# **BALAVIN KURAL**

## **Balambika Divya Sangam**













Balambika Divya Sangam (BDS) wishes its members a very Happy New Year 2017 and a Happy Pongal too. To each of us, a new year rings in new hopes, dreams and fulfillments, a new chance to start afresh and succeed! We tie up our little disappointments away in a knot and begin all over again, more determined than ever. With God's grace and blessings, may each of us find that perfect recipe to make our lives as sumptuous and delectable as we can. Even our dear Bala is waiting to see Her abode become a magical reality, as Malur prepares to host the kumbhabhishekam of Her temple in April 2017.

It is the final few months before the culmination of any spiritual event that the gusto and enthusiasm of man and God come together in resonance. Every little glitch irons out, the impossible becomes possible, nature sings along in harmony, and our hearts are filled with so much of passion, that we pour endlessly into the sea of devotion. With less than three months before the kumbhabhishekam, the hustle and bustle of the festivity has kindled and awakened each of our hearts as we aspire to be a part of this celebration. Indeed, now is the time to contribute in any way you want, be it physically, morally or financially. Our list of sponsorships has a little something for each of you, that will fit your dream of being a part of Sri Bala's

temple. As we read, the idols are prepared to be immersed in water, grains and milk, for reasons that are both spiritually and scientifically in accordance to that laid out in the Agama Shastra.

As you browse through our collection of the temple construction pictures in this edition of the newsletter, we hope to see you become a part of the temple kumbhabhishekam event as well. We look forward to the continued support of our well-wishers, patrons, sponsors and dedicated volunteers, who have made every BDS activity run seamlessly. We could not have come this far without our members' cheers and praises on WhatsApp. We sincerely appreciate your comments and suggestions, and cherish your membership. As the countdown begins, we hope to hear more from you as we perfect our plans for the kumbhabhishekam.





Mrs. Asha Manoharar resident—BDS

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# Bala Speaks...



Happiness is a daily choice. It is a mindset which you can nurture and train. It doesn't mean it is there every second, but when you notice it is missing - often the tiniest shift can put you right back on top of the world. Spend a few minutes thinking of all the bits of life that you are grateful for. The big and the small, the things that you are proud of, the people who care about you, the experiences that bring a smile onto your face. Often, it is the grateful people who are likely to be more happy. Smile is often that magic wand, which spreads happiness all around you, and inside you.

# The Kumbhabhishekam work is proceeding at a fast pace with fervent anticipation of the 'once in a lifetime event'.

- Sanchara Dolai in and around the villages surrounding Malur is being taken up to spread the word.
  - The Breakfast Meal program is in progress and many patrons have come forward to support this initiative.
- Bala Sahasranamam chanting groups are being encouraged at various locations as a run-up to Kumbhabhishekam.





# Yeri kaatha Raamar

By Thulasinathan Kandasamy

"I have to take charge as collector to a place called Chengalpat(tu)", said Colonel Lionel Blaze to his colleague. "That place and the surrounding areas are quite strange. It either suffers due to lack of water or from floods. Seems like cursed on Water!", remarked the Colonel, trying to sound witty. However, Blaze was seriously worried. He continued with a frown, "I also read that a few flourishing Cities are now under the sea". "All the best", was the response of his colleague at East India Company.

Blaze knew why he was being sent, if management was sending him somewhere, that means there is some trouble and they expect him to solve it. He did some homework and learned that every year, due to heavy downpours of rain, the weak bunds of the lake often breaches. Revenue levels also dropped because of floods ruining the agriculture.

Blaze went around the Madhuraanthakam village and saw a (Kothandaraamar) temple. A question that always popped up in his head, did so once again. These Indians seem to have understood metallurgy and done wonders with architectural designs, way ahead of time compared to most other civilizations. That being the case, why were they invaded and colonized? It was beyond him. In his understanding, the people that he interacted with were also pretty decent and knowledgeable. He entered the temple and saw a huge pile of unfinished huge stone slabs kept in a corner of the premises. Priests rushed to invite Blaze to the temple. His question to them was, what were those stone slabs doing there?

"They are meant for constructing a separate shrine for Janakavalli Thayaar", explained the chief priest. "It's delayed due to lack of funds", the priest added. "We believe that She will show us a way, for She is the incarnation of Goddess of Wealth".

Blaze didn't want to provoke any religious feelings/issues, for he needed everyone's support for achieving his mission. However, he couldn't stop himself from remarking in jest, "Not sure why you need a separate shrine, when there is a more urgent need to repair the lake for everyone's survival. However, let me tell you this, if your deities protect the lake this year, I will build the shrine myself". He left the temple in a hurry and was quite thoughtful. He didn't listen to the priests who were inviting him for darshan.

"It is more complicated than I thought", Blaze was wondering. "I can fix it. However, it will take time. I need roughly a year. With the rainy season nearing and lack of immediate funds, I can't do any magic within this time". Reality struck him hard and got him worried. He went around and studied the lake and the wall over and over. Worked with the masons and made the repairs as effectively as he could. At the end of it, he realized that the repairs are no stronger than last year's. He re-evaluated the situation and ordered evacuation in nearby areas. The rains started. The rain wasn't making his job any easier, each day, the level of water in the lake was rising more than expected.

The water level was already near the danger mark and rains started freshly. It was midnight and there was no sign of the rains stopping. Blaze ventured out to see the situation near the lake. His servants were accompanying him with umbrellas. Blaze tried to assess the lake situation. The intensity of rains increased, and he saw that the lake was full to the brim. His heart became heavy thinking of the inevitable. Suddenly, there were was lightning and thunder. Blaze was amazed to see two young and very well built men walking with a bow in one hand and arrow in the other. It was an astonishing sight to see the two of them walking in the opposite direction and meeting each other once every round. Blaze was wondering what they were doing at this hour. They wore crowns and looked like great kings. He was wondering why will these Rajahs

be here, that too, at this hour? He was told that the recent Rajahs don't take any pain.

Blaze couldn't ask those two men all his questions, for they were far from him and the rain with thunder was getting worse with each minute. The servants urged him to return to the camp as soon as possible. Blaze returned to the camp and couldn't wake up till later next day. By then, the rain has stopped and the Sun was shining. In anxiety, he rushed to take stock of the lake situation. To his astonishment, the bunds held the water. There was also a confirmation from his office that the worst rainy days were over. Blaze was extremely joyous.

