

Simple Saraswati Homa

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Introduction

Saraswati is the goddess who blesses devotees with learning and scholarship. Her homa can be done every day or every Wednesday or every on Saptami tithi or on Moola nakshatra.

Preparation

Find a standard homa kunda or simply a small vessel/utensil made of copper/silver/bronze/steel, in square/circular/rectangular shape. Even if it was used for cooking earlier, it's ok. Clean it thoroughly, dry it and use it. We'll simply call it "homa kunda" in this writeup.

Find some ghee (clarified butter). If not available, use sesame oil or some other oil. Find a copper/silver/steel cup/tumbler/vessel to keep melted ghee. Find a copper/silver/steel spoon for offering ghee.

Find another tumbler and spoon for water. Keep a matchbox and camphor (if available) ready.

If possible, get some dry coconut (copra) halves at a nearby store and make small pieces (roughly 1 inch x 1 inch). If not, collect some fallen dry twigs from nearby trees (or other firewood). If you have dried cowdung pieces, you can use those too.

If you have black/brown/white sesame seeds and any unsalted plain nuts (e.g. cashews, almonds etc), you can use them too.

Some Precautions

Do NOT consume meat or alcohol or drugs on the previous day. Sleep well and get up early on the day of homa. Take bath and wear clean clothes that you feel comfortable in (no need for traditional clothes if they make you uncomfortable, as being in a calm state of mind is more important than externalities).

If possible, it is ideal to do homa in an open space outdoors. When doing in a closed room, one should have enough ventilation to avoid accumulation of smoke in the room, resulting in smoke inhalation. One should also take precautions and avoid fire hazards like inflammable substances near the homa.

Procedure: Pre-Fire Stage

Sit down facing east and place the homa kunda in front of you. Think of Mother Earth with gratitude for bearing your weight. Clean your palm, pour some water in your palm 3 times and drink it after saying the following:

(1) ॐ केशवाय स्वाहा

(2) ॐ नारायणाय स्वाहा

(3) ॐ माधवाय स्वाहा

Light a lamp and think of fire in it with gratitude. While saying any mantra you like (or just ॐ), breath in and out calmly while focusing the mind on your breath. You can either do alternate nostril breathing or normal breathing. Stop when your mind is calm.

Place some water in your right palm. If you are *not* comfortable with Sanskrit, say this:

For the establishment of Dharma on earth and for the well-being and peace of all people, I shall do a Saraswati Homa within my abilities.

If you are comfortable with Sanskrit, say this:

भूलोके धर्म स्थापनार्थं सर्वेषां जनानां सुखं शान्तिं सिद्ध्यर्थं सरस्वती होमकर्म यथाशक्ति करिष्ये

After saying it, drop the water in front of you, over the tips of fingers.

Place a couple of copra pieces (or twigs) in homa kunda and light them with a matchstick (use a camphor for ease if you have), while saying the following and imagining that Holy Fire will cooperate in this ritual:

ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवरोम्

Offer drops of ghee in fire 8 times while saying this and imagining that fire is becoming holy and stronger:

ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवः स्वाहा

Procedure: Initial Offerings in Fire

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your consciousness to Prajapati, via Holy Fire:

ॐ प्रजापतये स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your faculty of inspired perception to Indra, via Holy Fire:

ॐ इन्द्राय स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your faculty of logical and structured thinking to Agni, via Holy Fire:

ॐ अग्नये स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your faculty of feeling and intuition to Soma, via Holy Fire:

ॐ सोमाय स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your awareness of physical, mental and spiritual realms to Prajapati, via Holy Fire:

ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवः स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your ability to plan and avoid obstacles to Ganesha, via Holy Fire:

ॐ गं गणपतये नमः स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your ability to persist and overcome problems to Varuna, via Holy Fire:

ॐ वं वरुणाय नमः स्वाहा

Procedure: Services to Main Deity

Saying this, imagine that Mother Saraswati has entered Holy Fire and accepting your offerings.

अत्र आगच्छ। आवाहिता भव।

Say this and offer sandalwood powder in fire (or a drop of ghee in its absence):

ॐ लं पृथिव्यात्मिकायै नमः

Say this and offer a flower or dried flower powder (or a drop of ghee in its absence):

ॐ हं आकाशात्मिकायै नमः

Say this, light an incense stick and place it near the homa kunda (or offer a drop of ghee in its absence):

ॐ यं वाय्वात्मिकायै नमः

Say this and show the lamp to the homa kunda (or offer a drop of ghee in its absence):

ॐ रं अग्न्यात्मिकायै नमः

Say this and offer a raisin or piece of a fruit or some unused cooked food in fire (or a drop of ghee in its absence):

ॐ वं जलात्मिकायै नमः

Procedure: Offerings to Main Deity

Say one of the following 5 mantras and offer a drop of ghee (or sesame seeds or nuts) in fire while imagining that Mother Saraswati is accepting it:

ॐ ऐं सरस्वत्यै नमः स्वाहा

ॐ वद वद वाग्वादिनि स्वाहा

ॐ या देवी सर्वभूतेषु विद्या रूपेण संस्थिता। नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः। स्वाहा।

ॐ शारदा शारदाभोज वदना वदनांबुजे। सर्वदा सर्वदास्माकं सन्निधिः सन्निधिः क्रियात्। स्वाहा।

Warning: Ignore the mantra below if you are uncomfortable with Vedic intonation (swara). You can also chant flat.

ॐ प्रणौ देवी सरस्वती वाजैर्भिर्वाजिनीवती। धीनामवित्र्यवतु। स्वाहा॥

You can do this as many times as you can. You can also use any other mantras you are attached to.

Don't rush. Imagine that lord is in fire, accepting your offerings and mantra. Imagine that his blessings are coming to you. Try to develop that feeling and enjoy it.

Procedure: Final Offerings in Fire

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your physical experiences to Agni, *via* Holy Fire:

ॐ भूः अग्नये स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your mental experiences to Vayu, *via* Holy Fire:

ॐ भुवः वायवे स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your spiritual experiences to Surya, *via* Holy Fire:

ॐ सुवः सूर्याय स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering everything physical, mental and spiritual that is being created inside you, to Prajapati, *via* Holy Fire:

ॐ भूर्भुवस्सुवः स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering everything physical, mental and spiritual that is being sustained inside you, to Vishnu, *via* Holy Fire:

ॐ विष्णवे स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering everything physical, mental and spiritual that is being destroyed inside you, to Rudra, *via* Holy Fire:

ॐ रुद्राय स्वाहा

Take 6 raisins or 6 pieces of a fruit (no more fruit should be left outside of those pieces) or 6 fruits. Offer them to those ethereal associates of the deity, who cannot accept via Holy Fire and who like to consume food via sense of smell. You can throw away that food later in woods or trash or feed it to animals or birds.

ॐ पार्षदेभ्यो नमः

Procedure: Poornahuti (Complete Offering)

Say this and offer a big copra piece or a nut or a twig or a big drop of ghee in fire while imagining that you are surrendering your sense of being to Mother Saraswati:

ॐ ऐं सरस्वत्यै नमः स्वाहा

Say this and offer a drop of ghee in fire while imagining that Holy Fire with seven tongues is pleased:

ॐ अग्नये सप्तवते स्वाहा

Meditation

Now, meditate as long as you can, with the following mantra (or any other mantra you like).

ॐ ऐं सरस्वत्यै नमः

At the end, say this while imagining that peace descends on you and others:

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः