

Vasant Panchami - 23rd January 2026

Pranaams, Vanakkum, Jai Ma Saraswati Devi



"May Goddess Saraswati,
who is fair like the jasmine-colored moon,
and whose pure white garland is like frosty dew drops;
who is adorned in radiant white attire,
on whose beautiful arm rests the veena,
and whose throne is a white lotus;
who is surrounded and respected by the Devas, protect me.
May you fully remove my lethargy, sluggishness, and ignorance."

Vasant means, "The spring season" and Panchami mean fifth day. This is the great spring festival, falling on the fifth day of the month of Magh (January - February), the first day of spring. This year Vasant Panchami falls on the **23rd January**. Vasant Panchami is a festival full of religious, seasonal and social significance and is celebrated by Hindus all over the world with verve and new sense of optimism. Vasant Panchami is the festival dedicated to Saraswati, the goddess of learning.

As 'Diwali' - the festival of light - is to Mother Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, and 'Navaratri' is to Mother Durga, goddess of strength, might and power, Vasant Panchami is dedicated to Mother Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and learning. She represents the free flow of wisdom and consciousness. She is the mother of the Vedas, and chants to her, called the 'Saraswati Vandana' often begin and end Vedic lessons. Mother Saraswati grants us Hindus knowledge, learning and aesthetics, particularly in the realm of arts. Mother Saraswati is the one who is represented by the feeling of being aware and dispensing with ignorance. She is also called by another name viz. Vaagdevi, which is the goddess of speech and communication. We Hindus worship Mother Saraswati in order to get rid of confusion from our lives by the light of knowledge. The way the goddess is portrayed is a point to be noted. Mother Saraswati does not have any jewellery or bright colours adorning her. All that she

wears is white and this symbolizes the purity and simplicity that she embodies. She is not lured by materialistic wealth or baseless pursuits. She has arisen above the wanting of the fulfilment of desires and has the will power and control over her mind to be able to withstand all kinds of temptations. Everything that she stands for is simple, pure and a part of nature, away from materialistic pursuits.

Mother Sarasvati's expression is so serene and calm even thought she is majestic. She is seated on a white lotus in Padmasana, adorned by a pure white silk sari, she has a book in her lower left hand, her lower right hand showing the chinmudra. Both of her eyes are full of compassion. The vehicle assigned to each of the three goddesses also symbolically represent their special powers. Mother Saraswati is the consort of Lord Brahma (Lord of Creation) and is the Goddess of wisdom and learning. Mother Saraswati is the one who gives the essence (sara) of our own self (swa). She is considered as the personification of all knowledge - arts, sciences, crafts and other skills. She has a beautiful and elegant presence, is pure white in colour, clad in a white sari, seated on a white lotus, representing purity and brilliance. She has four hands representing four aspects of human personality in learning; mind, intellect, alertness and ego. She has the sacred scriptures in one hand and a lotus (a symbol of true knowledge) in the second. With her other two hands she plays the music of love and life on the veena.

Mother Saraswati is always shown as someone who is dressed in complete white and is seated on the white lotus along with a veena one of her favourite instruments. Any place where knowledge is transpired is considered to be the home of Mother Saraswati. She is the goddess that will help you in your pursuit of knowledge and learning and allow you to be joyful by the dispensing of ignorance away from you. Us Hindus worship Mother Saraswati because of the knowledge and wisdom that she can embody on us. She is the goddess of dawn that will be able to enlighten the being and dispel darkness away from them. If there is no knowledge and wisdom on this earth, then the earth will be thrown into darkness and mayhem. In order to get the true meaning of wisdom for oneself, one has to give up the pleasure that is sensual and dependent on our senses but must search for the peace and calmness of the spiritual well being. She is dressed in white (sign of purity) and rides on a white goose (swan). She is generally shown to be riding swans, which symbolizes the purest form of knowledge that one could ever possibly acquire. The swan is known for its peculiar characteristic of being capable of separating water from milk, indicating that we should possess discrimination in separating the bad from the good. The seat being a lotus or peacock implies that the teacher is well-established in the subjective experience of truth. When sitting on a peacock she reminds us that wisdom suppresses ego.

