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In the memory of new temple of
Lord Shri Narnarayan Dev

RELIGIOUS RITES

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Vedantacharya

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Introduction

The rites perform by the devotees of uddhav sect are entirely according to shastra and shastrokta way. Hence this sect is entirely Vaidic sect already proved the shikshapatri written by Bhagwan Swaminaryan himself contains the rules, religious rules. Shree Satamand muni Virchit Satsangijivan is also included.

This book highlights the practice Urdava Pundra bearing putting kanthi along the neck and Nitya Puja is based on totally scientific way and classical system have the generation may ask some questions as to what is the benefit of Tilak and wearing kanthi around the neck and worshipping. What do they get by Bhakti. So Swamiji has explained the above questions in classical way the benefit, bodily mentally and financially. And next what ever we do, one must know the basic reason of our act so that we may know its’ result.

I hope that N.R.I. people (living in abroad) may be benefited by this English booklet and may be benefited maximally that is my humble prayer at the pious feet of Shri Hari

Mahant Purani Swami

Shri Dharmanandan Dasji
Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Bhuj
Introduction

This book is an interesting publication, coming from our Swaminarayan Sampraday in which Dr. Swami Satyaprasad Dasji, Ph.D, (Vedantacharya) has genuinely attempted to bring out the inherent significance of vast number of ‘Religious Rites’ performed by the adherents of the Sampraday. In this book, learned saint has provided a deep thoughts into the various aspects surrounding the observance of these rites and has offered explanations relating to their scientific importance and significance. The author has also extensively quoted the vedic passages which may be considered as the base or authority for the conduct of many of our religious practices; for example putting ‘tilak’, or wearing ‘kanthi’; and more importantly for proper performance of ‘pooja vidhi’ (procedure of worship), a regular and faithful practice, which shall ensure a peaceful and devine happy life, in this world.

In today’s contemporary society, a good majority of the people or community may
not be genuinely aware of the importance of practicing these different rituals. However with the aid of this handbook, such aspiring members of the community shall have a very good opportunity to read and absorb the significance and essence of various religious practices prescribed in the Sampraday. Apparently, for a busy person, in to-day’s modern society- it may not be possible to find adequate time to study the great classical books works like ‘Achar Samhita’, ‘Padma Puran’ or ‘Upanishads’, which are a great and precious storehouse containing these practices. To overcome such difficulties facing today’s community and still aid them in the sacred path of their spiritual pursuit, our Swamiji has taken considerable pains and efforts to explain these practices in their simpler perspectives, but without losing their contextual merit and significance for which the community should feel grateful. Swamiji has done his best in providing a very lucid and concise explanation in a simple language for the
benefit of the community. Swamiji has also tried to explain the various fruits of prosperity and other benefits that shall accrue to such persons, who perform the sacred rituals with devotion and dedication. More importantly, such a devout individual is bound to invoke the grace of the supreme Lord, Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan, both in this life and hereafter.

I am hopeful that all sections of society will immensely gain valuable knowledge lying in store of this small handbook and realise true happiness, in life.

Navinbhai Narshi Pinara
Gandhidham
Introduction of an author

Dr. Swami Satya prasad Dasji (Vedantacharya)

After attaining Bhagwati mantra Dixa from Acharya Tejendra prasadji Maharaj and receiving religious course from honourable Sataguru Swami Morlimanohar Dasji and Swami Premprakash Dasji at Bhuj became their disciple in Samvat 2041 Bhadra sud 11. (E.V. 24-9-1985) Sanskrit Pathashala running in the temple premises and K. Kasturi Rangacharya’s guidance, after finishing primary education, proceeded to Melkote (Karnatak) for higher studies went to the abode of scholar so K. S. Vardacharya to study Vedant and finished his studies becoming Acharya in Vedanta Thereafter proceeded to Tirupati (Andhra pradesh) at Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidhyapeth to carry out research in research department. He wrote Bhashya as Shri Bhaysam by Shri Ramanujacharya and Bhrahimiramsa. by Shri Muktanand Swami. He wrote Shodhaprabanth on above two Bhashyam due to it he was awarded “Vidya Varidhi” Ph.D.

He has written many religious extract books, being published by-Bhuj Temple Publishing House.
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PART – I

URDHVA PUNDRA DHARAN VIDHI
(ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रधारणविधि)

(Ritual for wearing tilak on the forehead and other parts of the body)

Let us now seek to know relating to the procedures for wearing the ‘Urdhva Pundra’ (Tilak), Kanthi (Rosary) and performing the Pooja (worship), in a prescribed manner. These are ‘Dharmik Vidhis’ (Religious Rites) that need to be performed in a specific manner, as ordained in Vedic scriptures.

Before undertaking performance of these Vidhis(Rituals), certain questions like- ‘why
should one perform these dry rituals’; ‘are they really needed to progress in this world’; ‘can we not remain religious or virtuous even without performing these so called religious rites’ etc.,- naturally tend to arise in the minds of the people, in particular those among the young generation of today’s society. In fact, it is the aim and objective of this publication to address such questions and provide accurate answers in a most convincing and forceful manner and thus laying down the procedures as sanctioned in scriptures, for the benefit of one and all.

In the shikshapatri Lord Swaminarayan states that “All my male followers shall adorn the ‘Urdhva Pundratilak’ a chandlo on the forehead with (a round mark) at the centre Married women shall wear only a red round mark on the forehead applied with kumkum. Widows shall however abstain from marking their foreheads with either Urdhvapundra mark or redmark with kumkum.

Thenafter both my male and female followers should mentally worship Lord Shree Krishna.

Bhagwan Shree Swaminarayan proceeds to describe the procedure of performing the ‘Puja Vidhi’, in the following Shikshapatri verses:
RELIGIOUS RITES

नृत्यदीक्षा गुरूः प्राप्तेस्तुलसीमालिके गले ।
धार्ये नित्यं चोर्ध्यपुन्त्रं ललाटादौ हिजातिभि: ( शि.प. ४९)
(Krishnadiksham guroh prāptaistulsimālike gale.
Dhārye nityam chordhavapundram lañātādau dvijātibhihi.)

कर्त्त्वमूर्त्यपुन्त्रं च पुम्बिरेव सचन्त्रकम् ।
कार्यः सधवानारीभिभाले कुम्भयचन्द्रकः || (शि.प. ५९)
Kartvyamoordhvapundram cha pumbhirev sanchandrakam.
Kāryah sadhavānāreebhirbhāle kumkumchandrakah.

पुन्त्रं वा चन्द्रको भाले न कार्यो मृतनाथया ।
मनसा पूजनं कार्यं ततः कृण्यास्य चाखिले: ||
Pundram vā chandrako bhāle na kāryo mrutnāthayā.
Mansā poojnam kārya tatah krishnasya chākhilaihi.)

प्रणम्य राधाकृण्यस्य लेख्यार्चा तत आदरात् ।
शक्त्या जपित्वा तन्मच्छं कर्त्त्वं व्यावहारिकम् || (शि.प. ५४)
Praņmya rādhākrushnasya lekhyārchā tata ādarāt.
Shaktyā jāpītvā tanmntram kartvyam vyāvahārikam.

After annotating oneself with ‘Urdhva Pundram Lord Swaminarayan states that discipies shall bow down with devotion before the idol or painted image of Radhakrishna and chant the ‘Krishna Mantram’ to the best of their ability and capacity, and only then should their proceed to attend to their daily duties”.

