

Notes on Performing Ritual/Puja (2005)

During the summer of 2005 I studied the art and science of ritual with a Purohit named Rami Sivan who was trained in South India.

Saha nau bavatu...may our truth that we are pursuing protect us

Tantra – tamayate, jnanam anena iti tantra = that whereby knowledge is disseminated, methodology of spreading knowledge

Sravana – listening, manana – reflection using logic, nididhyasana – application

God's don't accept offerings without understanding, introjection of teachings

Knowledge without application is a waste of time

Epistemology = theory of knowledge

How we know:

1. pratyaksha – direct observation

2. anumana – reasoning

3. agama – testimony

prama = valid knowledge, aprama = invalid knowledge

1. satyam (truth) reveal as it truly is

2. applicable

subjective conditioning

- svabhava (disposition)

- bhumika (level of attainment)

- adhikara (capacity)

samskara = subliminal activator

vasana – habitual pattern formation

markata matsya nyaya = monkey fish axiom

different paths: jnana sakti = path of knowledge, karma/kriya sakti = path of action,

bhakti/iccha sakti = emotional component

objective conditioning

- desa = space

- kala = time

- patra = circumstances

Abrahamic Coalition

- Judaism, Christianity, Islam, earthly beings having a spiritual experience

Dharma Coalition

- Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Daoism, spiritual beings having an earthly experience.

No soul, atman is self

Star of David symbol – non duality, interconnectedness of masculine and feminine energies

Amityam = impermanent, vikaryam = changeable, everything is always changing

Sambandhitam = bound together interconnectedness

Pada's of Tantra are all sambandhitam

Jnana = wisdom

Yoga = application of systematic methodology

Kriya = action, ritual

Carya = lifestyle practices, temple building, creation of vessels etc.

Atman = mind/body

Bhagavad Gita

Yoga = samatvan = balance

Yoga = karma sukusalam = still in action

Yatha brahmanda tatha pindanda= external/internal, macrocosm/microcosm

Atma vasam sukhan = self control → happiness

Pava vasam dukham = anything depending on other → suffering

Change is inevitable, transformation is intentional change

Acarya = person who you gain spiritual knowledge from

Guru = any teacher, remover of darkness, heavy knowledge

Teacher must embody teachings

Test acarya

1.knowledge

2.teaching method

3.compassion

4.associates

5.feeling

sun (light), fire (cooks), moon (nurtures) = guru

upadesha = instruction

no division between sacred and profane, EVERYTHING is part of spiritual practice. In tantra we spiritualize EVERY aspect of our life

Sadari (6 enemies of afflicted emotions)

Kama (selfish desire) krodha (reaction when desires are not met) mokha (false view, delusion) mada (pride), lobha (greed), matsarya (jealousy)

Bhaya = fear, gurna = repulsion, lajja = shame

Two major Paths

1.Pravrtti (extrovert) householder, dharma, artha, karma

2.Nivrtti (introvert) monk, moksa

sexuality vs. non sexuality

brahmacarya = living and engaging with awareness of the divine

grihastha = discharging debt to society, looking after everyone

vanaprastha, sanyasa don't exist in tantra

Maha Nirvana Tantra

Upanisad = sitting close to teacher

Upasana = personal practice

Pujari/pujarini = low level priest

Arcaka = worship, temple priest

Sastri = teacher of sastras, vedic law

Srotriya = persona qualified in the Vedas

Ganapathi = knows how to chant Vedas entirely fwd and back in 8 different combinations

Pandit/pandita = scholar

Brahmana = one who knows Brahmin, studies spirituality and realized truth

Varna = color, jati = bird

Varna = aquired, jati = by birth

Everyone is born a sudra

Vadhyar = teacher, one who performs ceremonies

Rtvk = initiated and invited to perform vedic sacrifice

Svami = sanyasin/sanyasini is the profession, title is swami

Bhatta = consecrated temple priest, usually vaisnava aka bhattacharya

Brahman = the absolute reality, nirakala, niskala

Brahma = creator god

Brahmana = one who has realized Brahman

Purohita = domestic priest, acarka does not leave temple

Auspicious ceremony, purva prayoga, before death

Inauspicious, apara yoga, post death ceremony

*Satyam is made up of vyavaharita which is the practical level of truth, paramarthika is the ultimate level

