

Shiva Homam

Laghu Paddhati (Short Procedure)

By P.V.R. Narasimha Rao (www.VedicAstrologer.org)

Date of current version: 2009 April 20

A Word from the author

My spiritual master Dr Manish Pandit hails from Pune, India and lives in Manchester, UK. The idea of spreading homam in the world was revealed to him in a dream a few years ago. He saw eight elevated beings in a dream. They transported him across blue skies to Chennai, India, where he was shown the big fire that was to be lighted in future. They told him to start the work. They assured him that homam as a spiritual sadhana was very appropriate in Kali yuga. As spiritually inclined people have fewer and fewer hours to spend on spiritual sadhana everyday with the progressing Kali yuga, sadhanas that work fast are more relevant. Homam works much faster than japam and other spiritual sadhanas. They told him that the practice of homam would transform into a movement that would reach across caste, class and race barriers.

Later, when we were performing a Shata Chandi Homam in the first week of March 2006 at the Kalikambal temple in Chennai, he had a darshan of Divine Mother on a Friday and was reassured by Her about the right course of events regarding spreading homam. A Mahaganapathi homam manual was published later and several people are performing it daily or weekly or monthly.

Our goal is to create a community of people who regularly perform a quick homam for the deity that they are attracted to. We intend to make manuals available for simplified homam procedures for several deities.

What is Homam

Homam is a fire ritual of sacrifice. It is also known as homa or havan or yajna (yagya) or yajana. In homam, divine presence is invoked into fire using specific procedures. Then materials are sacrificed into fire, along with sacred chants (mantras). The sacrifices are supposed to reach gods. It is interesting to note that fire ritual is an ancient practice and several religions taught worshipping gods in fire.

Why Homam

Homam is a very powerful tool for spiritual progress. Chanting mantras in front of fire while offering material substances into fire has a great cleansing and calming influence on one's mind and gives great level of mental focus, peace, calmness and bliss. This practice has been extolled in many scriptures such as Yajurveda and Bhagavad Gita. Vedic seers practiced it regularly. Several people are experiencing the benefits of homam even today. The proof of the pudding is

in eating it. If one performs homam regularly for a few months, one will surely see the difference in one's mental state.

Why Shiva Homam

Shiva means auspicious. Lord Shiva stands for auspiciousness. He is easy to satisfy and grants material benefits easily, if one surrenders to him fully. Moreover, he is a perfect yogi. He dissolves the delusion in the mind, increases detachment and grants liberation. His worship in fire is very auspicious and accelerates detachment and spiritual progress.

What Homam Does

Hinduism teaches that gods come into fire and receive the prayers of spiritual aspirants. Even when one meditates without an external fire, gods being meditated on come into the internal fire of the aspirant and receive the mantras via that fire. However, the internal fire is quite weaker than an external fire for most people and hence it is beneficial to perform worship using an external fire. That practice eventually strengthens the internal fire also.

We all see and feel our *sthoola sareera* (gross body), which is made up of gross matter. But, we also have a *sookshma sareera* (subtle body) made up of subtle matter. It cannot be perceived by the senses attached to the gross body (eyes, ears, nose *etc*). It contains thousands of *naadis*, which are essentially subtle channels of energy flow. A fire called *bhootaagni* (existential fire) burns in this subtle body. It is the subtle basis of one's entire existence. It manifests in the gross body in the form of various fires. Examples are the "fire" in the stomach that helps one digest the food eaten and the "fire" in the brain that helps one digest and understand various sense experiences.

This *bhootaagni* is vital to one's existence. In most people, it is quite weak. Due to impurities and obstructions in the *naadis* of the subtle body, this fire cannot burn strongly to energize the entire existence. When it burns low, the divine presence that can enter it is quite limited in magnitude.

If one overcomes the internal weaknesses such as desire, anger, greed, false prestige, wantonness and jealousy, develops compassion, one-pointed devotion, detachment, and sheds one layer of ego and delusion after another, eventually the impurities in the *naadis* will be cleared and *bhootaagni* will burn strong. However, this is a very difficult and time-consuming process.

One can take advantage of an external fire in that regard. As the deity of homam enters the external fire on a regular basis, the nearby divine presence burns the impurities in the *naadis*, by burning various *karmas* (*actions* from the *past*, which will get corresponding *reactions* in the *future*) in the *kaarana sareera* (causal body). This eventually leads to the strengthening of *bhootaagni*.

After one performs homam for a long enough time, one's *naadis* are cleared of the obstructions and one's *bhootaagni* burns brightly. At that juncture, all *sadhanas* performed by one, including

regular meditation, become much more effective. If bhootaagni can accommodate divine presence to a larger degree, the meditation becomes more effective.

The goal of all spiritual sadhana, whether one thinks in those terms or not, is actually to cleanse oneself of all the internal impurities. Various karmas from previous lives hang on to the kaarana sareera (causal body), making it heavy. These in turn manifest in the sookshma sareera (subtle body) as various impurities in various nadis (subtle energy channels) that block the free flow of energy. These in turn manifest in the sthoola sareera (gross body) as various problems of the body and mind. These also cause dense conditioning of one's mind to sink one's consciousness in an ocean of delusion. This conditioning of the consciousness due to previous karmas is also known as *maayaa*. When one is sunk in maayaa, one is beaten down by the six enemies – kaama (desire), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (delusion), mada (wantonness) and maatsarya (jealousy). As one makes spiritual progress, one's karmas drop off the kaarana sareera, the impurities in the nadis are cleansed, one's mental conditioning becomes weaker and one can resist the internal enemies. All these are inter-related and happen simultaneously. When one burns all of one's major karmas, one becomes karmically very light. Nadis in the sookshma sareera are all clear and energy can freely flow anywhere. One is untouched by the internal enemies then. When one sees *all as god*, nothing can make one angry or jealous or deluded. When mental conditioning drops, nothing excites one and nothing saddens one. One stays in a state of bliss always. Despite the changing nature of the external work and appearance, one is in the same state internally.

The goal of all spiritual sadhana is to reach that state. Whether through jnaana (knowledge and wisdom) or through bhakti (devotion and surrender) or both, one has to burn the karmas and impurities blocking one from reaching that state. The goal of all sadhana is to let ego (the sense of "I-ness") go completely and merge (have yoga) with divinity. If a vacuum can be created within oneself, then divine presence can fill the vacuum. As long as one has egotism and various kinds of conditioning (vasanas) of mind, such a vacuum cannot be created. When all those cease and the mental conditioning is weakened, the mind become extremely calm and a vacuum is created within. Then divine presence fills one and the result is indescribable bliss.

Homam facilitates this process quickly by burning various karmas that are creating various layers of conditioning and obstructing spiritual progress.

A lot of Hindu rituals involve invoking divine presence in an idol or a water pot (kalasha) and offering worship to the idol/pot. Unfortunately, we are living in Kali yuga in which the elements of earth, water and air are not pure. If the idol has any impurities on account of the time when it was made, how it was made, the thoughts of the person who made it *etc*, the impurities heavily restrict how much divine presence the idol can accommodate.

The only elements that cannot be polluted are space/ether (aakaasa) and fire (agni). It is very difficult to do spiritual sadhana via the medium of space. So the best medium for sadhana is fire. One of the Sanskrit words for "fire" is "paavaka", which means "the one that purifies". Fire is by definition pure and purifies everything that it comes in touch with. The wood or coconut used to sustain fire may have impurities, but fire itself is very pure and accommodates a divine presence of the highest degree. For a ritual using the earth or water elements as the medium to be

successful, the sadhaka must be quite pure and the sadhaka's bhootagni must be reasonably strong. On the other hand, a ritual using the fire element as the medium can be successful irrespective of the stature and purity of the sadhaka. For this reason, homam is the most apt sadhana for most spiritual aspirants in this yuga, especially as the Kali deepens. Unfortunately, many people have unfounded fears of making mistakes and being punished for them and hence do not take advantage of the fantastic practice of homam.

Apart from the personal benefits, there are universal benefits of homam. The offerings in the fire finally reach Sun, who feeds the entire earth. The gross material body of the burnt offerings reaches the gross material body of Sun. The subtle body of the burnt offerings reaches the subtle body of Sun. It is the subtle body of Sun that feeds the subtle bodies of all beings on earth. Thus, feeding it is very important for the smooth running of life on earth. As we enter the Ghora Kali (terrible age of strife and disorderliness) phase, adharma (un-righteous activities) will be on the rise in the world and as such the subtle body of Sun will become weaker. If more and more people perform homam and strengthen the subtle body of Sun, it will balance the adharma and keep the world away from a total collapse.

Common Mis-conceptions

(1) *Misconception:* Homam is very difficult to perform. It is for experts only.

Comment: Not really. Several people who did not know anything about how to do any kind of worship conducted homam by themselves by reading this document. It is a simple practice.

(2) *Misconception:* One must either do a "perfect" homam or not do any homam at all. A perfect homam takes a very long time.

Comment: Though one may eat a sumptuous meal on an important festival day, one does not necessarily get a lot of energy from it. One gets most of one's energy from the regular dal (lentils) and rice that one eats everyday.

Though there are complicated versions of homam, it is better to do a simple homam on a regular basis than to do a complicated version very rarely. A small half-hour or one-hour homam done on a daily basis is far better for spiritual sadhana than a big annual or half-yearly homam.

(3) *Misconception:* If mistakes happen in a homam, the consequences will be bad.

Comment: If a homam is performed with a saattwik spirit for saattwik purposes, there are no risks.

If you act nice with your parents because you want their money, you have to understand their thinking well, take the advice of people who know them well and act very carefully to get money from them. Mistakes can be costly and spoil your goal.

But, if you act nice with your parents simply because you love them and want to show your love, you do not need to be careful. You just show your love in whatever way you know. There is no need to follow anybody's advice strictly and there are no risks.

Similarly, you have to be careful if you perform a homam for certain material goals (such as getting money, attracting someone, destroying someone *etc*). If you perform a homam just to show your love to god, cleanse yourself spiritually and make yourself worthy of divine communion, then there are no risks. The procedure taught in this document is based on the teachings of rishis and it is safe for anybody to use. Small mistakes will not result in any punishment.

In fact, it is expected that everybody who uses this document is interested in only the second kind of goal, *i.e.* spiritual cleansing and upliftment.

(4) *Misconception*: One not initiated by a guru (master) cannot perform homam or recite certain mantras.

Comment: If one receives a mantra or a procedure from the mouth of a master, it is analogous to a millionaire opening a bank account in his son's name with a high starting balance. The son is lucky, as he is starting off with a big balance. Similarly, some of the siddhi (attainment) the master has in the mantra or procedure is transferred to the disciple even as (s)he starts out.

If one does *not* receive a mantra or a procedure from the mouth of a master, it is analogous to starting off with a zero bank balance. While it is useful to start off with a positive balance, it is neither necessary nor sufficient. There are sons of millionaires who used up the millions earned by parents and reduced them to zero, while there are some self-made men who made millions purely with self-effort. Similarly, one taught by the greatest guru can fall while one not taught by a guru can reach the ultimate. While it is desirable to have a guru, it is by no means compulsory.

If one is the kind who needs to have a guru figure behind every mantra or procedure, one can think of the author and/or his spiritual master, Dr Manish Pandit from Pune, India (currently residing in Manchester, UK) as the guru for this homam procedure.

