



BALAVIN KURAL

A publication from Sri Balambika Divya Sangam Trust®



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- A commentary on Bala Sahasranamam
- Know your Mythology
- Science Snippets
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INTRODUCING : CHILDREN'S CORNER!!

on the account of
BALA'S BIRTHDAY

on

MAY 25th

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Featuring this Month :

Know your mythology : Vasudev Krishna

Written by Thulasinathan, this month's mythological feature highlights the magnanimity of Lord Krishna towards Shishupala ... See page 04

Science Snippets: To eat or not to eat?

Written by Latha, the science snippets section presents the rationale behind our intelligent ancestors recommending certain vegetables... See page 06



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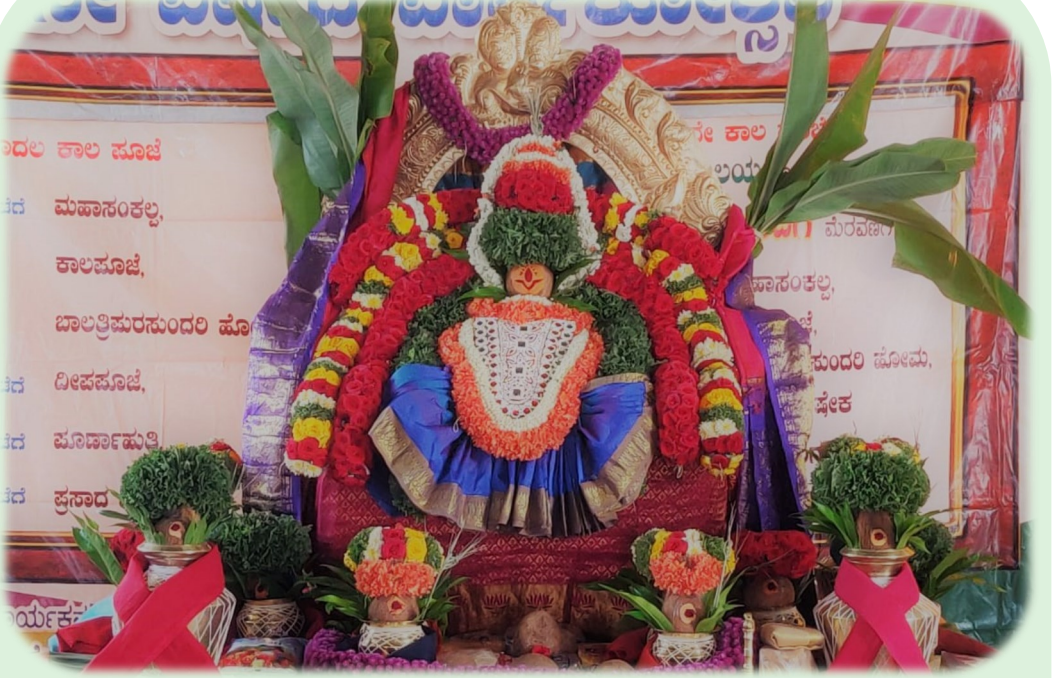
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Dear BDS Members,

Namaskaram.

Hope you all are staying safe and healthy in this challenging time.

In this month's newsletter, we continue with the commentary on the Bala Sahasranamam, our President Smt. Asha Manoharan provides the context and meaning behind the word "Kantha".

The Science Snippets section provides the rationale behind our wise ancestors advising to consume certain types of vegetables.

Moving on to Know Your Mythology, the magnanimity and valor of Lord Krishna is highlighted with an excerpt from the Mahabharata epic.

The Devotee Speaks section includes contributions from two authors.

One of the articles elaborates on the significance of Sri Suktam and the worship of Goddess Lakshmi. The other "Good Thoughts", touches on the importance of our mental state and thoughts in our outlook towards life.

On the account of Bala's upcoming birthday, we have a new section "Children's Corner", with contributions from three kids. One of them is a small story about who our beloved Bala is. The other is a drawing of Bala, while the third is an earnest plea to Bala to protect us from the COVID pandemic.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of the newsletter, please share your feedback and ideas to improve the content.

Let us all pray to Bala to provide us the much needed strength and patience to overcome this pandemic.

Sarvejana Sukhinobhavanthu.

