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HARIVARASANAM CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS FINALE - RECEPTION COMMITTEE



A grand Reception Committee has been formed for the proposed HCC Finale - Ayyappa Maha Sangamam on 20th January, 2024.

The Harivarasanam Centenary Celebrations was started on 29th August, 2022 at a grand function and procession at Pandalam, Kerala the birth place of Swami Ayyappa and will be concluded on 20th January, 2024 with a grand public function - Global Ayyappa Mahasangamam at Kollam Aashramam Maidan.

The Reception Committee formation meeting at Kollam Press Club Auditorium on 09th July, 2023 was presided over by the SASS District President Sri. Valathungal Ashokan. Major General (Retd) Shri. C. S. Nair inaugurated the function. Poojya Swamy Nithya Swaroopananda, Madathipathy of Panmana Ashram and Bhagavathacharyan Shri. S. Narayana Swamy made felicitation address and blessed all for the success of the celebrations. Shri. V. K. Viswanathan, Trustee and senior karyakartha of SASS, explained the importance of Ayyappa worship and relevance of Harivarasanam Centenary Celebrations. Shri. S. Vinodkumar, National Joint General Secretary highlighted the major events of celebrations starting from inauguration at Pandalam in August 2022, state level programs, rathayathras etc. and the concluding functions in January 2024 - Mass Chanting of Harivarasanam at 7.00 pm on the Makaravilakku day - 15th and Ayyappa Maha Sangamam on the 20th January 2024.

A Reception Committee consisting of 101 members was declared with Major General (Retd) Shri. C. S. Nair as the Chairman and Shri. Sunil Mangad (SASS Dt. General Secretary) as the General Convenor for the successful conduct of the grand finale of the HCC Celebrations.

HARIVARASANAM CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS- KONKAN STATE.



SASS Konkan State, celebrated the 100th year of Harivarasanam song at Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Auditorium, Matunga, Mumbai on 8th July, 2023.

SASS Konkan State President, Dr. Suresh Nair, welcomed all the Ayyappa devotees present in the function. Around 2500 devotees were present during the celebrations. National and Kshethreeya level office bearers and senior Karyakarthis of SASS from various states attended the function. State General Secretary, Shri. Girish G Nair reported about the growth trajectory of SASS Konkan Pranth and it's envision in the future. State Treasurer Shri. Shashank Shah thanked all the sponsors for their support towards this event.

National Chairman, Shri. T. B. Shekhar informed that SASS has organised a mass chanting of Harivarasanam at evening 7 pm on 15th January, 2024 involving about 5 crore Ayyappa devotees globally and requested all the Ayyappa sevaks to join this event. National Gen. Secretary, Shri. Erode N Rajan talked about how centenary celebrations have been planned at the state and national level. National Treasurer Shri. Prakash Pai and Paschima Madhya Kshetra President Shri. Murugan R. Selvan welcomed all the important dignitaries and VIP's. Shri. N Muthukrishnan, National Secretary (Prachar) spoke about activities of SASS. Other important dignitaries who attended the HCC function were Poojya Swami. Shri. Krishnananda Saraswati, Madathipathi of Ramadasa Ashram, Badlapur, Adv. Ashish Shelar, MLA of Bandra constituency & Capt. Tamil Selvam, MLA of Sion-Koliwada constituency.

The celebrations started with SASS prayer rendered by Mrs. Asha Nair. Classical dance rendition of Harivarasanam song, by 'Shravani group Mumbai' enthralled the audience with its excellent steps. The audience were very enthusiastic during the Bhajan performances of Kalaimamani Shri. Veeramani Raju and his team from Chennai and Bhajan Samrat Shri. Prashant Varma, Music Composer and Singer, Shri. T. S. Radhakrishnan, Sopanam Artiste Shri. Njeralath Harigovindan - all from Kerala. The performances of all the artistes were unique and first of its kind in Mumbai where 4 maestros performed on the same day and stage.

SABARIMALA TEMPLE RITES AND RITUALS CONNECTED WITH DAILY WORSHIP - PART 3

(Extracts from “Sacred Complex of the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple”

by Shri. P. R. G. Mathur, Anthropologist)



USHA POOJA

Usha Puja (dawn worship) is performed by the Melsanthi from 7.30 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. It is the first of the three Pujas of the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple. It is performed with the Usha Puja Nivedyam called Idicchu Pizhinja Payasam (A type of sweet liquid preparation of coconut milk, ghee, kalkkandam or sugar candy, ginger, cumin seed powder and jaggery). A minimum of 12 liters of Usha Payasam are required for the Usha Puja. Before starting the Usha Puja, the idol of Lord Ayyappa is cleaned and adorned with blue robes. The quantity of the votive offerings of Idicchu Pizhinja Payasam depends upon the number of devotees who have contributed their share. If there is Udayasthamana Puja, the Usha Puja is performed by the Thanthri along with the offering of Idicchu Pizhinja Payasam and Vella Nivedyam (plain steam-cooked rice).

