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ETYMOLOGY OF VAMANA
"Vama Udgare, Yak Set | Vamati Avamit |
The root word “Vama” means “Udgare.” It is derived from the root verb “Udgru,” conveys the exact interpretation through the meanings like – ejecting, giving out, oozing, stream, eruptions, echo & hissing sound. But according to Monnier William, “Vama” refers to ejecting, spitting out, vomiting, giving out, emitting, saliva, belching, sound, etc.

“COMPARATIVE CLINICAL STUDY ON EFFECT OF VAMANA FOLLOWED BY LEPA AND ONLY LEPA IN YOUVANA PIDAKA (ACNE VULGARIS)”
– By – Anil S. Managuli
Vamana

For the medieval grammarian, see Kāśikāvṛttī. For Ayurveda procedure, see Vamana (Panchakarma).

Vamana (Devanagari: वामन, IAST: Vāmana) is described in the Puranas as the fifth avatar of Vishnu, and the first incarnation of the Second Age or Treta yuga. He is the first avatar to appear with anthropomorphic features, although he does appear as a dwarf Namboothiri Brahmin. He is also known as Upendra and Trivikrama.

1 Origin

Vamana was born to Aditi and Kashyapa. He is the twelfth of the Adityas. Vamana is also the younger brother of Indra.

1.1 Hinduism

In worshiping Mahabali and his ancestor Prahláda, he conceded sovereignty of Pátála, the netherworld. Some texts also report that Vamana did not step into the netherworld, and instead gave its rule to Bali. In giant form, Vamana is known as Trivikrama.

Just before King Mahabali was pushed out of this earth, he was given permission by Vamana to visit his people once a year. The Onam festival is a celebration of welcoming Mahabali home to his lost kingdom. During this festival, beautiful floral decorations are made in every house and boat races are held throughout Kerala. A twenty-one-course feast is the most important part of the Onam festival.

Mahabali symbolizes ahankar, the three feet symbolizes the three planes of existence (Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupthi) and final step is on his head which elevates from all three states and he attains moksha. This is the moral of the story.

The Bhagavata Purana describes that Vishnu descended as the Vamana avatar to restore the authority of Indra over the heavens, as it had been taken by Mahabali, a benevolent Asura King. Bali was the great grandson of Hiranyakshipu, the grand son of Prahlada.

King Mahabali was a generous man who engaged in severe austerities and penance and won the praise of the world. This praise, from his courtiers and others, led him to think of himself as the greatest person in the world. He believed that he can help any one and can donate whatever they ask. Even though he became benevolent, he became pompous of his activities and forgot that the almighty is above him. Dharma says that one should do his duty and helping others is the duty of a king. Mahabali was a devoted worshiper of the Lord. The story is an ample example that the almighty, the Parabrahma is neutral and unbiased; he only tries to balance nature. He showers his divine light to all, irrespective of what they do.

Vamana, in the guise of a short Brahmin carrying a wooden umbrella, went to the king to request three paces of land. Mahabali consented, against the warning of his guru, Sukracharya. Vamana then revealed his identity and enlarged to gigantic proportions to stride over the three worlds. He stepped from heaven to earth with the first step, from earth to the netherworld with the second. King Mahabali, unable to fulfill his promise, offered his head for the third. Vamana then placed his foot and gave the king immortality for his humility.

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1.2 Jainism

Jainism also describes Vamana. In its scripture, an ill-natured man has contention with Jain Munis, which results in the king banishing him from the kingdom. He traveled to a rival kingdom and managed to gain the favor and trust of its king, and is granted a wish. He asked to be made King for 4 months during Chaturmas, a holy time for the Jains. The evil man orders that he must be allowed a bite of every meal in Jain Muni, thus not allowing them not eat for the rest of the day as the food would be considered contaminated. The Jain Shrvaks and Shrvikas, recognizing his intent, consulted Vishnukumar Muni who had the capability to change his size. As Vishnukumar Muni changed his size to the height of a dwarf he is called a Vamana.

