Simple Deepavali Pujan

By: Pt. Narayan Bhatt

Hindus celebrate the four main Hindu festivals, namely Holi, Rakshabandhan, Dushhera and Deepavali from time immemorial. Although each festival is full of its unique significance, Deepavali has its national and international importance because wherever Hindus live this festival is celebrated with full reverence and joy.

Deepavali is celebrated on three consecutive days. Hindu festivals are celebrated according to the lunar calendar. Deepavali starts on *triodashi(13th day)* and that day is called *Dhan Teras.* On this day people buy new utensils and jewellery and they believe that Goddess Maha Lakshmi has arrived at their house. On *chaturdashi (14th day)* they celebrate *Narak or Yama chaturdashi.* On this day, Lord Yamma is worshiped in the evening for granting long life by lighting a four-Vicks lamp in the middle of the courtyard. By this day people have cleaned and whitewashed their houses and shops. Cleanliness is the symbol of purity and knowledge.

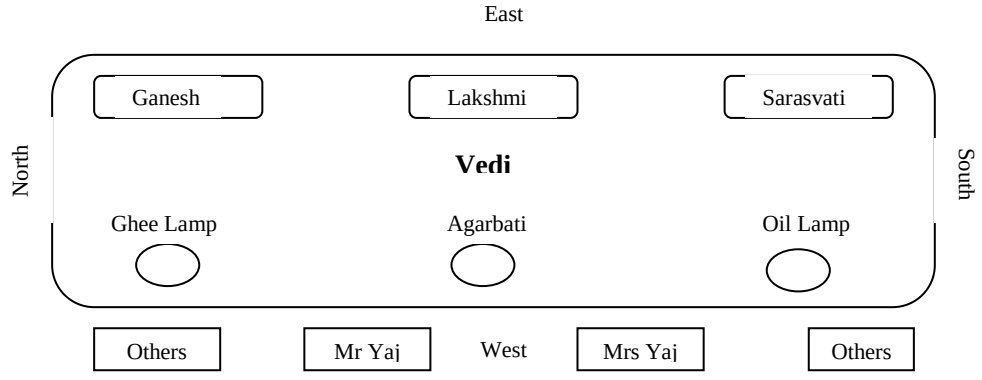
Most important is the A*mavashya (15th day of the dark fortnight).* It is celebrated at night by lighting rows and rows of lamps to drive away the darkness. This is the day when Goddess Maha Lakshmi is worshiped. The darkness, which symbolizes ignorance and leads to desires, anger, greed and violence is removed by lighting the lamp of wisdom and worshiping Goddess Maha Lakshmi, who is the giver of wisdom, wealth, peace and prosperity.

So let us all worship Maha Lakshmi for prosperity, Lord Ganesha for success, and Goddess Sarasvati for pure knowledge.

Pujan-vidhi

Before sitting for the worship collect all the necessary *samigri* (as given at the end). Worship means giving respect and serving God. Prepare a *Vedi* as per the diagram so that you are sitting facing east or north. Always sit on a matt for worship. Keep water in a pot. Make garlands of fresh flowers. Offer yellow flowers to Lord Ganesha; red flowers to Maha Lakshmi and white or pink flowers to Goddess Sarasvati. Place idols of Lord Ganesha, Maha Lakshmi, and Sarasvati on their respective places. If you don't have any idol you can use a *supari* (Beatle-nut) instead. The idols help us to visualize the presence of Gods and Goddesses.

Simple lay out of the Mundapam



If you can chant the *mantras* then chant full *mantras*, otherwise just chant the following *beej* (core or seed) *mantras:*

Om Gan Ganapataye Namah!	*For Lord Ganesha;*
Om Hrim Maha Lakshmiye Namah!	*For Goddess Maha Lakshmi;*
Om Aim Sarasvatiye Namah!	*For Goddess Sarasvati.*

Take water three times in your right hand and do ***aachman*** (sipping), thinking that you are cleansing your mind and body. Then light the lamp and *agarbatti* (incense). Take a little water, flower, rice and a coin in your right hand, pray that you are doing the Deepavali Pujan along with your family and let the Lord accept your offering, placing them on the *Vedi*.

Sandal paste (chandan) should be prepared in two separate little containers, one for applying on the foreheads of the family members and other for the *Pujan*. Mix a few grains of rice with the paste for the family and apply *teeka* on their foreheads.

Now all the members take a flower each in their hands and pray to the Gods and Goddesses and invite them to take their seats on their respective holy *asanas*. Offer the flowers on the feet of the Lords. If you have the idols, place each idol, one by one, in a deep plate and pour water four times on each idol to symbolize washing their feet, hands, mouth and body. Then offer a small drop of *panchamrit* five times.

Panchamrit – milk (½ glass), yogurt (3 tablespoon), ghee (½ teaspoon), honey (1.½ teaspoon) and sugar (2 teaspoons). Mix them thoroughly.

After offering *panchamrit* wash all the idols with clean water and wipe them dry with clean cloth. While doing this, keep chanting the *beej mantras*. Offer *mauli* (red thread) symbolizing clothing of the idols. Also apply the sandal paste; put *rolli*, *avir* and *gulal* and keep chanting the *beej mantras*. Take some rice grains and apply on the idols' foreheads. Offer the garlands of flowers, if available or just put a flower each on each idol. Light the *dhup* or *agarbatti* and wave them three times from right to left. If you have *itr* (rose water or Scent), sprinkle a few drops. Now show the lamp three times to the idols by waving the right hand.

Naivedhya Bhoga – sprinkle some water on your hands (symbolizing cleaning), put *prasad* (sweets) in front of the idols. Then offer them to the Lord praying "Oh! Lord, you are the Giver, we do not have anything to offer you but we have prepared this food with our devotion. Please accept it, so that it becomes *Prasad* (consecrated food) for us.

Fruits – offer a plate of sweet fruits according to the season, again as *Prasad*.

Dravya dakhshina – it is a custom of pujan that some coins must be offered. Money is our most loving attachment. That is why by offering it to the Lord we want to offer our most loving item and seek detachment from its bondage. By offering money we pray for its purity.

Arati* and *pradikshina – finally with the lighted lamp in right hand wave it at least seven times in front of each idol and sing the arati for Lord Ganesha, Goddess Maha Lakshmi and Goddess Sarasvati. If time is short then only sing arati for goddess Maha Lakshmi..

Simple Lakshmi Ganesh pujan Samagri

Chandan powder	Cotton Balls	Flowers	Dry fruits
Red Thread (Mauli)	Match box	Garlands 3	Fresh fruits
Sindoor	Incense sticks	Mango leaves 7	Coconut
Supari 12	Camphor	Betel Leave 1	Sweet prasad
Red Cloth 2 mtr	Cloves & Cardamom	Grass (Doob, kush)	
Rice 1 Kg	Rose water		
Coins $ 1 – 2	Other Items:	Mustard oil	plates, Napkins
Turmaric powder	2 Deepaks and 1 Aarti	Tea spoons,	Asanas for sitting
A plate with 11 Deepaks decorated for Deepawali pooja	2 Lotas for Kalash and water.	Bowls (11 small & big),	Table(s) for Murtis of Ganeshji, Lakshmiji and Sarasvati

AARTI SHRI LAKSHMI JI KI

(1) Om Jai Lakshmi Mata, (Maiya) Jai Lakshmi Mata, Tumko Nishdin Sewat, Har Vishnu Vidhata *(Tek).*

Brahmani Rudrani Kamla, Tu Hi Hai Jagmata,, Surya Chandrama Dhyavat, Narad Rishi Gata. (Om Jai …)

(2) Durga Roop Niranjan, Sukh Sampati Data, Jo Koi Tumko Dhyavat, Ridhi Sidhi Dhan Pata(Om Jai …)

Tu Hi Hai Patal Basanti Tu Hi Hai Shubh Data, Karm-Prabhav Prakashak, Bhavnidhi Se Trata. (Om Jai …)

(3) Jis Ghar Tharo Vaso, Tehi Men Sad-Gun Aata, Sabh Sambhav Ho Jata, Man Nahi Ghabrata. (Om Jai …)

Tum Bin Yagya Na Hove, Vastra Na Koi Pata, Khan Pan Ko Vaibhav, Sab Tumse Aata. (Om Jai …)

(4) Shubh Gun Sunder, Mukta Kshir Nidhi Jata, Ratna Chaturdash Tum Bin, Koi Nahin Pata. (Om Jai …)

Asrti Lakshmi Ji Ki, Jo Koi Nar Gata, Ur Anand Ati Upje, Pap Utar Jata. (Om Jai …)

Sthir Char Jagat Bachave, Shubh Karm Nar Lata, Ram Pratap Maiya Ki, Shubh Drishti Chahta. (Om Jai …)

Jai Ganesha Deva

Jai Ganesha Jai Ganesha Jai Ganesha Deva
Maata Jaaki Parvati Pitaa Mahadeva

Ladoowan Ka Bhog Lage Sant Karen Sevaa
Jai Ganesh Deva

Eka Dant Dayavant Chaar Bhujadhari
Maathe Par Tilak Sohe Muse Ki Sawaari

Paan Chadhe Phool Chadhe Aur Chadhe Mevaa
Jai Ganesh Deva

Andhe Ko Aankh Det Kohin Ko Kaaya
Banjhan Ko Putra Det Nirdhan Ko Maaya

Surya Shama Sharan Aaye Safal Kijye Sevaa
Jai Ganesh Deva

Useful links

http://www.diwalimela.com/puja/ganesh-puja.html

http://www.durga-puja.org/

http://satsangh.tripod.com/glossary/puja_ritual.htm

Method of Daily Puja
Submitted by Karthik

Whatever be your favorite God - Ganesha or Vishnu or Shiva or Hanuman, the way of doing pooja is the same.

