

Kathiri Veyyil - Agni Nakshatram (4th - 28th May 2023)



We at Dipika humbly prostrate to procure the sacred blessings of our Divine Supreme Mother Sarasvati in compiling this ground-breaking topic on Kathiri Veyyil. The reason behind compiling this article is that many people around the world, especially those of South Indian decent, observe the Kathiri period which occurs in May every year. Many Hindus have become very confused about Kathiri and its significance. We pray that this humble rendition will shed more light than confusion on this pertinent topic. Do note we are not trying in any remote way to disrespect/discredit any religious beliefs. At Dipika our aim is rather simple "If a prayer is not in our scriptures then one should re-evaluate their understanding about a certain topic as our scriptures are final and binding."

According to the Tamil Almanac (Panchangam), there is a period of around 27 days during the month of May in INDIA, designated as "Agni Nakshatram" when the heat will be at its maximum. It's colloquially called "Kathiri Veyyil", meaning the sunlight will cut you like a "Kathiri Kol" (Scissors) if you venture out in the Sun! Traditionally the temperature during this period of Summer in INDIA will be maximum compared to rest of the season. People in South India generally dread the extreme heat and think twice about venturing out in the daytime.

Kathiri Veyyil is the period when the Sun or Suryadev (the Sun Deity) passes through the star Krittika also known as Agni Nakshatram. This period is considered to be the peak summer season in INDIA. In 2023, Kathiri Veyyil in the Tamil Calendar is from May 4th to May 28th in INDIA. As it is the peak summer season, the period is considered "inauspicious" and therefore some people refer the period as Agni Nakshathra dosha (malefic). The period is also known as Katthhir and Kartari. The passing of Sun through 3rd and 4th quarter of Bharani Nakshatra, the four quarters of Krittika and the first quarter of the Rohini Star is the period of Agni Nakshatram. The dosha or "inauspicious period" is for approximately 21 days. The popular belief is that journeys made during this period will be unsuccessful, money or lent will not be returned, diseases will not be cured easily etc. Some people are of the belief that auspicious events were avoided in ancient times during this time (period) due to the intense heat wave taking place during the period.

In Tamil Nadu, India, in the days of yore, whenever a promissory note was written, the words "if I don't return the amount on the agreed date, I will be like a dog roaming about in Kathiri Veyyil" were included, meaning even a dog will not venture out during that hot period, and this person will be a lower life form compared to it.

The city of Chennai, South India lies on the thermal equator and is also coastal, which prevents extreme variation in seasonal temperature. For most of the year, the weather is hot and humid. The hottest part of the year is May to early June, known locally as Agni Nakshatram ("fiery star") or as Kathiri Veyyil, with maximum temperatures around 38-42 degrees Celsius (100-108 °F). Summertime in South India - the days of Kathiri Veyyil - is the time when the sun beats down on people relentlessly and

mercilessly. In the rest of the time, the folks of South India venture freely in the sweltering heat and go about their daily business. But most of May was ruled out due to the dreaded, extreme heat (making this period far hotter than the rest of the year) and children were generally kept away from the Sun and heat. During this period, in South Indian temples, abhishekams (bathing) with water and cooling preparations like ilaneer (Tender Coconut water) are performed for the deities and a special pot of paneer with 'Vetti Ver' will be kept in the Garbhagraha to calm and cool down the deity.

Agni Natchathiram/Nakshatram begins on **May 4th 2023** and will continue till **May 28th 2023**.

***** POINTS TO PONDER OVER:**

* A good friend of mine told me that her grandmother who was a Tamil scholar in the 80's and very well known for her role in promoting the Tamilian culture in the community as well as awareness on certain subjects involving religion and culture. My friend said that her grandmother was a very practical person in her views and approach, and she explained to her grandchildren that, back in the day in India, people lived in grass/straw huts and due to the severe and extreme heat conditions these huts even caught alight. Now imagine moving into a new home and experiencing something like this. Hence people never bought homes or moved houses during this period. Furthermore the extreme conditions made weddings not possible as well since the heat caused heat strokes, exhaustion, dehydration, etc. Imagine the bridal couple or the close family being affected by any of these conditions - hence weddings too were not conducted in this period. Practical and simple explanations. How this affects us in SA is beyond my comprehension.

* Remember that Kathiri is followed just in India as it is mid summer there and we in South Africa are entering our Winter months. So I really can't understand why this hasn't been brought up before by the priests here in South Africa as so many are confused. Remember this period is only for those in India and NOT South Africa. Also a point to note is that there isn't any shastric injunctions confirming it's a bad time. The inauspicious term was only give due to the relentless and merciless heat in India in this period. When one is in such relentless heat, it's advised to conserve one's energy or else it can seriously harm one's body causing injury/calamity, like heat strokes, exhaustion etc.

* Another valid point of note to ponder over. Allow me to ask you a question. If you are told or advised not to perform prayers in this period and that person justifies it by saying we have been following this for centuries but can't furnish you with any shastric injunctions (this means there is no shastric (proof in scriptures) proof that this is an inauspicious time and is considered a "bad" time solely due to the sweltering heat in India for that period) confirming his/her points, then there is something very wrong with that - isn't it?

* Even in Pitar Paksha (Mahalaya Paksham) and Aadhik Maas most prayers still continue. So unless one can furnish us with solid shastric injunctions confirming that Kathiri is an inauspicious period, we humbly suggest that one should think outside that box and pray as much as you can.

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Thank you so much for taking the time to read this article. We pray that this article will assist you in some way and we also pray that it helps you to appreciate the beauty and remarkable foresight of our ancient Hindu culture. We wish to educate all readers and demystify the path of Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma). Please feel free to share these articles with friends and family who do not have direct access to our website or articles. If you use the articles in any form including blogs and/or as part of other articles kindly credit our website as a source. We hope that the articles serve as a reference to you and your family when you need clarification of certain topics.

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Compiled for the upliftment of Sanatan Dharma
Narottam das & Arjun Nandlal
T.N
Email info@dipika.org.za