

Description of religious events – Inauguration & Kumbhabhishekam

Yagashaala Pravesha (ST: 6.00 PM – 7/23/09 ; expected duration - 15 minutes)

After seeking the blessings of Lord Hanuman, the sacred fluids (mangala dravyas) to be used in performing the ceremonies will then be carried in a procession amidst Vedic chants and musical accompaniment to the area (yagashaala) where the religious ceremonies will be performed. A sacred cow will first enter the yaagashaala followed by the Priest, Pujya Swamiji, and all devotees. All the idols will also be carried to the yaagashaala area at this time.

Kalasha Staapana (ST: 7.30 PM – 7/23/09; expected duration – 45 minutes)

Prior to Kalasha Staapana, Sabha prartana will be done to introduce the chief priest and Ritwiks who will preside over the religious ceremonies and sabha anugya/blessings and good wishes sought from the audience for the safe conduct of the function. This will be followed by Vigneshwara Puja, Swasti Punyahavachana - the purification ceremony, Deva Naandi- seeking the blessings of the Devas, Panchagavya shuddi - purification of precincts and the assembled devotees/audience and Raksha Bandana.

Raksha Bandana (precedes Kalasha Stapana - expected duration – 30 minutes)

Maha Kumbhabhishekam is a big and important event that is done over three days comprising of several pujas and austerities that has to be free of obstacles in any form or fashion. In order to help protect the sanctum and participating devotees from any unforeseen obstacles that they may run into, Raksha Bhandan (or) a sacred thread is tied to the wrists of rithwiks and devotees and sponsors. Devotees who opt to have the Raksha Bhandan tied are expected to abide by the sanctity and austerity called for, during the course of this event.

Kalasha Staapana is the procedure of establishing the main pot/Kalasha of sacred water for the consecration ceremony. All the main deities, Navagrahas, Devas, and the Digpaalaks will be invoked in the Kalasha containing the holy Ganges water that will be used for the Mahakumbhabhisheka.

Kalasha Staapana will be followed by Ankurarpana, wherein water and milk will be sprayed over seedlings that are left to sprout in small clay pots and prayers done for everyone's prosperity and health. This will be followed by Agni Pratishta – invoking the fire God which will be followed by a Ganapathy Homa.

What is a Homa?

Homa is a fire ritual. Also called Havan or Yajna, Divine presence is invoked by performing a homa following specific procedures. Different materials appropriate to the different Homa are offered in the Homa Agni (fire) amidst chanting of Vedic mantras. These offerings are supposed to reach the Gods through the fire medium. Agni, the God of fire is all pervading and can digest anything and still remain pure. Agni is prevalent in Brahmaanda as well as in Pindaanda (the human body) and represents God or Brahman. Thus Homa, the Fire ritual has been an ancient practice and several other religions have also taught worshipping Gods through Fire.

Maha Ganapathi Homa (pradaana homa kunda) / Maha Ganapathi Homa (for sponsors) (ST: 10.30 AM – 7/24/09; expected duration – 2 hours for both the homas – sponsors’ homa will be performed parallelly in another Homa Kunda)

Lord Ganesha is supposed to be residing in the mooladhara chakra. Chakras exist in the subtle body and represent different realms in one which one’s consciousness can dwell. Mooladhara chakra represents the physical/material realm while the other higher chakras represent the other realms of consciousness. Residing in the mooladhara chakra, Lord Ganesha takes care of material prosperity and well being. Considered the gatekeeper of the sushumna nadi (nadis are the channels of energy flow), Lord Ganesha control’s one spiritual experience of the various Gods and other worlds (lokas). Our scriptures also recommend praying to Lord Ganesha before praying to any deity! Lord Ganesha removes all obstacles. Maha Ganapathi Homa thus facilitates spiritual progress while protecting the material aspects of one’s life. It is a very useful homa and is recommended to all spiritual seekers.

Navagraha purasara Homa/ Navagraha Homa (for Sponsors)

Navagraha homa is done to appease the nine planets namely Sun, Moon, Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu. Every planet has its own importance and has an influence on the different life aspects of a human being. Sun is the king of all planets and bestows good health. Moon is the planet which rules over one’s mind and gives success. Mars or Mangal is the planet which gives prosperity and wealth. Mercury influences knowledge, Jupiter gives education; Venus gives the knowledge of art, music etc., and Saturn gives happiness and teaches vairagya or dispassion. Rahu makes one’s life stronger and Ketu influences the prosperity of the family. Bad times are often attributed to the different grahas or planets and their current positions in one’s horoscope. By performing the Navagraha homa, these planets can be appeased and the undesirable influences caused by them can be minimized and good results can accrue.