After offering the Nivedyam to Lord Ayyappa the Thanthri closes the front door and goes to the Ganapati temple and performs the Usha Puja in honour of Kannimoola Ganapati by offering Idicchu Pizhinja Payasam. It is followed by offering the Nivedyam to Nagaraja. He then returns to the Srikovil after circum-ambulating the temple and performing the Vaishyam Thookal to Agni. He then performs the Prasanna Puja and completes the Usha Puja. The temple then remains open for darshan and for ghee abhishekam. The Edakka is performed for the Usha Puja, and songs are sung in Thiyanai Ragam. The Sankhu is also blown for Nivedyam Ezhunellippikkal for the Usha Puja. The Nadaswaram is played for the Usha Puja with Nadaswaram (a conical long double reed aerophone in wood) and Thakil (a type of drum) instruments.

UCCHA POOJA

The Uccha Puja (mid-day Puja) is the most important of the rites of the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple. It is conducted between 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 noon by the Thanthri. The main offering at this Puja is Vella Nivedyam, Aravana Payasam (jaggery, fruits, small dhal, rice and ghee) and kadali plantain. The quantity of

the Nivedyam depends upon the number of Vazhipadu booked by the devotees. However, each Nivedyam will be performed with one full vessel. After completing one half of the Nivedya Puja, the Thanthri comes out of the Srikovil closing the doors and goes to the Ganapati temple and performs the Uccha Puja there by offering Vella Nivedyam, Aravana Payasam alongwith betel leaves and arecanuts. These Nivedyams are prepared by the Parikarmikal. The Thanthri performs the Uccha Puja in honour of Ganapati and Nagaraja and returns to the Srikovil after making a circumambulation of the temple and performing Thookal to the Pathinettampadi. He performs the Vaishyam Thookal too before opening the door and conducting the Prasanna Puja. After the Prasanna Puja, camphor is lit and the door of the Srikovil is opened to the devotees for darshan. The Uccha Puja lasts for one hour from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 noon. During the seasons of Mandala Puja and Makara Vilakku it is conducted from 01:00 p.m. to 01:30 p.m. The Uccha Puja is also performed in honour of Nagaraja and the Thanthri returns to the Srikovil by circumambulating the temple. Before opening the temple, Thookal is performed by offering Havis to the celestial deity Agni and this is called Vaishyam Thookal. Then he opens the temple and conducts the Prasanna Puja after making Alankaram to the deity, with special coloured clothes. The temple remains open for darshan after the Uccha Puja.

For the Uccha Puja, Edakka is performed and songs are sung in Malahari Ragam to the accompaniment of Nadaswaram. For the Uccha Puja, Panchavadyam is also performed. Every day before the Uccha Puja, the Kalasa Puja is performed with 25 silver Kalasams (this is a significant Vedic ritual involving sanctified liquid in silver pots) and ritualistic worship is conducted to the Kalasa pots. Only water is used for the Kalasabhishekam. The Kalasa Puja is performed for increasing the divinity or chaithanya of the Lord. It is performed by the Thanthri. Sometimes along with Kalasam, Kalabha Abhishekam is performed as Vazhipaadu. The Sankhu is blown for Nivedyam Ezhunellippikkal for the Uccha Puja.

DEEPARADHANA

The Deeparadhana is performed by the Thanthri at the Sabarimala Temple between 6.30 p.m. and 6.45 p.m. according to the time of the sunset. The Melsanthi, accompanied by a Devaswom attendant holding a Kuthuvilakku (a lamp with a long handle) opens the golden door of the sanctum sanctorum at 05:00 p.m. and brightens the Thookkuvilakku hung on the right side of the Lord. Then he brightens the Thookkuvilakku on the Lord's left side. After that he brightens the other five Thookkuvilakkus and nine Nilavilakkus. He then brightens the Kannadi Vilakku behind the Lord. After that the Melsanthi prostrates before the Lord and returns to the Ganapati temple closing the door of the Srikovil. After brightening the lamps of Ganapati and Nagaraja, he returns to the

Srikovil, making a circumambulation to open the door of the Srikovil at about 06:30 p.m. In the meantime the Thanthri joins him. Then the small Thattu Vilakku with five tiers is lit, along with the Nagapaththi lamp (seven-tiered lamp). Before the door is opened the seven-tier Thattu Vilakku is lighted and camphor is also burnt. Then the door is opened for the darshan. This is the time when there is the maximum crowd, as devotees cram before the sanctum sanctorum to get a glimpse of the glorious sight. The Deeparadhana starts with the lighting of the seven tiered lamp by the Melsanthi. The Thanthri begins the ritual ringing of the hand bell simultaneously. At that time the Melsanthi opens the door of the Srikovil. The Nadaswaram along with Edakka are played during the Deeparadhana.

UDAYASTHAMANA POOJA

The Udayasthamana Puja is performed for five days in a month by the Thanthri. According to Thanthri Rajeevararu, Chief Thanthri begins the Udayasthamana Puja just after the Usha Puja. There are eighteen Pujas including three usual Pujas i.e. the Usha Puja, the Uccha Puja and the Athazha Puja. Vella Nivedyam is the main offering at the Udayasthamana Puja. For each of the seventeen Pujas of the Udayasthamana Puja other than the last one at night, Vaishyam Thookal in honour of Agni is performed. The Puja is performed along with the Deeparadhana by offering Vella Nivedyam. Vaishyam Thookal is given to Agni. The eighteenth Puja is performed along with the Athazha Puja, but for the eighteenth Puja the Vaishyam Thookal is not performed. During the performance of Udayasthamana Puja, Agni is given Thookal for Deeparadhana. This Thookal is called Vaishyam Thookal. The Udayasthamana Puja is generally done by the Thanthri. Melsanthi can also perform it. The Athazha Puja is generally performed by the Melsanthi. The current booking for the Udayasthamana Puja is over until the end of 2040, as reported. During the Makara Vilakku and the Mandala Puja, the Udayasthamana Puja and Sreebhoothabali are not performed. Only Moola Mantra is recited for the Udayasthamana Puja. Fifteen special Pujas and three usual Pujas are performed for Udayasthamana Puja.

