

## Makara Jothi Deepavali

**Student 1:** Hi, what a surprise, what brings you here?

**Student 2:** Subha Deepavali to all of you! Please have some Deepavali sweets. Tell me, instead of lighting diya lamps on Deepavali evening, why are you doing Rongoli with fluorescent colors?

**Student 3:** It's not Rongoli! It's my school project on the periodic table and noble gases. I am too busy; I don't have any time to spend on these Vedic rituals!

**Student 2:** Maybe you should change your attitude and try to connect all that you study?

**Student 3:** Well I am not in my SCI class and...moreover, how do you want me to connect Mendeleev's periodic table of chemicals to the Vedic rituals?

**Student 2:** Did you know that this Russian chemist arranged the periodic table elements based on the pattern of the Sanskrit phonetics?

**Student 3:** Come on! Just because you are from India, you think everything was invented in India?

**Student 2:** No, no... It's true! He named the eighteenth group of elements as Noble gases because noble people are contented people and do not seek anything from others; instead they are the guiding lights of knowledge. You can see that all these noble elements like helium, argon, neon, krypton, and xenon are all used in light bulbs and are actually "guiding lights"!

(Meanwhile **Student 3** is checking information on her IPAD).

**Student 3:** Yes, You are right my dear friend. While you were lecturing, I googled and found this trustworthy information in Wikipedia!

**Student 2:** This is Kali Yuga - that is why you trust the internet more than what your parents, friends and teachers tell you.

**Student 3:** But, let's talk about what you said earlier...my mind seeks constant attention from everyone and in this process, I create chaos everywhere. Tell me, how do I become a noble person?

**Student 2:** Both atoms and human beings want stable energy levels. Noble gas have electron (energy) shells complete and stop reacting. Humans will stop reacting, that is, taking birth and death, if they are complete at the divine energy level. Vedic festivals like Deepavali are celebrated for this purpose.

**Student 2:** I understand that the Dharma of all beings is to attain Moksha. Is there a complete procedure for this?

**Student 3:** Yes. The pilgrimage to Sabarimala Ayyappa in Kerala helps one attain Moksha if carried out properly as instructed by the great Rishis like Agasthya and Parasurama.

**Student 1:** What are these instructions? Could you tell me more?

**Student 2:** Long, long ago, after Satyuga, Dharma Sastha, the protector of Dharma incarnated in this world with his wife Leela.

**Narrator :** Here is a brief episode from the life of Dharma Sastha and Leela

**Leela:** Hmm...I don't get attention from anyone. I see that my friends have started not only cutting their long hair short but are also wearing short dresses to seek attention of others. I am only seeking your attention. But you are not interested in any of my activities.

**Dharma Sastha:** (Chanting)

Aarooda prauda vega pravi jitha pavanam

Thunga thungam thurangam

Chaelam Neelam vasaanah karathala vilasath

chanta kothanda kaandam

Raaga dweshaadhi naanaa visha mrigha padali

Bheethi hridh bhootha bhartha

Khurvan naa kheta leelaam pari lasathu mana

Kanane maama-keenae

May the Lord Bhootnath, who mounts a tall, majestic horse which runs faster than the air, and wears blue attire- may He cheerfully hold a bow and arrow in his lustrous hands and hunt in the forest of the mind...the mind, that has the fear of creating dreadful animals like desire, hatred, attention seeking and other negative qualities.

**Leela:** I cannot stand any more of your long lectures, I am sick and tired of this!

**Dharma Sastha:** My dear Devi Leela, you should try to self-realize that you are the very same "Energy" like the three devis - Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathy who are the consorts of the Trinity devas - Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma.

**Leela:** Look at my friends' husbands! They behave normally! Not like you....

**Dharma Sastha:** So be it Devi. According to your wish, you will be born seeking and dwelling only in the materialistic, attention-seeking activities in Kali Yuga.

**Leela:** Oh, I am so curious to know in what form both of us will be born!

**Dharma Sastha:** An Asuraic person will focus and spend too much energy on the pleasures of the senses and the body. So Leela, you will be born as Mahishi, a demoness that will drain others' energy also.

**Leela:** Lord, I understand my mistake, please forgive me.

**Dharma Sastha:** A desire is like an arrow that has left the bow. Now you are only left with the choice of fulfilling it.

**Leela:** My kind Lord, when I forget my own Self and roam in the age of darkness, please come and rescue me as pra-deepam, the Primordial Light.

