

## **SHIKSHAPATRI SHLOK 49:**

***All my disciples shall get up daily before sunrise, meditate upon Lord Shree Krishna and then go to answer the call of nature. || 49 ||***

- *Lord Swaminarayan* now begins his teachings upon '*Nitya-Karma*' - those duties observed daily - *Pratyaham*.
- *Shatanand* explains that the period of 55 *Gadis* (One *Gadi* = 24 minutes) after sunrise is called *Ushakala*. Thereafter, 57 *Gadis* is *Arunadeyakala* and 58 *Gadis* after that is *Praatahakala*. The remaining time (for sunrise) is called *Suryodeyakala*. The time before sunrise is called *Brahm-muhrat*.
- It is this **Brahm-muhrat Kala** which is of significance and is precisely the time when we are to wake up and perform prayers to *Shree Krishna*.
- *Acharmayukh* explains, 'Night time's last *Gadi* and daytime's first *Gadi* (2 *Gadis* in total) is known as *Brahman*.'
- *Prayogparijat* explains, 'Night time's lasts *Prahar* (one *Prahar* = 3 hours) is called *Brahm-muhrat*. Such time is for study of the Vedas and so one should remain awake for this duration of time.'

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## **BHRAM-MUHRAT:**

- ***Bhram-muhrat*** = when all the stars and constellations can be seen in the sky. These constellations should still be in the sky when a person takes a bath. Therefore, devotees should train themselves to wake up accordingly.

**Smrutiratnavali** explains the **consequence of sleeping during *Brahm-muhrat*** –

- ‘By sleeping during ***Bhram-muhrat***, one destroys their *Punya* (fruits of righteous actions). Those who unintentionally sleep during such time should perform *Pada-Krucchra Vrata* (involving severe fasting).
- ***Bhram-muhrat*** is for purpose of study of Vedas and devotion to God. It is the most purest and pious part of the day. Therefore, one can find peace of mind at this time and not be distracted from meditating upon the Lord Supreme.
- It is said that those who tackle a problem during such time will surely succeed in finding a solution to their problem. Those who perform worship during this time receive endless more fruits for their action. Such is the greatness of ***Bhram-muhrat Kala***.
- For such reason, one should not sleep during this time of day and thus waste it in this way. After which one should meditate upon Shree Krishna, his *Bhaktas* and his *Tirtha Sthanas* - performing *Shree Krishna*

*Smaranam.*

- Some people have a habit of drinking tea, reading newspapers or switching on the radio as soon as they wake up! This does not suit a devotee.
- Sleep is considered to be a rehearsal of death. When God releases a devotee from the rehearsal, He should be thanked by the chanting of His name. This should thus, be taken place before performing ablutions, having a bath and others.
- One who chants God's name as soon as one wakes up in the morning in *Bhram-muhrat* would never have bad dreams. On waking up after having a bad dream, chanting God's name in meditation rids one of any bad luck. One who does not chant God's name soon after waking up does not become pure even after having a bath.
- *Shatanand* says that those who have woken early should perform *Smarana* for one *Gadi* (24 minutes). Those awoken late shall perform *Smarana* for two *Gadis* (48 minutes) and then go to answer the call of nature. It is ironic that we work opposite to this philosophy by reducing the time spent on *Smarana* / *Pooja*, the later we wake up!

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**ANSWERING THE CALL OF NATURE:**

- *Manu* explains the cleansing procedure after answering the call of nature: ‘Using sand or mud (and water) one must cleanse their genitalia once, their knees thrice, their left hand ten times, both hands together seven times and their feet three times.’ Only after such rigorous procedure does one become truly cleansed. It is surprising that many people don’t even bother to wash their hands when going to answer the call of nature, never mind the rigorous procedure above.
- *Shatanand* **forbids** the use of various types of sand or mud - there are five in all: (1) that from a river etc., (2) from temples and other holy places, (3) from an underground burrow of a snake or ant-hill, (4) from a

mouse's burrow, (5) mud used by somebody else for the same purpose.

- *Shatanand* explains that those who do not properly cleanse themselves after answering the call of nature are degenerates. Therefore all should make sure that they follow these principles. Not only is it a religious thing but it is also for purpose of personal hygiene and the prevention of disease.
- *Shatatap Muni* explains, 'Those who answer the call of nature in circumstances where there is no water to cleanse themselves should bathe once they have water, perform a special offering and drink a preparation of water and Ghee, purified with Gold. After which *Bhaskacharya* suggests further purification through fasting.
- Nowadays, most people use soap to cleanse their hands. This does not mean soap should be used instead of mud. A bar of soap is still not ideal. This is because, a bar becomes dirty when people rub it their dirty hands. A liquid soap dispenser is ideal. The reason being the germs from the hands cannot disinfect the dispenser or the soap inside.

#### CONCLUSION:

It is desirable that *Bhaktas* wake before sunrise and perform *Pooja*. This is rarely done these days. However this should not be used as an excuse to not perform *Pooja* or to in some way ridicule to those who do perform *Pooja*. There are people in this world who will say to those who perform *Pooja* - 'Your *Pooja* is futile as you perform it after sunrise - it will bear no fruits'. Fools who do not understand the greatness of *Pooja* speak such words. Yes, those performing *Pooja* before sunrise will receive endless more *Punya* for their act. Those who perform *Pooja* after sunrise may not receive as much *Punya*, but will still receive something for their labour and so such people should never give up their devotion.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Is the rule of sunrise applicable to us here in the UK?
2. What is the ideal time one should wake up latest by?
3. Between what times does the ***Bhram-muhrat*** start and stop?
4. Are we meant to have taken a bath by the end of the ***Bhram-muhrat*** or should have wakened up by then?
5. What time should I have a bath, in case I was working or studying or had gone out with friends?
6. Etc etc etc.....