The temple door remains closed and is opened frequently for the 15 Pujas. The Lord is propitiated with additional fifteen special Pujas and three usual Pujas. The performance of eighteen Pujas for Udayasthamana Puja is in the following order.

The Usha Puja and fifteen special Pujas; the sixteenth Puja is the Uccha Puja and the seventeenth Puja is performed along with the Deeparadhana. The Athazha Puja is the eighteenth Puja. For Udayasthamana Pujas, Edakka is beaten by the Marar and twenty five Kalasams are poured during the Uccha Puja while the Edakka is played. For Udayasthamana Puja a minimum of 101 nazhis (about 300 ml size measuring vessel) of rice,

100 kg sarkara and 100 coconuts are used for making Idicchu Pizhinja Payasam.

ATHAZHA POOJA

The Athazha Puja is performed by the Melsanthi after the Deeparadhana while the Padi Puja is conducted between 07:00 p.m. and 09:00 p.m. There is no special Mantra for the Athazha Puja. But the Moola Mantra is recited. Vella Nivedyam, Appam and Panakam are offered as supper to the Lord. The Panakam is prepared with jaggery, lemon, inchi (ginger) and pepper. It is believed that any stomach ailment suffered by the devotees can be cured by drinking the Panakam. After the Athazha Puja, Harivarasanam is sung before closing the temple at about 10:00 p.m. But during the Mandala/ Makara vilakku Puja the doors are closed at 11:00 p.m. For the Athazha Puja Edakka is beaten, while songs are sung in Andari Ragam to the accompaniment of the Nadaswaram and Thakil. But, if the Udayasthamana Puja is being performed, Vella Nivedyam is also offered to the Lord.

(....Contd)

ITHIHASA – RAMAYANAM : Part 2

(Dr. P. V. Viswanathan Nampoothiri,
Retired Professor in Sanskrit, Kottayam)

RAMAYANAM

मानिषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वतीः समाः ।

यत् क्रौञ्चमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम् ॥

maniṣāda pratiṣṭhām tvamagama:
śāśvati: samāhl

yat krauñcamithunādēkamavadhi: kāmamōhitam ||

“O’ hunter, No! May you never attain eternal and permanent existence, for you are the one who killed one of the love-intoxicated birds”.

‘I curse you not to have eternal existence in this world because you killed one of the two amorous birds’ - this is the popular and generally accepted meaning of this verse. Let us examine the interpretation of this verse in more detail.



Cursing someone not to have eternal existence in this world means that he may die someday at a later time. It cannot be a curse because everyone is bound to die at some point of time. Cursing someone to die at an unspecified time doesn't sound like a curse. If it was intended as a curse, there should have been a time limit attached to it, say like a week or a month's time. However, there is no such condition attached here. Further, the reason for the curse is that the hunter shot and killed a bird. Hunting is the normal routine and livelihood of a hunter. Is it right to punish/curse him for that? For all these reasons, this verse is unlikely to be a curse.

Another important question is whether this first Sloka of Valmiki could have begun with a negative word 'ma' meaning 'no'. Whether this Adisloka, which was born out of Valmiki's mouth in a very rhythmic manner, could have begun with a 'No'? That seems far from being possible.

We can find three or four such grave improbabilities when the verse is interpreted as above. Then, it must be possible to interpret this Sloka in a different way and yes! there is such a beautiful interpretation, which makes this verse really glorious and meaningful.

The word 'Ma' has different meanings; it also means Goddess Lakshmi as seen in Amarakosa (a Sanskrit thesaurus) - 'mā ramā mangala devata' (these are different names of Lakshmi). Likewise, the word 'Nishada' could also mean - निषीदति इति निषादाः- niṣīdati iti niṣāda: - 'one who is seated' - (For example, the word Upanishad means sitting near / below). The one who is seated with 'Ma' is 'Manishada'. Thus, this word could mean the one who is seated with (wedded to) Lakshmi, i.e. Lord Mahavishnu and it can be seen as a salutation to Lord Mahavishnu.

मानिषाद शाश्वतीः समाः प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः- mānisāda śāśvati samāḥ pratiṣṭhām tvamagama: - O' Lord Vishnu, you are the one seated with Lakshmi; may you have eternal and everlasting glory. Thus, this verse can be seen as a praise glorifying Lord Vishnu. The context for this greeting is present in the second line of the Sloka. Apart from meaning a bird, the word Krauncha could also mean 'Rakshasa' (A race of people who are generally evil).

यत् क्रौञ्चमिथुनाद् काममोहितं एकं अवधीः

yat krauñcamithunād kāmamōhitam ēkam avadhi:

Among the Rakshasa couple of Ravana-Mandodari, You have killed the one who had succumbed to lust. For this great deed, O' Lord Mahavishnu, may you have eternal glory!

