



BALAVIN KURAL

A Balambika Divya Sangam Publication



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Dear BDS Members,

Namaskaram.

Balambika Divya Sangam would first like to wish all our readers a very happy and prosperous new year. Your consistent support and participation was instrumental in the success of the various religious and outreach programs that we carried out in 2020.

In this month's newsletter, our President Smt. Asha Manoharan continues her discussion on how to transition to the second level of Aanmigam or Spirituality. The third and final section will be published in the subsequent edition.

Moving on to the Bala Sahasranamam commentary, the President explains the context behind the word "Ramya".

The "Know your Mythology" section presents a section from the Mahabharata epic, where Bheema meets and marries Hidumba.

Most of our common poojas and rituals include the word "Jambu Dweepam". The science snippets section elaborates on the context behind this word, and how it varies based on the location the person is conducting the ritual.

As this new year unfolds, let us seek Ambal's blessings and grace to give us the strength and patience to defeat this pandemic, once and for all.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of the newsletter, and would like to wish you all a very Happy Pongal/Sankranti.

Sarvejana Sukhinobhavanthu.



Kutti Bala in Her
chariot during
Mandala Poojai
Celebrations 2019

இதன் பொருள் அழகே மொத்த உருவமாக கொண்டவள் என்பதாகும். இந்த அழகிக்குத்தான் எத்தை விதமான பெயர்கள். அழகிற்கு எத்தை வண்ணம் சேர்க்கிறாள் இவள். இந்த பெயர் இவளுக்குத்தான் எத்தனை பொருத்தமாக இருக்கிறது என்பதனை மேலே பார்ப்போம். பாலாவின் அழகை அவள் சொல்லிலும் செயலிலும் நாம் காணலாம். அவள் அழகே சொன்ன சொல் மாறாதவள். ஒருமுறை வாக்கு கொடுத்தால் அதிலிருந்து பின்வாங்கமாட்டாள். அதேபோல் அவள் நமக்காக எடுக்கும் சிரத்தை அளவிடமுடியாது. அதனால்தான் அவள் பக்தர்கள் அவளை அழகே என்றும் செல்லமே என்றும் ஆசையாய் அழைக்கிறார்கள்.

அதிசயமான வடிவடையாள், அரவிந்தம் எல்லாம்

துதிசய ஆனன சுந்தரவல்லி

என்று அபிராமி அந்தாதியில் போற்றுகின்றார் அபிராமி பட்டர்.

இதன் பொருள் வியப்பூட்டும் வடிவாழகி, தாமரை மலர்கள் வணங்கும் அழகிய முகம் கொண்டவள் என்பதாகும். ஒரு கவிதைக்கு அழகு சொல், ஒரு தாய்மைக்கு அழகு பாசம், ஒரு மனிதனுக்கு அழகு அவன் அறம். அதனால்தான் அன்னையை அழகு என்று சொல்வதன் மூலம் அவள் நமக்கு உணர்த்தும் அறம் நினைவிற்கு வருகிறது. அந்த அறம் பத்தையும் நாம் இங்கு பார்ப்போம்

உண்மை பேசுதல்

பொறுமையுடன் இருத்தல்

பெருமையுடன் வாழ்தல்

தவம் செய்தல்

அடக்கத்துடன் இருத்தல்

நடுநலைமையுடன் வாழ்தல்

தனக்கொன்று இல்லதிருத்தல்

பற்று விடுதல்

நல்லது செய்தல்

மாறுபடாத விரதங்களை மேற்கொள்ளுதல்

என்பதாகும். அதைத்தான் அறநெறி சாரம் சொல்கிறது

மெய்மை

பொறையுடைமை

மேன்மை

தவம்

அடக்கம்

செம்மை

ஒன்றின்மை

துறவுடமை

நன்மை

திறம்பா விரதம் தரித்தலோடு

இன்ன அறம் பத்தும் ஆன்ற குணம்.

அன்னையே வெளிநின்ற நின் திருமேனியை பார்த்து

என் விழியும் நெஞ்சும் களிநின்ற வெள்ளம் கரைகண்டதில்லை

கருத்தினுள்ளே, தெளிகின்ற ஞானம் திகழ்கின்றது என்ன

திருவுள்ளமோ

என்று கூறி ரம்யமான அந்த அழகியை இம்முறை ரசித்து

ரம்யா என்று அழைப்போம்.

Q & A WITH SMT. ASHA MANOHARAN



Raja Shyamala—The Minister, Ganapathy - The remover of Obstacle & Varahi - The Army chief guarding the temple.

AANMIGAM PART II:

Today, we are going to continue from where we left off last time on Aanmigam or Spirituality.

