

Introduction to ganesha home puja

One could say that the Hindu form of home worship, known as puja, is unique in all the world. Quite fittingly, it arises from the magnanimous spirit of hospitality that Hindu people are famous for. All guests are received and treated as God in the Hindu home, and God is no exception. During this daily morning rite, family members gather in their well-appointed shrine room to honor God as their royal guest. They receive Him warmly, offer a seat, serve water to quench His thirst, bathe and dress Him in beautiful clothes, burn the finest incense for His enjoyment, honor Him with light and flowers and feed Him a sumptuous meal. It is an intimate, personal interaction with God. Throughout the puja, the officiant chants sweetly to the Deity in Sanskrit, describing these kindly acts and beseeching His blessings. Finally, he thanks the Deity for His presence, bids Him farewell and humbly apologizes for any errors he may have committed. It is a ritual performed daily in millions of homes. In a sense, each Hindu has a private temple right in the home, and invites God to abide there, close to the family. Mystically, it keeps open the channels to the superconscious, divine areas of the inner worlds, bringing peace, health, prosperity and happiness to family members. Intellectually, it keeps religious beliefs strong. Emotionally, it cultivates a burgeoning love of God, known as bhakti. ¶ Puja literally means “worship, adoration.” Home puja is a personal version of the public puja performed in temples by priests. The forms of puja vary widely between Hinduism’s four main denominations and its hundreds of lineages, but all puja finds its basis in sixteen offerings, *shodasha upachara*. These also vary somewhat, depending on the scriptural source that is followed, but one popular list is the following: 1) Āvāhanam, invoking; 2) Āsanam, offering a seat; 3) Pādyam, offering water for cleansing feet; 4) Argyam, offering water for cleansing the palms; 5) Āchamanīyam, sipping water; 6) Snānam, ceremonial bath; 7) Vastram, offering vestments; 8) Yajñopavītam, offering sacred thread; 9) Chandanam, offering sandalwood paste; 10) Pushpam, offering flowers; 11) Dhūpam, burning incense; 12) Dīpam, waving lighted camphor; 13) Naivedyam, offering food; 14) Añjali, praying with folded hands; 15) Pradakshinā, circumambulation; 16) Udvasanam, farewell. Lord Ganesha is the God honored and worshiped by all Hindus, so here we present a puja for this universally beloved, boon-giving Lord of Beginnings and Ruler of Obstacles, which can be performed by anyone, young and old, Hindu or non-Hindu, Vaishnava or Shakta, Saiva or Smarta. It is Lord Ganesha who bridges all distinctions and unifies all peoples, and it is through His worship that we ultimately come to know all the other Gods.

Puja instructions

In performing the puja, preparation is of utmost importance—gathering flowers, cleaning the altar and puja tray, making ready the oil lamps and preparing the fruit and/or cooked food offering. It is common to chant a Ganesha mantra or softly sing devotional songs while performing these tasks. This quiets the mind and brings one’s awareness close to Him. Indeed, all this preparation is an integral part of worship.

There are a number of traditional implements needed for the puja, such as a metal tray, holy water cups and spoons, ghee lamp, camphor lamp, as well as puja supplies, like holy ash and sandalwood paste. These are now available at Indian grocery stores, and online at www.minimela.com. If you need help with setting up an altar, one source of information is our four-page HINDUISM TODAY Educational Insight called “Hindu Home Sanctuary,” available at:

https://www.himalayanacademy.com/media/books/home-puja_ei/web/ch24a.html

Before beginning the puja, check the altar to make sure all necessary articles are there, so that you don’t have to interrupt the flow of puja to get a missing item. Arrange all the items the same way for each puja so you can reach automatically when needed, with those most frequently used closest at hand.

Hold the attitude that, as *pujari*, you are a servant of the Gods, a channel for the spiritual energies. Only thoughts of God are on your mind as you perform puja, thus enhancing the outpouring of divine blessings. Tradition provides a caution: you should never perform puja during or within 31 days of experiencing severe anger or other deep emotional upset, but it is all right to attend. Also, puja is not performed or attended by women during their menses, or by anyone who has a wound that is bleeding. Puja is a yoga, or link, between this and inner worlds. Therefore, you must be at your best in mood and emotion to assist in making this connection. Before performing puja, you should be freshly dressed, clean and undistracted by daily concerns. Having bathed beforehand, enter the shrine room and prostrate.

The form of prostration differs for men and women. Men perform “eight-limbed obeisance,” *ashtanga pranama*, a fully prone pose in which hands, chest, forehead, knees and feet touch the ground. Women perform “five-limbed obeisance,” *panchanga pranama*, a kneeling pose in which hands, head and knees touch the ground (with ankles crossed, right over the left).

When everything is ready, take your seat in a cross-legged posture in front of and to the left of the altar, facing the Deity but turned slightly to the right. Close your eyes, sit quietly for a moment and tune your nerve system to God Ganesha and the sacred puja you are about to perform. If others are attending, be careful not to sit directly in front of the Deity, thereby blocking their view of the altar. Generally one remains seated throughout the ritual, though in some shrines it may be more comfortable to stand during the *arati* or throughout the puja. When small children are in the home, the shrine room is locked so they do not disturb the contents. If a lockable room is not available, the altar is raised so as to be out of reach, and the puja is performed standing up. Those attending will usually sit during most of the ceremony, then stand during the final *arati*. However, this again may be left to individual discretion in consideration of the height of the shrine.

