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SABARIMALA TEMPLE RITES AND RITUALS CONNECTED WITH DAILY WORSHIP - PART-5

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

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



ANNUAL UTSAVAM - KODIYETTAM

The Kodiyettam or the hoisting of the flag is conducted by the Chief Thanthri during the morning hours of the day of star Atham to herald the Sabarimala Annual festival. The festival lasts for ten days in the Malayalam month of ‘Meenam’ or the Tamil month of ‘Panguni’ (March-April).

A Puja is performed on the Kodikura (flag) to inaugurate the Kodiyettam. Before hoisting the flag, a portion of the chaithanya of Lord Ayyappa is transferred to the Kodi (flag) and Thanthri hoists the flag. The flag has the Lord’s vahanam/ mount (horse) drawn on it. The Kodiyettam is performed after the Usha Puja in the morning, declaring beginning of the ten-day Annual Utsavam.

On the appointed day of the Kodiyettam, after the Usha Puja in the morning (07:30 a.m., Thanthri performs the Mulayidal ritual in the Mulayara. Twelve grains are sown in sixteen Mulampalikas. According to the Thanthri, these twelve grains represent twelve gods. The Mulayidal Puja is performed thrice a day for nine days. After the Mulayidal, the Kodikura, Mani (bell) and garland are kept in a Uruli/bell-metal cauldron under the Kodimaram (flagstaff). The Thanthri takes this Uruli to the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Ayyappa and seeks his permission to conduct the festival successfully and also his blessing by invoking a portion of the Lord’s vahanam’s (horse’s) divine power to the flag after worshipping the flagstaff. Accompanied by Paani, Nadaswaram and lamps, the flag is taken to the Kodimaram and the vahanam of the Lord is worshipped with mantras. After

the sanctification of the flag, it is taken to the Srikovil and presented to Lord Ayyappa and brought back by the Thanthri, accompanied by his assistants.

The Kodi used for the festival is brand-new every year. Thickly twined cotton thread ropes are used for hoisting the kodi. The ropes are tied to the flag along with the bell and are handed over to the Thanthri. After the Kodi Puja, it is carried by the Thanthri to the flag mast to the accompaniment of Paanikottal and then flag is hoisted.

SREEBHOOOTHABALI

Sreebhoothabali is the most important ritual performed in honour of the Dwasthanmar (bodyguards and celestial deities) at Sabarimala temple. It lasts for one hour. The Thanthri performs the Sreebhoothabali in the morning and evening for nine days during the annual festival. Cooked rice is used as Havis. Parishavadyam is performed for the Sreebhoothabali and for this; Veeken Chenda, Thimila and Chengala are used.

Normally, there will be four Pradhakshinams for Sreebhoothabali. With the fifth Pradhakshinam, begins the Vilakku Eahunellippu. Before completing the Sreebhoothabali, Kshetrapalakan is given Thookal after Ootta Pradhakshinam. This ritual is performed during the ten day Annual Utsavam with the exception of the morning of the Utsavabali.

The sanctum sanctorum of the Sabarimala temple consists of the Srikovil and the Mukamandapam. At the outset, Thookal is given to two Dwasthanmar (Kshuragapani and Ghulgahastham, according to the Sankalpa) in the sanctum sanctorum. Then the Thookal is given to Ganapati and Dhaskhinamoorthi, who are installed on the southern wall of the Srikovil (Sankalpa). Afterwards the Thookal is offered to the vahanam (horse), vehicle of the Lord, situated on the east of the Namaskara Mandapam. The Thookal is also given to the two bodyguards of Lord Ayappa, Veerabhahu and Mahaveeran, who are stationed outside the Srikovil on the south and north respectively. Then the Thookal is given to Ananthan. The Thookal is given thereafter to the Dikpalakas, viz., Indra (east). Agni (south east), Yama (south), Nirurthi (south west), Varuna (west), Vayu (north west), Kubera and Soma (north) and Easanan (north east). The Thookal is also given to Brahma, who is stationed on the north east of the Srikovil. The libation is also given to Veerabadhran and Ganapati stationed to the south of the Srikovil and in the east and west of the Sapthamathrukkal. This is followed by the offer of Thookal to the Sapthamathrukkal (Brahmi, Maheswari, Kumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamundi), Sastha, Durga, Ganapati, Subramanian, Vaishnavan and Nirmalyadhari. Each deity is propitiated by the recitation of the prescribed mantra and by offering Jala (water), Gandha (incense), Pushpa (flowers), Dhoopa

(lit incense sticks), Deepa (lamps) along with the appropriate Tantric mudras. The rule is that the libation is to be offered with the recitation of the appropriate mantra for each celestial deity three times while the Moola-Mantra is recited once for each deity during the first circumambulation, beginning from two Dwasthanmar of the Srikovil. The second circumambulation begins from the Sapthamathrukkal and ends by offering libation to the Nirmalyadhari. During the third circumambulation Thookal is given to the eight celestial deities of eight Deva Grahams, Bhoothaganas and Valiya Balikkal. The Bhoothaganas are stationed in eight quarters of the world, presided over by Indra, Agni, Yama, Surya, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera and Soma. The fourth circumambulation is completed by performing the ritual called Ootta Pradhakshinam which begins when the procession reaches the eastern nada and ends with the libation to the Kshetrapalakan. The leftover of Havis is offered to Kshetrapalakan as Nivedyam.

VILAKKU EZHUNELLIPPU

The Vilakku Ezhunellippu is conducted as part of Sreebhoothabali on the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th days of the festival. Nadaswaram and Thakil are used for the Vilakku Ezhunellippu with a caparisoned elephant carrying the Utsava Vighram or Sreebali made of silver. Kirtan is played by the Nadaswaram and various artists during the Vilakku. The Vilakku procession is accompanied by four Panthams (traditional torches).

