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Sri S Prasanna

Research Scholar,
Department of Oriental Studies
& Research, SASTRA Deemed to
be University, Thanjavur,
Tamil Nadu, India

Dr. N Kannan

Professor, Department of
Oriental Studies & Research,
SASTRA Deemed to be
University, Thanjavur,
Tamil Nadu, India

Utsavams in Bālālayam

Sri S Prasanna and Dr. N Kannan

Introduction

Agamas are the treasure house of not only to spiritual wisdom but also the knowledge of vivid and varied subjects like the construction of the temple and the preparations are undertaken to build the temple. Here we deal about 'Bālālayam' - a temple in miniature must be built-in for God since the actual/New temple is yet to be begin. This temple shall be a small one and so called 'Bālālaya', 'Bālagṛha', 'Bālasadana', 'Tarunālaya' and 'Bālamandira'. Here we have to perform 'Nitya', 'Naimittikam', 'Kāmya' ustavams and 'Brahmotsavam' also. On the other hand, 'Bālālayam' should done for the sake of renovation of the old temple or idols. Here also the ustavams are performed as we mention above. These things are elaborated below with Pramāṇa slokas from various samhitas of 'Śrī Pāñcarātra Āgama'.

स्वयं व्यक्तं तथा सिद्धमार्षं देवतमानुषम्।
आलयमागमे प्रोक्तं चतुर्धा मुनिभूषणाः॥८॥
अनिर्मितं स्वयं दत्तं देवेन परमेष्ठिना।
स्वयं व्यक्तं तु तत् प्रोक्तं देवालयशिरोमणिः॥९॥
कपिलप्रभृतिभिस्सिद्धैर्निर्मितं सैद्धमुच्यते।
मार्कण्डेयादिभिश्चैवं ऋषिभिर्निर्मितं द्विजाः॥१०॥
आर्षमित्येव संप्रोक्तं निर्मितं वरुणादिभिः।
काश्यपैर्देवतं प्रोक्तं मानुषं मनुभिस्तथा॥११॥ - वैहायसी - ८

Temples are of four kinds: Swayam Vyaktam, Siddham, Ārsham, and Mānuṣam. That which appeared by itself without anyone constructing it is Swayam Vyaktam. This is the supreme of all the temples for deities. That which has been established by the supreme among 'Munis' such as Kapilar is called Siddham. That which has been created by ascetics such as Markandeya goes by the name Ārsham. This includes temples established by Gods like Varuna. Temples established by human beings are called Mānuṣam.

आरभ्यमाणे प्रासादे ये वै प्रत्यूहकारिणः।
भूतदानवयक्षाश्च राक्षसास्तत्प्रशान्तये॥८९॥
बालालये देव देवं प्रतिष्ठाप्य यथाविधि।
अर्चयेद्विधैर्भोगैर्यावद्वै मूलमन्दिरे॥९०॥ - ईश्वरे - १६

The God of gods shall be installed duly in the bālālaya for migrating spirits, Dānava, Yaksha and Raaksasas who give rise to impediments when the temple is begun to build. He shall be worshiped with various enjoyable services. A bālālayam should be made before constructing temples of the Mānuṣam kind Balaalayam is of two types:

(i) Ādya bālālayam and (ii) Jīrṇoddhāraṇa bālālaya.

- Ādya bālālaya is the small one which has to be established before the construction of the proposed temple begins.

- Jīrṇoddhāraṇa bālālaya is the one built when the existing temple or the idols in the existing temple get damaged.

Corresponding Author:

Sri S Prasanna

Research Scholar,
Department of Oriental Studies
& Research, SASTRA Deemed to
be University, Thanjavur,
Tamil Nadu, India

बालालयस्य कल्प्यं स्याद् बिम्बं लोहेन वा पुनः॥५९॥
 अश्मना वा दारुणा वा शङ्कचक्रगदाधरम्।
 चतुर्भुजं चतुर्हस्तं सर्वलक्षणसंयुतम्॥६०॥
 उत्सेधस्तस्य बिम्बस्य चतुर्विंशतिरङ्गुलाः।
 हासे पञ्चाङ्गुलः कार्यो न्यूनं तस्य न विद्यते॥६१॥
 कल्प्यमानस्यालयस्य मूलबिम्बं यथा भवेत्।
 कारयीत तथा बिम्बं बालं लोहादिवस्तुभिः॥६२॥ - श्रीप्रश्ने - ५
 बिम्बं बालालये लौहमाश्मनं वाथ दारयम्।
 शङ्खचक्रगदापद्म दिव्यायुधचतुर्भुजम्॥६३॥
 उत्सेधस्तस्य बिम्बस्य हासे पञ्चाङ्गुलो भवेत्।
 त्रयश्च विंशतिश्चैव वृद्धावङ्गुलयः स्मृताः॥६४॥
 मानं सुखावहं यत्स्यात् यजमानस्य तद्भवेत्।

