

शुभमस्तु
Subhamastu

अविघ्नमस्तु
Avighnamastu

विजयोस्तु
Vijayostu

आलय



संदेशः

[Aalaya Sandeshaha]
Sri Venkateswara Temple Newsletter

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Volume 5 April 2010

Dear Devotees,

Thanks to all of you, during the month of March, Ugadi/Gudipadwa and Sri Rama Navami were celebrated very well at the temple. On April 14, Tamil New Year was celebrated and it was also well attended. We are now planning for the fifth temple-inauguration anniversary celebration to be celebrated from May 30 to June 1, 2010. Program details will be published as soon as possible and everyone is cordially invited to attend the same.

I am pleased to inform you that recently our mortgage has been refinanced. Although it has provided temporary relief, the loan will be re-evaluated after five years and the terms of the loan may be modified as needed. As a result, your continued financial support and fund-raising ideas/opportunities are sincerely requested. Apart from that, our Income/Expense Statement for CY2009 is shown below:

Opening balance:	\$ 36,418.01
Total income	: \$242,004.89
Total expense	: \$264,342.82
Closing balance	: \$ 14,080.08

Recently Priest Kalyanakumar informed that he had accepted another job offer and would resign his current position with our temple. I and the rest of the Board wish him (and his family) success in his future endeavors. The Board has already started the search for a new Priest and details will be announced as soon as they are finalized.

Finally, I would like to remind our devotees to visit our website www.svtempletexas.org to find out about temple events, read Newsletters and to view the gallery of photos taken during our previous events at the temple.

Sincerely,
M.P.Sudhakaran
President

Vaisakha Maasa

वैशाखो माधवो मासः माधवस्यप्रियंकरः vaiSAKo mAdhavo mAsaH mAdhavyapriyaMkara:
माधवानुग्रहं दत्ते स्नान पूजाधिकं ध्रुवम् || mAdhavAnugrahaM datte snAna pUjAdhikaM dhruvam ||

वैशाख व्रत मात्रेण जीविवर्गश्वराश्वरः vaiSAKa vrata mAtreNa jIvivargaScarAScaraH
मुच्यते सर्वपापेभ्यः प्राप्नोति परम् पदम् || mucyate sarvapApebyaH prApnoti param padam ||

भक्तिरेतैवमुख्यासा संसक्ता हरिपादयोः BaktiretaivamuKyAsA saMsaktA haripAdayoH
पिपीलिकादि ब्रह्मांतं तयामुक्तिं च गच्छति || pipilikAdi brahmAMtaM tayAmuktiMca gaccati ||

Vaisakha is very dear to Maadhava, and the month is his swaroopam. Sri Krishna said, “Among Rutas, I am Vasantha Rutu”. Vaisakha comes in Vasantha Rutu. In Vaisakha Puraana, it was said that all forms of living beings from ant to Brahma are attaining mukti by reaching Lord Hari by performing Vaisakha Vratam and cleansing themselves of all sins.

Narada asked Brahma as to why people need to do praathahsnaanam (early morning bath), daiva poojas and daana dharmas. Brahma answered that among Maasas, Kaartikam and Vaisakham are superior and Vaisakham is the best. Snana, pooja, daana dharmas done in this month produce best results. Take bath in pratahkaala(early morning), preferably in river. Vishnu pooja, Tulasi pooja, Cow pooja should be performed. Recommended daanas are fresh water, footwear, umbrella, hand fan, anna daanam and vastra daanam. In addition, sandal wood, Kasturi, buttermilk, lemon juice mango juice also are great daanams.

It may sound odd to hear about these daanas. According to English calendar, Vaisakha comes in May which is the hottest month with high temperatures, heat waves, burning from head to toe and longing for cool shade, cool air and cool water. Any amount of money given at that time does not give relief. Among daanas, Anna Daanam is superior and satisfying, hence elders say “Anna daataa Sukheebhava” (Blessed is the one who gave Anna Daanam). Decades ago every house used to have a bench like structure in front with small mat. Pedestrains would sit there to rest and the house owner would give them cool water and buttermilk and wave hand fan to comfort the person. It used to be considered as basic duty of the one in the house. Now there are no such houses or people, that is why puraanas conveyed dharmas good for any time. Main idea is to help someone and give relief to any person who is suffering.

It is believed that the donation of footwear for Vishnu Saayujyam; Taamboolam for relief from illness; rice for the effect of performing yazna, yagas; cow ghee for effect of performing Ashwamedha yaagam, Sugandha dravyaas for better life, sugar juice pot for effect of gayaasraaddha phalam(performing annual rites for deceased people). In essence, all the above translates to *manava seva is maadhava seva*.

