

27. Why Did He Faint?

When I had gone to Kanchi MaTham once, I heard about this incident from an arcakA (priest).

Maha Periyavar was camping in a village near Trichy, about 45 years ago. When he started for the usual Chandramouleesvara puja one day, he told the manager of the MaTham, "Within a short while, the Akhiladeswari Koil (temple) arcakAs will come here. Provide them bhojana (food) and bring them to me around two o' clock." Then he told a sishya (disciple), "Arrange it with the sthapati (sculptor) to carve a two-foot Vinayaka statue."

As directed by Periyavaa, the manager received the arcakAs with honours when they came in the afternoon, fed them and then took them to the sage. Periyavaa inquired them about their welfare.

The head priest told him, "The arcakA who goes daily in the morning to open the sanctum sanctorum of Sri Akhilandeswari for public darshan, faints and falls down as he opens the door. He recovers only after ten minutes. Since this happens daily, the other arcakAs are hesitant to attend the puja."

Periyavaa said at once, "Tomorrow I shall come to the temple myself. You can open the temple after my arrival." He gave them prasAda and bade them farewell.

Periyavaa went to Sri Akhilandeswari temple at 5:30 hours the next morning. The arcakA fainted as he opened the door. He recovered after ten minutes and then got up and went about his work. Periyavaa sat in nishTa (meditation) for sometime. Then he called the head priest and said, "From tomorrow, ask him to enter the sannidhi (building where the deity is installed) by opening the side door!" He also explained the priest the way to do it and asked for the arcakA to enter the sanctum two minutes after opening the door.

When the sthapati came with the Vinayaka statue at four in the evening, Periyavaa asked him to build a stUpi (tope) and install the Vinayaka statue on the tope in such a way that the lines of sight of both Akhilandeswari and Vinayaka met each other on the same plane. Sri Vinayaka was installed in the temple opposite (his mother) Sri Akhilandeswari according to Agama

rules and pujas were performed to Him. The incident of the arcaK A fainting did not continue thereafter. The Vinayaka statue is still located directly opposite AmbaaL's sannidhi (so the mother's first look every morning falls on her first son).

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Glossary:

stUpaH - stUpi in Tamil; a tope, a monument