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Sh. Vinod Razdan General Secretary of Kashmiri Pandit Sabha – Panchkula is transferred to Jaipur (Rajasthan) & Sh. Satish Razdan Finance Secretary of the sabha has been transferred to Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh).

These transfers of senior executives of the body has caused a vacuum in Executive body of sabha. Their selfless service to sabha will always be remembered. Sabha wishes both of them best of luck successful professional boost at their new location

From President's desk

The body of sabha held the meeting and president presided over the meeting. Members were informed that since both General Secretary Sh. Vinod Razdan and Finance Secretary Sh. Satish Razdan have been transferred to Jaipur and Jabalpur respectively which has hampered the smooth functioning of sabha. Beside the president Sh. K K Koul has almost completed his two terms. Therefore it was decided to hold General Body meeting on 26th February 2012 at sector 20 Panchkula Park at 3.00 PM to decide the further course of action to be initiated for holding fresh election as early as possible to elect new body or to elect new body unanimously. The date & vanue shall also be communicated through SMS's & telephone calls.

It has also Been decided that Hora Ashthami will be celebrated on 15th February 2012 at Mata Kalyani Mandir, sector 15, Panchkula from 4.00 PM to 6.00 PM. All members along with their family members are invited to be a part of celebration.

THE GARUDA PURANA

Continued from last issue.....

Hierarchy of Beings

There is a hierarchy of beings. All living beings are divided into four groups. The first group consists of those that are born from eggs, the second of those that are born of sweat, the third of herbs and plants, and the last of mammals. These four groups are respectively known as andaja, svedaja, udbhijja and jarayuja.

Every atman has to be born in each of these forms twenty-one lakh times, subject of course to consideration of papa and punya performed in earlier lives. That is, an atman has to spend eighty-four thousand lives on earth.

Amongst mammals, men are superior to all others and it is very difficult for an atman to be born as a human. It is only if the atman has acquired a lot of punya that it is born as a human. Living beings are the best of all elements, intelligent living beings the best of all living beings, humans the best of all intelligent beings, brahmanas the best of all humans, learned brahmanas the best of all brahmanas, and brahmanas blessed with the knowledge of the brahman the best of all learned brahmanas.

Garuda said, I have heard that all sorts of donations are to be made at the time of the shraddha ceremony. What are the objects of these donations? You haven't explained these at all, except for the donation of a bull in the case of vrishotsarga.

I will tell you about them now, replied Vishnu. The first object that should be donated is an umbrella (chhatra). On the way to Yama's abode, the preta has to pass long stretches where there is no shade at all and the sun shines very brightly. If an umbrella is donated, it can be held over the preta's head as it is taken to Yama's abode. The preta suffers less. The second object that should be donated is a pair of sandals (paduka). There is a possibility that the preta may land up in asipatravana naraka. If you remember, there the sands are very hot and sinners have to dash over the hot sands to a cool grove that is in the centre of the hell. If sandals are donated, the preta does not have to walk over these hot sands, but gets to ride a horse. The third object that should be donated is a seat (asana). If a seat is donated, the preta gets enough food to eat as it is taken to Yama. The fourth object that should be donated is a water-pot (kamandalu). If a water-pot is donated, the preta does not suffer from lack of drinking water on the journey. The fifth object that should be donated is clothing (vastra). If clothing is donated, Yama's messengers do not torture the preta on the journey. The sixth object that should be donated is a ring (mudrika). If a ring is donated, Yama's messengers allow the preta to travel at his own pace. They do not rush him and goad him to travel fast. The benefits of whatever is donated percolate through to the preta himself. Sometimes they directly reach the preta.

I don't understand how that is possible, said Garuda. How do they reach the preta?

Varuna accepts these offerings, replied Vishnu. He then gives them to the god Bhaskara. And Bhaskara takes these objects to the preta.

You had mentioned several hells, said Garuda. But you mentioned the names of only the seven major ones. What are the names of the others?

Vishnu told him the names of the other hells. They are tamisra, lohashanku, shalmali, kudnala, kalasutra, putimirittika, sanghata, lohatoka, savisha, sampratapana, mahanaaraka, kakola, sanjivana, mahapatha, avichi, andhatamisra, kumbhipaka and patana.