agama = tantric, vedic, no temples

mantra protects one from thinking, protection mantras protect you from yourself

aim of hindu tantric practice is to create harmony

murti = concrete form, thought becoming concrete

vighraha = object/form, specifically grasped by the mind, form of the deity you choose

pratima = image

bimba = reflection of your consciousness

rupa = form

arca = object of adoration or worship

bera = locus of consecration

there is no difference between us and the deity but we have not yet realized that there is no difference

santa deities (hanuman, ganesha) sattvic

vira deities (durga, usually more than 2 arms) rajasic

ugra deities tamasic, always more than 2 arms never installed in place of habitation

bhoga (pleasure) yoga (picture of deity in meditation)

householders never worship yoga deities

what you contemplate you become

uttama (best) madhayama (middle) ahama (low)

ranganatha = lord of the stage (visnu)

svatva hanana iti svaha

svaha = selfness destruction, destructing myself

108, 100 for your own sadhana 8 for benefit of all other beings

0 is shunya, the void, non dual supreme reality, total potential of total manifestation

1 + or – represents the individual, total possibilities of manifestation

8 = destruction, death, sex, procreation, death = CHANGE!

9 is the only number that repeats itself in an endless sequence

mandira = pauranic

alaya = agama, flag pole (yantra underneath statue)

mantra = rainbow

yantra = astral

bimba = physical

right hand, masculine, sun, unseen, spiritual

left hand, feminine, mortal world

paropatara punyaya = virtue, anything bringing benefit to others

papaya para-pidanam = sine, any act intentionally causing suffering to other beings

sankalpah

sam (together, same focus) +kalpa (imagination) = framing of your mind

jagat = born, gone = world is eternally changing
prapanca = that which is presented through the 5 senses

siva = white, tamas
visnu = black sattvas
brahma, rajās

gotra = cow shed, clan, one of 7 rishis

do guru puja on the birth day of the guru, nakshatra
nakshatra at dawn is the ruler of the day

8/10 Puja Notes

Deities are friends that help you achieve deeper realization of your true nature

- externalized projection of an inner quality of pure unformed essential nature
- these cosmological forces are deities, these rays come from our essence they don't exist as separate entities, we don't exist as separate entities
- even the sage who recognizes one taste acknowledges relativism
- manifestation as a being (awareness)
- deities have a special function to help as us
- they die too
- enlightened beings help us

srsti → pralaya
to release → to reabsorb

religion aides the path. It gives cultural context for spiritual practice, take techniques out of our culture we lose the broader, more expansive energetic view of our essential non dual self, held on path by a greater energy

unconditioned pure potentiality in heart → form of murti

prayer affirmation of what is

GRATITUDE, undemonstrated gratitude is NOT gratitude

LIFE IS MOVEMENT, NOT STILLNESS, THIS IS WHY WE DO PUJA TO SAY, "I AM BACK IN THE GAME FULLY!"

Non dual does not negate relative

PUJA TEST NOTES

- Svartha: ritual performed by anyone for oneself. Initiation not needed
- paratha: ritual performed by a priest for the sake of another, initiation essential.

Nitya karmas – must be performed. Performance does not produce merit, failure to perform demerits: daily bathing, morning salute of the sun and reciting gayatri mantra (sandhya-vandanam), japa, panca-maha-yajna (performance of 5 great sacrifices which are obligatory, discharge debts, five debts are to parents, god, sages, humans, elements)

Kamya = rituals done in order to gain merit (build hospitals)

Niskamya = unmotivated rituals

Offences against the deity (deva apacara)

Touching icon in the dark without having lit a lamp, interrupting puja to answer calls of nature, performing puja in angry mood, engaging in puja with upset stomach, tasting food or smelling flowers before offered, wearing an upper garment while saluting the deity, offering incense without offering flowers