In the above advice of Lord Shree Swami Narayan it evident that a desciple is only fit to perform pooja after adorning the Urduha Pundra tilak. This has its basis in the ‘Pancharatra Samhita’, a renowned text authority.

यज्ञो दानं तपोंहोम: भोजनं पितृतर्पणम् ।
सर्वं भवन्ति विफला: उर्ध्वपुन्द्रं विनाक्रृता: ॥
(Yagno danām tapo homah bhojanam pitri tarpanam. Sarvam bhavnti viphalāḥ urdhvapundram vinā krutāha.)

Yagna, Charity, Penance, daily rituals, taking food, offering libations of water to ancestors manes, etc., all become fruitless, if they are performed without applying the ‘Urdhva Pundram’. Similarly, Shri. Radhakrishna’s Pooja and chanting the Krishna Mantra too, shall become fruitless, if it is done without wearing the ‘Urdhva Pundram’. Therefore the Lord has thus instructed his disciples:

“My disciples, only after wearing Urdhva Pundaram shall worship Shree Radhakrishna”. The authority for wearing ‘Urdhva Pundram’ is as follows:

अयोध्य जाति कामानां ऊर्ध्वपुन्द्रस्य धारणम् ॥
(Ayardhva jāti kāmānām urdhvapundrasya dhārnam.)
Those who seek to attain ‘Moksha’ (liberation from the cycle of births and deaths), must mark their forehead with ‘Urdhva Pundram’.

This subject is dealt with in this chapter, drawing substantially upon the authority of scriptures. ‘Urdhva’ is defined literally as “Vertical” or “Upwards”; ‘Pundram’ means a symbol, or sectarian mark. The vedic authority prescribing the procedure for applying the ‘Urdhva Pundram’ is as follows:

धृतोध्वपुन्द्र: परमेश्विनारायणं साङ्ख्ययोगाधिगमयम् ॥
ज्ञात्वा विमुच्यते नरः समस्तेः संसारपाशेरिह चैव विष्णुम् ॥
(Dhritordhwapundraham parameshitaram narayanam sankhya yogadhihamyam.
Gnativaa vimuchyeta narah samstaih samsara pashairiha chaiva vishnum.)

Mahopanishad says that one who wears ‘Urdhva Pundram’ and who sincerely meditates upon Lord Shree Narayan, realises himself through his mind and attains liberation from worldly bondage.

Another vedic authority says:

धृतोध्वपुन्द्र: परमेश्विनारायणं पूजयति स्वभवत्या ॥
अध्यादिभि: पारुषस्युक्तमन्वे: संप्रान्यवात् विष्णुपदं महात्मा ॥
RELIGIOUS RITES

(Dhritordhvakupundrah i parmeshitāram nārāyaṇam
poojayati svabhaktyā.
Arghyādibhihi paurushasooktamantrihi samprāpnyāt
vishṇupadam mahātmā.)

One who worships Lord Shree Narayan, after wearing ‘Urdhva Pundram’ along with recitation of Purusha Suktha Mantras and offering of oblations (“Arghyas”) will surely attain “Moksha”. So, from the above texts which are based on authoritative sources, it becomes obvious that applying ‘Urdhva Pundram’ for the devout follow seeking Lord Shree Narayana is highly essential and sacrosanct.

MATERIAL TO BE USED FOR
‘URDHVA PUNDRAM’

While it is important for the devotee to wear ‘Urdhva Pundram’ before worshipping Lord Shree Narayan, it is equally important to know, as to what kind of sacred materials shall be specifically used or those materials which constitute ‘Urdhva Pundram’. These aspects are also carefully dealt with in a number of authoritative scriptural texts. Some of these texts are mentioned here.
The following shloka from the Shikshapatri provides valuable information about the materials to be used for ‘Urdhva Pundram’.

तत्तु गोपिचन्दनेन चन्दननाथवा हरेः ।
कार्य पूजाविशिष्टेन केशराद्युत्तेन च ॥ (शिश्ना.)
(Tattu gopichandanen chandanenāthavā hareh.
Kāryam poojavāvishishten kesharādiyuten cha.)

Tilak, the holy mark shall be made out of the white clay, called ‘Gopi Chandanam’, or even could be of sandalwood paste. If required, this paste can be mixed with saffron etc. According to Shikshapatri Bhashya, there are many other types of materials which could also be used for ‘Urdhva Pundram’.

The Bhramhandapurana recommends the following, relating to the sourcing of the materials, which are to be used for ‘Urdhva Pundram’.

पर्वताग्रे नदीतीरे मम क्षेत्रे विशेषतः ।
सिंधुतीरे च कल्पीके तुलसीमूलमाश्रिते ॥
(Parvtāgre nadeeteere mama kshetre wisheshatah.
Sindhuteere cha walmeekte tulsimoolmāśhrite.)

According to the above, the holy marks shall be made of white clay, which shall be sourced
from either a top of a hill or from river bank, or sea coast, or the clay may be brought from an ant hill(termite mound), or from the roots of the tulsi plant garden.

The ‘Urdhva Pundaram’ shall be applied in a straight line manner on the forehead, on the chest and also on the two arms. The sacred clay materials should be first offered to Shree Hari and then used for ‘Urdhva Pundram’ application.

Configuration or Shape of the ‘Urdhva Pundaram’

Having prescribed the material for usage in ‘Urdhva Pundram’ application, it is equally important to know the shape or configuration in which the ‘Urdhva Pundram’ has to be worn on an individual. In this connection, Shree Shatanand Muni quotes extensively from a number of Achar Samhitas, Brahmand of Achar Madhav, Achar Mayuka, Padma Puranam and Vasudev Upanishad, in the Shiksha patri Bhashya, for the benefit of the devotees.

Some of the shapes or configurations prescribed for ‘Urdhva Pundram’ application are as follows:-
(7) हरिपादकृति: - (Haripada Kritih) Shape of the lotus feet of Lord Shree

(2) वेनुपत्राकृति: (Venupatra Kritih) Leaf of a Bamboo tree.

(3) दीपाकृति: (Deepa Kritih) Flame of a lamp.

(4) दंडाकृति: (Danda Kritih) Shape of a wooden stick.

(5) शंक्खाकृति: (Shankha Kritih) Shape of a conch.

(6) पद्माकृति: (Padmākar) Shape of a lotus leaf.

(7) मत्स्याकृति: (Matsya Kritih) Shape of a fish.

(8) कूर्माकृति: (Koorma Kritih) Shape of a tortoise.

After examining all the above recommended shapes for ‘Urdhva Pundram’, Shree Shatanand Muni concludes that, the most appropriate shapes for usage are Haripaada Kritih and Dhanda Kritih, in support of which is a quotation from the following sloka of Shree Padma Purana.

महाभागवत: शुद्ध् पुन्द्रं हरिपदाकृतिः ।

दन्दाकारं तु वा देवी धारयेदुर्ध्वपुन्द्रक्रमः ।

इति युक्तः उक्तः । उपरि किंचिन् विस्तीर्णन्त्वे पदाकृतिः ज्वों समत्वे तु दन्दाकृतिः ।
Accordingly the ‘Urdhva Pundram’ shall be worn in the form of Haripada Kritih (Shape of lotus feet of Lord Shree Hari) or Dhanda Kritih (Shape of a wooden stick).

