

Upeavals of Tamils in Mauritius carry on again. Since months we have had many protests among our community in connection with the Panjangham issued by the MTTF and which has had to be rectified slightly following consultations with some stake-holders. Soon afterwards, other polemics have come out, in particular regarding Vaigasi, whereby for the first time in Mauritius we have celebrated Vaigasi on 3 days, namely 2nd, 3rd and 4th June. In the meantime, the MTTF is having consultations here and there to try putting off the fire but, it seems that, they have decided now to tow the line. Probably they have realized that at some point in time they would have had to tow the line, anyway. Tamils are so passionate about the practice of their religion that when changes are brought without convincing them of same, there is no chance that they will accept these changes. We have been doing all these rituals for so many years under the guidance of our priests, local and indian, on whom many of us have lot of reliance. It is thus quite human that there were going to have resistance to changes made in the timing and naming of these rituals.

We note with concern that after several months there is no conclusion on this issue of Panjangham and no general consensus. Not later than yesterday another yet 'Open' meeting was convened by a group of devoted Tamils to try shedding some light on this issue. Let's hope that lessons are being learned prior to the issue of the next Panjangham, since the date is approaching.

Our passion for our religion gave rise to another polemic last month - the Shusheela Raman's case. So much have been said, and so much have been written on newspapers, Facebook and alike that we believe it's high time to de-passionate the debate. Susheela Raman came to Mauritius with a wrong assumption that all countries are same. She never doubted that Tamils are very sensible to whatever touches their religious beliefs. Indeed she is well versed in Tamil and Tamil music for having grown up singing South Indian classical music and began giving recitals at an early age but she later moved into funk, rock and roll, before branching out into more blues and jazz-based music. With time, she adapted her music for her own audience in the UK and in the countries she visited. She became popular for her music and the rhythms mainly and not for the message in her songs. Very few artists are known for their lyrics, while most of them are known for their rhythms; for instance we listen to Michael Jackson, not for his message against violence or on ecology, but rather because of their very rocking rhythms. Susheela Raman is known for her very rhythmic songs, which can keep her audience dancing all night. She could have adapted any lyrics on her rock-and-roll rhythm and have many English youngsters to dance madly for hours. While becoming popular, she never realized that some lyrics are devotional and should command respect from the audience. She never realized that Muruga is the god of the tamils and that above all, we cannot allow any blasphemy when chanting the virtues of Muruga. 'Ennapane' and 'Paal' are interpreted during cavadee festivals and are very dear to us Tamils. Others won't understand their significance to the Tamils, and this is precisely why they have jump to conclusions of censorship. Great minds like Finlay Salesse and Gilbert Ahnee and a few others were trying to debate on issues they are ignorant. We can simply advise them not to dance on all tunes. As the saying goes:

« Chacun son métier, et les vaches seront bien gardées. »

Long Live Tamils.

Nandri, vanakkam.