



WHY DO WE?

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WHY DO WE LIGHT THE LAMP

- Symbolizes knowledge and removal of darkness and ignorance
- Knowledge is a lasting inner wealth
- Oil/ghee represents vasanas and the wick represents ego
- Like flame, knowledge lifts us upwards

ॐ शुभं करोति कल्याणं आरोग्यं धनसंपदः ।
शत्रुबुद्धिविनाशाय दीपज्योतिर्नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

"Subham Karoti Kalyanam Arogyam Dhana Sampadah
Shatru Buddhi Vinashaya Deepa Jyoti Namostute

WHY DO WE HAVE A PRAYER ROOM



- Reminds us that the Lord is the creator and true owner of everything
- To worship the Lord
- Spiritual thoughts and vibrations influence time of one who spends time there



WHY DO WE DO NAMASTE

- Namaste = I bow to you
- Way to greet
- Negates ego
- Recognize oneness
- Avoid touch and spread of germs, and influence of negativity



WHY DO WE PROSTRATE

- Represents respect for age, knowledge, wisdom and divinity on other person
- Seek blessings
- Surrender to greatness in others



WHY DO WE WEAR TIKA ON FOREHEAD

- Spot between two eyebrows is a major nerve point
 - Tika is believed to prevent the loss of “energy” and control the various levels of concentration.
 - Pressing Adnya-chakra offers many benefits
- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| • Brahmin | white chandan | signifying purity |
| • Kshatriya | red kumkum | signifying valour |
| • Vaishya | yellow kesar/turmeric | signifying prosperity |
| • Sudra | black bhasma | signifying service |



WHY NOT TOUCH THINGS WITH FEET

- Touching with feet is disrespectful
- Knowledge is sacred and divine and must be given respect
- Every subject - academic or spiritual - was considered divine and taught by the guru in the gurukula.
- Reminder of the high position accorded to knowledge
- If we accidentally touch anything by feet, we do namaskar asking for forgiveness
- We seek for forgiveness from mother earth for touching her with feet



WHY DO WE APPLY THE HOLY ASH?

- Not “any” ash is holy
- Ash yajna with special wood, ghee and herbs is holy
- Ash is called Bhasma meaning “that by which our sins are destroyed”
- Also called ‘Vibhuti’ (glory) as it bestows glory on the one who applies it and it safeguards the wearer
- It soaks extra moisture from the body and prevents colds and headaches
- Mrityunjaya mantra to be chanted while applying Bhasma on the forehead



WHY DO WE OFFER FOOD TO THE LORD BEFORE EATING IT?

- Acknowledge that the God is ultimate giver of everything and show respect to him
- Encourages habit of sharing and removes attachment
- Sprinkle water around the plate and put five morsels of food on the side



WHY DO WE DO PRADAKSINA?

- Signifies that the Lord is at the center and everything revolves around Him
- Clockwise Pradakshina keeps the Lord on our right side

यानि कानि च पापानि जन्मान्तरकृतानि च ।
तानि सर्वाणि नश्यन्ति प्रदक्षिणपदे पदे ॥

Yaani Kaani Ca Paapaani Janmaantara-Krtaani Ca |
Taani Sarvaanni Nashyanti Pradakssinna-Pade Pade ||



WHY TREAT PLANTS AND TREES AS SACRED?

- Plants are also form of the Lord, hence, they are all regarded as sacred
- Human life on earth depends on plants and trees. They give food, oxygen, clothing, shelter, medicines etc.
- Indians scriptures tell us to plant ten trees if we have to cut one
- Certain trees and plants like tulasi, peepal etc., which have tremendous beneficial qualities, are worshipped till today. It is believed that divine beings manifest as trees and plants, and many people worship them to fulfill their desires or to please the Lord.



WHY DO WE FAST

- Fasting is called upavaasa (Upa = "near" + vaasa = "to stay")
- Lot of our time and energy is focused on food (earning, cooking, eating, etc.)
 - Certain food types make our minds dull and agitated
 - Fasting helps us save time and conserve his energy
- It is a self-imposed form of discipline
- Allows digestive systems to take a break and take some rest
 - The we indulge the senses, the more they make their demands.
- Fasting helps us to cultivate control over our senses and our minds
- Fasting does not make us weak, irritable or create an urge to indulge later
- The Bhaḡavad-Gita urges us to eat appropriately - neither too less nor too much - yukta-aahaara and to eat simple, pure and healthy food (asaatvik diet) even when not fasting



WHY DO WE RING THE BELL

- Bells are made of various metals
- Bells produce a distinct sound that creates unity of your left and right brain.
- Bells make auspicious sounds including sound of “Om”
- Bell sound lasts for minimum of seven seconds in echo mode to touch your seven healing centers or chakras in your body

“आगमार्थं तु देवानां गमनार्थं तु रक्षसाम् ।
कुरु घण्टारवं तत्र देवताह्वानलाञ्छनम्” ॥ १५ ॥

āgamārthaṃ tu devānāṃ gamanārthaṃ tu rakṣasām ।
kuru ghaṇṭāravaṃ tatra devatāhvāna lā'ñchanam

om kalasasya mukhe viṣṇuḥ kaṇṭhe rudraḥ samāśritaḥ /
mūle tatra sthito brahmā madhye mātṛgaṇāḥ smṛtāḥ //
kukṣau tu sāgarāḥ sarve saptadvīpā vasundharā /
ṛgvedo'thayaḥ jurvedaḥ sāmavedo'pyatharvaṇaḥ //