(5) *Misconception*: Those who are not learned in Veda cannot recite Veda mantras and perform homam based on Veda mantras.

Comment: Jnaneshwar was a 12th century master. He was a great Krishna devotee. When he was asked to not recite Veda by a council of erudite scholars, as he was not formally qualified, he replied that every being had a right to recite Veda. When he started reciting, they tried to shut his mouth. Then, a buffalo standing next to him recited Veda! The scholars begged his pardon and corrected their narrow-minded attitude.

Many great souls like him taught that Veda could be recited by anyone. One engaged in *tantric* practices that serve specific purposes and give specific *siddhis* (attainments) need to be afraid of side effects and punishments for mistakes, but mantras from Veda were taught by great rishis for

the highest purpose of self-realization. One reciting them need not be afraid of any side effects. Veda mantras are saattwik, self-correcting and ultimately leading to self-realization.

Those who have an affinity to tantric practices should not be discouraged from learning and using them, but those who appreciate the teachings of rishis must be encouraged to recite Veda mantras and perform homam based on Veda mantras. The key is to have an attitude of submission and a desire for nothing other than self-realization and to do homam without any expectations whatsoever. Then there are no risks.

The procedure taught in this document contains just a few Veda mantras, which are not very difficult to pronounce.

(6) *Misconception*: Those who are not born in a Brahmin family cannot perform homam.

Comment: One's varna (caste) is not to be determined solely from the family one is born in. There are examples of men born to parents belonging to various castes performing *tapascharya* and becoming rishis. Maharshi Viswamitra, who taught the Savitru Gayatri mantra, was a kshatriya by birth. Maharshi Valmiki, who taught Brahma Jnana to Maharshi Bharadwaja, was a shoodra by birth.

One who has affinity to knowledge is a Brahmin (scholar). One who has affinity to power and authority is a kshatriya (warrior). One who has affinity to money is a vaisya (trader). One who has affinity to carnal pleasures is a shoodra (worker). If a person born in a Brahmin family is after money, he becomes a vaisya and not a Brahmin. On the other hand, if a person born in a vaisya family desires nothing but knowledge and self-realization, he automatically becomes a Brahmin and very fit to perform homam.

Irrespective of the caste of birth, one who is interested in knowledge (especially knowledge of self) and one whose interest in power, money and pleasures is decaying is fit to perform homam.

(7) *Misconception*: Women cannot perform homam.

Comment: There is a big difference between men and women when it comes to the gross body. But, at the level of subtle body or causal body, there is no difference based on gender. All spiritual practices operate mainly at the subtle and causal level. So, it makes no sense to have a *total* ban on women performing homam.

However, there are some practical reasons behind the biases of tradition. Though there are no differences based on gender in the subtle body, the differences at the gross body level can come into play in the initial stages. Women interested in performing homam may carefully consider the following factors and make their decision.

Any spiritual practice performed well over a period of time eventually results in a Kundalini awakening and rise. Kundalini is nothing but one's self-identification. It is a microcosmic representation of the Divine Mother within oneself. It defines how one identifies oneself. Though everything in the universe is just Brahman, each being forms a separate self-identity and that

self-identity is reinforced quite strongly with time. When one identifies completely with the body without any kind of questioning, Kundalini is asleep. As kundalini wakes up and rises, one starts to wonder “who am I” and one’s awareness of self becomes more and more refined. As kundalini reaches higher chakras, one realizes one’s true nature. When Kundalini reaches Sahasrara chakra, one realizes one’s truest nature, *i.e.* one realizes that one is the formless Brahman.

If Kundalini gets stuck at swadhishtana chakra, one’s sexual drive increases and one is tested in that matter. In this matter, women and men are very different. This phase can be very difficult for women. This is not to say that this phase is easy for men.

More importantly, some spiritual experiences in a pregnant lady can even kill a fetus, if the soul in it is not spiritually elevated. On the positive side, if an elevated soul is in the fetus at the time of such experiences, a siddha may be born.

There is a negative for every positive and it is a matter of balancing the factors and making an individual decision. Women interested in homam should consider the above factors and decide whether they want to perform homam or not. If any women are interested, they should be encouraged to perform homam.

(8) *Misconception:* Homam is just like meditation. It is not any better. It does not really make any difference.

Comment: The proof of the pudding is in eating it. If one tries performing a homam to the best of one’s ability on a daily basis for a few months, one will know what homam can do! After doing homam for several months, one will find that all other sadhanas one does become more effective as a result of homam.

(9) *Misconception:* One should get a priest to do homam and not do it oneself.

Comment: Let us revisit a previous analogy. If one wants to be nice to one’s parents to get their money, one may engage someone who will act on one’s behalf to get the money of parents. But, if one’s sole purpose is to just love one’s parents and show that love, it is better to do it directly than to engage other people.

(10) *Misconception:* Before doing homam with any mantra, one must do japam of that mantra by a count that is ten times the homam count. For example, one must do japam by a count of 10,000 before one does homam by a count of 1,000.

Comment: This convention is not without reason. The true meaning of this convention is that homam is ten times more powerful than japam. If one does a mantra 1,000 in a homam, it is *equivalent* to doing the mantra 10,000 in japam. If one wants, one can offer the mantra entirely in external fire and there is no need to do any japam before doing homam.

All thumb rules and conventions have exceptions. If a rishi with a very strong bhootagni does japam, it is equivalent to a homam and the “ten times” rule does not apply. However, for most normal people, homam is ten times more powerful than japam. The bottomline is that the

strength and the purity of the medium that accommodates the presence of the deity who receives the mantra will decide the effectiveness of the mantra.

About This Document

This document describes a short procedure for performing Shiva homam, which takes 30-45 minutes. This document is for those who are interested in performing Shiva homam by themselves every day or week or month. The procedure taught here is simple enough to do daily and yet retains all the important steps in a full-fledged traditional Vedic homam. Those who want an even simpler procedure with fewer mantras may refer to **Appendix A** for a **super-short procedure** with **bare minimum** mantras.

One should consult one's elders and gurus and decide whether one is allowed to perform a homam or not. If one thinks one is allowed to do homam and is interested in doing homam on a regular basis but does not know how to do it, then one can use this document to learn *one* way to do it. If one's gurus have taught one a different procedure, one may use the procedure taught by one's gurus. This document is for the benefit of those who do *not* know *any* procedure and want to learn *some* procedure to do homam. Those who learnt a slightly different procedure from the previous versions of this document need not worry and either follow what they have already learnt or switch to the procedure in this document.

Excessive Movement of Body and Mind

Some people move a lot when they meditate. As it was mentioned earlier, the goal of all sadhana is to calm the mind down and create a vacuum within oneself, so that the deity of the sadhana can come and occupy the space. One should lose awareness of the body. When meditating, it is a good idea to keep the back straight without making it too tense. It is a good idea to not move. If it is not possible to stay still for extended periods, one should at least try to stay still over short periods of time. It is also a good idea to close the eyes. One can focus one's mind on either a deity or on the sound of the mantra.

Similarly, when performing homam also, it is a good idea to keep the back straight and minimize the movement, especially of the back. It is ideal if one keeps the back and head erect and manages with a minimal movement of just one arm.

If body is stationary, there is some chance that mind too will become stationary for a while in the middle. That is the goal after all.

Correct Attitude

While it is good to follow the procedure faithfully, it is even more important to surrender oneself to god, leave ego and identify one's self with the deity in the fire when performing the homam. If that is there, all other minor errors will have no negative effect. If that is not there, even an impeccably performed homam will not have any tangible effect. Like mentioned earlier, the goal is to melt ego (I-ness or sense of self) and create a vacuum within oneself, so that the deity can

fill it. Complete devotion, single-minded focus on deity/mantra/procedure and minimization of the activity of body and mind can help one achieve that eventually.

If one has an over-active mind, doing pranayama before homam can be useful. The time around sunrise in the morning is a particularly conducive to a pleasant homam.

Materials Needed

Must have

- One homa kundam¹ (a copper container with preferably a square shaped base). If a homa kundam is not available, one can dig a square shaped pit in the ground (with 1-2 foot sides and half to one foot deep) and arrange a few layers of bricks around the pit.
- Dry coconut halves (available in Indian stores) or wood (for burning)
- Ghee (clarified butter) from cow's milk. It is available in Indian stores. If unable to find, just get some butter and melt it in low heat. After it melts, some black stuff will separate from the melted liquid. Filter out the black deposit and use the liquid. It will solidify after a time. Before the homam, melt it again and use it.
- A wooden spoon/ladle to put ghee into the fire
- Some akshatas. Those can be made by mixing raw (uncooked) white (or brown) rice grains with a drop of sesame oil (or some other oil) and a pinch of turmeric powder. Instead of turmeric powder, one can also use vermilion (kumkum) powder used for the dot on the forehead.
- A small lamp, consisting of a wick that can be lit in sesame oil/ghee. A candle can also be used as an alternative, though it is better to burn ghee or sesame oil than wax.
- A match box to light fire
- One tumbler or cup to store water. It should preferably be made of silver or copper or clay. If unavailable, you may use steel or glass.
- One spoon (preferably silver or copper)
- Some water

Optional

- A small idol of Shiva or a Shiva linga. If you have none, use a metallic coin or any metallic object. Actually, you can do without any idol and just invoke Shiva in fire.
- A mixture of various auspicious materials known as the *havan samagri* (available in India stores), if possible.
- Some sandalwood powder, turmeric powder and kumkum (vermilion) powder
- Some flowers or flower petals
- Some sesame seeds, some mamra/murmura (puffed white rice), some nuts, some mildly popped corn and other materials that can be offered in fire. Small fruits are also fine. Honey can also be used. All these are optional. The absolute minimum needed is coconut pieces and ghee.

¹ If in India, search for "Havan Kund" on <http://shopping.rediff.com>. If in US, search for "Kund" on <http://indousplaza.com>.

- Some darbhas (dried blades of sacred grass). Check with a local temple priest to find out how to procure them. If darbhas are unavailable, you may think of creative alternatives. For example, find some other dry grass or dry leaves or just thin twigs and pray to your ishta devata (favorite deity) before the homam to make them acceptable.
- An incense stick (agarbatti) if available and a holder to stick it to (a banana can be used instead)
- Camphor and a container or plate for lighting camphor and offering haarati
- Some food that you can offer to god. Eggs, meat and seafood should not be used in that food. In fact, do not *eat* eggs, meat and seafood on the day of homam. Onion, garlic, strong spices and too much of chillies should also be avoided in the food cooked for God. Fruits are also fine. Just sugar or brown sugar or rock candy sugar or jaggery can be offered to god too. When using sugar, please note that the normal white refined sugar used these days has bone ash in it. Brown sugar, vegetarian sugar or jaggery are to be preferred.
- Some milk, if available.