In a relaxed mood, Blaze went to the temple again. This time, when the chief priest invited him to join for darshan, he said, "Sure."

The alankaram was in progress. Blaze was puzzled to see a huge curtain screen. The chief priest told him that it is almost darshan time. "No problem," said Blaze. He was looking around and studying the architectural aspects. Suddenly, with bell sounds and some strange sounds (the priest told him that they were mantras for avahan), the curtains were moved to make the deities visible. Blaze's eyes widened, his hands folded in Namaste, and before he realized what was happening, he said loudly, "I saw them." All the sounds stopped and the chief priest who spoke English came to him and said, "You saw Sri Rama and Lakshmana? Where?" Blaze narrated the episode. The Poojaris were delighted and sad at the same time. They were delighted that Sri Rama came to protect them and the village. They were also sad that they couldn't get darshan of them, despite performing poojas all the time, while the firangi (foreigner) got darshan as soon as he came there. Strange is the way of the Ultimate Truth.

Blaze has indeed built the shrine as promised. An inscription still says it was built by "Colonel Lionel Blaze of East India Company".







# Demystifying Science...

A salute to our scientific creator

When we picture science and scientific things, our minds conjure up a variety electronic gadgets, chemistry and chemical sciences, medicine, satellites and other state-ofthe-art technology. In retific thinking is and always has been about living in harmony with nature. Whether we bring in science from the Vedas, or



Newtonian science, it boils down to understanding, respecting, and abiding by the laws of nature. God, our most scientific creator, could not have planned it better! He was definitely thinking right when He made the oceans salty, lest they completely freeze in colder regions. He made water expand anomalously so that it becomes less dense as ice and floats, letting marine life go about their business. He scattered flint stones to make our first fire, nourishing the fire and our lungs with the right amount of atmospheric oxygen. In doing so, He paved the way for alchemy. Every seed, cell and atom was His pioneering work; we merely (or barely!) try to keep it going. He engineered our genes so flawlessly, that its inbuilt autocorrect feature helps DNA replicate perfectly. That is why you don't see people and animals with more than one head or one too many limbs. Viruses lack that mechanism and that's why they mutate! He wired electricity into our brains to let the excited neurons send their messages. But alas! He also planted curiosity into the human brain that questions, challenges, judges, explores and destroys. If we only learn to live with nature, abide by its fair tenets, reduce exploiting, and instead, reuse and recycle its limited resources, nature will be preserved in her youth for a long time. This New Year's resolve: a salute to the Creator and His creation!

 I was born on October 15th, 1931 into a Tamil muslim family residing in Rameshwaram.

# Who am I?

- 2) I was the youngest of 4 brothers and 1 sister, in a family which had in the past, been wealthy and affluent traders.
- 3) I started selling newspapers at the age of 5 to support my family.
- 4) I was fascinated by physics and mathematics, but obtained only average grades in school.
- 5) I went on to attend St. Joseph's College in Tiruchirapalli, from where I graduated in physics in 1954.
- 6) I moved to Madras in 1955 to study Aerospace engineering at the Madras Institute of Technology.
- 7) I missed an opportunity to become a fighter pilot for the Indian Air Force, as I was listed 9th with only 8 openings in the offing.
- 8) In 1960, I became involved with DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment.
- 9) In 1969, I was made the Project Director for Satellite Launch Vehicles and was shifted to ISRO.
- 10) I was invited to witness the country's first nuclear test Smiling Buddha, even though I had not participated in its development.
- 11) I played a major role in developing many missiles such as Agni and Prithvi which are the mainstay of the Indian Defence Establishment currently.
- 12) I served as the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of DRDO from July 1992 to Dec 1999.
- 13) I used to take the sole blame for setbacks in my projects, but gave all credit to the team when they achieved success.
- 14) Although a Muslim by birth, I was a strict vegetarian for most part of my life.
- 15) I wrote a great deal of poetry in Tamil and enjoyed playing the musical instrument Veena.
- 16) I served as the 11th President of India from 2002 to 2007 and was fondly known as the "People's President".
- 17) I was honoured with numerous Awards such as Bharat Ratna, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, along with 7 honorary doctorates.
- 18) My autobiography titled "Wings of Fire", was translated into 13 languages, including French and Cantonese.
- 19) I suffered a cardiac arrest on 27th July, 2015 while delivering a lecture in IIM-Shillong and passed away soon after.

## A.P.J Abdul Kalam

was one of the most widely known nuclear scientists of India, who relentlessly worked to strengthen our country's defence capabilities. He was popularly known as the 'Missile Man of India and was respected by people from all walks of life. He was an effective orator and continues to inspire many young minds to aspire and strive for excellence in their chosen path.





# **Indus Valley Civilization: Decline**

cline around 1800 BCE. Archaeological evidence indicates that trade with Mesopotamia, located largely in modern Iraq, seemed to have ended. The advanced drainage system and baths of the great cities were built over or blocked. Writing began to disappear and the standardized weights and measures used for trade and taxation fell out of use.

marked by overwhelming monsoons.

## The Aryan Invasion Theory (c. 1800-1500 BC)

One of the theories which explain the demise of the Indus Valley Civilization is invasion. According to British archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler, a nomadic, Indo-European tribe, called the Aryans, suddenly overwhelmed and conquered the Indus River Valley. He based this on unburied corpses found in the top levels of the Mohenjo-Daro archaeological site and claimed that these were victims of war with the Aryans. However, this theory was dismissed by other scholars who explained that the skeletons were not victims of invasion massacres, but rather, the remains of hasty burials. Wheeler himself eventually admitted that the theory could not be proven and the skeletons indicated only a final phase of human occupation, with the decay of the city structures likely a result of it becoming uninhabited. Furthermore, various elements of the Indus Civilization are found in later cultures, suggesting that the civiliza- In summary, many theories have been formulated during that time period.