We discussed last time that people who always blame others and the situation, have not started on the spiritual path. In contrast, spiritual people will always hold themselves responsible for any outcomes, good or bad.

Now, to transition from one level of spirituality to the other, we need to enhance our knowledge and intelligence. Our fickle mind, ignorance and desires present hurdles in our spiritual journey, and we have to build that determination and will-power within ourselves to not succumb to these temptations for materialistic possessions. With regards to our interactions with people, anyone has the freedom to say or do anything to us, however, we can control the way we react to them.

It is very easy to complain about bad things happening to us, but if we perceive the events unfolding in our life just like a movie or novel, and enjoy that experience, we will no longer be perturbed by any unpredictability, and our mind becomes steady and calm. Therefore, the mind and attitude is what needs to be conditioned, as we cannot control what happens around us. Depending on how the mind is trained, it can either be your best friend or worst enemy, causing you to get attached towards worldly things or help launch you on a journey towards Moksha or enlightenment.

They say well begun is half done. Diagnosing that the mind is the main hurdle in our spiritual path, is half the battle won, and is instrumental in transitioning to the second level of spirituality.

Let's talk about why the mind is sometimes negative and presents obstacles in our spiritual progress. The mind is like a copper vessel which holds all the emotions, ignorance, knowledge and experiences we have on a day to day basis. The negative emotions erode the purity and inherent property of the copper vessel. Unless we make a conscious effort to purge our mind of negative emotions, it will continue to degrade it.

Now, you may ask, how do we work towards this goal? The answer is simple, first and foremost, we have to follow the karma yoga path with adherence to the Dharmic laws. Based on the stage of life we are in, we have to keep up and complete our responsibilities and duties. Secondly, we have to stop worrying about unnecessary and uncontrollable things in our life. The third and most important thing is to gain knowledge about our vedas and scriptures from a learned Guru, and deeply contemplate on this. This will lead to Atma Jnana or self-realization.

வாசகரின் கேள்வியும் திருமதி ஆஷா மனோகரன் பதிலும்

ஆன்மீகம் இரண்டாவது பகுதி

ஆன்மீகத்தின் இரண்டாவது நிலையை பார்ப்போம்.

‘நீ அனுபவிக்கும் துயரங்களுக்கு எப்போது நீ உன்னையே குறை கூறிக்கொள்கிறாயோ அப்போது உன் ஆன்மீகப் பயிர்ச்சி நடைபெற்றுக்கொண்டிருக்கிறது’ என்று சூத்திரம் சொல்கிறது.

முதல் நிலையிலிருந்து இரண்டாவது நிலைக்கு போக மூல காரணம் உணர்வதற்கான அறிவுதான். ஒரு சூழ்நிலையில், நாம் பாதிக்கப்படுவதற்கான காரணத்தை ஆராய்ந்தால் அதற்கு முதல் காரணம் நம் மனம்தான் என்று உணர்வோம். இரண்டாவது காரணம், நம் துயரத்திற்கு நம் ஆசையே காரணம் என்று உணர்வோம். மூன்றாவது காரணம், நம் பொறுமையின்மை அத்துயரத்திற்கு காரணமாகலாம்.

நம் மனத்துயரத்திற்கான காரணத்தை சற்று ஆராயலாம்.

நம் மனதில் உள்ள ஆசை, பலகீனம், அறியாமை ஆகியவையே நம்மை துயரத்தில் ஆழ்த்துகிறதேயன்றி அச்சத்தி மற்றவரிடமோ அல்லது பொருள்களிடமோ இல்லை. இதை உணர்தல் அவசியம்.

மற்றும், சூழ்நிலைகளை நம்மால் மாற்றமுடியாது என்பதை உணர்ந்து அதனை எதிர்கோள்ளும் சக்தியை வளர்த்துக்கொள்வது மிக அவசியம். வாழ்க்கையில் நடக்கும் ஒவ்வொரு நிகழ்வையும் ஒரு அனுபவமாக எடுத்துக்கொண்டால் மனப்பக்குவம் உண்டாகி துயரத்திலிருந்து முக்தி கிடைக்கும்.

நம் குணாதசியத்தையும், மனப்போக்கையும் மாற்றிக்கொள்வது மிக அவசியம்.

வெளி உலகம் நம்மை துன்புறுத்துகிறது என்ற எண்ணம் ஏற்படும்போது, அது ஒரு மாயத்தோற்றம் என்ற பக்குவத்தை வளர்த்துக்கொள்ள வேண்டும்.

