

A confluence of faith and culture-By Dr. Shruti Jha Bahukhandi (Author- Dr. Shruti Jha Bahukhandi is Deputy State Project Director RUSA (Chhattisgarh Project)

¹Dr. Shruti Jha Bahukhandi

¹Deputy State Project Director

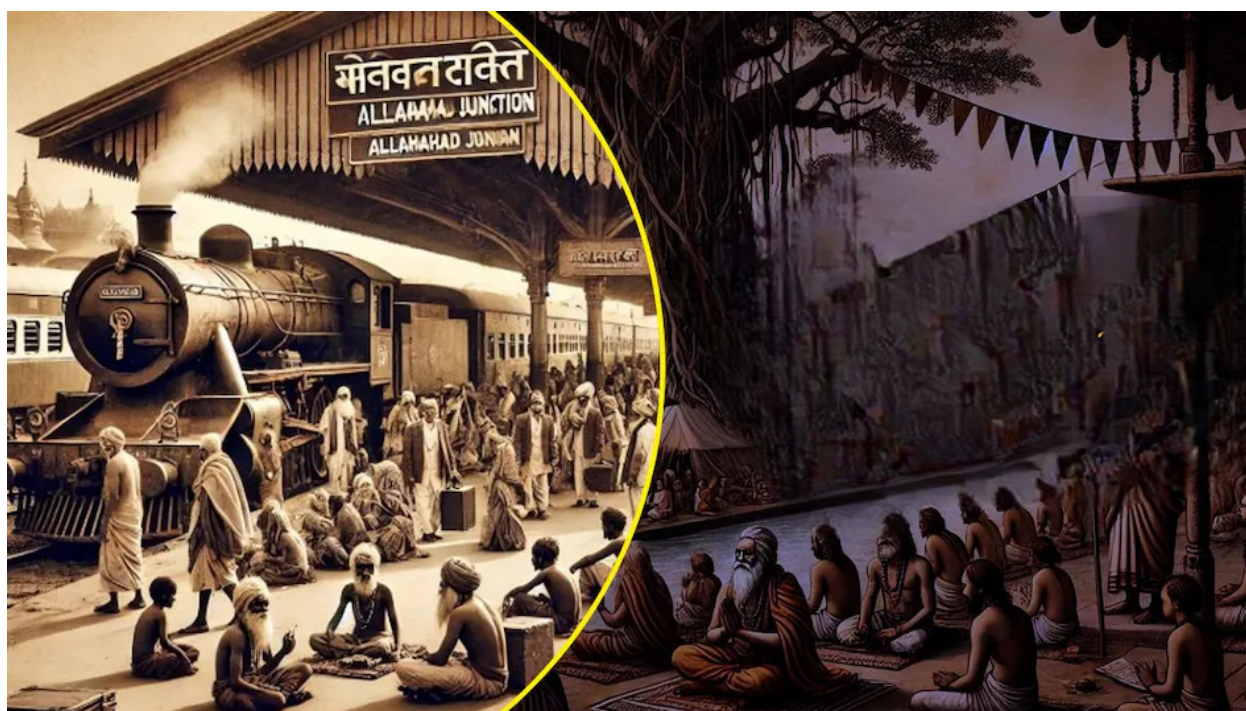
¹RUSA (Chhattisgarh Project)

Abstract—Maha Kumbh is the biggest religious and cultural event of India, which is held every 12 years at four holy places—Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nashik. Crores of devotees bathe in the holy waters of the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Godavari and Kshipra rivers to seek salvation and get rid of their sins. The organization of Maha Kumbh is based on religious beliefs, astrological calculations, and historical traditions. It is not only a religious festival, but also a symbol of Indian culture, spirituality and unity, which attracts devotees from India and abroad.

I. Introduction

Special trains with 'K' written on them were run for Kumbh Mela, wireless was used for the first time.

Railways had made special preparations in 1954 For the Kumbh Mela of 1954, the railways ran shuttle trains. Along with this, a railway station was built very close to Sangam. More than two hundred ticket collectors were recruited for the Kumbh. Passenger guides were recruited so that people do not face any problem in the Kumbh. An area control office was set up for traffic control.