## he Indus Valley Civilization started to de- The Climate Change Theory (c. 1800-1500 BC)

Proponents of this theory suggest the collapse of Harappan society resulted from climate change. In particular, some experts believe that the drying up of the Saraswati River, which began around 1900 BCE, was the main cause, while others conclude that a great flood struck the area. Any major environmental change, such as deforestation, flooding or droughts due to a river changing course, could have Scholars speculate on various theories that would had disastrous effects on Harappan society, such as explain the disappearance of this great civilization, crop failures, starvation, and disease. In addition, including an Aryan Invasion and climate change skeletal remains suggest that many people died from malaria, which is most often spread by mosquitoes. This also would have caused a breakdown in the economy and civic order within the urban areas.

> Another disastrous change in the Harappan climate might have been in the eastward-moving monsoons, or winds that bring heavy rains. Monsoons can be both helpful and detrimental to a climate, depending on whether they support or destroy vegetation and agriculture. The monsoons that came to the Indus River Valley aided the growth of agricultural surpluses, which supported the development of cities, such as Harappa. The population came to rely on seasonal monsoons rather than irrigation, and as the monsoons shifted eastward, the water supply would have dried up. Another reason that is debated by scholars is the change in the course of river Ghaggar -Harka, that might have led to an increase in aridity of that area. The location where the Indus valley civilization once flourished is a desert today.

tion did not disappear suddenly due to an invasion. and provided, but all the theories met with one or In contrast to the invasion theory, many scholars be- another form of criticism. Archaeological evidences lieve in an Indo-Aryan migration theory that states do however prove that there was no sudden collapse that the Harappan culture was assimilated during a of the Indus Valley Civilization, but that it declined migration of the Aryan people into northwest India over a period of time and got mingled with other civilizations of that period.



**Ruins at Lothal** 

Bernard Gagnon (Own work) [GFDL (http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html) or CC BY-SA 3.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0)], via Wikimedia Commons

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# Sri Bala Sahasranamam

With Meaning & Commentary by Smt. Asha Manoharan

References to Goddess Balambika (Bala) can be found in the Brahmanda Puranam. Sri Bala Sahasranama Stotram describes and praises the various attributes of Sri Balambika in 113 verses. Since each *nama* represents a unique nature and quality of Sri Balambika, it can be interpreted and discussed to cater to the different needs of an individual. Along with a direct meaning of each *nama*, Smt. Asha Manoharan has provided us with intriguing commentary and examples that a common man can relate to and apply in everyday life. So the next time we chant Sri Bala Sahasranamam, we will not only know the literal meaning of the *stotram*, but will also find a unique way to connect and relate to Sri Balambika.

bālā svarūpiņī māyā vareņyā vara dāyinī / vidrumābhā viśālākṣī viśiṣṭā viśva nāyikā //

### Maya: Illusion

Maya is defined in Devi Gita as neither existent (sat) nor non-existent (asat), not both...

Ambal is real (sat), in the sense that She alone is eternal and unchanging. The unreal (asat) refers to what absolutely does not exist. Eg., Son of a lion.

The world that we live in is an illusion, it is not eternal and unchanging, but it is not unreal also. Maya is the cause of this world, Ambal holds this in Her hands to create this magnificent world. It is also explained in Devi Mahatmya that Maya and Brahman are one. The Divine Mother is the supreme Shakti of Para Brahman. Apparently, they appear different in outward dispensation but they are actually one, like fire and heat, milk and its white colour and so on. The Supreme Divine Power is described as the dynamic moving aspect of the Para-Brahman. The Mother is the mysterious link between the manifest and the un-manifest. She makes the creation possible through Para-Brahman. There is a beautiful description in this regard in Durga Saptasati. According to this description, when the 'Devas' were oppressed by the Asuras, the former invoked the blessings of the Divine Mother. The Divine Mother appeared as three forms (Kali, Lakshmi and Saraswathi) and destroyed the Asuras and protected the Gods. The Divine Mother thus gave to men as well as the Gods Her infallible promise that whenever the Gods/men would remember Her in the vortex of danger or in the case of difficulties, She would save them from the evil force.

In the Maheshwari Khanda of Skanda Purana, Shiva and Shakti being inseparable, they are seen by Narada with one body; half male on the right side and half female on the left side of Lord Siva, in the form of Ardhanariswara. This portrays the manifestation of Para-Brahman in Saguna form with the Devi Mother, i.e Maya Shakti intermingled as the Supreme Mother of the universe. This also signifies the fact that without Shiva, Shakti has no existence and similarly, without Shakti, Shiva has no expression. It is through Shakti that the impersonal Supreme Being i.e. Shiva or, the Nirguna Brahman becomes the Personal Being or Saguna Brahman. Devi Mahatmya gives a beautiful description of three aspects of the Mother as Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi and Maha Saraswati - the Tamasic, the Satwik and the Rajasik aspects of the Divine Mother.

Ambal as Durga is the symbol of delusion through Avidya Maya. She is also the image of deliverance through Vidya. The puzzling form of Durga worship displays to the world, the Mother as an all destructive terrible and fearful being. She is all merciful and gentle. She is the dynamic aspect of Lord Shiva who lives like a dead corpse. He is absolute, calm, motionless and breathless with His eyes closed in Samadhi. He is not touched by the cosmic plays of the universe. Ambal walks on His chest and makes him come alive to the Cosmic Lilas. As Durga, She is the Divine symbol of destiny and prosperity. She generates the growth of the universe. As the destroyer, She destroys ignorance and darkness to create light. She destroys all pains, all sorrows etc., to bestow on us the divine achievements like bliss, joy and immortality. Thus, She is the destroyer of all shackles that bind the Jiva to this terrible Samsara.

Next is Maha Lakshmi form, the symbol of Vidya Maya.

As Maha Lakshmi, Ambal makes life bearable by balancing pain and destruction with the elements of love, luster, prosperity and happiness. She is Kalyani. She is Mangalam. Thus, as Maha Durga and as Maha Lakshmi, Ambal maintains the balance in the material world.

Hospitality to guests is another aspect of Lakshmi.

Hospitality, charity and generosity are the divine qualities of Maha Lakshmi. Our customs and traditions should be followed with strict discipline, this is conducive to welfare and prosperity of human society.

Simple rules need to be followed.

