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Apr 4, 2021 · 12 tweets · [GhorAngirasa/status/1378636985510682628](https://twitter.com/GhorAngirasa/status/1378636985510682628)



## Śaivālaya Dharmakartā (शैवाल-धर्मकर्ता)

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(उत्तरमेरूर तमिळ्-पण्डितर् श्रीमान् आ. ईश्वरमूर्ति-पिळ्ळै)

Year of Publication: 1940

++See following tweets++

I have translated his 16-point essay in Tamizh on the qualifications & duties of an ideal धर्मकर्ता i.e. temple administrator

It may be interesting to take a look at this (now) historical document in the light of recent debates.

A final note before I start the translation:

While several points are शैव-centric, you can read them mutatis mutandis (That is, you can rephrase the शैव points for yourself in another specific framework or a generic one). This, of course, is left to the readers.

Introduction by Author:

Throughout भरतकण्ड, there are शैवाल-स many. Those who take care of them are धर्मकर्ता-s. The one appointing them is the sarkār. Those coming as धर्मकर्ता-s are of various classes/ qualifications: Some are wealthy men; some are lawyers; some are pensioned retirees from government careers; some are owners of temples (private). But not even one of these qualifications is [in & of itself] suitable for देवालय-परिपालन. For that, the suitable qualifications are different. Some [of them] as follows:

Point 1:

1 One who comes [to a temple] as a धर्मकर्ता should be one belonging to the वैदिक-शैव-समय (Vaidika-Śaiva-samaya/faith). Him being born to parents of that faith will alone not suffice. In his own capacity, he must be a शैव-शील-अभिमानी (one attached to/immersed in the शैव code of conduct). In respect of that, he must have received at least the समय & विशेष initiations (दीक्षा-s).

Points 2 & 3:

2 Whatever the āgama in line with which the पूजा इत्यादि are taking place at the temple he is a धर्मकर्ता of, at least that āgama, at least after becoming a धर्मकर्ता, he must study & retain whatever he can [of that आगम] in some months.

3 In Temples, many festivals (उत्सव-s) take place. Those expenditures will increase as well. He (the धर्मकर्ता) must take a portion of the expenditure monies [for the festivals] to print pamphlets, which give the तात्पर्य of those festivals with authorities (प्रमाण-s) from the शिवागम-s or at least from the शास्त्र-s which conform to the शिवागम-s, and distribute them to the throngs of devotees during the [temple] festival seasons. Doing this service annually is important. It will not be befitting, in the slightest, for them (i.e. धर्मकर्ता-s) to give explanations for any [temple] festival with the books written by wandering nomads (पाषण्डी-s?) or non-शैव books as प्रमाण-s.

Points 4 & 5:

4 If a festival is to take place in a temple, he must inquire whether there is a विधि (procedure) for it in the śaiva śāstras such as the āgama-s. Even if there is no such vidhi, it is necessary for him to know if those festivals run counter to those śāstras. If the festival is conformant or does not run counter to the āgama-vidhi, holding it would be fitting for him. Otherwise, he should set it aside. Apart from festivals, he should do the same in the case of the नित्यक्रिया/nityakriyā (daily, obligatory rites).

5 Should there come obstacles from outside to rituals (क्रिया-s), etc held in concordance with आगमादि-शैव-शास्त्र-s (Śaiva sacred texts such as the आगम-s), he (the धर्मकर्ता) should, on the strength of those Śaiva-Śāstras, remove those obstacles.

Points 6, 7, 8 & 9:

6 He should have well-realized the तात्पर्य of the शिवलिङ्ग, नटराज मूर्ति-s, दक्षिणामूर्ति & पार्वती मूर्ति इत्यादि kept at the temples, as well as the greatness of the meanings of विवाह-क्रिया, नित्यशयनोत्सव, धूप, दीप, निवेदन इत्यादि, & possess both भय & भक्ति in respect of these matters.

7 He should conduct himself with dignity towards the आदिशैव-s (the priests at a शैवागम temple) & must be one who can monitor whether they perform the मन्त्र-s & क्रिया-s without deficiency & in accordance with the आगम.

8 He should be an exemplar to his subordinate employees. "Temple wealth belongs to all. Nobody suffers a loss by its theft"—He should prevent by several means that those employees don't dare to think so.

9 He should steadfastly adhere to the truth that परमशिव is verily the supreme entity & see to it that pious वैदिक-शैव-सिद्धान्ती-s hold discourses on that supremacy in the free spaces of the temple.

Point 10:

10 Tamizh-Ārya fight, Tamizh-Saṁskṛta fight, Non-Brahmin [Movement] fight, Congress-Justice [Party], etc - He (the धर्मकर्ता) should realize that it is utterly unworthy/disgraceful for him to enter these fights, join some party, do व्याख्यान for the शैव religion from that party's point of view & attempt to ruin the worship system of the temple.

Point 11:

11 He should not call the क्रिया-s (rituals) occurring at the temples as "मामूल" (Arabic/Urdu word for custom) or customs. A temple is a great centre of faith. It is subject to the शास्त्र called आगम. Without आगम-s, there are no temples. Whether it is setting aside an old practice or introducing a new practice, he should do so only with the sanction of the आगम.

Points 12, 13, 14 & 15:

12 He should be one who has won the trust & respect of the वैदिक-शैव community, one who has weight/influence among authorities & one who is wholly pure (blemishless conduct).

13 Those who revile temples & those of other faiths; he should prohibit them such that they do not enter even the outermost precincts of the temple.

14 Following the temple expenditure on नित्य-नैमित्तिक rites, of the remainder, one portion should be kept as savings & for the other portion, he should expend it for the growth/propagation of the वैदिक-शैव-समय (Vaidika-Śaiva-samaya/faith). He should not give even an iota of the temple's monies for the propagation of other faiths such as मायावाद इत्यादि.

15 He shall not promote संस्कृत or तमिळ् with temple monies if they are not mixed with शैव समय (Śaiva faith).

Point 16:

//End

16 He must hold in his heart the following old tamizh verse (**Note: A hyperbolic verse**):

“In this wide earth, it is no fault if he gives away a woman but it is a fault if he allows the ancient, unbroken Śaiva faith to be lost. The great Hariścandra could attain Śivagati even though he had sold his wife but Indra suffered blame [on account of his शिवनिन्द/Śivaninda].

Whether it be to satisfy the officials who appointed him or his preferred political party's members, or whether it is for his own gain, rather than allowing आगम-विरोध acts to enter the temple, it would be better for him to give away a woman.

Even by giving away a woman, if there is something to be done, it is आलय-परिपालन (Preservation/sustenance of Temples) only. आलय-परिपालन is making the temple function in line with the आगम. Knowing this, let him (the Dharmakartā) hold onto his पौरुषम् (manliness/valour) till the very end!

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