BALA SAHASRANAMAM : காந்தா (KANTHA)

இதன் பொருள் மனதிர்க்கு மிகவும் நெருக்கமானவள் என்பதாகும். நெருக்கம் உறவு இருக்கும் இடத்தில் வரும். அந்த உறவிற்கு வடிவம், தன்மை, முறை வந்துவிடுகிறது. உதாரணத்திற்கு பாட்டி, தாத்தா உறவில் மனதில் தோன்றுவது வடிவமாக முதிர்ந்த தோற்றம். தன்மையாக பரிவு, முறையாக தாய் அல்லது தந்தை வழி உறவு ஆகியவை. ஆனால் அம்பாளின் இந்த உறவை ஒரு சதுரங்கத்தில் அடக்க முடியாது. அதன் வடிவம், தன்மை முறைக்கு எல்லாம் அப்பாற்பட்டது. வடிவம் என்று எடுத்துக்கொண்டால் அவள் ஆக்க சக்தியாக, ஆதார சக்தியாக, அழிக்கும் சக்தியாக பல வடிவம் எடுக்கின்றாள். தன்மையை எடுத்துக்கொண்டால் பரமானந்தமாக, பஞ்சபரம்ம ஸ்வரூபினியாக, துரியாவாக, ருத்திரரூபமாக என்று சொல்லிக்கொண்டே போகலாம். முறை என்று பார்த்தால் தாய்வழியும் அவளே, தந்தை வழியும் அவளே. 'ஆப்பிரம்மகீட ஜனனி' அல்லவா. அதனால்தான் அவளை ஒரு சதுரங்கத்தில் அடக்க முடியாது என்றேன். அப்படியென்றால் அவள் எவ்வாறு நமக்கு நெருக்கமாவாள் என்ற கேள்விக்கு லலிதா ஸஹஸ்ரநாமம் நமக்கு 'மைர்த்தியாதி வாசனாலப்யா' என்று பதிலளிக்கிறது. அதாவது நம் தோழி என்ற உணர்வுடன் அவளை நெருங்க முடியும் என்கிறது. 'மித்ர ரூபினி' என்ற பதத்தில் இதனை வலியுருத்துகிறது. நாம் தோழர்களிடத்தில் எந்த எதிர்பார்ப்பும் இன்றி பழகுவோம் அப்போது அங்கு உணர்வு, உண்மைத்தன்மை ஆகியவை இருக்கும். இவை இரண்டும் அம்பாளிடம் நமக்கு ஒரு நெருக்கத்தை உண்டாக்கும். அப்போது அவளே நமக்கு எல்லாமாகவும் இருக்கின்றாள். இந்த நெருக்கம் நமக்கு எதற்கு என்றால், 'உன் நண்பன் யார் என்று சொல், நீ யார் என்று நான் சொல்கிறேன்' என்ற கூற்றே இதற்கு பதில். அம்பாளிடம் நெருக்கம் ஏற்படும்போது அவளை கவனிக்க துவங்குவோம். அவள் செயலை, உணர்வை, தன்மையை பார்த்து, அதனை உள்வாங்கி, புரிந்துகொண்டு அவள் வழி நடக்க ஆரம்பிப்போம். அப்படி நாம் செய்யும்போது அவள் 'பக்திகம்யாவாக, பக்திவைச்யாவாக' இருந்து 'சர்மதாயினியாக' நமக்கு வளங்குவாள் என்பதில் ஐயமில்லை. இதனை புரிந்துகொள்ளாதவற்கு இதனை சொல்ல ஆசைப்படுகிறேன்.

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என்று சொல்லி முடிக்கின்றேன்.

KNOW YOUR MYTHOLOGY:

VASUDEV KRISHNA



The assembly in the sacrificial rite mansion of Pandavas was filled with glorious kings. Yudhisthira asked Bheeshma who the first libation should be given to. Bheeshma's instant response was Vasudev Krishna, who is the Sun among the kings. Krishna accepted the worship under the shastra rituals. Shishupala, the king of Chedi could not bear this. He tried to convince Yudhisthira and the other Pandavas to not worship Krishna. When he miserably failed at doing so, he became very abusive and spoke ill of everyone and kept firing insults at Krishna.

Hearing the jealous filled words of the Chedi king, Bheeshma told the story of Shishupala. The moment Shishupala was born, he brayed like a donkey. He had four arms and an extra eye. Seeing this, the terrified parents decided to abandon him. That's when a voice from the sky told, "Have no fear. Your son will have great strength and glory". The voice continued, "Your son will not die because of you. His death is far away; however, his slayer has already taken birth."