- 1. Do not waste food, prepare only the amount you need, if left over, give it to someone who would need it.
- 2. Keep your house clean and tidy at all times
- 3. Do not buy things that you don't need, stop being shopaholic.
- 4. Do not use harsh words on anyone.
- 5. Respect elders at home

This brings us to the concept of Indian womanhood in our society. In domestic life, our scriptures identify women with the concept of Goddess Lakshmi. Indian women are adored as Grihalakshmi, which means mothers who preside over auspiciousness, welfare and progress of home-life. It is said in scriptures that when women are happy and remain in peace, the Gods are ipso facto satisfied. This is a symbolic expression which actually means that happiness of women leads to actual happiness of the human society.

The next form is Mahasaraswati who is in the form of Sabda Brahma. She presides over commencement of all manifestations and all projections of names and forms. She has in Her hands the Veena, the Mala and Veda Grantha. The significance of the Mala is equated to the practice of Yoga in its practical form. Mahasaraswati is spotless and clad in pure white. The Veena is the symbol of vibration and manifestation. It is Nada articulated in the forms of countless names expressed through relatively countless forms. Mother Saraswati is the annihilator of darkness and ignorance. She is the outflow of the process of creativity.

Thus, taking these forms is a way of saying, She controls every aspect of our life. She brings in peace and prosperity into our lives. Isn't that also a MAYA?

## Varenya: Highest

Bala is the height of wisdom. She is the Jnana shakti ruling over this world with intellect, power and knowledge. Many of us understand jnana as just knowing stuff, but jnanam doesn't stop there. True knowledge transforms us in two ways.

- 1. Transforms our life completely.
- 2. Helps us realize our true self.

Transforming includes:

- 1. Helps us to stop worrying about everything under the sun.
- 2. Helps in positive parenting.
- 3. Helps to lead a happy married life.

Realizing our true self includes:

- 1. Knowing God.
- 2. Understanding self.
- 3. Understanding karma.

Let us look into how it transforms our life:

1. Helps us to stop worrying: Worries can have a perfect negative impact on our lives. I am no stranger to it either. Most of the things we worry about have never happened. It is often just a monster that we build in our minds. Honestly and realistically,

ask yourself, what is the worst that could happen? Spending a few minutes on finding clarity in this way can save us a lot of time, energy and suffering.

- 2. Positive parenting: Parenthood is full of challenges and dealing with children is an art, not everyone's cup of tea. At the same time, we cannot run away from it, so tackle it effectively. Here are a few tips for positive parenting.
- Set a good example
- Keep your expectations in check
- Understand your child's personality
- Help your child to express his/her feelings
- 3. Happy married life: Many of us think spiritualism and spiritual jnanam is about disowning the family and becoming a sanyasi. It needs to be understood only at 60's. This is a wrong notion, spiritual jnana helps us to build relationships, show love and helps us to be considerate towards others.

Many struggle when handling marital problems. Men feel marriage is a bondage and women think that life is over after marriage. NO, it is not. Relationships don't need hard work, they require attention and intention. Marriage is a relationship between two people, with totally opposite personalities. This relationship is like a plant. In order to stay healthy, it needs daily attention, care such as water and sunlight. So does marriage. It needs attention and care.

Here are a few tips:

- 1. Greet each other lovingly in the morning.
- 2. Complement each other regularly, don't take it for granted.
- 3. Express your needs from a place of vulnerability. We often say, "you are always on the computer." Instead, try saying, "I like to spend some time with you, could you spend some time with me?" This invites a dialogue between partners.

The second part is to realize your true self, which includes:

- 1. Knowing God
- 2. Knowing self
- 3. Understanding karma

Let us see them one by one.

- 1. Knowing God: to understand one's self, one should first accept the presence of a supreme being. This super power is God. She is the ultimate teacher who helps us to understand the other two. For that, She uses adversity (difficulties) in our life for three reasons,
- a. To gain attention.

She wants to catch your attention while you scramble around in this busy world. One of the ways is to put you through trials and problems, because what She wants to achieve in you is far greater than the problem itself. All we have to say is, "Teach your path, dear holy Mother, lead me to the truth, for you are the only key to my deliverance in this world."

b. Adversity leads to examination.

At times, Ambal allows adversity to motivate us to self-examination. The winds of adversity blows away the surface issues and forces us to cope with things on a deeper level. Nothing has the ability to drive us closer to Her than tribulation. It removes the cloak of denial and reveals who we really are, as well as what we believe about Her, Her form, and faithfulness.

c. The effective lesson leads to a change in behaviour.

When we understand Her ways and act according to Her will, our true identity emerges. Teachers often prepare behavioural objectives for their classroom lectures. These objectives list in concrete and measurable form of behaviours, that the teacher desires for a student to display as proof that the student has learned the lesson. The lessons that God teaches us through adversity are ultimately for that very purpose: a change in behaviour, including a change in the belief that prompted the behaviour.

- 2. Knowing Self: Nature of the self as portrayed in the Upanishads can be summarised in four major points,
- i. The self exists;
- ii. The self is immortal and without beginning or end;
- iii. The self is essentially non-material and;
- iv. The self is identical with Brahman, the highest reality.

The individual self is essentially made up of pure knowledge and it has no restriction and limitation. So the next thing you would ask me is, then why do we feel self by this physical body? The self gets covered in the shape of its own karma. The consequence is that the scope and breadth of this knowledge is curtailed in accordance with their karma. They get embodied in a variety of bodies to dissolve the karmas. They are deluded into identification with their bodies. In accordance to them, they become subject to joys and sorrows, which in essence, constitute what is termed as the river of transmigratory existence.

3. Understanding karma: We often hear the word karma, time and again, so what is it?

Karma can be accumulated on the soul level or from your behaviour in past lives. Universal laws establish proper ways of behaviour, that all souls must adhere to. Behaving outside these parameters indicates your need for education and lessons. On the human level, all of us need to transform the part of ourselves that has behaved badly, so that we will never choose to behave that way again. As we accomplish this, we also transform the corresponding part of our soul. Negative patterns need to be transformed until the desire to behave badly no longer exists in our soul. For example, if we have a tendency to be physically abusive to others, we will need to re-educate that part of ourselves until the mere thought of hurting someone no longer comes into our mind. As a human transforms, their soul transforms, then they become divine souls, again they evolve, until they become the blissful soul. It is God's great plan. Karma is always ebbing and flowing, and is never in perfect balance. The entire universe is set up so that all beings, human, are to learn lessons. Lessons vary greatly from one corner of the universe to another, and are based on consistent, systematic, organized universal laws that encompass all dimensions.

A soul understands its karma before birth and then gets ready to set out to work on its karmic deeds. The soul along with God designs its pre-birth or soul contract, including which lessons/karma they will embrace. The pre-birth or sacred contract also includes how the soul will use its newly developed enlightenment to contribute back to the greater good of all. Ambal and the soul will work together, to find a fair balance for all. Once agreed upon, the pre-birth or sacred contract is placed in the ethereal heart of the foetus. From there, it pulses out a magnetic signature that draws to the human, the experiences that align with their pre-birth or soul contract. Our lives are truly owned and guided by our pre-birth or sacred contracts. Our free will exists within those parameters. There are no accidents.

Here are a few examples of karmic deeds.

- In a past life, a person was incessantly cruel to other people. In this lifetime, the soul chose to experience excessive physical abuse, in order to experience and understand the cruelty it had doled out in the past.
- In a past life, a woman was stunningly beautiful. She flaunted her beauty, making others feel inferior and less valuable, because they did not share her beauty. Vanity was her only God. In this lifetime, she is born physically ugly. She is to learn that the depth of soul is more important than the surface self, and that the feelings and well-being of others are important too.
- In a past life, a genius is commissioned to create inventions. He is self-centered and cruel, with no consideration for others. He only cares about his creations and inventions, at the cost of great suffering. In this lifetime, he is again a genius, but can never get any ideas off the ground. Everyone uses his genius to develop their own highly successful projects, taking full credit, with no recognition given to the genius.
- In a past life, a soul savagely and ruthlessly undermines other souls to gain power just for power's sake. Once he has this power, he does not use it properly. In this earthly lifetime, he is impassioned about being a powerful leader all of his life and believes he has great revolutionary ideas. However, no one will listen to him. He is obsessed and ineffective, as he learns that power is to be used to help others, not simply to have for our ego's own sake.
- In a past life, a soul is a spoiled brat who gets everything she wants. In this lifetime, she gets everything taken away. Though

she works very hard to get ahead, it never works.

- In a past life, a soul believes that he is all knowing. To humble this tendency in his current life, he never receives any recognition that he has knowledge or wisdom. No one ever seeks him out for answers. The answers he offers are discounted and brushed aside.
- In a past life, a lady rises above and beyond the call of duty earning grace. In this lifetime, the accrued grace opens many doors effortlessly for her.

### Varadayini: fountainhead of blessings

This is one of the wonderful names of Ambal, which sums up Her nature in one word. All our blessings come from Her. She is the fountainhead of blessings.

We all believe in miracles; and want to experience them all the time, don't we? We want to serve only the God that performs miracles in our lives.

I define a miracle as the suspension or superseding of natural laws. Ambal performs miracles and uses them like a bell to draw people unto Herself, but Her preference is not to meet your needs through a miracle.

Let me ask you, would you rather receive a miracle of healing or live with the blessing of good health? Would you rather have Ambal perform a miracle to pull you out of bankruptcy or be so blessed financially, that She wouldn't have to?

I think the logical answer to both of those questions is obvious.

It's always better to avoid problems, which is the result of living in blessing, than it is to be delivered out of them, which requires a miracle.

There are three important reasons why we should receive a blessing from God rather than miracles.

- 1. Blessings prevent crises, while miracles deliver from crises.
- 2. A blessing is always more abundant in supply than a miracle.
- 3. Miracles are a temporary fix, while blessings are permanent solutions.

Therefore, if you're living from miracle to miracle, it probably means you're living from crisis to crisis, because miracles are "unnatural," they are never permanent. Ambal created laws that govern the operation of Her creation. She sometimes, temporarily, supersedes them, but always returns the situation back to the natural operation of those laws. For instance, if we abuse our bodies, we can receive a miracle of healing. But, if the root of the problem isn't dealt with, the sickness or infirmity will return, and we'll need another miracle. The only thing that can stop the blessing of God in our lives is our unbelief. So believe in Her, Her love and Her mercy.

Here are a few tips to receive Her abundant blessings:

1. Recognize That Everything You "Own" Actually Belongs to Her.

Ambal has placed Her trust in us, a measure of time, a unique set of talents, and sufficient treasures to carry out Her will for our lives. Our task as faithful stewards, is to manage those blessings to bring maximum glory to Her name.

2. Realize it is More Blessed to Give than Receive.

When you give yourself and your possessions freely as a material expression of your spiritual obedience to Ambal, She in turn meets your needs abundantly. This is true whether you are rich or poor, whether you serve Ambal in a land that is blessed with great material wealth or in a poverty-stricken part of the world.

3. Realize That What You Sow, You Will Reap.

Like planting good seeds in fertile ground, your task as a devotee is to do what Ambal wants you to. This applies to the gifts and offerings you give. It doesn't matter how much you give, it matters how you procured those gifts and how well it reflects the will of Ambal. You cannot get away by simply giving gifts or offerings got by illegal means, that is not what Ambal wants you to do. You should play by Her rules, it is Her game, do not think for a moment She will play according to your rules.

### Vidrumabha: Like coral in complexion

The most beautiful Goddess, who is unrivaled in Her beauty in the three worlds, is Tripurasundari. All these names are attributes of the same Divine Mother, who is the fountainhead of all the beauty and ever young. Although forms of the Goddess are countless, there is only one Divine Mother or Sacred Feminine behind them all. Ultimately, the Mother is pure, formless Love appearing as the manifold expressions we see as the universe and all of the beings in nature.

Ambal is described in various texts with the same word or nearly the same word. To quote a few.

1. Soundarya Lahari (Shloka 64):

Avishrantam pathyur guna-gana-katha'mridana-japa Japa-pushpasc-chaya thava janani jihva jayathi saa; Yad-agrasinayah sphatika-drishad-acchac-chavi mayi Sarasvathya murthih parinamati manikya-vapusha.

Mother mine,

The well known tongue of yours,
Which without rest chants and repeats,
The many goods of your Consort, Shiva,
Is red like the hibiscus flower.
The Goddess of learning Saraswati,
Sitting at the tip of your tongue,
Though white and sparkling like a crystal,
Turns red like the ruby,
Because of the colour of your tongue.

2. Lalitha Sahasranamam (Shloka 166): Vishvagrasa vidrumabha vaishnavi vishnurupini Ayoniryoni nilaya kutastha kularupini Vidrumabha: Who is like coral in complexion.