**Dharma Sastha:** Granted! I will incarnate as Mani-kanta, widely known as Ayyappa and will fight you like a hunter and transform you to your original form.

**Leela:** I wish that happens very soon.

**Dharma Sastha:** Sorry, transformation takes a long time. So you will have to wait like Sabari mata who waited for Ram for ages and was finally granted Moksha by the Lord.

**Narrator:** Here is the story of Ram, Lakshman and Sabari Mata.

**Lakshman:** Bhaiya Ram, who is this Sabari Mata?

**Ram:** Lakshman, here is Sabari's story. She was a hunter's daughter. The night before her marriage, she saw that thousands of goats and sheep were brought by her father, which were going to be sacrificed for the marriage dinner.

**Sabari:** Oh no, I cannot mercilessly eat meat and serve meat for sensorial enjoyment! I will renounce this cruel world and, instead, will serve a compassionate Master and stay in an ashram.

**Ram:** After days of traveling, she met Sage Matanga at the foot of the Mountain Rishyamukha. She accepted him as guru and started serving him with devotion.

**Sabari:** I am so fortunate that my guru Matanga muni, before attaining Maha Samadhi, blessed me that I will be granted Moksha by Lord Ram.

**Ram:** As per her guru's words, Sabari waited for me for many, many years.

**Sabari:** I don't know when Lord Ram will come but every day I will clean the ashram and be prepared to greet him.

**Lakshman:** I understand that serving the master selflessly will grant Moksha.

**Ram:** But that Moksha cannot be predicted, so one has to patiently wait for it to happen while continuing your dharmic actions.

**Sabari:** Every day I will pluck berry fruits and first taste it myself. If it is sweet I will save it for Lord Ram and discard the bitter ones.

**Ram:** Lakshman, the symbolic message behind Sabari mata tasting the berries before serving me is that we should check all of our actions – are they bitterly selfish or selflessly sweet?

**Lakshman:** I understand. The selfless sacrificial action unifies Karma, Dharma and Bhakthi; and this leads to Moksha.

**Sabari:** My Lord Ram, I am glad at last you came. I am so blessed by your holy feet touching these Garudadri hills.

**Ram:** My blessing Sabari Mata. In Kali Yuga, when Dharma Sastha incarnates as Lord Ayyappa, the spot where you attain Moksha will be known as Sabari Peetham and these Garudadri mountains will be renamed as Sabari Mala.

**Sabari:** Jai Shri Ram. Please follow this direction so that you will meet the great Hanuman who is waiting to see you. Jai Sita Ram.

**Narrator: And now the story of Mahishi and Ayyappa.**

**Student 1:** When will Ayyappa incarnate and kill Mahishi?

**Student 2:** When Mahishi undergoes Lord Saturn's auditing period of karmic actions, Lord Ayyappa will come to the rescue.

**Mahishi( leela) (to Ayappa, the hunter):** Ha Ha Ha, I will eat you, handsome young man!

**Ayyappa:** Mahishi, time has come to shed your Ego and transform back to your Divine state.

**Mahishi (Leela):** Even while you blabber you are so cute, young man.

**Ayyappa:** While I was Dharma Sastha, I promised that I will help to free you from this Asura form. Aum Namah Shivaya, Aum Namo Bhagavadae Vasudevaya Vishnavae Namaha.

(Ayyappa kills Mahishi)

**Leela:** Lord! thank you for coming and rescuing me. I will merge with your Divine Light.

**Ayyappa:** The day when the sun transits on January 14th to the Makara Zodiac as Makara Sankranthi, that day will be Moksha Deepavali!

**Student 3:** So, can I get Moksha by going to Sabarimala and seeing the Divine Light?

**Student 2:** That alone will not grant you Moksha; but undertaking the 18 actions to overcome all forms of negative attitudes, symbolized as the 18 evolutionary steps in the Sabarimala temple will help to attain Moksha.

**All -** Chant 3 times "Swamiyae Saranamam Ayyappa".

**Leela:** May everyone be blessed to take up the Dharma of life on this great Moksha Deepavali day.

**Student 1:** Mangalam to all of you.

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**Student 3:** Drishika Thimmaiah

**Student 2:** Shristi Sharma

**Student 1:** Abhishek Rana Singh

**Ram-** Karthik Vempatti

**Lakshman** – Karan Chodankar

**Sabari:** Vaishnavi Mohanraj

**Leela:** Siddhi Cupala

**Dharma Sastha** - Pranav Chhaliyil