The Auspicious days that give punya in Vaisakha Maasa are—

1. **Vaisakha Suddha Tadiya**—this tidhi is very auspicious. It is good to perform *Hari Pooja with Chandanam* (sandal wood). In Simhachalam (AP), India, *Chandanotsavam* is performed.
2. **Vaisaakha Suddha Panchami**—this is the *birthday of Aadi Sankaraacharya*. He is considered to be ‘Sakshaat Sankara’. He wrote countless stotras. One gets punya by chanting or reciting those slokas.
3. **Vaisakha Suddha Saptami**—this is the day of *Gangaavataranam*, the birth day of the holy river Ganga. Ganga snaanam, Ganga Pooja, Gangaa Stuti are auspicious on this day.
4. **Vaisakha Suddha Ekadasi and Dwadasi** are special for *Vishnu Pooja* with *Sree Vishnu Sahasra Naama Paaraayanam*.
5. **Vaisakha Suddha Trayodasi**—for Dushta Sikshana (punishing the evil), Sishtha Rakshana (protecting the good) Sri Hari attained *Nrusimhaavataaram*. Sri Lakshmi Nrusimha stotram and Karaavalamba stotram is chanted and Prahlada charitra can be recited.
6. **Vaisakha Poornima**—*Atyanta Punya Dinam (Most Auspicious day)*—On this day, one should bathe in sea or river and *perform Vishnu Pooja*, give daanams like food, buttermilk, sugar juice, coconut water, water. Those who could afford, used to build shelters with palm and coconut trees and provide cool drinks.
7. **Vaisakha Bahula Dasami**—*Hanuman Jayanthi*. Hanuman is Shivaamsa sambhuta, and Sri Rama Bhakta. People perform Sri Hanuman Pooja, chant sotrams. Reading or listening Sundara Kanda removes all sins and gives Maha Punyam.

It is good to worship God and perform Daana Dharmas the whole month or at least the aforementioned auspicious days. While describing the importance of this month, in Skaanda Puraana, Naarada told Raajarshi Ambareesha “Among teertha jalaas, Ganga jalam is the best. Among Daanaas water is the best. Among Maasaas Vaisaakha Maasa is the best”.

Vaisakha Puraanam describes benefits of daanas in Vaisaakha Maasam.

1. Giving water to thirsty people equals performing Raajasoooya yagam
2. From times immemorial, in weddings and yagnas and feasts, hand fans used to be distributed.—result is cleansing of all sins and reach Brahma Lokam.
3. Buttermilk daanam results in vidyaa dhana prapti (Education and wealth).
4. Giving Chandanam (Sandal Wood) to relieve body heat results in Jeevan Mukti.
5. Giving flowers is good for prosperity of family, clothes for poornayurdayam(full life).

Akshar Truteeya is third day after poornima in Vaisaakha Maasa. Buying gold on this day brings wealth according to saastras, tretaa yuga started on this day and according to Skanda Puraanam it is birth day of Parasu Rama, Maha Vishnu incarnation. According to Jyotisha saastra, on this day sun and moon are on high stage. In vedas it was mentioned that yaagas were started on this day. Because it is so pure, there is no need for muhurtams for weddings on this day. Hindus believe that acquiring properties and precious metals in this day is good. Parasu Rama Avatar was the sixth of sri Mahaavishnu's Dasaavatharams (ten incarnations).

What is the significance of Parasu Ramavataram? Once Brahmanas and kshatriyas had big controversy as to who is superior. Kshatriyas subdued Bahamans with their strength and arrogance. Because Kshatriyas were unable to rule their people properly due to adharma, and torturing people, Parasu Rama came to earth, killed kshatriyas and restored peace on earth.

Adhika Maasa

This is year there is one Adhika maasa (extra month) of Vaisakha maasa. That means there will be two Vaisakha maasas, among which the first will be the Adhika maasa and the next will be Nija maasa (real month). The concept of Adhika Masa is unique to the traditional Hindu lunar calendars. It is practice for many not to perform any domestic auspicious events during adhika maasa.

The Hindu calendar is a lunar calendar and is based on the cycles of the Moon. A lunar month is around 29.5 days long. Now, a solar month, that is the usual calendar, is 30 to 31 days.

The lunar year consists of 354 solar days and solar year consists of 365 days. So, as years pass by each lunar month starts earlier to the corresponding solar month. There is a difference of 11 days between the lunar and solar year. In every two or three solar years the difference between the two calendars becomes a full month or around 29 days. To compensate and get the two calendars similar an extra month is added

Vasishta Siddhanta, a treatise of Sage Vasishta, says that the Adhika Masa occurs after every 32 months, 16 days and 8 Ghadis. A Ghadi is 24 minutes.

Now, in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat the lunar month begins and ends with the new moon or no moon (amavasya). In North India, the lunar month begins and ends with full moon (purnima).