During the ritual, you will be making many offerings. Most offerings are made with the right hand, never just the left, though there are occasions when both hands are used.

The offering of food is an important part of puja. Traditionally a simple dish of cooked rice is prepared especially for the Deity, with cooking utensils reserved for this purpose alone. If cooked food is not offered, then freshly cut fruit may be substituted. Keep the offering covered until the point in the puja when the pranas (life energies) of the food are offered to the Deity. Keeping the food covered helps to preserve purity and contain the pranas, which the Gods and devas can see, absorb, enjoy and reflect back to cleanse the auras of devotees. After the puja, the food offerings—along with holy ash (*vibhuti*), sacred water (*tirtha*), sandalwood paste (*chandana*), red powder (*kunkuma*) and flowers (*pushpa*)—are passed out and enjoyed as *prasada*.

A recording of sacred chanting from the *Vedas* may be played softly before the puja begins. At the high point, as the *arati* is presented, loud drums and *nagasvaras* resound. As the sacraments are passed out by the *pujari*, the divine musical ragas are heard softly played on the vina, or Vedic chanting or devotional songs may be played.

After the sacraments are passed out, encourage everyone to sit quietly for a while to enjoy the *sannidhya*, the ever-present feeling of the Divine, that the God, Gods, inner-plane gurus and devas suffuse in the shrine room. Such internalized worship naturally follows a puja. Those who perform daily *japa* will find this an ideal time for that *sadhana*.

Internalizing worship in this way gives you and all members of the family strength to face the outside world, its daily challenges and, yes, school tests. Internalizing worship is the core of the Sanatana Dharma. It is the root, stem and blossom of the highest chakra, the 1,000-petalled lotus. It is the force that gives the strength to resist temptation, to turn others from their bad ways and to face up to and live through birth karmas, *prarabdha* karmas, that are brought with you in this life. It gives the courage to resist making new, especially unwanted, karmas to be faced at a later date. It gives the willpower needed in this Kali Yuga to survive. It gives the love which provokes the understanding to overlook and forgive, then forget. Finally, internalized worship gives the peace of mind, the *shanti*, in which all saints, sages, mahatmas and great seers dwell, in their *jnana* of how things work in their universe of which we are a vital part.

Many people are hesitant to do puja, specific, traditional rites of worship, because they feel they don't have enough training or don't understand the mystical principles behind it well enough. Most Hindus depend on the priests to perform the pujas and sacraments for them, or to train them to perform home puja and give them permission to do so through initiation, called *diksha*. However, simple pujas, such as this one, may be performed by anyone wishing to invoke grace from God, Mahadevas and devas. Mothers, daughters, aunts, fathers, sons, uncles, all may perform puja within their own home, and do, as the Hindu home is considered to be nothing less than an extension of the nearby temple.

The Ganesha puja presented on the following pages consists of a series of Sanskrit chants to be intoned while performing the indicated actions and visualizations. Each chant is given in three forms, first in Sanskrit's traditional Devanagari script, second in transliterated for those who speak English, and third in a freely-rendered English translation. Each translation is followed by detailed instructions to guide the *pujari's* actions.

The chants of the simple Ganesha puja given here are in Sanskrit, Hinduism's ancient scriptural language. Time spent mastering the pronunciation is time well spent. Ideally, training is received personally from a priest, pundit or other person proficient in Sanskrit, so that you can chant the verses properly. Such a teacher will generally begin by teaching the alphabet and will offer training in reading in the Devanagari script, as well as the transliteration to help English-speaking students. Learning Sanskrit is not mandatory, and for those who do not have a teacher, we have a voice recording of this entire puja for learning the mantras properly. It is available at <https://www.himalayanacademy.com/looklisten/chanting>. A key to Sanskrit pronunciation for the transliteration system used in this puja is available online at www.himalayanacademy.com/resources/sanskrit/.

Devotion During Sacred Rituals

While correct chanting is important, the essential part of any puja is devotion. Without love of God and the Gods, outer performance is of little value. But with true devotion, even the simplest puja can be a profoundly sacred experience. Devotion is facilitated by the belief that you really are communing with the Divine through puja, that the Gods and devas do actually hear your prayers, enjoy your intonations and respond by sending blessings that purify your aura and protect your home. Though you can't see them with your physical eyes, they are there nonetheless. As you perform or attend puja, visualize the Deity sitting before you, accepting your offerings, pleased to be in your company, delighted with your love and hospitality. Think of the God as a part of your family, a grand being who is concerned with your welfare. Through strong visualization and sincere devotion, your sensitivity to the darshan will grow and your relationship with the Deity will become strong and close.

Cultivating devotion is called bhakti yoga. Satguru Sivaya Subra-mu-niyaswami stressed its importance in this way, "Bhakti yoga is love on all levels of consciousness—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. The greatest inhibiting factor in practicing bhakti yoga is the doubting, cynical, intellectual mind. Doubt and skepticism harden the heart and narrow the mind. The bloom of bhakti softens the heart and relaxes the intellect. Through bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion, the combative mind becomes erased, absorbed into the consciousness of the One Self, the Being permeating all beings. With the help of devotion, you can soar within. You cannot only pull away detachedly from unwholesome areas of the mind, but it is possible to keep yourself in an inward state of expanded consciousness."

