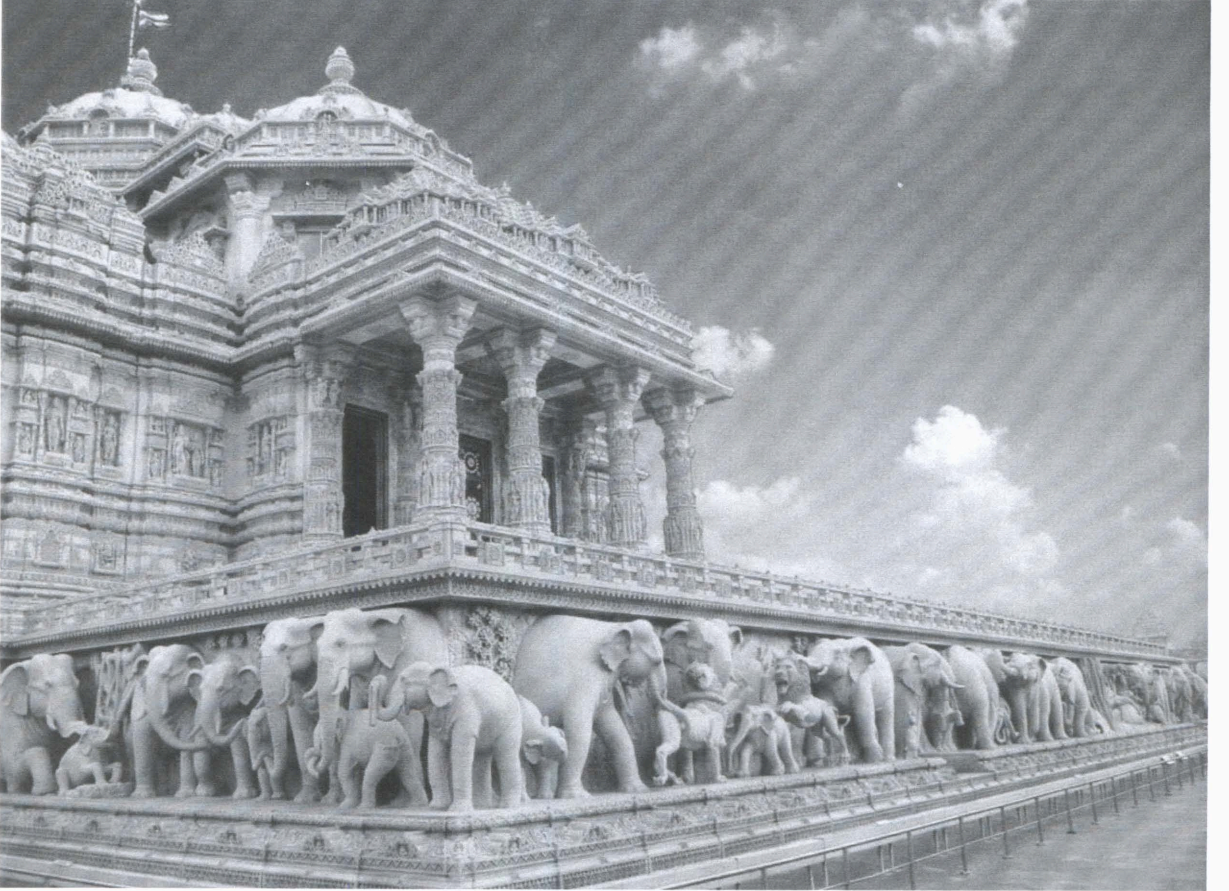


Path to Dharma



39



சேஷத்திர (வயல்) விநாயக ஆலயம், ஸ்ரீ முன்னேஸ்வரம், சிலாபம், ஸ்ரீ லங்கா.

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மார்ச் (மாசி - பங்குனி)

Path to Dharma

தர்ம நெறி



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சேஷத்திர (வயல்) விநாயக ஆலயம்,

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ஜனவரி(மார்கழி/தை)

Editorial.

The monthly publication 'Path to Dharma', of Kshethra Vinayaka Temple, Sri Munneswaram, Chilaw, Sri Lanka, is presenting the 39th issue this month.

The most important undertaking of this monthly is to convey the concepts and ideas related to Hindu dharma fundamentally by responds to the questions place by the concerned readers.

The comments and analysis of the readers are appreciated.