Preparation Before Homam

- (1) Instead of arranging homa kundam directly on the floor, place a wood plank or something on the floor, wrapped with aluminum foil (or some such thing), and put 4 bricks of the same height on it and place the homa kundam on the bricks. Thus, there is some air and a wooden plank under the homa kundam and the floor does not get heated up.
- (2) If you want easy cleaning, place some aluminum foils on the floor all around the plank containing homa kundam. If ghee or something is spilled in that area, it is easy to clean.
- (3) If you want, you can also cover the interior of homa kundam with some aluminum foils, so that it is easy to clean.
- (4) Make some food items to offer to god. You can just use rock sugar candy or raisins or dates or fruits or jaggery also. Please see the notes in the previous section on this.
- (5) Cook a little plain white rice. I put a few grains of rice and a little water in a small container and put it in microwave oven before my homam and cooked rice is ready at the end when I need it. If this is not possible, take a banana or apple or some other fruit and make it into 6 slices.
- (6) Fill water in the tumbler/cup and place the spoon in it.
- (7) Make a seat for yourself in front of the homa kundam. Ideally you should be facing east, i.e. homa kundam should be on the east from you. On the east of the homa kundam, place a small plate or a wooden plank, make a pile of some rice grains on it and place the idol (or a metal/clay object such as a coin) on it. You can decorate based on your ability and taste. An idol is optional. You can worship Shiva directly in fire.
- (8) From the middle of the western edge of the homam kundam, draw two parallel red lines with kumkum (vermilion) powder towards your seat. They should go east-west and connect homa kundam to your seat. Melt the ghee and place the bowl containing it on those lines.
- (9) Cut dry coconuts into small pieces. Pieces of 1 inch x 1 inch size are useful.
- (10) *Important:* Do not consume any food within 3-4 hours before the homam (atleast one hour). Evacuate the bowels before homam and take bath. Stomach should be empty during a homam for the best experience.

Homam Procedure

Anujnaa (Permission)

Before starting the homam, think in your mind of Mother Earth who is bearing you, Lord Ganesha who removes obstacles, your ishta devata (favorite deity), your parents, the rishis of your gothra (if you know them), all the rishis and all your gurus. Then say the following, while mentally requesting all the gods to co-operate with your homam.

ఓం బుద్ధ్యాస్మ హవ్యైర్మమసోపసద్యః మిత్రం దేవం మిత్రధేయం నో అస్తు అనూరాధాన్ హవిషా
వర్షయంతః శతం జీవేమ శరదః సవీరాః

If you have a “pavitram” (a ring made of darbha or a special ring made of metal), wear it now. If you don't have a pavitram, take any ring that you have, pray to your ishta devata and wear it. It should be worn on the right hand ring finger. If you don't have a ring, don't worry and move on.

Aachamanam (sipping water to purify)

Take a little water from the tumbler into your right hand with a spoon. Drink the water after saying the first item below. Take more water with the spoon into your hand, say the second item below and drink it. Take more water, say the third item below and drink it. Imagine that Vishnu who is within you is getting that water.

ఓం కేశవాయ స్వాహా ఓం నారాయణాయ స్వాహా ఓం మాధవాయ స్వాహా

Vighneswara Pooja (worshipping the remover of obstacles)

In order to not have any obstacles in the pooja, we have to pray to Ganesha in the beginning. Just read the following verses:

శుక్లాంబరధరం విష్ణుం శశివర్ణం చతుర్భుజం ప్రసన్నవదనం ధ్యాయేత్ సర్వ విఘ్నోపశాంతయే॥
అగజానన పద్మార్కం గజాననమహర్నిశం అనేకదం తం భక్తానాం ఏకదంతం ఉపాస్మహే॥
వక్రతుండ మహాకాయ కోటిసూర్యసమప్రభా నిర్విఘ్నం కురు మే దేవ సర్వకార్యేషు సర్వదా॥

Pray within your mind to Ganesha to remove obstacles from your homam. If you have time, energy and inclination (or when you are doing a longer version), you can even make a small Ganesha idol with turmeric and water and do shodasopachaara pooja to the idol. But just reading the above verses and praying to Ganesha in mind should suffice for a short homam that is performed on a regular basis.

Praanaayaamam (restraining the life force)

Take some akshatas (see “Materials Needed” for a description of how to make them) in the the left palm, place the left palm on the left lap, hold the nostrils with the right hand and do praanaayaamam. Place the little finger and ring finger on the left nostril and thumb on the right nostril. Close the left nostril, open the right nostril by releasing the thumb and say the Gayatri mantra mentally while gently breathing in through the right nostril (without making any breathing sound). If you don't know the Gayatri mantra, use one of the following mantras:

ఓం నమో భగవతే వాసుదేవాయ | ఓం నమశ్శివాయ | ఓం గం గణపతయే నమః |

After saying the mantra once, close the right nostril with the thumb and say the mantra once more while retaining the air previously breathed in. Then open the left nostril by relaxing the little and ring fingers and say the mantra for the third time while breathing out through the left nostril. When done, say the mantra once more, while breathing in through the left nostril. Then close the left nostril with little and ring fingers and say the mantra for the fifth time while retaining the air previously breathed in. Then release the thumb and say the mantra for the sixth time while breathing out through the right nostril. While reading the mantra all the six times, contemplate the formless supreme Brahman (supreme soul of the entire universe) that fills each being of this universe and also the air being breathed in and out. If you want, you can imagine a specific form (such as your ishta devata) also and imagine that your ishta devata fills the entire universe. If you want, you can repeat the above sequence as many times as you comfortably can.

Sankalpam (taking the vow)

Now, declare your intention of doing a homam to please Shiva. Transfer the akshatas to the right hand, place the open left palm (empty) on right lap, place the closed right palm containing akshatas on the left palm. Then say the following, while mentally thinking that you are going to do a homa to the best of your ability, to please Shiva.

ఓం మమోపాత్త సమస్త దురితక్షయద్వారా శ్రీ పరమేశ్వర ప్రీత్యర్థం శ్రీ సదాశివ ప్రసాద సిద్ధ్యర్థం అద్య శుభదినే శుభముహూర్తే శ్రీ శివ హోమకర్మ యథాశక్తి కరిష్యే |

Then leave the akshatas from your hand in front of the homa kundam or the idol and sprinkle a little bit of water on the palms. Now light the ghee/oil lamp.

Kalasa Suddhi (water purification)

When you are doing a long version of the homam, you can establish a kalasam in the northeastern side of the homa kundam and invoke Varuna in it and do shodasopachaara pooja to Varuna and read Punyaaha Vaachanam (Pavamana Sooktam). For a short homam, you can just do the following.

Place a few akshatas and a flower (if available) in the tumbler containing water. If you can, put dhenu mudra (else, don't worry). Say the following syllable 11 times to purify the water.

వం

Now read the following and think that auspicious essence of various rivers of the world is entering the water in the tumbler.

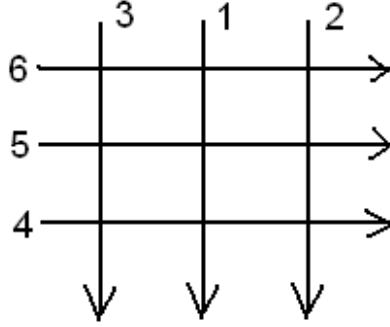
గంగే చ యమునే చైవ గోదావరి సరస్వతి ।
నర్మదే సింధు కావేరి జలేఽస్మిన్ సన్నిధిం కురు ॥
అమృతం భవతు

Then take a little water from the tumbler with a flower or flower petal or spoon and sprinkle it on yourself, on homa kundam, on the idol you are going to use and other materials to be used in homam (like fruits, flowers and food).

Take a darbha (see "Materials Needed" for a description) and draw 6 lines with the darbha on the base of the homakundam, in the same order as shown in Figure 1. The direction in which each line is drawn is indicated by the direction of the arrow in the figure. Say the following six mantras while drawing the six lines (respectively).

ఓం బ్రహ్మణే నమః।
ఓం యమాయ నమః।
ఓం సోమాయ నమః।
ఓం రుద్రాయ నమః।
ఓం విష్ణవే నమః।
ఓం ఇంద్రాయ నమః।

Figure 1



Agni Pratishthaapana (fire installation)

Take a darbha. Place it inside the homa kundam (on the base), with the tip of the darbha facing east and the other end facing west. Take another darbha. Place it inside, with the tip of the darbha facing north and the other end facing south.

Take a piece of camphor, light it from the lamp and place it in the middle of the homa kundam, while saying:

ఓం భూర్భువస్సువరోమ్ |

Place one or more dry coconut pieces (or a log/twig/piece of wood) above the burning camphor and make sure that it catches fire. Next pray to the fire god using the following mantra from RigVeda. It requests the fire god to keep an inauspicious form of fire called “kravyaada” and carry the offerings to gods through the auspicious form of fire called “jaatavedas”.

క్ర॒వ్యా॑ద॒మగ్ని॑ం ప్ర॒హిణో॑మి దూ॒రం॑ యమరాజ్ఞో గచ్ఛ॑తు రిప్ర॒వాహః॑ |
ఇ॒హై॒వా॒యమి॑తరో జాత॒వేదా॑ దే॒వేభ్యో॑ హ॒వ్యం॑ వహ॑తు ప్ర॒జానన్ |

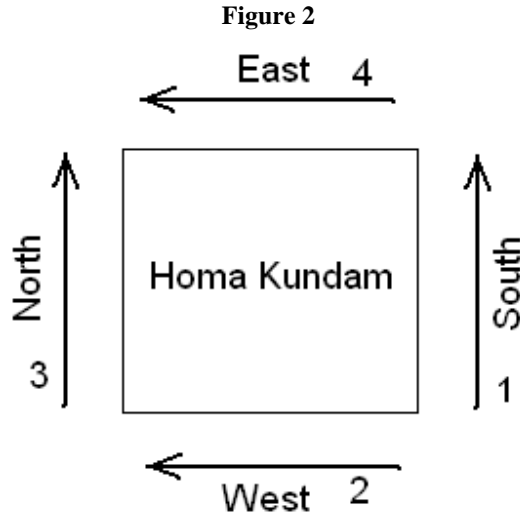
Now we have to do samskara (refinement) to the fire. Pour 8 drops of ghee in the fire while saying the following mantra 8 times.

ఓం భూర్భువస్సువః స్వాహా |

Take 2 or more darbhas (or twigs). Place them outside the homa kundam, along the eastern boundary. The tips should be facing north and the other end facing south. Then take another 2 or more darbhas and place them on the southern boundary, with tips facing east and the other end facing west. Then take 2 or more darbhas and place them on the western boundary, with tips facing north. Then take 2 or more darbhas and place them on the northern boundary, with tips facing east. If you do homam on a regular basis, you can leave these darbhas/twigs around the homa kundam there is no need to do this step every time.

Take some water with the spoon and sprinkle it outside the homa kundam, on its four boundaries while reading the following 4 mantras. The order and direction of sprinkling is shown in Figure 2. For example, first sprinkle water from the southwestern corner to the southeastern corner, as shown by the arrow marked “1”. Then follow other arrows marked as 2, 3 and 4.

అదితే॑కనుమ॒న్యస్స॑ | అను॒మతే॑కనుమన్యస్స॑ | స॒రస్వ॑తే॒కనుమన్యస్స॑ | దే॒వ స॒వి॒తః ప్ర॒సు॒వ |



Now pray to Agni (fire god) with the following mantra:

చ॒త్వారి॑ శృ॒ంగాస్త్ర॑యో అ॒స్య పా॒దాద్వే॑ శీ॒ర్షే స॒ప్తహస్తా॑సో అ॒స్య |
 త్రి॒ధా బ॒ద్ధో వృ॒షభో॑ రో॒రవీ॑తి మ॒హో దే॒వో మ॒ర్త్యాగ్ం ఆ॒విపే॑శ |
 ఏ॒ష హి దే॒వః ప్ర॒దిశో॑ ను స॒ర్వాః పూ॒ర్వో హి జా॑తః స ఉ గ॒ర్భే అంతః॑ |
 స వి॒జాయ॑మా॒నః స జని॑వ్యమా॒ణః ప్రత్య॑జ్ఞా॒ఖాస్తి॑వ్యతి వి॒శ్వతో॑ముఖః |
 ప్రా॒జ్ఞాభో దే॒వ హే అగ్నే॑ | మమా॒భిముఖో॑ భవ |

Now think within your mind of Lord Ganesha, your ishta devata (favorite deity), rishis of your gotra (if you know them), all rishis, your gurus, various gods and other beings of this universe.

