigveda, attributed to Visvamitra. Gayatri mantra is named for its Vedic gayatri meter. The main principle of Vedic meter is measurement by the number of syllables. The metric unit of verse is the pada (foot), generally of eight, eleven, or twelve syllables. Others Vedic meters are Jagati, Tristubh, Viraj, and Anustup. Each has its specific number of padas and syllables. Gayatri has 3 padas and 8 syllables. Chandas (ছাণ্ড: ) is the systematic study of Vedic meter.
Gayatri verse is interpreted to invoke the deva Savitr (sun). Hence it is often called Savitri. Gayatri, however, has been referred in its meditation (ध्यान) as a goddess. Thus some believe that the radiation energy of the sun is considered as goddess Gayatri. From a more scientific point of view, the energy is the basis of all creations and thus Gayatri is held on a high position in Hindu pantheon. Gayatri Mantra is repeated and cited very widely in Vedic literature, and praised in several well-known classical Hindu texts. The mantra is an important part of the upanayana ceremony for young Hindu Brahmin males as part of their daily rituals. Modern Hindu reform movements spread the practice of the mantra to include women and all castes and its use is now very widespread.

**General Preparation**

Wash your hands and feet before sitting on the asan (puja seat) to do the sandhya.

**Marjana (purifying with water)**

Sprinkle water on the head (purification process) and chant:

```
ওঁ শ্রী সাংনো ধ্রুন্যাং, শশনং স্তূপাং।
শাঙ্গ সমুদ্রিয়া অপঃ, শশনং স্তূপাং।।

Om Sanno apo danyanya samanah santu nupya |
Sanna samudria apah, samana santu kupya ||

Oh the waters! that comes out from the desert, from the land with plentiful water, from the sea, and from the well, shower your bliss on us.
```

```
ওঁ রূপদাদিব মুমুচান, বিবিং রাতো মলাদিব। পৃথূঃ পবিত্রপ্রজাজ্জ, মাপঃ চক্ত্ন্ত মৈনস।।

Om! Drupadadiba mamuchanam swinaha snato malatiba|
Putang pabitenabajya, mapah sudhantu mainashaha||

Om! As a sweated person feels soothed under he tree, as he feels clean after a bath, as ghee always stays pure, so Oh water, wash away my sins and purify me.
```

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ওঁ আশোহিষ্ঠা মোরাঢুব, জনউজ্জ্বে দধুজ্জ। মহে রণায় চকুস।।
ওঁ যো বঃ শিবতম রুস জ্ঞান তাজজ্ঞানে নঃ। উপাজ্জিরা মাত্রা।।
ওঁ তথম অহ্ন গমনে বো, যস্য ক্ষায় জ্ঞিন্ত। অপো জনযথা চ নঃ।।

Om apo hi stha mayobhuba, sta na urjhey dadhatana|
Mahe ranaya chakhashey ||
Om jobah shivatamo rasastaya bhajayatehanah! Ushatiraba matarah||
Om tasma arangamam boh, jashya khaya jinwatha|
Apojanayatthah chanah||

Oh waters, you are the source of happiness; strengthen us with your divine energy so that we feel your greatness and enjoy your bounty
```
Share your nourishing energy with us, Oh waters, like an affectionate mother nourishes her children with her auspicious energy.

From all-illuminating Supreme Lord the Divine Law and Truthfulness generated.
Then came the darkness of night followed by vast ocean full of water.
Thus came the annual rhythm, the night, the day, the sun, the earth, the sky, the Heaven and the universe, with the blessing of the Almighty.

**Breath control**

Pranayam

Sprinkle water around you while you imagine creating a wall to isolate yourself from the rest of the world. Repeat the following chant while sprinkling the water:

Uttering the primordial sound of Om! Invoke all rituals by thinking of the great sage Brahма, sung in the beat of Gayatri, and meditating on the energy-emitting god Agni.

The seven states – *Saptabyahritanang* – *Bhu, Bhubha, Swya, Maha, Janah, Tapah and Satyang* (earth, universe, self, people, intellect and truth). The seven beats of Samaveda – *Gayatri, Unchik, Anustupa, Brihati, Pangti, Tristupa, and Jagati*. The seven gods: Agni,
**SARASWATI PUJA**

**Bayu, Surya, Baruna, Brihaspati, Indra, Biswandevatah** (Lord of the universe).

**Pranayamey biniyoga:** I am dedicating my breath control to the names of all the above and to revered Gayatri, sage Viswamitra, sung in Gayatri meter, in the name of Sun God - Sabita.

**Breath control Step #1** (Inhale through left nostril)

After sprinkling the water around you close the right nostril with your right thumb and inhale through the left nostril while chanting the *pranayam* mantras.

(NaMo) 
रक्तवर्णं चतुर्फलं विद्वृजं अक्षयस्ते-कमलस्ते-करं हलेभाहंं प्रकाशं धाम।
ो भुं ओ भूं ओ भं ओ महं जनं ओ तपं ओ सतं।
ो अं ब्रह्म प्रलयं रसोहत्वं एष भूतवं धरेऽ।

*Nabhau – Raktabarnang chaturkumham dwibhujang*
*akhshasutra kamandalukarang Brahmanam dhyanam.*

*Om bhur, om bhubha, om swah, om maha, om janah, om tapah, om satyang.*
*Om tat Sabiturbarenyam bhargo debashya dhimahi dhiyo yonah prachodayat.*
*Om apojyoti rashomritam Brahman bhurbubhaswarom.*

The chanting involves upholding the image of the Lord of Creation, Brahma – red in color, bearing four heads while looking all over the universe (four directions), and with two arms. The right arm holds the prayer beads while the left arm holds the kamandalu containing the life giving water.

*He is sitting on a swan (symbol of peace). Offering all the seven states of our existence (explained earlier, with following alternate meaning – life, consciousness, bliss, devotion, intellect and truth) let us meditate on that divine energy (light, consciousness), which is coming out of the sun, that will inspire us. That self illumined Brahman covers the entire universe.*

**Breath control Step #2** (Hold breath)

Continue to press the right nostril with the right thumb and then close the left nostril with the little finger and ring finger of the right hand. Imagine the presence of Vishnu on your heart and chant the following describing the appearance of Vishnu:

(Mali) 
दलप्रभंग चतुर्फलं शस्त्रचक्रलापस्माहं गुरुभुजं रक्षशं केशं धाम।
ो भुं ओ भूं ओ भं ओ महं जनं ओ तपं ओ सतं।
ो अं ज्ञाति रसोहत्वं एष भूतवं धरेऽ।

*Hridi – Nilotpala dala-prabhang chaturbhujam*
*sankhachakra-gada-padma-hastam*
*Garuraruha Keshabang dhayan |*
*Om bhu Om bhubah Om swah Om maha*
*Om janah Om tapah Om satyam ||*
*Om tat Sabitur varenyam bhargo devashya dhimahi |*
Meditate on Vishnu (Keshaba), sitting on your heart and emitting blue hallows. In four arms He holds – conch, spinning wheel, mace and lotus. He sits on the heavenly bird Garura for his transportation. Oh the revered Sun remove the darkness that prevails in me and illuminate my intellect with your divine illumination that spreads out over the three worlds of this universe.

**Breath control Step #3** (Exhale through the right nostril)

Release the thumb on the right nostril and allow the breath to exhale through the right nostril.

While exhaling, meditate on the image of Shiva, the destroyer, resting on your forehead. He has three eyes, with two arms – holding trident on the right and drum on the left, decorated with half-moon on the forehead and riding on a bull. Oh the sun ---.

**Obeisance to Surya (sun)**

Sipping water in the name of the sun (Surya)

Take water in your right palm chant the mantra and sip it.

---

**SURYA METI MANTRASYA BRAHMA RISHI PRAKRITISHANDA APO DEVATA ACHMANEY BIYOGA**
**In the name of the Sun as described by the sage Brahma in Prakriti chanda, I am sipping this water. With the blessings from the Sun and the sages may be protected from the ignorance (sin). Whatever sin I have incurred in the night by my words, hands, feet and other organs, may that be excused by the God of the night. Blessed by them I may now burn all my sins into the eternal flame of bliss as my ahuti (offering) in order to acquire my immortal soul.**

**Expelling the Sin**

Aghamarshan

Take little water in your right palm, chant the mantra and imagine that you are blowing off your sin through your breath.

As described by Aghamarshana sage in Anustupachanda, dedicated to describe God’s creation. In the beginning of the Creation there was no light that was watched exclusively by His Absolute Truth. Then formed the sea, followed by the intermittent day and night leading to the annual cycle of the year. The universe got illuminated by His grace, reflected by the sun and the moon, as He planned. And finally merged the whole Universe and this earth extended deep into its core.

*(Recalling the Creation removes the ignorance within you)*

Now throw the water on to your left on the ground imagining that you are released of the sin and ready to do your worship as the pure soul (amritasya putra). Wash your hand and you are now ready to offer your prayer to Gayatri. Now look to the east, imagining the rising sun and chant:

"O Bhur-bhuta-swaḥ tat sabitur vareṇyam bhargo devashya dhimahi
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayat Om"
He who is adored by all over the universe – heaven, earth and underground,  
Destroy the ignorance in me and enlighten my intellect (soul).

Offer little water on the plate, meditation on sun:

**Prayer to Sun’s location**

_সূর্যোপস্থান_  
*Suryopasthan*

This prayer is dedicated to the sun in his current position on the sky. Facing the sun chant:

ও উদ্যুতভিত্তায় প্রক্ষণ নির্মিতঃঃ সূর্যো দেবতা সূর্যোপস্থানে বিনিরোপঃ।  
উদ্যতঃ যজ্ঞদাসঃ, দেব বর্জতি কেতাঃ। দৃশে বিশ্বায় সূর্যঃ।

_Udutyam ityasya Prashkanva rishih Gayatri chanda_  
_Suryo devata Suryoposthaane biniyogah._  
_Om udutyam jatavedasam, devam bahanti ketavah_  
_drishe vishvaaya Suryam ||_

For the mantra that starts with the word “Udutyam”, Praskanva is the seer (rishi), Gayatri is the meter, and the sun is the God. This mantra is applied to worship the Sun.  
_Om, in order to make everything visible to us,  
the rays of the Sun hold the all-knowing Sun high above._

চিত্রিতত্ত্বায় ক্রূসর্ববিষ্ণুপুজ্জনঃ সূর্যো দেবতা সূর্যোপস্থানে বিনিরোপঃ।  
ও চিত্রঃ দেববানুসৃষ্টিপুলিকাঃ, চতুর্দ্রিষ্টায় ধরণসংগ্রহােঃ।  
আপ্রা দ্বারাতুল্যহীনঃ অক্তীক্ষৎ সূর্যঃ আজ্জ জগতভুমিঃ।

_Chitram ityasya Kutsa rishi Tristup chandah Suryo devata Suryopathaney viniyogah._  
_Om chirtram devanam udgadinikam, chaktsur Mitrasya Varunasyagneh._  
_A pra dyava prithivi antaraksha, surya atma jagatas tad rashashcha. ||_

For the mantra that starts with the word “Chitram”, Kutsa is the seer,  
Tristup is the meter, and the Sun is the God.  
_this mantra is applied to worship the Sun._

Then give water in the name of various aspects of divinity:

ও রোম্যে নমঃ, ও ব্রাহ্মণেবো নমঃ, ও আচার্যেবো নমঃ, ও বিদ্যাসাগর নমঃ, ও সেবকে নমঃ, ও সেবকে নমঃ,  
ও বায়ঃ নমঃ, ও মুক্তিবে নমঃ, ও বিশ্বে নমঃ, ও শৈল্পিয়া নমঃ, ও উপাস্য নমঃ।

_Om Brohmaney namah, Brahmanebhyo namah, acharyebhyo namah, rishibhyo namah,  
devebhyo namah, Vedebyo namah, bayabey namah, mritabey namah,  
Vishnabey namah, Vaishrabanaya namah, upjaya namah._
Welcome to Gayatri

Call Gayatri with folded hands placed on your heart:

ॐ आयाहि बरदे देवी, त्रक्षरे ब्राह्मबदनिः
पायरि अश्पसां मात-अर्क्षोधनि नमोमहं।

Om aayahi baradey devi, traksharey Brahmabadini |
Gayatricha chandasang matar-Brahmayoni namastutey ||

Come Oh the revered goddess, Oh the immortal, Oh the mother of Vedas,
Oh the mother of Gayatri meter, who came out of the supreme Lord (Brahman),
allow me to bow with deep reverence.

Gayatri Meditation

Dhyan is the process of invoking the image of the God/Goddess on the mental screen.

Gayatraya Viswamitra rishi-Gayatrichanda
Sabita devata japayaney biniyogah ||

Gayatri, initiated by sage Viswamitra in Gayatri meter and addressed to the sun,
I am offering that mantra to you.

Morning

ॐ कुमारी-हुप्प बेदुरुदुंग ब्रह्मरुपं बिचित्र०ः
हंससहितं कुष्ठरुं सुर्यमंडल-सन्धितं।

Om kumarim-Rigvedajutan Brahmarupan bichintayet
Hansasthetang kushahastang Suryamandala-sansthitam ||

In the morning meditate on Gayatri as a small girl, holding the sacred Rigveda,
looking over the universe while sitting on a swan, holding Kusha
(the sanctified grass that captures sun’s rays) in her hands; while
located on the divine solar system.
High noon

ও মধ্যাহ্নে বিষ্ণুরূপ তারকায়ং পীতরাসং।
ধূমরূপ বকুলকর্ণীঃ সূর্যমণ্ড-সংহিতাং।

_Om madhyaneh Vishnurupancha tarakshasthan peetabasasang |
Yubatincha Yajurvedang Suryamandala-sansthitam _

At noon, like Vishnu riding on his Gaduda, Gayatri takes the form of a young grown up lady, holding Yajurveda in her hands, wearing a yellow dress and located in the divine solar system.

Evening

ও সারাকে শিবরূপং বৃদ্ধঃ বৃদ্ধ–বাহিনীঃ।
সূর্যমণ্ড-মধ্যঃ সামবেদ সামাজ্যঃ।

_Om sayaneh Shivarupanchya bridang brishabha-bahining |
Suryamandala-madhyastang Samaveda samajutang _

In the evening, like the image of Shiva, Gayatri takes the form of an old lady riding on a bull while located in the Solar system and holding the Samaveda in her hands.

Gayatri chant

_Gayatrijap

Light is a symbol for 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. The following Gayatri prayer is mentioned in Rigveda and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. It is considered as the ultimate vaidic prayer.

The counting process, while chanting the Gayatri matra on the right hand palm, is described in Chapter 3.

ও ভূর্ণবেহো, তৎ সাপির্ভবেহো, তর্পো দেবস্যা ধীমহি। থিয়া যো নঃ প্রচোদয়। ও।

_Om Bhur-Bhuba-Svah,
Tat savitur barenyam,
bhargo devasva dhimahi.
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayat Om! _

_Om( primordial sound that represents divinity)! In the three worlds – the physical (bhur), the mental (bhuvah) and the spiritual (suvah) – you that transcendental Paramatama, the adorable (barenyam) Sun (Savitur, creator of this world), destroy the darkness (bhargo, sin), with your divine effulgence (devasya).
We meditate upon (dheemahi) Thee,
Enlighten our intellect (dhiyo yonah pracodayat). Om.

Conclusion of Gayatri

Take a little water on your right palm, chant the following mantra and throw on the puja plate:

ও মহেশ-বদনোৎপন্না বিশ্বার্ধ-সত্ত্বা।
ব্রহ্মা সমুদ্রতা গচ্ছ দেবিয যথেক্ষ্য।

Mahesha-vadanotpanna Vishnuhridaya-sambhaba |
Brahmana samnugyata gachcha devi jateychaya

Oh goddess Gayatri, you have come from the mouth of Shiva, reside in the heart of Vishnu, and hold to the conscience of Brahma, now you can go anywhere you wish.

Prayer for self-protection

Atma-raksha

Touch the backside of your right ear with your right thumb and pray to seek the blessing of Agni to protect you from all dangers.

Jatabedasha itashya Kashyapa rishi trishtupo chanda Agnirdevata, atmaraksham japey biniyoga.
Om jaatavedasey sunbama somam-aaratiyato ni dahati Vedah.
Sa nah parshadati Durgani bishvaa naabea sindhum duritatyagnih

Let us offer Soma to Agni, the knower of all Vedas. May He destroy our enemies. As a boatman helps us to cross the ocean with a boat, so may Agni protect and help us to steer over the river of our sorrows.

Prayer to Rudra, Shiva

With folded hands chant this prayer:

ষভ্যমিত্যায়া কালাপ্রিয়জ্ঞবি রূপোহ জনা রুদ্রো দেবতা রুদ্রাপস্থানে বিনিরোধ।
SARASWATI PUJA

Ritamityasya Kalagnirudra rishi anupstupa chando
Rudhro devata rudrpathaney viniyogah.

Om ratham satyam param Brahmah purusham krisnapiingalam
Urdhavaretam virupaksham, visvarupam namoh namah  ||

Supreme Brahman, The Absolute Reality, who has assumed the form of Umaamaheshvara, with dark blue and reddish brown in hue, absolutely chaste and possessing uncommon eyes. Salutations to Her in the form of the universe.
(This verse is taken from Mahanarayan Upanishad).

Now offer water with the spoon (kushi) in the names four divinities separately:

Om brahamen namah, Om Vishnabey namah, Om Rudraya namah, Om Varunaya namah.

Reverence to Brahmah, Vishnu, Rudra – Shiva, and Varuna.

Special offering to Sun God (সূর্যাধিক) 

Take the kushi (the small spoon that sits inside the kosha, water holder kept in front of the priest) with little water. Put in that a touch of red sandalwood paste and a red flower. Add a bit of rice (kept in the pushpapatra) into the kushi. Hold the kushi with narrower side pointing outward. Meditate on the rising sun coming in front of you and you are looking at it. Chant:

Om ehi surya sahasrangsho tejorashey jagatpatey.
Anukampaya man thunga guhyaparyo divakaram.  

Oh the Sun God! Oh the emitter of thousands of rays over the universe, bless me, your devotee, and receive my offering, Oh the day maker.

Then offer your reverence to the Sun God by joining the hollowed palms and holding them on your chest:

"Om javakusuma sangkasham kashyapeyam mahadyutim.
Dhwantarim sarbapeeghnem pranatoshim divakaram."
SARASWATI PUJA

Like the red shoe flower (জাবা), extremely bright like the hot copper, the killer of darkness, the remover of all sins, Oh the maker of the day! I am prostrating in front of you.

Now offer a spoonful of water from your boat-shaped right palm uttering the mantras that appeal to Goddess Gayatri to excuse you from the errors you incurred during the ritual and fulfill it by her grace.

ও যদক্ষং পরিভ্রাষ্টয় মারাহিন জ্যাঙ্গduc
পূর্নং ভবতু তৎ সকর্ম তৃপ্তসাদাং সুরোদবরি।।

Jadaksharam paribhrashtam matraheenanc jadvabet.
Purnam bhatu tat sarbam tatprasadat sureshwari.

If I made any error in using the proper alphabet or pronouncing it, Oh the Goddess of all knowledge, complete it by your grace.

NARAYANA PUJA

The word Narayana comes from the union of two words, nara (man or in general the jiva or any living creature) and “ayana” which means path. In other words, man is the culmination path of evolution who can realize Him. It is another name of Vishnu, the preserver of life.

Narayana is the family deity for many Brahmins and is in the form of saligramsheela which is a shapeless black-colored stone.

Bath

The sheela (stone) is first given a bath before putting it on its special throne and subjected to worship. Ring the bell while giving Narayana a bath. It is a very auspicious ceremony.

Following are the mantras used during bathing chant the following mantras:

ও সহস্রাদিয়া শূলশাপ সহস্রাক সহস্রপাথ স দূরিদি সবম্ব পন্ত অভ্যতিষ্ঠনাগুল ম ত্র।।

Om sahasra Shirsha Purushah sahasrakshah sahashrapat |
Sa bhumim sarvatam spastwa atyatischha dashangulam ||1||

With thousand heads of the Lord covering the land of thousand steps and yet leaves space for ten fingers (story related to Vamana Avatar of Vishnu || 1||
Alternate: The supreme Person exists enveloping the whole manifest Universe, cognizing through every mind, seeing through every eye and working through every limb (sahashrapat) – nay He exists transcending the Universe.

Om agni-meeday prohitam yagyasya devya mrtvijam hotaram ratna dhatamam

Om! I call upon the attributes of that Self-effulgent Divinity, who is the upholder of universe from very eternity, the most bounteous and the great possessor of wealth and prosperity.

Om! We invoke you for the sake of food and energy as you are the vital breathing energy. May the Lord, the Creator assign you, the sacrificers, with best accomplishments.

Om Agna aa yaahi beetaye grinaano havyadaataye ni hotaa satsi barhisi

O Agni come here, sit with us as Hota (the special priest) on this holy grass for food and fun. We are offering oblations with fire.

Om shanno devirabhistaya aapo bhavantu peetaye sham yo rabhisrabantu nah

O Lord, may these waters be useful to us for drinking and bring happiness; may the goddesses fulfil our desires. May their blessings shower on us form all directions.

After giving bath, wipe the Naryayana with the chant of Gayatri and then put a tulsi leaf dipped in sandalwood saying:

Etat sachandana tulsi patram, Om namastey bahurupey paramatmaney swaaha

With my sandalwood tulsi leaf (read the story of tulsi in introduction) I prostrate to thee Oh the Supreme Lord who appears in so many ways.
Then put the Narayana on his throne with a sandalwood-dipped placed at the bottom.

**Meditation**

বিশ্বুধ্যান

Vishnudhyan

Take a white flower, keep on your head and establish the image of Naryaya in your heart.

ও দেয়া সদা সর্বত্রাঙ্গমালার্ণী, নারায়ণ সরসিজাসনসমীতিঃ।
কৃষ্ণনাথ কনকদুনাব কীর্তি, হরী হিরুক্ত্যদ্যুপত্ত্যদ্যঙ্গকঃ।

Om dheyah sada sabitri mandala madhyabarti
Narayana sarasijasana sannibishta
Keyurabana kanakakundalaban kiriti
Hari hiranmaya bapu dhrita shankha chakrah

I meditate on the solar orbit with Narayana in the middle, wearing armlets, golden earnings and necklace. His head is covered with a crown and he holds the conch and discuss in his hands while His body shines with a golden color.

**Offerings to Vishnu and His Associates**

Now place sandalwood touched flower (white preferred) on the head of Naryana Shila, uttering the following six mantras:

এতে গঞ্জপুপে এতে গঞ্জপুপে ও বিদ্যাশার নমঃ, এতে এতে গঞ্জপুপে ও শিবাদিপঞ্চভড়ো নমঃ, এতে গঞ্জপুপে ও অতিভাদিনংশভড়ো নমঃ, এতে গঞ্জপুপে ও ইন্দ্রাদৈশগ্রাহয়ো নমঃ, এতে গঞ্জপুপে ও মহাসাদিদশাবারোভো নমঃ, এতে গঞ্জপুপে ও নারায়ানো নমঃ।

Etey gandhapushpey Om vignabinashaya namah;
Etey gandhapushpey Om Shivadipanchadevatevyo namah;
etey gandhapushpey Om Adityadinavagrahevyo namah;
etey gandhapushpey Om Indradidashakapaleyvyo namah;
etey gandhapushpey Matsyadishavatorevyo namah;
etey gandhapushpushpey Om namah Narayanaya namah.

Here I offer the (sandalwood) scented flower to the obstacle remover; to Shiva with five gods and goddesses in the group (Shiva-Ganesha-Narayana-Surya-Durga); Aditya and other nine planets – Aditya-Soma-Mangala-Budha-Brihaspti-Sukra-Sani-Ravi and Ketu)

After establishing the Narayana and offering reverence to various gods and goddesses, offer the following five things to Narayana. With each offering take the name of Narayan: water, rice, incense, lamp, raisin and sugar candy (misri). As cooked rice is not available in daily puja, offering of cheera (flat dry rice) can be done instead.
Offerings to Narayana (Vishnu)

_**Panchapochareypuja**_

Make offering of five things (minimum):

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Etat padyam (water) Om Namah Narayanaya namah
I am offering this water to wash your feet, Oh Narayana
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Similarly repeat for **argham** (rice), **dhupam** (incense), **deepam** (lamp), **falam** (fruit, like raisin), **mistanyam** (sweet candy or misri) and **annam** (flat rice in place of cooked rice), **achmanium** (glass of drinking water) and **punarachmanium** (second glass of drinking water).

**Special offering of Tulsi**

The story of Tulsi is described under Satyanarayana. Offer Tulsi three times and place on the top of the Saligram Shila, uttering the following mantra

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Om namastey vahurupaya Vishnabey parmatmaney swaha ||
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Pay reverence with folded hand placed on the heart:

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Om namo Brahmanya devaya go brahmanaya hitaya ca.
Jagaddhitaya Shri Krishnaya Govindaya namo namah
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I offer my respectful obeisance to the Supreme Lord, who is the well-wisher of the cows and the Brahmanas, as well as all living entities in general.

I offer my obeisance to the Lord of the Universe, known as Krisna and Govinda.

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Om trailokya-pujitah Sriman sadaa Vijaya-vardhanah
Shaantim kuru gadaapaney, Naaraayana Namah-astu tey.
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You are worshipped in all the three worlds – underworld, earth and heaven.

You always bring victory to us, You shower peace,

Oh the holder of mace, I bow to you Oh Narayana.
PRERILINARY PUJA PROCEDURE
সাধারণ পূজা পদ্ধতি
Sadharan Puja Padhyati

Prayer for the Holy River Ganges
গঙ্গা প্রণাম
Ganga pranam

Sprinkle small amount of Ganges water from the pot over your head and chant (if Ganges water is not available, use any water):

ও সদ্যঃ পাতক সংহিতঃ সদ্যঃ দুঃখবিনাশিনী; সুখস্মৃতি মোক্ষস্মৃতি পাতক পরমা গতি।

Om sadya pataka sanghrantri sodho dukho binashini;
Suhkoda mok hodha Gangha Gangoibo parama goti.

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.

Offerings to Lord Vishnu and other Gods
গদ্ভদির অর্চনা
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).

ও বিষ্ণু নাম

Om Vishnabey namah ||
My reverence to you Oh Vishnu

ং এতেশ্চ গদ্ভাদিভ্যো নামহ এতে পুজোপায় এতসাধিতায় স্রীবিষ্ণুবেদমাল্যনামহ নমহ

Bong! Etasmai gandhadibhyo namah |
Etsey gandhapuprshpem etadhipatyam Sri Vishnabey namah |
Etab sampradanayam pujaniya devataganbebcyo namah ||

Uttering the primordial sound of Bong, I am offering the scented flower to the feet of Lord Vishnu, and also offering herewith my deep respect to all the revered Gods.
Offering to the Sun God (Surya)

Suryargha

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

Offering

Argha

Pick up the kushi (spoon) with little water. Put in this a flower (preferably red in color) and put in that a little rice. Holding the kushi, pointing side out, chant, addressing the sun:

Om namah bibswatey Brahman bhyasate |
Vishnu tejashey jagata sabitrey suchanyay sabitrey karmadainey |
Idam argham bhagabatey Shri Surjaya namah ||
Ehi Surjyo sahasrangsho tejorashey jagatpatey |
Anukampaya mang bhaktam grihanargham divakaram |
Esha argham bhagabatey Shri Surjaya 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.

Prostration

Surya pranam

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

Om jaba kusamo sankashong kashopayong mohadhuting:
dhantaring Sarbopapoghanang pronotosmi divakarang.

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.
Prayer For Auspicious beginning

Gayatri prayer

This may not be repeated if done earlier (see Sandhya).

Light is a symbol for 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 100 times. To keep track of which repetition (jap) you are on, mentally number the knuckles of each hand, starting with the second knuckle of the ring finger (see diagram below). Place your thumbs on knuckle 1 of both hands. When you have finished saying the prayer once, move your right thumb to knuckle 2. After the second iteration, move the right thumb to knuckle 3 and continue in this way. After the tenth repetition move your left thumb to knuckle 2 and your right thumb returns to knuckle 1. After the twentieth repetition, move the left thumb to knuckle 3 and continue. Thus when the left palm reaches the ten count, you have done jap 100 times.

Om bhurhubbhavah, thath Saviturbarenyam, bhargo devasya dhimahi. Dheyo yonah prachodayat Om! ||

Om! In the three worlds – the physical (bhur), the mental (bhuvah) and the celestial/spiritual (suvah) – you, that transcendent 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.

General Reception for the Divine

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:
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:

ॐ आधरशक्तये नमः, ॐ कृष्णये नमः,
ॐ अनन्तये नमः ॐ पुष्पीये नमः।

Om adharashaktaye namaha, Om Kurnaya namaha,
Om annataya 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:

Then put some flowers at the tip of the kosha while chanting the following mantras.

এতে গঙ্গপুশ্পে ও অং অর্কমণ্ডলস্য রাশি কলাত্মনেন নমঃ
ও উৎ সোমমণ্ডলস্য রোজুশ কলাত্মনেন নমঃ, ও মং বহুমণ্ডলস্য দশকলাত্মনেন নমঃ।

Etey gandhapushpey
Om Ang arkamandalaya dadasha kalatmaney namah ||
Om Ung Somamandalaya sorasha kalatmaney namah ||
Om Mang 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.

Divine Witness
সাক্ষ্যমন্ত
Sakhyamantra

With Folded hand in front of your chest, chant:

ॐ सूर्यः सोम यमः कालः सद्योच्छतायं तथा।
परन्तु निकंविते तुमिन्काशं खरा मराः।
SARASWATI PUJA

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

Sprinkle some water around you taken from the kosha in front of you by dipping a small flower in the pot while chanting:

Om Sasthi, Om Sasthi, Om Sasthi.

Let lord Indra and sage Pusha give me blessings for this occasion. Let there be sanctity everywhere.

Seeking Divine Blessings

With praises to the glory of Moon (Som), Varuna, Agni, Sun, Vishnu, Brahma and Brihaspati; and my prayers to mighty Indra, learned Pusha, undefeated Taksha, and the care taker of Gods, Brihaspati, we seek their blessings on us.
Sanctification of the water

Immerse the tip of your right hand index finger in the water of the *kosha* and chant.

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ঐ গঙ্গা চ যমুনা চৈব গোসবরি সরস্বতি,
নরমদে সিন্ধু কাবেরি সন্নিধিং কুরু।
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*Om Gagaye cha Yamunaye Choibo Godabori Sarawati; Narmadaye, Sindnu, Kabaeri jalaye osmin sannidhing kuru.*

Let this pot of water represents all the holy rivers of India

Purification of the seat (আসন ভ্রষ্ণ)

Holding a flower with your right hand thumb, index and middle finger and touch your seat (ashon) with the flower and say this mantra.

