

Kashi Vishwanath: Governmental Rules and Regulations

Mudrarakshas

The original appears on pages 27–31 of *Mathurādās kī dāyārī*, and it was published previously on pages 28–32 of the collection *Suno bhai sādho*. This translation © 2020 by Robert A. Hueckstedt.

While Lord Shankar stared right at him, a thief lifted up a piece of gold that had been offered to the god and ran away. In a bus a man watched while a cutpocket took his money away, because in one hand the cutpocket had scissors and in the other a real pistol. As soon as the cutpocket left, the man whose pocket had been cut breathed a sigh of relief and said, “Thank God.” Lord Shankar, too, must have breathed a sigh of relief, because if the thief had had any difficulty carrying away the gold, he may have made off with his head.

After incidents like that had taken place, the Government took over the administration of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. Now it, too, will run as smoothly as Chapara’s Block Office. To facilitate the administration of the Temple detailed rules and regulations are being prepared. Some of them will be written rules which sometimes either the District Superintendent or the Chief of the Local Police Station can enforce. Some of them will be unwritten which, on behalf of the Government, anyone has the right to enforce.

A notice such as the following will be sent under the name of Baba Vishwanath, which the Lord will not have the right to refuse.

Official Notice is hereby given to Lord Shankar, alias whatever, resident of Benares, that through the Office of the District Superintendent he has been brought under the jurisdiction of the Government. From today’s date the Government, through

the Treasury, will provide him a reasonable stipend for food and expenses, after an authoritative estimate has been made, and all Rights and Responsibilities concerning Lord Shankar will be those of the Government.

After issuing the Official Notification of this takeover, the first order of business will be the regulation of Lord Shankar's food. For that the Government will not summon Lord Shiv to the Office of Rations, but he will have to have his own card made up. That card will not guarantee that Shiv ji will get any rations, but it will come in handy for many other things. For example, with it he will be able to purchase kerosene, and he will also be able to have his name put on the Voter List. And now and again, in fact, he will be able to get some rations. For example, his bag will be filled with tiny rocks and stones that will be adulterated with the grains of wheat the grain bugs weren't able to polish off. In another bag he'll be able to take home a sticky substance which, when he tries to pour it out of the bag and he sees that it doesn't come out, he'll know to be something like sugar.

It's known that Shiv ji is addicted to bhang, but the Government will not make arrangements for satisfying that addiction. He'll have to use his own resources for that. If, however, he would learn to enjoy the pleasures of liquor instead, then for his convenience the Ministry of Information and Human Resources would order that he be issued a valid press card.

Since the Government values discipline above all, Lord Shiv, alias unknown, will be required to be on duty. People say that he went off with his Lady Parvati to a cave somewhere and stayed there for a long time, avoiding all work. Such negligence of duty will not be tolerated. Except for the lunch hour, he will have to be in the office during all working hours, and he will have to give proper attention to the problems of the people.

It has also been noticed that sometimes a devotee of Lord Shiv, even after months of hassling and pleading, has not had his petition accommodated. A full, written account of such incidents will have to be prepared, and a proper and reasonable cause for denying such petitions will have to be placed on file.

Furthermore, a detailed account of the deeds of Lord Shiv will be maintained, secretly, by the District Superintendent. In the event of a negative entry Shiv will have the right to send an appeal, within seven

days, to the Chief Superintendent.

Since it is the Uttar Pradesh Government that has properly taken over the administration of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, it has therefore been announced by the Government of Uttar Pradesh that from time to time it will be necessary for Shiv and Parvati to take part, without remuneration, in cultural programmes sponsored by the Department of Cultural Activities of the Uttar Pradesh Government. The type of performances they are to present on such occasions will be determined by the Director of the Cultural Affairs Directorate. While the above-mentioned artistes generally present duet dance performances, the order of the Minister is that they should also be prepared to sing ghazals, etc. Furthermore, if the Administration invites a singer from outside, and if he forgets to bring along his tablaji, then, without any additional pay, it will be Lord Shiv's duty to provide the accompaniment on tabla.

While Lord Shiv usually dresses in tribal garb, on special occasions he will have to wear a clean and proper uniform. For example, on the Parade of the twenty-sixth of January, on the order of the above-mentioned organizers, he will have to sit in some proper tableau, along with the entire Administration, and pass before the reviewing stand. After that, and conforming to the announcement of Dr. Kailash Vajpeyi, he will make a video clip with Doordarshan in which Shiv ji will be required to praise the improvement that has come to the area of Mt. Kailash due to the Government's Mountain-Areas Development Program. Obviously, Shankar Bhagawan won't know a thing about such improvements. Even the people who live in the areas where such improvements have occurred due to the Government's efforts are ignorant of them, so it is up to the Government itself to present the statistics about them. For Shankar Bhagawan's convenience those statistics are available in the Ministry of Information.

Once he has obtained those statistics, he is to convince a producer for Doordarshan that he is the best producer Doordarshan has and that he is doing him an immense favour by producing the said video clip. The producer may then put Shankar ji off by saying that he will be notified of the date of the recording in due time. Furthermore, he may say that if Shankar ji should indeed have the great fortune of being summoned to the studio, he will have to take that crescent moon out of his hairdo and put it underneath the table; otherwise, the cameraman will complain about the glare from it, put his headphones on the handle of the camera and go off for tea.

It's understood that Shankar Bhagawan has control over ghosts and spirits and that he also knows tantras and mantras. In order to aid the Administration he should prepare a list of all the ghosts and spirits he has in his control, along with their addresses. Therefore, when it becomes necessary, they can be summoned by the Government to carry out rituals against the enemies of high officers and ministers. BUT Shankar Bhagawan must guarantee that under no circumstances will they ever work on behalf of Hemavati Nandan Bahuguna or Raj Narayan.

It's also understood that, while the Temple provides Bhagawan with the best in living quarters, food, and clothing, he continues to accept from devotees, in the form of offerings, a great deal of money. On the basis of the Fundamental Rules and on the Central Civil Service Classification Control and Appeal Rules the acceptance of such gifts is expressly forbidden. Since Lord Shiv is now considered to be a full Governmental Employee, his acceptance of any such gifts will be a violation of the rules and regulations, and administrative action will be taken against him.

From now on Lord Shiv will not have the right to satisfy someone's complaint orally. All petitioners, for example those who wish not to be caught cheating on an exam or those who wish to have a successful medical practice despite the fact that their degree is from Bihar, will have to fill out a written request form which will then be made available to Shiv ji through the Deputy Collector or the BDO. Without the approval of the said Officers Lord Shiv will not have the authority to make any decisions concerning the requests of petitioners.

This Temple will be administered on the model of Tirupati Devasthanam. From the income it gets, a hospital will be built where heart operations can be performed on those leaders who have suffered serious attacks because of having to leave their positions or because of not getting a position of their liking in the first place. Streets will be built, and the money for extending them will be useful only for buying the files needed for administering that work. And on those streets the bus service will be so good that more funeral cars will be on the roads than cars for traveling. Schools, too, will be opened in which the Trustees will have their wishes fulfilled and all studying will stop.

In addition to all the above the Government has the right to issue any other orders it may feel will be necessary.