It has been a more than a month since the beginning of Maha Kumbh-2025. Amazing enthusiasm and amazing devotion is being seen among the people doing Kalpavas on the banks of Sangam. Apart from this, devotees continue to come to the Sangam banks. Seeing the Maha Kumbh, it is natural to wonder how preparations are made for such a big and grand fair. How does it become the biggest fair in the world, where the number of devotees arriving is one-third of the country's population. One question in the series of questions is that how would have been those Kumbhs, which were held before independence and then how did the governments in independent India conduct it?

How was the first Kumbh after independence?

II. Discussion

The answers to these questions are found by scouring the reports of old newspapers. Some answers are also given by reportage-based books. Senior journalist and author Dhananjay Chopra answers these questions in his book 'Kumbh in India'. According to the book, the time for Kumbh had come only seven years after independence. Nehru, the first PM, who himself was a resident of Allahabad at that time, knew the importance of Kumbh very well. He had instructed to make special arrangements for this. In this arrangement, special attention was paid to traffic and the railways had made preparations on a war footing. This was the first time when the wireless system was also used.

The railways had made many arrangements

At that time, Allahabad was in the Northern Railway Zone and the five divisions in this zone had also revised their schedules for Kumbh. Apart from this, the work done was to build a railway station near Sangam, which was temporary. The number of shuttle trains was increased. Many new ones were also started. Passenger guides were recruited and new arrangements were also made on platforms etc.

Temporary station built near Sangam Ghat

According to the book, the railways ran shuttle trains for the 1954 Kumbh. Along with this, a railway station was built very close to Sangam. More than two hundred ticket collectors were recruited for Kumbh. Passenger guides were recruited so that people do not face any problem in Kumbh. Area control office was set up for traffic control, which was connected to the zonal headquarters of the railways across the country. Records related to the railways' preparations are still safe in the regional archives of Allahabad.

Trains were given special character 'K'

The Allahabad division, Moradabad division, Lucknow division, Delhi division and Firozpur division of Northern Railway were especially involved in the preparations for Kumbh. All the five divisions changed their timetables for Kumbh and then also changed the timings of trains. The time and platform of the special trains running for the fair were also decided in advance. The trains and racks running for Kumbh were given a special English character 'K' logo. So that they can be easily identified.

Crowd management preparations were made

Out of the approximately 50 lakh devotees coming to Kumbh, 16 lakh were expected to come by train. Keeping this in mind, arrangements were made at the main station of Allahabad as well as Rambagh, Jhunsi, Naini, Prayag and Prayag Ghat stations. Railways had also made preparations for crowd management. Rules were also made for issuing tickets to separate the crowd and reduce pressure. Senior level officers were appointed for the fair.

138 passenger guides were appointed

138 passenger guides were appointed for about two months. So that passengers do not face any problem at the station. Employees appointed in the fair were given twenty percent allowance and employees posted outside the fair but on fair duty were given ten percent of the salary allowance. For the first time in the fair, railway employees used VHF wireless set and they were also trained for this.

Sister of death but goddess of salvation... Why is the importance of river Yamuna mentioned more than Ganga in the Puranas

When Yamuna meets Ganga in Prayagraj, it increases the importance of this place i.e. Sangam area manifold. Then this one place becomes the recipient of the blessings of those two rivers, which have their own importance, but the benefits of both the importance are obtained together. When a dip is taken in the water of Sangam during Maha Kumbh, faith says that this combined water of both Ganga-Yamuna will take one closer to the same divine element.



In the Puranas, the importance of Yamuna river is said to be equal to that of Ganga

Prayagraj is filled with the wonderful shade of devotion and faith due to the organization of Maha Kumbh. This Maha Mela held at the confluence of Ganga-Yamuna and Saraswati also becomes more important in cultural and mythological terms because of these three rivers. All these three rivers have been described as very important in the Vedas and Puranas and along with creating vast fertile plains, they have been the mother of cultures, civilizations and urban development.

Whereas Saraswati is a pure Vedic river on whose banks Vedas were written. On the other hand, Ganga is the river that originated from Brahma's kamandal, got the charanamrit of Lord Vishnu and a place in the matted locks of Shiva Mahadev, along whose banks many mythological stories have taken place. Now comes Yamuna river. It is said that this river is of more mythological importance than Ganga and in many descriptions it has been considered even older than Ganga. However, the

sanctity of Yamuna river and its clean water was recognized only in Dwapar era, when Shri Krishna made this river a witness to his divine acts.