```
এতে গঙ্গাপুঞ্জে গৃহে আধারশক্তয় কমলাসানায় নমঃ।
আসনমঠে মেরুপুঞ্জক কয়ি সুভং ছনঃ কুর্মে দেবতা, আসনধৰ্ম্মন্ত বিনিয়োগঃ।
নমঃ পৃথিবিক্রয়া ধৃতা লোকা, সেবিত কুং বিফূল্যা ধৃতা।
তুমি ভাষায় মাঝ নিত্যং পরিত্যং কুরঃ চাননঃ।
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*Eteye gandhapushpaye hring adharshaktaye kamalasanaya namaha.*
*Ashasamantrasya meruprithshtha rishi suthalong chandho kurmoo devata,*
*ashonoupobayshaney biniyogaha: nomo prithwitaya dhrita loka,*
*debitwang Vishuna dritha: thancha dharaya mam nityam pobitram kuru chasanam.*

*I am offering this flower to the divine earth holding this asan (my seat).*

*Meruprshththa, the sage who introduced the mantra of the seat sanctification,*
*in sutal 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*
*who in turn held by Lord Vishnu; hold me firmly and sanctify my seat.*

Remove Of All Obstacles

বিন্নপাসরণ

*Bighnapasaran*

Various obstacles can interrupt Puja. So the devotee prays to God for remove those obstacles that may come during the puja process. This is done through sound and action.

Throw a flower in the offering plate with the following sound.

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ঐঐঐঐ
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*Oing*
Then circle the palm of your right hand around the left palm three times and then strike the left palm with two fingers (middle and pointing fingers) of your right hand.

अस्त्र्या फट
Astrya phat

Offering to the evil spirit
माशभक्त बलि
Mashabhakta bali

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

Show five welcome mudras as described before.

ও ভূতানায় ইহাপাচ্ছি, ইহাপাচ্ছি, ইহাপাচ্ছি, ইহাপাচ্ছি, ইহাসাদিক্ষত ইহাসাদিক্ষত
অর্থবিহারী, কৃতী, মম পূজার পূজীত ।

Om Bhutadaya iha gacata iha gacata
Iha tishthata Iha tishthata Iha sannidhatta, iha sannirudhyam ।
Atradhisthanam kurutah mama puja grihṇita

Oh the spirits come, establish here, come close and stay close to me, rest here and accept my offerings.

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 (মাশভক্ত বলি).

বং এতেই মাশভক্তবলির নাম, ।
এতে গঙ্গাপূজ্য ও মাশভক্তবলির নাম, এতে গঙ্গাপূজ্য ও এতেদিনিয়ে এ বিকরণ নাম । ।
এ মাশভক্ত বলি ও মূঢ়নিত্য নাম ।

Bang etashmai mashabhaktabalaye namah!
Etey gandhapushpe! Om mashabhaktabalaye namah!
Etey gandhapushpe etadhineyeh Om Vishnabey namah!
Esha mashabhakta bali Om bhutadibhyo namah ॥

Reverence to the mashabhaktabali (the container with yogurt, mashkalai and red flower dipped in sandalwood) as I offer the scented flower to the name of Vishnu and the invisible spirits. Looking up, with folded hands, pray to the spirits. At the end of the prayer touch the mashabhakata bali container.

ও ভূতায় প্রেতায় পিষ্টাচাচ্ছে বে কাত্তায় ভূতায় । বে গৃহপূজ্য মম স্নাতন পিরণ্যে প্রস্তািত ।

পুজিতা এই মাশভক্ত বলিও মূঢ়নিত্য নাম । সূতা পূজায় পলায় সংক্রামন ।

Om bhuta preta pishachashcha jey basan tatra bhuteley
Removal of Evil Spirits from the Worship Area

Pick some white mustard seeds with your fingers and sprinkle them around the worship area while saying these mantras.

All the spirits who reside below this earth who may disturb our peace is guarded off in the name of Shiva. All the creatures, may they be ghosts, gobbling or reptiles are hereby driven away from this place in the name of Chandi, the goddess of evil destruction.

Take some white mustard and throw into the offering plate with the sound:

Phat
Go

Knot of Security

The thought behind this ritual is to bring the scattered mind into the focus of devotional thoughts. Tie a knot at the end of the cloth that you are wearing. Hold the knot and chant:

I am tying this knot like a thunderbolt pulling my scattered mind into the focus of divinity. May I pray the Lord (Mahapratisar) to protect me by standing on my mental gate and preventing the entry of all distracting thoughts.
Reverence to the Gods and Goddesses at the Entrance

\textit{Dwarpuja}

Various Gods are called and worshipped at the entrance of the puja place with the request to sanctify the place of worship.

The calling of the Gods are done through five gestures, called \textit{mudras} that welcomes them and ask them to stay with the devotee during the ceremony.

Five welcome mudras

\begin{verbatim}
এ ধারণেতা ইহাগচ্ছত, ইহাগচ্ছত, ইহাগচ্ছত, ইহাগচ্ছত, ইহাগচ্ছত ইহাগচ্ছতর্কত্বম
অত্রালিহান্ত, কুরুত, মম পূজার গুরুতত।
এতে গম্ভীরে ও গং গুণের নমস্ত| ও মহালক্ষ্মী নমস্ত, ও সর্বভূতায় নমস্ত,
ও বিশ্বায় নমস্ত, ও কেঁপেলায় নমস্ত, ও গং গল্পীয় নমস্ত, ও যাং ব্যাপ্তায় নমস্ত।

Om! Dwaradevata ehaa gacata ehaa gacata |
Eha tisthata, eha tisthata, eha sannirudha, eha sannirudhyam |
Atradhisthanam kuruta, mama pujan grinhtita ||
Etey gandhupushpey Om gang Ganesha namah,
Om Mahalakshmai namah, Om Saraswatai namah,
Om Vighnaya nama, Om Kshetrapalaya namah,
Om Gangawai namah, Om Jam Yamunawai namah ||

Oh the Gods at the entrance, come, come, rest here, rest here,
stay close and closer tome, establish here and accept my offerings.
I offer my scented flowers to Ganesh along with his primordial sound (গং),
reverence to Mahalakshmi, Saraswati, remover of obstacles,
lord of the directions with their primordial sound Om (অ), and to the sacred rivers
Ganges with the primordial sound (গং) and Yamuna with the primordial sound (যং).\
\end{verbatim}
THE HOLY POT

Holy Pitcher and Five Great Elements of Life

The *pancha mahabhuta*, or "five great elements" are: Tej (energy), Ap (water), Kshiti (earth), Marut (air), Vyom (cosmos). Hindus believe that all of creation, including the human body, is made up of these five essential elements and that upon death, the human body dissolves into these five elements of nature, thereby balancing the cycle of nature. Life depends on these five great elements and in the same way that we rely on God and His blessing.

The Kalash (holy pitcher) represents all the aforesaid five elements where the leaves are the captured energy from the sun, water is filled inside the pitcher, and earth is kept under the pitcher. The air and cosmos are naturally surrounding the pitcher. The following hymn exemplifies the Hindu concept of creation. It is chanted as the holy pitcher is established.

*Hiranyagarbha* (হিরন্যগার্ভা) literally means the 'golden womb' or 'golden egg', poetically rendered 'universal germ'. It is the source of the creation of the Universe or the manifested cosmos in Indian philosophy. It is mentioned in Rigveda (RV 10) and known as the *Hiranyagarbha sukta*. It declares that God manifested Himself in the beginning as the Creator of the Universe, encompassing all things, including everything within Himself, the collective totality, as it were, of the whole of creation, animating it as the Supreme Intelligence.

**Placement of Holy Pitcher**

Hold the neck of the bottom with both hands and chant:

```
Hiranyagarbha samabartatagarb bhutasya jatah patireka aseeta |
Sa dachar prithihing dhyamuteyam kashmai devaya habisha vidhema
In the beginning was the Divinity in his splendor,
manifested as the sole Lord of land, skies, water, space and that beneath and
He upheld the earth and the heavens.
Who is the deity we shall worship with our offerings?
```
Sanctification of Holy Pitcher

Fold your hands and pray to the holy pitcher:

At the mouth of the pitcher rests Vishnu, on the neck is the Shiva, at the bottom (root) rests Brahma (the creator), and in the middle circles various mother goddesses. The water represents the ocean at the time of creation of earth when seven islands comprised the land of India, when the learned sages wrote Rigveda, Jajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. They all merged in this pitcher of water. This pitcher is dedicated to the worship of God and all the evil spirits clear off from here. Oh the sanctified waters of Ganges, Jamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, and Kaberi, come and purify the water of this pitcher.

Establishing the Holy Pitcher

Hold the pitcher with both hands and repeat the following mantra:

In the name of Vishnu I am offering my reverence to the gods to stay with me as long I am performing this sacred puja. Stay here firmly.
Prayer for support

ক্রিতান্তি

Kritanjali (pray with folded hands)

ও সর্বজীববৃক্ষেন বারি সর্বজীববৃক্ষবিতম ।
ইহং ঘটং সমারঃ তিঃ দেব পশৈস সহ ॥

Om sarbatirtha udbhabam bari sarba deva-devi samanvetam
Imam ghatam samarujhya tishta deva-devi ganaih saha

The sacred rivers sanctify this holy water of the pitcher with the merger of all Gods and Goddesses into it. Now I establish this pitcher with the appeal to the Gods and Goddesses to rest here with their attendants.

Cordoning the pitcher

The sacred pitcher is cordoned by planting four arrowhead sticks (কাতরোপণ, Kandatropan) on the four corners around the pitcher and circling (5-7 times) of a red-colored thread circling around the sticks (সূতরবেষ্টন, Shutrabeshtan).

A touch of the ancient history of India in Hindu rituals

Brahmanda Purana has described that the prehistoric India was comprised of seven islands which today drifted to its various current locations – Malasia, Andaman, Lanka and others. They were named as Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmala, Kusha, Krouncha, Shaka and Pushkara. They were surrounded by seven seas. They believed that today’s India was inhabited by sages and people with high spiritual thoughts. Apart from this mythological account, anthropological evidences record that during the Continental Drift, India separated out from the Gondwana Land located in the South Pole into the present position. Geologically, the origin of the Himalayas is the impact of the Indian tectonic plate traveling northward at 15 cm per year towards the Eurasian continent, about 40-50 million years ago. The formation of the Himalayan arc resulted since the lighter rock of the seabed of that time was easily uplifted into mountains. An often-cited fact used to illustrate this process is that the summit of Mount Everest is made of marine limestone. In addition, the continuing rise of Himalaya is in support of this theory. The mystery still remains to be resolved as how our forefathers conjectured the things happened before even the human race appeared on this earth?
Planting of Arrow-head Sticks

Kandatropan

On the four corners of the sacred pitcher place four sticks (3-5 mm diameter, 2 ft high) with an arrowhead on the top of each. This is commonly known as তীরকাঠি (tirkathi). The arrowhead is made from dry palm leaves as they are inserted into the split top of the stick, making the appearance of the three leaved durba grass (iconic). If palm leaves are not available, use thin wood pieces or green rough leaves, inserted into the split top of the sticks, with the attempt to make the stick. The তীরকাঠি (tirkathi) imitate durba grass. The sticks are inserted into the mud balls at the base (imitating earth). One can use foam cups filled with wet dirt. The mantra bears the history of the migration of Aryans into India.

Background information:

The doob grass or Cynodon dactylon is a creeper grass highly priced in India. It practically grows anywhere under wide variety of climates and soils. It spreads quickly with the availability of water, extending its creeping stems, called “stolons” that spread in all directions. (Note: a stolon is a shoot that bends to the ground or that grows horizontally above the ground and produces roots and shoots at the nodes). Hence it is also referred as “runners”.

When the Aryans came, they wanted to spread out in India like the doob grass. The nodes with roots and shoots they called, “কাং” (kanda) and the extending stem between the nodes, or stolon, they called “পরুষ” (parush). So, the arrow-head sticks, planted around the holy pitcher, are compared with the doob grass with three pointing leaves (the arrow head) that is held on mud balls (earth). The thread is the stolon or the family joined together by holding to each other and circles around the holy pitcher (emblem of God).

The pitcher, symbolic of the basic elements of life, is encircled by four sticks called tirkathi (তীরকাঠি) and a continuous red thread (five rounds). The tirkathi and thread appear to signify the interwoven relationship of the family and community with the creation of the basic elements of life.

Put four bamboo sticks on four sides of the pitcher. Hold the sticks in four balls of clay (traditional) or use four foam cups with wet dirt. The sticks are split at the top in order to hold palm leaves (traditional, or use similar stiff leaves available locally). Make a three-prone spearhead with the leaves cut into pieces. This is symbolic of durba grass whose tip typically bears three leaves.
Touch the তীরকাঠি (tirkathi) and chant:

ও কাড়াং কাড়াং প্রবোধী পরুষ পরমপরি এখানো দূর্বে প্রতুন সহস্রে শতেন চ।

Om kandat kandat prarohanti parushah parushpari ebano durbey pratanu sahasrena satena ca

I am establishing these sticks with arrow-heads (tirkathi), representing the Durba grass that spreads all directions through roots (kandat) at the nodes and stolen (parush) or runnerstalk. I pray for our family to spread out in all directions in hundreds and thousands. Oh durba (Cynodon dactylon) the way your roots strikes at your nodes ("কাড়া"), connected by your stolen ("প্ররূপ"), the same way connect us with thousands of our children and grandchildren spreading out in all directions.

**Circling of thread**

মুহুবেষ্টন

Shutrabeshtan

The continuous red thread, circled around the tirkathi, encircling the sanctified pitcher, is the icon of the interwoven relationship of the family and community with the essence of life. Clockwise circle the sticks (tekathi), with a red thread, five or seven times. Loop the thread on each stick. Chant while tying the thread:

ও সৃষ্টমাণ পুরীবী দ্বায়নেহস্ম সুপর্বন্ধমণ্ডিতম সূর্যোতি ।

Om sutramanam prithibim dyamanehasam susharmanamditim suprenitim

Ddaivim nabam swaritra managasam srabanti ma ruhema swastayey

This auspicious security thread is long, holy, prosperous, immortal, divine and firm. It is like a boat that will lead us to the heaven.

**Purification of Dais**

বৈদিশোধন

Vedi sodhan

Put a flower on the platform and pray with folded hands.

ও সেদৈ বেদিশ সমাপয়ে বৰিষা বরহিনিরুধি ।

Om bedya bedih samapyatey barhisa barhiindriam

I am dedicating this sacred dias (platform) with all my sense of perception inviting all Gods to bless me and to the God of fire – Agni.
Purification of the roof cover

Look at the ceiling (or top canopy) and place a flower in the offering plate and then say with folded hands.

ও উর্দ্ধ উদ্ধরণ উত্তরে, তিষ্ঠা দেবো ন সবিতা ।
উত্তরো বাজসা বতঃপ্রার্থতিবিহয়োমহে ॥

_Om urdhey ushuna utaye, tishtha debo na Sabita \ Urđho bājashya sanita jathw anja bhīrbaga udīrhabayamahe_

Oh the sacred canopy, like the sun in the sky, you protect our food and us. Let your invitation go to the wise men to chant mantras under your shelter.

Calling for the Water of Sacred Rivers

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_.

_গোপী জয়নু চৈত্য শোভাবরী সররাত্তি
নর্ম্মো সিংহ কারীর জল অশ্বিন সররাত্তি কুরু ॥_

_Om Gange ca Yamuney chaiba Godavari Saraswati \ Narmadey Sindhu Kaveri jaley asmin sannidhim kuru _

Oh the sacred rivers of India – Ganges, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri, merge into this water to sanctify.

Prayers Addressed to Invocational Gods and Goddesses

Take a flower, with a touch of sandalwood paste, and place it on the holy pitcher taking the name of each God and Goddess mentioned:

_এতে গঞ্জগুপ্তে পাং গণেশায় নমঃ।
ও মহালোক্যা নমঃ, ও সরদৈত্য নমঃ, ও বিন্যস্য নমঃ, ও কেংশপালর নমঃ,
ও পাং পলায়ী নমঃ, ও রাযঃ বুদ্ধর্থে নমঃ_

_Etey gandhapushpey Om gang Ganeshaya namah,
Om Mahalakshmai namah, Om Saraswatai namah,_
Om Vighnaya nama, Om Kshetrapalaya namah, 
Om Gangawai namah, Om Jam Yamunawai namah ||

I offer my scented flowers to Ganesh along with his primordial sound (ग), reverence to Mahalakshmi, Saraswati, remover of obstacles, lords of the directions with their primordial sound Om (ॐ), and to the sacred rivers Ganges with the primordial sound (ग) and Yamuna with the primordial sound (य).