The most important event in the Ramayana is the killing of the lustful Ravana by Rama. With the above interpretation, the Sloka acquires three great virtues that it summarizes the story of Ramayana in the opening verse, it begins with the auspicious word Lakshmi, and this first verse is in praise of Lord Vishnu.

All along, we have got used to the popular Interpretation

that this Sloka was meant as a curse on the hunter. However, once we realize that this verse has such a glorious meaning, we can truly appreciate its relevance and status as the Adisloka of the Adikavya.

This first Sloka was written by Valmiki duly following the metre ‘Anushtup chandas’ (A metric scale for Kavya composition. There are a number of such scales that we find in Vedic mantras like Gayatri, Ushnik etc.). Later, Lord Brahma advised Valmiki to narrate the story of Rama in the pattern of the Adisloka. Following this advice, the Adikavya - Ramayana consisting of twenty-four thousand verses took shape in the hands of Valmiki.

Sloka from soka

क्रौञ्च द्वंदव वियोगोन्थः शोकः श्लोक त्वमागतः

krauñcadvandva viyōgōttha: śōka: ślōkatvamāgata:

The शोक - soka (grief) caused by the death of the bird was turned into Slokatva. Can grief befall a sage like Valmiki who has practised Tapas for a thousand years? Likewise, it seems improbable that the results of his long Tapas could be blemished by cursing a hunter. There is little chance that a sage like him could be affected by emotions like grief, anger, etc. So the fact that the ‘soka’ turned into a ‘Sloka’ is not likely to be the grief over the killing of the bird. Creativity, especially the writing of a poem, requires a calm mind. A great poem cannot come out of a troubled mind. It is only probable that the great sage Valmiki might have composed the Sloka by converting the momentary grief into a memorable verse with the help of his creativity.

Apart from the Ramayana composed by Valmiki, we have another version of Ramayana known as “Adhyatma Ramayana”, which has around four thousand verses. There is a lot of controversy about its author; no specific name can be confirmed. There are some prevailing thoughts that the author could be a Vyasa from a later generation (there are a number of Vyasas, including the author of Mahabharata). The “Adhyatma Ramayanam Kilippattu” in malayalam written by Thunchath Ezhuthachan is the word by word translation of this Adhyatma Ramayana, and not that of Valmiki Ramayana.

The Ramayana is divided into seven chapters or Kandaas-Balakandam, Ayodhyakandam, Aranyakandam, Kishkindakandam, Sundarakandam, Yuddhakandam and Uttarakandam.

The Ramayana tells the story of three families - a Manusha (human) family in Ayodhya under King Dasaratha’s rule, a Vanara (monkey) family in Kishkinda under King Ball’s rule, and a Rakshasa family in Lanka under Ravana’s rule. Based on the character and qualities of these three, we may identify Dasaratha as a ‘Satvic’ person, Bali as one dominated by ‘Rajoguna’ and Ravana possessing more of ‘Tamoguna’. Thus these three families can be seen as symbols of the three Gunas known as ‘Satva-raja-tamo-gunas’.

Ramayana can be seen as an anthology of three stories

representing these three qualities. The story can be summarized like this; Rama, the son of Satvaguna, kills Bali, thus eliminating Rajoguna, proceeds to cross the sea, then destroys Tamoguna in the form of Ravana and returns to the abode of Satvaguna. This in fact is the summary of the duties of a human being in his day to day life. We all have these three qualities within us. These qualities alternately arise within us and manifest in our actions. Tamoguna can be destroyed only after Rajoguna is eliminated with the help of Satvaguna. One has to eliminate Raja-stamogunas in order to perfect the practice of satvaguna that is to lead a virtuous life.

The story of Ramayana, is based on these three virtues. We shall engage in a journey through various contexts of the story presented in the seven chapters and try to understand the messages, advice and lessons that they convey. Since the story of Ramayana is familiar to everyone, we shall focus on the spiritual lessons that should be learnt from the stories.

(To be continued)

JHANSI RANI LAKSHMI BAI

(19 November 1828 -17 June 1858)



An unforgettable woman warrior figure in Indian history is our Rani Lakshmi Bai, who was well known as Jhansi Rani, which means The Queen of Jhansi. She was born in Varanasi (also known as Kashi) and married off to Maharaja Gangadhar Rao, but was soon widowed before they could inherit an heir.

Rani Lakshmi Bai proved her valor and heroism in the 1857 rebellion against the Britishers, and this battle was also declared as the 'First War of Independence.' She died a hero and as one of the most contributing personalities at only the age of 29.

Manikarnika was a Brahmin girl born to Moropant Tambe and Bhagirathi Tambe on 19th November 1828 in Kashi (the now Varanasi). She was also called Manu Bai when they moved to the Bithoor district in Uttar Pradesh because her father started working as an adviser in the Peshwa Baji Rao's court, after the death of her mother. Manu Bai spent her childhood training in martial arts,

horse riding, fencing, shooting, and playing with Nana Sahib, Tantia Tope, Rao Sahib, and other boys in the Peshwa's court. Manu Bai was very fond of horse riding, and she had two mares, namely Pavan and Sarangi, and a horse named Badal.

The fourteen-year-old Manikarnika was married to Maharaja Gangadhar Rao Newalkar in 1842, who was the king of Jhansi. After marriage, she was named Lakshmi Bai (Hindu Goddess of wealth). Bai is the honorable title given to the Queen or the 'Maharani' of the kingdom. In 1851, Lakshmi Bai gave birth to Gangadhar Rao's son and named him Damodar Rao, but unfortunately, after four months, the child died due to chronic illness. Soon after, Maharaja adopted his cousin's son Anand Rao, yet he could not recover from the depression of his son's death and ultimately died in 1853.