Together with the seven hells mentioned earlier, this gives a total of twenty-five hells. There are actually supposed to be twenty-one hells. Probably four of the hells have two names each. Or perhaps the figure that is given elsewhere in the Garuda Purana, of there being eighty-four lakh hells, is the right figure.

Garuda asked, But sometimes ghosts come and pester people. How do they manage to do that? How do they escape from hell?

In the same manner that prisoners escape from prison, answered Vishnu. They come and disturb their friends and relatives.

They return to their old houses and cause all sorts of illnesses, such as fever. They are positively delighted when people get headaches or cholera. The more they loved their dear ones when they were alive, the more harm they cause them as ghosts. It is in kaliyuga that one has all these ghosts. There were no such ghosts in satyayuga, dvaparayuga or tretayuga. These ghosts cause strife among friends and kill animals and children.

How does one know that ghosts are around? asked Garuda.

The signs are fairly obvious, replied Vishnu. Animals die and friends fight. There are sudden catastrophes. Children turn against their parents, brahmanas are criticised and there are bad harvests. Fire break out for no reason at all. Husband and wife fight all the time. These are all signs.

What does one do if one knows that there are ghosts around? asked Garuda.

I have already indirectly answered the questions, replied Vishnu. Perform a funeral ceremony for the ghost. But it is also good to consult someone who is learned in these matters, a diviner or astrologer (daivajna).

A ghost is a sinner. And a person who knows that there are ghosts around but does nothing about it, also becomes a sinner by contamination. In his next life such a person is born poor, diseased, without a living and does not have any sons. Or he may even be born as an animal. If nothing is done about the ghosts, the ghosts themselves realize after sometime that there is no hope for salvation in haunting people. Their only hope for salvation lies in returning to hell and serving out their terms of penance. So they return to hell and give up the haunting.

The worst form of ghost is a pishacha. They are very mischievous. They appear to their friends and relatives in all sorts of different forms, as bulls, horses and elephants. They make sleepers have nightmares. They frighten people. Sometimes pishachas appear and beg for food. At other times, they steal food and water. You will know a pishacha if you run into a cow or bull that talks in the human tongue. Friends and relatives discover that they are being carried (through the sky) to all sorts of different places by the pishacha.

If it is known that a pishacha is around, the first thing that is to be done is to bathe in a tirtha. A bliva tree is to be watered next. And finally a ceremony is to be performed, at which learned brahmanas are given grain.

Life

Garuda said Lord Vishnu, the Vedas say that humans live for a hundred years. And yet I find that very few people actually live for a hundred years. Why is this?

You are quite right, answered Vishnu. The Vedas do indeed say that humans live for a hundred years. But that is really their entitlement of life. How long they actually live depends on the sins that they commit. All sins lead to a lowering of life expectancy. Sins are there to tempt anyone who is born as a human being. For the first five years of life, there are very few sins to tempt a child. But thereafter the temptations start and people succumb to these temptations. That is the reason why very few people live to be a hundred years old. Why only a hundred years? If people are completely righteous, they can even be immortal.

A human being is called an infant (shishu) from birth to sixteen months of age. From sixteen to twenty-seven months of age he is called a child (bala or balaka). From twenty-seven months to five years of age he is called a boy (kumara). From five years to nine years of age he is called an adolescent (pouganda). From nine to sixteen years of age he is called a youth (kishora). Thereafter, he becomes a young man (yuvaka).

Vishnu next described to Garuda the human Body.

The human body is formed of skin(charma), blood (rakta), flesh (mamsa), fat (meda), marrow (majja), bones (asthi), and life (jivana).

The five elements are the earth (kshit), water (apa), energy, (teja), wind (vayu) and the sky (akasha). Each of these elements goes into the constitution of the human body. The earth forms the skin, the bones, the veins (nadi), the hair (roma) and the flesh. The water forms parts like saliva (lala), marrow and blood. Energy gives rise to hunger (kshudha), sleep (nidra), thirst (trishna), lassitude (alasya) and lustre (kanti). The wind produces anger (raga), spite (dvesha), modesty (lajja), fear (bhaya) and ignorance (moha). The sky gives rise to holes (chhidra), gravity (gambhirya), hearing (shravana) and mind (sattva).

There are several senses or faculties (indriya). The sense of intelligence (buddhindriya) are the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose. The senses of action (karmendriya) are objects like the hands, the feet and speech. There are ten veins in the body. Their names are ida, pingala, sushumna, gandhari, hastijihva, pusha, yasha, alambusha, kuhu and shankhini.

