

Temple for Yamadharmaraj

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Yamaraj in Vellalore temple



Yamaraj

Lord Yama Dharmaraj

The very name of Yama will frighten many as he is fearsome and not worshipped. But the fact is otherwise . Yamaraj is supposed to be very kind hearted and carries out his duties with devotion upholding Dharma and right conduct. There is a small dispute over his birth. Some believe that he is son of Sun God and some say he is the son of Mahabharata hero Yudishtar.

Yamaraj's justice

There is a very interesting story as found in Katha Upanishad on Yamaraj. Once a poor Brahmin had to donate some cows owned by him to a Yagna held for the welfare of mankind. Since he was very poor, he could not feed them properly and they were very weak. Seeing the condition of the Cows, the poor Brahmin's learned son named Nachikoda came forward with a request that he may be taken in place of the Cows and done to death in the sacrificial Yagya fire. His plea was accepted and thereafter Nachikoda was sent to Yamaraj. As Nachikoda was highly learned, he requested Lord Yamaraj to enlighten him on some of the unlearned issues surrounding life and death and discussed the points with him for three days. Yamaraj unhesitatingly clarified all his doubts. Subsequently pleased with the behavior of Nachikoda, Yamaraj sent him to heaven.

Yet another story on Yamaraj is available from folk tales. It shows the fairness of justice practiced by Yamaraj while awarding sentences to those who were sent to Yamaloga after death. Once a washer man was sent to Yamaloga after his death and when he reached there he found the golden chair of Yamaraj empty as he had gone out. Elated to see it empty, the washer man, went near and sat in the golden chair and slept. He dreamt as though some one was stealing money from his shirt hung in the door. Angered over it, he got up and threw the golden Chair towards him only to realize later that it was a dream. In the meanwhile Yamaraj returned back. On reaching his chamber he found his golden chair lying upside down in a corner, and learned the fact from the washer man. Without losing temper, cool Lord Yama recalled several instances when the washer man stole and clandestinely kept with him the valuables taken out from the clothes given to him

for washing during his lifetime in earth and wondered whether he could imagine how many chairs would have been thrown on him for such cowardly acts ? Yamaraj displayed the list containing several such instances and sent the washer man to hell.

Temple for Lord of death

Apart from a temple for Yamaraj in Sreevanchiam in Tamilnadu, one more temple has been built for him in a place called Vellalore near Coimbatore in India. The temple is about 20 KM from Coimbatore in the main line leading to Guruvayoor and Trichur. The temple is reportedly built three hundred years ago by the first of the seventh generations of temple priest Palaniswamy,

Prior to the construction of the temple Vellalore faced the danger of getting washed away on account of flood from a nearby river. Yamaraj who appeared in the dream of a local, stopped the catastrophe and asked him to build a temple for him there.

Happy over the dream the resident started searching for a suitable land and when he found a land similar to the one seen in his dream, he realized it to be the land of a Brahmin. Interestingly when he reached that spot, he found the owner of the land was also standing there. Without hesitation he went to the owner, narrated the dream, and expressed his desire to construct a temple for Yamaraj in that place. Surprisingly the owner of the land agreed at once and told him to take as much as land required for the construction of the temple there. Rest of the work started fast and a temple for Yamaraj, which could be reached by walk through a narrow footpath in the midst of a sugarcane saplings, came up in a very short time.

Before one reaches the sanctum of Yamaraj one has to pay obedience to Andichi Amman, sister of Chitrugupta. Next seen is Lord Vinayaga, surrounded with snakes. At the end of them, in the sanctum of fearsome looking Yamaraj seated on a black buffalo facing the south and holding weapon Ankus in one of his hands, statue of Chitrugupta has also been placed to his right side . While women are not permitted to go beyond Vinayaga, men can go near Yamaraj to perform puja and worship him. The Thevar community members administer the temple.

Offerings to Yamaraj included full coconuts, lemon and betel with nuts. Those visiting Coimbatore should go to Vellalore to have darshan of Yamaraj, the god of justice.

End note: The contents of this article is based on the expressed views of the Pundits (Pujaries) and other devotees whom I met in the temple during my visits. Photos gathered from different sources. In case some one get further information in the temples they visit I shall be glad and thankful if they mail me the story in nrj1945@gmail.com so that updates in the article can be done in future.