उर्ध्वपूजनीवि च गुरुः: साधुभिष्म ललाटे हृदि बाहोश्वेति चत्वारि
वासुदेवस्सूर्यप्रयुम्नानिरुद्धनाम - मन्त्रेश्चार्याणि नित्यरू प्रीठाविधं।
(Urdhvapundrāṇī cha grihsthaih sādhubhishcha lalāte hradi bāhvoshcheti chatvāri vāsudev sankarshañ pradyumnāniruddhanām mantrairdhāryāñeetyuktam dikshāvidhau.)

LOCATIONS OF FOUR PUNDRAS

The prescribed locations or positions for application for four pundras on a devotee’s person are as follows:

ॐ श्रीवासुदेवाय नमः [Om Shree Vasudevaya Namah]
1. Forehead – placing Lord Shree Vasudev,

ॐ श्रीसंकरशनाय नमः [Om Sri Sankarshanaya Namah]
2. Chest – placing Lord Shree Sankarshan,

ॐ श्रीप्रद्युम्नाय नमः [Om Shree Pradyumnaya Namah]
3. Right Shoulder – placing Lord Shree Pradyumna,

ॐ श्रीअनिरुद्धाय नमः [Om Sri Aniruddhaya Namah]

4. Left Shoulder – placing Lord Shree Aniruddha,

Now, after wearing the four Urdhva Pundra’s as recommended above, one should proceed with the application of ‘kumkum’ in the middle of the Pundra’s as follows:

The ‘kumkum’ powder of sandalwood mixed with saffron or ‘Kumkum’ offered in worship to Radhaji or Lakshmiji should be applied in the middle of the Pundras. Shikshapatri provides the correct guidance for applying ‘kumkum’ or ‘Shreechurnam’ as follows:

तन्मध्ये एव कर्त्याः पुन्द्रद्रव्येण चन्द्रकः ।
कुम्कुममेनाथवा वृत्तो राधालक्ष्मीप्रसादिना ॥ (शिश्ना)
Tanmdhya av kartvyah pundradravyeñ chandrakah.
Kumkummenāṭhava vritto rādhālakshmiprasādinā.

With kumkum powder or similar paste material, a round shaped mark (‘0’ like mark) shall be applied in the centre of ‘the Urdhva Pundra’. This paste shall however be offered to Radhaji or Lakshmiji, before using the same.

“ चन्द्रविधानं तु स्वसम्प्रदायध्योतकम्” ॥
(Chandrak vidhānam tu svasampradāydhoytokam.)
The application of this round shaped “kumkum” generally signifies the particular sect to which the person belongs.

In this regard, Brahmand Purana is of the view that:

उर्ध्वपुन्द्रस्य मध्येन्तु विशाले अतिमनोहरे ।
लक्ष्म्या सार्ध समासीन: रमेहं तत्र निर्वृत्तः ॥
(Urdhpundrasya madhyet vishale atimanohare.
Laxmya sardham samaseenah ramelaham tatra nirvritah.

The ‘Urdhva Pundram’ which is wide and good looking is where Lord Shree Narayan resides, with goddess Lakshmi in middle.

निरन्तरालं य: कृत्यात् उर्ध्वपुन्द्र्यं द्विजाधमः ।
स हि तत्र स्थतं विष्णु श्रीयं चैव व्यपोहति ॥
(Nirntralam yah kuryat urdhvapundram dvijadhaham
Sa hi tatra sthitam vishnum shriyam chaiv vyapohti.)

However, one who wears ‘Urdhva Pundram’ without leaving adequate space in the centre for applying kumkum or Shreechurnam, is considered a Brahmin of the lowest order, since he neglects the presence of Lord Vishnu and Shree Lakshmi who always reside here.

IN SARASANGRAH

In the Sarasangrah this aspect is once again highlighted as follows:
RELIGIOUS RITES

श्रीअनिषुद्धाय उर्ध्वपुंड्रस्य मध्ये तु हरिद्राचूर्णकुम्भम्।
धारेयत्र वैष्णवो नित्यं कमलापीतये नृप ॥
उर्ध्वपुंड्रस्य मध्ये तु लक्ष्मीस्थानं प्रकल्पयेत् ॥

(Udhvapundrasya madhye tu hridrachoornakumkum.
 Dharyet vaishnwo nityam kamalapreetye nrip.
Udhvapundrasya madhye tu Laxmisthanam praklpayet.)

All devout Vaishnava’s, seeking the divine grace of Goddess Lakshmi shall wear Haridrahchurna kumkum in middle region of ‘Urdhva Pundram’. The mid-region of ‘Urdhva Pundram’ is attributed to be the abode of Lord Shree Lakshmi.

FRUITS OF URDHVA PUNDRAM

वर्णाङ्गुलिभेदनोर्ध्वपुन्ड्रफलभेदेप्रयतः:
(Varangulibhedenordhavapundrafalbhedopyuktah.)

It is also believed that ‘Urdhva Pundram’ Thilak, applied on a person in different colours or hues, using different fingers of the hand shall yield different results. Thus, Tilak worn in blackish color will bestow peace of mind to the wearer, while reddish color will establish control or supremacy over others. Yellow colored Tilak will bring wealth and prosperity, but Vaishnavas are recognised by white Tilak on their foreheads.

Is regard to the usage of various fingers for the
application of the ‘Urdhva Pundra’, the following sloka is relevant.

श्यामं शान्तिकरं प्रोक्तं रत्नं वश्यकरं भवेत्।
श्रीकरं पीतमित्यावृष्णवं श्रेतमुच्यते॥

(Shyāmam śāntikaram proktam raktam vashyakram bhavet.
Shrikaram peetmityāhuh vaishńskam shvetamuchyate.)

If the ‘Urdhva Pundra’ is applied by the devotee on his forehead using his thumb, it results in nourishment; if applied using the index finger, middle finger and ring finger these in turn bestow on the wearer wealth, happiness and emancipation. However, it is important to bear in mind that in the process of using these fingers for applying ‘Urdhva Pundra’, the nails shall not come into contact (with ‘Urdhva Pundra’).

In Sakand Margasheersha Mahatmya it is said-

एतत्वचाद्वयाधि दृष्ट्वैव कार्यम्॥
वैश्वाद्वयां जले वापि यो विद्व्यात्मप्रयतनः॥
उर्ध्वपुन्न्द्रं महाभागं स याति पर्यां गतिम्॥

(Etchchādarshadi Drishtvaiv kāryam.
Viskhādarshe Jale vāpi yo vidadhyātprayatntah.
Urdhvapundram mahābhāgah sa yāti parmām gatim.)

In Satsangi Jeevan, it is said:

प्रासादिकेन रूपचिं दृष्ट्वा दर्शस्यचन्द्रकम्॥
Those persons, who wear ‘Urdhva Pundra’, together with the round shaped kumkum in the middle will surely attain Moksha by witnessing its image in a mirror or in water.

SIZE OR DIMENSION OF ‘URDHVA PUNDRAM’

Apart from wearing the prescribed configurations of ‘Urdhva Pundram’ marked in the mid-region with kumkum/Shreechurnam, the devotee shall also adhere to prescribed size or dimensions of ‘Urdhva Pundram’, aspects of which are discussed here.