It is conducted by the Melsanthi. Edakka is beaten along with Kottipattu Seva and three Pradhakshinams are made. In other temples there are five Pradhakshinam for the Vilakku. At first, on the south of the temple, Edakka is beaten along with the recitation of Thyanni Ragam Saamantha Lahari. It takes twenty minutes to recite Thyanni and Kirtan. After this Nadaswaram begins. For Nadaswaram the musical instruments used are Nadaswaram, Thakil, Thalam, and Shruthi. Twelve Ragas are used. The Vilakku begins with Malahary ragam. After these Thakil and Nadaswaram are sung. At the completion of the Pradhakshinam, Keli Kottal begins.

For Keli Kottal the instruments used are one Maddalam, one Chenda, and one Elathalam. The purpose of the Keli is to inform the devotees about the Vilakku. It is followed by Panchavadyam. Along with Panchavadyam one circumambulation is made, during which the deity is taken on a caparisoned elephant. It is followed by Chendamelam for the third Pradhakshinam. Valamthala Chenda and Kombu are used for the Melam. This completes the Vilakku festival.

(....Contd)

ITHIHASA – RAMAYANAM : Part 4

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AYODHYA KANDAM

After subduing Parasurama's pride, Rama arrives at Ayodhya with Sita. Valmiki next describes the various experiences they had to face in their family life. There



are three types of Karmic experience - सञ्चितं, प्रारब्धं, आगामिकं - sañcitam, prārabdham, āgāmikam.



The first type of Karmas 'sañcitam' is accumulated over time, 'prarabdham' is the result of Karma from earlier births which are carried over through the Punarjanma cycle of deaths and births, and the final one āgāmikam is about Karma that are destined to be performed in future. Everyone has to necessarily experience these Karmas and their results throughout their life. There could be possible remedies for the ill effects of accumulated Karmas and Karmas to be performed in future. 'Prayaschitha' - acts of atonement and good deeds could help in minimizing their ill effects. But there is no such escape from 'Prarabda Karma' carried over from earlier Janmas. Their ill effects have to be experienced necessarily; though the severity of such ill effects could be reduced to some extent through good deeds in the present life.

The basic rule of Karma and its result is that Karma, either good or bad, has matching consequences and such results have to be experienced. If one has performed many good deeds and the accumulated results (Punya) are sufficient, he may attain the coveted place - Swarga (heaven). When such accumulated Punya are exhausted, the person has to take birth again. One can be liberated from the cycle of births and deaths through Atma-sakshatkaaram (realization that the inner self - Jeevatma is one and the same as the supreme power - Paramatma), which is the only way for attaining Moksha.

Like the results of good deeds, the results of one's evil deeds are also accumulated and the consequences of such Prarabdhda Karma have to be experienced through Punar- janma (re-birth) cycles. Bhagavan takes the

Avatar of Rama as a human being to teach us this important lesson.

The story of Ramayana elaborates on the multitude of sufferings a human being has to experience because of Prarabda Karma; even Lord Rama is no exception. Rama draws the strength to face such experiences from Atmajnana in the form of Sita. A person who has Atmajnana attains the strength to face such experiences; but even he cannot avoid these experiences.

The next major event is when King Dasaratha is planning the Rajyabhisheka' (coronation) of his eldest son Rama. But then, Rama is faced with an unexpected situation where he had to give up the coveted position overnight. Rama could have easily managed to prevent such a development with his divine powers if he wished so. However, he knows what his dharma is and is bound to follow his father's decision courageously, with total support from Sita, the symbol of Atmajnana. He obeys his father's orders without any hesitation. More importantly, Rama doesn't feel his father or Kaikeyi are responsible for this adverse situation.

It is usual for ordinary men to find fault with others for any misfortune that befalls them. काल कर्म ग्रहो न वा - kāla karma grahō na vā - inauspicious time, unfavourable position of the stars (astrological signs) or results of one's own Karma - none of these can be blamed for the results of Prarabda Karma. There is no meaning in blaming someone else for one's own Prarabda Karma. Mind is the most important tool to face and manage such adverse situations. One can deal with any kind of situation if his mind is under control. Having proper control over the mind is essential in the journey of life. This is the message we receive from this part of the story where Rama relinquishes the crown and decides to go to the forest for fourteen years in order to fulfil his father's promise.

तदप्रियममितघ्नो वचनं मरणोपमं ।

श्रुत्वा न विव्यथे रामः कैकेयीं चेदमब्रवीत् ॥

tadapriyamamitaghnō vacanam maraṇōpamam |

śrutvā na vivyathe rāma: kaikēyīm cēdamabravit ||

Rama was not upset when he heard those words, which were unpleasant, overly depressing, and equivalent to a death sentence. Instead, Rama tells Kaikeyi - "none of you is the reason behind this situation. Everyone is born to experience his own Prarabda Karma". Atmajnana gave Rama strength to console mother Kaikeyi, whom everyone considers as the cause of all problems. Rama, who knows what Dharma is, does not ask anyone's opinion in this matter. He didn't question his father's order and he had no confusion about leaving the country because his mind was clear about his Dharma. Rama also consoles the angry Lakshmana with kind words. He offers scholarly advice to his brother (popularly known as 'Lakshmanopadesha') and makes him understand the importance of following Dharma, thus making him a stronger person.