Every year Saraswati Pooja (Navaratri) is celebrated by people all over India, be it students, workers, craftsmen, businessmen offering their prayers for a successful and fruitful year. Major temples for Mother Saraswati are in Basara Town (Andhra Pradesh, www.BasaraTemple.org) Shringeri (Karnataka), Pushkar (Rajasthan), Panachikkad (Kerala), South Paravoor (Kerala). Though temples for Mother Saraswati are rare, there are some minor temples in Kumbakonam, Koothanur (Tamilnadu), Basar, Nuzvid (Krishna Dt.) (Andhra Pradesh), Bharathi temple (known as Kollam Bharathi locally) near Atmakur, Kurnool Dist in Andhra, Shradapeth (ruins) (Kashmir) Also Deupatan, Kamalakshi, Thimi, Bhadrakali, Gairidhara in the Kathmandu region have Ma's temples.

The colour yellow is given special importance on Vasant Panchami. On this day, Mother Saraswati is dressed in yellow garments and worshipped. Sweets of yellowish hues are distributed among relations and friends. Some people feed Brahmins, some perform Pitri-Tarpan (ancestor worship) like in Pitra Paksha and many worship Kamadeva, the Deity of love on this day.

However, the most significant aspect of this day is that children are taught their first words on this day, for it is considered an auspicious day to begin how to read and write. Educational institutions organize special prayers for Mother Saraswati. Notebooks, pencils and pens are kept at Mother Sarasvati's lotus feet for blessings and thereafter used by the students. A notice board asks the students to write their names; address and the roll number on a piece of paper and put it in the hundi after praying for success to Mother Sarasvati! Ma blesses them for good and positive results. Saintly people and individuals inclined towards spiritual progress attach great importance to the worship of Mother Saraswati.

Mother Sarasvati is also known as Brahmani who is part of the Ashta Matrikas (8 mothers) as described in Devi Mahatmya (Durga Paath). The Ashta Matrikas (8 mothers) are warrior devi's who help Mother Durga fight against the evil forces in the Durga Paath. Maha Saraswati is the presiding Devi of the Final episode (Uttama Charita - chapters 5-13) of Devi Mahatmya (Durga Paath). Here she is a part of the trinity of Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi and Maha Saraswati. She is depicted as eight-armed. Her dhyana shloka is: Wielding in her lotus-hands the bell, trident, ploughshare, conch, pestle, discus, bow, and arrow, her lustre is like that of a moon shining in the autumn sky. She is born from the body of Gauri and is the sustaining base of the three worlds. The Maha Saraswati I worship here who destroyed Shumbha and other asuras.

The Rigvedic hymns dedicated to Mother Sarasvati mention her as a mighty river with creative, purifying, and nourishing properties. Along the course of the Sarasvati, the Harappan Civilization developed. The earliest known examples of writing in India have been found in the ruined cities that line the now dry riverbed of the ancient waterway. As a river/water goddess, Mother Saraswati symbolizes fertility and prosperity. She is associated with purity and creativity, especially in the context of communication, such as in literary and verbal skills. In the post-Vedic age, Mother Sarasvati began to lose her status as a river goddess and became increasingly associated with literature, arts, music, etc. Her name literally means "the one who flows", which apparently was applied to thoughts, words, or the flow of a river (in Sanskrit: "dhaara-pravaah").

In the Rig-Veda (6,61,7), Mother Saraswati is credited, in association with Lord Indra, with killing the serpentine being Vritrasura, a demon which hoarded all of the earth's water and so represents drought, darkness, and chaos. She is often seen as equivalent to other Vedic goddesses such as Vak, Savitri, and Gayatri. Mother Saraswati represents intelligence, consciousness, cosmic knowledge, creativity, education, enlightenment, music, the arts, and power. She is not only worshipped for secular knowledge, but for the true divine knowledge essential to achieve moksha. She is also referred to as Shonapunya, a Sanskrit word meaning 'one purified of blood'. The original (spiritual) forms of devi's and deva's including Mother Saraswati are present in the spiritual world: "In the centre [of Vaikuntha] reside the deities of fire, sun and moon, Kurma-avatara, Ananta Sesha, and Garuda, the master of the three Vedas. The Vedic hymns and all sacred mantras also stay in that holy place, which is made of all the Vedas, and which is known in the Smriti-sastra as the yoga-pitha." Srila Rupa Gosvami elaborates: Accompanied by Goddess Lakshmi and other associates, the catur-vyuha expansions headed by Lord Vasudeva are manifest in the eight directions, beginning with the east. In the directions beginning with the south-east, the palaces of Lakshmi, Saraswati, Rati, and Kanti respectively are situated.