Dikpaalaka Pooja (worshipping the rulers of directions)

Now, take some akshatas and also some flowers (if available) and offer them to the rulers of directions. Starting with the eastern edge of the homa kundam, go clockwise (i.e. east, southeast, south, southwest etc) and offer akshatas and flowers in the eight directions. You can place them on the edges of the homa kundam. After the eight directions, offerings are made to Brahma (ruler

of the upward direction) in the middle of northeast and east and to Sesha (ruler of the downward direction) in the middle of southwest and west.

Then offer akshatas and flowers to Agni in the middle of the homa kundam. Finally, touch your heart and offer respect to the self (soul). For the 8+2+1+1=12 offerings, say the following 12 mantras:

ఓం ఇంద్రాయ నమః | ఓం అగ్నయే నమః| ఓం యమాయ నమః| ఓం నిర్భతయే నమః| ఓం
వరుణాయ నమః| ఓం వాయవే నమః| ఓం సోమాయ నమః| ఓం ఈశానాయ నమః| ఓం బ్రహ్మణే
నమః| ఓం శేషాయ నమః| ఓం అగ్నయే నమః| ఓం ఆత్మనే నమః|

Poorvaangam (preliminary offerings)

Now hold the wooden spoon/ladle pointing from northwest towards southeast and offer a ghee drop in the fire for Prajapati (progenitor of all beings), with the following mantra.

ఓం ప్రజాపతయే స్వాహా[॥] ప్రజాపతయ ఇదం న మమ

Now hold the wooden spoon/ladle pointing from southwest towards northeast and offer a ghee drop in the fire for Indra (ruler of gods), with the following mantra.

ఓం ఇంద్రాయ స్వాహా[॥] ఇంద్రాయేదం న మమ

Offer a little ghee to Agni (fire god) in the middle of the fire with the following mantra:

ఓం అగ్నయే స్వాహా[॥] అగ్నయ ఇదం న మమ

Then offer a little ghee to Soma (god of nourishment and well-being) in the upper half of the northern side of the homa kundam with the following mantra:

ఓం సోమాయ స్వాహా[॥] సోమాయేదం న మమ

Now, we have to offer a “forgiveness offering” to Prajapati again to request his forgiveness for all the mistakes that happened in the homa upto this point, with the following mantra:

ఆరంభప్రభృతి ఏతత్క్షణ పర్యంతం మధ్యే సంభావిత సమస్త దోష ప్రాయశ్చిత్తార్థం సర్వ ప్రాయశ్చిత్తం
హోష్యామి ఓం భూర్భువస్సువః స్వాహా॥ ప్రజాపతయ ఇదం న మమ

After making an offering to the basic gods as shown above, one can invoke Ganesha in the fire. After the above preliminary offerings and before invoking Ganesha, one can also make offerings to rishis. One can, for example, make offerings to the rishis of one's lineage. It is optional.

Quick Homam for Mahaganapathi

Before calling the main deity of homam (Shiva) into fire, a quick pooja of Mahaganapathi in fire needs to be done for the removal of obstacles. Mahaganapathi can be invoked in fire while chanting the following.

ఓం గం గణపతయే నమఃః ఓం శ్రీ మహాగణపతి ప్రాణశక్త్యై నమఃః అత్ర ఆగచ్ఛ ఆవాహితో భవ
స్థాపితో భవ సన్నిహితో భవ సన్నిరుద్ధో భవ అవకుంతితో భవ ప్రసీద ప్రసీద

Now, we have to offer worship with several services to Mahaganapathi in the fire. Say the following and offer sandalwood powder/paste to Mahaganapathi in the fire. You can also offer turmeric powder and kumkum.

లం పుథివ్యాత్మనే నమఃః గంధం సమర్పయామి

Say the following and offer a flower (or a flower petal) to Mahaganapathi in the fire.

హం ఆకాశాత్మనే నమఃః పుష్పం సమర్పయామి

Say the following and offer dhoopam (incense) to Mahaganapathi in the fire and the idol. Light the tip of the incense stick, let the fire burn brightly and then extinguish the fire. There should be no fire on the stick but smoke coming from the burning tip. Show the smoke to the fire in the homa kundam. You can also offer the incense stick completely into fire.

యం వాయ్వాత్మనే నమఃః ధూపం ఆఘ్రాపయామి

Say the following and show the deepam (light/lamp) to Mahaganapathi in the fire.

రం అగ్న్యాత్మనే నమఃః దీపం దర్శయామి

Say the following and offer some food to Mahaganapathi in the fire. You can use cooked food or a fruit or jaggery or sugar. Show it to the fire and offer a little bit into the fire. If you cooked only one item, keep it for Shiva and use something else for Mahaganapathi. You can offer just a raisin or a little sugar also.

వం అమృతాత్మనే నమః! నైవేద్యం సమర్పయామి

Say the following and offer some akshatas to Mahaganapathi in the fire. This mantra means that we are offering “all services” to Him.

సం సర్వాత్మనే నమః! సర్వోపచారాన్ సమర్పయామి

Now say the following offer ghee (or other allowed materials mentioned at the beginning) into fire for Mahaganapathi. Repeat that 4 or 8 or 12 times.

ఓం గం గణపతయే నమః! స్వాహా॥

Praana Pratishthaapanaa (invocation of main deity)

Now we have to invoke the deity in the idol and the fire. If you know how to do anganyaasam and karanyaasam, do it while saying the following. Otherwise, just read the following.

అస్య శ్రీ ప్రాణప్రతిష్ఠాపన మంత్రస్య బ్రహ్మ విష్ణు మహేశ్వరా ఋషయః ఋగ్యజుస్సామాధర్వాణి
 ఛందాగ్ంసి శ్రీ సదాశివో దేవతాః ఓం బీజం హౌం శక్తిః సః కీలకం ఓం అంగుష్ఠాభ్యాం నమః! నం
 తర్జనీభ్యాం నమః! మం మధ్యమాభ్యాం నమః! శిం అనామికాభ్యాం నమః! వాం కనిష్ఠికాభ్యాం నమః!
 యం కరతల కరపృష్ఠాభ్యాం నమః! ఓం హృదయాయ నమః! నం శిరసే స్వాహా! మం శిఖాయై వషట్!
 శిం కవచాయ హుం! వాం నేత్రత్రయాయ వౌషట్! యం అస్త్రాయ ఫట్! భూర్భువస్సువరోమితి
 దిగ్బంధః!

ధ్యానం - మృత్యుంజయాయ దేవాయ నీలకంఠాయ శంభవే । అమృతేశాయ సర్వాయ మహాదేవాయ
 తే నమః ॥

Now invoke the deity in the fire and the idol with the following mantra. While saying it, imagine that Shiva who is in your own heart is entering the fire and the idol.

ఓం హౌం సః యం రం లం వం శం షం సం హం ళం క్షం ఓం హంసః సోఽహం సోఽహం హంసః శ్రీ
 సదాశివస్య ప్రాణ ఇహ ప్రాణః జీవ ఇహ స్థితః సర్వేంద్రియాణి వాఙ్మనశ్చక్షుః శ్రోత్ర జిహ్వః
 ప్రాణాపానవ్యానోదానసమానాః ఇహైవాగత్య సుఖం చిరం తిష్ఠంతు స్వాహా సాన్నిధ్యం కుర్వంతు స్వాహా
 ఆసునీ తే పునరస్మాసు చక్షుః పునః ప్రాణమిహ నో దేహి భోగం జ్యోక్ష్మశ్శ్రీమ
 సూర్యముచ్చరంతమనుమతే మృళయా నః స్వస్తి ఓం హౌం సః సః హౌం ఓం ఓం శ్రీ సదాశివ
 ప్రాణశక్త్యై నమః

Now read the following and make the aavaahani, samsthaapani, sannidhaapani, sannirodhini and avakunthana *mudras* with your hands if you know them. If not, don't worry and just read.

అత్ర ఆగచ్ఛ ఆవాహితో భవ స్థాపితో భవ సన్నిహితో భవ సన్నిరుద్ధో భవ అవకుంతితో భవ దేవ
 ప్రసీద ప్రసీద యావద్ధోమావసానకం తావత్త్వం ప్రీతిభావేన మూర్తౌ అగ్నౌ చ సన్నిధిం కురు

While saying this, pray to Lord Shiva in your mind and ask him to *stay* in the fire and the idol till the *end* of the homam. Now, till the end of the homam, *you* should *firmly* believe that Shiva *is in the fire* and treat him with *respect* and *love*.

Panchopachaara Pooja (worship of god)

Now, we have to offer worship with several servies to Shiva in the fire and idol. There are several options. One can do a panchopachaara pooja with 5 services or a shodasopachara pooja with 16 services or a chatusshashtyupachara pooja with 64 services. For simplicity, a panchopachara pooja is recommended in a homam. Those who have a lot of time and want to perform a shodasopachara pooja may refer to Appendix B and use that procedure instead of what is given in this section.

Say the following and offer sandalwood powder/paste to Shiva in the fire and the idol. You can also offer turmeric powder and kumkum.

లం పుథివ్యాత్మనే నమః గంధం సమర్పయామి

Say the following and offer a flower (or a flower petal) to Shiva in the fire and the idol.

హం ఆకాశాత్మనే నమః పుష్పం సమర్పయామి

Say the following and offer dhoopam (incense) to Shiva in the fire and the idol. Light the tip of the incense stick, let the fire burn brightly and then extinguish the fire. There should be no fire on the stick but smoke coming from the burning tip. Show the smoke to the fire in the homa kundam.

యం వాయ్వాత్మనే నమః! ధూపం ఆఘ్రాపయామి

Say the following and show the deepam (light/lamp) to Shiva in the fire and the idol.

రం అగ్న్యాత్మనే నమః! దీపం దర్శయామి

Say the following and offer some food to Shiva in the fire and the idol. You can use cooked food or a fruit or jaggery or sugar. Show it to the fire and idol and offer a little bit into the fire.

If you made only one food item, it is a good idea to offer it at the end of the homam. There will be a naivedyam (food offering) again. Offer something else for now. The offering at the end is the main one.

వం అమృతాత్మనే నమః! సైవేద్యం సమర్పయామి

Say the following and offer some akshatas to Shiva in the fire and the idol. This mantra means that we are offering “all services” to Him.

సం సర్వాత్మనే నమః! సర్వోపచారాన్ సమర్పయామి

Parivaara Devata Aahutis (offerings to associates)

If one is in a hurry, just one aahuti (offering) of ghee can be made for all deities together:

ఓం సదాశివ పరివార దేవతాభ్యః స్వాహా! సదాశివ పరివార దేవతాభ్య ఇదం న మమ॥

If one has time, aahutis can be made individually by chanting the following instead. Make an offering of ghee whenever you encounter svaahaa (స్వాహా).