After leaving the kingdom, they cross the river Ganga with the help of the knowledgeable ‘Guha’ and arrives at the ashram of sage Bharadwaja. Blessing from the Guru is essential to face difficult situations in life and this fact is indicated in these contexts when they visit the Ashrams of Maharshis like Bharadwaja and Valmiki. Here we learn that the presence of the Guru and his valuable advice would give us the strength to face difficulties in life. In fact, Rama, the incarnation of God, does not need any such advice. But Rama leads this life as a normal human being and convinces us about the value and importance of the Guru. His life is an example to teach the humans about their Dharma.

Ever since birth, we are traveling on the boat of life to reach the desired destination of Moksha. When the boat reaches the other side, everyone must alight from the boat. It’s only a delusion if you think that you can sit in boat forever. This boat must be abandoned when the journey is completed. We may compare the physical body and this human life to a boat. We all need the help of a Guru, who can be compared to the boat navigator. His help is essential for the boat to travel safely and reach the other side. During this boat journey, if we are blessed with favourable winds, the journey will be more comfortable and less tedious. This wind is nothing but God’s blessings. With the Guru’s help and God’s blessings, the boat can travel safely and reach its destination in a comfortable manner.

While Rama, Sita and Lakshmana are staying in the Chitrakooda forest, they receive the sad news about the demise of King Dasaratha. Rama is saddened by the news of his father’s death just like a normal human being. But soon after, he prepares himself to console Bharatha and others who had come from Ayodhya with the sad news. Rama’s true love for his younger brother Bharatha is expressed in a very touching manner in this situation. During such instances, the poet presents exemplary pictures of brotherhood. Though Bharatha requests his brother to return and takeover ruling of the country, Rama declines the request because he is steadfast in his vows. Bharatha collects Rama’s Padukas (footwear) and places them on Ayodhya’s throne; symbolising that Rama is the ruler and he is only a representative. This highlights Bharata’s devotion towards his elder brother.

ARANYA KANDAM

After his father’s last rites are duly performed, Rama continues his journey towards the deep forest areas. In our family life often all of us have to traverse difficult paths in life. Maintaining harmony between family members and relatives who may be having different attitudes and temperaments can be quite tough. Difficulties encountered in the forest can be seen as symbols of a turbulent family life. Before entering the deep forest areas, Rama visits Maharshis like Atri, Sarabhanga, Suteeshna and Agasthya, seeking their blessings. He receives advice from them to deal with one’s Prarabda Karma. Apart from

their advice, the Maharshis also present Rama with certain divine weapons.

A person who enters Grihasthashram or family life should be well prepared to meet all kinds of situations, which is possible with the blessings of his Guru. Spirituality and devotion are essential qualities needed for a householder to be successful in the journey of life.

The next event that takes place after entering Dandakavanam is the arrival of the lustful Soorpanakha who appears in disguise as a seductive, beautiful woman. It is natural that people are tempted by attractive objects and lust can be aroused in the presence of an attractive lady like Soorpanakha. It is said that Rama just had a glance at her and that itself was enough of a mistake. When Soorpanakha requests Rama to accept her, Rama rejects the request, telling her that he was already married.

Rejection of a lustful request can result in further problems and complications. In our life also, there could be situations where lust / desire is aroused on different objects. Outright rejection of such desires can be counter-productive as a human being is created with sensory organs that are made to enjoy different forms of worldly pleasures. Kama is quite a difficult sensation; excessive Kama as well as its outright rejection - both may have negative impacts. When both Rama and Lakshmana reject the lustful advances of Soorpanakha, she gets into a fit of rage and attempts to kill both of them. कामात् क्रोधोऽभि जायते kāmāt krōdhō'bhi jāyate- Lust (Kama) that is not satiated can result in anger (Krodha); both Kama and Krodha are two major enemies of man.

Falling into the trap of lust, can cause serious problems. Soorpanakha, the symbol of lust, was the root-cause which ultimately resulted in the abduction of Sita. This symbolizes the fact that lust can cause the loss of Atmanjana, which is so precious and difficult to acquire. This is one reason why even Rishis and Yogis, who strictly follow a disciplined spiritual lifestyle, ensure that they maintain a safe distance from lustful objects. The story of Soorpanakha is highlighting the importance of managing and controlling lust. The lesson here is that wise men should learn to stay away from situations where one may fall prey to the temptations of lust.

Soon after this incident, they reach the Ramyaka forests, the dwelling place of many Rakshasas who indulged in various atrocities. The sages who used to live in this area had fled from these parts in fear of them. Rama instructs Lakshmana to be extremely careful in these forest areas. The Rakshasas are capable of disguising themselves in different forms; they may even appear in the form of trees. Rama says that even wild animals are avoiding this part of the forest because of them. This context also can be compared to our daily life. There are many people in disguise, who are out there waiting for a chance to deceive and attack others. It is important to be wary of such people.

The next important event is where Rama is forced to chase the golden deer at the behest of Sita. In fact, leave alone deer, even lions are afraid of living in this forest. As such, it was not difficult to realise that this golden deer is no ordinary animal. Rama could have easily realized this and he could have convinced Sita about the possible danger. However, Sita was so attracted by the beauty of the deer, and Rama was only thinking about satisfying the desire of Sita at that moment.

रामोऽपि रामावचः प्रतिपन्नवान् - ramo'pi rāmāvaca: prati-pannavān

Even Lord Rama himself could not resist the sweet and compelling words of 'Ramaa' (this word is the feminine gender of Rama, meaning Sita) requesting him to catch the attractive deer for her. Rama is behaving like an ordinary man here, falling prey to lustful instincts. He leaves Sita for capturing the golden deer which cleverly leads both brothers away from Sita.

प्रभवति कुतो अनर्थः बुद्धिश्चेत् अपथोन्मुखी ? prabhavati kutō anartha: buddhiścēt apathōnmukhi ?

