

SOLAR ECLIPSE OBSERVANCE FOR US RESIDENTS ONLY

A partial solar eclipse will occur on Thursday, October 23rd, 2014. It will be visible from most of the United States, Canada and Mexico. People in the West Coast will be able to see the full eclipse. However, the further East in the US you are, the eclipse will still be in progress as the sun sets. In Atlanta, the partial eclipse will begin at 6:01 PM EST and end at 7:48 PM EST. However, the sun sets during the eclipse at 6:53 PM. Please visit: <http://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/solar/2014-october-23> and check to see the exact time of the eclipse in your city and the sun set times. In the East Coast and Central Time Zone the sun will set before the eclipse ends.

It is recommended that everyone perform snAnam(bath) at the start of the eclipse. It is normal for people to do japam, recite sahasranAmam etc. during the eclipse. Then take a bath again after the end of the eclipse or sunset, whichever is earlier, for suddhi or purity.

For those doing tharpaNam, you need to take a bath after the start of the eclipse, do tharpaNam just before the eclipse ends(at the time of the release or just before sunset) and then take a bath after the end of the eclipse or sunset, whichever is earlier. The tharpaNam procedure is the same as amAvAsya tharpaNam, with the following exceptions:

1. Sankalpam: Replace the words " amAvAsya puNya kAlE dharsha shrAddham thila tharpaNam rUpENa adhya karishyE" with "Sooryoparaaga puNya kaale sooryoparaaga shrAdham thila tharpaNam roopeNa karishyE"
2. sAthvIga thyAgam(Beginning and Ending): Replace the words " dharsha shrAddha" with "sooryoparaaga shrAddha"

This following applies only to individuals in the East Coast and Central Time Zone where the sun sets in the evening before the eclipse ends:

Very strict individuals will not eat anything till they see the sun rise again next morning and have a bath. However, we can treat this like an Ekadasi day and prepare and eat palahAram in the evening after the end of the eclipse.

Since AmAvAsya also occurs on the same day as GrahaNam, some of you have asked whether those doing tharpanams have to do it twice or once. You only need to do it once during GrahaNam, following the same rules as for when AmAvAsya and Maasapirappu(sankramaNa) shrAddham occurring on the same day.

Here is the rule:

In a pair of events involving tharpanam occurring on the same day which involve samAna devatAs (same deities), one is 'niyatam' (frequent) and the other is 'aniyatam' (rare). Since 'aniyatam' is more important, that has to be observed and the other left out. Since AmAvAsya and GrahaNam tharpanam involve two-way ancestral lineage, only the rare one needs to be observed. Similarly, this rule applies when AmAvAsya and manvAdi, yugAdi or sankramaNam occur on the same day.

(Please note that some elders observe both.)