The British Government saw the Maharaja's death and a loss of direct bloodline heir as an opportunity to occupy Jhansi. The British East India Company introduced the Doctrine of Lapse, and Governor-General in India implemented this policy (from 1848 to 1856). The doctrine stated that 'if the ruler of a princely state under the direct or indirect control of the East India Company died without a legal male heir then the state would be annexed by the Company.' Rani Lakshmi Bai was irked by the unfairness of the British Rule, and she even pleaded at the London court, but of course, was turned down, and the British only agreed to grant her an annual pension that her adopted son won't be given to after her death.

Rani Lakshmi Bai was not willing to give up her fort and kingdom, and in 1857 she bravely fought against the British Army (lead by General Hugh Rose) with her son tied to her back and riding on her horse Badal. Her army consisted of 14000 rebellions and some famous figurines like Tantia Tope, Nana Rao Peshwa, Dost Khan, Gulam Gaus Khan, Deewan Raghunath Singh, Khuda Baksh, Deewan Jawahar, and many more. Some famous woman warriors that joined Rani Lakshmi Bai's forces were Jhalkari Bai, Sundar-Mundar, and others.

On March 23, 1858, when Rose besieged Jhansi, she engaged in combat with the British troops to protect the city. Lakshmibai refused to give up despite the British overwhelming her forces. The valiant Rani jumped from the fort on her horse, Badal, with Damodar Rao (adopted son) on her back. She led her army of men and women bravely against the British for two weeks during the fight. Jhansi fought valiantly, but they were defeated. However, Rani managed to escape in the night escorted with her guards. Dee Lala Bhau Bakshi, Moti Bai, Deewan Raghunath Singh, and Khuda Bakhsh Basharat Ali (commandant), were among the warriors who managed to flee with her.

After leaving the fort, she moved toward the east and camped at Kalpi, where she was joined by other rebels, including Tantia Tope. They were able to take con-

trol of Kalpi, but on May 22, 1858, British troops invaded the town. Lakshmibai led the Indian army in combat with the British, but she was unsuccessful. After escaping to Gwalior and joining the other Indian soldiers, Lakshmibai joined the Nawab of Banda, Rao Sahib, and Tantia Tope. They led a successful assault on the city-fortress of Gwalior and managed to take control of its armoury and treasury without engaging in any actual fighting. The Peshwa (ruler) was thereafter declared to be Nana Sahib, and the governor to be Rao Sahib (subedar). However, Lakshmibai anticipated a British assault in Gwalior but was unable to persuade the other Indian chiefs to plan a defense. After taking Morar on June 16 of that year, the British soldiers led by Rose successfully attacked Gwalior, confirming Lakshmibai's prediction. The Rani led her army of men and women bravely against the British for two weeks during the fight. Jhansi fought valiantly, but they were defeated.

Jhansi Ki Rani Death : The final battle was fought on 17th June, 1858. The Rani, who had been riding a horse, was struck by bullets and fell. As soon as she was dead, in accordance with her last wish, she was placed on a pile of dry grass and cremated, unseen by the enemy and untouched by the shackles of slavery.

Describing the Queen of Jhansi, Sir Hugh Rose (officer commanding the force that took Jhansi and Gwalior) said, "The Ranee (queen) was remarkable for her bravery, cleverness and perseverance; her generosity to her subordinates was unbounded. These qualities, combined with her rank, rendered her the most dangerous of the rebel leaders... the Indian Mutiny had produced but one man, and that man was a woman."

Twenty years after her death Colonel Malleson wrote in the 'History of the Indian Mutiny (vol. 3). "Whatever her faults in British eyes may have been, her countrymen will ever remember that she ... lived and died for her country. We cannot forget her contribution for India."

Legacy of Jhansi Ki Rani : Generations of people have been inspired by the brave queen's efforts. Several institutions have been named in her honour, including the Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University in Jhansi, the Maharani Laxmi Bai Medical College in Jhansi, the Lakshmibai National University of Physical Education in Gwalior, and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, a women's unit of the Indian National Army.

The revolutionary war of 1857 saw one of the strongest all-pervasive resistance to British colonialism. It showed how a common goal of liberation of the motherland can connect people of different class, creed and religion and bring them together to lead a national struggle. As we celebrate the 75th year of India's Independence, this spirit must be rekindled and revered. That would be true homage to the sacrifices made by Rani Lakshmi Bai.

KARKIDAKA VAVU / BALITHARPANAM



Amavasya is the monthly occasion which is prescribed as suitable for performing Bali-Karmas. The word ‘Amavasya’ means ‘that which reside together’. On this day, moon is believed to be residing with the Sun and hence it is not visible to us. Moon is on the other side of the earth on this day. This world which is not visible to us is believed to be Pitru-Loka. On the day of Amavasya, the Pitru-Loka would be bright and well illuminated with the rays of Moon (which is not visible to us here in earth). As such, Bali-Karmas are to be performed on this day when the Pitru-loka is having the maximum light. The ‘Kavya’ (food) that is offered to our Pitrus in the form of ‘Anna’ or ‘Pinda’ would be clearly visible in this light so that they can relish and enjoy these offerings to their utmost satisfaction.