In Achar Mayukha, it is said:

उर्ध्वपुंड्रमृजं सौम्य कनिष्ठं लिमित् स्मृतम् ॥

नासादिकेशपर्यंत प्रयत्नातु धार्येत् जन ॥

(Urdhvatpundramrijum saumya kanishthangulimat smritam.
Násādikeshparyntam praytnat dhāryat janah.)

Again Padma Purana, endorses a similar view:

आरभ्य नासिकामूलं ललाटे विलिखेन्मृदा ॥

समारभ्य भुवीर्मूलमन्तरालं प्रकल्पेत् ॥

(Ārbhya nāsikāmoolam lālāte vilikhamridā.
Samārabhy bhruvormoolamantarālam prakalpyet.)

In the view of Satsangī Jeevan:

सच्छिद्र नासिकामूलललाटे त्वादू चोद्यात् ॥
(Sachchhidram nāsikāmoolāllalāte tvāk chodyāt.)

All the above spiritual texts uphold the view that the ‘Urdhva Pundra’ shall be applied using the tip region of the fingers, starting from the base of the nose passing through the forehead region of the face, and terminating at the top of the forehead, i.e, near the parting of hair.

**IMPORTANCE OF THILAK IN YOGA,**

**MEDITATION AND PHYSICAL FITNESS**

The precise position where the round shaped ‘Tilak’ along with ‘Urdhva Pundram’ is applied, is called the ‘CENTER OF ORDER’ or ‘AGNA CHAKRA’. When the person who applies Thilak on his forehead on the Agna Chakra or Center of Order, mixed with sandalwood or any other type of prescribed sacred clay, the mind of such person attains a state of total calmness or tranquility. By cultivating this practise regularly, one finds it easier and relatively simpler to concentrate. If one were to follow the signs of anatomy, the two sacred nerves ‘IDA’ and ‘PINGALA’ pass through the forehead region of
every human being and by regular application of the holy ‘Urdhva Pundra’, tilak both the ‘IDA’ and ‘PINGALA’ nerves would be further developed.

Regarding the need and desirability of development of both these vital nerves, it is said that this will lead to upliftment of the living self. The celebrated ‘UPANISHADS’ recommend that the practise of Dhyana and meditation with the mind concentrating on the Agna Chakra, centered in the forehead should be undertaken daily. By a rigour of regular practise, ‘Dhyana’ (meditation) for the Brahman becomes relatively easier. The ‘PRANA SHAKTI’ or the vital ‘Living Force’, accumulates to an enhanced level in the region of the forehead. According to ‘YOGA SHASTRA’, our life span increases with the application of the above ‘Tilak’, which will further take us towards submission to God, Almighty. We are all actually ‘Dasas’, that is servants of God. But when we genuinely accept and turn ourselves into the state of Dasas, the benevolent God spontaneously comes to our rescue and will be insrumental in our spiritual upliftment, besides taking care of our worldly problems.
Sri (Mahalakshmi), the celebrated goddess of wealth, is known to reside in the forehead region of a devotee, and hence by applying ‘TILAK’ of haldi and kumkum, the flow of wealth will also correspondingly increase. Through ‘SADHANA’ i.e. worship of ‘AGNA CHAKRA’, one naturally becomes happy in life. The ‘Jeeva’ (soul) lives in the heart, and according to ‘Yoga Shastra’, the heart is compared to a divine temple where the divine idol of God is installed. Applying the ‘CHANDAN’ or ‘FLAVORED CLAY’, has a cooling effect on the heart where God resides. By Applying ‘AGAR CHANDAN’ on the heart region of the person, one can attain the twin benefits of both mental peace and physical fitness. In pursuit of achieving these virtues, everyone should practise applying of ‘Tilak’ regularly.

It is also well known that both of our arms are symbols of strength. The nerves running underneath the arms are by nature UGRA type, which are very sensitive. Due to this unique combination of nature, at times this could lead to certain events which may be termed as destructive in nature, which could happen in one’s life. Therefore in order to minimise the potential of this
counter-productive adverse effect, and to analyse the above power for beneficial purposes, the application of ‘TILAK’ becomes most significant.

**PART PLAYED BY TILAK IN OBTAINING MONETARY OR FINANCIAL GAINS.**

The application of ‘URDHVA PUNDRA TILAK’ is considered to be a positive virtue in the eyes of the society. It may also be compared to the third eye which helps to distinguish between the good and the evil in our society. There is a popular proverbial saying in the ‘UDDHAV’ (SWAMINARAYAN) ‘SAMPRADAY’, that ‘Kusangi ke fen fatur mein satsangi ki roti’, meaning that money spent by addicts is well served, if he starts applying ‘TILAK’ on his forehead. From the point of view of freeing oneself from the clutches of vices, one should apply ‘TILAK’ on his person. It is a well known truth founded on practical wisdom and experience, that when you apply ‘TILAK’, you find that your conciousness will win you or take you away from
falling into the traps of many vices, such as drinking, consuming tobacco, smoking, hashish etc. In fact, a person wearing ‘TILAK’ on his forehead would shy away or feel ashamed of practising any activity of vice, since his conscience would constantly rebuke or admonish him saying ‘are you not ashamed of doing such evil things, even when you are wearing the TILAK on your person?’. Thus by abstaining from vices, such as indulging in tobacco, wine etc, one truly benefits such as saving money, which shall rightfully go towards the upliftment of the family and other justified obligations. Apart from this the person who gives up such viceful practices, would re-establish himself and achieves a respectable position in the eyes of the society. If any ‘TILAK’ bearer is tempted to carry out practices of vice, he will first remove the ‘TILAK’ from his person and only then will he down to perform bad or evil things. Such is the magical power of ‘TILAK’.

A TRUE INCIDENT RELATING TO THE POWER OF TILAK

A long time ago, the writer of this article was travelling by train from Baroda to Chennai in
a reserved compartment. His co-passenger was a friendly young man, who had applied ‘URDHVA PUNDRA TILAK’ and who was regularly uttering ‘JAI SWAMI NARAYAN’. This writer soon came to learn, that his co-traveller was a (‘Hari Bhakt’), and he was in the business of supplying raw materials to a factory dealing with plastic goods. On one occasion his boss, who had in his possession Rs.3 lakhs handed over to him Rs.2 lakhs towards some payments while actually his intension was to give him only Rs.1 lakh, for the same purpose. Later, the boss left the factory for some routine work elsewhere leaving behind only Rs. 1 lakh in his office, Following his departure there occured a theft in the office, and on coming to know the incident, the boss soon lodged a complaint with the police reporting a theft of Rs.2 lakhs instead of 2 lakh. However, on return to the office, the co-passenger learnt of the whole story, but was in an acute dilema, whether to reveal or not about receiving the additional Rs.1 lakh. However, at this point of time he was strongly prompted by an inner voice which urged him to be honest and thus he decided to reveal the truth and return Rs.1 lakh to his boss, which he did.
The boss was highly pleased by his assistant’s truthful and responsible behaviour and he was overwhelmed and offered him Rs.50,000 as a token of his honest gesture. But the young man, politely declined to accept the gift of money his boss offered him. Nevertheless the boss was so pleased to have such an employer he promoted that Hari bhakt as an officer in his Chennai office. This entire episode shows the great potential of application of ‘URDHVA PUNDRA TILAK’ by individual, and how it guides in leading a righteous life, full of virtues and benefits.
PART – 2

KANTI DHARN VIDHI
(कण्ठीधारणविधि)

कृष्णदीक्षां गुरोः प्रायेस्तुलसीमालिके गाले।
धार्यनित्यं चोर्ध्यःपुनर्द्वलादः हिजातिभि।
(Krishṇādikṣhāṁ guruh prāptaistulsimālike gale.
Dhārya niyam chordhva prundram lalātādau dvijātibih)

My followers who are Dwiji – i.e those who are twice-born -, shall receive initiation into the Krishna from an ‘Acharya’, and following this shall wear a double stranded rosary around their neck and also apply a ‘Tilak’ U shape on their forehead as well as on the chest and on both the arms.

