

Sanatana Dharma

**Lesson 11: Yajña: Jivanmukti: Liberation
While Living**

Festival: Maha Shiva Ratri



Review of

Lesson 10: Yajña: The Fire Ritual

Śānti Mantras



- ॐ सह नाववतु ।
सह नौ भनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥
- Om saha nāvavatu |
sa ha nau bhunaktu |
sa ha vīryam karavāvahai |
tejasvināvadhītamastu mā vidviṣāvahai |
Om shāntiḥ shāntiḥ shāntiḥ ||

Śānti Mantras



- Meaning:
 - 1: Om, May God Protect us Both (the Teacher and the Student),
 - 2: May God Nourish us Both,
 - 3: May we Work Together with Energy and Vigour,
 - 4: May our Study be Enlightening, not giving rise to Hostility,
 - 5: Om, Peace, Peace, Peace.

Review of Lesson 9: The Four Varnas



- The Vedic society is a duty-based society
- Every duty is considered to be sacred and essential and should be performed with the proper attitude as prescribed by Karma Yoga principles
- Just because a person is born into a varṇa does not mean that a person has certain “rights” and superiority over others
- Karma Yoga teaches us that we only have duties; we are not “entitled” because we are born into a certain caste

Review of Lesson 10 Yajña: The Fire Ritual



- Through Vedic times, fire has been used as a medium for devotees to pray and seek help
- Fire is considered a medium that carries the oblations offered by a devotee to an invoked deity
- The three essential requirements of a Yajña are:
 - Mantra; Material for oblation; Deity invoked
- Yajña brings the devotee's attention to focus by:
 - Speech (mantra); Body (offerings made); Mind (Deity invoked)

Festival: Maha Shiva Ratri



- From “Hindu Festivals and Celebrations” by Smt. Anasuya Sastry
- **Maha Shiva Ratri** is celebrated on the 14th day of the waning moon in the month of “Magha”
- Maha Shiva Ratri - in honor of Lord Shiva
- Shiva & Pārvati - regarded as parents of the universe
- Shiva represents Puruṣa (primary cause) and Pārvati represents Śakti (energy)
- We have already discussed the Ganga story, Markandeya story, etc. to teach us about the significance of Lord Shiva and Maha Shiva Ratri

Festival: Symbolism of Lord Shiva



- Lord Shiva, with half-closed eyes, teaches us to be “in the world but not of it” (Sri Ramaṇa Maharṣi)
- Lord Shiva’s form reminds us that we should do our duty but not become needlessly attached to sensory pleasures, which in turn leads us to constantly seek happiness in objects and/or approval of others
- Detachment happens through understanding that the Divine is expressed in all forms;
 - We can learn to love and accept others as they are
 - We do not discriminate on the basis of color, gender, income, religion, nationality, etc.
 - We learn to enjoy whatever work comes our way and learn to dedicate our actions and their results to the Lord

Meditation



- Open your eyes and look at the picture of Lord Shiva – don't look elsewhere for 1 full minute
- Reflect on the symbolism of Lord Shiva's form
- Slowly close your eyes and look at the picture within your heart
- Visualize within and be silent for some time



Lesson 11: Liberation While Living



- All human pursuits are described by the four puruṣarthas
- **Dharma** is the basis of everything we do (action) in the Vedic tradition
- Human beings seek **Artha** for security and serving the needs of society
- Human beings have desires (**Kama**) which they would like to satisfy
- As one becomes more mature, one seeks **Mokṣa**

Lesson 11: Liberation While Living



- Why does a mature person seek **Mokṣa**?
- Think!
- We want to be happy all the time (not just the weekend!) and we want to be happy everywhere
- We seek Artha (money, security) to satisfy our desires (Kama)
- We think that satisfying a desire will make us happy
- Is this really true?

Lesson 11: Liberation While Living



- When I was a few years old I craved having a genuine cricket bat of my own; I thought this would make me happy forever
- One day my parents got me a cricket bat. I was very happy! When I went to sleep, I used to put the cricket bat right near my feet (so I could be touch it with my feet in the middle of the night)
- After a few weeks, the “newness” of the cricket bat was gone, it started to have the scars of the cricket ball - like all other used cricket bats
- Eventually, I moved on to something else (new desire)

Lesson 11: Liberation While Living



- Like the cricket bat, all objects etc. we seek to “make us happy” only make us happy temporarily
- Actually, they don’t make us happy
- We forget for a moment that we badly wanted something when we finally get it – this is the moment that we are truly happy
- So, if things don’t make us happy all the time, is there anything that will?

Lesson 11: Liberation While Living



- So, if things don't make us happy all the time, is there anything that will?
- Our Vedas teach us that Knowledge of the Self is the only way to remove all unhappiness from our minds
- The Knowledge of the Self is revealed in the Upanishads (at the end of each Veda)
- Every human being has a choice to seek this Self-Knowledge
- The Upanishads become the means (pramaṇa) of providing us with Self-Knowledge

Lesson 11: Liberation While Living



- As human beings, we cannot be free of action (Karma);
- When we perform action (Karma) with the **attitude** of Karma Yoga, that prepares our minds and helps us mature – and awakens us to seek self-knowledge
- Karma (e.g., action of prayer) by itself cannot guarantee heaven or happiness
- Self-knowledge frees one from all afflictions

Lesson 11: Liberation While Living



- One who has gained self-knowledge is called a “jivan-mukta”
- A Jivan-mukta lives in a liberated state (ever free) because he has understood that neither he is the doer or actions (karta) nor is he the enjoyer of the results (bhokta)
- He has the understanding that the Lord is both the doer and the enjoyer

Lesson 11: Liberation While Living



- Bhaja Govindam is a wonderful hymn attributed to Sri Adi Śankaracharya and teaches the seeker the path to jivan-mukta

Sat-sangatvé nis-sangatvaṃ

Nissangatvé nir-mohatvam

Nirmohatvé niścalatatvaṃ

Niścalatatvé jivan-muktiḥ

Lesson 11: Liberation While Living



- The beauty of Sanatana Dharma is that the Vedas provide us a way of life to **discover** this truth, which liberates an individual from all bondage **here and now**

Concluding Śānti Mantra



- ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम पूर्णात् पूर्णमदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमीदाय पूर्णमैवावशिष्यते ॥
Om Pūrṇamadah Pūrṇamidam Pūrṇāt-Purṇam-
Udacyate
Pūrṇasya Pūrṇamādāya Pūrṇamévāvaśiśyate ||
Om Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ ||

Meaning:

That (God) is infinite; this (world) is whole;
from the infinite the world becomes manifest.

From the infinite, even if the whole is taken away,
what remains again is the infinite.