Creating a Divine Environment

Imagine you are surrounded well protected by gods and your well-wishers. Chant with folded hands.

(On the left)
Om guruvyo namah | Om parama guruvyo namah |
Om parapara guruvyo namah |
(On the right) Om Ganeshaaya namah |
(At the center) Om Saraswatwai namah ||

On the left I am offering my reverence to my teacher, and the teacher of highest knowledge. On the right is the Ganesha (the obstacle remover), and at the center is goddess Saraswati.

Sanctification of Body

Dedication of Self

न्यास
Nyas

Through these rituals the devotee dedicate all his body organs to the prayer of the Lord.

Hand

करासुधि
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.

Phat
May the evil elements leave
Body organs
अंगत्व
Anganyas

I am offering my different organs – heart, head, apex of my hair (shikha), arms, eyes, and my hands to Thy prayer.

Touch the organ with the joint fingers of right arm and chant pointing the organ:

Heart: ॐ गंग ह्रदया नमः । Om Gang hridaya nama ।
Head: ॐ गिंग शिरशेि स्वाहा। Om Ging shirashey swaaha।
Hair on the tip of the head: ॐ गुंग शिक्कहवं बशत। Om gung shikhawai bashat।
Cross over two hands: ॐ गाँग कबचया हुम। Om gaing kabachaya hum।
Two eyes (one at a time): ॐ गौंग नेत्रत्रयाय बौशत। Om goung netratraya boushat।
Circle the right palm around the left palm and then strike in the middle of the left palm with the ring finger and middle finger (joined): ॐ पृष्ठाय अजाय कट। Om gah karatala prishhtabham astraya phat।

Touch the heart (Gang hridayaya namah), the head (ging sirshey swaaha), the shikha - long bunch of hair extended in the middle of the head – for Brahmins – (gang shikhayai bashat), two eyes (left first and then right), and finally, two arms - crossing hands - (gaing kabachaya hum), then touch the eyes (goung netetraya baushat), finally circle around the left palm with the right palm and hit the center of the left palm with two of the right fingers- ) – middle and pointing fingers and simultaneously uttering the mantra -

Fingers
करानास
Karanyas

Touch your thumb, then the pointing finger, then the middle, then the ring finger and finally the little finger. Finally, as you have done earlier, hit the center of the left palm with two of the right fingers (middle and pointing); simultaneously utter the sound “astraya phat”.

ॐ सं अघ्नायाय नमः। �ॐ गींग वर्जिताय स्वाहा। �ॐ सुं ज्ञाताय बशत। �ॐ सं अनामिकाय हु।
ॐ सौं कनिष्ठाय बौशत। �ॐ सं करातल पृष्ठाय अजाय कट।

Gam angushthabhyam namah, gim tarjanibhyam swaaha,gum madhyamam boushat,
gaim anamikabhyam hum, goum kanisthabhyam boushat,
gah karatalaprishthabhyam astraya phat.

I am offering my thumb, pointing finger, middle finger, ring finger, the small finger and my palm to your prayers.

(Follow the same procedure as described before with body parts)
Sanctification of flower

The flower to be offered to the Goddess needs to be sanctified.

Owing Phat
Move out the evil spirits

Om pushpaketa rajahartey shataya samyak sambandhaya hrang |
In the name of divinity (Om) I sanctify these bright beautiful flowers in plenty collected for the sacred offering

WORSHIP OF GURU (Spiritual teacher)

Guru has a high position in the development of an individual. He/ she is borned ignorant with the ability to learn with the passage of time. This is our natural process of evolution. It starts from the parents who teach us the basic 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.

Meditation

Take a flower in both hands, hold that in front of your chest and say this mantra. At the end put that flower in a bowl in front of the Holy Pot to be established later.

Dhyayachirosi shuklabhjaye dhinayetrong dhibhujong Guroong;
Shaytamborong poridhanong shayetamallaonulayponong;
Bhrabhayokarong shantung kurunamoyo bigrahong;
Bamayeutpalodharinnong shaktalingito bigrahong;
Sayronnanang suprshonnang sadhakavisthidayakong.)
Let me meditate on the glory of my spiritual teacher who represents the incandescent light of supreme consciousness, who is dressed in white outfit with a white garland in neck and sandal wood paste on forehead (signifying purity), with a calm, smiley face, forgiving attitude, holding a lotus in left hand signifying symbols of blessings and whose feet rest on a lotus with one thousand petals.

**Prostration to Guru**

গুরু প্রণাম

Gurupranam

With folded hands, in front of your chest say these three mantas.

अक्षं-मंकलकरं बलं वेन चराचरं
तं पदं सहिःतं वेन तैः स्री० श्री० ब्रह्मस् नमः।

Akhandamandalakaram vyaptam jena charachram;
Tatpadm darshitam yena tasmai Shree Guruve namah.

(My) Salutations to respected Guru, who showed me the stature whose form pervades the entire sphere of the universe.

अज्ञान-तिमिराणस्य ज्ञान-शलक्ष्या।
चक्षु-शिल्पितं वेन तैः स्री० श्री० ब्रह्मस् नमः।

Ajnaana-timirandhasya jnaanajanashalakaya;
Chaksurunmeelitamam yena tasmai Shree Guruve namah.

(My) Salutations to respected Guru, who opened the eyes of the one, who is blind due to darkness of ignorance with the flame of knowledge.

गुर० ब्रह्मस् गुर० विष्णुह गुर० देवो महेश्वरसः
गुर० सक्षांत वरं तैः स्री० श्री० श्री० ब्रह्मस् नमः।

Gurur Brahma gurur Vishnuh gurur devo Maheswarah
Guruh sakshat parama Barhma tasmai shreee Gurave namah.

Salutations to the preceptor who is verily Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara and who personifies the Supreme Being

**Offering to Guru**

Offer little water on the offering plate imagining that the water is poured at His feet (padyam):

ॐ एवं पदं सशक्तिक श्री० श्री० नमः।

Oyim etat padyam sashaktik Guravey namah
SARASWATI PUJA

I am offering water to your feet Oh my almighty Guru

Then offer other four articles, making a total of five articles in the same way, *ayim etat argham sashaktik Guravey namah* etc.
Argham
Achmanium
Dhoopam
Dweepam

**Repeat Utterance of Name (jap)**

*Gurumantra*

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

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Jai Guru
Hail my guru
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After

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Gujyatigujyagopta twam grihana kritam japam.
Sidhir bhabatu me deva tatprasadat Sureswara.
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Take away my ignorance with the completion of your name in repeats and I may succeed in my endeavor by your grace, Oh the learned.

WORSHIP OF LORD GANESH

*Ganesha puja*

Shri Ganesh is always worshipped before any other puja. So, after establishing Narayana, as a daily prayer ritual, Shri Ganesha is worshiped.

**Meditation**

*Dhyan*
Om! kharbam sthula-tanum gajendra-badanam lambodaram sundaram,  
Prasyandan mada gandhalubdha madhupa-vyalola gandasthalam.  
Dantaaghaata – bigaarita-ari-rudhiraih sindura-shobhaaakaram,  
Bandey shailasutaa-sutam Ganapatim siddhipradam karmasus.

Oh Ganesha, with a short fat-body, having the face of an elephant with beautiful long trunk, 
a happy face, that emits the sweet fragrance of honey and attracts the honey bee;  
whose tusks are covered with the blood of the enemies that beautifies his complexion.  
I am offering my prayers, Oh the son of Mahadeva (Shailasuta),  
Oh the lord of all beings (Ganapati), bless me success in my job..

Offering (পূজা)
Offer any (or all) of the five following things: Padya, argha, modak, dhup, deep, acmania,  
punaracmania.  
Mantra: Etat padyam om shri Ganeshaya namah etc.

Prostration

Pranam

बक्षुजुन महाकाय सूर्य कोटि समप्रभः।
अर्धिं बुरमें देव सर्प कर्णेन सर्वलं।

Bakratunda mahakaya suryakoti samaprabha  
Nirbighnam kurume deva sarbakarjeshu sarvada

With the bent trunk, huge in size, brighter than thousand suns,  
Oh Lord Ganesh! protect me from all obstacles, in everything I do.

Worship of Lakshmi (Goddess of wealth)

Lakshmi puja

Lakshmi is the sister of Saraswati and wife of Narayana (Vishnu). Hence her special worship  
is done along with Goddess Saraswati.

Meditation

Dhyan

ও পাশাপাশিকান্তা-সৃষ্টিবির্ধম সৌময়েঃ।  
পদরসনাং ধ্যায়েচ্ছ প্রিয়ঃ তৈলোকামাতরম।  
পৌরবর্ষ্ণ সূরুপাঞ্চা সর্বরলংকার-ভূতিভাম।
As I meditate you in the image of holding a long rosary bead,
a beautiful wife (bharjya), sitting on lotus, with a pleasant face
like moon, the Supreme mother of the three worlds, beautifully decorated
with a variety of golden jewelries, and raising your lotus-shaped
right arm as a lotus, you are offering blessing to all.

Offerings

Any five things (পঞ্চ উপচার) as listed below, starting with water to wash the feet (পাদাম)

Etat padyam Shrim Lakshmai namaha
Here I offer the water to wash your feet Oh Lakshmi.

Repeat in the same way with other objects (five minimum, পঞ্চ উপচার)
etat padyam (water), etat argham (rice), naivedyam (decorated plates of fruits-sweets-wet rice etc), achmaniyam (first glass of water), phalam (fruits), deepam (lamp), dhupam (incense),
punarachmanium (second glass of water). You can further add or replace – mistanyam
(sweet), bastram (cloth or sari), bhojyam (cooking materials) etc.

Prostration

Pranam

Om viswarupasya bharyashi padmey padmalaye shubhey
Sarbatah pahi mam devi Mahalakshmi namostutey ॥

Om! The wife of the Lord of the Universe (Vishnu or Narayana), beautiful as the lotus, is
dwelling in the house of lotuses of good fortune. You are always looking after us,
Oh goddess Mahalakshmi, I am prostrating before you.
Invocation for Auspicious Start

Before starting the actual puja which is dedicated to the deity on the dias (Saraswati) a few of the invocation prayers are repeated.

एते गंधपूष्पं ओ गणेशाय नमः ।
एते गंधपूष्पं ओ नारायणाय नमः ।
एते गंधपूष्पं ओ श्री गुरुने नमः ।
एते गंधपूष्पं ओ ब्राह्मेऽम्ये नमः ॥

Etey gandhapushpay Om Ganeshaya namah |
Etey gandhapushpey Om Narayanaya namah |
Etey gandhapushpey Om shri gurubey namah |
Etey gandhapushpey Om Brahnebhyo namah ||

My humble prayers to various Gods I am offering these scented flowers to Lord Ganesha, Lord Narayana (Vishnu), to my teacher (Guru) and to the learned Brahmin, the spiritual inspiration.

Prayer for Good wishes

चतुर्वचन
Swastivachan

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:

ও কার্ত্তিকেয়শিন গণেশাদি-নানাদেবতাপূজাপূর্বক, লেখনী-মস্তকের সহিত
শ্রীদর্শনীপূজন করিতে ও পুথিয়াহ ভজনে ক্রুশ্চু, ও পুথিয়াহ ভজনে ক্রুশ্চু
ও পুথিয়াহ ভজনে ক্রুশ্চু ।

Om kartebeyshin Ganeshadi nanadevata puja purbaka |
Lekhani mashyadhar sahita Sri Saraswati pujana karmani |
Om punyaham bhabanto broobantu (3) ||

With the blessing of the Almighty, I have resolved to perform pujas for Lord Ganesh and other gods, and to Goddess Saraswati, with her inkpot and pen, and in doing so, I seek the blessing from the assembly to make this day be auspicious
Response of the assembly

Priest and others will throw rice towards the holy pitcher in response to the wish of the devotee:

ॐ पुण्याम, ॐ पुण्याम, ॐ पुण्याम ।
Om punyam, Om m, Om punyam)

We pray God to bless you. May it all be auspicious.

ॐ कर्तेबेयशिन गणेशदी-नानादेवतापुजागृह, लेखनी-मस्तिष्कहरू सरस्वतीपूजन कर्मकृति ।
Om kartebeysin Ganeshadi nanadevata puja purbaka
Lekhani mashyadhar sahita Sri Saraswati pujana karmani

As part of my solemn duty I would perform the puja of Ganesha and other Gods and Goddess Saraswati, with her pen and ink, Oh the assemblage, allow me to seek your blessing.

Response

ॐ स्वाति, ॐ स्वाति, ॐ स्वाति ।
Om swasti bhavabti brubantu,
Om swati, Om swasti, Om Swasti

We bless you, we bless you, we bless you.

ॐ कर्तेबेयशिन गणेशदी-नानादेवतापुजागृह, लेखनी-मस्तिष्कहरू सरस्वतीपूजन कर्मकृति ।
Om kartebeysin Ganeshadi nanadevata puja purbaka
Lekhani mashyadhar sahita Sri Saraswati pujana karmani

As part of my solemn duty I would perform the puja of Ganesha and other Gods and Goddess Saraswati, with her pen and ink, Oh the assemblage, allow me to seek your blessing.

Response

ॐ र्हित्यात, ॐ र्हित्यात, ॐ र्हित्यात ।
Om rhidyatam, Om rhidhyatam, Om rhidhyatam

You have our good wishes.

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 “करिष्यामि” (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, “করিষো” (which means I am doing it)

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

ও নমঃ সরস্বতী নমঃ
Om namah Saraswatvai namah
Hail to Goddess Saraswati!

Vishnurom tatsat adya Maaghey mashi, makara rashistey, bhaskarey,
Shuklapakshey, Panchamam ithou amuka gotra Shri amuka devsharma ____ (name of the host) Shri Saraswati preetikamah Ganeshadi nana devata puja purbaka lekhani
masyadhara sahita (* see note) Shri Saraswati puja karma aham karishey.

If the priest is doing the puja he gives his identification (Gotra and name) and end the mantra with karishyami.

Like this
Shri Saraswati puja karmaham amuka gotra ____
Shri amuka devasharma ____ (priest) karishyami.

In the name of Lord Vishnu, on this auspicious month of Maagh, at the planetary synchrony of Makara (Capricorn), glowing fortnight of waxing moon (shukla), on the lunar calendar day of Panchami (fifth day after Amabasya, new moon), I of ____ Gotra (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.), name ____ born by the grace of God (devasharmana) personally doing this Saraswati puja.

Alternatively, if the priest is called, he says, “I ____ gotra ____ name (priest) doing for the person mentioned before.

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.

* Note: Add the following while performing public puja for the general mass:

“সমবেত জনপদসা জান, বিদ্যা, রুদ্ধি, সীমাত, নৃতা, শিক্ষকান্তি, প্রভুত বিদ্যালাভ কামে ---“
SARASWATI PUJA

Samabetah janaganasya gyan, Vidya, buddhi, sangeet, nritya, shilpakaladi prabhuta
Vidyalabha kamey ----- (continue)

For the general public I am seeking Her blessing for knowledge, education, intelligence, music, dance, arts, with a goal of earning plenty of these creative arts ----

Seeking God’s Grace

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

Om devobo dravinodah purnam bibastasicam |
Udwa sincadwa mupa ba prinadhwa madidwo deva ohatey ||

In the spirit of divinity may my goal be successful. Thus, herewith I am starting with His good wishes.

Inhale through the left nostril with the 16 counts of mulmantra (Owing, {/* */}) then close both the nostrils and 64 counts of the mulmantra and then exhale through right nostril with 32 counts of the mulmantra. This is further explained in Sadharan Puja (p 0000).