जितिन्द्रियः स्वधर्मसंस्थितः इत्यादि शास्त्रेशपूकलक्षणयुक्तः।
य: आचार्यः (गुरुः) तस्मात् कृष्णदीक्षां प्रायं तुलसीमालिके
(कण्ठी) धार्येत्।
(Jitendriyah svadharmsansthitah Ityādi shāstreshooktalakshanyuktah yah āchāryah (guru) tasmāt krishṇādikṣhāṁ prāpyah tulasimālike (kanthim) dhārayet.)

We should recieve initiation from an Acharya i.e. preceptor who has fully conquered his senses, who is established in his own religion
and shastras, who in turn is also initiated by a Guru, who has obtained Krishna Deeksha and adorns a Tulasi-rosary:

The vaidik authority for the procedure of wearing the two-line rosary:-

धारणीयां कण्ठदेशे तुलसिकाष्ट्मालिके ।
वैष्णवेन विशेषेण भगवत्प्रीतिवर्धीनी ॥
(Dhāraṇīyā kanthadeshe tulasikāśth mālike. Vaishnavaṇena vishesheṇa bhagvat preetivardhani.)

“In the Skanda Puranam” -

Devotees of Lord Vishnu shall wear a double stranded rosary around their neck, made of tulasi this is because Tulasi is divinely bound with Lord Vishnu.

It is said in Agama authoritative religious texts; as follows:

यज्ञोपवीतवायया तुलसिकाष्ट्मालिका इति ।
(Yagnopavitvatadhāryā tulsikāśth mālikaiti.)

The sacred thread i.e, Yagnopvita, shall not be removed at any time, and in any kind of circumstances. Likewise the rosary of Tulasi must always be worn around neck but not be removed under any circumstances.

आक्षेप:  OBJECTION

True beloved devotees of Lord Shree Hari
are those who wear double stranded rosary of Tulasi around their neck, not only during worship (Pooja) or meditation (Dhyaan), sandhya vandan, i.e, prayers offered during down or desk but also during daily chores.

However It is said in the Padma Puranam :-

According to the views expressed by some sages in the ‘Padma Puranam’, it is said that the Tulasi Rosary must be worn around the neck only while doing worship, i.e, puja, meditation i.e Dhyana etc, as otherwise such rituals do not yield success or the desired results.

It is therefore very essential to wear the rosary at the the time of worship or meditation. However a view is also expressed in Padma Puranam, that one who wears tulasi rosary, while going to bed, or during the movement of bowels
or urine excretion, would be offending Lord Vishnu (Vishnu Drohi). That is to say, that a person who has worn Tulasi rosary while eating food, or while going to bed, or during the acts of excretory processes, cannot be accepted as a true devotee of Lord Shri Vishnu.

अतः पूजासमय एव तद्वरणमुचितम् न तु सर्वदेति (Atah poojāsamay ava taddhāraṇamuchitam na tu sarvdeiti.)

Therefore rosary must be worn only during observance of religious rituals, including daily pooja and Dhyan, but should be excluded at other times always.

**CLARIFICATIONS OF DOUBTS**

Those sentences dealing with prohibiting the wearing of rosary, etc shall apply only to such rosaries, which are not offered to Shri Hari. Hence, there is no sin attached if one wears the rosary at all times always, which has been offered to Lord Shri Hari.

( समाधानम् )

तेषां निषेधवाक्यानां भगवदसमपितमाला धारणविषयत्वात्

(Teshām nishedhāvākyānām bhagavadāsamāpītmalā dhāraṇāvishyatvāt.)

अतः स्कंदपुराणो...... It is said in ‘Dwarikamahatmya’
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in ‘Skandapurana’ as follows:

निवेद्य हर्षे मालां तुलसीकाष्ट्रं संभवाम् ।

वहले यो नरो भक्या तत्स्त्र नैवास्ति पातकम्॥
(Nivedhya harṣye mālāṁ tulasiḍhṭhāsaḥabhām.
Vahte yo naro bhakya tasya naivāsti pātakam.)

There is no sin attached if a devotee of Lord Shri Hari wears the tulasi rosary at all times around his neck, if the same has been first offered to Lord Shri Hari.

Another Pouranik authority of Uttarkhand in Padma Puranam says,

शयने भोजने स्नाने स्नाने तथा चोत्सार्गकर्मणि।

न त्यजेत् तुलसीमालां त्यज्यस्तं दोषभाग् भवेत॥
(Sayane bhojane snāane tatha chotsargakarmaṇi.
Na tyajet tulsimslam tyajanstām dosbhāg bhavet)

One shall not take off his rosary, even while having ablutions i.e, bathing,eating,sleeping or during excretory periods, those that give up wearing rosary, will be offending Lord Shri Vishnu. That is to say, those who want liberation from the world and attain Moksha, must wear a rosary(Tulasi Kanha) constantly and always.

Another Pouranik authority in Garuda Puranam says:
We should not give up wearing the Tulsi rosary (Kanthī) at any time, at any location, under any circumstances. By its very nature, the rosary (Kanthī) can never become polluted or unholy, because it is essentially, the sacred form of ‘Bramhan’. That it is to say, that the Rosary (Kanthi) is ever as holy as Brahmaṇ, and hence it can never become tainted or polluted.

ननु मालाध्यन्धारणे को हेतुरति?

(Nanu mālā dvaydhārne ko heturiti.)

However, let us try to know as to what is the purpose in wearing the two-lined-rosary (Bevadi Kanthi) in Shree Swaminarayan Sampraday.

श्रीराधाकृष्णायुगलस्वरूपाकङ्क्षयूपाचारधारणायमित्यवगम्यताम्।

(Shri rādhākrishṇākhya yugalaswaroopopāsakatvā soochanārthmyavagmyatām.)

The double lined rosary is perceived as a of Radha and Shri Krishna being together, thus indicating the worship of Shri Krishna with His consort Radha (i.e Lord Narayan with Shri. Lakshmi).
PRAYER OFFERED WHEN ADORNING A KANTHI

It is said in Vishnu Dharma:

तुलसीकाष्टसंभूते माले विष्णुजननीये
बिभामि त्वामहं कण्ठ कुरु मां क्रृष्णवल्लभम्।

(Tulsikāśtha sambhoote male Vishnujanpriye,
Bibhrmi tvamham kanthe kuru māṁ
krishnavallabham,)

Oh Rosary of Tulasi! - the beloved of the devotees of Vishnu, I wear you around my neck, so be pleased and make me dearer to Shree Krishna.

कण्ठी अधारणे को दोषः?

(Kanthis adhārne ko dosah ?)

