



S.K.S. SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE (LONDON) – BAL YUVAK MANDAL

Westfield Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9EA Est. 1966 Charity Reg. No. 271034

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Shikshapatri Bhashya 41

|| Those of my Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya disciples who have been initiated into the devotion of Shree Krishna by their Guru shall always wear around their neck a double kanthi prepared from tulsi wood and shall mark their forehead, chest and arms and with a tilak ||

Initiation into a Samradaya is much more than one realises. After initiation one needs to follow the code of conduct stipulated by the Acharya. Only then does one have a right to worship God. (**Shatanand Muni**) How do we choose the right Guru?

A worthy Guru:

- Has control over his senses;
- Is pure and pious;
- Of high intellect or wisdom;
- Full bodied;
- Follows the Dharma; and
- Whose mind, speech and body are employed to protect and comfort those in need.

It is extremely important that one is initiated into a worthy Sampradaya, headed by a worthy Guru/ Acharya.

The Krishna Mantra

In our Sampradaya we refer to this as the 'Guru Mantra' or 'Krishna Ashtakshar Mantra'. This is samanya diksha and the mantra should be recited everyday in our pooja. We also have bhagvati diksha for those who become saints and sankhyogis.

Twice borns (Dwija) have to attain diksha. These are Brahmins Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. Why are they twice born? Once when they are born, and again when they have their yagnopavit (**what is this?**) ceremony. Those without diksha face death and rebirth as an animal. They are considered a burden on Earth (**Padma Puran, Uttar Khanda**).

Kanhti (Tulsi mala)

This signifies Jugal Upaasna (bhakta-bhagwan relationship, as is that between Radha and Krishna, swami sevak or Jeev and Shiv). Tulsi is used because of its sacredness within Hinduism. It is another sign of initiation into the Sampradaya.

It is said that Yamdots do not come near those who wear kanthis. A dog with a dog collar is a stray, and is eventually rounded up by dog catchers. In the same way, a person without a kanthi is a stray and is eventually caught by the Yamddots. Anyone who doesn't wear a kanthi is consumed by fire and falls to hell. If you eat or drink without a kanthi, then that food and water is considered to be meat and liquor. When we wear a kanthi we should recite:



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II Tulsikashtasambhutemale Vishnujanapriya

Bibharmi Tvamahan Karashte Kuru Mam Krushnavallabham II

‘O rosary made of Tulsi, which is adored by all Vaishnavas! I place thee around my neck. Grant that I be fond of Krishna as I wear thee.’

Note: Just because we wear a kanthi does not make us Satsangis. We need to follow the Panch Vratman in order to prove our worthiness. The kanthi IS NOT a fashion accessory which can be worn with 1 strand or 3. Can we have a kanthi which has been made from gold? Discuss. – could argue that the use of gold is ordained, but at the same time it may take away the humbleness and simplicity of kanthi.

Tilak Chandlo

Those who do not do a Tilak do not have the right to the fruits of their actions. Yagnas, daan, jap, offerings, svadhyay (Vedic study) and shraadh (offerings to dead ancestors) hold no fruits if not done with a Tilak. If you have a tilak and perform shraadh then you attain the fruits of 10 million such ceremonies over millions of years gone by.

Vaishnavs regardless of caste should wear the tilak. However, a devotee of Shiva should not abandon the tripundra. The tilak is known as the footprint of God. By wearing the mark we are advertising our faith and devotion to the Lord.

Men should wear the ‘U’ Shaped tilak daily and should be done using gopichandan. They should say the following mantras whilst applying it in the order shown below:

- Forehead (to bring development of the mind and intellect) – Om Vasudevaiya Namah;
- Centre of chest (to bring health and vitality) – Om Shankarshanaiya Namah;
- Right Upper Arm – Om Pradyumnaiya Namah; and
- Left Upper Arm – Om Annirudhaiya Namah (marks on the arms prevent unscrupulous acts and bring pure actions).

A kum kum chandlo should be worn in the middle of the ‘U’ (Urdvapundra) on the forehead. Whilst applying the chandlo one should recite ‘Om Maha Laxmine Namah’. Please note that female devotees should only apply the chandlo and not the Urdvapundra.

As above, the tilak chandlo is not a fashion accessory, and therefore different shapes and stick on bindis are not acceptable. What can we say to those who are ashamed to wear tilak chandlos?

- A forehead without a chandlo is somewhat dim.
- Those with a tilak look livelier and it brings beauty to the face.
- If other faiths are not scared or ashamed to show their marks of faith then why should we be?