Regarding the origin and development of Sarasvati, interesting accounts are recorded in different Puranas. The Devi Mahatmya section of the Markandeya Purana refers three principal forms of female principle, i.e. Mahalakshmi, Mahakali and Mahasarasvati. According to the Brahmavaivartta Purana, the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, the Matsya Purana, the Devi Bhagabat Purana, goddess Sarasvati is stated to have been born from

the mouth of Paramaatma, Krisna as his Shakti. The Matsya Purana and the Vayu Purana describe Sarasvati as Visvarupa and Brahma created her. In the Matsya Purana She is conceived as wife of Brahma.

As evident in the Tantrasara, where Sarasvati devi has more dhyanas, as compared to other devi's. Her name is Varnesvari, which means 'goddess of letters'. She is also described as Varnajanani, the meaning of 'mother of letters'. The other epithets of Sarasvati devi included in different literature as Jihvagravasini (dwelling in the front of the tongue) and Kavijihvagravasini (She who dwells on the tongues of poets), etc.

As the goddess of learning She has various names such as Vagishvari, Sharada, Sarasvati and Bharati, etc., having different vahanas (vehicles) associated with different pastimes/situations. Sarasvati devi is associated with the hamsa (swan), the lotus, the ram, and lion. According to the Puranic texts, Sarasvati inherited her vahana swan (hamsa) from her father or husband Lord Brahma, who has swan vahana. According to the Satapatha Brahmana, ram is the mount of Sarasvati devi from the Vedic period. Sarasvati devi is also described as Mayura vahana. It is probably to symbolize her philosophical relation with Agni that She holds the peacock the symbol of Agni, as her vehicle. According to Krisna Yajurveda, the lion is her mount and She was invoked in the form of a lioness to destroy the demons.

Today, Sarasvati devi is worshipped primarily as a goddess of speech, learning and the fine arts. Her early associations with water, fertility, as a goddess of healing, as goddess of prosperity are mostly forgotten.

DID YOU KNOW??? The Germany national airlines called is called "Lufthansa". So the sanskrit word 'Lupt' means 'vanished' and 'hansa' means 'swan'. The literal meaning is, the Swan that vanished into the sky after flying. The swan is on every airplane.

Us Hindus celebrate this festival of Vasant Panchami with great enthusiasm, and temples and households are full of activities on this auspicious day. This 'Panchami' is also known as Sarasvati Day, because it's said that on this day Mother Sarasvati appeared. Vasant Panchami is a festival full of religious, seasonal and social significance and is celebrated by Hindus all over the world with verve and new sense of optimism. The first faint signals of the forthcoming festival of Holi - the festival of colours - also manifest at Vasant Panchami.

Food (Naivedhyam) offered to Mother Sarasvati can be quite elaborate consisting of foodstuff like Puri, Baingan Bhaja (fried eggplant), Aloo ki Sabji (potato curry), Halwa, sweets (mithai) like Sandesh and Burfies. Many different types of fruits including Amrood (guava) and ber aka jujube, red date, or Chinese date, (*Zizyphus jujube*) are included. Other foods eaten on Sarasvati pooja day are 'bhuni mung ki khichiri', mixed vegetable curry, chutney, papar (popodoms) and sweet rice (Kheer). Great significance is attached to offering honey to Mother Sarasvati on this day, as honey is representative of perfect knowledge. Her favourite fruit is supposed to be the apple.

Below is a simple prayer procedure to perform on this day to Mother Saraswati.

