Shankara Jayanthi Mahotsav
Atharva Veda Sammelan

Jyeshtha Mata Mandir
Srinagar
17 April - 23 April 2015
Kashmir has been a centre for Vedic culture and tradition, birth place of Kashyap Mahamuni and abode of Goddess Saraswathi Devi. Their Holiness Jagadgurus Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Shankaracharya Swamigal and Jagadguru Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Shankaracharya Swamigal of Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam have blessed for Veda Parayanam to be organized at various places, for universal peace and prosperity. In pursuance of Their directions, Visva Shanthi Maha Yagnya and Veda Parayan have been held in Jammu, Srinagar, Leh, Nepal, Arunachalpradesh, Manipur, Sikkim, Tripura and such regions. In 2012, Samskruti Saptaham was held in Jyeshta Devi Temple in Srinagar for seven days coinciding with Akshayatritiya and Sankara Jayahtmi in the presence of His Holiness Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Shankaracharya Swamigal. In 2013 Krishna Yajur Veda Jata Parayan was held. Last year, SAMA VEDA SAMMELAN was held from 25th April to 4th May 2014.

This year Atharva Veda Sammelan and Rigveda Samhita Havan will be held from 17th April to 23rd April at Jyeshta Mata Temple(near Raja Bhavan) and on the occasion of Shankara Jayanti, special abhishek and paryan will be performed at the Shankaracharya Hills in SRINAGAR. His Holiness has blessed that the Jayanti of Jagadguru Shankaracharya to be celebrated in Shankaracharya Hills Srinagar. Devotees are invited to participate and receive the blessings of Pujyashri Acharyas and Anugraha of Jyeshta Matha Devi and Sri Maha Tripurasundari Sameta Chandramouleshwara Swamy.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT**

**Atharva Veda:**
Vedas are the highest source of knowledge. Atharva Veda is one of the four Vedas. The two main branches of Atharva Veda are Shounaka & Pippalada. The Shounaka Shakha contains 5977 mantras divided into 20 Kandas.

**Benefits of Chanting:**
The preface to the Atharvaveda commentary of Vidyaranya Swami, illustrates the various benefits derived by chanting of Atharvavedic mantras. They include, भक्तिविवेक - increasing mental capacity, विभक्तिनिवद्धिः - protection of village, citizens, cows, horses other animals, plants, एकाचकल - Unity in thinking, जयम् - victory, अन्नप्रसादम् - increase in cattle and agri yield, धनविस्तारम् - agriculture development, animal welfare, स्वस्थ्यम् - health, नवनलिप्तिः - free flow of rivers, अविलेलोकम् - increase in trade, देयायम्या - medication to all types of diseases including for cows, horses and elephants, दीर्घाशुरुवांश - balanced rain, climate balance, अनुभूमिक - long and healthy life, भुवनालसंबंधित - removal of deities etc.. For a stable and progressive nation all the above listed are a prerequisite. The Atharvaparishadshatam says in an interesting verse:

यस्य राजी जनपदेः अथवं शास्तिपारम्।
निवसलुधि तद्दानुवै निरुपणयम्।

tasmāt rājā vishēṣeṇa abhavann jñetānīdrām
dvānāṃśāntātprāharpītān sāmamipuuṇyayet ।(4.5.13)।

“Even by the very stay of an Atharva Vedi (One who has learnt Atharva Veda), that place will progress and will be free from crisis. Hence a king should make all efforts in finding a qualified & pious Atharvavedi and provide him with facilities and revere him.” In the Raghuvamsha of Kalidas, the author has written that King Dilipa while paying his respects to Maharshi Vashishtha at his Ashram states that his weapons are of no use when protected by the Sage, an expert in Atharva Veda- Atharva Nidhi.

**Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam’s role in Atharva Veda’s protection:**
Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam’s intense efforts for preservation and sustenance of Vedic traditions is well known. His Holiness Shri Chandrashekarendra Saraswathi Shankaracharya Swamigal’s (68th Acharya of Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam) endeavor in protection of Vedas is unparalleled. In the mid sixties (1965) His Holiness after a long search to find a competent traditional teacher belonging to Swasthaksha Atharva Veda, sent two young South Indian Vidyarthis to study Atharvaveda from Shri Ramanik Lal Pancholi, a great Atharvaveda Scholar in Sinor Village, Vadodara District, Gujarat in the traditional Gurukula way. The two scholars returned back after completion and today, have trained about 200 scholars in South India. Presently efforts are on to spread the knowledge received from the land of Gujarat, to entire country where traditional Atharva Veda study is fast declining.

**The Kashmir Connection – Tribute and revival:**
A very old copy of Atharva Veda manuscript (Birch Bark) in the Sharada script found in the then Maharaja’s library was given to a German Indologist. As early as 1870, searching for Atharvaveda manuscripts Prof. Rudolph von Roth, the German Indologist wrote to the Maharaja asking for the manuscript. The Maharaja
however, declined. Prof. Roth then wrote to him asking for a Devnagari version of the manuscript. The Maharajah then employed some scholars to transliterate the manuscript in Devanagari script from the original Sharada. He sent one copy to Prof. Roth. When Prof. Roth scanned through the contents, he realized that this was one of the rarest manuscripts he had come across and set his heart upon getting it. He approached a senior British official who was the Lt. Gen. of Allahabad then. He in turn entered into a long negotiation with the Maharajah of Kashmir. After several rounds of discussions and offers, the Maharaja parted with the original Sharada manuscript. The manuscript housed in the Tübingen University library, Germany has been given back to India in form of CD ROM’s.

The significant information implies that Kashmir was once a land of Vedas and that it possessed great scholars well versed in the Atharva Veda also.

The Acharyas of Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam have initiated sustained efforts to bring peace and development to Jammu, Kashmir & Leh. They have ordained that this year the Atharva Veda Parayana may be performed to rejuvenate the Vedic atmosphere of the region. Starting from year 2011 the Shankara Jayanthi is being celebrated in Shankaracharya Hill wherein Rig, Yajur, Sama Veda are chanted and various havans conducted.

**Shankara Jayanthi at Shankaracharya Hills:**
The great Saint Adi Shankaracharya, who hailed from the southern part of the country had travelled to Kashmir, more than two millenniums ago and spread the vedic message of truth, oneness & harmony. The Rajatarangini authored by Kalhana has recorded the existence of a temple in the name of Shankaracharya and its renovation by a Kashmiri King Gopadiya. The Shankara Jayanti Mahotsav is being celebrated at this Shankaracharya Hill every year to commemorate the Great Saint’s contribution to India’s unity in this holy land.

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**Daily Programme at Jyeshtha Mata Mandir**

**Morning**
- Go puja, Ganapati puja, Sankalpa, Atharva Veda parayana
- Rigveda Samhita Havan
- Yajur Veda and Sama Veda Parayana

**Evening**
- Svasti vachanam, Totakshatam, Vishnu Sahasranam & Avadharaya during Harathis at mandir sanctum sanctorum
- Discourse by Shri Dr.Ranganji on Adi Shankara Charitra & Kalhana’s Rajatarangini
- Special Ishtis will be performed

- Shankara Jayanti day Abhishekan & Archana at Shankaracharya hills. Veda Parayana Purti - Purnahuti Adishankara Avataraghatta Parayana - Sambhavana