Yamuna

has been a witness to Krishna's deeds

He was born in a city situated on its banks, grew up in the forests situated on its banks, Krishna was present in all the villages through which the Yamuna river flows. There are many places like Gokul, Vrindavan, Barsana, Govardhan which are of mythological importance today and are witnesses to the life philosophy of Shri Krishna. Yamuna river, named Kalindi, is one of the eight queens of Shri Krishna. This Yamuna meets Gangaji in Prayagraj and this place is known as Tirtharaj.

Yamuna originates from the Kalind mountain of the Himalayas

Yamuna river originating from the Kalind mountain range of the Himalayas is also named Kalindi. In the Puranas, she has been called the daughter of Sun God and the sister of Yama. It is said that earlier she was born as a human, but due to later circumstances she was transformed into a river. The conversation between Yama and his sister Yamuna (Yami) is also recorded in the Samvad Sukta of Rigved. This dialogue sukta explains the family values in the Indian system and also underlines the sanctity of the relationship between brothers and sisters.

Description of Yamuna in Rigveda

There are many contradictions among the Veda scholars regarding this story of Yama-Yami in Rigveda. Actually, once Yamraj goes to Yami's house. Yami and Yama's father is Vivaswan i.e. Suryadev, but Yami, who has always been separated from her brother, considers him a lover. When Yama reaches Yami's house, she proposes her love to him. Then Yama tells her that we are children of the same father and the same mother. Your mother Sandhya is also my mother. Therefore, do not propose love to me. Hearing Yama's words, Yami gets very disappointed and she starts repenting. This decision of Yama has been seen with great greatness in Rigveda and this story also becomes an example of the dignity of the relationship between brother and sister.

ओ चित्सखायं सख्या ववृत्त्यां तिरः पुरु चिदर्णवं जगन्वान्
 पितुर्नपातमा दधीत वेधा अधि क्षमि प्रतरं दीध्यानः ॥ 1 ॥
 न ते सखा सख्यं वष्टयेतत्सलक्ष्मा यद्विषुरुपा भवाति
 महस्पुत्रासो असुरस्य वीरा दिवो धर्तार उर्विया परि ख्यन् ॥ 2 ॥

उशन्ति घा ते अमृतास एतदेकस्य चित्यजसं मर्त्यस्य
 नि ते मनो मनसि धाय्यस्मे जन्युः पतिस्तन्वमा विविश्याः ॥ 3 ॥

न यत्पुरा चकृमा कद्ध नूनमृत वदन्तो अनृतं रपेम
 गन्धर्वो अप्सवप्या च योषा सा नो नाभिः परमं जामि तन्नौ ॥ 4 ॥

This story of Yam and Yami has been told in different contexts in the Puranas. According to Vishnupuran, Yam reached his sister Yami's house one day. According to Bhagwat Katha, no one is happy if Yam (means death) himself comes to his door, but on the contrary, Yami was very happy to see her brother. Yami gave Yam a seat with great respect. She cooked dishes and fed him and satisfied him with food etc.

Seeing such hospitality for the first time, Yam was very happy and asked Yami to ask for a boon. Yami did not ask for anything for herself but said that whichever sister feeds her brother like this on this day and welcomes him in her house, she should never fear death. Yam also said that whichever brother goes to his sister's house on this day and gives her respect and takes care of her, he will not fear untimely death.

This is how Yamuna turned into a river

In the Puranas, the story of the formation of Yamuna river also seems to originate from this union of Yam-Yami. When Yam told Yam that he is her brother and hence he cannot accept Yam's love, Yam feels very sad. She starts regretting. Slowly her body melts and turns into water and from this stream of water Yamuna river emerges. The antiquity of Yamuna river is much older than Ganga. After this story of Yam-Yami, the day of Yam Dwitiya which falls after Diwali is of great importance. On this day, there is importance of brother and sister bathing in Yamuna together and there is a belief of cooking some food and feeding it on the banks of the river. This tradition is going on in many areas of North India.

