

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, anushthana paddhati-s and a lot of bhakti sahitya texts are in Samskrita only.

We know that in Samskritam, especially for anushthanam, sound/pronunciation is important. Therefore one should write and read sankalpa shloka-s etc for anushthanam 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 aā ī ī uū rr̥ l̥ mm h̥ n̥ñ t̥ d̥ s̥ s̥. Aspirated (mahāprāna) sounds are denoted with an additional h as in k/kh, g/gh, c/ch, j/jh, t/t̥h, d/d̥h, 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, r ऋ, ṛ ऋ, l ल्, ḥ ल्

e ए, ai ऐ, o ओ, au औ, am अं, ah अः

ka क, kha ख, ga ग, gha घ, ḥa ङ्

ca च, cha छ, ja ज, jha झ, ña ञ्

ṭa ट, ṭha ठ, da 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 ल्, va व, śa श, śa ष, sa स, ha ह

hara hara śaṅkara

Om

jaya jaya śaṅkara



śrī-vedavyāsāya namah

śrīmad-ādya-śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda-
paramparāgata-mūlāmnāya-sarvajñā-pīṭham
śrī-kāñcī-kāmakotī-pīṭham
jagadguru-śrī-śaṅkarācārya-svāmi-śrīmatha-
samsthānam

bhīṣma-tarpaṇam

5126 viśvāvasuh makarah 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 Smrti says that those who offer this Bhishma Tarpanam gets as much punya as feeding a thousand brahmanas.

aṣṭamī-divase caiva bhiṣma-tarpaṇamācaret |
dadyāt pradadyād bhiṣmāya tarpaṇam prativatsaram ||

tena tarpaṇa-mātreṇa sahasra-dvija-bhojane |
yat phalam kathitam sadbhistadavāpnotyasyaṁśayah ||

śuklāṣṭamyaṁ tu māghasya dadyād bhiṣmāya yo jalām |
saṁvatsara-kṛtam pāpam tat-kṣaṇādeva naśyati ||

veda-dharma-śāstra-paripālana-sabhā

brāhmaṇādyāśca ye varṇāḥ dadyurbhīṣmāya no jalam|
saṁvatsara-kṛtam teṣāṁ puṇyam 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 anushthanas of nityakarmas such as morning Snanam, Sandhyavandanam everyone should do Tarpanam and Arghyadanam for Bhishma.

ācamanam| śuklāṁbaradharam + saṁtaye| prāṇāyāmaḥ|
mamopātta-samasta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā śrī-parameśvaraprītyartham
śubhe śobhane muhūrte adya brahmaṇaḥ dvitīya-parārdhe śvetavarāha-
kalpe vaivasvata-manvantare aṣṭāvimiśatitame kali-yuge prathame pāde
jambū-dvīpe bhārata-varṣe bharatakhanḍe meroḥ daksiṇe pārśve 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 sādhya-yoga (09:08; śubha-yoga)yuktāyām
bhadrā-karaṇa (10:17; bava-karaṇa)yuktāyām evam-guṇa-višeṣaṇa-
viśiṣṭāyām asyām aṣṭamyaṁ

śubha-tithau śrī-parameśvara-prītyartham bhiṣmāṣṭamī-puṇya-kāle
bhiṣma-tarpaṇam bhiṣma-arghya-pradānam ca kariṣye|

jīvat-pitā'pi kurvīta tarpaṇam yama-bhiṣmayoḥ

(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

veda-dharma-śāstra-paripālana-sabha

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

udaka-dāna-mantraḥ— (prācīnāvītī)

vaiyāghrapāda-gotrāya sāṅkṛtya-pravarāya ca
gaṅgā-putrāya bhīṣmāya pradāsyē’ham tilodakam
aputrāya dadāmyetat salilāṁ bhīṣma-varmaṇe||

bhīṣmām̄ tarpayāmī| bhīṣmām̄ tarpayāmī| bhīṣmām̄ tarpayāmī|

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

satya-vratāya śucaye gāṅgeyāya mahātmane|
arghyāṁ dadāmi bhīṣmāya soma-vamśodbhavāya ca||
bhīṣmāya namaḥ idamarghyam| bhīṣmāya namaḥ idamarghyam| bhīṣmāya
namaḥ idamarghyam|

vasūnāmavatārāya śantanorātmajāya ca|
arghyāṁ dadāmi bhīṣmāya ā-janma-brahmacāriṇe||
bhīṣmāya namaḥ idamarghyam| bhīṣmāya namaḥ idamarghyam| bhīṣmāya
namaḥ idamarghyam|

prārthanā

bhīṣmaḥ śāntanavo vīraḥ satya-vādī jitendriyah|
ābhiradbhiravāpnotu putra-pautrocitāḥ kriyāḥ||

With this shloka, offer Prarthana to Bhishma.

kāyena vācā manasendriyairvā
buddhyā”tmanā vā prakṛte: svabhāvāt|
karomi yadyat sakalam̄ parasmai
nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayāmi||

anena mayā kṛtena bhīṣmāṣṭamī-puṇya-kāle bhīṣma-tarpanena bhīṣma-
arghya-pradānena ca paramātmā suprītaḥ suprasanno varado bhavatu||