Times of practice: full moon, new moon, 8th and 14th day of lunar fortnight

Locations of ritual practices: places of pilgrimage, river-banks, confluence of rivers, sea-shore, mountain tops, shade of banyan tree, cattle shed, puja room, guru's home

Orientation: deity faces east, pujari to deity's right, deity faces west pujari to deity's left facing north

Purification (suddhi) = purificatory mantras, bath, ashes, dust raised by cows, sun bathing/rain bathing, natural ponds, thinking of the divine. space for worship, seat for worship, vessels must all be clean, items for puja must of the best possible. Direction: face east during the day, north at night, south when worshipping ancestors. Mouth must be clean before chanting mantras, icon purified by mudras (biumba), elements of body purified, purity of mind.

Develop right mental state,

Sacraments, samskaras: marriage, consummation, simanta (consecration of womb), rite for securing a male child, birth ceremony, naming ceremony, weaning ceremony, first outing, beginning of schooling, tonsure, initiation, final rites

Use of sacred spaces: (devices) icon, sand altar, water pot, fire, special fossil, natural lingam, mandala, yantra, lotus of ones own heart

Pranyama = regulation of breath, purifying nadis

Trapana = libations

Two types, nismaya, done with pure water and sakamya done with herbs

Japa: recited aloud, whispered and audible only to oneself, mental repetition

Pranam = outward demonstration of an inner feeling of humility

Asana = one cannot sit on bare ground
Deer skin, tiger skin, kusa grass, silk cloth

Yantra = geometrical designs which rep basic energy forces of the universe, visual equivalent of mantras or thought forms of deities, astral body

Mantra = protect the mind (man = mind, tra = protect) device protects mind from negative forces and transforms it into the means for enlightenment and self-realisation

10 karmas of mantras:

- 1.santi = peaceful
- 2.paralyzing, used to stop movement of any living being
- 3.attraction, used to attract man, woman or animal
- 4.agitation, used to disturb mental equilibrium of another
- 5.controlling, used to enslave someone
- 6.attractions, used to attract someone living in a distant place
- 7.modification, used to change behavioral pattern
- 8.conflict = used to create opposition between two people
- 9.death, used to kill someone
- 10.empowerment, used to increase one's or another's wealth

Mudra = seal, imprint, passport, gives pleasure to the god's.

DEVO BHUTVA DEVAM YAJET = One can only worship God after becoming god like

Nyasa = placement of fingers and palm of hand on various parts of body, purpose is to prepare the physical body for the reception of the divine presence of the deity

ARADHANA = worships, puja, upasana, arcana

Bahya – external

Manasika – mental

9 standards: utama, madhayama, adhama

Sankalpa = statement of spacio-temporal factors which confine the ritual activity, the type of ritual, purpose or expected results of the ritual (brahmanjali)

8 Stages of Aradhana

1. nyasa, locating bija of deity upon various parts of the body
- 2.dhyana, visualization of the deity
- 3.avahanam, invocation
- 4.manasika
- 5.upacara
- 6.japa, silent recitation of matras

7.stotra, chanting of hymns in praise of deity

8.visarjanam, valideiction formal request of deity to forgive imperfections of the worship and bidding deity to depart and return to heart chakra of deity

Upacara

Flowers, incense, water

Flowers, incense, lamps, victuals, waving of camphor

Libation, water for washing feet, water for sipping, bathing, clothing, sandal paste, flowers, incense, light, food

Invocation, enthronement, scented water, washing of feet, sipping water, lustration, clothing, sacred thread, adornment, sandal paste, flowers, incense, light, food offering, betel leaf, camphor flame

Sandhi – junction points, auspicious, easeful time to realize our shiva nature

- shows duality does not exist

- in tantra we go by nature to find our true nature

- great points of sandhi: waking up and going to sleep, sunrise and sunset (1/2 hr before and 20 minutes after), full moon or new moon, solstices, equinoxes and lunar nodes in between, eclipses, in between breaths, when channels switch from right to left or left to right, birth and death (most impt sandhi), in between thoughts, sneezing or orgasm,

- cosmologically, the light body beings are the openings at equinoxes

- you are either eating or being eaten,

- be humble, have good conduct