



WELCOME
to the
UPANAYANAM
of
Sumedh Venkata
Sai Kota



May 18th, 2025

Upanayanam is the ritual of initiation that brings the *vaṭū* (the boy) closer to the Guru or Divine. The phrase *upa* means “near,” and the phrase *nayanam* means “leading to the teacher.” It is performed to mark the commencement of formal education in the Vedic tradition. It also marks the spiritual rebirth of the boy (*dvija*) into a new and disciplined life.

THE CEREMONY:



Gaṇapati Puja

The ceremony begins with offering prayers to Lord Gaṇeśha, invoking his divine aid to remove any obstacles and to ensure a smooth ceremony.



Punyāhaṇachanam

This involves sanctifying the place and invoking divine presence into the *kalasam* (sacred pot). Holy water is sprinkled to purify the surroundings.

Ankurārpaṇam

The phrase *ankura* means “sprout” and *arpaṇam* means “offering.” In this ritual, 9 varieties of grain are sown in mud-filled earthen pots, signifying life and continuity through cycles of time. The essence of this ritual is to make a *sankalpa* (wish) and to receive the grace of the Divine.

Rakshā Bandhanam

This involves tying a sacred thread on the boy's right hand, symbolizing responsibility, duty, and spiritual commitment.

Pitru Puja

This ritual offers respect and gratitude to deceased ancestors through sacred rites. It is performed to obtain their blessings before the Upanayanam commences.



Chaula Hōmam

The father places the *dharbas* on the boy's head and cuts the *dharbas* in all 4 cardinal directions (north, east, south, & west). The boy's hair is then completely shaved except at five specific points (Pancha Śikha), indicating the 5 energy centers through which spiritual energy enters the boy. Later, he takes a ceremonial bath.

Thread Ceremony / Yagñōpavīta Dhāraṇam

The sacred thread (*yagñōpavīta*) is placed across the boy's shoulder by his father, symbolizing the boy's eligibility to study the Vedas. The 3 strands of the thread represent purity of thought, word, and deed.



Kumāra Bhōjanam

The boy dines traditionally alongside other Brahmachārīs, with his sister joining him during the meal.



Upanayana Hōmam

In this ritual, the sacred fire is invoked, and offerings are made to symbolize the boy's inner transformation. He performs the ritual under the guidance of the Guru.

Brahmōpadesam

The father/guru whispers the Gāyatri Mantra into the boy's right ear. This mantra is considered to be the essence of the Vedas. Chanting this mantra allows the boy to invoke divine light and wisdom, leading him on a path towards enlightenment. This profound act symbolizes the sacred transfer of divine knowledge across generations.



Bhikshāṭana

Dressed as a young student, the boy goes around seeking alms by chanting "Bhavati Bhikshām Dehi." This act of begging symbolizes humility, detachment, and dependence on knowledge and society for sustenance.

Akshata Āsīrvādam

The elders and priests offer their blessings to the newly initiated Brahmachārī. They shower him with rice and sacred mantras, blessing him with strength, knowledge, and a life rooted in dharma.



Thank you for
your blessings!

