Sabari Yatra Mala Wearing Mantra

Shlokas · English

This mantra has to be administered by a Priest or a Guruswamy.

Jnaanamudraam Shaastru mudraam
Gurumudraam Namaamyaham
Vanamudraam Shuddhamudraam
Rudramudraam Namaamyaham

Shaantamudraam Satyamudraam
Vratamudraam Namaamyaham
Shabaryaashrama Satyena
Mudraam Paatu Sadaapi Me

Gurudakshinayaa Poorvam
Tasyaanugraha Kaarine
Sharanaagata Mudraakhyam
Tvan Mudraam Dhaarayaamyaham

Chinmudraam Khechareemudraam
Bhadramudraam Namaamyaham
Shabaryaachala Mudraayai
Namastubhyam Namo Namaha

Meaning of Mala Dharana Mantra

When we wear the mudra mala, we are indeed making a physical, mental, and spiritual commitment - with the Divine Self within, to prepare our body/mind/intellect for the arduous journey through the forests to reach His Divine abode, and to get His darshan. We commit to observing the vrata for at least one mandalam (of six weeks), go on the pilgrimage, and present our Irumudi at HIS Holy Feet - for HIS divya darshan.

Given below are the shlokams we chant at the time of receiving our mudra mala from our guru, after having worshipped the Holy Feet of our Supreme Guru, Swami Ayyappa.

Let us explore the meaning and the significance of the first four shlokams:

My salutations to this symbol representing wisdom, the sacred scriptures, the Guru, the forest (representing life itself, through which we take the journey towards attaining moksha), purity, and the ever-present God.

I offer my salutations to this symbol of peace, truth, and penance. May the Truth of Shabari's hermitage ever protect this symbol.

After seeking and securing the compassionate grace and blessings of my Guru, O Lord, I will wear this symbol of my complete surrender, and seek refuge in You.

I offer my salutation to this symbol of pure intellect, the celestial beings, and auspiciousness. O symbol of the shabari hill, I offer my salutations to you again and again.

There are a few important words and concepts to understand and appreciate in these shlokams. First, the word 'mudra'. Literally, mudra means a symbol, a seal (as in a royal seal, a seal of authority), a special sign (as mudras used in tantric rituals and our puja), and a special pose conveying specific meanings (e.g. classical dance has numerous mudras).

To devotees of Swami Ayyappa, the mudra maala is a seal of approval they have received from HIM, their Supreme Guru, through the compassionate grace and blessings of their guru swami. It is the honourable duty of the guru swami to ensure that the mudra maala is given only to the deserving. It is also the guru swami's duty to guide the devotee through out the vratam, and help through the journey to attain our Lord's darshanam. Thus, each mudra maala represents a symbol of the guru swami's authority, commitment and responsibility to the devotee.

The shlokams detail the many aspects/attributes which the mudra maala symbolizes, from wisdom all the way to total surrender of the self (ego) and finally seeking refuge at the Holy Feet of our Lord. It is equally important to appreciate that this surrender of self is not just at the feet of our Lord, but also at the feet of the guru swami.

It is also important to understand the expanded meaning of 'guru' or preceptor. It is said we have three preceptors who lead us to realization of the Divine Self within. The first of these is our mother, who bears us and nourishes us. The second is our father, who traditionally initiates us into Gayathri upaasana and leads us to the next preceptor - the one who imparts Vedic knowledge to us, preparing us for the Atma-vichaarana needed for realizing the Divine Self. Thus, it is essential to get the blessings of one's parents before approaching the guru swami for wearing a mudra maala and starting on the austerities leading to the yatra and the experience of bliss in His divine presence.

Which brings us to the next three key words: dakshina, anugraha and sharanaagati. The word dakshina has several meanings - but the most important of them is, "Compassionate, ignorance-destroying glance/communication". Our Lord is called Dakshinaamoorthi, as HIS compassionate glance and the chin-mudra HE

shows completely dispels the nescience of the greatest of sages who had been
in penance for thousands of years at HIS feet to attain knowledge of the Self.

The guru dakshina we offer to our guru is a very humble and a miniscule token offering in exchange for this divine compassion we receive. In fact, in order to be truly deserving of this grace, we need to do a lot more, there is a shlokam:

dhyAna moolam guror moortihi, poojA moolam guror padam mantra moolam guror vAkhyam, moksha moolam guror krupA

The foundation of meditation is the form of our guru; the foundation of worship are the holy feet of our guru. His words are the foundation of mantrams to us. (By being so) HIS grace becomes the foundation for liberation from earthly bondage. There is another shlokam that describes the dakshina to be given to a guru:

guru shushrUshayA vidya, pushkalena, dhanena cha athavA vidyayA vidyA, chaturthi nopalabhyate

In order to gain knowledge from a guru, you have to serve the guru (caring for the guru), and offer the guru all forms of wealth including money. Else, you should be able to impart to the guru some knowledge being sought by the guru (for

example, I will teach you German, if you will teach me French). There is no fourth way (for gaining knowledge from a guru).

And Taittreeya Upanishad urges: '**AchAryAya priyam dhanam Ahrutya ...**' give as much as needed to please the preceptor. It also states:

shraddhayA deyam, a-shraddhayA a-deyam, shriyA deyam, hriyA deyam, bhiyA deyam, samvidA deyam -

with reverence should offerings be given, never with irreverence, and given with liberality, modesty, fear and in friendliness.

So, with the dakshina of our guru secured, and through guru's 'anugraha' - which means, through the guru's decision to shower you with grace and blessings - you surrender your ego and seek refuge (sharaNAgati) at the Holy Feet of the Supreme Guru, our Lord Ayyappan. Note that this sholokam is directly addressing Lord Ayyappan - while the other three shlokams are focused on the mudra mala itself. The word literally means 'brought closely along' - the guru 'carries' you through the process from start to finish, till you are brought to the Divine presence of the Lord.

My prayers to Lord Ayyappan to bless us, his devotees with HIS mudra mala on the day of vrischika sankramaNam, be our constant inspiration and guide through the manDala vratam and our journey to HIS Divine sannidhAnam.