WHY DO WE WORSHIP KALASHA

- Kalasha is a brass, mud or copper pot is filled with water
- During worship, mango leaves are placed in the mouth, a coconut is placed over it and red or white thread is tied around its neck
- Kalasha represents the entire universe
 - Water symbolizes primordial water from which entire creation emerged
 - The leaves and coconut represent creation.
 - The thread represents the love that “binds” all in creation.
 - The Kalasha is therefore considered auspicious and worshipped.
- The waters from all the holy rivers, the knowledge of all the Vedas and the blessings of all the deities are invoked in the Kalasha and its water is thereafter used for all the rituals

ॐ कलशस्य मुखे विष्णुः कण्ठे रुद्रः समाश्रितः।
मूले तत्र स्थितो ब्रह्मा मध्ये मातृगणाः स्मृताः ॥
कुक्षौ तु सागराः सर्वे सप्तद्वीपा वसुन्धरा ।
ऋग्वेदोऽथ यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽप्यथर्वणः ॥



WHY DO WE WORSHIP TULSI

- Tulsi = Tulana (comparison) + nasti (none)
- Symbolises Goddess Lakshmi, and those who wish to be righteous and have a happy family life worship the tulasi
- Many medicinal values
 - Gives out oxygen even in night
 - Supports the body's stress response
 - Its extracts are used widely for curing common ailments like .. common cold, headache, stomach disorder etc.

यन्मूले सर्वतीर्थानि यन्मध्ये सर्वदेवताः।
यदग्रे सर्व वेदाश्च तुलसि त्वां नमाम्यहम् ॥

yanmūle sarvatīrthāni yanmadhye sarvadevatāḥ।
yadaḡre sarva vedāśca tulasi tvāṃ namāmyaham ॥

I salute Her (tuLasi) in whose root
are all sacred waters, in whose
middle are all celestials and in
whose crown are all Vedas



WHY IS LOTUS SPECIAL

- Symbol of truth, auspiciousness and beauty (satyam, shivam, sundaram)
- Blooms with the rising sun and close at night. Similarly, our minds open up and expand with the light of knowledge
- Remains beautiful and untainted despite its surroundings - We should remain pure and beautiful under all circumstances.
- Leaf never gets wet even though it is in water - man of wisdom (gyaani) who remains ever joyous, unaffected by the world of sorrow and change

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥

*brahmanyādhāya karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā karoti yaḥ
lipyate na sa pāpena padma-patram ivāmbhasā*

One who acts by dedicating actions to Brahman and by renouncing attachment, he does not become polluted by sin, just as a lotus leaf is not by water.



WHY DO WE BLOW CONCH



- Blown conch, the primordial sound of Om, an auspicious sound emanates. It represents the world and the Truth behind it.
- All knowledge enshrined in the Vedas is an elaboration of Om
- The sound of the conch is also the victory call of good over evil.
- Auspicious sound removes negative energies
- Health benefits
 - Great exercise for various muscles such as, urinary tract, bladder, lower abdomen, diaphragm, chest and neck muscles
 - Expands lung muscles, improving their aerial capacity
 - Exercises thyroid glands and vocal cords and helps in correcting any speech problems
 - Stretches face muscles
- The conch is placed at the altar in temples and homes next to the Lord as a symbol of Naada Brahma (Truth), the Vedas, Om, dharma, victory and auspiciousness. It is often used to offer devotees thirtha (sanctified water) to raise their minds to the highest Truth. It is worshipped with the following verse.



WHY DO WE SAY SHANTI THRICE

- Shaanti means "peace", a natural state of being
- Everyone without exception desires peace in life
- It is believed that trivaram satyam - that which is said thrice comes true
- We chant shaanti thrice to emphasise our intense desire for peace. All obstacles, problems and sorrows originate from three sources.
 - Aadhidaivika: Divine forces over which we have little or no control like earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions etc.
 - Aadhibhautika: Known factors around us like accidents, human contacts, pollution, crime etc.
 - Aadhyaatmika: Created by us through ignorance, agitation, etc.
- May peace alone prevail. Hence shaanti is chanted thrice.



WHY DO WE OFFER COCONUT

- Coconut is most common offerings in a temple
- The coconut is broken and placed before the Lord. It is later distributed as prasaada.
- Coconut represents head of a human being. The coconut is broken, symbolizing the breaking of the ego. The juice within, representing the inner tendencies (vaasanas) is offered along with the white kernel - the mind, to the Lord.
 - A mind thus purified by the touch of the Lord is used as prasaada
- The coconut also symbolizes selfless service
- The marks on the coconut represent the three-eyed Lord Shiva and considered to be a means to fulfill our desires.



WHY DO WE CHANT OM

- Om - most chanted sound symbols
- It has a profound effect on the body and mind and the surroundings
- It is used as a greeting - Om, Hari Om etc.
- Om is the universal name of the Lord and made up of three letters
 - A, U and M
- Om is also called pranava meaning "that by which the Lord is praised"
- It is said that the Lord started creating the world after chanting Om
- Thus Om symbolizes everything - the means and the goal of life, the world and the Truth behind it, the material and the Sacred, all form and the Formless.



WHY DO WE DO AARATI

- After every ritualistic we perform the aarati by ringing of the bell and sometimes by singing, playing of musical instruments and clapping
- It is one of the sixteen steps (shodasha upachaara) of the pooja ritual
- At the end of the aarati we place our hands over the flame and then gently touch our eyes and the top of the head
- Camphor is lit as it burns itself out completely without leaving a trace of it representing burning of tendencies (vaasanas) without leaving trace of ego