Shishupala's mother asked, "I wish to know who will slay my son." The ethereal voice said, "Laying upon the lap of the one who your son is destined to get slain by, will cause his extra limbs to disappear." Hearing the news of the strange child, all kings came to see him. The Chedi king placed his son on the lap of each king. Since Shishupala's mother is a sister to Vasudev (Sri Krishna's Father), Krishna and Balarama visited the Chedi kingdom as well. When the Chedi queen placed the child on Krishna's lap, the child's extra limbs fell off.

Distressed queen asked Krishna. "O Krishna with great prowess, I need you to grant me a boon." Krishna responded, "Aunt, please ask and I shall grant it if possible." The Queen asked, "Krishna, always pardon my son's offences."

Krishna responded, "Aunt, even when your son deserves to be slain, I will forgive a hundred of his offences." Bheeshma told, "It is that boon which was granted to this disgraceful king." Hearing all this, the furious Shishupala challenged Krishna for a fight. Krishna addressed all those in the assembly, "Shishupala has been an enemy. When I went to Pragjyotishpur, despite being my father's nephew, he set fire to Dwarka. He stole the sacrificial horse when my father did Ashwamedha yagna.

This imbecile, driven by the desire to die, wanted to possess Rukmini." All the kings there condemned Shishupala's misdeeds. Shishupala again resumed to rain insults. Krishna after losing every shred of patience, decided that Shishupala had crossed every limit and swiftly beheaded him.

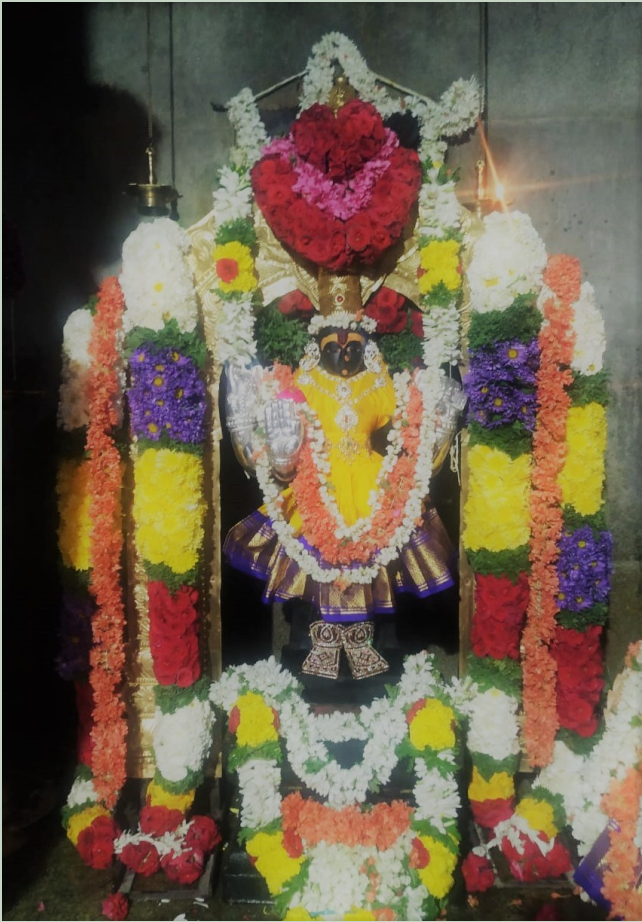
Shishupala split apart like a mountain struck by Indra's Vajra. A brilliant light emerged from the body of Shishupala and merged into the body of Sri Krishna.

Upon hearing about Shishupala's death, Shalva, the king of Sauba and a close friend of Shishupala decided to avenge him. He launched a large-scale attack on Dwarka, destroying its major cities and crucial places. Krishna's sons Prathyumna and Samba, tried their best. However, Shalva was more sophisticated and possessed a saubha vimana that could fly anywhere. The asura architect Mayan built it, and it can cross several yojanas within the time taken to close and open an eye. The vimana had weapons that were powerful, sounded like thunder and had the power to level forts. With these aerial attacks together with techniques of Maya, Shalva injured Krishna's sons and took Krishna's father (Vasudev) as a hostage.

Upon hearing this at Indraprastha, Vasudev Krishna, Balarama and Satyaki, left for Dwarka. Krishna guided the remaining army and besieged Sauba. Shalva tried all his techniques and prowess before using the saubha vimana again. This time around, Shalva's techniques were not working as well as they did before. Balarama and Satyaki reduced all his crucial warriors to dust.

