

16 Step Puja Worship in Hinduism

Posted on June 23, 2014 by Kyle Tortora

There are numerous forms of worship among Hindus, of which *Puja* is one of the more popular. The most widely accepted and followed system of *Puja* is the *Shodasa – Upachara Puja*, or 16 – Service worship.

The main purpose of this type of *Puja* is two-fold. Primarily it is to uplift the five senses of the worshiper, and by doing so elevate him to a higher level of consciousness that will promote good thoughts and actions. Secondly it draws upon the Indian traditions of honoring a guest, wherein each *upachara* is a service to the deity who takes presence in the sculpture for the duration of the *Puja*.

Among these sixteen services, five hold more importance than the rest. Together these five services are referred to as the *pancha – upacharas*, and include *gandha*, *pushpa*, *dhoopa*, *deepa*, and *naivedya*. Collectively, these five services engage the five senses.

It is advisable to bathe, put on clean clothes, and fast before puja (don't eat any meat, eggs, or consume alcohol before puja).

- ***Gandha – Touch***
- Sandalwood paste cools the skin and is a natural insect repellent.
- ***Pushpa – Hearing***
- The recitation of the deity's names that accompanies each flower engages the ears.
- ***Dhoopa – Smell***
- Incense envelops the entire temple with a refreshing fragrance for the nose.
- ***Deepa – Sight***
- The lamp illuminates the deity and brings out the beauty of the icon to the eyes.
- ***Naivedya – Taste***
- Food that has been offered to the deity is eaten and entices the taste buds.

<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Mantras</i>
1. <i>Dhyaana</i> – Prayer while Meditating on the deity that is being invoked. Hold flower in hand, say mantra then offer the flower	<i>Recite the appropriate Gayatri Mantra for the Deity – see Mantras below</i>
2. <i>Aavaahana</i> – Inviting the deity into the altar. Hold another flower say mantra then offer the flower	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Aavaahanam samarpiyami</i>
3. <i>Aasana</i> – Giving the deity a seat. Hold another flower say mantra then offer the flower	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Aasanam samarpiyami</i>
4. <i>Paadya</i> – Washing the deity’s feet with clean water as the mantra is chanted	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Paadyam samarpiyami</i>
5. <i>Arghya</i> – Offering the deity water to rinse hands and mouth as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Arghyam samarpiyami</i>
6. <i>Aachamana</i> – Offering the deity water to drink as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Aachamanam samarpiyami</i>
7. <i>Snaana</i> – Bathing the deity with various auspicious items as the mantra is chanted. <i>Chandan</i> <i>Haldi</i> <i>Sindoor</i>	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Snaana samarpiyami</i> <i>Om Sri [Deity name] Chandanam samarpiyami</i> <i>Om Sri [Deity name] Haldiyam samarpiyami</i> <i>Om Sri [Deity name] Sindoor Tilakam samarpiyami</i>
8. <i>Vasthra</i> – Dressing the deity with clean clothes as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Vasthra samarpiyami</i>
9. <i>Yagnopaveetha</i> – Offering the deity a clean sacred thread as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Yagnopaveetham samarpiyami</i>
10. <i>Gandha</i> – Spreading fresh sandalwood paste on the deity as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Gandham samarpiyami</i>
11. <i>Pushpa</i> – Offering fresh flowers while chanting the deity’s names as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Pushpa samarpiyami</i>
12. <i>Dhoopam</i> – Spreading incense smoke throughout the altar as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Dhoopam samarpiyami</i>
13. <i>Deepam</i> – Waving a lamp to illuminate the freshly decorated deity as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Deepam samarpiyami</i>
14. <i>Naivedyam</i> – Offering the deity food as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Naivedyam samarpiyami</i>
15. <i>Taambulam</i> – Offering the deity a refreshing mix of betel nut and leaves as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Taampulam samarpiyami</i>
16. <i>Pradakshina & Namaskara</i> – Offer money, Circumambulating the altar and bidding farewell to the deity as the mantra is chanted.	<i>Om Sri [Deity name] Pradakshina samarpiyami</i> <i>Offer your money with flowers then, bow down to the feet of Deity and take blessings from the feet.</i>

Murti Gayatri Mantras

Ganesh Gayatri Mantra

Om Lambhodaraya vidmahe
Mahodaraya deemahi
Thanno danthi prachodayath

Aum Ekadantaya Viddhamahe,
Vakratundaya Dhimahi,
Tanno Danti Prachodayat

Om Thatpurashaya vidhmahe
Vakrathundaya dheemahi
Thanno danthi prachodayath

Rudra Gayatri Mantra

Om Tatpurushaya Vidmahe
Mahadevaya Dhimahi
Tanno Rudrah Prachodayat

Durga Gayatry Mantra

Om Kathyayanaya Vidhmahe
Kanya Kumari cha Dheemahe
Thanno Durgaya Prachodayath

Lakshmi Gayatri Mantra

Om Shree Mahalakshmyai Cha Vidmahe
Vishnu Patnyai Cha Dheemahi
Tanno Lakshmi Prachodayat Om

Saraswati Gayatri Mantra

Om Aim Vagdevyai Vidmahe
Kamarajaya Dhimahi |
Tanno Devi Prachodayat

Raam Gayatri Mantra

Om Daserathaya Vidhmahe
Sita Vallabhaya Dheemahe
Thanno Rama Prachodayath

Sita Gayatri Mantra

Om Janaka Nandinye Vidhmahe
Bhumijayai Dheemahe
Thanno Sita Prachodayath

Krishna Gayatri Mantra

Om Dhamodharaya Vidhmahe
Rukmani Vallabhaya Dheemahe
Thanno Krishna Prachodayath

Radha Gayatri Mantra

Om Vrishabhanujaye Vidhmahe
Krishna priyaya Dheemahe
Thanno Radha Prachodayath

Hanuman Gayatri Mantra

Om Aanjaneya Vidhmahe
Maha balaya Dheemahe
Thanno Hanuman Prachodayath

Shirdi Sai Gayatri Mantra

Om Shirdi vasaya Vidhmahe
Sachithanandaya Dheemahe
Thanno Sai Prachodayath

Sathya Sai Gayatri Mantra

Om Sri Sayeeswaraya Vidhmahe
Sathya Devaya Dheemahe
Thanno Sarva Prachodayath

Kali Gayatri Mantra

Om Maha Kalyai Ca Vidmahe
Smasana Vasinyai Dhimahi
Tanno Kali Prachodayat