‘நீயே உனக்கு நண்பன், நீயே உனக்கு பகைவன்’ என்ற பகவத்கீதை வாக்கியத்தை சற்று ஆராயலாம். மனம் என்ற பகைவனை நண்பனாக மாற்ற முயற்சி செய்யவேண்டும். ஒவ்வொருவரின் இயற்கையான குணாதிசயமே அவரின் மனம் பகைவனாகக் காரணம். மனம் மாயையின் கட்டுப்பாட்டில் உள்ளது. நம்மை சுற்றிலுள்ள கோபம், காழ்ப்புணர்ச்சி, லோபம் போன்றவை மனதின் தெளிவை அழித்துவிடுகிறது. இவற்றை வெளியேற்றும் வழிகளைப் பார்ப்போம்.

முதல் வழி கர்ம யோகம். நம் வேலைகளை அறிந்து, புரிந்து தர்ம வழியில் செய்வது.

இரண்டாவது வழி மனசஞ்சலத்தில் இருந்து விடுபடுவது.

மூன்று அறியாமையைக் களைவது.

நான்கு குருவை நாடி ஆத்ம ஞானம் பெற முயல்வது. ஞானத்தைப் பெற மூன்று நிலைகளில் முயல் வேண்டும். ஒன்று, சிரவணம். இரண்டு, மனனம். மூன்று, நிதித்யாசனம். அதாவது பாடங்ளை கேட்டு, சந்தேகங்களை நிவர்த்தி செய்து, அவற்றைப் பற்றி சிந்தித்து பின் தியானம் செய்ய வேண்டும்.

KNOW YOUR MYTHOLOGY: *BHEEMA & HIDUMBA*



The Mahabharat has witnessed many powerful women acting at their discretion. Ganga made her own choices about what to do with her children. Rukmini eloped with Vasudev Krishna. Subhadra chose her husband. Kunti and Madri were very powerful women. Shikandi was a rebirth of a devastated woman, who wanted to take revenge in her own way. Draupadi handled several difficult situations, and almost considered Vasudev Krishna as her brother. One thing that was common among all these women, was that they were all from royal families (or were Goddesses or Tapasvis). Is there anyone who was not so royal or sophisticated?

Well, there was, and she was sophisticated in her own way.

Pandavas had just escaped the Kauravas' conspiracy of burning them alive in Varanavata. Bheema was tired and was resting under a tree, keeping a watchful eye on the forest neighborhood, his sleeping brothers and mother Kunti. He had carried his brothers and mother a long way and crossed a great distance, walking quickly as his father Vayu himself. Little did he know of that surrounding.

Hidumb the rakshasa, was hungry, and woke up from a drowsy and painful sleep, smelling something very good. He realised the familiar smell immediately and got delighted. It was long since he had human flesh and blood. He looked at his sister Hidumba and said, "Seems like time is in our favor, there are some human trespassers. Could you kill them and bring them to me? Don't fear them, they are just puny humans." Hidumba descended the tree to carry out the orders of her brother.

As soon as she approached Bheema, she felt something very pleasant. A strong good looking human, who also seemed so gentle and loving. She felt maybe it was the same old trick of Manmatha. However, she did not believe that she would want to kill these people. They were not bothering them. Well, except Bheema, who bothered her heart. She used her super powers to transform herself as a good looking human woman, and went near Bheema and the other Pandavas.

..Continued

“O mighty one, who are you? And why did you enter the realm of rakshasa Hidumb? He is my brother and has sent me with the evil intent of eating you all for a meal,” and then paused herself.

Bheema was wondering, “This good-looking person looks like a Nishada woman and was she speaking of a meal, where is it? Oh wait, she is thinking that we will become the meal for some rakshasa family. Seriously?”

Hidumba tried to understand the puzzled look of Bheema. However, she continued, “But, let me confess. Having seen you, I want you to be my husband. Seems like Manmatha has played the old trick on me. I have special powers and I can travel through the sky at will. Now, if you could decide fast, we can leave before my brother comes here.”

Bheema had no idea about what was unfolding. He replied, “I am a simple man and I cannot abandon my sleeping brothers and mother.” That was an elementary thing for Hidumba. She said, “Do you love them? Sure, no worries! Wake them up and I will save all of you from Hidumb.”

Her concern intrigued Bheema. He said with a smile, “O girl, no Yaksha, Gandharva, or rakshasa can overpower me. I am Bheema.” Hidumba was wondering, she was not very sure, and she said, “Not to underestimate you. However, I have seen the predominance of rakshasas over humans.”