A question may arise- what is the sin is not wearing a kanthi?

न धारयन्ति ये मालां हैतुला: पापबुध्यः।
पतन्ति ते तु नरके दण्डः: कोपार्जनना हरे:॥

न च यस्य पशोः: कण्ठुतलसीमालिका भवेत्॥

तस्यान्त्र मांसस्तुैश जलं च मदिरासमम्॥

(Na dhāryanti ye malāṁ haitukāḥ papbuddhayah.
Patnti te tu narke dandyaṁ kopāgninā hareh.
Na cha yasya pashoh kanthe Tulmsimālikā bhavet.
Tasyanām mams sadrusham jalam cha madirāsamam,)
Those, who do not wear a Kanthi around their neck, are prone to evil thinking, or they are sinful persons. Therefore at the displeasure and anger of Shree Hari, they will descend to hell as a punishment. One who does not wear Kanthi around his neck, in par to a beast or animal. Therefore his daily food is only comparable to meat or flesh, and also the water he drinks would be equivalent to taking intoxicating spirits or drinks.

अतः श्रीहरिप्रसन्नतार्थ भाषपमूक्त्यार्थाय
मालामध्यमधारये।
(Atah Shri Hariprasannatārtham papamuktyart-
hancha malamavashyam dhārayet.)

Therefore Kanthi of Tulasi, must always be worn constantly which will benefit the wearer on two ways pleasing Shree Hari and also achieving liberation from sins.

Several kinds of Kanthi are suggested and some of them are as follows:

तुलसीमभूता
(Tulsi sambhootā,) made of Tulasi

चन्दनमभूता
(Chandana sambhootā) made of sandal wood

प्रद्विजमभूता
(Pradmabij sambhootā,) made of lotus seed
सुवर्णमयी
(Suvarnamayi) made of gold(golden)
स्फटिकमाला
(Sphatika mālā) made of rock crystal
पिपलसंभूता
(Pipal sambhootā) made of holy pipal tree.

Amongst the different Kanthis mentioned above, it is concluded that the Kanthi of Tulasi is the most holy and fruitful, because all the Vaidik Scriptures endorse the Tulasi Kanthi. Hence, it is necessary that the Kanthi of Tulasi be worn by all devotees of Lord Vishnu.

The rosary made from other types of wood, can also be worn but only when Tulasi rosary is not available. It is important to remember that all types of kanthi should first be offered to God, and then received with the blessings of God, for wearing on one’s person.

* * * * *
PART – 3

INTRODUCTION TO POOJA
(पूजा विधि)
POOJĀ VIDHI

Pooja is an important task of our daily life and should be performed every day with a complete sense of huminity and servitude.

Performing daily Pooja involves waking up in the early hours of the day, preferably at day break, and worshipping the beloved Lord. The essence of Pooja is to lovingly welcome the Lord Almighty to reside in the idol placed in front of us, with complete faith that is it Lord himself in front of me and not a statue made of stone, metal, etc., one bow down at His and offers pooja to him in the form of flowers, fruit, sandal, perfume, etc. ‘My followers shall perform pooja daily in the morning’, says Shree Swaminarayan Bhagawan in the Shikshapatri. Hence the Pooja case must always be carried with us when travelling away from home so we may perform morning pooja according to Lord’s command. It is also necessary that prior to and during performing Pooja,
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neither water nor any food, should be consumed
by the devotee.

(After dispersing (Alwar-???) from God, the
soul must present itself to God, and such presen-
tation to God is called ‘Bhakti’). In the authorita-
tive texts of Hinduism there are elaborate discus-
sions on the element of ‘Bhakti’, and accordingly,
nine types of ‘Bhakti’ are prominently described
as follows:

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णू: स्मरणं पाद्सेवनं।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं साध्यमात्मनिवेदनम्।।

(Shravnam keertnam vishnoh smarnam pādsevanam.
Archanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyamātmanivedanam)

Among the nine types of Bhakti, ‘Archana’
i.e. ‘Pooja’ is the fifth one, which is considered
as the best and easiest approach to realise God.
In regards to ‘Pooja’, one is expected to perform
‘Pooja’, five times a day. If that is not possible
then one should perform pooja three times a day.
If that too is not possible then one should per-
form pooja, wholeheartedly and with total dedi-
cation, at least once in the early hours of the morn-
ing.

तदुक्तं हरितमुनिना- (Taduktam hāritmuninā)
Haritmuni thus says:
Although one shall perform Pooja to Vishnu, five times or three times a day, those who are unable to do so shall offer Pooja worship at least once, but with pure devotion and to their capacity after purifying themselves with a bath.

Purification of one’s body by bathing before undertaking Pooja has been considered to be very important, as otherwise one can not be considered as fit or qualified to perform Pooja Vidhi.

तदुक्तं (Taduktam.) It is said

अन्नात्वा नाचरेत्रकम् जपहोमावि किन्न्वाज्यनौ।
लालास्वेदसमाकीर्ण: शयनादुत्थितं: पुमानौ॥
(Asnatvā nācharetkarm japahamādi kinchan Lālāśvedsamākeernah shaynādutthitah pumān)

अत्यन्तमलिनः कायो नवच्छिद्यस्मन्धितिः।
स्त्रत्येव दिवारात्रं प्रातःस्नान विशोधनम्॥
(Atyantamlinh kāyo navchchhidrasamanvitsh sravatyeva divārātram prātah snānam vishodhanam)

During the course of our daily lives, our body is prone to collection of many impurities,
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like saliva, sweating, dirt etc. Therefore it is important and necessary to cleanse oneself from these impurities by the bathing, before doing Pooja. Otherwise the person is not entitled to perform regular duties like ‘Japa’ and ‘Homa’.

As our body consists of nine openings or outlets, which are constantly extracting unwanted waste products, the morning bath is absolutely essential for cleansing our body before engaging ourselves in Pooja worship to God.

(1) शिक्षाप्रयास - In the Shikshapatri it says:

Shikshapatri, it says:

प्रत्येके तु प्रबोध्यं पूर्वमेवोवोव्याद्विते।
विद्याय कृप्नस्मरण कार्यं शौचविविषयस्तं॥

Pratyaham tu praboddhyam poorvmevodyadruvah.

Vidhāya krishnasmarnam karyah shauchavidhistatah.)

One must get up daily before sun rise and offer prayer to Lord Krishna Only thenafter should one proceed for ‘Shaucha’, i.e purification.

(2). Oral and bodily purification.

उपविष्यैव चैक्षन कर्तव्यं दत्तात्रास्यम्।
सात्त्व शुच्याम्बुना धौते परिध्यय च वाससी॥

(Upavishyaiva chaikatra kartvyam datdhaavanam. Snātvā shuchyāmbunā dhaute paridhārye cha vāssī.)

Thereafter, one must sit at an appropriate
place and clean the teeth(preferably using Babool or Neemstick), and after taking bath with clean and pious water, one should – wear a ‘Dhoti’ as the lower garment and another cloth as the upper garment on the body.

पवित्रजलम् उक्तं पावेः - (Pavitrajalam uktam Padme,)

नद्याम नदे वा सरसि तदागे वापिकूपयोः ।

स्नानं प्रशस्तमुदितमद्हृः शीतभित्तकवम् ॥

(Nadyām nadeva sarasi tadhage vāpiikopayoh,
Snāna prashastmuditamadbhiḥ shitabhisvaham.)