There are ten types of breath in the body. Their names are prana, apana, samana, udana, vyana, naga, kurma, krikara, devadatta and dhananjaya.

The body-hair on a human body number three and a half crores and there are three lakh hairs on the head. Teeth number thirty-two and nails twenty. Pala is an unit of measurement. There are one thousand palas of flesh in the body, one hundred palas of blood, ten palas of fat, ten palas of skin and twelve palas of marrow. So say the learned men.

There is a complete correspondence between the human body and the universe. The portion below the waist corresponds to the underworld and the part above the waist to the upper regions. The balls of the feet correspond to the underworld region tala, the ankles to vitala, the calves to sutala, the knees to talatala, the thighs to rasatala and the waist to patala. The navel corresponds to bhuloka (the earth), the stomach to bhuvanloka, the heart to svarloka, the throat to maharloka, the face to janaloka, the forehead to tapoloka and the top of the head to satyaloka. All fourteen worlds are thus to be found in the human body.

Garuda obtained answers to all his questions. He touched Vishnu's feet and expressed his thanks.

Great punya is acquired from reading or hearing the Garuda Purana. But a word of warning. At the end of the recital, the reciter should be given some alms. Otherwise, no punya is acquired at all. The text of the Purana should be worshipped. The reciter should then be worshipped with clothes, cows, food, gold and land.

Origin of Kahwah

Compiled by : Sanjay Ganjoo

Kahwah (also spelled **qehwa**, **kehwa** or **kahwa**) is a traditional green tea recipe in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Kashmir Valley. It is made in the Kashmir Valley of India and Pakistan, the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan, in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and other provinces in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other regions of Central Asia. The Kashmiri Pandit who had migrated from Valley in recent past and living in the North Indian Plains, particularly in the urban agglomeration of Delhi (NCR), Chandigarh, Jammu have contributed to its popularity among non-Kashmiri Indians.

The Arabic word *qahwah* may have been the root for kahwah or kehwa. However, whereas *qahwah* is used for coffee beans, the BMC kehwa is a green aromatic tea. Even though exact origins of kehwa are still unclear, most Kashmiris believe that the aromatic traditional drink kehwa dates back to times immemorial & has been a part of local consumption for ages. Certain sources also trace the origins of the drink to the Yarkand valley in Xinjiang Area (Areas of Kashmir & Xinjiang were part of the Kushan Empire during the 1st & 2nd century AD. It is likely that use of kehwa & its spread from one region to another was facilitated & popularised in these regions during the Kushan rule)

As we all know the tea is made by boiling green tea leaves with saffron strands, cinamon bark (dalchini) and cardamom pods (Chhoti Illachi) & occasionally Kashmiri roses to add a great aroma. Generally, it is served with sugar or honey, and crushed nuts, usually almonds or walnuts. Kahwah is usually served to guests or as part of a celebration dinner, and Saffron (Kong) is added to the Kehwa for special visitors. Sometimes milk is added to the kahwa, but this is generally given to the elderly or the sick and is popularly known as double Chai.

Congratulations

Ankit Raina S/o Sh. Vinod Raina (our executive member) Mamta Enclave, Zirakpur has been selected in TCS and posted to Trivandrum. Sabha wish him all the best & good luck in his career.

Get Well Soon :

Sh. S L Gigoo Husband of Smt. Asha Gigoo our social secretary has been operated upon and is progressing well. Our wishes to get well soon.

Condolences



- Sh. H K Raina of House no. 71, Sector 17 Panchkula one of our senior members left for heavenly abode. His departure is a real loss not only to the near & dear ones but also to the sabha. He was much respected member of Kashmiri Pandit sabha Panchkula and was helping sabha with his suggestions, guidance as well as by way of donations. He was gem of our community. This is an irreparable loss. Sabha conveys its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and their kith and kin. May the departed soul rest in peace.
- Sh. Bal Krishan Handoo of Chhanpora Kashmir originally from Bagh Jogilanger, Rainawari, Srinagar Father-in-law of Sanjay Ganjoo House No. 1518, Sector 15, Pkl passed away in Delhi on 24th October 2011. Sabha conveys its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and their kith and kin. May the departed soul rest in peace.

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