Hidumb, losing patience, came there. He did not like what he saw or heard. He was wondering why his sister was in human form, and draped in some nice garments. He could hear only part of what Hidumba said. However, he realized and roared in anger, “First, you disobey my orders, and then, you desire a human. It is so shameful. You have brought a stain to the honour of rakshasas. Let me clean the stain with your blood, before I slay the people you are trying to protect.” Hidumb tried to rush towards his sister Hidumba.

Bheema intervened. Suddenly, he looked very fearsome, and said, “Stop, you wretched rakshasa. You sent her here intending to kill us. She seems to like me and wants the safety of my mother and brothers. She did nothing wrong. As long as I am breathing, you cannot harm a woman in front of me.” Hidumba was so happy to see Bheema caring for her. Whenever Bheema said the words like “woman” or “she”, she heard it as her name and felt happy. Hidumb was going nuts seeing the expressions running on Hidumba’s face. He still could not believe that a human was challenging him for a dual, and this fueled his anger further.

Hidumb rushed to Bheema to attack him. Bheema engaged him and as the first step, Bheema dragged the rakshasa as far away as possible from his sleeping brothers and mother. They both fought in fury with trees and bare hands. All these noises woke up the Pandavas and Kunti.

Kunti was wondering why a beautiful girl was guarding them, and why there was so much noise of fighting nearby. She asked Hidumba if she was an Apsara. Hidumba narrated the entire story. They all rushed to the spot where the fight ensued. Arjuna shouted to his brother, “Don’t be afraid, I did not know about your duel. Shall I help you?”

Angered, Bheema responded, “Can’t you just be a spectator? Stop your anxiety, I don’t want this rakshasa to escape.” Arjuna again spoke, “It’s nearing twilight and the power of rakshasas will increase. Can’t you be any faster? If he is formidable, I will slay him.”

Enraged, Bheema lifted the rakshasa and whirled him several times, before he threw him with extreme force on the hard ground. He also bent the rakshasa's body with bare hands, to break it in the middle, killing him. The brothers were pleased with this ending. They wanted to move to a nearby town to avoid being traced by Duryodhana. When they started their journey, Hidumba also followed them. Bheema was angry and since the rakshasas use sorcery and may take vengeance, he wanted to kill her as well. Yudhishtira intervened and said, “You cannot harm a woman. Observance of one’s dharma is more important than staying alive.”

Hidumba paid respect to Kunti and Yudhishtira. She said to Kunti, “I have forsaken my family, friends and my tradition, for your son. I have special powers and can carry you beyond any obstacles. I can protect your lives. Anyone who is walking on the path of righteousness, should preserve their life during distress by seeking the means. To live a virtuous life, sustaining life is essential, and it is a virtue by itself. If it is for virtue, one should take every action.” She convinced Kunti and Yudhishtira to persuade Bheema to marry her. And Bheema agreed, on condition that he will stay with her till a son is born. They both lived a joyful life. The son born from their wedlock, was the powerful Ghatotkacha.

When it was time for the Pandavas to move further, Hidumba stayed there itself and performed meditation and penance. Her severe penance elevated her to be the forest Goddess. The Hadimba Devi temple is still there, amidst the dense forests of Manali in Himachal Pradesh.



Raja Bala Alankaram during Bala's Birthday celebrations in 2018

Most of our common poojas and nitya karmas are usually initiated with a sankalpam that refers to the temporal (time) and geographical location in relation to the Hindu cosmology. One of those details mentioned, includes the name of the island that we reside in. Those performing sankalpam in the Indian subcontinent refer to this island as 'Jambu Dweepam', while those residing in the United States might have caught on to the mention of the island of residence as 'Krouncha Dweepam'. According to how we currently describe Earth's land masses, we have seven continents. So, how does this division of land masses find a parallel in our scriptures? Well, according to the puranas, the planet Earth is indeed divided into seven islands - Jambu Dweepam, Pluksha Dweepam, Salmali Dweepam, Kusa Dweepam, Krouncha Dweepam, Shaka Dweepam and Pushkara Dweepam. Jambu Dweepam (Asia-Eurasia) is supposed to be the exact center of the planet. However, the most interesting aspect of this island of Jambu Dweepam, is the location of Mount Meru - the seat of Devi - in the central axis of this island. Now, let's go back in time - hundreds of millions of years ago - when the Earth was once a continuous landmass, known as Pangea. At that time, today's Jambu Dweepam would still have been the center of the Earth, and Mount Meru would have still stood lofty and resplendent as the throne of Shakthi, overseeing all of creation. As shifting continental plates moved the land masses within Pangea, further and further apart, we see the world of today with the distinct seven continents. It is no surprise that our scriptures have a parallel association to every scientific fact, with remarkable clarity and originality!

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