B.S.Sarma,

Kshethra Vinayaka Temple,

Sri Munneswaram, Chilaw, Sri Lanka. March.2011

Suggestions from the readers

Dear Mr.B.S.Sarma,

I read with a lot of interest the monthly magazine that you sent me regulatly and frankly say that I and my friends are pleased by the manner that these areas are dealt with.I and my friends sent you a couple of questions a few months back to you.We expect the answers for those questions at the earliest. With kind regards,

S.M.Dhinesh,U.K

19th January. 2011

Dear Mr.Sarma,

Thank you very much for sending the monthly magazine 'Path to Dharma' every month. Some of the explanations given in 'Path to Dharma' for the queries asked by the readers are very short and snappy and if detailed explanations are given whenever and where ever necessary it will be extremely helpful.

Please give the meaning of some important hymns, which are chanted in the rituals at the temples and at home.

K.N Vasudhevan, Canada

17th Feb, 2011

Dear Mr.B.S.Sarma,

Thanks for sending me the monthly magazine 'Path to Dharma' which my friends, my relations and I appreciate very much. Some of the explanations given are too intricate and are more procedural, which are quite complicated to grasp at once.

G.S. Sunthar, SriLanka

16th January2011

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Quotations

"They call Him Indra,Mitra,Varuna,Agni or the heavenly sunbirdGarutmat.The seers call in many ways that which is One;they speak of Agni,Yama,Matarisvan."

-Rig Veda

"The primordial Vastness is the sky.The primordialVastness is the spher of space. The primordialVastness is the mother,the father,the son. The primordialVastness is all the Gods,the five sorts of mem, all that was born and shall be born."

-Rig Veda

"Lead me from unreality to reality, Lead me from darkness to light,Lead me from death to immortality."

-Yajur Veda

"The atman pervades all like butter in milk.He is the source of Self-knowledge andascetic fervor.This is the Brahman teaching,the highest goal!This is the Brahman teaching,the highest goal."

-Yajur Veda

"There the eyes goes not,nor words,nor mind.We know not.We cannot understand how He can be explained.He is above the known,and He is above the unknown.Thus have we heared from the ancient sages who explained this truth to us"

-Sama Veda

"The athman is below,it is above,it is behind,it is before,it is in the south,it is in the north.The atman indeed is all that is.He who sees,reflects and knows this-he has joy in the atman."

-Sama Veda

"He is the Supreme Brahman,the Self of all.the chief foundation of this world,subtler than the subtle,eternal.That thou art;thou atr That."

-Atharva Veda

"In whose one limb all the Gods, three and thirty in number,are affixed-tell me of that Support-who may He be?"

-Atharva Veda

He has one tusk and four arms.Two of His hands hold a noose and a hook,while the other hands show the gestures of removing fear and granting boons. A mouse is seen on His flag.Red,obese.He has ears like winnowing baskets.

-Ganapati Upanishad

Devoid of beginning,duration and ending,by nature immaculate,powerful,omniscient,supremely perfect-thus is Siva spoken of in Saivite tradition

-Ajita Agama

Uequalled,free from pain,subtle,all-pervading,unending,unchanging,incapable of decay,sovereign-such is the essence of Siva,Lord of the summit of all paths.

-Svayambhuva Agama

Pure consciousness,taking form as knowledge and action,is present in the soul everywhere and always,for the soul is universal in its unfettered state.

-Mrigendra Agama

The bodily from the Almighty, being constituted of powers,is not comparable to ours.Most conspicuous is the absence of anava.His bodily form,having a head,etc is composed of five mantras, corresponding each to the five activities-Isa,Tat Purusha,Aghora,Vama and Aja