Seeking support from the wise

The mantra seeks the blessing from the wise. Take a flower in your hand, chant the mantra and discard it in the offering plate. Then move the collected right hand fingers to the locations mentioned in the mantra for the following chant.
SARASWATI PUJA

Om asya Sri Saraswatimantrasya Kanyarishih Gayatrichanda Sri Bagiswaridevata mamo sarbabhhishtha sidhaye Sri Saraswati pujaney vinijoga.

(On head) Om Kanaya rishaye namah.
(On mouth) Om! Gayatrimeter in my mouth (touch lips); and the goddess of speech in my heart (touch heart).

I herewith whole-heartedly resolve to worship the mother Goddess Saraswati, in the Gayatri meter as formulated by Rishi Kanya, written for the Goddess of speech (Bageshwari).

May Rishi Kanya rest on my intellect (touch top of the head);
Gayatrimeter in my mouth (touch lips); and
the goddess of speech in my heart (touch heart).

Meditation of Saraswati

Dhyan

Take the flower in left palm with the Kurma mudra position and meditate on the image of Saraswati. When the image is established in your heart discard the flower on the plate in front of you while chanting the mantra:

Om taruna-shakalam-indor-bibhrati shubhra-kaantih |
kuka-bhara-namitaangi sannisanna sitaabje ||
nija-kara-kamala-udyat-lekhani pustaka shrih |
Sakala-bibhava-siddhyai paatu baag-devataa nah ||

We bow to the Goddess of learning who is radiating soothing moonlight of white complexion, bend slightly because of her heavy breasts, and sits on a white lotus; her lotus-shaped hands are holding book and pen.
May the Goddess of learning help us to acquire all the glories and fames.

After the meditation take a flower, with a touch of sandalwood paste, and place it at the feet of the Goddess Sarawati, captured in your mental image and then put it on the holy pitcher.

মানুষ কাঁথাগীরের অকালদিনে দৃষ্টিপথে পিকেট পন্নুধাতে মানুষ বিষয়ক ।
কুচহং নমিতাঞ্ঞঃ সন্নিসাণ্ডঃ সিতাবঃ ||
নিষ্কর্ক মলান্দান্নেঃ প্রস্তুতক শ্রীঃ |
সকলভিজ্ঞাসীঃ পাত্তু বাগসেবন্তা নঃ ||

We bow to the Goddess of learning who is radiating soothing moonlight of white complexion, bend slightly because of her heavy breasts, and sits on a white lotus; her lotus-shaped hands are holding book and pen.
May the Goddess of learning help us to acquire all the glories and fames.

After the meditation take a flower, with a touch of sandalwood paste, and place it at the feet of the Goddess Sarawati, captured in your mental image and then put it on the holy pitcher.

এতে পক্ষপূপ্রে ও ঐ সরস্বতী নমঃ
শাপং-ও তুর্কিং বর্ষগতি সরস্বতী দেবিতে শাপং কুপল তে।।
Welcome to Goddess Saraswati

Abahan

Welcome Saraswati by chanting the mantra and creating the five hand gestures where indicated. The mudras are like expressing the feeling with hand gestures, as it is done in case of dancing.

Om Bhurghubhaswa bhagabati Shrin Shri Saraswati Devi
Eha agachya, eha agachya (abahani, welcome) ||
Eha tishtha, eha tishtha (sthapani, sit),
Eha sannidehi (sannidhapani, settle down)
Eha sannirudhaswa (sannirodhan, come close),
Atradhisthanam kuru (sammukhikarana, establishing),
Mama pujan grihana (pray with folded hands) ||
Om stham sthim sthiro bhaba jabat pujam karyomaham |
Aga madgrihey Devi ashtabhi shaktibhi saha |
Pujam grihana bidhibat sarba kalyana karini ||

Oh the goddess of the universe Saraswati, you are welcome you are welcome, sit here, settle down, come close, and get established and receive my worship.
Stay settled here with me as long as I do the worship.
I am much obliged that you have come to my house with your companions and your divine powers. Receive my offerings in the rightful way and bless me Oh our well-wishers.

Swagata, Om bhurabhaha swarbhagawati Saraswati Devi
Swagatam suswagatam, kushalam tey |
Om kritartho anurgrihitoshmi safalam jeebitam mama ||
Agatasi jato Devi bageswari madashramam |
Om Owim Saraswatwai namah ||

Welcome! Oh the Goddess of the three worlds (earth, heaven and the underworld), Saraswati, welcome, cordially welcome. Are you doing well?
I am so very obliged and my life is blessed. Come into my house,
Oh the goddess of speech.
I bow to you Oh Saraswati with utmost reverence.

Giving the vision

Chakhurdan

Take the stalk of a belpata (bel leaf, favorite of Shiva), touch it with the black soot paste and draw on the left eye of the deity with this mantra

Om apyayasya Sametu tey Viswatah somabrishnam bhaba bajashya sangathey
Oh Lord Soma let all the energies of the Universe merge in you so that you can nourish us all ||

Then draw the same on the right eye with this mantra:

Om chitram devanamudgadaneekam, chakshurmitrasya Varunasyagney
Aapra devya prithibi antariksha surya atma jagatasta sthusaschyá ||

Oh the rays of the setting sun merge in thee eyes which with the vision of Varuna and Agni illuminate the heaven and earth unto its core and become the soul of the living.
Bringing life into the deity

Pranpratishtha

Take kush (or durba grass) in your right hand, repeat the mulmantra ten times (Owing, ṛṇ). Then touch the heart of the deity in Lelihana mudra (see figure) and pray for bringing life with the following mantra:

ॐ अस्त्र प्राणाः प्रातिष्ठातु ।
ॐ अस्त्र प्राणाः कष्टच ।
ॐ अस्त्र देवता संहारेः बहुः।

Om aswai prana pratisthantu, asmai prana ksharantu cha ।
Aswai devatwa sankhawai swaha ॥

Let life come into this deity. Let this deity come into life.
May that holds true (swaha) by the divinity ।

ॐ त्रयंबकं जयमहे सुगंधि प्रातिवर्धनम्।
उर्बरकं विवशनातुर्वर्कीमायुः ।

Om Trayambakam jajamahey sugandhim pushthibardhanam ।
Urbarukamiba bandhanam mrityomukhshiya mammritat swaha ॥

Let us meditate (jajamaheu) on the Three-eyed reality (Trayambakam – three-eyed Shiva, or all pervasive Almighty) which permeates like a fragrance (sugandhim) and nourishes us all.
May we be liberated from death for the sake of immortality,
like the ripe cucumber (urbaruka) is severed from its bondage of the vine.

Alternate translation

We worship the three-eyed One (Lord Shiva) Who is fragrant and Who nourishes all beings, may He liberate me from death, for the sake of immortality, even as the cucumber is severed from its bondage of the vine.

Note: This mantra is known as Mahamritunjay mantra (winning over death). Trayambakam could be interpreted as Shiva with three eyes or the all pervasive Almighty with vision all around.
OFFERING TO THE GODDESS

Hindu offerings to God are very personal. As we are a part of Him, we offer the things that we need for our own sustenance. Just imagine your mother has arrived at your home to spend some time with your family, here she is Goddess Saraswati. Earn her love and blessing with your sincere yearning and sharing your life with her during her stay with you. A minimum of ten things are needed but may give nothing (manasapuja), just thinking about her, or a minimum of five things (pañca-puja), ten things (daśa-puja) or sixteen things (saojá-puja). We will offer ten things here which are common, but one can add more, if desired.

Water for washing feet

Take a little water with the spoon (kushi) from the water container (kosha) and offer it on the puja plate in front of the pitcher (tamrapatra).

Allow me to pour this water to thy feet, Oh Goddess, who takes away all our sorrows. I welcome you, Oh my protector, beloved by Vishnu, allow me to wash your feet; I offer my reverence to you goddess Saraswati.

Seat

The seat is a silver square available in puja stores for this purpose. In its absence, take a silver coin or a flower to offer seat to the goddess.

Reverence to the seat. In the name of Vishnu (the preserver), I am sanctifying the seat in preparation of its offering to the Goddess Saraswati with respect.
Om asanam grinha deveshi jat kritam shobhanam maya |
Sarba kamaphalam dehi Bageshwari namahstutey ||
Edam rajatasanam Om Owim Saraswatwai namah ||

Oh Goddess! Please accept this decorated seat. Oh the goddess of speech, May you bless me with success in fulfilling my wishes. I offer this seat to your name, with the utterance of your primordial sounds, Om and Owing.

**Special Offering for reception**

*Bisheshargha*

This special ritual, called Bisheyshargha (বিশেষার্গ), uses the water-conch (*jala sankha*, জলাসঞ্চাৰ্ক), to make the special offering or *argha* to the principle deity. The water-conch sits on a tripod on the left side of the priest. Wash it out and throw the water with the sound,

*Phat*

Get out all evil spirits

that sanctifies the conch and its contents – sandalwood-dipped flower, rice and durba grass. It is symbolic of the greatest gift of God – the green leaves, the flowers and the food (rice).

*Om Durbakhshata samajuktam billapatram tatha param |
Shobhana shankhapratrastham grihanargam Harapriye ||
Esha argham namah Saraswatwai namah ||*

*Om (in the name of divinity)! I am hereby offering the durba grass along with bail leaves (offered to Lord Shiva) decorated on the water-conch. Please accept this, Oh the favorite of Lord Vishnu. Herewith I am offering the argha (rice) to your name, Oh revered Goddess Saraswati*

Now touch the flower and durba and chant dedicated to the solar energy and the solar system:

*Etey gandhapushpey Om arkamandalaya dadasha kalatmaney namah |
My reverence to the twelve fold solar system |
ও মং বহিমণ্ডলয় দশকলস্তম্ভ নমঃ।*
Om Mang Banhimandalaya dashakalatmaney namah
My reverence to the ten fold energy ring of the solar system

Continue your offering (for the moon):

Om Um Somamandalayashorashakalatmaney namah
My reverence to the sixteen folds lunar system

Show the Ankusha mudra and call the various sacred rivers to sanctify the water.

Om Gangeycha Jamuney chaiba Godavari Saraswati
Narmadey Sindhu Kaveri jalasmin sannidhin kuru

May all the sacred rivers of India Ganges, Jamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri, merge into this water to sanctify.

Now meditate on the goddess Saraswati (see mantra given earlier) and cover the conch by Abagunthana mudra with the sound of \( \text{h} \) and then show the Galini mudra to the conch uttering \( \text{Eb} \). Then say with folded hands, holding a flower:

Om Pithadevata ihagchata ihagachata, ehatishthat ehatishthata
Iha sannirudhwashwa, iha sannirudhwam atradhishthan kurutah
Mamapuja grinhita

Offering to Gods on background

Pithapujha

Pitha puja refers to the offerings to those Gods that govern our actions by staying on the background.

Show five welcome mudras while looking at Saraswati.

Om Pithadevata ihagchata ihagachata, ehatishthata ehatishthata
Iha sannirudhwashwa, iha sannirudhwam atradhishthan kurutah
Mamapuja grinhita
SARASWATI PUJA

Oh pithadevata (Gods of the background) come and stay close to me and let your presence help me to perform the puja.

Now put bits of flowers in the name of each God or offer a bit of water (or rice) in the name of each. Discard the water into the offering plate.

Note: You may find it difficult to correspond to the direction. Hence focus on the thought and offer small amount of water after uttering the name of the God.

(Etey) Om adharashaktaye namah, prakritai namah, anantaya namah, prithibai namah, khirasamudraya namah, swetadwipaya namah, manimandapaya namah, kalpabrikshaya namah, manibedikayai namah, ratnasinhasanaya namah, dharmaya namah, gyanaya namah, ausharjaya namah, adharmaya namah, agyanaya namah, abairagya namah, anisharjaya namah, anantaya namah, padmayanamah, arkamandala dwadashakalatmaney namah, somamandala shorashakalatmaney namah, banhimandala dashakalatmaney namah, sattaya namaha, rajashey namah, tamasehy namah, atmaney namah, antaratmaney namah, paramatmaney namah, gyanatmaney namah, medhayai namah, pragyai namah, prbhawai namah, vidyawai namah, shriwai namah, dhritai namah, smritai namah, bridhai namah, vidya ashairjai namah, barna kamalashanaya namah

I offer these scented flowers to the names of: my holder, the nature, the universe, the earth, and in all the various aspects of Gods and Goddesses.

Honey-bowl

The honey pot is a combination of five things – honey, sugar, ghee, yogurt and milk. Offer the honey pot, called, madhuparka (মধুপর্ক) by putting a flower on it or simply offer a drop of honey in the offering plate.
Namahmadhuparkam mahadevi Brahmadwai parikalpitam |
Maya niveditam bhaktya grihana Parameshwari ||
Etad madhuparkam Saraswatwi namah |

Oh the greatest goddess of all
allow me to consecrate this honey bowl,
as Brahma designed this sweetness,
I, your great devotee, offering it to you,
Accept this honey-bowl, Oh the Goddess Saraswati.

**Bathing water**

Take a little water in your kushi (spoon), look at the goddess and offer it with the following mantra:

Om jalancha shitalam swacch nityam sudham manoharam |
Snanartham tey prajachami Bageshwari grihanamey ||

Please accept my offering of this cold, clean, sanctified, heart-warming water
for your bathing. Here is your water Oh Goddess Saraswati.

**Cloth**

Take the sari (placed for offering) in your hand, put a flower on it, complete the chant, and touch the sari on to the holy pitcher and then place it next to the feet of the goddess. If you are using a picture, place it next to the picture.

Namah, bahutantu samayuktam patta sutradi nirmitam |
Baso devo susuklanca grihana parameshwari |
Om bahusantasna smridham ranjitam ragabastuna |
Mahadevi bhajapritim basante paridhiatam |
Etad bastram namah Saraswatwai namah ||
SARASWATI PUJA

Made out of many threads, this white cloth of yours, accept it Oh the supreme Goddess.
Be pleased by wearing this long and rich cloth with many colors.
Allow me to offer this clot to you with reverence. I bow to you Oh Goddess Saraswati.

Sandalwood paste
চন্দন (গাংধা)
Chandana (gandha)

Touch the sandalwood paste with your middle finger and mark the paste on the holy pitcher while chanting the following:

ও শরীরম তে ন জানামি চচ্চাং নেব নই চ।
ময়া নিবিদাতান পদাম প্রতিগৃহয় বিলিপত্যাম।
এত গৌণ ও সরবরাহ নমঃ॥

Om shariram tey na janami ceshtam naiba naiba ca
Maya nibeditan padam pratigriya bilipatyam
Esha gandham Om Saraswatwai namah

Oh Goddess I do not know your body or your whereabouts. I am offering this sandalwood paste with fragrance, please accept it and spread on your body.

Flower
পুল্ল
Pushpa

Place a white flower at the feet of the Goddess followed by this mantra:

ও পুল্লা মনোহরং দিবং সুগন্ধি দেব নির্মিতম।
কৃষ্ণাম অজুতম আমেং দেবীং দত্ত প্রতিগৃহতাম।
এতং পুল্লা নমো সরবরাহ নমঃ॥

Om pushpamanoharam divyam sugandha deva nirmitam
Hridyam adhobtam aghreyam deva dattam pragrijyatan
Etani pushpani Om Owing Saraswatwai namah

This beautiful divine flower with fragrance is created by God. I am offering it to you whose smell captures the heart. Here is the flower O Goddess Saraswati.

Incense
ধূপ
Dhup

Light a new incense stick, burn it, do arati while chanting the following mantra and then place it on its stand.
SARASWATI PUJA

Om banaspati rasho divyo gandhadyam sumanoharam | Maya nivedito bhakta dhupoham pratigrijhatam | Esha dhupah Om Saraswatwai namah ||

Here is the divine extract from plants with heartwarming smell. Please accept my offering of this incense, with great reverence, Oh Goddess Saraswati.

Lamp

Pradeep

Look at the burning lamp with a flower in your right hand and chant the following mantra. After chanting throw the flower towards the lamp.

