



Karkidaka Masam

Ramayana Masam



Karkidaka Masam – Ramayana Masam

- It is an important observance in Kerala, India.
- It is observed in the month of ‘Karkidakam’ (mid July – mid August) of the Malayalam calendar.
- It is also popularly known as “Ramayana Masam” (Masam in Malayalam means month).
- The Sun transits from Mithuna Rasi (Gemini) to Karkidaka Rasi (Cancer).



Significance

- Karkidakam is the last month of the Malayalam calendar. Karkidakam is the period of spirituality and devotion in Kerala.
- The monsoon rains are at its peak in Karkidakam month. Owing to the heavy rains, Karkidakam Masam is also known as '**Panja Masam**' (the period of scarcity). With the fields flooded, people do not have much work to do and are solely dependent on the grains stored during the previous harvest season. Due to the heavy rains they cannot move out of their houses to earn a living.
- This month is also known as the **Ramayana Masam** – the epic Ramayana is read in this month in homes and temples. This is done to ward off the fury of Nature.
- As per the Malayalam Almanac, auspicious functions and new business ventures are not held during this period.



- Starting from the first day, every day during the Karkidakam Masam, all the members of the house gather, after sunset. After lighting the evening lamp, they sit close to the 'Nilavilakku' or the traditional Kerala lamp and narrate the verses of 'Adhyatma Ramayana' (the Malayalam version of Ramayana). The reading of Ramayana is managed in a way that it ends on the last day of the Karkidakam Masam.
- Karkidakam month is dedicated to dead ancestors. Pithru tharpan are offered to them.
- The month of Karkidakam is most suitable for the Ayurveda treatment as the monsoon rains are at its peak.

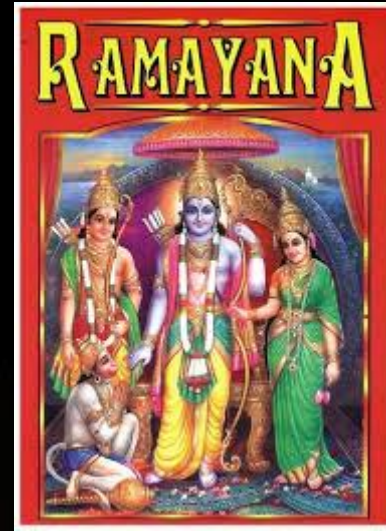
Ramayana

- Ramayana is a Sanskrit epic written by Saint Valmiki.
- It was translated in the Malayalam language by Thunchath Ezhuthachan and is known as 'Adhyatma Ramayana Kilippattu'.
- It is this Malayalam version that is read during the Ramayana Masam.



History

- Earlier, Karkidaka Masam used to be one of the difficult months due to heavy rains and floods.
- Majority of the people depended on agriculture and this month used to be the month of scarcity.
- With the farm fields flooded, there used to be no work and the economy used to come to a stand still.
- In some places, due to the rains, it was even hard to venture outside the house.



Ramayana



Adhyatma Ramayana
Kilippattu



Ramayana Parayanam



Flooded farm



Nilavilakku



Nilavilakku

Pithru tharpan



Rituals during Ramayana Masam



- Starting from the first day, every day during the Karkidakam Masam, verses of Ramayana are narrated in houses and temples.
- The 'Amavasya' (no moon day) of the Karkidakam Masam called "Karkidaka vavu" is dedicated to ancestors. On this day Hindus perform special rituals close to water bodies for attainment of peace of their dead family members. This ritualistic homage is usually performed by the male member of the family.



- Hindus also undertake pilgrimage to the four temples of Lord Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna, located in the Kottayam and Thrissur districts. This ritual is known as 'Nalambalam Darshanam' (worship of four temples).
- Many pujas and rituals like Bhagavathi seva are conducted in their homes and temples during this month to ward off evil.
- The Lalitha Sahasranamam is chanted to invoke Goddess Devi and archanas are offered.
- In most Devi Temples there is Sahasranama Archanas every day in the evening of Karkidaka month. Special payasams are prepared in some homes and temples.
- The aanayoottu (feeding the elephant) takes place in Vadakkunnathan temple, Thrissur, Kerala. There will be an interesting sight of a long row of elephants feasting on jaggery, palm leaves and coconut.
- At Sri Krishna Temple of Guruvayur, the temple elephants can be seen being pampered with a rejuvenation therapy called sukhachikilsa. It includes body wraps, herbal solutions and a special diet.