Use of the Shrine Room

Keep the shrine spotlessly clean, and decorate it for festivals and special holy days. Visit your shrine before you leave the home, seeking blessings and protection as you leave its shelter, and go there again for purification upon returning. Worship in heartfelt devotion, so the Gods' grace flows freely toward you and loved ones. Make the shrine a refuge for all family members, a haven where they can find peace and solace, where they can connect with the Gods, offer their praise and pray for practical needs. Train your children to worship in the shrine before each important event in life, such as a major exam at school or when faced with a personal challenge or problem.

HOME PUJA PREPARATION AND PURIFICATION

आचमनम् *Āchamanam--Water Sipping By the Pūjāri*

ॐ सुमुखाय स्वाहा, ॐ एकदन्ताय स्वाहा, ॐ गजकर्णकाय स्वाहा

Aum sumukhāya svāhā

Aum ekadantāya svāhā

Aum gajakarṇakāya svāhā

Aum! Hail to the God whose face is always shining! Aum! Hail to the God who has only one tusk!

Aum! Hail to the God with huge elephant ears!

Holding the spoon with your left hand, take a spoonful of water from the cup and place it in the right palm to rinse the hand, letting the excess fall onto the floor or a tray. Put another spoonful of water into the right hand, intone "Aum sumukhāya svāhā" and sip the water. Repeat for the second and third lines, then rinse the right hand again.

विघ्नेश्वर प्रार्थना *Vighneśvara Prārthanā--Ganeśa Invocation*

ॐ शुक्लांबरधरं विष्णुं शशिवर्णं चतुर्भुजम् ।, प्रसन्न वदनं ध्यायेत् सर्वविघ्नोपशान्तये ॥

Aum śuklāambaradharam viṣṇum, śaśivarṇam chaturbhujam, prasanna vadanam dhyāyet, sarvavighnopaśāntaye

Aum. O Lord dressed in splendid white, pervading the universe, shining radiantly like rays of the full moon, having four mighty arms and a charming, happy face, we meditate on you that all obstacles may be quelled.

Salute Lord Gaṇeśa by holding hands in añjali mudrā, the prayerful pose. Then, while reciting the verse, tap your temples lightly with your knuckles three times, as in the photo. Alternatively, you may cross your arms before your face, the left hand tapping the right temple and vice versa. Return your hands to añjali mudrā while reciting the last words of the chant.

संकल्पम् Saṅkalpam, Dedication of Pūjā, Statement of Purpose

Five periods of the day (insert one in chant).

उषः कालः ushaḥ kāla, dawn प्रातः कालः prātaḥ kāla, morning

मध्याह्नकालः madhyāhñakāla, noon सायंकालः sāyaṅkāla, evening

उर्ध्वयामकालः ūrdhvayāmakāla, night

ॐ अद्य पूर्वोक्त एवंगुणसकल, विशेषेण विशिष्टायां अस्यां शुभतिथौ, ॐ महागणेश्वरं उद्दिश्य महागणेश्वरप्रीत्यर्थं
महागणेश्वरप्रसादसिद्धार्थं, यथा शक्ति (name of city) देशे (period of day) , ध्यानावाहनादि गणेशपूजां करिष्ये ।

ॐ अप उपस्पृश्य

Aum adya pūrvokta evaṅguṇasakala , viśeṣheṇa viśiṣṭāyāṃ asyāṃ śubhatithau , Aum Mahāgaṇeśvaraṃ uddiśya
Mahāgaṇeśvara prītyartham , Mahāgaṇeśvara prasāda siddhyartham, yathā śakti (chant city) deśe (insert the time of day)
dhyānāvāhanādi Gaṇeśa pūjāṃ karishye
Aum apa upasprīśya

At this particularly auspicious moment, time and place, on this auspicious day, so that we may realize the fullness of your grace, to the best of our ability this (insert time of day) Gaṇeśa pūjā we shall now perform. Aum. By touching pure water we become pure.

While reciting this statement of purpose, take a pinch of rice and hold it at chest height in your closed right palm, with open left hand underneath. Insert the time of day and the place where indicated. As you chant the last word, karishye, gently toss the rice toward the base of the image. Then, with the left hand, place a spoonful of water into your right palm and ritually wash both hands with the water by wiping the palms together a few times as you recite “Aum apa upa sprīśya.” Once the saṅkalpam has been chanted, the pūjā must not be interrupted or abandoned until the concluding mantras are recited.

WORSHIP AND OFFERINGS BEGIN

आवाहनम् आसनम्--Āvāhanam, Āsanam--Welcoming and Offering a Seat

ध्यायामि । आवाहयामि ।, रत्नसिंहासनं समर्पयामि ।

dhyāyāmi, āvāhayāmi, ratnasinhāsanam samarpayāmi

We now meditate on you, O Lord, and invite you to sit upon the jewel-studded, lion throne we have prepared for you.

Offer a pinch of rice to the Deity as you chant each of the three words before “samarpayāmi.” Visualize Gaṇeśa seated on a gem-studded throne before you, smiling, full of blessings, waiting to be honored as a guest in your home.

अर्घ्यम् --Arghyam--Washing the Lord's Feet and Hands

पादयोः पादं समर्पयामि ।, हस्तयोः अर्घ्यं समर्पयामि ।

pādayoḥ pādyaṃ samarpayāmi

hastayoḥ arghyam samarpayāmi

We now humbly bathe each of your white lotus feet and gently wash each of your precious hands, Lord Gaṇeśa.

With your right hand offer a spoonful of pure water by holding it up before the Deity momentarily and then placing it in the tirtha cup. This is how all water offering is done throughout the pūjā. As you chant the first line, visualize yourself bathing the feet of Gaṇeśa. Offer a second spoonful of pure water as you intone the next line and visualize yourself washing His hands.

