

Need to use a proper script for Samskritam

Even though Bhagavan understands all languages, the power of our Bharatiya languages cannot be matched in expressing our cultural values especially when rising to the plane of conversing with Bhagavan. Of them, the Samskrita bhasha is special in that it is pan-Bharatiya. Hence our scriptures, anushtana paddhati-s and a lot of bhakti sahitya texts are in Samskrita only.

We know that in Samskritam, especially for anushtanam, sound/pronunciation is important. Therefore one should write and read sankalpa shloka-s etc for anushtanam in an appropriate script which is capable of distinguishing all the sounds of Samskritam.

Now the Latin (English) script was evolved for other languages, and we all know the difficulty of correlating spelling and pronunciation even in English. Further, more letters are required to write Samskritam than English as there are more sounds in it. However, since Latin script is widely known, scholars felt it useful to create a Latin-based transliteration system for Samskritam.

In such a system, Latin letters which may be casually applied to different sounds need to be differentiated. For instance in Rama the first or second “a” may denote a long sound. This is differentiated as Rāma or Ramā. Similarly, other marks called diacritics are used to differentiate sounds as in āā īī ūū ṛṛ ḷḷ ṁṁ ḥḥ ṇṇ ṭṭ ḍḍ ṣṣ. Aspirated (mahāprāna) sounds are denoted with an additional h as in k/kh, g/gh, c/ch, j/jh, ṭ/ṭh, ḍ/ḍh, t/th, d/dh, p/ph, b/bh.

However, a system is useful only if followed correctly. If diacritics or added h-s are ignored and we do not read with the intended pronunciation, then the transliteration is no longer useful for its intended purpose. It is very easy to ignore diacritics as they are not in daily use. It would then have altogether been better to use a script which actually has different symbols for the sounds.

Therefore it is strongly recommended to learn a Bharatiya script like Devanagari, Grantha, Telugu, Kannada etc which has clearly different letters to denote the various sounds. Our documents are published in many such scripts.

However, with a view to help people who are not able to immediately learn such scripts, we are now publishing documents in Latin transliteration as well as per the system called International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST). For the above reasons, people should use these as a temporary measure till they learn a Bharatiya script.

The Samskrita varnamala in IAST is given below with Devanagari equivalents:

a अ, ā आ, i इ, ī ई, u उ, ū ऊ, ṛ ॠ, ̄ ॡ, ḷ ॢ, ḹ ॣ

e ए, ai ऐ, o ओ, au औ, am अं, aḥ अः

ka क, kha ख, ga ग, gha घ, ṇa ङ

ca च, cha छ, ja ज, jha झ, ña ञ

ṭa ट, ṭha ठ, ḍa ड, ḍha ढ, ṇa ण

ta त, tha थ, da द, dha ध, na न

pa प, pha फ, ba ब, bha भ, ma म

ya य, ra र, la ल, va व, śa श, ṣa ष, sa स, ha ह

hara hara śaṅkara

om

jaya jaya śaṅkara



śrī-vedavyāsāya namaḥ

śrīmad-ādyā-śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda-
paramparāgata-mūlāmnāya-sarvajña-pīṭham
śrī-kāñcī-kāmakoti-pīṭham
jagadguru-śrī-śaṅkarācārya-svāmi-śrīmaṭha-
samsthānam

bhīṣma-tarpaṇam

5126 viśvāsuḥ makaraḥ 13 māgha-śukla-aṣṭamī

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Shri Bhishma Pitamaha whose very nature was dharma undertook a vow of Brahmacharya and lived as a Brahmachari throughout his life. Hence, he did not have any descendants. He had the boon of icchamrtyu (choosing when he could leave his body). So he waited until Uttarayanam and shed his mortal on Shukla Ashtami in Magha masa. Therefore, all of us should offer Tarpanam and Arghyadanam for the sake of Bhishma on Magha masa Shukla Ashtami. Laugakshi Smṛti says that those who offer this Bhishma Tarpanam gets as much punya as feeding a thousand brahmanas.

aṣṭamīdivase caiva bhīṣmatarpaṇamācaret|
dadyāt pradadyād bhīṣmāya tarpaṇam prativatsaram||

tena tarpaṇamātreṇa sahasradvijabhojane|
yatphalam kathitam sadbhistadavāpnotyasamśayaḥ||

śuklāṣṭamyām tu māghasya dadyādbhīṣmāya yo jalam|
samvatsarakṛtaṁ pāpaṁ tatkṣaṇādeva naśyati||

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brāhmaṇādyāśca ye varṇāḥ dadyurbhīṣmāya no jalam|
saṁvatsarakṛtaṁ teṣāṁ puṇyaṁ naśyati sattama||

Padma Puranam also warns that those who do not offer this Tarpana to Bhishma on Bhishmashtami, lose the punya accumulated during the entire year. Hence we should all offer Tarpanam and Arghyadanam for the sake of Pitamaha Bhishma and strive to become those who perform their duties well.

