

Question 1 Why Kula dEvathA worship is important?

A cognitive question arises:

All Christians may worship only Christ and all Muslims worship only ALLAH. They probably account for more than 70% of humanity. When they do not have a Kula dEvathA why should we care?

There is no cognitive certain answer. We only have two empirical explanations (knowledge passed down and found to be protective)

We follow a DHAARMIC life, observing samaskaaras that pave way for both individual's bliss and collective auspiciousness and prosperity. And that DHARMA prescribes KULA DEVATHA worship at the start of many samskaaraas such as mudanam (hair offering), upanayanam (entering brahmacharya aas₂hrama), vivaaham (entering grahathas₂hrama).

Even when we start simple poojas, we invoke the following: Kula dEvathA, IshTa dEvathA , GrAma dEvathAbyO namOnamah. We also pray to kshEthra paalaka (the protector of the place where we perform poojas / rituals) and the DIK dEvathAs (the gods protecting all directions.

Please feel free write to <samynarayana@gmail.com> for any suggestions, improvements, upgrades, better explanation, modification, amendments.

Question 2 Why visit to Kula dEvathA temple is important?

1 **A fundamental cognitive question arises:** When it is we, the humans make brick, mortar (cement), use them to construct temples + we the humans who sculpt out the IDOL we eventually worship + we the humans who do CONSECRATION (kumbhAAbhisheKam) + we the humans who clear the debris when the temple deteriorates so that we do "JEEvanaUdhDharaNa MahA kumbhAbhisheKam, where is GOD in the temple and why do we worship the idol

There is no cognitive certain answer for this question also. But we have explanations of the natural process:

We the humans make match stick and the match box. We the humans make the lamp, the wick that is in there and extract the oil from seeds and pour the same in to the lamp.. We the humans rub the match stick on the match box. AND WE GET FIRE and use this to light the lamp. – though we didn't create the fire ourselves.

Once the lamp is lighted we have no control on the way the shadow should point. Even if change the direction of the lamp, the shadow is always underneath and the flame always points upwards. And the darkness gets sublimated in the light of the lamp even without driving away the darkness. AND WE CAN NOT CHANGE THIS NATURAL INVOLUNTARY SEQUENCE that follows even if we wish otherwise.

However, if we do not follow the processes of making the match stick, match box, lamp, oil, wick, we do not get the desired result.

Thus, if we construct a temple+ install the idol and consecrate in accordance with the (AAgama) s₂AsthA we have brought in the DIVINE ENERGY in that place involuntarily. And praying in the temple does drive away the ignorance (darkness) and gives us peace and divinity

2 A derivative question arises as to why we should go to Kula dhEvathA temple and offer worship instead of any temple where the DIVINE ENRGY manifests itself?.

MahA PeriyavA ChandrasEkara saraswathi swamalavAru has given an answer specific to this: When we go to Kula dhEvathA temple and offer prayers, we are also receiving the vibrations of our ancestors having offered prayers in the same temple. The life energy of some ancestors may be in the temple walls, or light of the lamp. That adds to the potency of our prayers. The vibrations from our prayers are also bequeathed to our progeny.

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Question 3 How do we define a kula dEvatha ?

A Kula dEvathA is defined as that dEvathA which was worshipped by our 7th generation ancestors (great grand fathers great grandfather- Prapithamaha Prapithamaha). Our ancestors had worshipped a dEvathA based on the place they lived and the circumstances. And that Kula dEvathA had offered protection to our ancestral families.

Since mobility in those days was extremely limited AND, many generations lived together; the kula dEvathA prEEthi when done in the family; is known across generations. The knowledge came down like baton pass-on .

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Question 4 Why some generations may not know the original kula dEvathA?

There had been primarily 4 factors listed by WISE MASTERS as to how we may find a missing link..

1. On occasions, the family elders might have suffered a huge misfortune and one of the elders directed his / her anger and the frustration on the kula dEvathA and stopped offering prayers. Over the years, the practice of kula dEvathA preethi / worship, temple visits stopped
2. On occasions such as flood, fire, earth quake or man made disasters, invasion by enemy forces, the kula dEvathA temple might have disappeared and hence our forefathers could not continue going to that temple and migrated to another.
3. One of our ancestors focused more on the “ishTa dhEvatha” – the God of one’s own liking choice and ignored the kula dhEvatha and thus practice of passing on the knowledge stopped.
4. Our ancestors started migrating to other places for three reasons. (i) Natural: The place where they lived became infertile, dry, desert , affected by famine and couldn’t support life and offer sustainable way of earning and living (ii) MAN MADE: the said place started developing threats such as epidemic- invasion and other man made threats . (iii) SEARCH of BETTER LIFE: There were better opportunities in other places (villages, towns, cities, countries)

When they migrated, due to inability to go to ancestral kula dEvathA temple , they mentally accepted a temple as a kula dEvathA temple and over a period of time, this knowledge was lost.