Om agnijyoti rabijyoti chandrajyoti tathaivaca | Jyotisatamo devi dwipoham pratigrijhyatam || Esha dwipah Om Owing Saraswatwai namah ||

In this flame is like that of the illuminations of the sun and the moon. In that illumination, Oh Goddess, take the divine light as I offer to you with reverence.

Garland

Pushpamalya

Look at the garland that the deity is wearing or touch the garland placed on the holy pitcher (ghat) and chant the following mantra:

Om sutren grathitam malyam nana pushpa samanwitam | Srijuktam lambamananca grahana parameshwari || Esha pushpamalyam Om Owing Saraswatwai namah ||

Take this garland, made of many kinds of flowers, stuck together on a long thread, Oh the great Goddess. Herewith I offer the garland to you Oh, Goddess Saraswati.
Food platter (sweets and fruits)

Naivedya

Locate the food platter with wet rice, sweet and fruits. Put a flower on the platter and chant

```bengali
Om naivedyam gritasamjuktam nana drabya samanityam |
Maya niveditam bhaktya grihana surpujatey ||
Idam sopakaranamamanna naivedyam Om Owing Saraswatai namah ||
```

Here the platter of food made with consecrated butter (ghee) and combination of many things. I am offering the platter to you with great reverence. Please accept it. Here is the food platter together with the implements and offer this to you Oh Goddess Saraswati with humility.

Fruits

Phalamulani

Put flowers or sprinkle water, as mark of offering, on the plates with cut or whole fruits.

```bengali
Om! Phalamulani sarbani gramya aranyani ca |
Nanabidha sugandhini grinha Devi mamaciram |
Etani phalamulani Om Saraswatwai namah ||
```

All these fruits, collected from village and forest, with good taste and smell, accept it from me Oh the Goddess Saraswati.

Sweets

Modak (mithi)

Modak (a round-shaped sweet preparation)

Place flowers or sprinkle little water on all the displays of sweets while chanting the following mantras:

```bengali
Om! Modakam baadsyreukam sarbadih vinibhircham |
Shreemam mashrang jeevam devi maha praidyabhandam |
Etai modakam O sarvadeh namah ||
```
Om modakam swadasangjuktam sarkaradi biniritam |
Suramyam madhuram bhoyojam Devi dattam pratigrijyatam |
Esha modakam Om Saraswatwai namah ||

These tasteful round-shaped sweets (মোদক), made out of sugar, good-looking sweet edibles I am giving you Oh Goddess, please accept them. Here are the round-shaped sweets for you Oh Goddess Saraswati.

**Payas or Paramanna**

Paramanna

Paramanna is a sweet dessert made from milk. Its offering is done in a special way. It is offered involves where the food is considered as consecrated ghee (habir). In the mantra the food is given to the flame of hunger that maintains our vital function.

**Vital ahuti (offering to fire) of food**

Pranahuti

First offer the dessert to the Goddess with folded hands:

```
Om gabyasarpih payojuktam nanamadhura samjutam |
Maya nibeditam bhaktya paramannam pragrijyatam ||
```

Oh Goddess, I am offering this great rice preparation (paramanna) made with ghee (concentrated butter), milk and many tasty sweets. Please accept it from me, your devotee.

Then chant the panchgras mantra to make the offerings to the five vital breaths of the body (see background information).
**Background information**

These verses are normally chanted before eating and have great philosophical significance. According to Vedic tradition, every act eventually becomes an act of worship. Food is essential for our sustenance. The prayer offered before eating is dedicated to the all pervasive Supreme Brahman so that the energy derived from the food be used to serve Him.

It is universally accepted that breath (ana) is the vital force behind life. Five vital breaths (ana) control the inner function of the body. Thus it manifests the power of the Supreme in the bodily plane. These vital breaths are responsible for different activities – prana (principle breath that we inhale to supply oxygen to every cell of our body), apana (excretory activity), samana (digestive activity), udana (respiratory activity that we exhale), and vyana (circulatory activity).

**Offering process**

पंचग्रास मन्त्र

Panchagrass mantra

(Dedicated to the five vital breaths of the body)

The offering is done with special gesture called, पंचग्रास मुद्रा (Panchagras mudra) which is described in the following section. It is important that you set up in your mental picture that the deity is taking the food from your hand as you show the moving gesture.

Take a small amount of water on your left palm. Move the fingers of your right palm from the consecrated food towards the Goddess. The five mantras refer to five kinds of air in our body to sustain our lives. The panchagras mudra (पंचग्रास मुद्रा) is the same as the offering to the pranabayu, explained elsewhere.

1. Get your left palm into the grassmudra (eating posture). In other words, depress the central section of the left palm. Put small amount of water on it.

2. Then join the thumb to the little finger and offer with the following mantra while moving your hand towards the deity, imagining your dream to feed her:

   ओ प्राणाय वाहा

   *Om pranaya swaha*

3. Then join the thumb with the ring finger and say, again move your right hand towards the deity, imagining your effort to feed her:

   ओ अपाणाय वाहा

   *Om apanaya swaha*

4. Then join the thumb with the middle finger and say,

   ओ समानाय वाहा

   *Om udanaya swaha*
5. Then join the thumb with the pointing finger and say,

\[ \text{ও উদানায় বাহা,} \]

\[ \text{Om udanaya swaha} \]

6. Finally, join all fingers and say,

\[ \text{ও বানায় বাহা} \]

\[ \text{Om vanaya swaha} \]

**Note:** Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana are the five vital breaths (winds or *ana*) of the body that promote its inner functions – Prana (principle breath that we inhale to supply oxygen to every cell of our body), Apana (excretory activity), Samana (digestive activity), Udana (respiratory activity that we exhale), and Vyana (circulatory activity). The final greeting is to the creator Brahma.

**Offering water to drink**

*আচমনীয়া Achmaniya*

Take a little water in the *kushi* (spoon) and drop it in the first glass of water after completing the following mantra.

\[ \text{ও মন্দাকিন্যাস্তু যদারি সর্বপাপহরণ তত্তম} \]
\[ \text{গৃহণ আচমনীয়ানূ তুন মারা ভক্তা নিবেদিতম} \]
\[ \text{ইসমাচমনীয়াং ও এং সরঘোষ্ঠো নম} \]

\[ \text{Om mandakinyast jadbari sarbapapa harang shubham} \]
\[ \text{Geihanam achmaniam twam maya bhaktiya niveditam} \]
\[ \text{Idam achmanium Om Owing Saraswatwi namah} \]

*Herewith I am offering to you the holy Ganges water that takes away all sin and brings happiness. As I offer that water with devotion, please oblige me by sipping that water.*

**The second offering of water**

*পুনরাচমনীয় Punarachmania*

Take a little water in the *kushi* and drop it in the second glass after completing the following mantra:

\[ \text{ও উচিস্থো উপ্যা সুচির্বিপী যশ্যা স্মরনামাত্রত} \]
\[ \text{স্নিতনাপ্রতি ত্বৈ তে পুনরাচমনীয়কম} \]
\[ \text{इमु পুনরাচমনীয়ম ও এং সরঘোষ্ঠो নম} \]

\[ \text{Om ucistho upya sucirbyapi yashya smaranamatratah} \]
\[ \text{Sudhimapnoti tasai tey punaracmaniakam} \]
\[ \text{Idam punaracmanium Om Owing Saraswatai namah} \]

*The contaminated water (ucistha) becomes pure by taking your name.*
Offerings to the iconographies of Saraswati

Put a flower on each of the following with reverence and utter the corresponding mantra:

To Book

ॐ पुस्खेभ्यो नमः।
Om pushkebhyo namah
Reverence to the book, the emblem of knowledge.

To Inkpot

ॐ मस्या धारय नमः।
Om masya dharaya namah
Reverence to the inkpot as an emblem of writing knowledge.

To Pen

ॐ लेखनै नमः।
Om lekhanai namah
Reverence to the pen, as the emblem of writing knowledge.

To Musical instruments

ॐ बादयन्त्र अदिभ्यो नमः।
Om badyajantra adibhyo namah
Reverence to the musical instruments.

To Swan

ॐ हंसया नमः।
Om Hangsaya namah
Reverence to the swan, Saraswati’s pet and emblem of purity.
Pushpanjali is the offering of flowers to Goddess Saraswati. It has four parts – Vishnu smaran, flower offering (anjali), prostration (Pronam, প্রণাম) and Vandana (vandana, বদনা).

Everyone stand, focus on offering, take a flower and pray with folded hands holding the flower in between.

ॐ बिष्ट्र्म - ॐ बिष्ट्र्म - ॐ बिष्ट्र्म
ॐ तदबिष्ट्र्म परम्र्म पद्म्र्म सदापराप्ति सुराय়। नवीব चकुरातতम।
ॐ बिष्ट्र्म - ॐ बिष्ट्र्म - ॐ बिष्ट्र्म

Om Vishn - Om Vishn - Om Vishnu
Om tadvishnoh paramam padam sada pashyanti suraya dibiba cakshuratatam
Om Vishnu - Om Vishnu - Om Vishnu

Hail Lord Vishnu (our preserver). With the divine vision of the learned, the presence of the Omniscient God Vishnu is everywhere. I bow to Thee, Oh Lord Vishnu.

ॐ सरस्वतिया नामवं निवात्त्र, भद्रकलिया नामो नमः।
वेदेण वेदांतं वेदाङ्गां विद्यास्थन्यं भयं एवं च।
एशा पुष्पञ्जलिः ओ एशा सरस्वती नमः।||

Om Saraswatai namo nityam, bhadrakalai namo namah |
Veda Vedanta Vedanga vidhyasthaneybhya eba ca ||
Esha pushpanjali Om Owing Saraswatai namah ||I||

I bow to the beautiful goddess who removes our darkness (kali), Saraswati, who gives us the knowledge of the Vedas. I am offering this flower to her name with reverence.

ॐ अर्घां पुष्पं नैसौ भैलां पंचानुस्पष्टं।
गृहां करसदी देवी कल्याणं करसदी सदा।
एशा पुष्पञ्जलिः ओ एशा सरस्वती नमः।॥

Om argham pushpanca naivedyam malyam gandanulepanam.
Grihaha baradey devi kalyanam kurume sada |
Esha pushpanjali Om Owing Saraswatai namah ||2||

I am offering rice (argha), flower, food platter, garland and the sandalwood. Accept them O devi and do good to us all.
Here is the sandalwood-dipped flower offering
Oh the divine goddess.
Rest on my tongue Oh the holder of veena (string instrument) and books (Saraswati, the icon of knowledge). Oh the favorite of Vishnu, pure and shining white, Goddess Saraswati. Saraswati, whose eminence is to the highest degree (mahabhagey) of knowledge, who is emitting knowledge to the universe through her divine look, enlighten me; I bow to you with reference, to give me that knowledge. Here is the offering of the sandalwood-dipped flower to your name Oh glorious Saraswati.

SARASWATI VANDANA

Saraswati prayer in Bengali
সরস্বতী বন্ধন
Saraswati vandana

Edited by Dilip Bhaumik (Lyric writer of Kolkata Radio Station)

Eshogo janani esho binapani devo danaba mandita
Sweta basana sweta bhusana sweta chandana charchita.

Esho satadaley nayanerojaley Pujibo ratul charano
Tomari karuna ashisho paiye safalo haibey janam.
Eshogo janani esho binapani devo danaba mandita
Sweta basana sweta bhusana sweta chandana charchita.

Mochao bharati modero kalmia jalia dao ma gyanero deep,
Deepto karama lupto garima thakigo janoma toma sameep
Eshogo janani esho binapani devo danaba mandita
Sweta basana sweta bhusana sweta chandana charchita.

Come Oh mother Saraswati (holding the veena), surrounded by numerous Gods. You
are wearing white clothes and ornaments marked with white sandalwood come on your
hundred lotuses I will wash your bare feet with my tears by your compassion and blessing my
life will be worthwhile. Wipe out the darkness from our hearts. Oh Goddess of the land, light
the candle of knowledge in our heart, brightens the hidden glory and keep me close to you.

Sanskrit prayer

Prarthana

Ya Kundendu tusharhar dhavala shubhra bastrabrita |
Ya Vena baradandamandita kara ya sweta padmasana ||
Ya Brahma Achuta Shankara prabhitbhi deba sada banditah |
Sa mang patu Saraswati bhagabati nishesha jadayapaha ||
Ya Brahma Achuta Shankara prabhitbhi Deba sada banditah
Sa mang patu Saraswati Bhagabati Nishesha jadayapaha
Om Saraswati mahabhagey Vedananang jananipara
Pujan grihana bidhibat Kalyanang kurumesada

She, Saraswati, Bhagavati (goddess of knowledge), who is adorned with a garland of
lilies(kundendu) as white as snow, who is clad in white clothes, holding a veena, whose hand
is raised to protect the seeker, who is seated on a white lotus, who is worshipped by Brahma,
Vishnu and Sankara (Shiva),

May She the Mother Goddess Saraswati dispel my ignorance completely!
Oh the great Goddess Saraswati, the mother of the Vedas, I have done my best in
accordance with the custom; please bless me always with happiness.
Singing Saraswati’s glory

Fold your hands and offer your prayers:

Ω ῥήνα να δεκα δαγκαν δραια δοκοπιτάμανη ।
Ταμ πολτήας γιοτή । Θαν δικεοναν ।
Δε δλακοπεδρατων θατ 9ο9ηνον ।
Ετακογ ιανπνιοντηκεαμην Σαρβτι ।

Om jatha na devo bhagawan Brahmah lokapitamaha ।
Twam parityajya santishtet tatha bhaha barapra ॥
Vedajh sarbani shatrani nritiya geetadikanca yat ।
Na bhinam staya devi yatha mey santu sidhaya ॥
Om Lakshmir medha dhara tushthi pushthi Gouri prabha driti ।
Etabih pahi tanur abhir-astabhirmam Saraswati ॥

With the blessing of Brahma, the Lord of the people, you left the heavenly abode to master the knowledge of Vedas and all scriptures, including dance and songs. Oh beautiful Goddess! bless this world with your knowledge and enlighten us with your divine power.

Prostration (salutation)

Prostrate with folded hands (repeat of mantra):

Ω ερομπταεξ ξεδε ξενετον ।
Τας βεδας ζδεας νιγκανσηνεξ ηαν ।

Om Saraswatai namo nityam, bhadrakalai namo namah ।
Veda Vedanta Vedanga vidhyasthaneybhya eba ca ॥

I bow to you everyday Oh Saraswati, the beautiful lady of all times, accept my reverence.

You are the knowledge of Vedas and knowledge beyond the Vedas.

Japa

Japa is a spiritual discipline involving the meditative repetition of a mantra or name of a divine power. The mantra or name may be spoken softly, or mentally without any sound. Here we will repeatedly mutter the primordial sound associated with Goddess Saraswati – Owing.

Owing

Begging excuse after the completion of jap:
SARASWATI PUJA

Om gujhati gujha goptri twam grihanasmat kritam japam |
Sidhirbhabatu mey devi tatprasadat sureswari ||

Staying in my utter ignorance, I am offering you your name with reverence so that I can be successful by your grace.

BENEDICTORY PRAYERS

These prayers mark the end of the puja ceremony.

Adoration with Lamp

Aarati

Aarati (adoration with lamp) is a special Hindu ritual of worship in which light from wicks soaked in ghee and several other items are offered to the deity in sequence. The priest/devotee circles the items in front of the deity. Each God gets a minimum of three circles starting with the main deity. The holy pitcher should also be adored and so also swan, pen and inkpot. If Naryayana and Ganesh are established, they should also received the arati.