आचमनम्--Āchamanam--Offering Water to Quench His Thirst

ॐ भूर्भुवः सुवः आचमनीयं समर्पयामि ।

Aum bhūr-bhuvaḥ suvaḥ āchamanīyaṁ samarpayāmi

Aum! In all three worlds, we humbly offer you fresh, pure water for sipping.

Offer a spoonful of pure water to Gaṇeśa. Visualize His accepting it in His Hand and sipping it.

स्नानम् --Snānam--Ritual Bathing

ॐ सुरसिन्धुसमानीतं सुवर्णकलशस्थितम् ।, स्नानार्थं गृह्यतां शम्भो सलिलं विमलं गणेश ॥

गङ्गास्नानं समर्पयामि

Aum surasindhu samānītaṁ suvarṇakalaśāsthitaṁ | snānārthaṁ gṛihyatām śambho salilam vimalam gaṇeśa ||
gaṅgāsnānam samarpayāmi

We now bathe you, beloved Lord Gaṇeśa, the pure one, with the water that was brought from the Ganges in the golden pot. We have bathed you in sacred Gaṅgā water.

While ringing the bell and reciting this verse, dip a flower into the tīrtha water and gently sprinkle the Deity. Do this three times or more. Hold the flower in your right hand in the mṛigi mudrā, the stem between your third and fourth fingers. If the altar design allows, you may pour water over the mūrti, rather than sprinkling it during this chant.

अलङ्कारम् --Alaṅkāram --Adornment and Offerings

वस्त्रार्थं मङ्गलाक्षतान् समर्पयामि, उपवीतार्थं मङ्गलाक्षतान् समर्पयामि

ॐ गन्धं गृहाण सुरभिमन्धकासुरसूदन ।, कुङ्कुमदिसमायुक्तं कुलाचलनिकेतन ॥

दिव्य परिमल विभूति चन्दन कुङ्कुमम् समर्पयामि

vastrārtham maṅgalākshatān samarpayāmi

upavitārtham maṅgalākshatān samarpayāmi

Aum gandham gṛihāṇa surabhim andhakā surasūdana

kuṅkumadi samāyuktaṁ kulāchalaniketana

divya parimala vibhūti chandana, kuṅkumam samarpayāmi

We give you this auspicious unbroken rice, our magnificent Lord, that you may enjoy resplendent clothing. We give you auspicious unbroken rice, Lord Gaṇeśa, that you may be handsomely adorned with a white, cotton sacred thread. Aum. O Lord, the destroyer of the demon Andhakāsura, you who resides in the Himālayas, please accept the good smelling *chanda* with *kuṅkuma* and choice offerings.

Dress the Deity. Offer a pinch of unbroken rice while chanting each of the first two lines. Repeat the third and fourth lines over and over as you decorate the Deity with flowers. The last line is recited once while applying vibhūti (holy ash), chandana (sandalpaste) and kuṅkuma. (red powder).

पुष्पम् --Pushpam--Offering Flowers

तदुपरि मङ्गलाक्षतान् समर्पयामि ।, पूजार्थं नानाविधपत्र पुष्पाणि समर्पयामि ।

tadupari maṅgalākṣhatān samarpayāmi

pūjārtham nānāvidhapatra pushpāṇi samarpayāmi

We now offer this auspicious un-broken rice. And for the fulfillment of our devotion, we offer many kinds of fresh, blooming flowers, our peerless Lord.

A pinch of rice is offered with the first line. A handful of flowers is offered with the second.

धूपम्--Dhūpam--Offering Incense

ॐ वनस्पत्युद्भवैः दिव्यैः नानागन्धसमन्वितैः ।, आघ्रेयधूपदीपानां धूपोऽयं प्रतिगृह्यताम् ॥

दशाङ्गं गुग्गुलोपेतं सुगन्धं सुमनोहरम् ।, आघ्रेयःसर्वदेवानां धूपोऽयं प्रतिगृह्यताम् ॥

धूपमाघ्रापयामि धूपानन्तरमाचमनीयं समर्पयामि, मङ्गलाक्षतान् समर्पयामि

Aum vanaspatyudbhavaiḥ divyaiḥ, nānāgandhasamanvitaiḥ

āghreyadhūpadīpānām dhūpo-yam pratigrihyatām.

daśāṅgam guggulopetam sugandhan sumanoharam

āghreyaḥ sarvadevānām dhūpo-yam pratigrihyatām.

dhūpamāghrāpayāmi

dhūpānantaram āchamanīyam samarpayāmi

maṅgalākṣhatān samarpayāmi

The finest incense, of magical qualities, of full and varied fragrances, Lord Gaṇeśa, we set aflame and offer to you in this, our home. Incense of the finest resins and perfumes, incomparable in sweetness and aroma, to be inhaled and enjoyed by you and all the Gods and *devas*, we offer to you in this, our home. Eagerly we offer to you, our resplendent Lord, fine resin incense, of heavenly odor, bewitching to the mind, rising out of a ghee-fed flame. We offer it to you in this, our home. This fine incense we have duly offered for your pleasure. And we again offer you cool, sweet water for sipping and auspicious un-broken rice.

During this chant, make three circles before the Deity with lighted incense held in your right hand while ringing the bell with your left hand. Complete the third circle and trace an Aum as you chant the fifth line, dhūpamāghrāpayāmi. At that point raise the incense higher and ring the bell louder. Put the incense down, and recite the next two lines. With the first, water is offered, with the second, a pinch of rice.