The features of the idol that is installed in the Bālālaya are described here: That idol can be of metal or granite or of wood. The deity is to have four arms bearing conch, wheel, mace and lotus. The height of the idol can be five to 23 inches. This miniature idol should resemble the shape of the Lord in the principal temple.

द्वारे चण्डं प्रचण्डं च क्षेत्रपालं खगेश्वरम्॥१७॥
 इन्द्रादीन् लोकपालान्श्च स्वासु दिक्षु प्रकल्पयेत्।
 सेनेशमीशकोणे तु गणेशं नैर्ऋते यजेत्॥१८॥
 अशरीरगतान् देवान् स्थण्डिले पूजयेद् बुधः। पाद्ये - क्रिया - ४

Thereafter the subsidiary deities have to be fixed chanda Prasandas, Kshetrapaalar and Kakeswarar are to be installed at the entrance. The Balakas of Indra Loka have to be installed in their due direction of East. Senai Muthalvar is established in the North-East and Ganesha in the South-West. They are to be worshipped as small platforms, and without idols embodying them.

मत्स्यादिष्ववतारेषु कल्पेष्वाभ्य मन्दिरे॥१०॥
 बालालयेऽपि तद्वत्स्याद्विश्वरूपे चतुर्भुजः।
 यानके यानकं वापि स्थापनं वापि कल्पयेत्॥११॥
 जलेऽधिवास्य तद्विम्बं मण्डये चाधिवासयेत्।
 बालालयस्य मध्ये वा भागे दिव्येऽपि वांशके॥१२॥ पाद्ये - क्रिया - ४

If incarnated Gods such as Mathsyas have to be installed in the principal temple, a deity similar to that one, and if the cosmic manifestation of the God is to be installed in the principal temple, then a deity with four arms are to be installed. If the God is one seated on a mount the Bālālaya deity should also be one seated on a mount. There after the deity is to reside in water, etc., and then it should be settled in the hall.

मेखलात्रय संयुक्तां वेदिं हस्तसमुच्छ्रिताम्।
 कृत्वा प्रभाते विमले मुहूर्ते शोभने गुरुः॥१३॥
 मूलमन्त्रेण वेद्यान्तु बालबिम्बं निवेशयेत्।
 स्थापयित्वा हरिं तत्र मन्त्रं न्यस्येद्यथाविधि॥१४॥ पाद्ये - क्रिया - ४

A three- tiered platform is to be constructed in the middle or the ultimate or in between these two parts of the Balaalaya. In an auspicious time in a flawless morning the idol is to be installed chanting basic mantras. Worship with mantras has to be done daily with homa and offerings.

स्थण्डिलं हस्तमात्रं तु मेखलात्रयसंयुतम्॥१५॥
 वृत्तं वा चतुरश्रं वा कृत्वा तत्र समर्चयेत्।

कुमुदादिगणान् सर्वान् महापीठे समर्चयेत्॥२०॥ पाद्ये - क्रिया - ४
 चण्डादीशावसानं तु बलिं दद्यात् पृथक् पृथक्।
 महापीठार्धमानं तु विस्तारयामतादृशम्॥११३॥
 बालगेहस्य पूर्वे तु कल्पयेत् पीठमुत्तमम्।
 पीठोपरि मुने पद्मपद्मत्रं सकर्णिकम्॥११४॥
 पूर्ववत् पार्शदान् सर्वान् तिष्ठन्ती (तौ?) बलिपीठकौ (के?)।
 बलिशेषं न्यसेद्धीमान् पूर्ववन्मन्त्रसंयुतम्॥११५॥ विश्वक्सेने - १६

After making offerings to the line of deities at the entrance beginning with the Chandas, a platform with eight tiers has to be made in front of the Bālālaya and offerings are to be made to the line of deities beginning with Kumudha.