Sankara Jayanthi, Eeswaraavataram

ॐ हरलीलावताराय शंकराय परौजसे | oM haraIIAvatArAya SaMkarAya paraujase

कैवल्य कलना कल्पतरवे गुरवे नमः || kaivalya kalanA kalpatarave gurave namaH

My salutations to the feet of Sankara who is Personified Lord Siva avataara, one who bestows moksha like Kalpa Vruksha, great and bright, and the teacher of the universe.

Born on Vaisakha Suddha Panchami, Sri Aadi Sankaracharya (Sankara Bhagavdpada) was the greatest philosopher who established the doctrine of Advaita (non-dualism). He was born in village Kaladi, Kerala in 8th century. About 2500 years ago, the life of *sanatana vaidika dharma* (age old dharma according to Vedas) was sidelined by the dominance of non-vaidika poojas. It is believed that Lord Shiva himself took birth on earth as Sankaraacharya to restore dharma and save the earth.

The birth and life of Sankaracharya is filled with plenty of stories with miracles and special occurrences. At the age of five upanayanam was performed and he was sent to *Guru Kula*. According to guru Kula tradition, the Brahma Chari has to do *Bhikshatana* (going to house to house for alms) and get education from Guru. One day he went to a poor woman's house. She had just one dried Amla fruit and she gave that into his bhiksha pot. Sankara's heart melted for her poverty and generosity. He spontaneously chanted "*Kanakadhara Stotram*", a prayer to goddess Lakshmi, and while he was finishing the stotram, the poor woman's house was showered with gold and silver coins. Thus from childhood his miraculous powers were evident.

In 32 years of short life span, he finished the goals of his Avatar and became *Jagadguru* (master of the world). He travelled across India and other parts of South Asia to propagate his philosophy through discourses and debates with other thinkers. He founded four mathas ("monasteries"), which helped in the historical development, revival and spread of Advaita Vedanta. Adi Shankara is believed to be the organizer of the *Dashanami* monastic order and the founder of the *Shanmata* tradition of worship. His works in Sanskrit, all of which are existant even today, concern themselves with establishing the doctrine of Advaita (Nondualism). His commentaries on Upanishads, Brahma sutras, and Bhagavad-Gita; Vivekachudamani, Bhajagovindam are few among his great works. All his works, bhajans, stotras are still popular today.

Adi Shankara begins his Gurustotram or Verses to the Guru with the following Sanskrit Sloka, that has become a widely sung Bhajan:

गुरुर्ब्रह्म गुरुर्दृष्टुं गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः। gururbrahma gururvSnu gururdEvO mahESvaraH|

गुरुसाक्षात् परंब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः॥ gurusAkSAAt paraMbrahma tasmai Srl guravE namaH||

(tr: Guru is the creator Brahma, Guru is the preserver Vishnu, Guru is the destroyer Shiva. Guru is directly the supreme spirit — I offer my salutations to this Guru.)

Nrusimha Jayanti

Nrusimha Jayanti is on Vaisaakha Suddha Chaturdasi (First 14th day of month). According to puranas, that evening Nrusimha murthi came out of pillar and killed Hiranya Kasyapa.

वैशाख शुक्लपक्षे तु चतुर्दश्यां समाचरेत् । vaiSAKa SuklapkShEtu caturdaSyAM samAcarEt |
मज्जन्म सम्भवं पुन्यं व्रतं पाप प्रणाशनं ॥ majjanma samBavaM punyaM vrataM pApa
pranASanaM ॥

As stated by Lord Nrusimha to Prahlada, this vratam is very important to Sri Vaishnavas. They observe fasting on the night of Trayodasi and the day of Chaturdasi, perform puja, put Tirumala Tiruchurnam on pillars and worship. They stay up all night and give swarna simha (golden Lion) statue as daanam.

Hanuman Jayanti

अतुलित बलधामं हेम शैलाभदेहं atulita baladhAmaM hEma SailABadEhaM
दनुजवन कृशां इजानिनामग्रगण्यं danujavana kRuSAM ~g~jAninAmagraNyaM
सकल गुण निधानं वानराणा मधीशं sakala guNa nidhAnaM vAnarANA madhISaM
रघुपति प्रियभक्तं वात जातं नमामि ॥ raGhupati priyaBaktaM vAta jAtaM namAmi ॥

Vaisakha Bahula Dasami (2nd 10th day of the month) is Hanuman Jayanti. Hanuman is Siva's Avatara. Sri Rama's Prime Bhakta, most powerful. Rescuer from dangers, granter of all wishes, Sri Hanuman was born on Vaisaakha Bahula Dasami. There are several stories about Hanuman Jayanti in different puraanaas. Tuesday and Saturday are favorite days for Hanuman. On his birth day, people worship him with beetle leaves, chant Hanuman Chalisa, recite Sundara Kanda from Valmiki Ramayana to be victorious in all activities, gain courage and strength, happiness and riches.