Shalva took the most advanced weapon again. The saubha vimana was slow compared to Krishna's swift attacks and Krishna's unerring arrows tore the crucial parts of the vimana and it fell broken into the ocean. Shalva jumped out and tried to fight Krishna, only to quickly lose his arm and soon after, his head to two consecutive swift slices from Krishna, one with a sword and the other with the Sudarshana chakra.

SCIENCE SNIPPETS : TO EAT OR NOT TO EAT?



Raja Bala Alankaram during 4th Annual Temple Anniversary Celebrations in 2021

Have you ever wondered why some religious people don't eat potatoes and yams, but would include turmeric and ginger in their diet? Well, to start with, both of these types of vegetables grow under the soil, so what is their rationale if they say, "bhoomi keezhe valarum"! Let us recall that our intelligent ancestors never did anything without a reason, which brings us back to why some veggies are taboo, while some are not. Science and its steadfast rules always come to our rescue, so here's a possible analysis...! The likes of ginger and turmeric are called rhizomes, and these plants grow laterally under the soil, with new plants sprouting at nodes. While harvesting these plants, we leave some part of the plant in the soil, and new plants keep growing. While this adheres to the concept of not annihilating a species - a scientific tenet, the basis of ahimsa, it is deemed alright to harvest turmeric and ginger. On the other hand, the infamous cousins - the potato families are not so lucky. The plant, also known as tubers, needs to be uprooted to benefit from its cultivation. While our wise elders conformed to these subtle rules, we have misconstrued the truth behind their actions. Not having sufficient evidence to back such beliefs, we are cynical and often scornful. Although this may be one of the reasons why the choices are selective, several other medicinal benefits of a vegetable might outweigh the rationale, and you might notice a stray outlier being dropped out of, or added to the "list of edible veggies". Let us give our forefathers their due credit for their scientific thinking, which they always seem to connect back to their spiritual world, as body, mind and soul is fed with the perfect food.



Significance of Sri Suktam and Goddess Lakshmi by Smt. Roopa V Rajan...

Purusha Suktam and the Sri Suktam are the most important Vedic mantras which are being used during Homas, Vratas, and ceremonial worship equally by Shaivas, Shaktas and Vaishnavas alike.

Sri Suktam is one of the 'Khila' Suktas of Rig Veda. 'Khila' means an appendix. Sukta means a collection of Vedic mantras. A collection of Suktas is called a Mandala. Rig Veda has 1028 Suktas. Sri Suktam is very popular because it is used in the worship of Sri Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. However, Sri Suktam not only addresses Lakshmi as merely the Goddess of wealth, but also the consort of Sri Narayana. Sri Suktam is a prayer to the divine Mother of the cosmos. She is seen as the very power behind the sun and the moon, and also identified with Agni or Fire.

She is also 'Narayani', the power of Sri Narayana, but at the same time, She is also 'Tryambake'. The word 'Shriy' means 'to take refuge' or 'to serve'. 'Shreeyate sarvaiH iti ShreeH' - which means Shree is that cosmic energy who is the refuge of all creatures.

If one needs to understand Lakshmi, she exists as life and intellect in every being, which is the greatest of all wealths. Our life force creator is Lakshmi. Hence, the Markandeya Purana says, 'Ya Devi sarva bhooteshu Lakshmi roopena samsthitaa' - I bow down to that great Goddess who is present as Lakshmi in all creatures. Hence, we worship and value everything in our lives as Lakshmi.

Lakshmi also signifies a sign or mark of Chaitanya (energy) and Vibhooti (power or greatness). This great Goddess is referred to as 'Ishwari' - the supreme leader of the universe in the Durga Sap-tashati. Thus, Shree not only means the Goddess of wealth, but also signifies the magnanimous aspect of Sridevi, as the mother of the cosmos. Hence, the deity of Shree Sukta is a personification of auspiciousness and prosperity. We seek that same consciousness of Lakshmi in our dimensions in our prayers.

The verse 'Hiranyavarnaam' is said to be the Bija mantra of the Sukta. Bija is the source from which the entire mantra takes its origin. The verse 'Taam ma aavaha' is the Shakti. Shakti is the part of the mantra where the entire power of the mantra remains encapsulated. The verse 'Keerti Riddhim' is the Kilaka. Kilaka is that pole or nail, to which the aspirant of the mantra has to tie up his mind, with complete concentration.