Yamuna river is the mother of Braj culture

Bhuvanbhaskar Surya is accepted as its father, Yam, the god of death, is its brother and Lord Shri Krishna is accepted as its husband. While Lord Shri Krishna is called the father of Braj culture, Yamuna is considered its mother. Thus, it is the mother of the people of Braj in the true sense. Therefore, in Braj, it is called Yamuna Maiyya. Brahma Purana has given a description explaining the spiritual form of Yamuna - "The one who is the basis of creation and who is called Sachchidananda form by the characteristics, who has been praised by the Upanishads as Brahma form, that supreme element is Yamuna in person. Gaudiya scholar Shrirup Goswami has described Yamuna as Chidanandmayi in person. Chidanandmayi means, by seeing whom the soul gets true happiness. Yamuna river has got the status of mother like Ganga.



Yami: The Sister of Yama and Goddess Yamuna River

Just like the water of Ganga is important for bathing, worship and sipping, Yamuna river also holds its own importance. Like Ganga, it has also been the center of the city of pilgrimages. Apart from this, due to being a co-witness in the leelas of Vishnu incarnation Shri Krishna, its water is also considered similar to Hari Charanamrit. It has been called venerable at many places in the Puranas.

“नमामि यमुनां देवीं सुरासुरनमस्कृताम्।

पापहारिणीं पुण्यां लोकानां त्राणकारिणीम्।”

While worshipping Yamuna in Skanda Purana, it is said that a person who takes bath in Yamuna gets the blessings of Lord Vishnu and all sins are destroyed.

“कालिंद्या वरदा गंगा त्रिपथगा विष्णुपादवी।

स्नातं यत्र हरिः स्वायं धर्मं तत्र करोति सः।”

In Padmapuran also, this river has been called Paap Nashini, Shok Harini and Kalyani. Contact with the water of Yamuna ends all the sorrows of a person. Even just remembering it destroys sins.

"यमुना जगत् त्राण कारणं कलिमलापहम्।
 स्नानमात्रेण पापघ्नीं नमामि हरिणीं शुभाम्।"
 "यमुनाजलसम्पर्कात् यो भवेद्दुःखमोक्षणम्।
 स्मरन्ति यमुनां भक्त्या पापानामाशु नाशनम्।"

At one place in Skanda Purana, Yamuna has been considered more sacred than Ganga. It has been said that by seeing Ganga, sins are destroyed, by touching it, sins are removed but by taking bath in Yamuna, one attains salvation directly.

"गङ्गायां दर्शनात् पापं स्पर्शनात् पातकं भवेत्।
 यमुनायां तु यत्स्नानं मुक्तिः साक्षात् भवेद् ध्रुवम्।"

It is also mentioned in Mahabharata

In the Mahabharata's Vana Parva, Yamuna has been described as the goddess of purity and the source of salvation for all living beings. It is also mentioned that the sages who performed penance on the banks of Yamuna attained great virtue. Yamuna river not only has religious importance, but it is also an important part of Indian culture and history. Its importance can be understood in such a way that one of the four Dhams situated in the mountains is the origin of Yamuna river. Which is called Yamunotri Dham.

This is also because, like Ganga, Yamuna is also the lifeline of the Indian way of life. Major cities of Haryana are on its banks. The country's capital Delhi is irrigated by its water. Agra, the main city in the history of Uttar Pradesh, where the fort and the Taj Mahal are located, are located on its banks.

This is the reason that when Yamuna meets Ganga in Prayagraj, it increases the importance of this place i.e. Sangam area manifold. Then this one place becomes the beneficiary of those two rivers, which have their own separate importance, but the benefits of the importance of both are obtained together. When a dip is taken in the water of Sangam during Maha Kumbh, faith says that the combined water of Ganga-Yamuna will take one closer to the same divine element. It will purify one's body and liberate him from the cycle of birth and death. Along with this, the chants of Har-Har Gange, Jai Jai Yamuna Maiya keep resonating on the Ghats.

If Mind is healthy the everything is fine

If the mind is pure, then every water is loike Gangajal ... If you are unable to go to Maha Kumbh, then take a bath with these mantras, your home will become Prayagraj!



Ganga Mata herself has promised that whenever she is invoked for any auspicious work, she will definitely come for the welfare of every person. In such a situation, you will not have to be deprived of the divine benefits of bathing in the Ganga on the special date of Amrit Snan. Just chant these mantras and the benefits of bathing in the Ganga can be availed at home.

