



The New Saiva Neri

The Newsletter of the Melbourne Vinayagar Hindu Sangam
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விநாயகர் துதி (Vinayagar Thuthi)

திருவாக்கும் செய்கருமம் கைகூட்டும் செஞ்சொற்
பெருவாக்கும் பீடும் பெருக்கும் உருவாக்கும்
ஆதலால் வானோரும் ஆனை முகத்தானைக்
காதலால் கூப்புவர் தம் கை.

A note from the Editorial Team

Welcome to the second issue of **The New Saiva Neri**.

It's been a busy few months for the Temple with the Tamil New Year celebrations, Annual Mahotsavam Festival and other events happening throughout the months of April and May. We share highlights of these events in this issue.

The Temple has also revived [its Facebook page](#), providing another means of communication for devotees and providing information to all who are interested about Sri Vakrathunda Vinayagar. [Click here to like the Facebook page](#) and share it with your friends too.

Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome. Please email us at admin@melbournevinayagar.org.au with your thoughts, ideas and stories of Sri Vakrathunda Vinayagar. We are happy to publish them in future newsletters if it is suitable. We look forward to your support in growing this newsletter.

Yours in service of Sri Vakrathunda Vinayagar,
The Editorial Team

PAST EVENTS

Tamil New Year

This year's Tamil New Year celebrations on 14 April 2018 attracted a huge crowd for the morning and evening puja. Annathanam was held on the day as well. This year's highlight was the Youth Committee (Melbourne Yuva) coming together to sponsor the evening Ubayam for the very first time. This gives us all confidence that the Youth will somehow carry on our time honoured traditions.



Annual Mahotsavam Festival

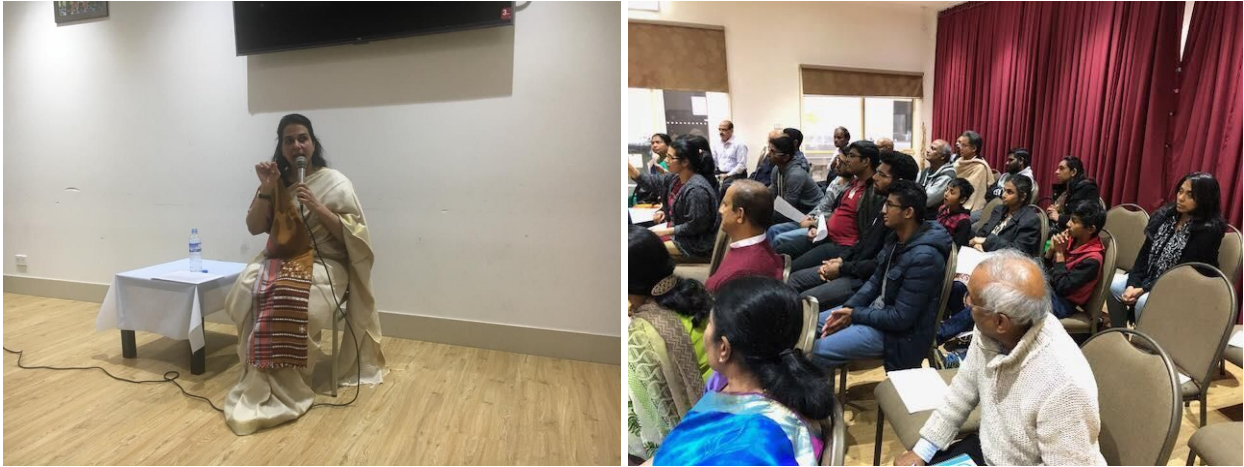
In its 11th year, the Annual Mahotsavam Festival took place from 20 April to 29 April 2018. The highlight of the festival was the Thaer Festival which was attended by over 2000 people. The 10-day festival itself was well organised and all the events started and finished on time, like clock work. In addition, the Annathanam was well coordinated, particularly on Thaer Day with 4 self service points allowing for quick service. Many devotees also commented that the food that was served in the evenings, during the 10-day festival was tasty and also full of variety. Thandapani Odhuvar from Coimbatore sang all the Thevaram and Panchapuram during the 10 days..

As in the past years, the festival was also broadcast live on ATBC radio, one of Australia's Tamil radio stations. Sri Vakrathunda Vinayagar Temple continues to be the only temple in Australia that takes the deity on the public roads of Melbourne.