The first Verse:

Hiranya varnaam hariṇīm suvarna-rajata-srajaṁ
Chandram hiranmayim lakshmiṁ jatavedo ma avaha

Meaning:

O Jaataveda, bring Sri Lakshmi to me, that Lakshmi who has a golden complexion, who is beautiful like the female deer, who shines like the moon and who has an enchanting form.

This verse is a prayer to Agni or the Vedic fire-god. According to the Vedic rituals, all Gods and Goddesses are propitiated by means of sacrifice to fire. Hence, though the deity referred to here which is Lakshmi, the prayer is to Agni.

The deities are Jaatavedaagni, Agni Durga and Mahalakshmi. All Vedic mantras are invocation of deities. We mortals have our consciousness fixed in the earthly planes, and cannot comprehend the divine forms of these deities. Thus, all the deities are visualized

DEVOTEE SHARES



through the medium of Agni or sacrificial fire.

The belief behind offerings to the various deities through Agni, is that Agni carries these offerings (Havis) to the respective deities. Hence, Agni is called Havya Vahana, or the vehicle of Havis.

'Lakshmi' represents all those signs of happiness and welfare that a man desires. The word Lakshmi, arises out of the dhatu 'Lash', which means 'to obtain'. Thus, Lakshmi means to obtain the signs of happiness like wealth, prosperity and knowledge, as that is Her very nature.

Poetic hearts have always identified Lakshmi with the lotus flower. The Dhyana Shloka (meditation verse) of Sri Mahalakshmi describes her like this, 'Amala kamala Samsthaa' - residing in a white stainless lotus. She holds lotuses in Her hands and sports a garland of lotuses. The mandala that worships Sridevi is also called Padma mandala. The reference here is actually to the six yogic Chakras in the human body. The goddess Shree, as the great Kundalini Shakti, resides in these lotuses.

Also, because She is the Shakti of Agni or Vishnu, it is but natural for Her to have a golden luster.

Lakshmi is called Harini in a literal sense, referring to a female deer, which represents attraction and beauty, both of which are the inherent qualities of Sridevi.

Since She has similar qualities as that of gold, She is seen as Hiranyaswaroopini. She is free from all limitations and boundaries of name, form and space, transforms Herself so as to become the efficient cause of this universe. Though She is without a form, She assumes a multitude of forms and shines in the hearts of the devoted, with a golden luster. She is thus referred to as Hiranmayii.

Maharshi Agastya describes thus, 'The intellect in the mind, the light in the sun, the shine in the moon, the luster in the gold, the butter in milk, all these are forms of Sri Mahalakshmi'. However, Sridevi is also given an additional adjective, 'Anapagaamini'. This refers to Lakshmi who resides in the Sadhaka without deserting him for another person. Gold represents Sthavara (immovable or inanimate) wealth whereas cows, horses and men represent Jangama (movable or animate) wealth. By Sridevi's grace, one obtains both these forms of wealth.

ॐ श्री महालक्ष्म्यै च विद्महे विष्णु पत्न्यै च धीमहि

तन्नो लक्ष्मी प्रचोदयात् ॐ॥

Om Shree Mahalakshmyai Cha Vidmahe Vishnu Patnyai Cha Dheemahi

Tanno Lakshmi Prachodayat Om॥

Excerpts from Kanchi Maha Peryava comments.

Maha Periyavar Charanam.

Bala Charanam.



நல்ல எண்ணங்கள் (Good Thoughts)

by Smt. Shantha Radhakrishnan...

நம் எண்ணங்கள் உயர உயர வாழ்க்கை உயரும்
என்பதை நாம் நன்றாக மனதில் நினைவு கொள்ள
வேண்டும்.

நாம் நம்மை நன்றாக புரிந்து கொண்டு
வாழ்வோமானால் மற்றவர்களை புரிந்து கொள்ள
முடியும்.

நம் மனதுக்குள் நல்ல எண்ணங்களை அனுப்புவது
மட்டும் போதாது. எதிர்மறையான எண்ணங்கள் நம்
மனதினுள் செல்வதை தடுக்கவேண்டும்.

வாழ்வில் நல்லது நடந்தால் அதற்கு நானே காரணம்
என்பதும், கெட்டது நடந்தால் அது மற்றவர்களால்
என்ற எண்ணம் கூடாது. அனைத்திற்கும் நாமும், நம்
எண்ணங்களுமே காரணம் என்று கொறுப்பேற்றுக்
கொள்ள வேண்டும்.