Question 5 Who is our Kula dEvathA? (Part 1)

- i) Most of us trace back our ancestral place as 124 Solaiyappa Street Kumbakonam and our kula dEvathA temple as SWAMIMALAI. Some of us visit Swamimalai regularly or frequently.
- ii) ON occasions such as marriage where vara pravaNam (declaration of lineage) - is chanted, our elders have said that Late RAgavaiah (our generation’s great grandfather – grand father Venkata SUbrahmanyam’s father) or his father moved from Karnool to Nellore in search of water, livelihood and then moved to Kumbakonam.
- iii) Some elders have said that the family had moved to Tamila NAdu during Saint ThyAgayya’s days.
- iv) Further, Sanskrit pundits from TTD Sanskrit university, whom I was fortunate to meet and discuss origins of family names; have emphatically said that the family name “Nivarthi” originated from surroundings of KURNOOL. Probably there might have a village by that name. But WEB SEARCH doesn’t show any such village near Kurnool or Nellore.
- v) We all know (from abhivAdhayE we offer at the end of performing sandhyAvandanam) that we belong to KrishNa yajur vEdha shAkha + chAndhramaNa sampradhAya + AANgeerasa-

Baaruhaspathya BhAradhWAja TRIYA Rishs (established s₂AsthRA sampradhAya) + BhAradhWAja gOthram.

Most of us know that our kula dEvathA is gajjala gurunaTHa swamy because we have a tradition in our families that the children are prohibited from wearing anklets (that make sound).

None of us are sure that gajjala gurunATHa swamy is same as Swaminatha swamy we worship in our generation (our parents, ourselves and our children)

Question 6 Who is our Kula dEvathA? (Part 2)

There are TWO versions of Gajjala GurunaTha swamy pooja.

- i) One is what we all typically chant in gurunATHa swAmy pongali we do in our generation
This version was codified based on the procedure followed on the occasion of marriage of Late Chella (Meenakshi), Chi.Vijaya Prema, Chi.Vidhya Saraswathi, Chi.La.Sow.Mangala and also Chi.Ravisankar and his Nivarthi brothers by our elders
This uses the phrase “khEtam kukkutam ankusszam cha varadham pASzam DHanuh cha chakram: dhEvam chithramayUUra vaahanagjatham s₂AsthRA ShaNmukham”
- ii) There is another version that uses the phrase as “pOOrNA pushKala samEtha GurunATHa swaminam”. May be Chi.GiridharasubrahmaNya swamy can help us get this version; because C.L.S.Lalitha Giri’s sister’s house hold follows that version. I also get to know that this version of GurunATHa swAmy temple is somewhere near Erode. Since none of our forefathers in our living memory had suggested this Erode Temple and further if at all there is another temple it must be in our ancestral village in Kurnool, Swamimalai still remains our favoured kula dEvatha temple!
- iii) If anyone has any DEFINITIVE answer, please do share.

Question 7 What to do if we can’t find our KULA DEVATHA in spite of best efforts?

We have a BY PASS route as prescribed by Sanskrit pundits. Not sure whether this is included in any s₂AsthRA though.

Whenever we pray to Kula dEvatha or in kula dEvatha temple, we could offer one more coconut, fruits, garland and nivEdhanam items and pray to the “known” kula dEvatha to pass on the second

“offering” to our “unknown” kula dEvatha. This request to pass on our offerings is exactly what we do when we perform hOmam, paarvaNa shraadhham etc.

We can also pray that “known” kula dEvatha some how leads to “unknown” kula dEvatha temple

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Question 8 Is there a way to find out KULA DEVATHA?

Of course some pundits suggest ways such as “palm leaf reading”, “jyOthism” and such techniques. However, they are not definitive. I prefer sticking to known kula dEvatha and kula dEvatha temple rather than listen to unverifiable prescriptions of people whom I may not trust to be fully qualified to offer solutions

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