ఓం బ్రహ్మణే స్వాహా! ఓం విష్ణవే స్వాహా! ఓం హరాయ స్వాహా! ఓం ఇంద్రాయ స్వాహా! ఓం అగ్నయే స్వాహా! ఓం శివాయ స్వాహా! ఓం వసుభ్యః స్వాహా! ఓం సరస్వత్యై స్వాహా! ఓం వాయవే స్వాహా! ఓం చంద్రాదిత్యాభ్యాం స్వాహా! ఓం అశ్వినాభ్యాం స్వాహా! ఓం రుద్రేభ్యః స్వాహా! ఓం ఆదిత్యేభ్యః స్వాహా! ఓం

మహాదేవాయ స్వాహా॥ ఓం వామదేవాయ స్వాహా॥ ఓం పినాకినే స్వాహా॥ ఓం శూలినే స్వాహా॥ ఓం
శివాశంకరాభ్యాం స్వాహా॥ ఓం వాయవే స్వాహా॥ ఓం అగ్నేయే జ్వాలామాలాపరివృతాయ స్వాహా॥ ఓం
సర్వేభ్యో దేవతాభ్యః స్వాహా॥

Pradhaana Homam (main part)

Now, you can offer any mantras of Shiva you want. Suggested count for each mantra is 4 or 8 or 11 or 12 or 16 or 21 or 28 or 108 or 121 or 1008. Pick a count with each mantra and try to meet that count. At the end of the mantra, you have to add the following and then make an offering in the fire.

॥
స్వాహా

When making the last offering with a mantra (*i.e.* you are going to stop that mantra after this offering and switch to a different mantra), you add the following instead of the above:

వౌషట్

The offering can be a drop of ghee or sesame seeds or murmura/mamra (puffed white rice) or havan samagri or small dry coconut pieces or small pieces of darbha. If you are doing homam on a big scale with a big fire, you can even put banana slices, full coconuts, various fruits, nuts (cashews, almonds etc), dates, raisins, sugar cane pieces, several sweets and snacks *etc.* But, if you are doing on a small scale with a small fire, stick to sesame seeds, dry coconut pieces, puffed white rice and ghee drops. At any cost, avoid spicy substances like any kind of pepper, cinnamon, cloves etc and products containing eggs, meat etc. In general, sweet substances are better. Just offering ghee when you do not have any other substances is also fine.

The following mantras of Shiva may be used. But you can really use any mantra you like. Read a mantra several times before moving on to a different mantra. Actually, it is advisable to pick **any one** mantra you like the most and repeat it as many times as you can, instead of doing a little bit of several mantras. If one wants water, one should dig deep in one place instead of digging a little in ten places. Several options are being given so that people can pick one based on their taste and mental conditioning from previous karmic debts. All of them are good and powerful. Please pick the one you are attracted to the most.

These are two forms of panchaakshari (five-lettered) mantra, with and without sandhi:

॥
ఓం నమః శివాయ॥ స్వాహా॥
॥
ఓం నమశ్శివాయ॥ స్వాహా॥

Adding the maayaa beeja of Mahalakshmi to the panchaakshari mantra makes it more suitable to many people. It helps one manage the material life even as one overcomes its delusion.

ఓం హ్రీం నమశ్శివాయ॥ స్వాహా॥

Mrityunjaya mantra is a **very powerful** mantra of Shiva for giving good health, long life and also spiritual progress, fearlessness and moksha. The first version is preferred. If one cannot pronounce it, the second version with the sandhi broken can be tried.

ఓం త్ర్యంబకం యజామహే సుగంధిం పుష్టివర్ధనం ఉర్వారుకమివ బంధనాన్మృత్యోర్ముక్షీయ
మామృతాత్॥ స్వాహా॥

ఓం త్ర్యంబకం యజామహే సుగంధిం పుష్టివర్ధనం ఉర్వారుకమివ బంధనాన్ మృత్యోర్ముక్షీయ
మామృతాత్॥ స్వాహా॥

A variation of the Mrityunjaya mantra is particularly good for good health and longevity:

ఓం జం సః త్ర్యంబకం యజామహే సుగంధిం పుష్టివర్ధనం ఉర్వారుకమివ బంధనాన్మృత్యోర్ముక్షీయ
మామృతాత్॥ సః జం ఓం స్వాహా॥

The following Veda mantras of Shiva are all auspicious. They can be used in a homam.

ఓం నమస్తేస్తు భగవన్విశ్వేశ్వరాయ మహాదేవాయ త్ర్యంబకాయ త్రిపురాంతకాయ త్రికాగ్నికాలాయ
కాలాగ్నిరుద్రాయ నీలకంఠాయ మృత్యుంజయాయ సర్వేశ్వరాయ సదాశివాయ శ్రీమన్మహాదేవాయ
నమః॥ స్వాహా॥

ఓం నమః శివాయ శివాయ నమో నమః శివాయ చ శివాయ నమో నమః శివాయ చ శివాయ చ
చ శివాయ శివాయ చ॥ స్వాహా॥

ఓం యో రుద్రో అగ్నో యో అప్స య ఓషధీషు యో రుద్రో విశ్వా భువనావివేశ తస్మై రుద్రాయ
నమో అస్తు॥ స్వాహా॥

ఓం తత్పురుషాయ విద్మహే మహాదేవాయ ధీమహి తన్నో రుద్రః ప్రచోదయాత్॥ స్వాహా॥

ఓం సద్యోజాతం ప్రపద్యామి సద్యోజాతాయ పై నమో నమః॥ భవే భవేనాతిభవే భవస్వమాం
భవోద్భవాయ నమః॥ వామదేవాయ నమో జ్యేష్ఠాయ నమః శ్రేష్ఠాయ నమో రుద్రాయ నమః కాలాయ

నమః కలవికరణాయ నమో బలవికరణాయ నమో బలాయ నమో బలప్రమథనాయ నమః
 సర్వభూతదమనాయ నమో మనోన్మనాయ నమః॥ స్వాహా॥
 ఓం అఘోరేభ్యోఽథ ఘోరేభ్యో ఘోరఘోరతరేభ్యః । సర్వేభ్యస్సర్వశర్వేభ్యో నమస్తే అస్తు
 రుద్రరూపేభ్యః॥ స్వాహా॥
 ఓం నమః శంభవే చ మయోభవే చ నమః శంకరాయ చ మయస్కరాయ చ నమః శివాయ చ
 శివతరాయ చ॥ స్వాహా॥
 ఓం నమో భగవతే రుద్రాయ విష్ణవే మృత్యోర్మే పాహి॥ స్వాహా॥

The following five mantras are based on permutations of panchakshari mantra letters. One can use any of them in homam. One can also cycle through the five mantras, *i.e.* do the first one for some count, then switch to the second one and do it for the same count, then switch to the third one and do it for the same count and so on.

ఓం నమశివయ శివయనమ యనమశివ మశివయన వయనమశి వశి స్వాహా॥
 ఓం శివయనమ యనమశివ మశివయన వయనమశి నమశివయ వశి స్వాహా॥
 ఓం యనమశివ మశివయన వయనమశి నమశివయ శివయనమ వశి స్వాహా॥
 ఓం మశివయన వయనమశి నమశివయ శివయనమ యనమశివ వశి స్వాహా॥
 ఓం వయనమశి నమశివయ శివయనమ యనమశివ మశివయన వశి స్వాహా॥

Using the following Linga mantras, one can make an offering at each svaahaa (స్వాహా). There will be 11 aahutis. After finishing eleven, one can repeat.

ఓం నిధనపతయే నమః॥ నిధనపతాంతికాయ నమః॥ స్వాహా॥
 ఓం ఊర్ధ్వాయ నమః॥ ఊర్ధ్వలింగాయ నమః॥ స్వాహా॥
 ఓం హిరణ్యాయ నమః॥ హిరణ్యలింగాయ నమః॥ స్వాహా॥
 ఓం సువర్ణాయ నమః॥ సువర్ణలింగాయ నమః॥ స్వాహా॥
 ఓం దివ్యాయ నమః॥ దివ్యలింగాయ నమః॥ స్వాహా॥
 ఓం భవాయ నమః॥ భవలింగాయ నమః॥ స్వాహా॥
 ఓం శర్వాయ నమః॥ శర్వలింగాయ నమః॥ స్వాహా॥

ఓం శివాయ నమః| శివలింగాయ నమః| స్వాహా||
 ఓం జ్వలాయ నమః| జ్వలలింగాయ నమః| స్వాహా||
 ఓం ఆత్మనే నమః| ఆత్మలింగాయ నమః| స్వాహా||
 ఓం పరమాయ నమః| పరమలింగాయ నమః| స్వాహా||

Using the following Jyotirlinga mantras, one can make an offering at each svaahaa (స్వాహా).
 There will be 12 aahutis. After finishing twelve, one can repeat. One can choose a specific
 Jyotirlinga and repeat the same mantra many times too.

ఓం నమశ్శివాయ నమో రామనాథాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం నమశ్శివాయ నమస్సోమనాథాయ | స్వాహా|| ఓం
 నమశ్శివాయ నమో నాగేశ్వరాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం నమశ్శివాయ నమః ఓంకారేశ్వరాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం
 నమశ్శివాయ నమో ధృష్టిశ్వరాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం నమశ్శివాయ నమో మల్లికార్జునాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం
 నమశ్శివాయ నమో మహాకాలాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం నమశ్శివాయ నమో వైద్యనాథాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం
 నమశ్శివాయ నమో విశ్వేశ్వరాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం నమశ్శివాయ నమో భీమశంకరాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం
 నమశ్శివాయ నమః కేదారేశ్వరాయ| స్వాహా|| ఓం నమశ్శివాయ నమస్త్ర్యంబకేశ్వరాయ| స్వాహా||

One can also use Shivaashtottara shata naama stotra (108 name prayer of Shiva). Offer an aahuti
 with each verse. This may be repeated as many times as one wants.