-Mrigendra Agama

The three impurities are anava,maya and the one caused by actions

-Suprabheda Agama

1. Some say it is not 108 Upanishads but 110 Upanishads can you get this list according to alpherbetic order ?

1. Adhyatma Upanishad
2. Advaya Taraka Upanishad
3. Aitareya Upanishad
4. Aksha Malika Upanishad
5. Akshi Upanishad
6. Amrita Bindu Upanishad
7. Amrita Nada Upanishad
8. Annapurna Upanishad
9. Aruni Upanishad
10. Atharvasikha Upanishad
11. Atharvasiras Upanishad
12. Atma Upanishad
13. Atma-Bodha Upanishad
14. Avadhuta Upanishad
15. Avyakta Upanishad
16. Bahvricha Upanishad
17. Bhasma-Jabala Upanishad
18. Bhavana Upanishad
19. Bhikshuka Upanishad
20. Brahma Upanishad
21. Brahma Vidya Upanishad
22. Brihad Jabala Upanishad
23. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
24. Chandogya Upanishad
25. Dakshinamurti Upanishad
26. Darsana Upanishad
27. Dattatreya Upanishad
28. Devi Upanishad
29. Dhyana-Bindu Upanishad
30. Ekakshara Upanishad
31. Ganapati Upanishad
32. Garbha Upanishad
33. Garuda Upanishad
34. Gopala Tapaniya Upanishad
35. Hamsa Upanishad
36. Hayagriva Upanishad
37. Isavasya Upanishad
38. Jabala Upanishad
39. Jabali Upanishad
40. Kaivalya Upanishad
41. Kalagni Rudra Upanishad
42. Kali Santarana Upanishad
43. Katha Upanishad
44. Katharudra Upanishad
45. Kaushitaki Brahmana Upanishad
46. Kena Upanishad
47. Krishna Upanishad
48. Kshurika Upanishad
49. Kundika Upanishad
50. Maha Narayana Upanishad
51. Maha Upanishad
52. Maha Vakya Upanishad
53. Maitrayani Upanishad
54. Maitreya Upanishad
55. Mandala Brahmana Upanishad
56. Mandukya Upanishad
57. Mantrika Upanishad
58. Mudgala Upanishad
59. Muktika Upanishad
60. Mundaka Upanishad
61. Nada Bindu Upanishad
62. Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad
63. Narayana Upanishad
64. Niralamba Upanishad
65. Nirvana Upanishad
66. Nrisimha Poorva Tapaniya Upanishad
67. Nrisimha Uttara Tapaniya Upanishad
68. Paingala Upanishad
69. Pancha Brahma Upanishad
70. Para Brahma Upanishad
71. Paramahamsa Parivrajaka Upanishad
72. Paramahamsa Upanishad
73. Pasupata Brahmana Upanishad
74. Pranagnihotra Upanishad
75. Prasna Upanishad
76. Rama Rahasya Upanishad
77. Rama Tapaniya Upanishad
78. Rudra Hridaya Upanishad
79. Rudraksha Jabala Upanishad
80. Sandilya Upanishad
81. Sannyasa Upanishad
82. Sarabha Upanishad
83. Sarasvati Rahasya Upanishad
84. Sariraka Upanishad
85. Sarva Sara Upanishad
86. Satyayaniya Upanishad
87. Saubhagya Lakshmi Upanishad
88. Savitri Upanishad
89. Sita Upanishad
90. Skanda Upanishad
91. Subala Upanishad
92. Suka Rahasya Upanishad

93. Surya Upanishad
94. Svetasvatara Upanishad
95. Taittiriya Upanishad
96. Tara Sara Upanishad
97. Tejo Bin Upanishad
98. Tripadvibhuti Mahanarayana Upanishad
99. Tripura Tapini Upanishad
100. Tripura Upanishad
101. Trisikhi Brahmana Upanishad

102. Turiyatita Avadhuta Upanishad
103. Vajrasuchika Upanishad
104. Varaha Upanishad
105. Vasudeva Upanishad
106. Yajnavalkya Upanishad
107. Yoga Chudamani Upanishad
108. Yoga Kundalini Upanishad
109. Yoga Sikha Upanishad
110. Yoga Tattva Upanishad

**2. Give the relevant English words for the following Hindu technical terms.
Sanka.....Sruva?**

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Sanka-conch | 4. Nandhaka-(khadga)sword | 7. Amrtatwa-immortality |
| 2. Chakra-discus | 5. Sarnga-bow | 8. Apasmara-elilepsy |
| 3. Padhma-lotus | 6. Moha-delusion | 9. Anjali pose-obeisance |
| 10. Tapas-austerities | 23. Para-suprema | 36. Abhaya-assuring protection |
| 11. Avidhya-ignorance | 24. Vyuha-emanation | 37. Varadha-granting boons |
| 12. Prakrithi—nature | 25. Vibhava-incarnation | 38. Mudras-posture,pose |
| 13. Dharma-righteousness | 26. Thisula-trident | 39. Chitha-mind |
| 14. Artha-wealth | 27. Damaru-drum | 40. Ahankara-eagoity |
| 15. Kama-pleasure of the flesh | 28. Parasu-battleaxe | 41. Bhudhi-intellect |
| 16. Moksha-beatitude | 29. Mrga-deer/antelope | 42. Manas-mind |
| 17. Amrtha-the ambrosia | 30. Pasa-nooseankusa-goad | 43. Jata makuta-hair crown |
| 18. Murthi-embodiment | 31. Danda-staff | 44. Sukshmanda-microsm |
| 19. Arca-icon | 32. Pinaka-bow(agagava) | 45. Brahmanda-macrocosm |
| 20. Srsti-creation | 33. Khatvanga-magic-wand | 46. Sruk-ladle |
| 21. Sthithi-preservation | 34. Pasupatha-spear | 47. Sruva-spoon |
| 22. Pralaya-destruction | 35. Darpana-mirror | |