दीपम्--Dīpam--Offering The Light

ॐ साज्यवर्तित्रयोपेतं प्राज्यमङ्गलदायकं ।, दीपं पश्य दयाराशे दीनबन्धो नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

ॐ आवाहिताभ्यः सर्वाभ्यो देवताभ्यो नमः ।, दिव्य मङ्गलदीपं सन्दर्शयामि ।

दीपानन्तरमाचमनीयं समर्पयामि ।, मङ्गलाक्षतान् समर्पयामि ।

aum sājyavarti trayopetam prājyamaṅgala dāyakam

dīpam paśya dayārāśe dīnabandho namo-stu te.

aum āvāhitabhyaḥ sarvabhyo devatabhyo namaḥ

divya maṅgala dīpaṁ sandarśayāmi,

dīpānantaramāchamanīyaṁ samarpayāmi

maṅgalākṣhatān samarpayāmi

O the Compassionate, the friend of devotees! See this lamp offered which is lighted with *ghee* and three wicks and which is the provider of abundant auspiciousness. Salutations to you!

Aum! Salutations to all the Gods invoked! This divine, auspicious light we offer to you. After that, we offer you pure water for sipping and auspicious unbroken rice.

Offer the oil light to Lord Gaṇeśa and ring the bell as you chant this hymn. As with the incense, circle three times then draw the Aum with the flame. Then raise the flame and ring the bell louder, then stop ringing. Offer water, then a flower or a pinch of rice.

नैवेद्यम्--*Naivedyam*--*Offering Food*

सत्यं त्वर्तेन (chant in morning) , ऋतं त्वा सत्येन (chant if evening) परिषिञ्चामि ।

ॐ अमृतमस्तु अमृतोपस्तरणमसि स्वाहा ।, ॐ गणेशाय स्वाहा॥ । ॐ गणेशाय स्वाहा॥ ।

ॐ गणेशाय स्वाहा॥ ।

satyaṁ tvartena (chant if in morning)

ṛitaṁ tvā satyena (if evening) parishiñchāmi

Aum amṛitamastu amṛitopastaraṇamasi svāhā.

Aum gaṇeśāya svāhā

Aum gaṇeśāya svāhā

Aum gaṇeśāya svāhā

We add Truth to Truth. Aum. May this sweet and pungent food be transformed into nectar. We humbly offer to you this food.

While reciting the first part of the mantra, uncover the food offering. Then, while chanting the last line and ringing the bell, circle a spoonful of water over the food and offer it to the Deity. While ringing the bell softly, gently waft the aroma and vital essences of the food or fruit toward the Deity. Do this by sweeping the right hand over the food with a flower held between your fingers, stem upward. The palm is facing downward as it moves over the food, then rotates upward as the sweep approaches the Deity, bringing the aroma and prāṇa toward His nose and mouth. As you complete the third line, gently toss the flower toward the feet of the Deity at the end of the sweep with all the love in your heart.

ॐ आवाहिताभ्यः सर्वाभ्यो देवताभ्यो नमः ।, नानाविधमहानैवेद्यं निवेदयामि ।

यथाशक्तिसमर्पितमहानैवेद्यम् कृपया स्वीकुरु ।

Aum āvāhitābhyaḥ sarvābhyo devatābhyo namaḥ

nānā vidha mahānaivedyaṁ nivedayāmi

yathāśakti samarpita mahānaivedyam kṛipayā svīkuru

Aum! Salutations to all the Gods invoked! Because we are offering you our very best, Lord Gaṇeśa, in all sincerity and love, please consider the essence of this food as among the finest meals you have ever received. To the best of our ability in the worship of you, we offer this food and humbly beg that you will receive it.

Ring the bell loudly as you recite the above chant, pick up a flower or a pinch of rice and hold it at chest height in the fingertips of the right hand. As the last word is spoken, gently release the rice or flower at the feet of the Deity. Then put down the bell and raise your hands above your head in devout prayer that Gaṇeśa will accept the meal. While your hands are raised, close your eyes and visualize Gaṇeśa accepting and partaking of the meal. After a moment, lower your hands and intone Aum quietly.

विघ्नेश्वराष्टोत्तर शतनामावलिः *Vighneśvarāṣṭottara Śatanāmāvaliḥ*--Chanting Gaṇeśa's 108 Names

In this section of the pūjā, chant the “garland of Gaṇeśa’s 108 names.” As you intone each name, offer with your right hand a flower, some flower petals or a pinch of rice. The names are attributes of the Deity, each delineating an aspect of His wondrous nature. Each name is preceded by the mantra Aum and followed by namaḥ, meaning “obeisance, adoration or homage to.” Thus the first line is chanted Aum Vināyakāya Namaḥ (pronounced, “na-ma-ha”).