When intellect is leading in the wrong direction, is it not natural for disasters to happen? If such a loss of commonsense can happen even to Lord Rama, there is nothing to say about ordinary mortals like us. This story suggests that one may lose Atmajnana (in the form of Sita) when wisdom is abandoned even for a short while.

The subsequent events are all about the most arduous efforts to regain the lost Atmajnana, which is far more difficult than gaining the same in the first place. Kama towards different types of materialistic attractions often occurs in our lives too, which can result in similar difficulties.

KISHKINDHAA KANDAM



During this stage, the story progresses through the search for Sita including events like Sugrivasakhyam - alliance with Sugreeva. Sugreeva is hiding in the Rishyamookachala hills in fear of his elder brother Bali, the king of the Vanaraas (monkeys). The brothers had become enemies due to certain unfortunate events of the past.

Sugreeva, from the top of the hill, spots two armed youngsters (Rama and Lakshmana who are searching the forests for Sita) moving in their direction. He is afraid that these two may be Bali's soldiers in disguise, coming

to kill him. He sends Hanuman to find out the truth about these strangers. Hanuman, disguised as a Brahmachari, meets the two young sages and makes very polite enquiries about their identity and purpose of visit. On hearing Hanuman's polite and cultured words, Rama tells Lakshmana:

निशेषशब्दशास्त्रमनेन श्रुतं ।
बहुव्याहरतानेन न किञ्चिदपशब्दितं ॥

nisseṣasabdaśāstramanēna śrutam I

bahuvyāharatānēna na kiñcidapaśabditaṁ II

“This one speaks very well, he knows Sabda-sastra (rules related to usage of words) and there is not a single word that is improperly spoken”. The easiest way to identify one's culture is by observing his selection of words and usage of language. Those who are pleasant to listen to and who speak kind words are certainly cultured people. Rama says that it is safe to make friendship with this Brahmachari. Here Maharshi Valmiki is stressing about the good qualities of spoken words and how a person's qualities can be assessed through his words. We must try to associate with cultured people which would help in maintaining and improving our culture also.

Sugreeva and his supporters promise their help in the search for Sita and in return, Rama promises to protect Sugreeva from the threat posed by Bali. Bhakti is essential to regain Atmajnana and Hanuman is the symbol of Bhakthi (devotion). Viveka (Wisdom) is needed for the practise of Bhakti and to experience the fruits of Bhakti. Sugreeva represents wisdom and Bali is an example of 'Aviveka' (imprudence) which is explicit through his actions. Wisdom must be recognized and imprudence has to be eliminated. When wisdom wins over imprudence and is coupled with devotion, such devotion becomes fruitful. Devotion unites everyone with wisdom. Here, Hanuman is the main reason behind Rama's decision to form an alliance with Sugreeva.

The difference between the wise and the unwise is often difficult to understand. Rama too finds it very difficult to distinguish between Sugreeva and Bali, who are look-alikes, but at the end he kills Bali, the symbol of imprudence.

One of the major criticisms about Ramayana is whether it was right for Rama to kill Bali and whether the method adopted for the killing was proper. It is a fact that imprudence cannot be directly destroyed. The imprudent Bali doesn't deserve the Darsan of Lord Rama because of his wrong deeds and as such Rama did not appear in front of Bali until his sins are removed. Hence the only way was to destroy imprudence in an indirect manner, Apart from this, there is the justification that Bali had abducted 'Ruma', the wife of Sugreeva and this was punishment for that crime. Bali earns the privilege of Rama Darsan only when his imprudence is destroyed by Rama's arrow.

There is a philosophical theory that truth and justice are not always one and the same. Justice must be con-

vincing whereas truth is an experience. Justice is based on prudence and logic. It should be convincing to and confirmed by the intellect. Truth cannot be seen as unjust and in the same note, falsehood can never be justified. In a practical sense, it is fair to say that the punishment given to Bali is based on prudence. Justice and prudence are commonly used in our day to day life and the present system of judiciary is functioning on these bases. Sometimes, justice and prudence may not be exactly matching with truth. When we view it in this manner, the killing of Bali is justifiable, though it may be lacking truth in the act.

Various events in Mahabharata and Ramayana are based on the definition of truthful justice that prevailed during the period of Vyasa and Valmiki. (Ramayana is from the Tretayuga and Mahabharata is from Dwapara-yuga). It would be imprudent for laymen like us to judge upon the thoughts and wisdom of these great Rishis. Instead, we may try to understand the truth and logic from their viewpoints. Often, the problem is that people set their own standards based on the world order prevailing during their time. The fact remains that such people are not able to recognize or appreciate the greatness of Valmiki's thoughts. Actually, it is our duty to properly study and understand the thoughts and views of such a great Rishi-Kavi.

After the episode related to the killing of Bali, Rama performs the Chaturmasya rituals. An important part from this section of Ramayana is the 'Kriyamarga-Upadesha' (advice given by Rama to Lakshmana about Kriyamarga - the rules and methods for performing ritualistic routines). Through such teachings, Ramayana explains the importance of rituals and daily routines like Yajnas, homas and Poojas that are essential in everyone's life. Many such teachings can be found from different contexts in Ramayana about the principles and practices to be followed in our life.

(To be continued)

SABARIMALA AND ME

(Shree. Madhu Kadampuzha,
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Why wear a 'Maala'/Necklace (Ayyappa Mudra)?