Dressed up as a tiny Brahman, he went to the house of the evil Raja while he performed a pooja. Near its end, the practitioner must give something to those present. He asked the dwarf what he wished, and Vamana replied that he wanted three feet of land. The King consented. Vamana then grew so large that one foot covered the planet, another the heavens, and so there was no where to place the third. The evil king then realized his mistake, and in shame bowed his head to Vamana and took Jain Shravak Vratas from the Vamana.

2 Symbolism

Vamana taught King Mahabali that pride should be abandoned for advancement in life, and that wealth should be appreciated as it can easily disappear. Vamana then took the form of Mahavishnu and was pleased by King Mahabali’s determination to keep his promise, despite the curse of his spiritual master and losing his wealth. Vishnu named the King Mahabali since he was a Mahatma (great soul). He allowed Mahabali to return to the spiritual sky to join Prahlada, the demoniac Hiranyakashipu's pious son, and other divine beings. Mahavishnu also declared that Mahabali would be able to rule the universe in the following yuga. Mahabali was the grandson of Prahlada, with his father being Virochana, who was killed in a battle with the Devas.

Mahabali is supposed to return every year to the land of his people, to ensure that they are prosperous.

2.1 In Sikhism

Vamana is discussed in the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred text of Sikhism.\(^4\)

Satjugi tai manio Chhalio bali ba-van bhaio
In Satyayuga, you sported as the dwarf incarnation, and fooled Bali.

3 In the Ramayana

On page 1390 of the Guru Granth Sahib, Vamana is mentioned as the “enticer” of Baliraja.\(^3\)

According to the Adhyatma Ramayana It is also said that Vamana is the guard of the gate of Bali’s underworld realm Sutala\(^6\)\(^7\) and will remain so forever.\(^8\) Tulsidas’ Ramayana too declares that Vamana became the “dwarpal” (gate-defender) of Bali.\(^9\)

It is said that Mahabali attained Moksha by atmanivedinam.\(^10\) Krishna in the Sri Rûpa Gosvâmi’s
Bhakti-rasāmrta-sindhu[11] says that Mahabali came to Him or attained Him. Some traditions also hold that Vamana was an avatar of Ganesha.[12]

4 Temples

The Vamana temples are located in

- Mithranandapuram Vamanamoorthy Temple, Cherpu, Thrissur, Kerala
- Thrikkakara Temple, Thrikkakkara, Cochin, Kerala
- Ulagalantha Perumal Temple, Kanchipuram in Kanchipuram.
- Vamana Temple, Eastern Group of Temples, Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.
- Ulagalantha Perumal Temple, Tirukoyilur in Tirukoilur, Viluppuram district, Tamil Nadu.
- Ulagalantha Perumal Temple, Singanallur, Coimbatore
- Keevelloor Sri Vamanaswami Temple, Mevelloor post, Vaikkom Taluk, Kottayam District, Kerala
- Kodilil Sri Vamanamoorthy Temple, Kumbidi, Pattambi Taluk, Palakkad District, Kerala

5 See also

Media related to Vamana at Wikimedia Commons

- Dashavatara
- Vishnu Purana
- Onam
- Bhagavata Purana
- Vishnu
- Varaha
- Parashurama
- Rama
- Krishna
- Buddha
- Kalki

6 References

[2] Account of the several Manus and Manwantaras Vishnu Purana, translated by Horace Hayman Wilson, 1840, Book III: Chapter I. 265:22, at the request of the deities Vishnu was born as a midget, Vamana, the son of Aditi by Kashyapa. By applying to Mahabali for alms Kashyapa was promised by the prince whatever he might demand, notwithstanding Śukra (the preceptor of the Daityas). The dwarf demanded as much space as he could step over at three steps and upon the ascent of Mahabali he enlarged himself to such dimensions as to stride over the three worlds. Being worshipped however by Mahabali and his ancestor Prahlāda, he conceded to them the sovereignty of Pātāla.
7 External links

- Vamana Temples in Kerala
- Complete Story of Bali
- Srimad Bhagavatam 8.18: Lord Vamanadeva, the Dwarf Incarnation
- Vamana Avatar
- Story of Vamana Avataram
- Vamana homam - Getting Blessings From Lord Vishnu
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8.1 Text

- **Vamana**

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