ध्वजारोहणपूर्वं स्यात्पुष्पयागावसानिकम्॥२१॥
 एकाहमथवा कुर्यादुत्सवं बालमन्दिरे- पाद्ये - क्रिया - ४
 उत्सवस्नपनादीनि कारयेच्छास्त्रोदितम्।
 शेषं साधारणं कुर्यात् बालस्थाने मुनीश्वर॥११६॥ विश्वक्सेने - १६
 प्रतिष्ठान्ते मुनिश्रेष्ठ उत्सवं कारयेत् क्रमात्॥११९॥
 पञ्चसप्तनवाहं वा यथावित्तानुसारतः।
 ध्वजं चैवोत्सवारम्भे सद्यः कुर्यात्तु तद्दिने॥२०॥
 तीर्थान्ते स्नपनं कुर्यात् पूर्वोक्तेन विधानतः।
 पुष्पयागविधानं तु नेष्यतेऽस्मिन् महामुने॥१२१॥ - विश्वक्सेने - १६
 एवं बालगृहे देवं प्रतिष्ठाप्य महोत्सवम्।
 ध्वजारोहणं कर्मादि पुष्पयागावसानिकम्॥१७६॥
 यद्वैकाह्योत्सवं कुर्यात् प्रतिष्ठान्ते चतुर्मुखं! - विष्णुतिलके - ६

After installing the deity in the Bālālaya the grand festival has to be conducted. The festival is to duly begin with the flag-hoisting and end in pushpayaga. The festival can be one for a single day or for five or seven or nine days. The God is to visit the sacred waterbody, and the sacred bath should also be done.

लोहजं बालबिम्बं चेत् तेनैवोत्सवमाचरेत्॥२२॥
 नित्यं नैमित्तिकं काम्यं कर्म बालालये भवेत्।
 उत्सवार्थं न चेद्विम्बं बालेनैवोत्सवो भवेत्॥२३॥ - पाद्ये - क्रिया - ४
 बालबिम्बे लोहजे तु नित्यं तेनैव कारयेत्॥१७७॥
 उत्सवार्थं नचेत् बिम्बं बालेनैव समाचरेत्। विष्णुतिलके - ६

The daily festivals, those appointed by the sacred texts and those desired by the devotees should all be done in the Bālālaya. If the idol in the Bālālaya is of metal all festivals have to be conducted with that idol alone. There is no need for a separate festival deity.

बालस्थानं विना पूर्वं मूलस्थानं न कारयेत्।
 यदि कुर्यान्महादोषः कर्तृदेशविनाशनः॥११७॥
 बालगेहार्चनाबिम्बं मूलागारे न पूजयेत्।
 पूजयेद्यदि तद्विम्बं कर्ता राष्ट्रं च नश्यति॥११८॥
 तस्मात् सर्वप्रयत्नेन मूलागारे न पूजयेत्। विश्वक्सेने - १६

If the principal temple is built without the initial Bālālaya having been constructed the one who built and the country too will be ruined. The idol installed in the Bālālaya is not to be installed in the principal temple. If so, done the doer and the country will come to ruin. Therefore, it should, by all efforts, be avoided.

About festivals to be conducted in the Bālālaya during renovation times there is nothing seen in the Agama texts. However, we shall describe here what the learned have said,

and what we have known in our experience as being followed in swayamvyakta, Divya, Arsha, Siddha temples and what we have heard and seen and realized.

The temples of this region such as Thirukkudanthai (Kumbakonam), Mannargudi, Thirucherai and Nagapattinam follow the SriPancharathra Agama texts.

नित्यं नैमित्तिकं काम्यं पवित्राद्युत्सवादिकम्।

बालबिम्बे प्रकुर्वीत न तु कर्मादिषु क्वचित्॥४३३॥ - श्रीप्रश्ने - ४९

In all these temples, during the renovation times, if the principal deity is installed as a picture or idol the grand festival is performed with the festival deity in the way it has always been performed. It is possible to so do if the impairment causing renovation had occurred to the temple tower or the principal deity. If the impairment had happened to the flag post, a temporary flag post is first installed and then the festivals are conducted. As these temples are of the kinds of Dhivya, Arsha and Siddha, even if the Bālālaya has been made for the principal deity, the worships due for the principal deity are performed without cessation.

Conclusion

My attempt is only a ripple in the great ocean of Sri Pancharatra Agama. The Rich Agama Heritage of our Nation should be preserved for posterity.

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