Shodasha Kala Homa (ST: 6.30 PM – 7/24/09; expected duration – 2 hours)

This is an elaborate sixteen step homa procedure performed to the deities after the invocation/avahana has been completed. During this procedure, the sixteen step (shodasha) puja is performed on the deities to bestow the shodasha kala on them. This will be followed by the adivaasa homa which comprises of jalaadivasa, immersing the deities in water, Ksheeradivasa, immersion the deities in Milk, Danyaadivasa, immersion the deities in Nava danyaas (nine different grains), Pushpa sayanadivasa, placing the deities in a bed of flowers etc., This will be followed by the Vaastu homa which is done to appease the forces that control the flow of energies in the temple where the deities will permanently reside. This is performed to ward off any vastu effects that may have resulted during construction and strengthen the structure for many years to come.

Sponsors Homa that will happen in parallel to Shodasha Kala Homa (Start Time: 6.45 PM - 7/24/09; expected duration – 2 hours)

Maha Mrtyunjaya Homa

Maha Mruthyunjaya Homa is dedicated to Lord Shiva. The Mruthyunjaya Homa is performed to achieve victory over Mrityu or death. Lord Shiva, who is worshipped through this Homa, is offered durva grass and an herb called amrita. While the durva grass is famous for purifying blood, amrita is used as a medicine for incurable diseases like cancer. Since these are used as offerings in this homa, it is believed that this homam bestows longevity on the performer. The hymns are devoted to Mrityu, the God of death, praying for long life. This homa also alleviates Mrityu dosha or untimely death.

Anjaneya Homa

Anjaneya Homa is dedicated to Lord Anjaneya/Hanuman. Hanuman, who is a great devotee of Lord Rama, is also well known for his devotion, dedication and great learning. Besides he is considered an avatar of Lord Shiva. By invoking Lord Hanuman in this homa, the devotee seeks mental strength and swiftness, valor, agility and all traits of Shri Anjaneya.

Rama Taraka Homa

During this homa, the Rama Taraka mantra is chanted for a minimum of 108 times. By performing this homa, a devotee seeks the blessings of Lord Rama for perfect happiness, peace, prosperity and justice to prevail.

Sudarshana Homa

Sudarshana Homa is performed for Sudarshana Chakra, the mighty weapon of Lord Vishnu. This homa is for the removal of all enemies and avoiding accidents. The Sudarshana yantra used in the Homa is supposed to remove all negativity and bring in Divine and Auspicious energies.

Sudarshana Homa when performed, confers health, wealth and prosperity on the seeker. It helps destroy all evil forces and prevents potential problems or danger in future. Cleansing is a very important aspect of performing Sudarshana homa. Thus one seeking to cleanse the body and mind may perform the Sudarshana homa. It is believed that purity of thought, sound and intonation while chanting the homa mantras result in rich benefits. This homa is recommended for those seeking overall success.

Pratishtaanga Homa (ST: 9 AM – 7/25/09; expected duration – 1-3/4 hour)

This homa is performed to ceremoniously establish (pratishta) the deities and infuse life (praana) and divine spirit into the statues of the deities prior to consecration. The main (moola) mantra is whispered into the ears of the diety. Netronmilana is the ceremonial process of opening the eyes of the diety. A sixteen step procedure (shodasha kalasha puja) is performed as part of this homa. Bali pradaana or offering to the minor, usually fierce deities is done by placing balis all around the temple. This will be followed by Purnahuti which marks the culmination of the Pratishtaanga Homa.

Mahakumbhabhishekam (expected duration – 1 hour)

After conclusion of all the preliminary rites before the actual consecration, the kalashas containing the sacred Ganges water is brought in a procession headed by the chief priest followed by other Ritwiks, Swamiji and other devotees. The procession starts from the yagashaala and goes around the temple once before arriving at the consecration area. After necessary oblations, the sacred water from the pradaana kalasha is first poured on the deities amidst Vedic chanting and is then followed by pouring of the water contained in all the other kalashas carried by the devotees to the sanctum. The deities are then decorated, elaborate post consecrational prayers performed before the Maha Mangala Arati. This concludes the consecration part of the Kumbhabhishekam.