Unity is the beacon of life. It is essential to stay together for a proper journey without any hindrance to anyone. Often that is not possible today. Kali Yuga is the age of organizational strength - "Sanghe Shakti Kalau Yuge". Rishis have predicted that immorality, violence and injustice will take place in this age.. However Temples and Rituals can prevent it. Temples should become the breeding ground of devotion. When we change from business



to devotion, there the thought of ME will change; We will drift into the larger thought of OURSELVES. The temple (kshetram) means which heals wounds (kshatham). There the 'Self /Aham' should fade away and 'We' should be born. Prayer and temple darshan are all meant to reach to this WE. All the rituals of Sabarimala are stepping stones for us to look back to ourselves. The Eighteen mountains and the Eighteen steps / Pathinettampadi are so ingrained in our culture. What is the scientific truth of wearing Maala? Our topic today is what are the changes that need to happen in us when wearing a maala.

The Maala

The maala is made of many pearl beads. Beads like tulsi, rudraksha and sandalwood are strung together to form a garland. Disorganized beads are organized when scattered beads are strung on thread or wire. We see a unity in itself. When it is given in its entirety, its sanctity also increases. When the clarion call of refuge / Saranaghosham is heard from the throat, we are attracted to an unknown power.

When Ayyappa mudra is added to it, we become celibate. It means that we reach the sky of knowledge with devotion. When we wear the maala, an unprecedented psychic power flows into us. It is also assured that Ayyappa Swami is with him. Garlanding /maala dharamam is the karmic way for us to reach and join Dharmic thinking. Vratha is what we need to take the true path to mature our minds so that we can move into the wider realms of devotion. When we wear the maala, we are filled with vratham. Maala and mudra lead to the thought that we are united. That is the best for the goal and the auspicious means.

Who are the maala wearers?

If we wear the maala, we will be respected as Swami. The time when we affirm that the soul spirit within us is Swami. But even if we don't wear the maala also, the Lord is within us. But the public will not call us by name and calls us 'Swami' if we wear maala. Then we have to think whether this maala is called as Swami?...no. Ourselves are called as Swami. Even though we all know that we are 'Bhagavad Chaitanya', normally we quarrel, find fault, speak, slander each other... There may be flowers and stones on the path we walk wearing maala... yet we still call ourselves as Swami with full devotion and make saranaghosham. We move towards the immeasurable Supreme. The expression "tat-tvam-asi" is strong, "that is you", which affirms that 'you are the one you seek'. As we walk wearing the maala and mudra, the cosmic power bows down to us. Travelling with complete care not to harm even a single living creature. We only need to wear maala to identify ourselves. Maala with Ayyappa Swamy's Mudra.....

(to be continued.... Daily Routine of a 'Swami')

VISHWAKARMA JAYANTI - 20 September 2023



One of the famous festival celebrated in India, Vishwakarma Jayanti is observed mainly by the working class in India, marking the birth of Hindu God Vishwakarma. He is believed to be the creator and architect of this entire universe. He is referred to as the divine architect. Vishwakarma Jayanti is primarily celebrated in the eastern states of India such as Assam, Tripura, West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar and Jharkhand. The Puja is performed on the same day every year as marked in the Gregorian calendar. It falls on the last day of Bhadra which is also known as Bhadra or Kanya Sankranti.

Vishwakarma is considered as God of craftsmen & the labourers involved in the construction, carpentry related work, etc. He is the son of God Vastu and Goddess Angisri. As per the Hindu mythology, Lord Brahma was helped and assisted by Lord Vishwakarma to plan and create this entire universe. He is also the one who got involved in creating a map of this entire world. Dwaraka, the famous and holy city of Lord Shreekrishna was also constructed by Lord Vishwakarma. Lord Krishna along with yadavas had left Mathura expecting a fearful attack from Jarasandh & Kalayvana in Mathura. After leaving Mathura, they arrived at the coast of Saurashtra. Pleased with the prayers of Krishna, Samudradev Varua granted land of size 12 yojanas. Lord Vishwakarma is believed to have built the city of Dwaraka in gold on this land.

There are several legends associated to lord Viswakarma.

- Odisha, one of the states in India is blessed with the famous temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri. There is a famous legend of Vishwakarma, the divine architect and the temple of Lord Jagannath. The famous king Indradyumna wanted to install an idol of Lord Vishnu in this temple. Vishwakarma disguised as an old man visited the king and told him, he would carve the log into an idol, on a condition that he shall be allowed to work without any disturbance. He also said that he will leave midway if this condition was violated for any reasons. Lord Vishwakarma, who was dressed as an old man had started building the idol in a closed workshop.

The king was not able to control himself without seeing the progress of the work. He opened the doors of the workshop. Lord Vishwakarma left the place immediately without completing the idols of Krishna, Balaram, and Subhadra. However, Lord Brahma himself acting as a priest invoked Lord Vishnu and also promised Indradyumna that these idols would attract devotees from all over the globe and become the main attraction. Unlike the figures and images of Lord Vishnu or Krishna, the Jagannath Puri idol has big eyes and a square-shaped head with an extended body without neck, ears, and limbs.

- As per the Mahabharata, Lord Vishwakarma is the one who created the Maya Sabha - the hall of illusions, for the Pandavas at Indraprasth city. Further, Palaces of Lord Yama & Lord Varuna, Lanka of Ravana, Pushpaka Vimana, weapons for Indra, Shiva, etc. were created by Lord Vishwakarma.

- It is also believed that in Rig Veda, the section containing the science of mechanics and architecture was formulated and written by Lord Vishwakarma.

Other than all these building and sculptural creations, he is also believed to be the designer of various weapons used by several Hindu gods in several wars explained in puranas. His grace and contribution has always been credited even in the field of carpentry. He is also called as swayambhu, meaning self-existent or to be born by own wish, not through a mother's womb.