It is believed that a Year on earth is a Day for the Pitrus. Karkidakam is the first new moon in the Dakshinayana , which is important to the Pitrus. That is why Karkidaka Vavubali is considered important. This ritual/ceremony is seen mainly in temples where Lord Vishnu and Lord Mahadev are the main deities.

After taking a fast the day before, taking a bath on the day of Amavasi, getting dressed in wetclothes, and thinking of the Pitrus, ancestors who passed away Balitarpanam is offered with great devotion. Balitarpanam is done with puja materials including cherula (Aerva Lanate-herb) sesame seeds, flowers, rice or rawrice. The method of feeding the crow is also seen on that day.

Pitru tarpanam facilities are provided at famous bathing ghats and temple shrines. Aluva (Periyar river banks) Mahashivaratri Manappuram, Thiruvananthapuram Thiruvallam Parasurama Temple, Malappuram Tirunavaya Navamukunda Temple, Perumbavur Chelamattam Shiva Temple known as Dakshinakashi, Wayanad Tirunelli Maha Vishnu Temple - Papanasini, Varkala Janardhanaswamy Temple Papanasham, Panchavadi Sri Shankaranarayana Maha Kshetra near Chavakkad, Kollam Tirumullavaram Maha Vishnu Temple etc. are very important Balitarpanam centers in Kerala.

Shraddha karma is different from Balitarpana. Shraaddham should be done on the star (or tithi) of the father’s / mother’s death. Tarpanam for the ancestors can be done on the Amavasi day of every month. But the new moons of Malayalam months Karkatakam / Cancer and Thulam/ Libra are more important. In all the Buddhist countries similar rituals of tarpanam are offered. In Japan it is called ‘Chhayi’.

KINDNESS THE GREATEST WORSHIP TO GOD -

**Mahadeva Temple and Sri Dharmashasta Temple
(Aanikad, Ernakulam, Kerala)**

Greatness of Thiruvumplavil Mahadeva Temple :



The legend associated with the Thiruvumplavil Mahadeva temple in Anikad near Moovatupuzha in Ernakulam district, which is famous as KERALA KASHI. Two people who left for Kashi Yatra. Crossing the forests, hills and rivers, their journey was in search of salvation.. As the goal was Kashi Vishwanath Darshanam and the bliss, in that single thought, no travel fatigue bothered them.. But, they saw something in the midway.

A cow lying on the road, almost dying. Sores all over the body. Flies and worms in it. They stood there for a moment not knowing what to do after seeing the plight of the mute creature who could not even move its body. On impulse, one of them started tending to the cow. The sores were cleaned and local herbs were applied. A little water and food were given. Seeing all this, the fellow traveller got angry. It's been a smooth sailing so far. The friend, on the other hand, is now engrossed in the service of the cow. If he waits longer, his goal will not be achieved. He called his friend once again. He, on the other hand, re-immersed himself in the care of the cow, insisting that he would only come after the cow's condition had been improved. Thinking that it was futile to wait any longer, the latter bade farewell to his friend and continued his journey from there.

Months of care paid off. The cow recovered completely. He was feeling the joy of being able to save the life of a dying mute animal. He did not even think about the subsequent Kashi-yatra. He suddenly remembered his friend - he might have reached Kashi by now. He was troubled by the thought that he could not do it. On the one hand, there is the joy of saving the cow and on the other hand, the sadness of incomplete Kashi yatra. A divine radiance roused him from his brooding with mixed emotions. Disappointment gave way to joy. Actually Kasi Vishwanath with Devi has appeared to him. The Lord spoke to the devotee who was confused as to whether it was a dream. "No need to grieve at all. This good deed done to relieve the grief of a fellow living creature was actually my favorite pooja. You

have great devotion to see God in everything. It is Kashi-theertha (Ganga Theertha) that flows from through the hoofprints left on this rock when the cured cow got up. You and those who come here will get all the results of going to Kashi and seeing me. As a sign of your great devotion, this Thirukulambu / hoofprint and the divine stream will remain forever”. Having told thus, the Lord contemplated. Yes, there is no greater worship of God than Kindness to fellow creatures. Adhering to the words of the Lord, that devotee spent the rest of his time in that divine place with God-mindedness and attained the exalted position of Yogishwara.

The stream of theertham through this thirukulambu can be seen even today on the north side of the temple in Muvatupuzha Anikad Thiruvumplavil Temple. “Thirukulambai” was later known as ‘Thirumbalai’ and ‘Thiruvumplavil’.

Even today, thousands of devotees come here to bathe in the Ganges and perform Pitruharpanadis and seek the blessings of the God in Tiruvumplavil, which is famous as KERALA KASHI.

Important days and pujas are Mahashivaratri, Karkatakavavu, Pradosha Sandhya, Thiruvathirayuttu, Amavasi, Aayilya Puja, Kalasha Day, Ashtami Darshan, Navratri, Umamaheswara Puja - etc..

Sivakadaksham Sadhujana Samarpana Nidhi, Tiruvumplavil Devaswom Sanatana School of Life, Mrityunjaya Spiritual Solutions, Nakshatravanam - the spiritual, educational and social activities of this temple are the specialties of this temple.