विनायकाय	Vināyakāya	the remover (of obstacles)
विघ्नराजाय	Vighnarājāya	the ruler of obstacles
गौरीपुत्राय	Gauriputrāya	the son of Gaurī
गणेश्वराय	Gaṇeśvarāya	the lord of categories
स्कन्दाग्रजाय	Skandāgrajāya	Skanda’s elder brother
अव्ययाय	Avyayāya	the inexhaustible one
पूताय	Pūtāya	the pure one
दक्षाय	Dakshāya	the dexterous one
अध्यक्षाय	Adhyakshāya	the great presider
द्विजप्रियाय	Dvijapriyāya	who loves the twice-born
अग्निगर्वच्छिदे	Agnigarvacchide	who destroyed fire’s ego
इन्द्रश्रीप्रदाय	Indraśripradāya	who restored Indra’s wealth
वाणीप्रदाय	Vāṇipradāya	who gives eloquence
अव्ययाय	Avyayāya	the inexhaustible one
सर्वसिद्धिप्रदाय	Sarvasiddhipradāya	giver of fulfillment
सर्वतनयाय	Sarvatanayāya	the son of Śiva
शर्वरीप्रियाय	Śarvaripriyāya	loved by Pārvatī
सर्वात्मकाय	Sarvātmakāya	the soul of all
सृष्टिकर्त्रे	Sṛṣṭikartre	the creator
देवाय	Devāya	the resplendent one
अनेकार्चिताय	Anekārchitāya	worshiped by multitudes
शिवाय	Śivāya	the auspicious one
शुद्धाय	Śuddhāya	the pure one
बुद्धिप्रियाय	Buddhipriyāya	who loves intelligence
शान्ताय	Śāntāya	the peaceful one
ब्रह्मचारिणे	Brahmachāriṇe	the celibate one
गजाननाय	Gajānanāya	the elephant’s faced
द्वैमातुराय	Dvaimāturāya	who has two mothers

मुनिस्तुताय	Munistutāya	who is praised by sages
भक्तविघ्नवि नाशनाय	Bhaktavighna vināśanāya	who destroys devotees' obstacles
एकदन्ताय	Ekadantāya	who has one tusk
चतुर्बाहवे	Chaturbāhave	who has four arms
चतुराय	Chaturāya	the ingenious one
शक्तिसंयुताय	Śaktisamyutāya	united with power
लंबोदराय	Lambodarāya	who has a large belly
शूर्पकर्णाय	Śūrpakarṇāya	with fan-like ears
हरये	Haraye	destroys evil with lion-like courage
ब्रह्मविदुत्तमाय	Brahmaviduttamāya	foremost knower of God
कालाय	Kālāya	the master of destiny
ग्रहपतये	Grahapataye	lord of planets
कामिने	Kāmine	who is love
सोमसूर्याग्नि लोचनाय	Somasūryāgni lochanāya	whose eyes are the moon, sun and fire
पाशाङ्कुश धराय	Pāśāṅkuśa dharāya	who holds a noose and a goad
चण्डाय	Chaṇḍāya	who is fierce-looking
गुणातीताय	Guṇātītāya	who transcends qualities
निरञ्जनाय	Nirañjanāya	who is without blemish
अकल्मषाय	Akalmashāya	who is without impurity
स्वयंसिद्धाय	Svayamsiddhāya	self-fulfilled, perfect
सिद्धार्चित पदाम्बुजाय	Siddhārchita padāmbujāya	whose lotus feet sages worship
बीजपूर फलासक्ताय	Bijapūraphalāsaktāya	who is fond of pomegranates
वरदाय	Varadāya	the boon giver
शाश्वताय	Śāśvatāya	the eternal, unchanging one
कृतिने	Kṛitine	the skillful one
द्विजप्रियाय	Dvijapriyāya	fond of the twice-born
वीतभयाय	Vītabhayāya	who is fearless
गदिने	Gadine	who wields the mace
चक्रिणे	Chakriṇe	who wields a discus
इक्षुचापधृते	Ikshuchāpadhṛite	who holds a sugarcane bow
श्रीदाय	Śrīdāya	the bestower of wealth
अजाय	Ajāya	the unborn one

उत्पलकराय	Utpalakarāya	who holds a proud blue lotus flower
श्रीपतये	Śripataye	the Lord of wealth
स्तुतिहर्षिताय	Stutiharshitāya	who delights in praise
कुलाद्रिभृते	Kulādrībhr̥ite	who supports Himālaya, His family's mountain
जटिलाय	Jaṭilāya	who has matted hair
कलिकल्मष नाशनाय	Kalikalmasha- nāśanāya	the destroyer of sins in the Kaliyuga
चन्द्रचूडामणये	Chandrachūdāmaṇaye	who wears a moon upon his head
कान्ताय	Kāntāya	the beloved, loving one
पापहारिणे	Pāpahāriṇe	the consumer of sins
समाहिताय	Samāhitāya	absorbed in meditation
आश्रिताय	Āśritāya	who is our refuge
श्रीकराय	Śrikarāya	who manifests prosperity
सौम्याय	Saumyāya	the amiable one
भक्तवाञ्छित दायकाय	Bhaktavañchita dāyakāya	the grantor of devotees' desires
शान्ताय	Śāntāya	the peaceful one
कैवल्य सुखदाय	Kaivalya sukhadāya	bestower of unsullied liberation
सच्चिदानन्द विग्रहाय	Sacchidānanda vighrahāya	embodiment of existence-knowledge-bliss
ज्ञानिने	Jñānīne	the great wisdom
दयायुताय	Dayāyutāya	full of compassion
दान्ताय	Dāntāya	who has self-control
ब्रह्मद्वेष विवर्जिताय	Brahmadvesha vivarjitāya	who is free from aversion to knowledge
प्रमत्तदैत्य भयदाय	Pramattadaitya bhayadāya	who brings terror to demons
श्रीकण्ठाय	Śrikaṇṭhāya	with beautiful throat
विबुधेश्वराय	Vibudheśvarāya	Lord of the Wise
रामार्चिताय	Rāmārchitāya	worshiped by Rāma
विधये	Vidhaye	who is the destiny of all
नागराज यज्ञोपवीतवते	Nāgarāja yajñopavītavate	whose sacred thread is a king cobra
स्थूलकण्ठाय	Sthūlakaṇṭhāya	of stout neck
स्वयं कर्त्रे	Svayamkartre	who is self-created
सामघोषप्रियाय	Sāmaghoshapriyāya	who loves the sound of Sāma Veda
परस्मै	Parasmai	who is supreme
स्थूलतुण्डाय	Sthūlatuṇḍāya	who has a stout trunk

