



# The Vedic Institute of Connecticut

Box 56, East Glastonbury, CT 06025

*Study, Learn and Share the wisdom of the Vedas with the world at large*

तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु (May we be illumined together)

## Learning Sanskrit through chanting

### Lesson 1

#### Background

We plan to help you learn Sanskrit – the liturgical language of Hindus i.e. it is the language used in performing all Hindu rituals. The Vedic Institute’s approach to teaching Sanskrit is different. We do not follow the usual method of introducing you to nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs etc. to start with. Instead we have chosen to begin with Sanskrit words and phrases – especially and frequently used in pujas, ceremonies and rituals. We call it **Chant & Learn**.

#### Introduction

पूज (pū ja) is a Sanskrit word meaning worship or worship service. It involves invocation of a godhead and going through a series of steps of offerings.

If, for example, your friends, parents or grandparents say they are visiting a temple on a day special to god Shiva ( शिव), and if you were to join them you may hear the priest chanting **Om shivāya namaḥ** (ओं शिवाय नमः). Salutations to Shiva. Take namaha - नमः first. Na ma ha. It means salutation. It also means bowing. I bow to Shiva.

You may have seen Hindus greeting each other by saying namaste (नमस्ते). Namaha नमः plus “te” (ते) is namaste. The word ते here means your - leading to the meaning your self. So namaste means salutations to your self. **shivāya** means to god Shiva. ओं is a sacred symbol and sound of Hinduism and you will hear it often. So you now know the word पूज, नमः, नमस्ते, शिवाय and ओं.

#### Conclusion

Practice saying **Om shivāya namaḥ**, or **namaḥ shivāya**. Repeat the phrase often and get used to the sound and intonation. Please listen to the audio file to firm up the practice.

Namaste! नमस्ते