Nalambalam Darshanam/ Nalambalam Yatra

- The four temples are dedicated to Lord Ram, Bharatha, Lakshman and Shatrughnan – the four brothers in Ramayana. One is supposed to complete the yatra in a single day.
- Most people begin the journey from the famous Sri Krishna Temple in Guruvayur, Kerala as temples are within 60km from here.
 1. Sree Rama Temple at Triprayar dedicated to Lord Rama. It is located 25km away from Guruvayur.
 2. Koodalmanickam Bharatha Temple at Irinjalakuda dedicated to Bharaths. It is located 24km from Triprayar.
 3. Lakshmana Temple at Moozhikkulam dedicated to Lakshmana. It is located 31km from Irinjalakuda.
 4. Shatrughna Temple at Payammel dedicated to Shatrughna. It is located 2km off from Arippalam.



Sri Krishna Temple in
Guruvayur



Sree Rama Temple



Koodalmanickam Bharatha Temple



Lakshmana Temple



Shathrugghna Temple



How to read the Ramayanam?

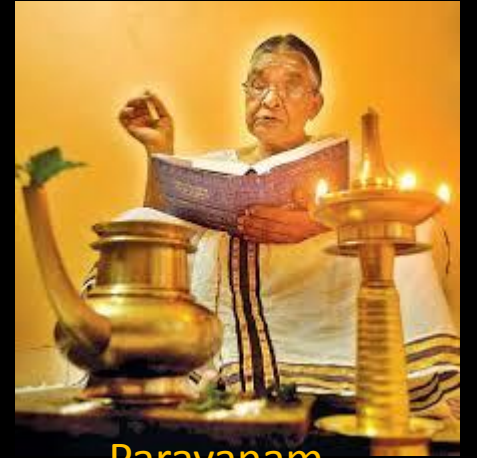
- Clean the house to eliminate negative forces.
- Prepare Ashtamangalyam (8 auspicious materials), light a lamp.
- In the morning you can read the book facing east or north.
- In the evening you can read the book facing west or north.
- At other-times, read only facing north.
- There is no rule regarding how many pages to be read.
- Never stop the reading when the line is dealing with war, sadness, death or other negative emotions.



- Always stop reading for the day with two auspicious lines.
- Once you start reading the Ramayana, should be read on all days of the month.
- Anyone can read the book in the home, it is not necessary that a single person should read it daily.
- Uttara Ramayana should not be read.
- The fourteen lines starting with Sri Rama Rama Rama... in the Bala Kandam should be read daily in the beginning.
- It is highly good to perform Anadhanam (donating food) on a day in the month.



Ashtamangalyam



Parayanam

Aanayoottu







Karkidakam & Health

- Karkidakam is most suitable month for the Ayurveda treatment.
- Due to the moist climate all the pores in the human body will be open and the Ayurvedic medicines especially external medicines works effectively in the body.
- Monsoon treatments help to promote health, to prevent life style disorders like diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, obesity etc.
- It is the ideal treatment period for patients who suffer with , depression, anxiety, insomnia etc .
- The Karkidaka therapies is a means to keep Vata (qualities that reflect elements of space and air), Pitta (qualities that reflect fire and water)and Kapha (qualities that reflect water and Earth) in balanced level , increase the immunity and make fit physically, mentally, and spiritually .Thus karkitaka chikitsa alleviate existing health conditions and to prevent illnesses.

Karkidaka Kanji



- It is a medicinal porridge that is prescribed in the Karkidaka masam.
- The ingredients in this porridge promote good health and clean digestion even during the peak monsoon when the skies are mostly overcast.
- There is no strict guideline in preparing the Kanji but is generally prepared using herbs such as ginger, jeera, fenugreek seeds, turmeric, carom seeds etc. It is cooked with coconut and served hot.
- In order to maintain the traditional recipe, ready-made mix of 'Karkidaka kanji' is available in the market.



Karkidaka kanji



Karkidaka kanji ready mix



THANK YOU!