

Simple Shiva Homa

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Introduction

Lord Shiva is a personification of detachment, auspiciousness and self-mastery. His homa can be done every day or every Monday (or weekend) or on a Chaturdasi tithi.

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) om keśavāya svāhā
- (2) om nārāyaṇāya svāhā
- (3) om mādhavāya svāhā

Light a lamp and think of fire in it with gratitude. While saying any mantra you like (or just om), 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 Shiva Homa within my abilities.

If you are comfortable with Sanskrit, say this:

bhūloke dharma sthāpanārthaṁ sarveṣāṁ janānāṁ sukha śānti siddhyarthaṁ śiva homakarma
yathāśakti kariṣye

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:

om bhūrbhuvassuvarom

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

om bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ svāhā

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:

om prajāpataye svāhā

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:

om indrāya svāhā

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:

om agnaye svāhā

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:

om somāya svāhā

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:

om bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ svāhā

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:

om gaṁ gaṇapataye namaḥ svāhā

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:

om vaṁ varuṇāya namaḥ svāhā

Procedure: Services to Main Deity

Saying this, imagine that lord Shiva has entered Holy Fire and accepting your offerings.

atra āgaccha | āvāhito bhava |

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

om laṁ pṛthivyātmāne namaḥ

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

om haṁ ākāśātmāne namaḥ

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

om yaṁ vāyvatmāne namaḥ

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

om raṁ agnyātmāne namaḥ

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):

om vaṁ jalātmāne namaḥ

Procedure: Offerings to Main Deity

Say one of the following 3 mantras and offer a drop of ghee (or sesame seeds or nuts) in fire while imagining that Lord Shiva is accepting it:

om namaśśivāya svāhā

om hrīm namaśśivāya svāhā

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

om tryambakaṁ yajāmahe sugandhiṁ puṣṭivardhanaṁ | urvārukamīva bandhanānmṛtyormukṣīya māmṛtāt |
svāhā ||

You can do this as many times as you can. You can do one mantra for sometime and the other for some more stime. 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:

om bhūḥ agnaye svāhā

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

om bhuvaḥ vāyave svāhā

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

om suvaḥ sūryāya svāhā

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:

om bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ svāhā

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:

om viṣṇave svāhā

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:

om rudrāya svāhā

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.

om pārṣadebhyo namaḥ

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 Lord Shiva:

om hrīm namaśśivāya svāhā

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

om agnaye saptavate svāhā

Meditation

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

om hrīm namaśśivāya

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

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