



# The Hindu Temple of Greater Springfield (HTGS)

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President, Executive Committee

## Donations (*dakshina*) Policy

**Approved Date:** September 2010  
**Approved by:** Executive Committee  
**Effective Date:** Immediately

**Purpose:** To clarify and establish guidelines to the community and the priest regarding *dakshina* to the Priest and donations to the temple.

**Affected Community and Employees:** Temple Devotees / visitors and Priest

## Background

As per Hindu Dharma shastras, it is customary to do *daanam* (donation) or give *dakshina* to a Hindu Priest and Temple. HTGS management fully supports this tradition. *Donation / Dakshina are solely voluntary.* HTGS management and priest are obligated to provide a devotional and conducive environment to all temple visitors and devotees.

The purpose of this policy is to clarify and establish guidelines to the community and the priest regarding *dakshina* to the Priest and donations to the Temple.

## Policy Resolutions

### Donations to the Priest:

In general, community is encouraged to give *dakshina* or *donate* to the priest in two possible ways:

- Monetary Donations (cash / checks) – **devotees are encouraged to give directly to the Priest**
- Non-monetary donations (goods, furniture, equipment – material nature) – **devotees are encouraged to give directly to the Priest**

### Donations to the Temple:

- **Monetary Donations** (cash / checks) - Devotees are encouraged to **PLACE the DONATIONS DIRECTLY IN HUNDI OR PAY AT THE FRONT DESK** and get an official receipt.
- **Non-monetary** (material) Donations: Deliver them at the front desk and get an official receipt as applicable.

## **Additional Guidelines providing Monetary Donations to the Priest**

### **A. Puja Services performed At the Temple:**

1. Devotees are encouraged to give dakshina to the priest:

Any time a personal puja (not combined with any other devotee or family) is performed by the priest (Examples: Havan, Satyanarayana katha, Abhishekam, Kalyanam, Birth day or Anniversary or Tarpan or vaahana puja).

**Note: After the personalized puja is performed, devotees are encouraged to give *dakshina* directly to the priest** (please do not leave in any plate). After receiving the donation from a devotee, priest shall put the dakshina away immediately by not displaying or holding it as it may be perceived as public display to hint the devotees. Any cash/coins/checks left in any plate belong to the temple.

2. Devotees are neither required nor should be obligated to give *dakshina* to the priest
  - a. Each time devotees visit the temple and getting Teerdha, Prasadam, Aarathi, and his blessings (via Chathar); or
  - b. Attending regular pujas that are performed **as listed in the *Temple Calendar*** (despite a devotee has sponsored or not for any puja by paying donation to the temple). (Few Examples are **Daily** Nitya pujas; **Weekly** Monday Shiva Abhishekams; **Monthly** pujas Satyanarayana vratham, Maasa Shivaratri, Sankastahara Chaturdhi; **Annual** festivals – Diwali, New Year etc..) These are considered as priest's regular duty being a full-time employee of the organization. For special festivals and events, HTGS management gives dakshina to the priest on the community's behalf.
3. At any time Priest shall not seek or obligate any devotee or negotiate with any devotee for *dakshina*.
4. Cash / Check Donations left by Aarti plate/chatari plate/teertha table or in any container or by deities or mandap belongs to the temple. Any time, volunteer on duty or authorized management staff is authorized to collect any displayed donations and put in Hundi.

### **B. Puja Services performed outside the Temple:**

- a. Devotees are encouraged to give *dakshina* to the priest any time a personal puja is performed by the priest at devotee's residence / business (off-site). This puja must first be approved by the puja committee and appropriate donation shall be paid to HTGS. (Examples: Havan, Satyanarayana katha, Abhishekam, Kalyanam, Gruha Pravesham, Sradha, etc..)
- b. When priest uses his car for travel to attend this puja, Mileage reimbursement rate approved by HTGS management shall be directly paid to the priest and it belongs to the priest only. At any time priest shall NOT negotiate mileage reimbursement rate with the devotee without puja committee's knowledge.
- c. Devotees shall give *dakshina* directly to him by check or cash.
- d. At any time Priest shall **NOT** seek or obligate any devotee or negotiate with any devotee for *dakshina*.
- e. As per Immigration rules and the employment contract, the priest is **NOT** allowed to perform any pujas to any devotees (at any location) without prior approval from the HTGS management (even after temple hours, during his vacation, time-off days).

C. **Income Tax filing:** It is the responsibility of the priest to report any additional income that priest directly receives from the devotees.

D. Priest shall not seek any donations from the devotees or visitors by selling any Audio CDs, Books or any literature etc., without prior approval from the HTGS management.

***Non-Monetary Donations guidelines:*** (goods, and furniture, equipment, etc.,)

**Donations to the Priest:**

- At any time, devotees are welcome to donate any non-monetary items to the priest directly. This should purely be voluntary.
- At any time the Priest shall **NOT** seek or obligate any devotee or negotiate with any devotee for non-monetary donations.

**Donations to the Temple:**

Any non-monetary donations that have significant dollar value shall be recorded in the temple's inventory system. Please check in at the front desk and get appropriate receipt for your donation.

## **Amendments**

This policy is subject to change as deemed necessary and shall be approved by the Executive Committee.