Anikad Mangalath Sri Dharma Shasta Temple



“Bhutanatha Sadananda Sarvabhuta Dayapara
Raksha Raksha Mahabaho Shastre Thubhyam Namoh
Nama:”

Mangalath Sri Dharma Shasta Temple is an ancient shrine, situated on a slightly elevated area in the north-east, about half a km from Anikad Chira Junction. The renovation of this temple, owned by Anikattillam, has been completed.

Legend: The presence of a Shasta in this area is known since 1908. A boy from Anikattillam, who was only three years old at the time, suffered from severe abdominal pain. (It was this child who later codified the systems and administrative systems of Tiruvumplavil Temple and Mangalath Shasta Temple - swargeeya Vasudevan Ilayathu). When

all the medical treatments failed, they looked for astrological methods to find out the cause of the disease. It was revealed the presence of the spirit of a Shasta in the Virgo sign of Illam, found an old idol of Shasta there in a decayed state without rituals. Further it was revealed that after puja and offering of nivedyam to this Shasta, if the nivedyam is given to the child, it will cure the disease and bring prosperity to all. According to it, the seniors of that time found a stone idol fixed on a pedestal in this forested area. After placing the idol straight, when everyone was about to go back to bathe and perform pujas, a cloth was tied to a tall tree (paala - tree) nearby so as not to lose the way to reach there again. (Later on realizing the presence of goddess Bhadrakali spirit here, the goddess was consecrated under this Paala tree).

Soon the family members came after bathe, performed abhishekadi pujas and offered some malar / puffed rice as nivedyam. This malar- nivedyam was given to the child to eat. The child's abdominal pain has completely resolved. Since then daily offerings to Shasta have been made without fail.

Deities in the Temple:

In 1950, during the renovation of the temple in Tiruvumplavil, Anikattillath Vasudevan Ilayath built a shrikovil here and installed the idol and the pedestal found that day in 1908. The main deity of this temple is Sri Dharma Shasta who is enthroned with consort Prabha - son Satyaka and carrying a bow and arrows. Ganapati, Bhadrakali, Durga, Bhuvaneshwari and Brahmarakshas are sub- deities.

Pujas will be held from 6 am to 9 am every day and from 6 am to 10 pm on Saturday and Sunday. Makaravilakku is the main annual feature of this temple. Apart from the special pujas, there will also be 'Ghee Abhishekam' and 'Kalamezhuthu song' after the deeparadhana. Also, on the first Friday after Makaravilakku, Goddess Bhadrakali will also have the ritual 'Valiyaguruti'.

For inquiries: Phone: 04852831071, 09895577692

BHAGAWAT GITA

(Chapter 2 – SANKHYA YOGA) Slokas: (31-35)



स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ 31॥

swa-dharmam api chāvekṣhya na vikampitum arhasi
dharmyāddhi yuddhāch chhreyo 'nyat kṣhatriyasya na
vidyate

Besides, considering your duty as a warrior, you should not waver. Indeed, for a warrior, there is no better engagement than fighting for upholding of righteousness

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥ 32॥

yadṛichchhayā chopapannaṁ swarga-dvāram apāvṛitam
sukhinaḥ kṣhatriyāḥ pārtha labhante yuddham īdṛīṣham
O Parth, happy are the warriors to whom such opportunities to defend righteousness come unsought, opening for them the stairway to the celestial abodes.

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 33॥
atha chet tvam imaṁ dharmyaṁ saṅgrāmaṁ na
kariṣhyasi

tataḥ sva-dharmaṁ kīrtiṁ cha hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi
If, however, you refuse to fight this righteous war, abandoning your social duty and reputation, you will certainly incur sin.

अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।
सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्तिं मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥ 34॥
akīrtiṁ chāpi bhūtāni kathayiṣhyanti te 'vyayām
sambhāvitasya chākīrtir maraṇād atirichyate

People will speak of you as a coward and a deserter. For a respectable person, infamy is worse than death.

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।
येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ 35॥

bhayād raṇād uparataṁ mansyante tvāṁ mahā-rathāḥ
yeṣhām cha tvāṁ bahu-mato bhūtvā yāsyasi lāghavam
The great generals who hold you in high esteem will think that you fled from the battlefield out of fear, and thus will lose their respect for you.

(To be continued)

Subhashitham – 43

(Soundaryalahari - Shlokaṁ 27 :
Jagadguru Shankaracharyar)

जपो जल्पः शिल्पं सकलमपि मुद्राविरचना /
गतिः प्रादक्षिण्य-क्रमण-मशनाद्या हुति-विधिः /
प्रणामः संवेशः सुखमखिल-मात्मार्पण-दृशा /
सपर्या पर्याय-स्तव भवतु यन्मे विलसितम् //

japo jalpaḥ śilpaṁ sakalamapi mudrāviraacanā /
gatiḥ prādakṣiṇya-kramaṇa-maśanādyā huti-vidhiḥ /
praṇāmaḥ saṁveśaḥ sukhamakhila-mātmārpaṇa-dṛṣā /
saparyā paryāya-stava bhavatu yanme vilasitam //

Meaning: Oh Divine Mother, may my utterances be your chant, may the movements of my hand be the mudras of your worship. May my wanderings be parikrama around you. May my eating and breathing be your offerings. May my lying down be your prostrations. And in the sense of surrendering very own self unto you, may all the pleasures I enjoy in life, be offerings in your service.