3. What are the leaves of plants mentioned as plates for eating?

Metals like gold, silver, iron or wood, of trees are mentioned other than the leaves of plants as plates for the purpose of eating. The most generally used are leaves like that of the food served in a plantain (banana) leaf is said to be very hygienic. It controls kapha and vaatha and is potency. The lotus leaves cures poisonous circumstances. Other leaves used as plates for this purpose are palaasha leaf (Butea monosperma), vata leaf (Ficus bengalenses), arka leaf (Calotropis gigantea) and era nada leaf (Ricinis communis). Palaasha leaf is used for eating rice - it increases taste and is also useful in conditions of gulma and mahodaram. It reduces pain and pittha. Vatapatram is good for reducing pittha and healing wounds. Arka leaf, cures peenasam and krimi and odema of the full body (all over the body). Eranda leaf - is vaathagham and is kapha and pittha karam.

4. What are the vessels mentioned used for cooking and serving of food for eating?

Any vessels used for cooking and serving of food for eating should be washed with clean water and dried before use. The pots or any vessels made of mud and iron are superior for cooking purposes. Food cooked in iron vessels are said to be excellent for eyes and cures arshas (piles), antiemetic, antianemic, improves complexion, cures oedema. Bronze (Bell metal) vessels which is

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called as *vengalam* in south and *koot* in north are extensively used in India. It is a combination of Copper, Zinc and Tin. It is generally believed that the food kept/or cooked in a bronze vessel stimulates blood and bile (pittham). It is also said that it is good for the heart, cures all eye diseases, improves appetite. Copper vessels make the food, unappetizing and they cause hyper-acidity (mlapittham). It is good to use copper vessels to store water for drinking purposes. Normally Milk, curds and paste of tamarind should not be stored in copper vessels. Food items cooked in silver and gold vessels are recommended as they are noble metals.

5. What are the modes of preparing fire for the rituals mainly the sacred fire offering (homa or Yagna) in a Hindu temple?

The **preparing fire** in the course of the rituals is, certainly looked upon as an occasion of immense importance. A series of purificatory practices are performed before the fire is actually deposited in the sacred homa Kunda (a structure of a variety of prescribed shapes into which the sacred fire is lit and kindled.) After performing the prescribed eighteen Samskaras the pit for the sacrificing the items (kunda) is ready for the rituals by the fire.

The necessity of fire is required at this stage only. Three sources of producing the fire for sacred homa are recommended in this purpose. The most important method of production of fire, is the churning out of the fire from the Aranis (churning rods of wood).

The second method in order is the fire produced from the Surya-Kanta (This is fire produced by converging the rays of the sun through a *convex* lens to fall on combustible substance such as cotton or wood carvings).

The third method of creation of fire for homa ceremony in order is the fire procured from the house of Dvija. This fire is called Bhutagni. This fire is collected in a vessel made out of copper and placed in the South-east or North-east of the homa agni kunda. An ember is picked up and thrown towards the quarter of Nruti (South-western corner) as the share of Kravyadas (demons).

6. What are the substances included in the kalasa (pot) when a ritualistic sacred bath (abhishka) is performed in a Hindu temple?