Bathing in cold and clean water of a river, lake, pond or well is considered to be pious. After taking bath, one long piece of cloth should be worn to cover the lower part of the body, and another worn on the upper part of the body. In this manner piece of cloth two pieces of clothes should be worn whilst performing the Pooja. Thus performing Pooja to God with only one piece of cloth on the person is recommended only for devils and deemed inappropriate for devout human beings.

तदुक्तं कृत्यचिंतामणो -

(Taduktam krityachintamanau)

एकवासा जपेद्यस्तु सदयनि जुहोति च ।

तत्सर्वंपुरेन्द्राणं ब्रह्म भागमकल्पयेत् ॥
After adorning two pieces of cloth on the body one should sit comfortably on a pious ‘Asan’ places on flat ground facing the East or North direction and proceed to perform the Pooja, as described in the ‘Shikshapathi’.

(3) The above is elaborated in the following sloka:

Preparing for Pooja:

उपविश्य तत: शुद्ध आसने शुचिभूतले।
असंकीर्ण उपस्मृत्यं प्राय्मुखं वोत्तरामुखम्॥

(Upavishya tatah shuddha Āsane shuchibhootale.
Amakirna upasprishya prānmukham vottarāmukham.)

After placing ‘Asan’ on the pious ground, we must sit facing East or North direction. Facing the devotee, a separate ‘Asan’ should be spread out on the ground. On this asan one should pence murti or idols of God.

**TYPES OF ASANA**

There are many types of asans of available: So, which type of Asana should be used?

व्यासेन उक्तम् - (Vyāsen Uktam,)
कौशेयं कम्बलं चैवाजिन पद्ममुत्तमम्।
बारुजं पत्रजं कौशमास्सनं परिकल्पयेत्॥

(Ekavasa japetyastu yaddadati juhoti cha,
tatsarvmasurendranam brahma bhagamkalpayet.)
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(Kausheyam kambalam chaivājinam padmamuttamam,
Dārujam patrajam kaushamāsanam parikalpayet.)

तस्य फलमपि उत्तमः - (Tasya Phalampi uktam.)

सर्वान् कामानवाप्नोति मनुष्यं: कम्भलासने ।
कृष्णाजिने भवेवन्युक्ति: तपः श्री व्याघ्रयग्रंणम् ॥

(Sarvān kāmānvāpnot manushyah kamblāsanē,
krishṇajine bhavenmuktih tapah shri vyāghracharmani.)

कृशासने भवेज्ञानमारोग्यं पत्रनिर्मिते ।
वस्त्रे व्रियामवाप्नोति भूमी मन्त्रः न सिद्ध्यति ॥

(Krishāsane bhavejgyānmārogyam patranirmitė,
Vastre shriyamvāpnoti bhoomau mantra na sidyati.)

In summary it may be said, that performance of Pooja by a devotee seated on plain
ground without an asan, does not yield full benefits. Specific varieties of seating materials have
been recommended here for deriving the maximum desired results. In regards the direction in
which one should face during Pooja or offering prayers, East and North are two directions rec-
ommended, e.g, facing East is always considered progressive, as the sun also rises in the East and
progresses throughout the day Hence facing East during Pooja is regarded to be very positive.

North is also a divine direction in our Shastras, and hence facing this direction is also
preferred for performance of Pooja in our tradi-
In performing Pooja considerable emphasis is placed not only on our external cleanliness, but also on our internal cleanliness, and detailed procedures are given as to how to attain both of these states of purity before proceeding to perform Pooja by the devotee.

External cleanliness can be achieved by bathing, but internal purification can be realised by performing ‘Achamana Vidhi’, which is equivalent to taking small quantities of holy water in the palm of one’s hands, as described in religious texts.

A little quantity of water is taken on one’s right palm and chanting the following ‘Mantra’ consecutively, this water should be taken in the mouth three times.

1 ओ वासुदेवाय नमः: Om, Vāsudevāya namah.
2 ओ नारायणाय नमः: Om, Nārāyaṇāya namah.
3 ओ विष्णुवेन नमः: Om, Vishṇuve namah.

यां संसारमभिन्नते (Yagnyawalkyena uktam-)

 Investigations.

उक्तं शिवगीतायाम् - (Uktam shivgitāyam -
पाग्मुखोद्धमुखो वापि जपपूजांसमाचरत्।
Pāggamukhodggamukho vāpi japapujāsmāchchet)

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Water should be put on the left palm and touching the right hand to left hand, one should sip it in the holy mouth until right hand is not touched, that water should be taken further.

Sitting a crossed legged position with hands in front between the knees (i.e. not on one side) the holy water should be collected in the palm. The palm is called ‘Brahmtirth’ and the water is thus taken from ‘Brahmatirth’ to our mouth subsequently. ‘Urdhva Pundra’ or ‘Tilak’ should also be applied on forehead.
(4) Urdhvaapundra TILAK and Red dot with kumkum

कर्तव्यमूर्ध्वपुंड्र च पुम्भिरेव सचान्द्रकम् ।
(Kartavyamoodhva pundram cha pumbhireva sachandrakam.)

Male devotees should apply as their foreheads Urdhva Pundra Tilak Gopichandan and a chandlo in its centre using gopichand or kumkum on their forehead, followed by wearing Urdhva Pundra Tilak on the chest region as well as on right and left arms.

While wearing the above Tilak the following Mantras should be uttered.
1. Applying Tilak on the forehead
   (१) श्री बासुदेवाय नमः । (Om Shri Vasudevay namh.)
2. Applying Tilak on the chest
   (२) श्री सुकृष्णाय नमः । (Om Sri sankarshaanay namh.)
3. Applying Tilak on the right arm
   (३) श्रीप्युमनाय नमः । (Om Sri pdhyumnay namh.)
4. Applying Tilak on the left arm
   (४) श्री अनिरुद्धाय नमः- (Om Sri Aniruddhaya namh.)

कार्यः सधवाणारीभिंभाले कुंकुमचन्द्रकः ।
(Karyah sdhavanareebhirbhale kumkumchandrakah)

A married woman, whose husband is alive,
should wear only a red dot with kumkum on the forehead and should perform pooja daily, as routine.

पुनः वा चन्द्रको भाले न कार्यो मृतनाथवा ।
(Pondram vā chandrako bhāle na kārya mṛitanāthaya.)

However, a widow not apply Urda puṇḍra tilak chandlo on her forehead, but can continue to perform daily pooja, as before.

(5) MANASA POOJA OR MENTAL POOJA

मनसा पूजनं कार्य तत: कृष्णस्य चाखिले: ।
(Mansā poojnam karya tataḥ krishnasya chākhilaiḥ.)

Thenaftet, sitting in ‘PADMAASAN’ position with eyes closed, our should perform Manasa Pooja or Mental Pooja. During this Pooja, one should not think about anything other than God, pondering over divine features and behaviour In this mental pooja one should lovingly offer his service to his beloved God. One should imagine that he himself is awakening the Lord form his sleep. Giving the Lord datan to brush with. Bathing him with water suited to the weather. Clothing the Lord with rich garments, again suited to the season. Adorning Him with golden jewellery and flower garlands. Applying fragment perfumes. Performing His arti.

Thus is performed the Manasa Pooja or
Mental Pooja to God.