The general sequence of the arati ritual is as follows:

1. Lamp (panchapradeep or lamp with five wicks)
2. Water from water-conch (jalashankha)
3. Cloth (bastra)
4. Flower (pushpa)
5. Incense (dhoop)
6. Camphor (karpur)
7. Fan (chamar)

Above said sequence is explained in the following way. Goddess (the deity) has arrived in your house and need to be led through the dark by showing the light (pradeep) with honor. Her feet will be washed (water), wiped (cloth), honored with the gift of flower, air of the environment refreshed (incense and camphor) and finally the deity rests comfortably (fan).
Prayer after arati

Prarthana mantra

Śvetoparāsana ācarī śvetopurāṇa śvāsottāti, Śveta abhīr dhāra nityā śvetopurāṇa. Śvetoparāsana ācarī śvetoparāsana śvāsottāti, Śvetoparāsana ācarī śvetoparāsana śvāsottāti, Śvetoparāsana ācarī śvetoparāsana śvāsottāti.

Sweta padmasana devi swetapushpo sushovhita, swetambaradhara nitya sweta gandhanu lepana ||
Sweta akhatashutra hasta ca sweta candana carci, Sweta veenadhara shuvra sweta alankar bibhusita ||

Oh the Goddess! You are wearing white dress, sitting on a white beautiful flower, fair body covered with white sandalwood, wearing white rosary bracelet that is covered with sandalwood, as you are holding the white Veena (musical instrument) in your hand and you are adorned with white ornaments.

IMMERSION OF THE IMAGE

Bisharjan bidhi

Reverence to the Flowers left On Dais

Nirmalya

Take a flower and put it on the platform where the deity was placed. The mantra offers respect to the remains of the puja.

Namah nirmalya basinai namah |
I herewith pay my reverence to the remains of the puja.

Offering of Farewell Sweet

Dadhikaramba/Dadhikarma

Offer the special sweet, called dadhikaramba, to Goddess Saraswati before she departs. It is made up of gur (molasses), yogurt (dadhi), flat rice (chipitak), murki (sweet puffed rice), sweet (sandesh) and banana (kadali) – ৰ্দৌ, দাধি, চিপিটক (চিড়েড়), মুড়কী, মিষ্টান্ন ও কাদলী (কাদালী। Offer chanting the following mantra three times and each time sprinkle water on the dadhikarma preparation.

ং এতেষ্ম সোপান মিষ্টান্ন দাধিকর্ম নৈবেদ্যায় নমঃ
Bong, etasmai sopakarana mishtanya dadhikaramba naivedaya namah ||
Allow me to consecrate the farewell sweet for your consumption

Place a flower on the special sweet preparation (naivedya)

Etat gandhapuspey etasmai sopakarana mishtanna dadhikaramba naivedyaya namah |
Etey gandhapushpey etad adhipataye Shri Vishnbey namah ||
Sampradanai etat sopkarana mishtanna dadhikaramba naivedyam
Owing Saraswatai nivedayami swaaha ||

I am sanctifying this with flower offered in the name Lord Vishnu. I am offering the special sweet preparation, the dadhikaramba naivedyam, to Goddess Saraswati.

Show the panchagrās mudra as described in the offering of Paramanna

Offering drinking water

Paniājal

Then take a little water with the kushi and discard it in the first glass of water (achmania) offering plate with the following mantra:

Etat panarthodakam Om Owing Saraswatai nivedayami ||
Here I am offering the glass of water for your drinking

Repeat the above, offering the second glass of water.

Etat prakshaniyodakam Om Owing Saraswatwai namah ||
Here is your second glass of water or you to consume |

Moving the Holy Pitcher (Ghat)

Ghatachalana

The holy pitcher that was established before the starting of the puja is now moved, symbolizing the end of the puja ceremony. First gently shake the image (or picture) and then move the holy pitcher with both hands while chanting the following mantra. This marks the departure of the Goddess and is followed by the peace chant while sprinkling the holy water of the pitcher on the heads of the devotees.
SARASWATI PUJA

Oh gacha gacha param sthanam swastham parameshwari.
Pujata dharran kalche gunaragamaya che.

Om gacha gacha param sthanam swasthanam parameshwari
Sambatsara byatitey tu punar agamanayaca

Oh the supreme Goddess, you go to your heavenly abode, with respect
Please come back after the span of an year

PEACE CHANT

Sprinkling of Holy Water and Peace Chant

Hold the holy water pitcher on the palm of your left hand. Take out the leaves and dip into the holy water. Then shake the dripping holy water on the heads of the attending devotees. Keep chanting the following mantra while sprinkling.

Kaya naschitra iti riktrayasya Mahabama devya rishir birarha Gayatrichanda
Indro DevataShanti karmani japey viniyoga

Om kaya naschitra ah bhubaduti sada bridhah sakha
This peace chant is written by sage Mahabamadeva in Gayatri chanda and addressed to Indra, the King of the Devas. Always victorious in numerous ways and friendly to us all, and whose (Lord Indra) protection surrounds us all.

Tell me how you (Lord Indra) were inspired to defeat your enemies with confidence.

Bless us with that valor of yours,

Oh Indra, you are the protector of your friends and devotees and you appear in numerous forms before us. Let your blessing shower on us.

Oh illustrious Indra, Oh all-knowledgeable Pusha, Oh Traksha with infinite speed, and Brihaspati, the caretaker of the Gods, shower on us your divine blessings.

By the grace of Lord Shiva, peace will prevail. May He destroy all the evil to establish peace. We pray that our ignorance be removed and permanently stay away from us.

You are infinite (perfect, absolute) here, you are infinite (perfect, absolute) there, and when we take out the infinite (perfect, absolute) from the infinite (perfect, absolute), the infinite (perfect, absolute) still remains infinite (perfect, absolute).

In other words:

You are Infinite, Absolute and Perfect in every possible way.
SARASWATI PUJA

Rewarding the Priest

Dakshina

To thy name, Oh Visnu, today in the month of Magha (January-February), during the auspicious waxing moon or bright lunar fortnight (shukla) period, on the fifth day after new moon (Panchami tithi), I of Gotra ___ Mr. ____ (the host) did the puja of Saraswati with her associates (pen and inkpot, that symbolizes knowledge) and related puja functions, I am rewarding of the mistakes that I incurred may be forgiven as I repeatedly take the name of Vishnu.

If the priest is offering on behalf of the host, replace “sampradadey” by “dadani”.

Prayer for Forbearance

Baigunya samadhan

We pray to Lord Vishnu to protect us when we make mistakes. Like our heavenly father, He always gives us the necessary shelter, knowingly that we will make mistakes. We can only do our best and leave the rest to Him.

Take a little water in your right palm and after chanting the following mantra in the name of Lord Vishnu, our preserver, pour the water into the puja plate. Then repeat the name of Vishnu ten times.

Vishnur Om tatsad adya Magheyamasi sukleypakshay panchamang tithou
Amuka gotra Shri amuka devasharma (the host) kriteysmin
Lekhani masyadhara sahita Shri Shri Saraswati puja tat anghibuta
puja karmanah sangatartham amuk gotra Shri amuka devasharma (priest)
dakshina midam kancham tanmulam tubhyamaham sampradade

Vishnur Om tatsad adya Magheyamasi sukleypakshay panchamang tithou
Amuka gotra Shri amuka devasharma (the host) kriteysmin
Lekhani masyadhara sahita Shri Shri Saraswati puja tat anghibuta
Jadbaigunyam jatam tadoshaprashamanaya
Shri Vishnur nama smarana aham karishey
To thy name, Oh Visnu, today in the month of Magha (January-February), during the auspicious waxing moon or bright lunar fortnight (shukla) period, on the fifth day after new moon (Panchami tithi),
I Mr. ____ (the devotee) did the puja of Saraswati with her pen and inkpot (that symbolize knowledge) and, in doing so, the mistakes that I incurred may be forgiven as I repeatedly take the name of Vishnu.

**Chant (japa) ten times**

दशबार मंत्र जप

We pray to Vishnu to protect us when we make mistakes. Like the mother, He always gives us the necessary shelter, knowingly that we will make mistakes. We can only do our best and leave the rest to Him.

**গ্রিহীতূম গোবিন্দী শ্রীশ্রী সরস্঵তী দেবী পুজ্যা তদন্তিহীনমমঃ।**

**Om Vishnu**

Oh my Lord Vishnu

Take the name of Vishnu ten times

**Prostration**

প্রণাম

This is the benedictory prayer for Vishnu.

**ও নমঃ ব্রহ্মাণ্য-দেবী গো-ব্রাহ্মণ হিতায় চ।**

**Om namo Brahmanya-devaya go-Brahmana hitaya ca।**

**Jaga-dhitaya Krsnaya Govindaya namo namah।**

I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme (Brahman), who is the well wisher of the cows and the Brahmanas (the keeper of our religious thoughts), who is the Lord of all living entities and known as Krishna (who removes darkness or ignorance) and Govinda (the reservoir of pleasure for all senses).

**Acceptance of Mistakes**

অচিদ্রাব্দঃকরণ

Achidrabadharan

**ও ক্রিতাত্ত লেখনী মদ্যাধ সহিত প্রিয়শ্রবহর্ষজ্ঞী পুজ্যা তৎসৌভূতিভিমমঃ।**

**Om kritaitat lekhani masyadhar sahita।**

**Shri Shri Saraswati devi puja tadangibhuta achidramastu।**

In the name of the divine (Om), I have performed this puja of Goddess Saraswati.
along with the inkpot and pen (as symbols of knowledge) and in doing so I made many mistakes for which I am seeking apology.

Response of priest

Pratibachan

The priest in return, on behalf of the Goddess, accepts the apology by saying,

ও অতু
Om astu
Be it so

Take a little water in your right palm, chant the following and then discard the water in the puja plate.

Etad sarba karmaphalam Shri Saraswati charaney samarpayami
I am dedicating all the results of all what I have done (puja ceremony) to the feet of the Goddess.

Then pray to Lord Vishnu with folded hands.

Om jadaksharam paribhrashtam matrarinanca jadbhabet
Purnam bhabatu tatsarbam tatprasadat sureshwara
Mantraheenam kriyaheenam bhaktiheenam Sureshwara
Jat pujitam maya Deva paripurnam tadastumey
Om kayena manasabaca karmana jat kritam maya
Tat sarbam paripurnam tad prasad Sureshwara

All the mistakes I incurred in reading the script,
Oh Lord make them perfect by your grace. I do not know the mantras, the rituals or even I do not have the devotion to perform them right, yet what I did, Oh Lord, make them right. I could not bring in words what I wanted to say, but I did what I could, please fill in the void and bless me.
ADDENDUM

PUJA FOR INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES

During the Saraswati puja (and other pujas) individual families offer personalized puja materials (fruits, sweets, money as *dakshina* etc.) to seek the favor of the Goddess for the family. This is handled by the priest and the names of the family members and the names of the gotras are written on a piece of paper and left on the basket of offering. The priest after the initial invocation, takes the names of individuals while offering the puja and finally conclude with flower offerings, prayers and arati. The goal is to seek blessing from the Goddess for the family as a special service.

**Invocation prayer**

With folded hands in front of your chest say

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ও অপবিত্ত পরিবর্তে বা সর্ববিষ্ণু গোপালি বা। যঃ স্মরেৎ পুনরীকাঙ্ক্ষ স বায়াত্তজঃ শুচি।
নমঃ সর্বমল মসল্লায় বরপেঁঁ বরদাং অভযঃ নারায়ণঃ নমস্কতৃত সর্বম কর্মশি কার্যেৎ।
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*He who, impure or pure, remembers the lotus-eyed Lord Pundarikaksha Vishnu in all situations become 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.*

Hold the *kushi* on your left palm and put little water, rice, a flower and a supari in the spoon (*kushi*). Then chant the *sankalpa* (resolution), announcing the auspicious day and the identification of the family. At the end the priest will take his name as the person who is offering on behalf of the family. For each sankalpa, change the water and flower but keep the supari. If there are too many offerings, complete all the sankalpas and then make the offerings at one time putting flower on each offering.

**Resolution**

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Sankalpa

বিশ্বুরেম তৎসং অদ্য মাতে মালি মকর রাব্লদ্রু ভায়ে অগ্রসেকে পুক্ষ্মাং তিষ্ঠে আমুকোণ্ডে শ্রী আমুক দেবর্মেহ শ্রীশ্রীরাজ্জী
গৃহিকাম গুরুলোকে ননাবেদিত পৃথিবঃ দেববর্মকে দেবধী মসাধার সহিত শ্রীশ্রীরাজ্জী পূজন কর্মে করিবে (পরামর্শঃ আমুকাক্স অমুক দেবর্মণঃ বা দাস করিবার্মিঃ)

Vishnurom tatsad adya Magheyamasi sukleypakshey panchamang titha
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2/16/2012 7:56 AM
SARASWATI PUJA

Amuka gotra Shri amuka devasharma (name of the devotee)
Shri Saraswati preetekamah Ganeshadi nana devata puja purbaka
Lekhani-masyadhar sahita Shri Saraswati pujan karmaham
Amuka gotra, amuka devasharmana (name of the priest) karishyami ||

Unto the glory of Visnu in the month of Magha (January-February), during the
auspicious waxing moon or bright lunar fortnight (shukla paksha) period, on the fifth day after
new moon (Panchami tithi), Mr. ____ (the name of the devotee) has resolved to perform the
puja of Goddess Saraswati, with the pen and the inkpot (symbols of knowledge), and along
with Lord Ganesh and other Gods. I of ____ gotra, ______ devasharma (name of the priest)
will perform the puja in behalf of the devotee.

Offering
Sprinkle little water on the offering and chant the manatra:

ওং শ্রীশ্রীগভীরনামঃ
Owing Shri Shri Saraswatai namah
My reverence to the Mother Goddess Saraswati

Made the flower offering পূঃফালনি (pushpanjali – flower offering) ****

ওং ওং ওং ওং

Om bhadrakali namonityam Saraswatai namo namah |
Veda Vedanta Vedanga vidhyasthaneybhya eba ca |
Esha pushpanjali Om Owing Shri Shri Saraswatai namah ||

I bow to the beautiful goddess who removes our darkness (kali), Saraswati,
who gives us the knowledge of the Vedas.
I am offering this flower to her name with reverence.

Arati
Take an incense and do arati for the family, circling the dhup (incense) on the offerings placed
before the goddess.

At the end do pranam:

সরবতী মহাভাগে বিদো কমলামোচনে।
Vidyaarupa beeshalakshi vidyang dehe namastutey ||
Esha sacandana pushpanjali Om Owing Saraswatai namah ||
Note: In public gatherings with many offerings, it is customary to identify all families first and then complete the puja offerings.

INITIATION OF STUDY

Vidyarambha

Traditionally, the education of a child starts at the age of five. Many families prefer to start to perform the ritual on the day of Saraswati puja. Hence it is described here. It can, however, be done on any other auspicious day.

Invocation hymn

Swastisukta

Take rice in your hand and after completing the mantra throw the rice three times in the offering plate, coinciding with the last mantra, which is repeated three times.

Om somam rajanam Varuna Agnim ambara bhamade, Adityam Vishnum Surjyam Brahmananca Brihaspatim ||
Om swasti nah Indro Bridhashrava swasti nah Pusha Viswavedah |
Swasti nastarkshyo arishtanemih swasti no Brihaspatirdadhatu ||
Om swasti, Om swasti, Om swasti ||

With praises to the glory of Soma, Moon, Varuna, Agni, Sun, Vishnu, Brahma and Brihaspati; with my prayers to mighty Indra, learned Pusha, undefeated Taksha, and the caretaker of Gods, Brihaspati, seeking their blessings on us.

Divine witness

Before starting we pray for the blessing of the weather gods and spirits that surrounds us:

Om surjya somo yamah kalah, sandhey bhuta naha khyapa |
Pavano dikpatirbhumi akasham khacaramarah ||
Oh the Sun, Moon, Yama, time (kal), morning, evening, living entities of the world, day, night, wind, Lords of the ten directions, earth, sky, the flying living creatures, the Gods, by the order of the Supreme Lord, (Brahma) assemble here to witness my undertakings

Resolution

Father/mother or the priest does the resolution (sankalpa), facing north.