The ingredients or substances included in the kalasa (pot) when a ritualistic sacred bath (abhishka) is performed in a Hindu temple normally are as follows;

- ela (Elettaria cardamomum (seed) – ஏலம்),
- lavanga (bark of Cinnamomum cassia - லவங்க பட்டை ,
- karpura Cinnamomum camphora - கற்பூரம்),
- kesara { stamen of Saffron - குங்குமப்பூ } ,

The nine gems are also placed into them. But prior to the ingredients or substances included in the kalasa (pot) for a ritualistic sacred bath the appropriate kalasas (pots) are selected and got ready for ceremonial purification. During the commencement of the ritual incense which are mentioned in the ritualistic performance in a temple is first burnt, made to blow within these Kalasas for the sake of refinement. They are then filled with water to the accompaniment Vedic mantras. And then only the ingredients or substances included in the kalasa (pot) the kalasas become ritualistically perfect after the sprouts of fresh mango are placed on the top and a coconut (nalikera) with its tuft pointing upwards is placed upon these sprouts.

7. What is meant by 'bhuta-suddhi' in relation to Hindu ritualistic performances?

'Bhuta-suddhi' (Purification of the five elements), and is performed with a view to bringing about the purification of the physical body, of the performer of the rituals, which is constituted of the five Pancha bhutas elements namely; i) Earth (prithivi) ii) Water (apas), iii) Fire (tejas), iv) Air (vayu) v) Ether (akasha).

The rite of the bhuta-suddhi seems to have close connections with the yoga practices. Regular control of

breath, inhalation and exhalation through the ida, pingala and susumna nadins (The main veins through the prana, the vital life breath is made to pass through are known by names ida, pingala and susumna) and the various bhavanas(mental assumptions) assumed at the various stages of the rite indicate the yogic character. The purification of the gross body is brought about by means of the process called sodhana which is practised in many stages. This purification is marked by the assuming of a new body obtained after the former physical body is ritualistically destroyed by the fire which originates in the toes. The impurities consequent upon the contact with the five elements (Panch bhutas) which exist in the gross physical body are then cleansed. The ensuing flow of amrta (nectar) from the sahasrara scatters all over and moistening the newly assumed body. The bhutasuddhi is followed by nyasa. This is the act of touching the limbs of the body of the performer with the prescribed fingers. Each limb is believed to be presided over by a deity, and the name of the deity is recited while touching the particular limb.

8. What are the Hindu ritualistic performance (Samskaras) carried out in a temple Yaga sala(manadapa)?

The Hindu ritualistic performance (Samskaras) are supposed to be ritualistically carried out at the commencement of the Yaga-puja in a temple. These samskaras are as follows;

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| i. Niriksana, | vii. Purana, | xiii. Abhyarcana, |
| ii. Proksana, | viii. Samikarana, | xiv. Sutravestana, |
| iii. Tadana, | ix. Secana, | xv. Sekha-trayannyasa, |
| iv. Abhyuksana, | x. Kuttana, | xvi. Vajrikarana |
| v. Khanana, | xi. Sammarjana, | xvii. Catuspathany-nyasa. |
| vi. Avakirana, | xii. Samalepana, | |

9. What are the five Activities (Pancha Krityas) of the Lord Siva?

The five - activities (Pancha Krityas) of the Lord Siva are: Srishti (creation), Sthiti (preservation), Samhara (destruction), Tirobhava (veiling) and Anugraha (grace). These, separately considered, are the activities of Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Mahesvara and Sadasiva.

10. What are the asta-mangalas (Eight auspicious signs) used in special sacred hall of fire offering pit ('homa kunda of Yajna sala') ?

The asta-mangalas (Eight auspicious signs) used in special sacred hall of fire offering pit ('Yajna sala') are namely;

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Darpana(The mirror), | 2. Purna Kumba(A Kalasa replete with all it's constituents) , |
| 3. vrsabha(The bull), | 4. yugma-camara(A air of chowries), |
| 5. srivasta(An emblem having three triangles one locked into the other), | |
| 6. svastika(An auspicious our-legged cross) , | 7. sankha (Conch), |
| 8. deepa(Lamp) | |

Eight auspicious signs(symbols) are set up in the yagasala at the appropriate places. Copper or wood is used for the construction of each of the astamangalas, each of which measures five angulas(a special unit of measurement) by eight angulas.