Every Pooja has 16 steps. That is why it is called Shodasa Pooja (Shodasa means 16 in Sanskrit). Depending on one's convenience one can do 5, 10 or all the steps.

I will specify all the steps one by one. Before that some specific points:

a) One should take bath before doing any pooja.
b) A lamp must be lit near the place where pooja is going to be performed.

Steps of Shodasa Pooja: Preliminary Steps:

a) Before commencing the pooja, one must offer prayers to Lord Ganesh or Ganpathy.

b) He/She must offer a prayer to his/her Guru or Spiritual Mentor.

Step 1 *Dhyana and Avahana*:
Sitting before the Image or Idol of our favorite deity, meditate on his form. For example, for Vishnu, one should think of conch, chakra and the mace in his hands and the lotus flower.

Then, invoke the deity into the pictures or idol through prayers. After this is performed, what is was previously an object becomes potent and holy. At this time, worshippers say "God, I know you are everywhere. I know you are also in this Photograph/Idol." While doing the Pooja, one should not think of this just as a Picture. The picture or idol is GOD ("you") sitting opposite to me, accepting my pooja and prayers.

Step 2 *Asana*:
The next step is offering God a seat. This is done by just touching the picture, as if asking God to sit. Mentally imagine each step- Like God coming and sitting in front of us etc.

Step 3 *Padhya*:
In this step God's feet are washed with water. (This is a custom followed in India- where the feet of holy men are washed when they come to a house.) Washing feet of the idol is done by pouring a few drops of water before the image. **

Step 4 *Argya*:
Water is offered to God to wash his hands. This is again done by pouring a few drops of water before the idol.

Step 5 *Achamanya and Madhuvarga* :
Water is offered to wash his mouth and face in the earlier prescribed manner.

Madhuvarga (Madhu-Honey) is a beverage made of honey and milk is offered for the God to drink. This is offered to GOD by keeping the vessel mixed with honey and milk in front of the image.

Step 6 *Abhishekam or Snanam*:
Abishekam literally means bathing (GOD). For an Idol, a few drops of water can be poured on the idol and then dried. For a picture it is sufficient if you pour a few drops of water before the image. In addition to water, you can pour milk, rose water, water mixed with sandalwood paste

etc.

Step 7 *Vastra*:
Offering of dress including an upper garment. Usually flowers are offered in place of these. But you can also offer a piece of cloth.

Step 8 *Gandha*:
Sandalwood powder and kum-kum (red powder Hindus wear on their forehead) is offered to him.

Step 9 *Abarana*:
Offering of ornaments made of Gold/Silver/Stones etc. While doing this, imagine putting a necklace on God and then place a flower at his feet.

Step 10 *Pushpa mala*:
Offering a garland of flowers.

Step 11 *Archana*:
Flowers of various types are offered to the Lord along with the chanting of his holy names.

Step 12 *Dhoop*:
Then show him an incense stick. The incense (agharbathi) can be light it and circled in clockwise manner three times in front of GOD.

Step 13 *Deepam*:
The next is offering of a lighted lamp. This can be an oil lamp.

Step 14 *Naivedya*:
Offer GOD food- fruits or cooked food.***

Step 15 *Arthi*:
Light camphor and show it in front of the deity and at the same time as reciting prayers. This light can be circled in front of GOD three times in a clockwise manner, and after praying you can take from the flame by putting your hands to the tip of the flame and then to your eyes.

Step 16 *Pradakshina and Namaskara*:
Offer flowers at the feet of God indicating your surrender to him. Then you prostrate before the deity. You then offer all your prayers/songs etc.

This pooja method has been traditionally observed in Hindu temples. Performing such a Pooja, cleanses one's mind from evil habits and reduces anger, stress etc.

Over a period of time, this Pooja can be made more elaborate. Our friends and relatives can also be involved in this. In Hindu temples, during such poojas, several people chant the mantras, a few perform the actual rituals and some assist them in these rituals. This is how Hindu temples have evolved into huge community centers.

Notes:
**(Please note that the terms *Image* and *Idol* have been used alternatively. The procedure remains same both while using a Photographic Image or a Bronze/Silver Idol)
***(The food offered to GOD - usually bananas, apples, oranges, sweets and freshly cooked rice, is called prasadam and one can eat this food right after the pooja is completed. If this food is offered to one in a temple, do not receive it with your left hand. Also, during puja do not offer anything to GOD with your left hand. The left hand can be used for support, but not for offering or doing rituals.)