3. உதிக்கின்ற செங்கதிர், உச்சித் திலகம், உணர்வுடையோர்

மதிக்கின்ற மாணிக்கம், மாதுளம்போது, மலர்க்கமலை

துதிக்கின்ற மின் கொடி, மென் கடிக் குங்கும தோயம்-என்ன

விதிக்கின்ற மேனி அபிராமி, எந்தன் விழுத் துணையே:

உதய சூரியனின் செம்மையான கதிரைப் போலவும், உச்சித்திலகம் என்கிற செம்மலரைப் போலவும், போற்றப்படுகின்ற மாணிக்கத்தைப் போலவும், மாதுள மொட்டைப் போலவும், ஒத்து விளங்கும் மென்மையான மலரில் வீற்றிருக்கின்ற திருமகளும் துதிக்கக்கூடிய வடிவையுடையவள் என் அபிராமியாகும். அவள் கொடி மின்னலைப் போன்றும், மணம் மிகு குங்குமக் குழம்பு போன்றும் சிவந்த மேனியுடையவள். இனி அவளே எனக்குச் சிறந்த துணையாவாள். She who has the reddish sun as a tilaka,

She who is the red gem for those who understand Her and worship,

She who is like the tender bud of pomegranate,

She who is the first ray of lightning,

She who is the reddish liquid made of saffron,

She who is like the Lakshmi sitting on red lotus,

She only is my life's all help.

Every devotee and poet has always been fascinated by Her beauty, so did I? Was it just the outward beauty we are attracted to? Is there much more than that? I closed my eyes to reflect on the Mother, there She was, smiling. The wondrous Mother is everywhere! She dances in the life of the plants, She is the spark in the laugh of the child. She is present in the growing belly, the voice that sings, the heart that loves. She is the urge to grow, to move, to change, to awaken. She is pure energy, chaotically free, the fuel for all activity, infinite energy.

Her full name is Kundalini Shakti and sometimes, She dresses like a serpent, coiled tightly around the four petaled lotus that grows at the base of your spine. She sleeps here, giving you grounding and stability, security and peace, with your roots buried deeply in the Earth. Her home at this level is called Muladhara, or root support. It is here that She binds you to the physical world. Her instincts help you survive. But sometimes, She stirs, languidly ravishing in the sensuous movements of Her serpentine body, sinuously sliding through the liquid nectar of your cells, moving upward through the curves and organs of your flesh. She pierces the lotus of six petals, whose element is water, and in this form, She awakens the cells within you to ecstatic pleasure. Her home at this level is called Swadhisthana, which means both sweetness and "one's own place." Beware, though, because Her movements may be chaotic when She first breaks out of Her slumber. She may be a wild dancer, robbing you of sleep. You may shake with Her tremors, together as She moves upward in search of Shiva Himself. If She does not find Him, She may get more and more agitated, burning even stronger, until you think you will burst with the intensity of Her presence.

She knows it is not enough to merely dance suggestively to attract the likes of Shiva. No, She must have power to do that, rising to the third chakra of fire, the lustrous gem of manipura. Here, She will find the strength and fierceness of a warrior Goddess, not merely the soft feminine sweetness of the young maiden. Shiva is a formidable force, but only with the raw stuff of life. In this form, you may see Her riding a tiger, as the Goddess Durga. Her power at this level is to break apart old forms, for once awakened, She hates constriction, and you may find that nothing in your life is ever the same. Who is the true love of our Shakti? He is the auspicious Lord Shiva, who comes in many forms. He is the Lord of Sleep, the undifferentiated bliss of meditation, unified with all that is. He is the wisdom of pure consciousness, the divine intelligence that shapes primordial chaos into order and form. His most familiar home is in the crown chakra, in the undifferentiated realm of limitless spirit, where He sees and knows ALL. Without His shakti, however, Shiva is but a corpse, downright boring for the uninitiated. If you see him before the wedding, he lays in perfect stillness, lost in meditation of the infinite wonders, enfolded in the bliss of perfect enlightenment, disembodied from the world of samsara, of birth and death. Here, the Lord of Sleep may bring you dreams, or in waking states, visions of what is possible. As He descends into the two-petaled chakra lotus of the third eye (ajna chakra), He is the illumination of limitless light, enabling us to see clearly through the illusions that bind us in the lower realms. He is the infinity of the imagination, the birthplace of dreams, the true seeing of the awakened One. And when He catches sight of his Beloved Goddess, He is luminescence everywhere, creating brilliant shining stars and bursting suns, glancing up Her jewels as She dances in splendour.

He descends to the fifth chakra (vishuddha) lotus of communication to call for His divine shakti. OM, the underlying sound of all creation. When Shiva's sounds join the energy of Shakti, the music of their love is passionate and sweet, and there are few who attend this wedding who are not compelled to dance with an unknown fervour, free and aware of the divine realm within their hearts.

Ambal as shakti, stood there as a bride. I write as the drama unfolds.

The wedding day:

Ganesha, greets you at the door, his elephant trunk seeping away your fears of love, his ample belly quivering with laughter. As you enter the sacred temple, you find yourself sinking into a lotus of twelve petals, set in emerald green. In the centre,

Brahma sits deep in meditation, quietly generating all that you see and experience. His consort, Saraswati has created the decor with elaborate tapestries of gold filigree, exotic plants and bouquets of flowers everywhere. She has hired the very best dancers and musicians for entertainment. Soon, they enter with sitars and tablas, accompanied by ornately costumed dancers of all kinds. Hanuman, who is the keeper of the heart, jumps quickly from place to place, ushering in each guest and seating them among the petals. Agni, God of the primordial fires, is lighting the candles on the altar, fanning the sparks within your heart.

And what would a wedding be without a feast?

Uma, the Goddess of the crop, has brought her first harvest to be shared. Lakshmi, the Goddess of earthly prosperity, clothed in red raiments, laced with gold, bedecked in perfumed sweetness, directs the preparation of a sumptuous feast of delightful curries and dals, sweets and fruits. Her consort, Vishnu, enters the court.