11. What are the names of eight divine damsels in Hinduism?

The eight divine damsels referred in Hindu religious rituals are namely;

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| i. Urvasi, | v. Sumukhi, |
| ii. Menaka, | vi. Sunadari, |
| iii. Kamuki, | vii. Rambha, |
| iv. Kamavardhani, | viii. Tiloattama |

12. What are the names of nine gems mentioned for nagraha in Hindu rituals

The names of nine gems mentioned for nagraha in Hindu rituals are namely;

- i. Surya (Sun/ Ravi) -Rubi,
- ii. Chandra (Moon) -Perl,
- iii. Angaraka(mars)-Red Coral,
- iv. Budha (Mercury) -Emerald,
- v. Brihaspati - Guru (Jupiter)-Topaz,
- vi. Sukra (Venus) -Diamond,
- vii. Sani (Saturn)-Sapphire,
- viii. Rahu (ascending node)-Onyx/sardonyx
- ix. Ketu (descending node)-Cat's eye/ Lapis /lazuli)

13. What is the story of the 4th Avatar of Lord Vishnu, Narasimha?

The Story of the 4th Avatar of Lord Vishnu, Narasimha is given below;

Hiranyakashipu wanted to take revenge on the devotees and in particular on Lord Vishnu because his brother Hiranyaksha was killed by the Varaha Avatar of Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakashipu was eager to be the controller of Heaven, Earth & Pathala, all the three worlds. He began penance at Mount Mandarachala for for years. Owing to the concentration of Penance, Lord Brahma appeared and asked Hiranyakashipu for his request. Hiranyakashipu requested Lord Brahma for immortality. Brahma, though, declined, Hiranyakashipu's expectation saying "*All living beings must face death Hiranyakashipu. Anyhow You may, however, choose your death wish.*"

Subsequently Hiranyakashipu laid three conditions, as his death wish, "let not death come to me either by man or beast, nor devil, nor god shall cause my death by day or by night with steel or stone or wood, indoors or outdoors, or earth or in sky. Grant me undisputed lordship over the world". Brahma agreed and Hiranyakashipu got his death wishes approved. Consequently he became practically immortal. After getting his death wishes protected Hiranyakashipu conquered the worlds and became a demon tyrant. He barred all worships to Lord Vishnu and affirmed himself a God.

The devotees of Lord Vishnu did not know what to do and approached Lord Vishnu for clarification. Lord Vishnu asked them to be quiet and calm. Kayadhu the wife Hiranyakashipu gave birth to a baby boy named Prahlad in the Ashrama of Narada. In the course of time Prahlad grew up and turned out to be an ardent devotee of Vishnu. Hiranyakashipu, expected his son to be a strong and ruthless king like himself. Becoming conscious that Prahlad for all time prayed to Lord Vishnu, Hiranyakashipu tried to educate his son Prahlad against the influence of Lord Vishnu. All their efforts to influence Prahlad against Lord Vishnu failed.

Hiranyakashipu ordered his servants to kill Prahlad if he refused to accept the supremacy of his father. They tried to kill him by throwing down a mountain, drowning, poisoning, and burning him. All their efforts went to waste as Lord Vishnu protected his devotee Prahlad. King Hiranyakashipu was very angry on the way of of his son's attitude.

One day the king challenged his son in the open court:

"*Prahlad! is my enemy, whom you worship, present anywhere here?*".

Prahlad replied, "*Vishnu is omnipresent. There's not a single place where he's not found.*"

Hiranyakashipu's anger was at its peak. He heated an iron pillar and then asked Prahlad, "*Can you embrace this pillar if your Vishnu is in it also*

Prahlad did not hesitate but rushed to the pillar and embraced it. The heated iron did not do any harm to him. Hiranyakashipu got up from his throne in ferocity and hit hard with full force to the pillar with his mace.

To Hiranyakashipu's surprise, The pillar cracked with a thundering sound in to two halves and Lord Vishnu appeared there in the form of Narasimha.

One half of his body was of a lion and the other half of a human form. He had matted hair on his head, large moustaches on the face and terrible teeth in the mouth. Terrible nails were seen in his paws.

Hiranyakashipu remembered his first death wish, "To be killed by some one who is neither human nor beast." It was also the twilight hour, neither day nor night, the second death wish.

The demon king hit Narasimha with his mace but Narasimha brushed it aside swiftly. It was twilight and Narasimha caught hold of the demon Hiranyakashipu.

He sat on the threshold of the court room, placed the body of the demon on his thighs, and pierced his nails into the body of the demon and broke open his stomach. The demon was killed on the spot in a moment. The place was neither inside nor outside. This was Hiranyakashipu's third death wish.

Lord Narasimha was furious and roared. However, he was pacified when Prahlad touched his feet and goddess Lakshmi also tried to cool him. Lord Narasimha then made Prahlad the King.