நாம் மனிதர்களாக வாழ்வது பெரிதல்ல,
மனிதாபத்துடன் வாழ்வதுதான் பெரிது.

கண்ணால் பார்ப்பதில் எல்லாம் அழகு தருவது
வண்ணங்களே.

பார்ப்பதில் எல்லாம் நல்ல உயர்வு தருவது
எண்ணங்களே. வாழ்க்கையில் வெற்றிபெற, இளவயதில்
சுறுசுறுப்பும், ஊக்கமும், நல்ல எண்ணங்களும் மிக மிக
அவசியம்,



Story of Bala

by Dhruv Karthik

Class V

FR. Angel Sr Sec School

Bala is the daughter of Hindu goddess Lalitha Tripura Sundari. It is believed that she came from the golden kavacha of Lalitha. She was always like a nine year old girl. Her body was like a rising sun. She is also pictured as having four arms and a red circle on each palm; she holds a sacred textbook and a japamala in two of her arms. She is considered a child and acts as one, but is said to bring true knowledge, education, wisdom, power and prosperity for a better life. She was always present at the footrest of Goddess Lalitha. She was her fourth eye. She was good at martial feats.

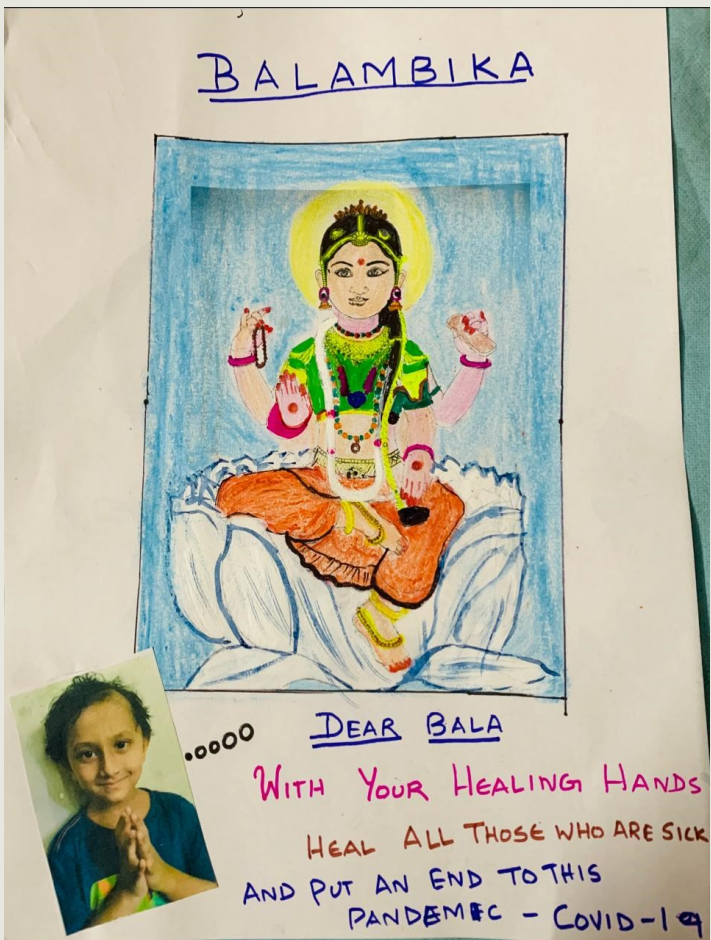
Once Bhandasura, a demon had sent his sons for fighting. On hearing that the sons of daitya bhanda, the chief of whom was Katurbahu had come for the purpose of fighting, Bala expressed her interest in fighting them and requested her mother to let her fight. Lalitha prevented Bala from fighting, but on repeated request from Bala and observing her steadfast decision, she granted permission to fight after closely clasping her in her arms. She took off one of her armor's and gave it to Bala along with other required weapons to fight. Bala got into the palanquin that had been made by extracting from the staff of her bow and to which hundred of swarms were yoked for drawing the palanquin. She fought and successfully killed all thirty sons of Bhandasura.

CHILDREN'S CORNER : BALA'S BIRTHDAY SPECIAL

Bala Drawing
by Vedansh ...



Prayer to Bala
by Siddhanth Karthik ...



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