And now, at last, the ceremony is about to begin. Guests begin to chant, "Om nama Anahata" (in the name of the heart chakra), as rapt attention is stirred for the sacred event of their joining. Vayu, God of winds, calls forth the divine breath of prana, and fills all with spaciousness. Agni, God of fire, sends forth sparks as the divine polarities of the universe arc into a dynamic flow of power. Indra, God of the waters, fills all vessels with amrita, the nectar of enlightenment. Lakshmi, as Goddess of earthly treasures, bestows her immense wealth, and an island of jewels springs forth, with abundance enough for all living beings.

And now, the bride and groom are to be joined, as the chanting softens into a deep primordial OM. First, Shiva appears as a lingam, piercing the center of the heart to probe its deepest mysteries. Shakti, who has been separated from Him for some time, comes forward dancing in the form of Parvati. Her sari of gold lightly draped across Her body and She looks at the audience with Her dark lotus eyes. When She enters, each one present is filled with a radiant energy, a power so illustrious, that there is nothing that cannot be accomplished.

When She sets Her eyes on Shiva, the drums and music play ever more forcefully, the dancers writhing feverishly to the rhythm. Shiva moves forward, taking His Shakti with one of His four great arms. His other arms hold a trident and a rosary, symbolizing His active and ascetic sides, while His remaining hand holds a lotus flower, complete with stalk, which He silently offers to the resplendent Goddess, who glows with the radiance of love. This glow is what is reflected in Her body as the coral complexion.

Shiva's hair is piled high upon His head, bound with stars and moons. As He begins to dance, the frenzy loosens His long tresses, cascading down across His great blue body, expanding into a halo of wings. The moon becomes a cup of nectar, which He offers to His Shakti. The divine couple stare fixedly into each other's eyes, lost in eternal rapture. Though appearing as two, they know that they have always been inseparably one.

The polarities of the universe combine, creating cascading multiplicities, dark and light, joining in a shower of rainbows. Sparks and jewels explode across time and space in the ever generating and eternal Sri Yantra, symbol of endless creation and destruction.

Shiva has found His sacred other, a feminine source of limitless energy. He can now move from static to dynamic dance, as Shiva Nataraja. And as they tumble into eternal ecstasy and divine union for the creation and destruction of all that is, all who are present in this divine and auspicious ritual are forever transformed...reading it, you will too.

## Visalakshi: Indian heliotrope

Ambal is compared to a medicinal plant called thel kodukku in Tamil. It is a branched plant, with small white flowers with a green calyx. She is compared to this plant because of its healing tendencies like Ambal. She is the healer of healers, medicine of medicines. Ambal's healing powers is not just in Her mercy or in Her touch, it can also lie in Her mantras, japas, slokas or even in Her ardent devotees. For example, in Lalitha Sahasranamam phala sruthi, many of you would not have heard of it. Unlike Vishnu Sahasranamam, where the phala sruthi is part of the stotra, in the case of Lalitha Sahasranamam, phala sruthi is

the next chapter and separate from it. So, it is not recited along with the thousand names of Lalitha. It occurs in Markandeya Purana, and is taught by Sage Markandeya to Sage Agasthya.

Here are a few verses for your reference:

Sarva roga prasamanam sarva sampath pravardhanam, Sarvaapath mruthyu shamanam akala mruthyu nivaranam.

This cures all diseases and gives rise to all types of wealth, It cures all accidental deaths and is an antidote to untimely death.

Sarva jwararthi hananam deergayushya pradhayakam, Puthra pradhama puthraanaam purushartha pradhayakam.

It is a cure for all types of fever, and gives rise to long life, It gives son, that too first son and gives three types of wealth.

Such is Her grace on Her devotees.

Not only through Her slokas and mantras, in very many simple ways as well.

- 1. Gifts to heal: There are times when Ambal releases the gifts of healing in certain places. In these instances, the anointing is so great that even clothes are used as points of contact. People are healed in a faith saturated environment, where gifts of healing are released.
- 2. Praying for the sick: It is the privilege of every true believer to lay hands on the sick and pray for their recovery. When this is done, a spiritual transference takes place in the invisible realm. It is the work of Ambal paying heed to Her devotees' prayers.
- 3. Your faith: Your own faith-saturated prayer can deliver healing to you. Faith will make plans and move on in spite of the sickness. Whatever you ask when you pray, believe in them and you will find that you will get them.

So prayers not only heal, but brings you closer to Ambal, you need to have faith and She appears before you as Visalakshi.

#### Visista: Excellent

Ambal is excellent in whatever She does. The only reason why it looks hidden away is because we choose not to see it. Have you ever noticed a small tiny miracle flower growing through the cracked cement walls in your building. It makes me shudder at the thought that we are so insensitive to the things that happen in front of us, we are choosing not to see them.

For instance, we might forget Ambal at work, mending a marriage because we can't see Her instant results. We might forget Ambal at work, healing a parent and teen relationship, because our impatience might corrode Her timing. We might forget Ambal at work, blessing our finances because we can't see or get beyond our current debts.

If we are not careful, we might end up bitterly stuck, seeing life through the failures and limitations of yesterday, while Ambal is quietly at work attempting to get us to move on to the victories that await us tomorrow.

If you know that Ambal has called you to a great future, but you feel stuck in a mediocre or discouraging present, have a good cheer. Ambal the Creator is working things out, whether you can see it or not. Her Word calls you to walk by faith, not by sight and Her Word even tells you to not look at the seen, but the Unseen.

Ambal never calls perfect people—only obedient ones.

She calls people, plants seeds of Her plans and purposes for them, then She gives them opportunities to blossom and to do great things.

#### 1. She looks after our well being:

One of the most amazing things Ambal does is, looks after you under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. She generally does so, in ways that you will never expect. She gives, and She takes away, but always ends up giving more than She has taken. And most of the time, She would not have been able to bless you, if She had not first taken away.

#### 2. She rules our hearts:

Ambal actually has the super-amazing ability to change hearts. At times, She has changed my heart to conform with Her perfect plan. At other times, I have seen Her change the hearts of others in order to accomplish Her will in my life.

#### 3. She empowers us at all times:

She has the ability to empower through challenging events in a way that you never could have experienced otherwise.

#### 4. She befuddles the Enemy:

When you feel that someone is tormenting you, and they just seem to be "getting away with it," you can dismiss that notion from your mind. Even when you cannot see what Ambal is doing, you can be rest assured that She is at work—even in the hearts and minds of your enemies. Justice reigns, and She has the ability to confound the works of the wicked.