Mahakumbh is being organized in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. There is a gathering of devotees. The amazing splendor of this mythological ancient event is spread on the holy banks of Sangam. There is going to be a huge crowd on the upcoming major bathing dates, while government figures estimate that about 55-60 crore people are going to gather during the Mahakumbh this time. In this wonderful coincidence formed after 144 years, everyone will wish to be a part of this event and purify themselves by bathing in the waters of Triveni.

This is not possible for everyone and there is a very large number of people who will not be able to reach the holy ghats even if they want to. If you are also included in these people, then there is absolutely no need to be disappointed. If you also have a desire to take a bath in Maha Kumbh and it is not getting fulfilled, then arrangements have been made for this in the scriptures. There are some mantras in the Puranas and scriptures for praising and invoking the river Ganga, by reciting and chanting which every area becomes Ganga Teerth and every water becomes Ganga Jal.

Mother Ganga herself has promised that whenever she is invoked for any auspicious work, she will definitely come for the welfare of every person. In such a situation, you will not have to be deprived of the divine benefits of bathing in the Ganga on the special date of Amrit Snan. Just chant these mantras and the benefits of bathing in the Ganga can be availed at home.

Mantra to invoke the rivers

River Ganga is not only sacred, its tributary rivers Yamuna and Saraswati are also very glorious. Apart from this, Godavari, Kaveri, Sindhu and Narmada are also called the incarnation of Ganga at their respective places. There is a confluence of Ganga-Yamuna and Saraswati in Sangam Teerth Kshetra. Therefore, there is glory of Teerthraj Prayag too. Apart from this, like Ganga, all these rivers originated from the water pot of Brahmadev in different times and are called Sapta Dhara.

The mantra of meditation of all these rivers is very effective which turns the bath water into Ganga water and Triveni. Therefore, chant this mantra before bathing. With this mantra, the courtyard of your own house will become a pilgrimage area like Kumbh Sthal.

गंगे च यमुने चैव गोदावरी सरस्वती ।

नर्मदे सिन्धु कावेरि जलेऽस्मिन् सन्निधिं कुरु ॥

Pray to Maa Ganga

Similarly, the Gangeya shloka taken from the Ganga source is also very sacred. In this shloka mantra, the purity of Maa Ganga has been described and prayers have been made to her to seek salvation from one's sins. In the shloka, it has been said that the Ganga water is beautiful which has come from the feet of Murari i.e. Shri Vishnu, and has been worn on the head by Tripurari i.e. Mahadev Shiva.

गंगां वारि मनोहारि मुरारिचरणच्युतं ।

त्रिपुरारिशिरश्चारि पापहारि पुनातु मां ॥

Who is the destroyer of sins. May such mother Ganga take away my sins too. By reciting this mantra and taking a bath, mother Ganga will join the water source near you to cool you. May such mother Ganga take away my sins too. By reciting this mantra and taking a bath, mother Ganga will join the water source near you to cool you.

A person can also take a bath far from Ganga

Describing the glory of river Ganga, it has been said in a shloka that the person who remembers Gangaji even from a distance of hundred yojanas, all his sins are destroyed and he finally goes to Vishnu Lok.

Through this shloka, it has been told that mother Ganga is so kind that on a call of her son and devotees, she herself goes to them.

गंगा गंगेति यो ब्रूयात्, योजनानां शतैरपि ।

मुच्यते सर्वपापेभ्यो, विष्णुलोके स गच्छति ॥

If he is not able to come to the banks of Ganga, then Maa Ganga goes to him and gives him freedom from sins and coolness. Do read this shloka mantra while taking bath.

River Ganga is the path of salvation

Just seeing the Ganga river is the path of salvation. Taking a bath means breaking all the bonds of karma. On the other hand, remembering Maa Ganga makes one a part of many virtues.

गंगा तव दर्शनात् मुक्ति

If one of the smallest and most important mantras of Maa Ganga is recited while taking bath, then the water in your water vessel becomes Gangajal and bathing in it gives the same result as Kumbh bath. Just the mind should be pure and there should be devotion in the feelings.

Similarly, Yamuna river is also a mythological river and bathing in it is also very important. Yamuna river is the daughter of Sun God and is the witness of Lord Krishna's leela. Many ancient pilgrimages are established on the banks of this river. Since Lord Krishna himself bathed in this water, the water of this river is also considered as sacred as Ganga. Therefore, it is also invoked at the time of bathing. Its mantra is something like this.