Celebration of Vishwakarma Jayanti: Vishwakarma Puja is observed every year in the month of September or October. It is also the day when the Sun god leaves the Simha rashi (Leo) and enters Kanya rashi (Virgo). Because of this reason, this day is also well known as Kanya Sankranti diwas. As per the Hindu solar calendar, Vishwakarma Puja falls on the last day of the Bhadra month. Some people observe this as Bhadra Sankranti. The day is celebrated with much fervour by architects, engineers, as well as skilled labourers including, mechanics, factory workers, smiths, welders, industrial workers and craftsmen across the country, but mostly from the north and north east. All these class of workers install the picture of Lord Vishwakarma adorning the walls of factories, industries and their offices as a gratitude towards the Lord. They stay away from all their professional work during these days. It is also a practice of renunciation of everything on this day. They worship tools by offering prayers to Lord Vishwakarma primarily to protect them and for a sustainable livelihood, secured life and for success in all ventures.

The Vishwakarma Jayanti is not just limited to these category of workers, but is also celebrated by businessmen dealing in machineries, tools etc. and by artisans, mechanics, smiths, welders, etc. who are directly instrumental in construction of buildings. Devotees rise early in the morning, take bath and wear clean clothes for performing the puja. There are some parts of India where Vishwakarma Jayanti is celebrated on the day after Diwali, along with

Govardhan Puja. The day of Vishwakarma Puja is calculated as per the Solar calendar whereas the other famous Hindu festival dates are calculated according to the Lunar calendar.

WORLD SANSKRIT DAY

World Sanskrit Day also known as Vishva-Samskrita-Dinam is an annual event focused around the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit that incorporates lectures about the language and is aimed to promote its revival and maintenance. It is celebrated on Shraavana Poornima, that is the full moon day of the Shraavana month in the Hindu calendar. This generally corresponds with the month of August in the Gregorian calendar. In 2023, it was on 31st August. The Sanskrit organisation Samskrita Bharati is involved in promoting the day.



Shraavana Poornima, i.e. Raksha Bandhan, is considered to be the festival of remembrance and worship of sages and worship for their dedication. In Vedic literature it was called Shravani. On this day, before the study of Vedas in Gurukulas, Yajñopavita - sacred thread - is worn. This ceremony is called Upanayana or Upakarma Sanskar. The old Yajñopavita is also changed on this day. Priests also tie raksha-sutras to the hosts. Rishis are considered the original source of Sanskrit literature, hence Shravani Purnima is celebrated as Rishi Parv and World Sanskrit Day. This day was chosen because the academic year in ancient Bharath started on this day. On this day, students started the study of Vedas in the gurukulas. From the full moon of the month of Paush to the full moon of the month of Shravana, the normal studies are stopped to learn other Vedantic scriptures. This tradition is still unbroken in modern Vedic schools. The World Vedic Day is on 11 July.

In 1969, the Ministry of Education of Government of India issued instructions to celebrate Sanskrit Day at the Central and State levels. Since then, Sanskrit Day is celebrated all over India. On this occasion, Sanskrit Kavi Sammelan, writer's seminar, students' speeches and verse recitation competition etc. are organized, through which Sanskrit students, poets and writers get a proper platform. THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE is a parent language that is at the foundation of many modern languages of India and the one that promoted Indian through to other distant countries. "Sanskruatham" means cultured, learned, refined etc. Sanskrit is the sacred language of Hinduism, the language of classical Hindu philosophy, and of historical texts of Buddhism and Jainism. In the modern world also the relevance of Sanskrit is much more as it is the most suitable language for computer applications. Sanskrit's

status, function, and place in India's cultural heritage are recognized by its inclusion in the Constitution of India's Eighth Schedule languages

Sanskrit has been taught in schools from time immemorial in India. In modern times, the first Sanskrit University was Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, established in 1791 in the Indian city of Varanasi. Sanskrit is taught in 5,000 traditional schools (Pathashalas), and 14,000 schools in India, where there are also 22 colleges and universities dedicated to the exclusive study of the language Sanskrit is one of the 22 scheduled languages of India. Sanskrit is also taught in traditional gurukulas throughout India. A number of colleges and universities in India have dedicated departments for Sanskrit studies.

SAMSKRITA BHARATI: The main All India office is located in New Delhi and there also offices at the various state capitals, district headquarters and grass root local levels. This is an organisation striving for the preservation, development and propagation of Samskritam as well as the tradition, culture and the knowledge system embedded in it. Now Viswa Samskrita Prathishtanam, with headquarters at Kodungallur, is the Kerala chapter of Samskrita Bharati, comprised of a large team of very dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who take the knowledge of Samskritam to all sections of society irrespective of race, gender, region, religion, caste, age, etc. The aims of Sanskrita Bharathi are:



*Promote the study of Samskritam and make it accessible to all sections of society, through online and offline classes, short and long term duration courses, Sambhashana sibiriams etc.

*Co-ordinate the work with Samskritam institutions, for a more effective and rapid spread of Samskritam.

*Enable activities for research into Samskritam tradition and its knowledge systems like Ayurveda, Yoga, Music, Dance and other Sastras for development of a harmonious society of cultured and civilized individuals.

Contact Details: Samskrita Bharati, 25, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi, 110002, India. 011-232236711/22, +911142651381 / +911145650586, Email: samskritamdelhi@gmail.com....

Vishwa Samskrita Prathishtanam, Kottapuram, Kodungallore, Thrissur, Kerala - 680667, Ph: 0480-2811985, Email: vspkeralam@gmail.com

BHAGAWAT GITA

(Chapter 2 – SANKHYA YOGA) Slokas: (41-45)

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।
बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥ 41॥

vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-śhākhā hyanantāśh cha buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām

O descendent of the Kurus, the intellect of those who are on this path is resolute, and their aim is one-pointed. But the intellect of those who are irresolute is many-branched.



यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥ 42॥
कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥ 43॥

yāmimāṁ puṣhpitāṁ vāchaṁ pravadanty-avipaśhchitah
veda-vāda-ratāḥ pārtha nānyad astīti vādinah //42//
kāmatmānaḥ swarga-parā janma-karma-phala-pradām
kriyā-viśheṣha-bahulāṁ bhogaiśhwarya-gatiṁ prati //43//
Those with limited understanding, get attracted to the flowery words of the Vedas, which advocate ostentatious rituals for elevation to the celestial abodes, and presume no higher principle is described in them. They glorify only those portions of the Vedas that please their senses, and perform pompous ritualistic ceremonies for attaining high birth, opulence, sensual enjoyment, and elevation to the heavenly planets.

भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहतचेतसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥ 44॥

bhogaiśwarya-prasaktānāṁ tayāpahṛita-chetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate
With their minds deeply attached to worldly pleasures and their intellects bewildered by such things, they are unable to possess the resolute determination for success on the path to God.

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ 45॥

traī-guṇya-viṣhayā vedā nistrai-guṇyo bhavārjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho niryoga-kṣhema ātmavān
The Vedas deal with the three modes of material nature, O Arjun. Rise above the three modes to a state of pure spiritual consciousness. Freeing yourself from dualities, eternally fixed in Truth, and without concern for material gain and safety, be situated in the self.

(To be continued)

Subhashitham – 45

आरोप्यते शिला शैले यत्नेन महता तथा ।
पठ्यते तु क्षणेनाधस्तथात्मा गुण दोषयोः ॥
(हितोपदेश)

aaropyathe shilaa shaile yathnena mahathaa thatha l
padyathe thu kshanenaadhashtaathmaa guna doshayoh ll
(Hithopadesham)

Mighty efforts are needed to carry a big rock to the top of a mountain, but to get it down, the effort needed is comparatively very less (sometimes just a push is good enough). Similarly it is very difficult to build a good character by performing many good virtues, but one very small bad quality can spoil one's entire character.

QUIZ – 30

(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 is the Annual Festival- Utsavam at Sabarimala celebrated?
2. What are Beeja, Mala Mantras in terms of syllables?
3. What is the most suitable time for performing Shraadha?
4. Who is the biological father of Pandu and Dhritarashtra?
5. Who wrote epic Mahabharata?
6. Who constructed Dwaraka, the city of Lord Krishna?
7. Who is the present Chairman of ISRO?
8. Why Chandrayaan-3 is called Vikram Lander?
9. Why was Kaliya the serpent living in Yamuna?
10. Who is the author of Hitopadesha?

Answers of Quiz : 29

1. "Is there now in this world a perfect, mighty man of all human qualities?" - Vatmiki asked Narada Maharshi. The answer was, 'A perfect man with all the qualities you asked for - there is only one man in this world, that is Sri Rama, born in the Ikshvaku dynasty'. The story of this Rama is written through Vatmiki Ramayana.
2. Vatmiki Ramayana has 7 kandas and 24000 verses.
3. The Yajna performed by Dasharatha to get good sons - Putrakameshti. Then SriRama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna were born.
4. Ravana abducted Sita from the Panchavadi Ashram.
5. For war victory Indrajit performed homam at 'Nikumbhila' to please Lord Shiva
6. Medicines to save Rama - Lakshmanas and Vanaras from Rishabhadri in Kailasa was brought by Hanuman. Medicines: Vishalyakarani, Sandhana Karani, Suvarna Karani, and Mruta Sanjivani.
7. Ravana sent 'Kalanemi' to obstruct Hanuman on his way to Rishabhadri. Hanuman killed Kalanemi.
8. In the battle of Rama and Ravana, when Rama was fighting on the ground and Ravana was fighting on his chariot, the chariot – Dharmarath - was delivered to Sri Rama by Devendran.
9. Hanuman who tried to enter the entry door of Lanka was

stopped by - Lanka Lakshmi. Hanuman gave moksha to her by hitting as Brahma had said to Lankalakshmi, 'You will be hit once by a monkey, then you will be freed from the curse'.

10. Ravana's wife was Mandodari, the daughter of Mayasura.
11. Hanuman gave Sita Devi 'Lord Rama's Anguliyam /Ring' to make her believe that he was the messenger of Sri Ramachandra. Goddess Sita also sent her 'Chudaratna' to Hanuman to make Lord Rama believe.
12. Lankadahanam is described in Sundara Kanda in Ramayana.
13. Sons of Sri Rama & Devi Sita – Lava & Kusa, born in Valmiki's hermitage.
14. Sri Rama ended his earthly life and ascends to heaven through jala-samadhi in Sarayu river.

Names of persons who gave correct answers to all questions:

None

NEWS

The highest Ayyappa statue - Pulivahanan Ayyappan

The country's highest Ayyappa statue unveiled at Pampa, base of Sabarimala. With this, one can climb the mountain by bowing down to the Tiger-Rider / Pulivahanan on the pilgrimage route. This statue is enshrined on the land of the Travancore Devaswom Board along the road from Pampa to Triveni. This is said to be the highest Ayyappa statue in India with a height 28 feet including the deity pedestal.