Take the kushi on left palm with little water and rice. Put a flower, little sandalwood and a hartaki (or supari). Cover the kushi with right palm and chant the mantra:

Oh the Sun, Moon, Yama, time (kal), morning, evening, living entities of the world, day, night, wind, Lords of the ten directions, earth, sky, the flying living creatures, the Gods, by the order of the Supreme Lord, (Brahma) assemble here to witness my undertakings

Om Vishnurom tatsat adya amukey _____ masi (month), amukey _____ pakshey (moon position – Krishna or Shukla), amuka tithao, amuka ____ gotra (priest)
Shri amuka _____ devesharma (priest) amuka _____ gotrasya (child’s parent), amuka ____ devasharmano (child’s parent)
bishishta Vidyalabha kamo amuka gotrasya (child’s, same as parents), amuka devasharmana/devi (name of child boy/girl)
Vishnu adi devata pujana aham karishyami.

In the name of Lord Vishnu, on today’s auspicious day (fill in month, day and lunar position), I the priest of this gotra and name is offering oblation to Vishnu and other Gods, on behalf of ____ (name and gotra of the devotee or jajamana) with the goal of initiating the learning in his life.

Vishnu smaran

Offer flower as expressing your reverence to Ganesha, Vishnu, and offer flower three times to Lord Vishnu with the following mantra:

Om Vishnu - Om Vishnu - Om Vishnu
Om Tad-Vishnoh paramam padam
Sada pashyanti sooryayah dibi-iba cakshur-aatatam
Om Vishnu - Om Vishnu - Om Vishnu

In the name of Lord 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.

Perform five offerings (incense or dhup, lamp or deep, flower or pushpa, food platter or naivedya, water or achmania) to Vishnu, ending with “Namah Vishnabey namah”.

Om Vishnabey namah
I bow to Lord Vishnu

Finally offer a tulsi to Vishnu:

Om namastey bahurupaya Vishnabey paramatmaney swaaha
I bow to the numerous forms of Lord Vishnu the Super soul and unto your name

Obeisance to various Gods and Goddesses

Repeat the same with the following Gods and Goddesses (ending with “namah, namah” for each):

Om Rudraya namah, Brahmaney namah, Janardanaya namah, Lakhsmai namah, Sutrakarebhyo namah, Swavidawai namah, Nabagrahebhyo namah

My salutation to Shiva, Brahman, Vishnu-Narayana, Lakshmi, God with the attributes of Brahman (Sutrakar, the builder), Self knowledge (Saraswati), and the nine planets.

Obeisance to Goddess Saraswati

At the end make five offerings to Saraswati (as described above), ending with “Om namah Saraswatai namah”

Owing Shri Shri Saraswatai namah
My reverence to the Mother Goddess Saraswati

Then the child joins the father/mother to offer pushpanjali (pushpanjali – flower offering) three times together with his/her parents:

Om namoh namah Sarasvato namah
Om namoh namah Sarasvato namah
Om namoh namah Sarasvato namah
SARASWATI PUJA

Om bhadrakali namonityam Saraswatai namo namah
Veda Vedanta Vedanga vidhyasthaneybhya eba ca
Esha pushpanjali Om Owing Shri Shri Saraswatai namah

I bow to the beautiful goddess who removes our darkness (kali), Saraswati, who gives us the knowledge of the Vedas.
I am offering this flower to her name with reverence.

Prostration

At the end do pranam:

Saraswati mahabhagey vidyey kamala lochaney
Vidyarupey beeshalakshi vidyang dehe namastutey

The First Writing

Hateykhori

Holding the hand of the child (priest or father) write both Bengali and English alphabets:

“অ” “আ” “ক” “খ”
A, B, C, D

Rewarding the priest

Dakshina

Vishnur Om tatsad adya Magheymasi sukleypakshaye panchamang tithou
Amuka gotra Shri amuka devasharma (the host) kriteysmin
Vidyarambha sangatartham amuk gotra Shri amuka devasharma (priest)
dakshina midam kancham tanmulam tubhyamaham sampradade

To thy name, Oh Visnu, today in the month of Magha (January-February),
during the auspicious waxing moon or bright lunar fortnight (shukla) period,
on the fifth day after new moon (Panchami tithi),
I of Gotra ___ Mr. ____ (the host) upon the completion of Vidyarambha,
SARASWATI PUJA

I am rewarding the priest _____ gotra and name with humility and reverence.

Prayer Of Forgiveness

অজ্ঞানাবধান

ও যদক্ষঃ পরিজ্ঞাতঃ মাত্রাহিনঃ যজ্ঞবৎ ।
পূর্ণঃ তত্তঃ ততৰস্তঃ তত্রস্তঃ সুরেশ্বরী ॥

Om jadaksharam paribhrashtam matrahinanca jadbhabet
Purnam bhabatu tatsarbam tatprasadat sureshwara

All the mistakes I incurred in reading the script,
Oh Lord make them perfect by your grace.


THINGS REQUIRED

It is important to keep in mind that all the materials needed in a traditional Saraswati Puja may not be available and may not be necessary. With the change in time and place do your very best and seek Her pardon for the shortcomings. The most important ingredient is the heart and sincerity to worship the Goddess of knowledge, Saraswati.

A picture of Goddess Saraswati helps to bring the mood and imagination. Remember the basic object of Hindu puja, “God is with us and we will try to respect Her with all our senses and heart-felt devotion.”

Picture of Saraswati, bottle of spring water, puja utensils (pradeep, kosha-kushi, tamrapatra – for discarding the puja offerings, white mustard, mashkalai (black lentil), vermillion powder, colored powder (5 kinds), five whole grains (panchasashya, 5 kinds – paddy, mustard – white, black, black lentil, til, barley, wheat etc.), honey, sacred thread, ring and a silver coin (asan), bettle nut, haritaki, pen, inkpot, pitcher (ghat), pitcher at the door with plants and garland decoration (welcome decoration), lamp, dhoop batti and stand, tripod and water conch, leaves of some fruit tree (mango branch with five leaves are traditional – you can choose leaves that looks like mango but do not forget to include a branch of a fruitbearing tree), bhojya (raw vegetables (5), rice, dal, ghee, spice and salt), sweet, sugar, milk, yogurt, tirkathi, mirror, camphor, two small bowls (to keep yogurt for mashabhaktabali and madhuparka), a new red cloth for the pitcher, new sari (if one can afford), bettle leaf and panmasala, arrangement for arati (panchapradeep, dhup, small cloth or gamca, camar or fan, flower, water conch). If Havan is planned, you need sticks, ghee, havan pot and glass with rice and supari (purnapatra).
CULTURAL SYMBOLS OF HINDUS

Havan

It is a ritual for fire worship in Hindus. Fire was discovered (or, more precisely, the controlled use of fire) probably about 70,000 years ago (Early Stone Age); although its opportunistic use can be traced to 400,000 years back. Discovery of the controlled use of fire marked the dominance of humans over other animals. Because of its numerous use and use in our daily lives, fire or Agni, became one of the most important Gods of the Hindus.

Deep (Lamp)

A lamp is an earthen saucer like container, filled with ghee or butter with a twisted cotton tape immersed in it. It is lighted in every Hindu household and temple in India. The cotton tape keeps sucking the ghee to yield a cool bright light, a flame. In nature the flame is considered to be the source of infinite energy of positive currents. In early days lamp was the only source of light to see in darkness. Great emphasis is also placed on performing “Aarati” in India during worship of any deity. The aarti flame is moved around the idol for the devotees to have a good look of the deity, and then the devotees put out their palms to receive the aarti aura for their good health and prosperity.

Betel Leaf (paan)

During worship or rituals, leaves from some select trees (mango, betel leaf, banana) are used as essential accessories, but among them Betel Leaf enjoys a place of pride in India. During marriage, the bride appears with covered eyes, using betel leaves before she takes her first look at the groom. The use of betel leaf is considered as a noble trait and on all auspicious celebrations; betel leaf has become a symbolic item denoting freshness and prosperity. The Skanda Purana says that the Betel Leaf was obtained during the ocean churning (Samudramanthan) by the Gods and demons. It has many rich herbal properties.

While performing Satyanarayana puja the Bengalis place five betel leaves on the platform or on the side with betel nut (supari), sweet and coin. This is called mokama. At the end of the puja this is given to five married women to receive their blessing for the host family. Most common use of betel leaf is as after-dinner treat for chewing Areca nut (Areca catechu) or betel nut (supari) wrapped in it. The betel nut is a mild stimulant which can be further promoted by the use of tobacco products that contributes nicotine.

Tilak, Dot and Bindi

It is the display of the position of the wearer. Vermillion powder is put on the forehead of women in order to display their marital status of the woman. Wearing of the vermillion powder or sindur is considered as auspicious for married women. It can also be used as a beauty spot (bindi). Ancient Indian had an indomitable urge to communicate his thoughts and
so symbols were developed to communicate the religious denomination, sect or ideology. The commonly used materials for putting the mark are sandalwood paste, vermillion (sindur), lime, turmeric, saffron, musk, agar, sandal and ash (bibhuti) for men and women.

**Swastik mark**

The word swastika comes from the Sanskrit word *suastika* (*su* means good and *asti* means well-being), meaning any lucky or auspicious object. Its origin probably dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization. It is a sacred symbol of good luck and eternity in many other ancient civilizations. The Aryans adopted the Swastik as a symbol for the good of humanity. Then the Hindus added some more arms to the Swastik to denote happiness in married life and worldly successes. The holy pitcher carries the mark of swastik.

**Sacred Thread**

*ব্রজেশ্বরীত
Yajnopavita*

Sacred thread is a bunch of cotton threads, with nine cords in three bunches of three, all of same length. The sacred thread is worn by conservative Brahmins and some other castes. It normally hangs from the left shoulder down under the right shoulder (see picture). This position of the sacred thread is called *Upaviti*. At the performance of some inauspicious ceremonies (like death or tarpan) one should be *Prachnaviti* when the sacred thread should hang from the right shoulder. At times the sacred thread is changed to *Niviti* position when the sacred thread is worn round the neck like a garland.

Wearing of the sacred thread signifies that the Brahmin is initiated to the spiritual knowledge through the ceremony of *Upanayana*. The thought behind the Upanayana is followed by other religions also. Short background information may not be inappropriate.

A Brahmin takes birth twice – *dwija* (twice-born). The first birth is from the natural mother and father like any other animal. The second birth is from Savitri (Goddess of knowledge) and the teacher or *guru* is his father in his natural age of eight. In early days, at the age of eight the Brahmin boy was sent to the teacher (*guru*). He stayed in the *ashram* or hermitage for four years. There he was initiated to Brahminhood (*Savitri* or Gayatri initiation) and received the spiritual knowledge from the guru. His life was simple (*Brahmachari*), abstained from all pleasures of life, shaved his head, wore only two sets of dresses, lived on begging and supported by the community. He cooked for the teacher and did all his house hold chores. During his stay with the teacher he wore three girdles – three strands of cotton thread, *munja* grass and deer skin. When he left the ashram, at the age of twelve, the girdles of Munja grass and deer skin were replaced by two sets of cotton girdles like the one he was
already wearing. Thus he carries home nine threads of cotton, tied in three bunches, which is called যজ্ঞোপবীত, *Yajnopavita*.

**Calls for prayers**

**Ringing bells**

In all religions there are ways to herald calls for the prayers. Thus ringing of church bell and Azan in Muslims are comparable to ringing of bells in temples or during Hindu puja rituals. The metallic sound within a circular contained-environment produce the most resounding echo, which spreads in all directions. Hindu believers feel that the sound of bell invokes the deity's blessings. There are other instruments to create similar sound like manjira that is played with devotional songs.

**Blowing of conch**

This is another way to draw attention towards spiritual activities. It heralds important events and auspicious celebrations and calls all the faithful for the worship of the deity. Conch is a type of shell through which wind is blown and it makes a typical sound. As the conch is a natural product, two conches rarely make exactly same sound. On the mythological picture, conch shell or Shankh was obtained as a gift from the ocean - churning by the Gods. The spiral formation inside the conch shell is symbolic of infinite space. All naturally occurring conch shells yield cosmic sounds, which can be heard by holding the shell close to one's ears. On the battlefield of Kurushetra in the Mahabharatha, every morning the blowing of the shankh, symbolized the starting of the war.

**Uloo**

In Bengalis uloo sound is created by rapidly moving the tongue while the wind is blown out with corresponding sound. It is the sound of auspicious occasions like marriage or during doing aarati.

**Some Common Terminologies**

*Dhyan:* Meditation on the image or deity in focus.

*Pranam:* Prostration. It can be done by touching the feet or by laying on the ground with folded hands stretched ahead towards the deity. One should always do pranam to elder people respecting their age-old wisdom.

*Namaskar:* Casual form of offering respect. Put the palms together and hold them on the chest.

*Stuti:* Adoration of the deity.

*Stob:* Singing the glory

*Prarthana:* Appeal and request.

**MUDRA**

Mudra is the hand expression to communicate with God. It can be compared with the hand gestures during dancing. In this book many mudras are referred. We are quoting a few here.
Special offering

Bisheshargha

These mudras are shown while establishing the water-conch on a tripod (জলশঞ্খা, jalashankha). Divine spirits are called to settle in the water covered with a red flower and durba grass. The water is then sprinkled around for sanctification. All the mudras are shown over the water conch.

Welcome gestures

Welcome gestures

Abahanimudras

These mudras express the welcome of the deity (icon) in four stages – welcome, sit, settle down, come close and face me.

Meditation mudra

During meditation, flower is held between the palms in different positions the image of the deity is focused in the mental screen.
Galini Mudra is used in some occasions during meditation.

**FIRE WORSHIP**

If Havan is included in the Saraswati Puja, refer to Satyanarayana. Usually, in Bengali pujas, this is not included here.
Professor Kanai Mukherjee, popularly known as Cyber Grandpa, was born in a priest family in Varanasi (July 4, 1926). As he was the eighth child, he was named after Krishna (Kanai). He learned his priesthood from his father Pandit Haribrahmo Bhattacharjee (title as priest), alias Mukherjee, and from his maternal uncle Professor Brahmadhab Bhattacharjee.

His father became blind when Dr. Mukherjee was five years old. So he became his father’s “blind man’s dog” and learnt the puja rituals by sitting next to his father until he took his sacred thread at the age of ten. After reaching his puberty he started doing the Hindu rituals to assist the family. When he reached his adulthood he was frustrated with the poor return of his family trade. Out of frustration he moved into science and married a non-Brahmin, Dr. Bibha Mukherjee (1954). His wife motivated him to relearn the priesthood as an academician. This book is the outcome of this unique combination. Dr. Mukherjee often refers his wife, with respect, as his “guru” who came into his life as God’s blessing.

Dr. Mukherjee came to the west alone in 1959 and was later joined by his wife and three small children. Dr. Mrs. Mukherjee received her doctorate in Geography from the University of Iowa (1964). Both of them were teachers of long standing. After his immigration to USA, Dr. Mukherjee promoted the Bengali tradition of Hindu puja rituals in the Baltimore-Washington DC area and became deeply involved in explaining the significance of the rituals to local people, various educational institutions and churches. His weekend priesthood did not mask his professional career of medical technology. He is considered as an authority in his field and published many books with such renowned publishers as Mosby, McGraw Hill and American Medical Association. His three children and six grandchildren are his life beats. All of them are highly accomplished. He received his recognition as Cyber Grandpa from the International Community (India Abroad and India Today, 1986). The World Indian Community knows him as a great story teller. His homepage (agiivideo.com) contains 300 videos of Indian stories and now this book on Hindu Puja rituals.

After his wife’ death (2007) he moved to Nashville, TN and lives with his eldest daughter, Dr. Anuradha Chakravarthy, Radiation Oncologist, Vanderbilt University.