#### 5. She Strengthens us:

Ambal uses adversity to make us stronger. The key is to run TO HER and not AWAY from Her in times of trial. She has used trials to strengthen us to the point that we can withstand after that, that itself will strengthen our character to see us through the trials.

#### 6. She Builds Your Character:

Nothing purifies our character and motives, quite like the fiery furnace of trials and tribulations. And it is important for you to know that all you NEED is that type of refining. God uses pain to turn us into clean, pure vessels for Her use.

#### 7. She Develops Your Wisdom:

When we are in tune with Her ways, She can use pain and difficult times to help us to learn about life in ways that we never could have experienced in times of bliss.

#### 8. She Gives Purpose and Direction:

Ambal often gives us direction and purpose by pointing us on a certain path in the midst of hardship. She can pull you through the storm and into a bright new day like you've never experienced this far in your life.

She is good, and She can work all of the events of your life into a great masterpiece—if you let Her. Will you?

### Visva Nayika: Universal Goddess

Ambal is the creative feminine energy in this world and without Her divine forces, nothing can exist. She is known by many names and various forms in different cultures, each being an expression of the divine wisdom or cosmic force of the nature, truth, love, and wisdom. Mary, Isis, Hera, Kuan-Yin, Mother Earth of the Native Americans, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Durga, Kali, Parvati are, but some of the many names and forms given to that One manifesting creative force. She has a form, yet formless, "formless form" to those who need Her, form to understand and obtain salvation. For those who have transcended the need for form, She is the light. This creative principle is called "Mother", for without Her, children of the earth would not exist.

Ambal is the force behind every little thing in this world. She is dynamic, sacred, preserver, protector, most of all, a true Mother. She is one without a manifestation, the ultimate reality, the power divine who bestows Her grace on all Her children. When constantly in commune with Her, She becomes your expression, your vital curer. She is all in this world. When I say this, some

of you might think that it is a bit of an exaggeration. But truly it is not, in fact, it is just half the truth said.

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For men to fully understand women and for women to realize their nature and be it, both have to understand the Goddess, the feminine aspect of the Universe. The nature of this phenomena is very complex, but if you get friendly with Her, She reveals innate secrets. There is no forceful way to Her; She will be only furious if you are, or depressed, or tricky. Love and playfulness, sincerity and innocence are Her ways. She can be innocent about the dirtiest things in the world, but responsible and protective like a mother as well. She can play different roles at different times. Woman – She is the mother, home keeper, lover, destroyer. Shakti is the mother of all, and of you, too; She is cuddly and warm, protecting you from the troubles of the world and emotional turmoil, a healer. She is the beautiful maiden, the vessel of desire and passion, and She is fierce to those who think of destroying you. So when our scriptures talk about different Goddesses, they are actually talking about these roles which She takes at different times. For example, Tara is a healer, who guides you safely through emotional floods, Shodashi is the beautiful ever-young maiden who loves you, and Kali is the destroyer, who, however, helps you to overcome ignorance and fear of death.

Now, what are the ways you can be friendly or take Her into your life. Here are the simple ways.

- 1. Trying bringing the external cosmic energy closer to the inner kundalini energy through chanting of mantras and meditation.
- 2. Look for Shakti in nature- understand nature and its ways, it gives you an understanding of Her ways, which will help you to get closer to Her. Breathe nature.
- 3. Ritualistic worship of the Mother ritual is part of shakti worship, this cannot be ignored unlike shiva worship, which is just internal worship. Shakti worship is always ritualistic with colours and décor.

Pray and evoke Shakti into your	r life, She is the Mother who	will never turn Her	face away from yo	u. She is Universal,	inside and
outside					

## Bala Sahasranamam on Website, Facebook and YouTube









As we fervently move towards the completion of the Temple construction and Kumbhabhishekam, here is a video which traverses through this beautiful journey. The Kumbhabhishekam is the divine culmination of a beatific dream and we want all of you to join hands and be a memorable part of it.

https://youtu.be/HuUSJdzg4Fg

Kumbhabhishekam: 10th April, 2017

# **BDS** Contacts

#### Bala Sahasranamam Parayanam:

Chakravarthy's residence, Ohio-USA.

- 95chikki@gmail.com
- Anuradha Srinivasan's residence, Chicago—USA
- asriniv65@gmail.com

#### Dolai Utsavam:

Dolai Utsavam will be performed for Sanchara Bala, in the privacy of one's home, amidst a social gathering.

Devotees who are interested, please contact Temple Manager:

balambikadivyasangam2015@gmail.com

#### Annadanam Scheme:

We are feeding the under nourished, low income children in government higher primary schools.

Those who are interested in sponsoring, please contact Temple Manager :

balambikadivyasangam2015@gmail.com

#### **BDS** Outreach:

We are having health and hygiene awareness and also dental care for children , if you could sponsor for this program, we would cover more children and help them have proper dental care.

Those who are interested in contributing towards this cause, please contact Temple Manager:

balambikadivyasangam2015@gmail.com

# Vision of Balambika Divya Sangam

As passionate devotees of Goddess Balambika, and overwhelmed by her grace and benevolence, we have come together from diverse scenarios as one unifying force to form Balambika Divya Sangam. The principal focus of the Sangam



is to pursue the age old tenet—sarvejana sukhinobhavanthu and pay obeisance to the divine Mother, who is the cause of welfare of the world. Through worship we realize that cast, creed, religion and social status, all melt away before her, for in her eyes, we are all her children.





### We are on the web!

http://malurbalambikatemple.com

This is a good place to catch up on all the Sangam activities such as About Us, Temple Updates, archives of earlier Newsletters etc.,

## Join us on WhatsApp!

To join Balambika Divya Sangam WhatsApp group, please send an email along with phone# to our President Smt. Asha Manoharan president1.bds@gmail.com

#### **Breakfast Meal**

Roopa Varadharajan Anuradha Srinivasan Indira Sampath Priya Anand Rohith

Ravindran Seshadri

# **Sponsor's Corner**

#### **Archana Contributions**

Vaishnavi Kasturirangan Raghu Ranganathan Navin Manash

## Pournami Poojai

Indira Sampath Aparna Ravi Maitreyi Karthik Ramabhadran