ॐ कालिन्दि यमुने जय श्रीकृष्णप्रियाङ्कुरे।

व्रजवासिनि विश्वजनि पुण्यतोये नमोऽस्तु ते।

O! Kalindi Yamuna river, hail to you! You are the beloved of Lord Krishna, you reside in Vrajbhoomi (Mathura-Vrindavan). You are worshipable and respected by the entire world.

The creatures of the world become pure and free from sins through your holy water. I bow to you, I salute you. Please bless me by giving me darshan.

When you go to take bath, do remember the king of pilgrimages Prayag and its glory. Tirtharaj Prayag is the king of all pilgrimages and also meditate on the purity of Triveni Devi, who is the goddess of Sangam area. This will create the aura of Tirtharaj Prayag in your house itself and you will get the same result as bathing in Prayag. Before performing havan-yagya etc. in the house, the priest also uses this mantra to make the atmosphere of the house spiritual.

ॐ त्रिवेणी संगमे देवि संगमेश्वर पूजिते।

स्नानकाले कुरु कृपा पापक्षय करो भवेत्॥

O ! Goddess residing at the Triveni Sangam! You are worshipped by Sangameshwar (God of the Sangam). Kindly bless us with your blessings while bathing. Please destroy our sins and purify us. This mantra invokes the Goddess of the Triveni Sangam. This mantra is a symbol of devotion, faith and self-purification.

Not just Ganga-Yamuna, there are seven rivers mentioned in the Puranas which are testimony to purity and purify the body, mind and soul. Remembering these rivers while bathing makes you blessed by them in every way. There is a mantra for this.

ॐ गंगे च यमुने चैव, कावेरी सरस्वति।

शतद्रुश्च महानद्या, गोदावरी महाबला।

सर्वे तीर्थाः समुद्भूता, हेमकूटनिवासिनः।

स्नानेन प्रीयतां नित्यं, सर्वपापप्रणा शिनः॥

Apart from this, when you are going to take a bath, you can also remember Lord Vishnu to attain purity and the virtue of bathing in the Ganges. Remembering Lord Vishnu is a means of purification in itself. It encourages the feeling of surrender in every moment of life and provides purity of soul and mental peace. It is especially prescribed to chant this mantra before bathing, meditation, worship, or any religious ritual. This mantra is.

ॐ अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपि वा।

यः स्मरेत् पुण्डरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यन्तरः शुचिः॥

Whether someone is impure or pure. No matter in what state (condition or situation) he is in. Whoever remembers Lord Vishnu (Pundarikaksha, i.e. the one with eyes like lotus).

He becomes pure externally and internally. It is also called Shuchita Mantra, it is also used for purification before worship at home.

So if your mind is pure and you honestly perform your karma and duty. Do not think bad about anyone and remain engaged in the welfare of humanity, then you can get the virtue of bathing in Tirtharaj Prayag by bathing in your home. For this, Saint Ravidas has also said - If the mind is pure, then Ganga is in the pot.

References

- [1] **Bhagavad Gita** – *The Bhagavad Gita, often referred to as the Gita, is a Hindu scripture, dated to the second or first century BCE, which forms part of the epic poem Mahabharata.*
- [2] **Vishnu Purana**: *Describes the life of Vishnu, including his avatars, and covers genealogy and cosmology*
- [3] **Rigveda**- The Rigveda is an ancient Indian collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns. It is one of the four sacred canonical Hindu texts known as the Vedas.
- [4] **Mahabharata** - The Mahābhārata is Sanskrit epics of ancient India revered as Smriti texts in Hinduism, It narrates the events and aftermath of the Kurukshetra War, a war of succession between two groups of princely cousins,
- [5] **The Enchanting Tale of Yamuna and Yamraj: Sacred Origins of Bhai Dooj-aavyaa.com** - This tale of Yamraj and Yamuna gave rise to the tradition of Bhai Dooj, where sisters welcome their brothers with warmth and affection, performing the tilak ceremony to bless them, while brothers vow to protect and cherish their sisters. Their bond, honored by the heavens, became a lasting celebration of sibling love.