(6) INVITATION

प्राणम्य राधाकृष्णस्य लेखार्चा तत्त आदरान्।
(Pranmya radhakrishnasya lekharcha tat adarat.)

After performing Mental Pooja, the idols of God should be well arranged on the aasan, with folded hands one should bow down to him, inviting him for Pooja by reciting the following ‘Mantras’

उत्तिश्थ्थोत्तिष्ठ गोविन्द उत्तिष्ठ गरुडङ्गन।
(Uttishthottishth govind Uttishth garuddhavan.)

उत्तिष्ठ कमलाकान्त त्रैलोक्यं मंगलं कुरु॥
(Uttishtha kamalakanta trailokyam mangalam kuru.)

उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ हे नाथ स्वामिनारायण प्रभो॥
(Uttishthottishth he natha svaminaraayan prabho.)

धर्मसूनो द्वासिन्धो स्वेतं श्रेयं परं कुरु॥
(Dharmsoono dayasindho swesham shreyah param kuru.)

आगच्छ भगवन् देव स्वस्थानात्यप्रेमेश्वर॥
(Aagchchha bhagavan deva swasthanat parameshwara.)

अहं पूजं करिष्यामि सदा त्यं सम्पुक्षो भव॥
(Aham poojam karishyami sadam tam sampukho bhava.)

(7) While reciting the above Mantras, the idols should be cleaned with a clean and pious piece of cloth. Thereafter ‘Naivedhya’ (holy offering) should be offered to Him. शक्त्या जपित्वा तन्मत्रम्।
(Shktya japitva tanmatram)
(8) Thereafter one ‘MALA’ should be performed chanting the ‘DIKSHA MANTRA’ which is taught by our ‘ACHARYA/GURU’. Then the meals should be performed chanting the “Swaminarayan” mantra. For every single head the Swaminarayan mantra should be chanted.

(9) **Penance Mala.**

Thereafter one MALA should also be performed standing on the left leg with the right foot raised towards the left thigh and keeping both arms in the upward direction.

In Pulahashram, Shri NeelKanthvarni, also performed penance in this manner pleasing Lord Swaminarayan (the sun God).

It is believed that the SUN GOD is easily pleased by such acts of devotion and our faith in God always remains strong and positive.

**PRADAKSHINA**

One should then perform mala while calmly walking around the God’s ideol in a clockwise direction. This is called Pradikshna. During pradikshna ones mind shoul concentrate on the form of God, having His darshan from all four directions.

(11) **SASHTANG DANDAVAT PRANAM**

Bowing down or prostrating at the Lord’s
feet, with the operation of the eight parts of the body is called ‘SASHTANG DANDAVAT PRANAM’. Male satsangi’s must perform five Sashtang Dandavat Pranams normally and one additionally for seeking pardon for faults committed knowingly or unknowingly while performing the Pooja.

पद्भ्यां कराभ्यां जानुभ्यामुरसा शिरसा दृशा ।
मनसा वचसा चेति प्रणामोष्ठादृह्य इरिति: ॥
(Padbhyām karābhyyām jānubhyāmurasa śhirasa drishā.
Manasa vachasā cheti pranāmoshtānga Iritah.)

Hands, feet, knees, chest, forehead, vision, mind and speech, these being the eight parts (elements) of the body touching the ground while prostrating before the idol of God is called “Sashtang Dandavat Pranam”

Women devotees should perform Panchang Pranam, which involves five elements of the body touching the ground.

कराभ्यां शिरसा दृष्ट्र, मनसा वचसा च सा ।
(Karābhyyām shirasā drishyā mansā vachasā cha sā.)

Hands, head, vision, mind and Speech are the five elements or parts of the body of women, which should touch the ground while performing ‘Pranams’ before the idol of God, and this is called ‘Panchang Pranam’.
RELIGIOUS RITES

Following the above, one should perform ‘Arati’, (Pooja by lighting ghee lamps).

तदुक्तम्
मन्त्रहीनं क्रियाहीनं यत् कृतं पूजनं हरे: ।
सर्व संपूर्णतामेति कृते नीराजने शिवे ॥

(Mantrahiaam kriyahinam yat krtam poojanam hareh,
Sarvam sampoorñatametī kruṭe nīrājne śhīve.)

The glory of arti is so described that the worshipper not having undertaken any of the above pooja rituals or mantra recitation, nevertheless experience a great sense of bliss. This highlights the importance of arti in pooja worship. ‘Nirajanam’ is another word for ‘Arti’ which should be carried out by lighting a number of ‘Dhoop’ sticks and ‘deep’ items. The ‘Nirajanams’ are offered by making frontal rounds before the idol of the God, providing perfect visibility of each and every divine parts of the idol of God, thus giving the benefit of great enjoyment to the devotee.

(12) PRAYER

अपराधसहस्त्रणि क्रियान्तेहर्मिष्टं मया ।
दासोहमिति मां मत्वा क्षमस्व पुरुषोऽत्मम ॥

(Aparadhshsrāñi kriyanteharnisham mayā,
Dāsohamiti mām matvā kshamswa purushottama.)
While praying to God, it is essential to keep both the hands together, saying “Oh Maharaj! Kindly forgive me for all my faults – which will be thousands in number – committed constantly by me knowingly or unknowingly, However, kindly grant me with intellect, health, wealth and happiness. Oh, Maharaj! Kindly protect me from the four types of bad elements. Help me always to save my parents and your staunch followers followers with my body, mind and wealth.”Oh God, kindly be merciful to me, and enable me to worship you all the while and keep you in mind constantly”.

Finally completing the Pooja, the following Mantra should be recited, which actually requests God to be with you, wherever and whenever remembered or called upon to once again accept your Pooja offering, as described below:

स्वस्थानं गच्छ देवेश पूजामादयं मामकीम् ।
इष्टकामप्रसिद्धर्थं पुनरागमनाय च ॥
(Svasthānam gachchha devesha poojāmadāy māmkiṃ.
Ishtakām prasiddhrtham punarāgamnāya cha.)

After reciting the above sloka, the Pooja can be stored away by duly touching the feet of the Idol of God.
(13) Shikshapatri Path
(Reading of Shikshapatri)

शिक्षापत्रायं प्रतिदिनं पाठोद्वस्या मदुपावित्रते: ।
कर्त्त्वोक्षरस्त्रौस्तु श्रवणं कार्यमादरात् ॥

Shikshāpatrīyāḥ pratidinam pāthosyā madupāshritaḥ.
Kartvyaonakshargnaistu shravnam kāryamādarāt.)

वक्त्रभावे तु पूजये कार्योऽस्य: प्रतिवाससम् ।
मद्दृष्टमिष्ठि मद्धाणि मान्ये यं परमादरात् ॥

(Vaktrabhāve tu poojaiva kāryasāh prativaśasam.
Madrupamitī madvāni mānyeyam paramādarat.)

After performing the Pooja, it is essential that atleast five slokas of the Shikshapatri are read. For those who are unable to read they should listen to the Shikshapatri being read. However, if there is no one to read Shikshapatri, it can be placed in the Pooja, with full faith and devotion towards it, believing it to be the Lord Himself.

कर्त्त्वां व्यावहारिकम् ।

(Krtawyam vyāvharikam.)

After performing the above said Pooja, devotees may attend to their secular or household duties in compliance with the Dharmic life order.

* END*