After completion of the anushtanas of nityakarmas such as morning Snanam, Sandhyavandanam everyone should do Tarpanam and Arghyadanam for Bhishma.

ācamanam| śuklāmbaṛadharaṁ + śāntaye| prāṇāyāmaḥ|
mamopāttasamastaduritaśayadvārā śrīparamēśvara-prītyartham śubhe
śobhane muhūrte adya brahmaṇaḥ dvitīyaparārdhe śvetavarāhakalpe
vaivasvatamanvantare aṣṭāviṁśatitame kaliyuge prathame pāde jam-
būdvīpe bhāratavarṣe bharatakhāṇḍe meroḥ dakṣiṇe pārsve asmin
vartamāne vyāvahārikāṇāṁ prabhavādīnāṁ ṣaṣṭyāḥ saṁvatsarāṇāṁ
madhye viśvāvasu-nāma-saṁvatsare **uttarāyaṇe hemanta-ṛtau makara-**
māgha-māse śukla-pakṣe aṣṭamyaṁ śubhatithau induvāsarayuktāyām
aśvinī-nakṣatra (12:31)yuktāyām sādhyā-yoga (09:08; śubha-yoga); śubha-
yoga; śukla-yogayuktāyām bhadra-karaṇa (10:17; bava-karaṇa)yuktāyām
evam-guṇa-viśeṣaṇa-viśiṣṭāyām asyām **aṣṭamyaṁ**
śubhatithau mamopātta-samasta-duritaśayadvārā śrīparamēśvara-
prītyartham bhīṣmāṣṭamī-puṇyakāle bhīṣmatarpaṇam arghyadānaṁ ca
kariṣye|

jīvatpitā'pi kurvīta tarpaṇam yama-bhīṣmayoḥ

(Those whose father is living must also offer Tarpanam for Yama and Bhishma)

According to this vachana, those whose father is alive should also offer Tarpanam to Bhishma. Those who do not have a father should wear the Yajnopavitam on the left and offer tarpanam via the Pitr Tirtha with water mixed with tila (sesame). Those whose father is alive should offer Tarpanam

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with just as in Pitr Tarpanam in Brahmajayna (with Yajnopavitam upto the left wrist and with only water) with Pitr Tirtha.
udakadānamantraḥ—

vaiyāghrapādagoṭrāya sāṅkṛtyapraavarāya ca|
gaṅgāputrāya bhīṣmāya pradāsyē'haṁ tilodakam|
aputrāya dadāmyetat salilaṁ bhīṣmavarmaṇe||

bhīṣmaṁ tarpayāmi|

With the following Shlokas, everyone should offer Arghyadanam with water three times similar to how Arghyadanam is done in Sandhyavandanam.

satyavratāya śucaye gāṅgeyāya mahātmane|
arghyaṁ dadāmi bhīṣmāya somavaṁśodbhavāya ca||

bhīṣmāya namaḥ idamarghyam| bhīṣmāya namaḥ idamarghyam| bhīṣmāya
namaḥ idamarghyam|

vasūnāmavatārāya śāntanorātmajāya ca|
arghyaṁ dadāmi bhīṣmāya ājanmabrahmacāriṇe||

bhīṣmāya namaḥ idamarghyam| bhīṣmāya namaḥ idamarghyam| bhīṣmāya
namaḥ idamarghyam|

prārthanā

bhīṣmaḥ śāntanavo vīraḥ satyavādī jitendriyaḥ|
ābhiradbhiravāpnotu putrapautrocitāḥ kriyāḥ||

With this shloka, offer Prarthana to Bhishma.

kāyena vācā manasendriyairvā
buddhyātmanā vā prakṛteḥ svabhāvāt |
karomi yadyat sakalaṁ parasmai
nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayāmi||

anena mayā kṛtena bhīṣmāṣṭamī-puṇyakāle bhīṣmatarpaṇena paramātmā
suprītaḥ suprasanno varado bhavatu||