శివో మహేశ్వరః శంభుః పినాకీ శశిశేఖరః| వామదేవో విరూపాక్షః కపర్ది నీలలోహితః| స్వాహా||
 శంకరః శూలపాణిశ్చ ఖట్వాంగీ విష్ణువల్లభః| శిపి విష్ణోఽంబికానాథః శ్రీకంఠో భక్తవత్సలః| స్వాహా||
 భవః శర్వః త్రిలోకేశః శితికంఠః శివాప్రియః| ఉగ్రః కపాలీ కామారిః అంధకాసురసూదనః| స్వాహా||
 గంగాధరో లలాటాక్షః కాలకాలః కృపానిధిః| భీమః పరశుహస్తశ్చ మృగపాణిర్జటాధరః| స్వాహా||
 కైలాసవాసీ కవచీ కఠోరః త్రిపురాంతకః| వృషాంకో వృషభారూఢో భస్మోద్ధూళిత విగ్రహః| స్వాహా||
 సామప్రియః స్వరమయః త్రయీమూర్తిరనీశ్వరః| సర్వజ్ఞః పరమాత్మా చ సోమసూర్యాగ్నిలోచనః|
 స్వాహా||
 హవిర్యజ్ఞమయః సోమః పంచవక్త్రః సదాశివః| విశ్వేశ్వరో వీరభద్రో గణనాథః ప్రజాపతిః| స్వాహా||
 హిరణ్యరేతా దుర్ధర్షో గిరిశో గిరిశోఽనఘః| భుజంగభూషణో భర్గో గిరిధన్వా గిరిప్రియః| స్వాహా||

కృత్తివాసాః పురారాతిర్భగవాన్ ప్రమథాధిపః| మృత్యుంజయః సూక్ష్మతనుః జగద్వ్యాపీ జగద్గురుః|
స్వాహా||

వ్యోమకేశో మహాసేనజనకః చారువిక్రమః| రుద్రో భూతపతిః స్థాణుః అహిర్బుధ్నో దిగంబరః| స్వాహా||

అష్టమూర్తిరనేకాత్మా సాత్త్వికః శుద్ధవిగ్రహః| శాశ్వతః ఖండవరశురజః పాశవిమోచకః| స్వాహా||

మృడః పశుపతిర్దేవో మహాదేవోఽవ్యయో హరిః| పూషదంతభిదవ్యగ్రో దక్షాధ్వరహరో హరః| స్వాహా||

భగనేత్రభిదవ్యక్తః సహస్రాక్షః సహస్రపాత్| అపవర్గప్రదోఽనంతః తారకః పరమేశ్వరః| స్వాహా||

Again, instead of trying to do a little of each, pick **one mantra** for the pradhaana homam and do it **as many times** as you can. That discipline will help you get the most from your homam.

Punah Pooja (worship again)

After all the offerings with mantras, we offer a quick worship again to Shiva in the fire.

Say the following and offer some food to Shiva in the fire and the idol.

ఓం నమః శివాయ| సైవేద్యం సమర్పయామి|

Light a small camphor piece in a plate and show it to the fire while saying the following. At the end, you can throw the camphor piece into fire.

ఓం నమః శివాయ| నీరాజనం సమర్పయామి|

If one has time, a panchopachara pooja can also be done as the punah pooja. But the above two things will suffice.

Now get up and do *pradakshinas* to the homa kundam. If someone stands on the roof (or in the sky) and looks down at you, it should look like you are going around the homa kundam in the clockwise direction. Do one or three rounds and then sit down again in front of fire.

Uttaraangam (vote of thanks)²

Now, offer one drop of ghee to Prajapati, then the controllers of the three worlds (bhuh – fire god, bhuvah – wind god, who controls space too, suvah – sun god for all the non-material spiritual realms), to Agni who processes the food for gods and makes it consumable and finally Prajapati again. Read the following and offer a drop of ghee at each “swaahaa”.

² Skip this and go to the next section to find a shorter procedure for uttaraangam.

ఓం ప్రజాపతే॑ న త్వదే॑తాన్యన్యో॑ విశ్వా॑ జాతా॒ని పరి॑ తా బభూ॑వః॒ యత్కా॑మాస్తే॒ జుహు॑మస్తన్నో॑ అస్తు
వయగ్ం॑ స్వా॒మ పత॑యో రయా॒ణామ్ స్వా॒హా ప్రజా॑పతయ ఇదం న మమ॥
ఓం భూః॑ స్వా॒హా అగ్నయ॑ ఇదం న మమ॥
ఓం భువః॑ స్వా॒హా వాయవ॑ ఇదం న మమ॥
ఓం సువః॑ స్వా॒హా సూర్యా॑య ఇదం న మమ॥
యదస్య॑ కర్మణో॑ఽత్యరీ॑చం యద్వా॒న్యూనమి॒హాక॑రమ్ అగ్ని॒ష్టత్ స్వి॑ష్టకృద్విద్వాన్ సర్వం స్వి॑ష్టం
సుహు॑తం కరో॒తు స్వా॒హా అగ్నయే॑ స్విష్టకృత ఇదం న మమ॥
ఓం భూర్భువస్సు॒వః స్వా॒హా ప్రజా॑పతయ ఇదం న మమ॥

Now do pranaayaamam again. The procedure of pranaayaamam is explained earlier.

Now, make three offerings to the fire god, asking for forgiveness for any mistakes committed knowingly or unknowingly, while using fire as the medium. Read the following and offer a drop of the ghee in the fire at each “swaahaa”.

Next, three offerings are made to the fire god, wind god and sun god, the controllers of the three worlds. Read the following and offer a drop of the ghee in the fire at each “swaahaa”.

అనా॒జ్ఞాతం॑ యదా॒జ్ఞాతం॑ య॒జ్ఞస్య॑ క్రి॒యతే॑ మిథు॒ అగ్నే॑ తదస్య॒ కల్ప॑య త్వగ్ం హి వే॒త్య
యథా॑తథం॒ స్వా॒హా అగ్నయ॑ ఇదం న మమ॥
పురు॑షసంమితో॒ యజ్ఞో॑ య॒జ్ఞః పురు॑షసంమితః॒ అగ్నే॑ తదస్య॒ కల్ప॑య త్వగ్ం హి వే॒త్య యథా॑తథం॒
స్వా॒హా అగ్నయ॑ ఇదం న మమ॥
యత్పా॑కత్రా మనసా దీ॒నదక్షా॑ నా య॒జ్ఞస్య॑ మన్వతే॒ మర్తా॑సః॒ అగ్ని॒ష్టద్ధోతా॑ క్ర॒తువి॑ద్వి॒జానన్॑ య॒జిష్ఠో
దే॒వాన్ బు॒తుశో॑ య॒జాతి॑ స్వా॒హా అగ్నయ॑ ఇదం న మమ॥
ఓం భూః॑ స్వా॒హా అగ్నయ॑ ఇదం న మమ॥
ఓం భువః॑ స్వా॒హా వాయవ॑ ఇదం న మమ॥
ఓం సువః॑ స్వా॒హా సూర్యా॑యేదం న మమ॥

One final offering to Prajapati is made to beg for forgiveness for various mistakes made in the homam, with respect to pronunciation, actions, procedure, devotion, materials used etc. Read the following and offer of drop of ghee.

అస్మిన్ హోమకర్మణి మధ్యే సంభావిత సమస్త మంత్రలోప తంత్రలోప క్రియాలోప భక్తిలోప శ్రద్ధాలోప
 నియమలోప నిష్కలోప ద్రవ్యలోపాది సమస్త దోష ప్రాయశ్చిత్తార్థం సర్వ ప్రాయశ్చిత్తాహుతిం హోష్యామి
 ఓం భూర్భువస్సువః స్వాహా॥ ప్రజాపతయ ఇదం న మమ॥

An offering to Vishnu and an offering to Rudra must be made. Read the following two lines and offer a drop of ghee for each line. Think of Vishnu and Shiva.

ఓం శ్రీ విష్ణవే స్వాహా॥ విష్ణవే పరమాత్మన ఇదం న మమ॥
 ఓం నమో రుద్రాయ పశుపతయే స్వాహా॥ రుద్రాయ పశుపతయ ఇదం న మమ॥

After making an offering to Rudra, wash the hand once. You can simply sprinkle a little bit of water on the right palm for that purpose.

Uttaraangam – shorter version (vote of thanks)

When you are in a hurry, you can perform uttaraangam in a brief form by saying the following and making an offering of ghee with each line.

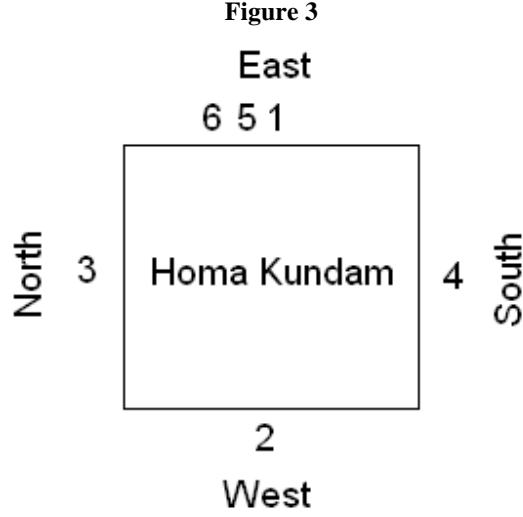
ఓం భూః స్వాహా॥ అగ్నయ ఇదం న మమ॥
 ఓం భువః స్వాహా॥ వాయవ ఇదం న మమ॥
 ఓం సువః స్వాహా॥ సూర్యాయ ఇదం న మమ॥
 ఓం భూర్భువస్సువః స్వాహా॥ ప్రజాపతయ ఇదం న మమ॥
 ఓం శ్రీ విష్ణవే స్వాహా॥ విష్ణవే పరమాత్మన ఇదం న మమ॥
 ఓం నమో రుద్రాయ పశుపతయే స్వాహా॥ రుద్రాయ పశుపతయ ఇదం న మమ॥

Suddhaanna Bali (sacrifice of pure rice)

Now, we have to offer bali (sacrifice to other associated beings). Get the cooked white rice (or banana slices or some other fruit slices or raisins). Just place a small token amount as bali. You need to place bali in six different places outside the homa kundam. First, place it on the east of the homa kundam. Then on the west, then on the north, then on the south and finally two more on the east (a little north to the previous bali(s) placed in the east). The order and positions can be found in

Figure 3. While offering balis in six places, the following sentence can be said:

ఓం పార్వదేభ్యో నమః! బలిం సమర్పయామి!



The rice remaining after offering balis should be thrown away and not consumed. If cooked rice is not available, small banana slices or some other fruit slices can be used. Again, any fruit pieces left over after bali should be thrown away and not consumed.

Vasordhaaraa (stream of excellence)

Take a little ghee into the ladle and pour it slowly on the burning dry coconut pieces in the homa kundam while reading the third verse from “Rudra Chamakam”. It is given below.

Don't pour too much ghee if you don't want much smoke. Just take one teaspoonful of ghee in the wooden ladle and manage with it slowly. This ghee should be just enough to make the pieces burn well so that poornaahuti (about to be offered) burns well.

ఓం శం చ మే మయశ్చ మే ప్రియం చ మేకనుకామశ్చ మే కామశ్చ మే సౌమనసశ్చ మే భద్రం చ
మే శ్రేయశ్చ మే వశ్యశ్చ మే యశశ్చ మే భగశ్చ మే ద్రవిణం చ మే యంతా చ మే ధర్తా చ మే
క్షేమశ్చ మే ధృతిశ్చ మే విశ్వం చ మే మహశ్చ మే సంవిచ్ఛ మే జ్ఞాత్రం చ మే సూశ్చ మే ప్రసూశ్చ
మే సీరం చ మే లయశ్చ మఋతం చ మేకమృతం చ మేకయక్ష్మం చ మేకనామయచ్ఛ మే
జీవాతుశ్చ మే దీర్ఘాయుత్వం చ మేకనమిత్రం చ మేకభయం చ మే సుగం చ మే శయనం చ మే
సూషా చ మే సుదినం చ మే॥

Poornaahuti

Now, we have to prepare a package for poornaahuti (“complete offering”). The normal procedure is to place a full dry coconut, some metal coins, some turmeric, some sandalwood, some kumkum, some akshatas, samples of some of the materials used in homam as offerings in a cloth and tie the cloth.