Spiritual talk by Niloferji

Melbourne Yuva organised a talk by spiritual guru Ms Niloferji who talked about understanding Ganesha and the essence of inner growth. Drawing parallels between wifi networks and superior powers, Ms Niloferji explained how there are greater powers that exist that we do not see. She was able to relate our ancient religion to modern day science and living. This was particularly appealing to the youth. Around 40 people turned up on Saturday, 19 May 2018 in the afternoon for this interesting talk. She succinctly explained the importance of Vedas and how they help us understand the world beyond science and our senses.



Ms Niloferji also talked about Devathas - the power that shines and how connecting to that power brings about inner growth. In order to appease these powers, there is a way of approaching a deity and chanting Vedas could be one way.

Just as there is a greeting for people, there is an invocation for each deity. In doing so, there is a lot of grace (punniya) that you get when you chant the Vedas, according to Ms Niloferji. She then went on to explain the meaning of the beautiful Ganesha sloka, *Shri Ganapati Veda Paada Stavah*.

New Gold-plated Vahanam for Ganesha and Murugan

As the old vahanams were heavy and required many youngsters to carry, the Temple Management committee decided to invest in lightweight Vahanams. Donations from well wishers meant that these vahanams could be done with minimal impact on the Temple's finances. The Vahanams were carved out of wood, and then molded in lightweight metal and the wood removed from inside, and then gold plated. This has meant that the entire Vahanam with the deity does not exceed 100kg. This weight is further reduced by using bamboo poles as opposed to the heavy wooden ones. This will allow many older folks to now carry the deity because of the reduced weight. Two gold-plated, lightweight Vahanams are now being used at the Temple for Ganesha and Murugan respectively.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Lalitha Sahasranamam - Friday, 13 July 2018 to Sunday, 22 July 2018**

Lalitha Sahasranamam chanting will take place for 10 days from 13 July to 22 July. The cost for this puja is \$101.00. To participate in the event, please contact the Temple office on 03 9762 1835.

Did you know?: Lalitha Sahasranamam contains the thousand names of goddess Lalitha. The names are organised as stotras. It is the only Sahasranamam that does not repeat a single name. *(Source: Wikipedia)*

- **Avani Sathurthi Festival – Saturday, 8 September 2018 to Thursday, 13 September 2018**



To celebrate the Temple's 25th anniversary (Silver Jubilee Celebrations), 1008 Sahasra Kalasa Abhishegam will be held on Avani Sathurthi. This will be a major event for the Temple as the Management Committee will be inviting priests from other states of Australia and from India for the event.

The cost of the puja is \$101.00 and one Kalasam will be given per ticket. Each Kalasam has a Ganesha and Mahalakshmi on opposite sides, and the Sanskrit OM and the Tamil OM on opposite sides as well. In addition it will have the engraving to indicate the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Sri Vakrathunda Vinayagar Temple 2018. Hence this is a collector's item. The Kalasams will be kept in the Pooja throughout the five days and only given after the Abhishegam on 13 September 2018. The tickets are now available at the Temple office.

NOTICES

- Nathan Ayya will be returning back to Sri Lanka on 30th June 2018 at the end of his contract. The Management Committee will be holding a farewell event on Friday, 29th June at 7:45pm after the daily puja. Devotees and well-wishers are invited to attend this event.
- Natheswaram classes are currently being held in the Temple. This is a unique opportunity for anyone in Melbourne to learn such an art form. No other institution is teaching this artform. The classes are conducted by Dr Srinivasan who holds a PhD in Natheswaram. For more information, please contact the Temple office on 03 9762 1835.
- Those interested in requiring the services of the resident Musicians Dr K Srinivasan (Natheswaram) and Mr AB Ramadoss (Thavil) can contact the Temple office on 03 9762 1835.
- The Temple canteen is open on Tuesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, for dinner between 6.30 pm and 9.00 pm. and for lunch on weekends between 11.30 am and 2.00 pm. The Brunch is on every 3rd Sunday of the month. For canteen opening hours, [please see the Temple website](#).
- For upcoming poojas, please refer to our Temple calendar.
- For the full list of Temple services, [please see the Temple website](#).

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

What's the importance of the number 108?

