

Shashti Poorthi

Shashti Poorthi (known also as “Shashti Abdha Poorthi” or “Ugraratha Shanti”) is a Hindu ceremony celebrating the 60th birthday of a male, akin to the **renewal of marital vows**.

1 Etymology

Shasti Poorthi is celebrated on completion of 60 years of age of the male. This term is derived from Sanskrit in which Shashti means sixty; abda—year; poorthi-completion. It marks completion of half the years of one's lifetime as in Hinduism, 120 years is considered the life span of a human being. The sixtieth year in one's life is a significant milestone, memorable turning point, a touching reminder of the rich, mellowed life that would unfold in the years to come.

The veda says "*Janmaabde, Janmamaasecha Swajamadivase tathaa, Janmarshe chaiva kartavyaa shanti rugrathaahvayaa, Devaalaye nadeeteere swagruhe vaa shubhasthale*"

The sages and the **rishis** of lore have acknowledged the sanctity of the sixtieth year in one's life and have drawn out elaborate rituals to mark this special event. They looked at it as rebirth and suggested the repetition of those rituals performed at one's birth. Hence this celebration at this point of life is a sacred part of the hallowed **Vedic** culture.

The Shastipoorthi Shanti should be performed in the sixtieth year and in the same month and day of birth according to the Indian Zodiac. This is considered to be the best option. In case it is not possible to time it exactly on the same day, allowance is given to perform it on a convenient day during and before the completion of sixtieth year. The choice of the place to carry out this tradition could be a pilgrim town, a temple, a river bank or even one's residence. As part of the celebrations the couple's children perform their parents' second wedding. This is reason for a grand family reunion to incorporate an important event in the couple's married life.

Shanti

The rituals carved out as part of Shanti are also referred to as Ugraradha Shanti. Ugraradha is nothing but the harsh natured time. In a hundred-year time scale of man's life, pre-sixty is a period of materialistic pursuit while the post-sixty span is slated for spiritual endeavour. The Ugraradha Shanti is a prayer sent to the heavens to make the post-sixty span a spiritually fulfilling experience.

Three different ways are chiseled to carry out the Shanti aspect. They are “Shounakoktam, Bodhaayanoktam and Shaivaagamoktam”

The basic elements of these three ways remain the same, though the contents vary marginally. Of all, Shaivaagamokta Shanti is very elaborate and ritual-laden. Given its exhaustive scope of rituals, only a limited few like the kings and the emperors can follow it in toto, though it is not entirely ruled out for devout householders.

Kranthi

After the successful completion of the “Shanti” programme, the Kranthi programme follows in which “Kalyaanam” is very important. “Kranthi” means “to step ahead” and signifies heading towards a new life.

“Shastipoorthi” is a good bridge - builder between the householder's domestic concerns and Vaanaprasta's spiritual yearnings. During Vaanaprasta, the married couple is to fulfill their life's mission by staying together through observance of celibacy. The “Kalyana Veduka” is a reminder of the unique role they are to play in the years to come. Marriage in the younger days promises physical proximity, while the one performed now brings about spiritual affinity.

Thus the Shanti - Kranthi aspects, which run through the “Shastipoorthi” celebrations provide a fusion of spiritual and social obligations which are the very bed rock the Indian culture.

The Ceremony

This ceremony should be performed as per Guru and elderly persons instructions. Generally this ceremony is two days programme. The ceremony is commenced in Shubha Muhurutham by performing “Yamuna Pooja”, followed by the “Ganga Pooja”, “Ishta Devatha Vandana”, “Sabha Vandana”, “Punyaha with Panchagaavya Sevana”, “Naandi Pooja”, “Ruthwikgvarana” and Kalasha Sthapanam”.

Kalasha sthapana of the deities - “Maha Ganapathi”, “Adithyadhi Navagraha”, “Mrutunjaya”, “Samvatsara-Aayana-Ruthu-Maasa-Paksha-Yoga devatha”, “Karana devatha”, “Raashhyadhipathi (pathi and pathni)”, “Navadurga”, “Sapthama Maru Devatha”, “Dwadasa Aditya - Dhata, Aryama, Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Vivasvan, Tvashta, Vishnu, Amshuman, Bhaga, Pusha and Parjanja”, “Ayurdevatha, Istadevatha, Kuladevatha”. Next Avahaana-Praana Pratishtapanam, Shodashopachara pooja, Mahamangalaarathi, Navagraha and Ganapati Homam.

2 References

[http://www.shaaditimes.com/wedding-rituals/
indian-customs/shastipoorthi-041018](http://www.shaaditimes.com/wedding-rituals/indian-customs/shastipoorthi-041018)

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