For a simple homam with a small fire, you may take a dry coconut half and place a few akshatas, one coin, little sandalwood powder, turmeric powder, kumkum powder and samples of materials offered earlier in it. If you do a small homam everyday in a western country and need to minimize the smoke, you may put just a small coconut piece as poornaahuti. If you are doing homam in a big firepit that is dug in ground, you may want to experiment with a regular full coconut that has little water. It is a more accurate representation of the ego of a normal person.

Place the poornaahuti on the wooden ladle, say the mantra below and then place the poornaahuti in fire carefully with hand (if you drop it on a small fire from the wooden ladle, it can extinguish the fire and also loose materials can spill everywhere in the homa kundam).

ఓం పూ॒ర్ణా॒హు॒తి॒ము॒త్త॒మాం॒ జు॒హో॒తి॒ స॒ర్వం॒ వై పూ॒ర్ణా॒హు॒తిః॒॑ స॒ర్వ॒మే॒వా॒ప్నో॒తి॒ అ॒థో॒ ఇ॒యం॒ వై
“
పూ॒ర్ణా॒హు॒తిః॒॑ అ॒స్యా॒మే॒వ ప్ర॒తి॒తి॒ష్ఠ॒తి॒
ఓం పూ॒ర్ణ॒మ॒దః॒ పూ॒ర్ణ॒మి॒దం॒ పూ॒ర్ణా॒త్పూ॒ర్ణ॒ము॒ద॒చ్యతే॒॑ పూ॒ర్ణ॒స్య॒ పూ॒ర్ణ॒మా॒దాయ॑ పూ॒ర్ణ॒మే॒వా॒వ॒శి॒ష్యతే॑॥
ఓం నమః శివాయ॑ పూ॒ర్ణా॒హు॒తిం స॒మర్ప॑యామి॒

While (or after) placing the poornaahuti in the fire, say the following mantra.

ఓం బ్ర॒హ్మో॒ర్పణం॑ బ్ర॒హ్మ॒హవి॑ర్ బ్ర॒హ్మో॒గ్నో బ్ర॒హ్మణా॑ హు॒తం॒ బ్ర॒హ్మై॒వ తే॑న గం॒తవ్యం॑ బ్ర॒హ్మ కర్మ॑
సమాధి॑నా॥

Imagine that you are completely surrendering yourself to Shiva. Poornaahuti basically means “complete surrender”. The full (or half) coconut used in the poornaahuti is a symbol of one’s head, *i.e.* ego (“I-ness”), which is to be sacrificed (surrendered) to Shiva. Think of Shiva as a manifestation of the Supreme Cosmic Being who fills the whole universe and who is the true owner of your body, mind, existence, thoughts, knowledge and actions. Surrender to Him fully. Without that inner sense of complete surrender, an elaborate poornaahuti ritual with pristine materials has no meaning. Most Vedic rituals are symbolic of certain inner changes that you bring about within yourself, to remove obstacles within your sookshma sareera that are blocking self-knowledge. The purpose of Veda is the knowledge of self (Aatman) and all rituals are ultimately for that purpose. Doing rituals blindly is a good starting point, but at some stage, one has to wonder about the inner meaning.

Winding Up and Meditation

The fire god (Agni) has carried all our offerings to various gods. So the final offering is to him. Read the following and offer a drop of ghee in the fire.

స॒ప్త తీ॑ అగ్నే॒ స॒మిధః॑ స॒ప్తజి॒హ్వోః॑ స॒ప్త బు॒షయ॑స్సప్తః॒ ధా॒మ ప్రి॒యాణీ॑ స॒ప్త హో॑త్రా స॒ప్త ధా॒త్వా
య॒జన్తి॒ సప్త॑యోనీ॒రాపృ॑ణస్వా॒ ఘృ॒తేన॑ స్వాహా॑ అగ్నయే॑ సప్తవత ఇదం న మమ॥

Take some water in a spoon and sprinkle it around the homa kundam as shown in Figure 2. This is similar to what we did at the beginning, but the mantras to say are slightly different. Instead of the four mantras used earlier, use the following four mantras when sprinkling water along the four arrows marked as 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Figure 2:

అ॒దితీ॑క॒న్వమం॑స్థాః॒ అను॒మతీ॑క॒న్వమం॑స్థాః॒ స॒రస్వ॑తీక॒న్వమం॑స్థాః॒ దే॒వ స॒వితః॑ ప్రా॒సావీః॑

The ritual of homam cleanses one internally. The powerful divine presence in the fire has a great ability to cleanse one. Especially, a sincerely offered poornaahuti creates a lot of positive energy as it burns. One can take advantage of it by meditating in front of the fire as the poornaahuti burns. The time when the poornaahuti burns is the best time to meditate.

Sit still with a straight back in front of the fire and meditate. Make sure that the back is erect and yet not too tight. Make sure that the neck and head are also erect. Close the eyes, imagine your favorite deity in a form you like and meditate on that form with your favorite mantra. You can meditate on Shiva also. It can be the mantra with which you did homam or any other mantra of any deity. Try to forget about the your body and what you are doing and get into the mantra fully. Think that the deity you are imagining is a manifestation of Supreme Cosmic Being and think that all beings and all objects of this world are expressions of the play of that deity. Think that that deity is the true Doer of all actions by all beings of this world. Your chances of losing consciousness of your body and immersing in the mantra fully are the maximum at this point of time than any other (while the poornaahuti is burning)! Take advantage and meditate for atleast 5-10 minutes with maximum focus now. Consider this an essential part of the homam.

Rakshaa

Now, take the darbhas placed at the beginning outside the homa kundam on the western side (or new darbhas, if you did not place any darbhas along the boundaries due to lack of darbhas), apply a little ghee to them and place the tips in fire. When they catch fire, remove them from the fire, place them in a container and let the whole darbhas burn. The black ash you get is called “rakshaa” (protection). At the end of the homam, you can apply a little rakshaa to the forehead of the idol and then a little to your own forehead and the foreheads of others. This is believed to protect from evil forces. You can store the rakshaa for future use on important occasions.

If your fire is too small and does not last till this point, you may consider taking rakshaa before meditation.

It is not *necessary* to take raksha. One can skip this step. Alternately, one can skip now and later mix the ashes of the materials burnt in the homa kundam with ghee and use that as rakshaa.

Udvaasana (good bye)

Take a couple of darbhas in your right hand and a couple more darbhas with your left hand. Take some flowers or akshatas also if available. Hold the darbhas with the tips facing away from you and the bases in your hands. Now touch the two sides of the homakundam with the darbhas in the two hands. Then touch the idol with those darbhas and leave the akshatas and flowers on the god. Imagine that the energy from the homakundam has been transferred into the idol. To simplify this, you can also place your fists containing a few akshatas on top of the northern and southern sides of homa kundam and then deposit the akshatas in those fists at the feet of the idol.

Say the following and show your heart with your hands. Imagine that Sri Mahaganapathi has exited the fire and came back into your heart.

అస్మాన్మార్తీశ్చ అగ్నేశ్చ శ్రీమహాగణపతిం యథాస్థానం ప్రతిష్ఠాపయామి

Say the following and show your heart with your hands. Imagine that Shiva has exited the fire and the idol and came back into your heart.

అస్మాన్మార్తీశ్చ అగ్నేశ్చ సదాశివం యథాస్థానం ప్రతిష్ఠాపయామి

Now, we have to say goodbye to the fire god too. Say the following and bow to the fire god.

అగ్నే నయ సువథా రాయే అస్మాన్ విశ్వాని దేవ వయునాని విద్వాన్ యుయోధ్యస్మజ్జుహురాణమేన్
భూయిష్ఠాం తే నమ ఉక్తిం విధేమ అగ్నయే నమః॥

Conclusion

Say the following three verses. Think of Krishna and imagine that you are not the doer and Krishna is the doer who is acting through you. While you do it, place a few akshatas on the tips of the ring and middle fingers of the right hand, place the palm on the small deposit bowl and wash it such that the water and akshatas are deposited in the deposit bowl.

మంత్రహీనం క్రియాహీనం భక్తిహీనం హుతాశనా యద్దుతంతు మయా దేవ పరిపూర్ణం తదస్తుతే॥

ప్రాయశ్చిత్తాన్యశేషాణి తపః కర్మాత్మకాని వై యాని తేషామశేషాణాం శ్రీ కృష్ణస్మరణం పరం॥ శ్రీ కృష్ణ
 కృష్ణ కృష్ణ
 కాయేన వాచా మనసేంద్రియైర్వా బుద్ధ్యాత్మనా వా ప్రకృతేః స్వభావాత్ కరోమి యద్యత్ సకలం
 పరస్మై నారాయణాయేతి సమర్పయామి॥

Say the following finally. Imagine that Sri Shiva became pleased with your homam. Surrender the doership of the homam to Krishna and pray for peace.

అసేన దివ్య మంగళ హోమేన భగవాన్ సర్వాత్మకః సదాశివః ప్రీయతామ్ ఓం తత్సతీ సర్వం శ్రీ
 కృష్ణార్పణమస్తు ఓం శాంతిః శాంతిః శాంతిః

After this, you should not think of yourself as the doer of the homam just finished, for you have surrendered the doership to Krishna!
 The naivedyam (food) you offered can be eaten now and served to others. The rakshaa (holy ash) can be mixed with a drop of ghee and applied on the forehead as a dot or a line.

If you used a kalasam (water pot) in addition to an idol to invoke the god, you can take a bath with the water in the kalasam. Pour the water on yourself after you finish your bath, while saying a mantra of Shiva. After pouring that water on yourself, don't pour any more regular water. The water from kalasam should be the last water you pour on yourself in the bath. In other words, you should absorb the energy in that water for a while.

It is possible to put a kalasam and use it everyday without changing water. One may change the water every weekend or on every Ashtami or Ekadasi day and take bath with the old water.

:: Sarvam Sri Krishnarapanamastu :: :: Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ::

Appendix A: Super-short Homam (minimum mantras)

For those who are uncomfortable with Sanskrita and yet want to perform homam, the procedure given in this document may still be difficult. For such people, I can recommend a much shorter procedure. It is hoped that those who start with this super-short homam will eventually make an effort to switch to the main procedure given in this document, after they get some practice and become comfortable with mantras in Sanskrita.

Mantras offered to a deity in fire are powerful irrespective of the procedure used. Instead of not doing homam at all, it is better to do this super-short homam.

This appendix will describe a super-short procedure very briefly. If some details are unclear, please contextualize them by reading the rest of the document. The Sanskrita mantras are minimized in this super-short procedure.

Preliminary Procedure

Think in your mind of Mother Earth, Lord Ganesha, Shiva, your parents, rishis of your lineage (if you know them), all rishis and all gods. You can use a language that you are comfortable with (e.g. English or Hindi or Russian) and say something in an intuitive way to remember all of them.

Take a tumbler or glass of water. Take three spoonfuls of water from the tumbler and drink them while saying: “This is for Keshava (కేశవ)”, “This is for Naaraayana (నారాయణ)” and “This is for Maadhava (మాధవ)”.

With akshatas in hand, pray to Ganesha: “O Ganesha (గణేశ)! Please remove obstacles from my homam”. Do praanaayaama (see the section on it in the main document), possibly with the *Om* sound or a mantra given earlier.

Now take a vow: “I shall now perform a homam to the best of my ability, for the pleasure of Lord Sadashiva (సదాశివ).”

Leave the akshatas in front of the idol or homa kundam.