By Soumya Joshi

When we see number of beads in vara mala/vrata mala, number of names of God and Goddess, I always wondered there should be some prominence for 108 which I do not know. Why 108 is so sacred for Hindus? Here is a brief explanation of the use and importance of this number:

- The diameter of the Sun is 108 times the diameter of the Earth. The distance from the Sun to the Earth is 108 times the diameter of the Sun.
- The average distance of the Moon from the Earth is 108 times the diameter of the Moon.
- In Ayurveda, there are 108 “Marma” points that are vital for giving life to living beings.
- The powerful Sri Chakra yantra intersects in 54 points each with a masculine and feminine quality, totalling to 108
- In Indian astrology we have 12 houses and 9 planets. 12 times 9 equals to 108.
- In Tantra, it is estimated that every day we breathe 21,600 times out of which 10,800 are solar energy and 10,800 are lunar energy. Multiplying 108 X 100 is 10,800.
- The famous saint Bharata wrote “The Natya Shastra” which has 108 karanas (Movement of hand and feet)
- There are 54 letters in Sanskrit each can be mentioned as masculine (Shiva) and feminine (Shakti) aspect, totalling to 108.
- There are 108 Puranas and 108 Upanishads.
- 9 times 12: Both of these numbers have been said to have spiritual significance in many traditions. 9 times 12 is 108. Also, 1 plus 8 equals 9. That 9 times 12 equals 108.
- Powers of 1, 2, and 3 in math: 1 to 1st power=1; 2 to 2nd power=4 (2×2); 3 to 3rd power=27 (3×3×3). 1x4x27=108
- Harshad number: 108 is a Harshad number, which is an integer divisible by the sum of its digits (Harshad is from Sanskrit, and means “great joy”)

Desires:

- There are said to be 108 earthly desires in mortals.

Lies:

- There are said to be 108 lies that humans tell.

Delusions:

- There are said to be 108 human delusions or forms of ignorance.

Heart Chakra:

The chakras are the intersections of energy lines, and there are said to be a total of 108 energy lines converging to form the heart chakra. One of them, sushumna leads to the crown chakra, and is said to be the path to Self-realization.

Pranayama:

If one is able to be so calm in meditation as to have only 108 breaths in a day, enlightenment will come.

Sri Yantra:

On the Sri Yantra there are marmas where three lines intersect, and there are 54 such intersections. Each intersection has masculine and feminine, shiva and shakti qualities. 54 times 2 equal 108. Thus, there are 108 points that define the Sri Yantra as well as the human body.

Pentagon:

The angle formed by two adjacent lines in a pentagon equals 108 degrees.

Time:

Some say there are 108 feelings, with 36 related to the past, 36 related to the present, and 36 related to the future.

Astrology:

There are 12 constellations, and 9 arc segments called namshas or chandrakalas. 9 times 12 equal 108. Chandra is moon, and kalas are the divisions within a whole.

River Ganga:

The sacred River Ganga spans a longitude of 12 degrees (79 to 91), and latitude of 9 degrees (22 to 31). 12 times 9 equal 108.

Gopis of Krishna:

There were said to be 108 gopis or maid servants of Krishna.

1, 0, and 8:

Some say that 1 stands for God or higher Truth, 0 stands for emptiness or completeness in spiritual practice, and 8 stands for infinity or eternity.

Silver and the moon:

In astrology, the metal silver is said to represent the moon. The atomic weight of silver is 108.

Numerical scale:

The 1 of 108, and the 8 of 108, when added together equals 9, which is the number of the numerical scale, i.e. 1, 2, 3 ... 10, etc., where 0 is not a number.

Meditations:

Some say there are 108 styles of meditation.

Paths to God:

Some suggest that there are 108 paths to God.

Jain:

In the Jain religion, 108 are the combined virtues of five categories of holy ones, including 12, 8, 36, 25, and 27 virtues respectively.

Sikh:

The Sikh tradition has a mala of 108 knots tied in a string of wool, rather than beads.

Buddhism:

Some Buddhists carve 108 small Buddhas on a walnut for good luck. Some ring a bell 108 times to celebrate a new year. There are said to be 108 virtues to cultivate and 108 defilements to avoid.

Chinese:

The Chinese Buddhists and Taoists use a 108 bead mala, which is called su-chu, and has three dividing beads, so the mala is divided into three parts of 36 each. Chinese astrology says that there are 108 sacred stars.

Stages of the soul:

Said that Atman, the human soul or center goes through 108 stages on the journey.

Meru:

This is a larger bead, not part of the 108. It is not tied in the sequence of the other beads. It is the guiding bead, the one that marks the beginning and end of the mala.

Praiseworthy souls:

There are 108 qualities of praiseworthy souls.

Japan:

In Japan, at the end of the year, a bell is chimed 108 times to finish the old year and welcome the new one.

Each ring represents one of 108 earthly temptations a person must overcome to achieve nirvana.

108 signifies the wholeness of the divinity, perfect totality. So, let us follow what our ancestors told us to do.