Firstly have a bath and then wear clean clothes. At your prayer place already have a picture/murti of Mother Saraswati and before hand make sure the prayer place is already clean/tidy and ready for your worship. Light incense/agarbatti and play in the background devotional music of Ma Saraswati. This is to give the prayer a special feeling.

Saraswati devi Prayer Procedure

At the prayer place, place a Lord Ganesh murti or photo and a picture/photo of Mother Saraswati devi. Firstly offer an agarbatti, lamp (with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor) and a flower (or all three on a tray) to Shree Ganesh (turn seven times clockwise around the murti or photo), and pray to Shree Ganesh, praying to him to remove all obstacles in the path of your prayer to the Mother. Mother Saraswati devi is now invoked and worshipped. Pray to Mother Saraswati devi asking Devi to please accept your prayers.

1) Hold your palms in the Namaste position and chant:

Om swagatam su swagatam - Om Saraswati devi-yai namah
(Swagatam means O Mother Saraswati I welcome you.)

2) Offer one or three incense sticks (dhoopam) by turning it seven times clockwise around Mother Saraswati deity/photo.

Om tato dhoopam aghraa-payaami - Om Saraswati devi-yai namah
O Mother Saraswati I offer you this incense, kindly accept my offering.

3) Then offer a clay or brass lamp (deepam) with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor by turning it seven times clockwise around the deity/photo.

Om prat-yaksha deepam darshayaami - Om Saraswati devi-yai namah
O Mother Saraswati I offer you this lamp offering, kindly accept my offering.

4) Then offer flower (pushpam) or flower petals by turning it seven times clockwise around Mother Saraswati's deity/photo.

Om idam pushpam - Om Saraswati devi-yai namah
O Mother Saraswati I offer you this flower, kindly accept my offering.

5) Then offer cut fruit or sweet meats or sweet rice (Naivedyam). It should be in a small bowl with a teaspoon. Turn the bowl seven times clockwise around the deity/photo and bring the bowl near the lips of Mother Saraswati suggesting she partakes in the food offering. Then leave this in front of the deity/photo. This is later consumed by the family as the Devi's Prashad.

Om naivedyam samar-payaami - Om Saraswati-yai namah
O Mother Saraswati I offer you this food offering, kindly accept my offering.

6) In a cup (lota/chumbhu) which has only milk turn the lota seven times clockwise around the photo and bring the lota near the lips of the Mother suggesting she drink the milk offering.

7) Offer prayers for forgiveness

Om yaani kaani cha papani janmaantara kritaani cha
taani sarvaani nashyanti pradakshina pade pade //

"O Compassionate Mother! Victory to You! Please do forgive all the errors committed by me with the hands, legs, speech, body, through actions, through the ears, eyes, mind or by not doing ordained actions or by doing prohibited actions".

Then offer your personal prayers to Mother Saraswati devi. Ask Devi for whatever you desire (within reason) and Devi being so merciful will grant what you desire. But be careful what you desire for.

Optional: You may sing or hear the Saraswati Chalisa.
Saraswati Chalisa click ([HERE](#)).

After the worship is over offer the lota milk in your Devi Thaan.

One may chant the following mantra from the "Shree Artha Argala Stotram" when offering milk but if it's rather difficult to pronounce then recite the English meaning.

Om Jayanti Mangala Kaali Bhadra Kaali Kaapaalini
Durga Shamma Shivaah Dhaatri Swaahaa Swaadhaa Namostute

(Oh! Conqueror of all, Remover of darkness, Auspicious one, beyond time, the bearer of Skulls of Impure thoughts, Reliever of difficulties, loving forgiveness, supporter of the Universe. You are the one who truly receives the sacrificial offerings and the offerings to the Pitars (Ancestors). To you I bow most merciful Devi.)

More mantras of Mother Saraswati to chant on Vasant Panchami:

Om shreeng hreeng sarasvat-yai namah

Om aing hreeng shreeng vaag-dev-yai saras-wat-yai namah

May Mother Saraswati Bless you & yours with wisdom,
peace, happiness, good health & prosperity

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