अग्रण्ये	Agraṇye	the leader
धीराय	Dhirāya	the courageous one
वागीशाय	Vāgīśāya	the Lord of speech
सिद्धिदायकाय	Siddhidāyakāya	bestower of fulfillment
दूर्वाबिल्व प्रियाय	Dūrvābilva priyāya	who loves dūrvā grass and bilva leaves
अव्यक्तमूर्तये	Avyaktamūrtaye	the manifestation of the Unmanifest
अद्भुतमूर्तिमते	Adbhutamūrtimate	of wondrous form
शैलेन्द्रतनुजोत्सङ्ग खेलनोत्सुकमानसाय	Śailendratānujotsaṅga khelanotsukamānasāya	who is happy to play in the lap of His mother, Pārvatī, daughter of the mountain Lord
स्वलावण्यसुधासारजित मन्मथविग्रहाय	Svalāvaṇyasudhāsārajita manmathavigrahāya	... who defeated Manmatha, the God of love, by His sweet beauty
समस्त जगदाधाराय	Samasta jagadādhārāya	the supporter of all the worlds
मायिने	Māyine	the source of illusory power
मूषिकवाहनाय	Mūshikavāhanāya	who rides the mouse
हृष्टाय	Hṛiṣṭāya	the joyful one
तुष्टाय	Tuṣṭāya	the contented one
प्रसन्नात्मने	Prasannātmane	the bright kindly-souled one
सर्वसिद्धि प्रदायकाय	Sarvasiddhi- pradāyakāya	the grantor of all fulfillment

मन्त्र पुष्पम्--Mantra Pushpam--Worship With Flowers

ॐ योऽपां पुष्पं वेदं ।, पुष्पवान् प्रजावान् पशुमान् भवति ।, चन्द्रमावा अपां पुष्पम् ।
पुष्पवान् प्रजावान् पशुमान् भवति ।, य एवं वेदं । योऽपामायतनं वेदं ।, आयतनवान् भवति ॥
ॐ श्री महागणेश्वराय नमः, मन्त्रपुष्पाञ्जलिं समर्पयामि ।

Aum yó-pām puṣpam̐ vedā, puṣpāvān prajāvāṅ n paśumān bhāvati
chāndramāvā apām puṣpam̐, puṣpāvān prajāvāṅ n paśumān bhāvati
ya evam̐ vedā, yó-pāmāyatanaṅ vedā, āyatānavān bhavati.

Aum Śri Mahāgaṇeśvarāya namaḥ, mantra puṣpāñjalim̐ samarpayāmi

The one who understands the beauty of the blooming powers of the Supreme Being is blessed with beautiful, blooming life, progeny and cattle. The moon is certainly the bloom of those powers. One who realizes the qualities of the moon, which are nothing but the blooming divine powers, is blessed with a blooming, beautiful life of perfection, progeny and cattle. One who realizes this principle and realizes the source from whom all these powers have come himself becomes the abode of those divine powers. Aum, salutations, Lord Mahāgaṇeśa, we respectfully offer you this flower mantra.

While chanting this mantra, hold a handful of flowers before you in añjali mudrā, hands cupped loosely around the flowers at chest height. Recite the verses with adoration. As you intone the last word, samarpayāmi, lower your hands (as shown in the photo) and toss the flowers into the air above the murti, sending a shower of blossoms upon the God with feelings of gratitude and loving devotion.

आरती--Āratī--Worship With Flame

ॐ साज्यं त्रिवर्तिसंयुक्तं वह्निना योजितं मया ।, गृहाण मङ्गलारतिं ईशपुत्र नमोऽस्तु ते ॥

ॐ आवाहिताभ्यः सर्वाभ्यो देवताभ्यो नमः ।, दिव्यमङ्गलदीपं सन्दर्शयामि ।

आचमनीयं समर्पयामि ।, मङ्गलाक्षतान् समर्पयामि ।

aum sājyaṁ trivartisaṁyuktam vahninā yojitaṁ mayā

grihāṇa maṅgalāratim īśa putra namo-stu te.

aum āvāhitābhyaḥ sarvābhyo devatābhyo namaḥ

divya maṅgaladīpaṁ sandarśayāmi

āchamanīyaṁ samarpayāmi

maṅgalākṣhatān samarpayāmi

O Gaṇapati, Son of God Śiva, please accept this auspicious *āratī* prepared by me with *ghee*, three wicks and fire. My salutations to you! Aum! Salutations to all the Gods invoked! This divine, auspicious light we offer to you. After that, we offer you pure water for sipping and auspicious unbroken rice.