Shodashopachara (Sixteen fold worship)

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Irrespective of whom we worship, there are sixteen basic steps in Pooja. These steps are common for all Poojas. Therefore everyone should learn these steps. Though the God we worship is not visible to our naked eyes, we have to offer these sixteen sevas (services) to the idol, which is the physical representative of the formless Almighty. This is a mental activity. Such physical actions which help us to successfully perform that mental activity constitute Pooja.

Pooja is one of the important means to achieve concentration of mind. Normally, we install the idol in a clean and aesthetically beautiful place. The surrounding gives us a sense of tranquillity and love. It is the tendency of the mind to acquire the qualities of the objects on which it concentrates. When the mind is concentrated on the Almighty, it imbibes the qualities of the Almighty and will eventually become the Almighty Itself. This is the ultimate aim of performing Pooja. But we are in an era where speed is everything. No one has time. It has therefore become difficult to understand the meaning of Mantras. Because it is difficult, we are not even trying to understand. This is wrong. Infact, the sixteen services are not much different from what we do every day in our daily life. To make it clear, let us understand the meaning and significance of the sixteen sevas.

Dhyana, Aavaahana:

It means 'to invite'. When we want an important person to visit our house, we extend a formal and respectful welcome. This is 'Avaahana'. While inviting, we remember his good qualities. This is called 'Dhyaana'.

Aasana: We offer a chair to our guest. This is called as Aasana Samarpana

Paadya : It is a tradition in India to offer water to wash the feet when a guest visits a house. (This practice may not be prevalent in cold regions. According to Yoga Shastra, the Nadis [nerves] terminate in the hands and the feet. It is therefore important to keep the hands and feet clean. Therefore, offering water to wash the legs and hands has been included in Pooja)

Arghya : Arghya means water to wash the hands

Aachamana: Taking three gulps of water. This is an important practice among those who follow ancient tradition of Rishis. By drinking water three times, the throat and other parts pertaining to speech faculty become smooth and the speech also becomes soft.

Madhuparka : We then offer to the guest something to drink. Any drink sweetened with honey is called Madhuparka.

Snaana : We request the guest to bathe. In the case of an idol, we bathe it with different articles like milk, curd, ghee etc.. We can also bathe the idol with plain water.

Vastra, Upaveeta : We offer clothes to wear after the bath.

Gandha : It is an ancient tradition to apply sandal paste (gandha) on the forehead.

Pushpa : Nowadays only women use flowers. In ancient times even men used to wear flowers just like women. Symbolically, flower signifies our heart. In pooja, we offer different flowers while chanting the 108 or 1008 names of God.

Dhoopa : Dhoopa means fragrant smoke. According to Ayurveda, inhaling of smoke by burning certain herbs is considered to be good for health.

Deepa : Deepa means light. To acknowledge the fact that the Almighty is of the form of light, this particular aspect has been included in Pooja.

Naivedya: Naivedya means offering different kinds of dishes. The practice of offering something to eat is prevalent everywhere.

Taamblooa : 'Tamboola' means betel leaf. According to Ayurveda, chewing the betel leaf with other herbs after food is considered a healthy habit.

Aarati

We are nearing the end of Pooja. Aarati consists of showing a big flame of camphor light to the deity. This is to remind the person that the Almighty is of the form of light.

Mantrapushpa, Pradakshina

To experience the original nature of the Almighty i.e., His Mantra form is the purpose of offering this service. By going round (pradakshina), we imply that the Almighty is present in all directions.

These are the sixteen services. Barring a few which have only spiritual meaning, the rest are very common things we do in our day to day life. Therefore, it is not difficult to mentally perform those while during Pooja. In order to help you understand the purpose and significance of Pooja, these aspects have been explained in common man's language. All these have still
deeper meaning. But for our daily sadhana, this is sufficient.

Even the concept of Ganapati has been presented very briefly in this article. There is abundant information in texts such as Upanishads, Puranas, Agamas, Tantras and Shastras.

There is a secret in Upasana (act of worshipping). If we somehow climb the first step, the Divine will show us the remaining steps in some way. Therefore, you should all try to understand the phenomenon of Ganapati by thinking about it constantly. Certain aspects may be difficult to understand at first. Certain aspects may not appear to be acceptable. Have patience. Contemplate on what you have read. Then the real phenomenon will reveal itself to you. The concept as well as the method of worship have been explained in simple language.

May Lord Ganesha make you eligible to receive His blessings. May He bless everyone with peace and prosperity.Om Shree Ganeshaya Namah....