Chanting this shloka daily, understanding the actual meaning of this shloka, is considered great.

How should the student be? (From Atharva-Veda !!!!)

माता पितरमृत आ बभाज धीत्यग्रे मनसा सं हि जग्मे।
सा बीभत्सुर्गर्भरसा निविद्धा नमस्वन्त इदुपवाकमीयुः ॥
(अथर्ववेद- 9.9.8)

Mata Pitaramrut Aa Babhaja Dhityagre Manasa sum
Jagme /

Saa Bipatsurgarbharaasaa Nividha Namaswantha Edupa-
vakamiyuh //

(Atharvaveda- 9.9.8)

1. The student should always feel that he is building his life.
2. His only intention should be to acquire true knowledge.
3. Must be diligent and attentive.
4. One should also live near the Acharya.
5. As knowledge increases, so should humility.

QUIZ – 28

(Note: Questions are related to Sanatana Dharma and mainly based on matters published in our Ayyappa Vani. Answers will be published in the next Ayyappa Vani. Any body can send answers in whatsapp to No.9447211722, within 20 days. Names & addresses of persons who answer to all questions correctly will be published in the next Ayyappa Vani).

Questions:

1. When did Jhansi Rani attain martyrdom and what was her real name?
2. Which Sage took Rama & Lakshmana to the forest to protect Sages from the atrocities of Demons ?
3. Name of the divine bow broken by Rama for the marriage of Sita?
4. Name of the mountain at Rameswaram from where Hanuman jumped over to Lanka?
5. “Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa” is the war-cry/ slogan of which Regiment in Indian Army?

6. Whom was Sabari, disciple of Matanga Rishi, waiting to have darshan for her salvation near to the Pampa river ?
7. Which brothers in Ramayana are considered as models for good brotherhood and bad brotherhood ?
8. Who founded Sikhism and how it was emerged as a religion?
9. Who was famous as Indrajith in Ramayana?
10. Who preached to King Janaka of Mithila which was later known as another Gita?

Answers of Quiz : 27:

1. Rishi Parasurama gave Brahmastra to Karna.
2. Atharva Veda deals with Medicines and healing (Ayurveda).
3. Kubera's world is called Alakapuri.
4. Vidura's mother was a maid.
5. Sun Temple in Multan of Pakistan was built by Samba, son of Srikrishna, but destroyed in the 10th century.
6. It was Savithri, wife of Sathyavan. Sathyavan had a short life, Savithri impressed Yama, god of death, and won back his life.
7. The two famous Bharatheeya Ithihasas are Ramayanam and Mahabharatham.
8. Rishi Valmiki (old name Ratnakaran, also known as Praachetas being the son of Prachetas Rishi) wrote Ramayanam.
9. Deities of Lord Ganapathi and Nagaraja are installed adjacent to the Sreekovil of Swami Ayyappa at Sabarimala.
10. Swargheeya Dr. Kesav Baliram Hedgewar, popularly known as Doctorji is the founder and First Sarsangachalak (Chief) of Rashtreeya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Gururji Golwalkar was the 2nd Sarsangachalak. Present Sarsangachalak is Poojaneeya Mohan Bhagawatji (Mohan Madhukarravo Bhagawat).

Names of persons who gave correct answers to all questions:
 None

NEWS

- * Today, 23rd July 2023 Uthram - Auspicious day of birth star of Swami Ayyappan. At the behest of SASS, Ayyappa devotees from all over the world perform Uthram Puja in their own homes and nearby temples.
- * SASS Konkan - Harivarasanam Centenary Celebrations were held on Saturday, 08th July, 2023.

* Reception Committee constituted for concluding programs of Harivarasan centenary celebrations.

(Details on first page)

* SASS Kerala - Brahmashree Akiraman Kalidasan Bhattathiripad (State President) & Shri. Murali Kolangad (General Secretary) submitted a petition to the Kerala State Minister of Devaswom Department regarding: 1. Withdrawal of cases taken against Ayyappa devotees involved in the Namajapayathra agitations regarding entry of women in Sabarimala Sannidhanam, 2. Permitting vehicle parking at Pampa at all times, and 3. Making adequate preparations for the coming Mandala - Makaravilak Pilgrimage season, in view of the increasing inflow of devotees.

The Pathanamthitta Jilla Samithi of SASS held a Nama Japa Satyagraha on 4th July 2023 in front of the Pathanamthitta Mini Civil Station, inaugurated by former Mizoram Governor Shri. Kummanam Rajasekharan, demanding withdrawal of the cases taken against Ayyappa devotees involved in the Namajapa agitations in connection with the entry of ladies at Sabarimala Sannidhanam.

**OPENING / CLOSING dates of
SABARIMALA TEMPLE
during the next 27 days.**

The temple will open on August 09 at 5:00 pm and close on August 10 at 10:00 pm for this year's **NIRAPUTHIRI CELEBRATION**. Muhurtham: 10th from 5.45 am to 6.15 am.

Again the temple will open on August 16 at 5:00 PM and close on August 21 at 10:00 PM for the **Chinga Masa Puja**.

Disclaimer : The opinion expressed in this publication are of the authors only and do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of SASS or its members.

Published by P Shanmuganandan, National Administrative Secretary from National Administration Office, Ayyappa Vihar, Viyyur, Thrissur, Kerala - 680010 on behalf of Sabarimala Ayyappa Seva Samajam