**VARIOUS TYPES OF CHARITY**



Adi Sankaracharya in his stothram praising Annapurna, the personification of plentiful food, says:

Annapurne sadapurne SankaraPranavallabhe gyanavairagya siddhyartham bhiksham dehi ca Parvati

Annapurna Devi, Goddess of Plenty, you are Lord Shiva’s eternal Consort, give us alms together with wisdom.’

The Annadaanam has gained its own importance mainly because; humans can be satisfied only in this. Also, this dhaanam specifies the significance of hunger and poverty.

Gaja turaga Sahasram | Gokulam koti danam |
Kanaka Rajatha patram | Methini sagarantham |
Upaya kula vishuttam | Koti kanya pradanam |
Nahi nahi bahu danam| Annadanam samanam ||

**Meaning:** Even if one gifts 1000 elephants, horses or gifts 10 million cows or any number of silver and gold, gifts the entire Land till sea, offering the entire services of the clan, helps in the marriage of 10 million women, all this is never never equal to Annadhaanam (Poor Feeding)

The above particular sloka has over lighted, but why??? Just to turn the minds towards the annadhana, it has been said like this.

The same composer in a song will say no god is there above Parvathi, in the very next song he will say the same to Vishnu. We should not get confused because of these slokas and carry on with our Dhaanams that are helpful to the society. It doesn’t mean that other dhaanas are cheap. But it insists us to do annadhanam.

When decided to give something, then why should there be classifications and gradations??? If our neighbour came to our house and ate one day, and similarly, our brother came to your house and ate one day. Will these be considered as annadhana??? (Certainly no; because, they are all not come under the "dhaana" category, as one other day we also will go and eat in their home). Similarly, the rich person’s does not need our annadhana also. But we know, even some millionaires have eaten like beggars in temples as a "Prarthana". Also there is nothing wrong that we can donate the same to Orphanages, old age homes etc. or even some beggars in the street.

In Tamil there is a proverb saying, "Vaai Vaazhthaavitalum Vayiru Vaazhthum". (Even if the mouth which eats doesn't bless you, the Stomach which digests will surely remember you) and by doing this, will certainly bring calm and steadiness in your mind.

The Sanskrit word Annadanam literally means the offering or sharing (danam) of food (annam).In sanskrit the word “Annam” means food and “Daanam” means to donate. Thus “Annadanam” means feeding the hungry and needy. Taittiriya Upanishad declares, All life force comes from food. (annam vai pranah) and Let food be produced in plenty (annam bahu kurveet). In Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna declares, From food all beings are evolved (annad bhavanti bhutani).Even in Vedas, Upanishad, Ramayana, or Mahabharata during all these periods feeding a hungry person was treated as a greatest service to man kind. **ANNA DAANAM MAHAA DAANAM** [offering food is the best gift in the world.]is a very popular Sanskrit verse which has motivated millions of Indians to perform this divine act and in ancient India in most of the temple premises there were annadana centers

**Annam Para Brahma Swarupam**. Food only can support the body to attain Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha. The person, who participate in this sacred Annadanam, will be blessed by divine Gods. Creatures cannot live without food, hence the donors of Annadanam are also considered as donors of pranadanam. Pranadanam means to offer all things as donation, accordingly they are blessed. Annadanam is a sacred activity. It is said that the sacred works done by the people with the energy acquired by food bestows half of its effect to the donor of food and the rest is to that person. Many positive results like this can acquire from the Annadanam.

Deserving poor may be offered food without any motive. There is news that some noble persons in down South - Madurai and Thirunelveli giving free food for mentally challenged persons without expecting any reward, a true Dhaanam to its meaning.

Some of the Dhaanam’s practiced and followed by are as follows:

**JALA DAANAM:**This form of charity involves giving water with betel nut and dakshina to a Brahmin, and it is done for wealth.

**SHAYANA DAANAM:**Giving bed to a needy is done for general happiness.

**VASTHRA DAANAM:**Giving clothes to needy will ensure a long life to the giver.

**KUMKUM DAANAM:**When a woman donates kumkum, she ensures a long life for her husband.

**CHANDANA DAANAM:**Donating sandalwood will prevent accidents.

**NAARIKELA DAANAM:**Donating coconuts will ensure that the last seven generations attain salvation.

**BUTTERMILK DAANAM:**Donating buttermilk will give you knowledge and enlightenment.

**PADARAKSHA:**Donating slippers to the need will keep the giver away from hell.

**CHATRA DAANAM:**Donating umbrellas on the other hand will help remove obstacles from the giver’s path.

**Blood Donation** is noble act, but it should be done without any reward.

**Vidya donation** to an ignorant is noble provided it is done without any reward.

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**Importance of doing charity on Tuesdays**

1. Tuesdays are meant for the planet ‘**ANGARAGAN’** , donations if done on Tuesdays will remove the evil effects of those who are suffering from (Chevvai) Angara Dosha.
2. Tuesdays are meant for Amman and Murugan worship also. Any charity made on Tuesdays will bring happiness in the life of the donar and Amman’s and Murugan’s blessings also will be there.
3. Tuesdays are very auspicious days. Many people observe fasting and will do charity by giving food and clothes to the poor on tuesdays.
4. Any charity if done on tuesdays, will be give more benefit to the donor, than on any other days.
5. Those who born on tuesdays and who do charity continuously on tuesdays will never take rebirth again in this world as per the verses of Hindu Puranas.
6. Any person who prefers a better job, and if he does any charity on tuesdays, he will get immediate change in his life and his wishes will be fulfilled.
7. Charity if done on Tuesdays, will bring health,wealth and better prospects in the donor’s life.

**CONCLUSION:-**

In general, doing charity on all the days in a week is important. Particulary, if a person does any charity on Tuesdays, it will yield better results in his life. Hence we have to do charity on all the seven days in a week as per our financial background. If we give more donation on tuesdays, than on any other day in a week, we will be blessed by the divine devas from the heavens.

**Developed by**

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