



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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TILAK & CHANDLO

“Male devotees shall mark their forehead with Urdhvapundra Tilak (‘U’ shaped mark of Gopichandan or sandalwood paste) with a round Kumkum Chandlo in the middle. Married women shall only make a round mark of Kumkum on their forehead”...(Shikshapatri Shlok 52)

“Widows shall not mark their forehead with a tilak or chandlo. All my devotees shall then meditate upon Lord Shree Krishna and mentally offer him sandal wood paste, flowers etc.”...(Shikshapatri Shlok 53)

Lord Swaminarayan himself introduced the Tilak Chandlo

- Tilak is the symbol of the Lotus Feet of God and will lead you to Akshardham (Pundra means a lotus and Urdhva means upward).
- Tilak is yellow in colour, Chandlo is red in colour.
- Chandlo is a symbol of Bhakti and of Radhikaji/Lakshmiji (i.e. spiritual prosperity)
- Just like other symbols the Tilak Chandlo signifies Bhakti and devotion to God. It shows that you are a devotee of God and can be trusted by other devotees.
- Tilak Chandlo is primarily applied on the forehead because it is the place of Agnya Chakra, i.e., the commanding centre of spiritual power.
- The scriptures declare that without the Tilak mark meditation, charitable work and the study of religious books are a waste of time, i.e. it is not fruitful.
- For the males when the tilak chandlo is put on the following mantras must be said:
 - Forehead - Aum Vasudevaay Namah
 - Chest/heart - Aum Sankarshanaay Namah
 - Right Arm - Aum Shree Pradhyumnaay Namah
 - Left Arm - Aum Shree Anirudhaay Namah

For the males and females when the kumkum chandlo is put on, the following mantra is said:

Aum Maha-Laxmi-Narayanaay Namah



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ORIGINS:

Ancient sages applied sandalwood paste or paste made from clay (collected from the ground where they placed their Murtis) on their forehead to make it cool and helpful while they went into deep meditation. It helped to calm their minds and focus on their souls and the inner being.

IMPORTANCE:

Tilak is a mark of auspiciousness. It is put on the forehead with sandal paste, sacred ashes or kumkum (red turmeric). The devotees of Shiva apply sacred ashes (bhasma) on the forehead, the devotees of Vishnu apply sandal paste (chandan), and the worshippers of Devi (in our case, Radhaji and Laxmiji) apply kumkum.

The scriptures say: "A forehead without a Tilak, is only worthy of condemnation. It exists for name's sake only."

"A Tilak is similar to an address on a letter. It defines where that letter is headed. If lost en-route, someone can easily identify it and put it back on track".

From this you can imagine the importance of Tilak or the sacred mark.

APPLICATION:

Tilak is applied at the Agna Chakra, the space between the two eyebrows. It has a very cooling effect. Application of sandal paste has great medicinal value, apart from the spiritual influence. Application of sandal paste will nullify the heating effect when you concentrate and meditate at the Bhramrandra.

Tilak indicates the point at which the spiritual eye opens. Lord Shiva has a third eye at the Bhramrandra. When he opens the third eye, the three worlds are destroyed.

So also, when the third eye of the Jiva is opened, the three kinds of afflictions – Adhibhautika (pains of the body), Adhyatmika (pains given by those around you), and Adhidaivika (pains given by the gods and powers) - are burnt to ashes. The three Karmas – Kriyaman (immediate results), Sanchita (results a bit later but in this life), and Prarabdha (results of previous or future births), - and also all the sins committed in the countless previous births, are burnt.

When you apply the Tilak, you mentally imagine:

Neej-atmanam Bhramroopam, deh trey vilakshanam

"I am the one non-dual Brahm, a divine and pious soul, free from this body and all its afflictions. May my eye of intuition open soon." You should remember this every time you apply a Tilak.



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METHODS:

There are various methods of applying Tilak:

1. Shaivites apply three horizontal lines with the sacred ashes and may even shape it like a trident.
2. The Vaishnavas apply three vertical lines (Tripundra) on the forehead. When they apply Tilak, they say: "O Lord, protect me from the evil effects of the trigunatmika maya which has sattwa, rajas and tamas as its binding cords."
3. Some Vaishnavas apply only one vertical line.
4. Some Vaishnavas (like us) apply chandan as a Tilak in a U shape (to symbolise allegiance to the Lord), and a red spot as a chandlo (to symbolise acceptance of the Lord's pious muktas such as Radhaji and Laxmiji).

Only the method of application differs, but the significance is the same.

EXAMPLES:

1. Ambrish Raja was addressed as "Bhagat" by the lonely old woman in the forest because he had a Tilak and Chandlo on his forehead. She trusted him to help her find her way home because of this.
2. Lord Swaminarayan's saints were identified as distinct from the rogue bhagvadhari saints and protected by the British empire in India because they adorned the unique Tilak and Chandlo while traveling to every village. The rogues had different applications on their foreheads.
3. Yamdoots came to take Dhanji Suthar's paapi son. But because Dhanji Suthar was a Satsangi and applied Tilak and Chandlo on his son's dead body's forehead, the Yamdoots said that they could not touch him anymore.