During this chant, hold the lit oil lamp or camphor burner in your right hand and the bell in your left. While ringing the bell and slowly reciting the āratī mantra, make three circles clockwise before Gaṇeśa with the flame. Stop at the top of the third circle, lower the lamp slightly and trace the symbol of Aum in Sanskrit or in your native language. Then lift the flame slightly above the Aum that you placed in the ākāśic ether and ring the bell louder for all three worlds to hear. Keep ringing loudly while chanting the above two-line salutation to the devas (“āvā-hitābhyaḥ ... sandarśayāmi”). Put down the bell and the lamp and then, with the flame still burning, offer a spoonful of water with “āchamanīyaṁ samarpayāmi,” then a pinch of rice with “maṅgalākṣhatān samarpayāmi.”

रक्षधारणम्--Rakshadhāraṇam--Prayer for Protection

इन्द्र स्तोमैःनपञ्चदशेन, मध्यमिदं वातेन सगरैः, रक्ष रक्षां धारयामि ।

indra-stomēna pañchadaśeṇa, madhyamidaṁ vāteṇa sagaraiḥ, raksha rakṣhām dhārayāmi

O Indra, Lord of material and spiritual prosperity, please protect the space between the heavens and earth as well as the mind between the body and the soul with the help of fifteen noble powers and virtues (five *prāṇas*, five *jñānendriyas* and five *karmendriyas*). Your protection and blessings sustain me.

As you recite this mantra, make three circles above the burning flame with a flower held in the right hand, stem upward (photo next page). With the last words, toss the flower gently toward the Deity and place your hands in añjali mudrā while facing the altar. Now offer the flame at chest level to all present, allowing each to draw both hands through it and lightly touch the eyes three times (photo next page, upper right). The Gods and devas can see us through the flame and send blessings. If especially honored persons are present, such as one's guru, parents or teacher, take the flame first to them. Then proceed clockwise to the others. In some cases, the pujārī may stand near the altar while devotees come forward to receive the flame. If no one is attending the pūjā, you may personally draw blessings from the flame, but not otherwise. Finally, present the flame once more to the Deity, then extinguish it with a wave of the right hand or by snuffing it out with a flower.

अर्पणम्--Arpanam--Final Consecration

अनया यथा शक्ति कृत, (state period of day), पूजया भगवान् सर्व देवात्मकः, श्री महागणेश्वराः सुप्रीतः
सुप्रसन्नो वरदो भवतु

anayā yathā śakti kṛita (state period of day from list on page I-4), pūjayā bhagavān sarva devātmakah
śrī mahāgaṇeśvaraḥ supṛītaḥ, suprasanno varado bhavatu

To the best of our ability we have performed this (state time of day) *pūjā* and worshiped you, dear Lord, the brightest of all the Gods. May it please you. May it be enjoyed by you. Surrounded by your presence, we place ourselves in your care, loving Gaṇeśa.

Before reciting the above verse, place a pinch of rice in your left palm, then transfer it to the right palm. Add to the rice three spoonfuls of water and close the hand (left photo). Hold the rice before you as you face the Deity, the left hand under the right hand, and recite the mantra. As you intone the last words, let the rice and water fall into the tirtha cup (right photo). The sacraments may then be given out in the following order: holy ash, blessed water, sandalpaste, red powder, food and flowers. If no one is attending the *pūjā*, you may partake of the sacraments yourself, but not otherwise. If many devotees are attending, a second person may help pass out the sacraments, except for the holy ash, which is always given by the person who performed the *pūjā*.

विसर्जनम्--Visarjanam--Farewell and Apologies

ॐ आवाहनं न जानामि न जानामि विसर्जनम् ।, पूजाञ्चैव न जानामि क्षम्यतां परमेश्वर ॥

मन्त्रहीनं क्रियाहीनम् भक्तिहीनं सुरेश्वर ।, यत् पूजितं मया देव परिपूर्णं तदस्तु ते ।

अन्यथा शरणम् नास्ति त्वमेव शरणम् मम ।, तस्मात् कारुण्यभावेन रक्ष रक्ष गणेश्वर ॥, ॐ तत् सत् ॐ

Aum āvāhanaṁ na jānāmi na jānāmi visarjanam, pūjāñchaiva na jānāmi kshamyatām parameśvara.
mantrahīnaṁ kriyāhīnaṁ bhaktihīnaṁ sureśvara, yat pūjitam mayā deva paripūrṇam tadastu te,
anyathā śaraṇaṁ nāsti tvameva śaraṇam mama, tasmāt kāruṇyabhāvena raksha raksha gaṇeśvara. Aum tat sat Aum.

O Lord, we do not know the proper means of inviting you or, when taking our leave, how to wish you farewell. A full knowledge of priestly rites has not been imparted to us, so you must overlook and forgive any mistakes or omissions. We know little of mantras or pious conduct, and we are strangers to true bhakti. Nonetheless, please forgive us and regard our attempts as exact and complete—because you are our only refuge. With your compassionate nature, Lord Gaṇeśa, we beseech you, please protect those who pray. That which is Truth is Aum.

This concluding apology is recited with hands in *añjali mudrā*. It is a formal and devout end to the worship service. As the final words, “Aum tat sat Aum,” are spoken, it is customary to clap your hands together three times. All may now prostrate.

It is traditional and most uplifting to meditate for a few minutes after the *pūjā*, rather than rushing offer to daily duties. There is great personal benefit in such internalized worship, eyes closed, mind still, following, deep within yourself, the *prāṇas* that the *pūjā* has created. Externalized worship is the *bhakti* path; internalized worship is the *yoga* path. Both together make the complete circle that sustains devotees in their spiritual life, making them strong and kindly in moving the forces of the world in their daily life. This dual-pronged effort towards self-transformation and right living is the very foundation for the final goal of all seekers: *moksha*, freedom from rebirth.