Early Offerings

Light a lamp. Put some akshatas in the water tumbler and say “vam (వం)” 11 times. Take the water with the spoon and sprinkle it on yourself, on the homa kundam, on the idol and on the food, fruits and flowers.

Homa kundam should be on your east and you should be facing east. Draw two red parallel east-west lines with kumkum (vermilion) connecting the middle of the western edge of homa kundam with your seat and place the container with melted ghee on those lines.

Take a small camphor piece, light it in the lamp and place the burning camphor piece in homa kundam while saying the following.

ఓం భూర్భువస్సువరోమ్

O Fire god, please co-operate with me and make my offerings reach gods in a state of purity.

Place dry coconut pieces or wood above it and make sure that they catch fire. Now offer five drops of ghee while saying the following:

ఓం ప్రజాపతయే స్వాహా॥
ఓం ఇంద్రాయ స్వాహా॥
ఓం అగ్నయే స్వాహా॥
ఓం సోమాయ స్వాహా॥

This is for forgiveness of my mistakes so far.

ఓం భూర్భువస్సువః స్వాహా॥

Quick Worship of Ganesha in Fire

Say “O Ganesha (గణేశ), please come into this fire”. Say the following while showing the fire with folded palms (as though you are telling someone “come here”):

ఆవాహితో భవ స్థాపితో భవ

Put some akshatas in the fire and say “O Ganesha (గణేశ), please be pleased with these services from me”. Now repeat the following mantra of Ganesha 4 times with an offering of ghee or something else.

ఓం గం గణపతయే నమః॥ స్వాహా॥

Main Homam of Shiva

Say “O Lord Sadashiva (సదాశివ), please come into this fire”. Say the following while showing the fire with folded palms (as though you are telling someone “come here”):

ఆవాహితో భవ స్థాపితో భవ

Put some akshatas in the fire and say “O Lord Sadashiva (సదాశివ), please be pleased with these services from me”.

Now repeat the mantras of Shiva that you know 4 or 8 or 11 or 12 or 16 or 21 or 28 or 108 or 121 or 1008 times. Some mantras are suggested in the main document (see pages 22-27 before). At a minimum, do the following simple mantra as many times as you can.

ఓం హ్రీం నమః శివాయ॥ స్వాహా॥

Each time you say this, offer ghee or akshatas or sesame seeds or some other materials described earlier in this document in the fire. If you do the above mantra many times and not do any other mantras, it is acceptable.

At the end of the offerings, take some food you cooked (or fruit), show it to the fire and say “O Lord Sadashiva (సదాశివ), please accept this” and throw a small bit into fire. Then stand up and go around the homa kundam once or 3 times. If someone looks at you from the roof or from the sky, it should look like you are going around the homa kundam in clockwise direction. At the end, you can bow in front of the fire. Finally sit down in front of the fire in your original place.

Final Offerings

Say the following lines and offer a drop of ghee in the fire after each line:

ఓం భూః స్వాహా॥

ఓం భువః స్వాహా॥

ఓం సువః స్వాహా॥

ఓం భూర్భువస్సువః స్వాహా॥

ఓం విష్ణవే స్వాహా॥

ఓం రుద్రాయ స్వాహా॥

At the end, sprinkle a little water on your right hand.

If it is possible, now offer six chunks of cooked white rice or fruit slices in the six places shown in

Figure 3, while saying “these are for the associates of Lord Sadashiva (సదాశివ)”. Otherwise, you may skip this step.

Poornaahuti

While saying “Om”, pour a stream of ghee from the spoon into the fire. When the fire becomes big, you can offer poornaahuti.

Please read the section on poornaahuti in the main document for the description of materials needed, meaning of poornaahuti and the spirit to be followed. Instead of the mantras in the main document, just say the following:

ఓం నమః శివాయ పూర్ణాహుతిం సమర్పయామి

Then drop the full coconut or half coconut or coconut piece in fire. Offer one more drop of ghee while saying:

ఓం అగ్నయే సప్తవతీ స్వాహా

Now, meditate with any mantra you like for 5-10 minutes as the poornaahuti burns. For some useful tips, please refer to the main document.

At the end of the meditation, show your heart with your hands and say “O Ganesha (గణేశ) and O Lord Sadashiva (సదాశివ), please come back into my heart”. Also, thank the fire god mentally for his co-operation in the ritual. Then say:

సర్వం శ్రీ కృష్ణార్పణమస్తుః ఓం శాంతిః శాంతిః శాంతిః

If you minimize the entire procedure and spend maximum time chanting a mantra of Lord Shiva with offerings into fire and then meditating as the poornaahuti burns, you will get the most out of your homam and not lose much! After some practice, you can compare this super-short procedure with the procedure given in the main document and keep adding mantras from the main procedure and eventually switch to the main procedure. But even this super-short procedure, when performed sincerely, can give good results.

Appendix B: Shodasopachaara Pooja

[If you want to perform a shodasopachaara pooja (a worship consisting of 16 services) to Shiva who is in fire and the idol, instead of the panchopachaara pooja mentioned in this document, please use the procedure in this appendix instead. This will take more time.]

Say the line below and think in the mind that you are offering a nice seat to Shiva to sit on. While imagining that, just offer a few akshatas to the idol and the fire.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | ఆసనం సమర్పయామి

Now, say the line below imagine that you are washing his feet. While imagining that, show a little water with the spoon to the fire and leave the water in a small empty bowl (we will call it “the deposit bowl” from now onwards).

ఓం నమః శివాయ | పాదయోః పాద్యం సమర్పయామి

Say the line below, imagine that you are washing the hands of Shiva, show a little water in the spoon to the fire and leave it in the deposit bowl.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | హస్తయోః అర్ఘ్యం సమర్పయామి

Say the line below, imagine that you are offering drinking water to Shiva 's mouth, show a little water in the spoon to the fire and leave it in the deposit bowl.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | ముఖే శుద్ధాచమనీయం సమర్పయామి

Say the first sentence below, imagine that you are giving a bath to Shiva, show a little water in the spoon to the fire and leave it in the deposit bowl. Say the second sentence below, imagine that you are giving drinking water to Shiva 's mouth after bath, show a little water in the spoon to the fire and leave it in the deposit bowl.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | స్నానానంతరం ఆచమనీయం సమర్పయామి

Say the line below, imagine that you are offering a pair of nice clothes (one in the top and one in the bottom, *i.e.* like a shirt and a pant) and offer a few akshatas to the idol and the fire.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | వస్త్రాణి ధారయామి

Say the line below, imagine that you are offering a yajnopaveetam (sacred thread) and offer a few akshatas to the idol and the fire.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | యజ్ఞోపవీతం సమర్పయామి

Say the line below, imagine that you are offering nice jewelry and offer a few akshatas to the idol and the fire.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | ఆభరణాని సమర్పయామి

Say the line below and offer a little bit of sandalwood paste, turmeric powder, kumkum powder and akshatas to the idol and the fire. If you don't have all these, just sprinkle a few akshatas on the idol and the fire.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | గంధాన్ ధారయామి హరిద్వా కుంకుమం సమర్పయామి అక్షతాన్
సమర్పయామి

Keep sprinkling a few flowers or flower petals or akshatas on the idol and the fire while reading the following 16 names of Shiva. Make sure you put very little amount of materials in the fire, so that you don't extinguish it accidentally. Offer most things to the idol instead. Just offer a token amount in the fire.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | పుష్పాణి పూజయామి

Say the following line and show the incense stick lighted before to the fire and the idol.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | ధూపం ఆఘ్రాపయామి

Say the following line and show the lamp lighted before to the fire and the idol. Then show a little water in the spoon to the fire and idol and leave it in the deposit bowl.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | దీపం దర్శయామి ఆచమనీయం సమర్పయామి

Say the first sentence below, show one of the two food items you prepared (or fruits) to god and imagine that he tasted it. If you know the standard procedure of offering *naivedyam* with the Gayatri mantra, you can do it. Else, don't worry and just say the line below. When saying the second line, imagine that you are offering a nice *taamboolam* (*paan*) to Shiva and offer some akshatas in their place to the idol and the fire.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | వైవేద్యం సమర్పయామి తాంబూలం సమర్పయామి

Place a little camphor on a camphor container or a plate, light it and make a clockwise vertical circle in the air with the plate in front of the fire. Say the line below while you do it.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | కర్పూరనీరాజనం సమర్పయామి

Take a small flower (or some akshatas) in your right hand, say the following and offer the flower to the idol (and perhaps a couple of petals into the fire). If you know “Narayana Sooktam” and/or Mantrapushpam (and if you have time), read them first and then say the line below. Otherwise, just this line will do. Imagine that you are offering a flower that captures the essence of all mantras.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | మంత్రపుష్పం సమర్పయామి

Say the following and bow before Shiva mentally. Of course, you can also get up, go around the homa kundam once or thrice and bow down (or kneel down or lie down) in front of the fire, if you are not in a hurry. If someone looks at you from the roof or sky, it should look like you are going around the fire in clockwise directions.

ఓం నమః శివాయ | ప్రదక్షిణా నమస్కారాన్ సమర్పయామి

While you do all this, make sure that the fire gets going. Keep placing more dry coconut pieces if necessary to keep the fire going. It may be tricky the first few times, but you will get used to it. When necessary, you can sprinkle a little camphor powder in the fire to make it bigger.

Appendix C: Practical Tips and Hints

Here are some hints related to practical aspects of homam:

- (1) In the beginning, there may be problems with maintaining the fire. New dry coconut pieces (or wood pieces) have to be put in the fire while old pieces are still burning, in order to keep the fire going. One’s ability to estimate how long a dry coconut piece can sustain fire will improve with time.
- (2) If the fire completely goes away, sprinkling some camphor powder on the hot pieces can bring the fire back. That fire can be sustained by placing new pieces.
- (3) If only a small amount of akshatas are offered during pooja (one or two akshatas each time) and placed on a coconut piece, they will eventually burn.
- (4) When offering a flower, if only a petal is placed on a coconut piece and the rest of the flower is placed near the idol, it has a better chance of burning fully in the fire without creating problems to the fire. Of course, in a homam performed with a big fire, full flowers burn easily.
- (5) If small amounts are offered, it works better (when the fire is also small).
- (6) If merely a drop of ghee is offered each time, less smoke is generated.

(7) Wood generates smoke. But dry coconut generates very little smoke. It generates smokes mainly at the end when the fire goes away. If the homa kundam is close to a window and the window is opened at the end, that may be sufficient to drive the little smoke out.

(8) Apart from mantras of Shiva, mantras of other deities can be offered in the fire while imagining them and Shiva to be different manifestations of the same Cosmic Being.

(9) It is a very good idea to keep the body as still as possible, with minimal movement of only those body parts that must move (*e.g.* arm and mouth). It will maximize the positive spiritual benefit from homam.

(10) It is a good idea to keep atleast two coconut pieces burning all the time. Even if the fire in one becomes weak, the other piece can help re-ignite it.

(11) If one puts a lot of oil or ghee in a pan and heats it, it generates smoke as the ghee burns. If one puts too little oil in a pan and tries to fry vegetables, they burn and generate smoke. If one puts the right balance of oil and vegetables, they get cooked properly and there is no smoke. Similarly, if one puts the right balance of ghee and solid materials, they burn without smoke. There will be some smoke only at the end, when the fire goes off. Wood, on the other hand, is different from dry coconut and generates more smoke.