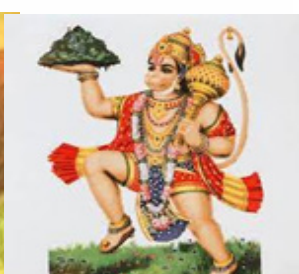
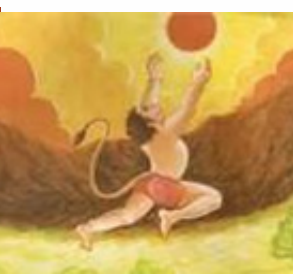
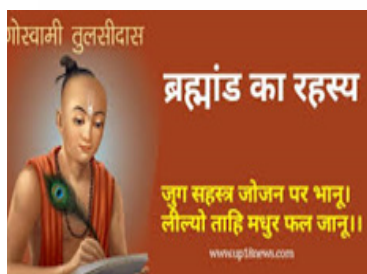


The shrine was sponsored by Shri Baiju Ambalakara, a devout film producer and businessman who visited Ayyappa without interruption for 48 years. Shri. Baiju, who got the information about the plan of constructing the shrine of Pulivahanan from Shri. A. Padmakumar, previous TDB President, he offered the construction as an offering. The idol of 'Pulivahanan Ayyappan' was designed by sculptor Chathan-noor Shantanu. After completing the work, it was dedicated to the devotees on the 1st day of Malayalam year 1199, Chingam month (17th August 2023).

*Chandrayan- 3 of Bharath landed in Moon...!!!

*Aditya - L1 of Bharath launched to Sun successfully...!!!

DISTANCE TO SUN IN HANUMAN CHALISA



'Hanuman Chalisa' is a prayer recited by devotional poet Goswami Tulsidas who lived in the 16th century. The distance from the earth to the sun is incredibly accurately recorded in that divine book!

Modern science says that the distance from Earth to the Sun is 149 million km. Due to the elliptical orbit of the Sun, this distance is 147 million km in January and 152 million km in July.

Now let us check the calculation given by Tulsidas in Hanuman Chalisa.

This incredible math is explained, seeing the blazing sun (Bhanu), when Bala Hanuman, who thought it was a ripe mango fruit (madhura phal), leapt into the sky to grab it.

“Yugasahasrayojana Para Bhanu Leelayo Tahi Maduraphalajanu”.

The Chalisa says that the distance Hanuman crossed in that leap towards the Sun is ‘Yuga-sahasra-yojana’ according to Vedic mathematics and how does it look in modern measurements?

1 Yuga = 12000 divine years = 4,320,000 human years. That is 12000 divine years x 360 human years (1 divine year is equal to 360 human years).

So, Yuga-sahasra-yojana = 12000 x 1000 yojanas.

The Vedic distance called Yojana is about 8 miles.

Yugasahasrayojana=12000 x 1000 X 8 which is 96 million miles. If we convert that distance to kilometers, we get 153.6 million kilometers.

See how accurate Tulsidas, who lived in the 16th century, recorded the distance from the Earth to the Sun in his Hanuman Chalisa!!!

OTHER NEWS

- * Today, 15th September 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.
- * National Management Committee (NMC) Meeting of SASS was held at Madhava Nivas, Elamakkara, Ernakulam, Kerala on 27th August 2023. Shri. S. Sethumadhavan and Shri. A. R. Mohanan, senior Karyakarthas and patrons of SASS also participated.
- * Harivarasanam Centenary Celebrations: It has been decided in the above NMC meeting that Global Chanting of Harivarasanam may be fixed immediately after the Darsanam of the Makara Jyothi, say at about 7.00 pm on the 15th January 2024. Further, different types of programmes like Bhajans, Ashtothara Archana, Ayyappa Gita parayanam, continuous saranaghosham, deeparadhana, Karpooara arati etc. may be conducted during the period of 2 hours from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm on that day. However, wherever this timing is not suitable for some temples or groups due to various other scheduled programmes like shobhayathra, cultural programmes or even their reluctance to change the system of singing Harivarasanam during the closing time of the Srikovil, they can arrange the Chanting at their convenience.
- * The Finale - Global Ayyappa Mahasangamam has been rescheduled. The Date of the programme has been fixed tentatively as Sunday, the 1st December 2024.

PRESS RELEASE*

PROTEST AGAINST HINDU GENOCIDE CALL OF MINISTER

Sabarimala Ayyappa Seva Samajam condemned strongly

the hateful remarks of Tamilnadu Minister Shri. Udayanidhi Stalin against Sanathana Dharma.

Sanathana Dharma alias Hindu Dharma is the oldest Dharma/ Culture in the world. It is all inclusive regardless of class, creed or sect. It is eternal. Hindu Dharma accepts all religious philosophies, provides education on loving everyone and provides extreme freedom of thought.

The remarks of Shri. Udayanidhi Stalin, a minister in the DMK led Tamilnadu state government, that “Sanathana Dharma should be eradicated’ is nothing less than genocidal call and it is to be strongly condemned by all. Sabarimala Ayyappa Seva Samajam demands an unconditional apology from Shri. Stalin against his hateful remarks, as explained by Shri. T. B. Shekhar, National Chairman and Shri. Erode Rajan, General Secretary of the Organisation, in a press release. They further declared that SASS will be in the forefront in all activities to protect Sanathana Dharma, Temples and it’s rituals and traditions along with like minded Hindu organisations and Sages.

SHRADHANJALY to SHRI.P.P. MUKUNDAN

Shri P.P. Mukundan, 77 years, senior ‘Pracharak’ of the Rashtriya Swayamsevaka Sangham and a strong leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, passed away on 13th September. A long-time pracharak of Rashtriya Swayamsevaka Sangham and Kerala State Sampark Pramukh, a strong State Secretary and later southern regional organizational secretary of Bharatiya Janata Party, and Managing Director of Janmabhoomi daily, Mukundettan as called belovedly by all, was an inspiration to many Swayamsevak and BJP workers. Shri. Mukundan’s departure is a great loss. Sabarimala Ayyappa Seva Samajam offers shradhanjaly to the soul of the deceased with prayers for salvation in the Bhagavadpadas.



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

The temple will be opened on September 17th at 5:00 PM and will be closed on September 22nd at 10:00 PM for the **KANNI 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