



Balavin Kural

BALAMBIKA DIVYA SANGAM

ISSUE 7 NOVEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

Editorial Board

Mrs. Asha Manoharan

Mrs. Latha Chakravarthy

Mr. Ramesh Chakravarthy

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TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

- A borewell of depth 750 feet has been drilled at the temple site, with water found at 410 feet (refer page 6 for details).
- A fence will be built around the temple site, in addition to a room to enclose the borewell water pump.
- Consultations are underway with the Stapathi, and possible contractors for designing the foundation for the temple.
- The temple website is being expanded to accommodate an online shopping cart.

Upcoming religious events:

Lalitha Sahasranamam parayanam on November 25th at Usha Murali's residence, Chicago, USA

Contact: umurali4@yahoo.com

Bala Sahasranamam parayanam on December 3rd, at 3:00 PM at Bala's residence

Contact: myyasundar@gmail.com

Bala Sahasranamam parayanam on December 3rd at 5:30 PM at Chakravarthy residence in Ohio, USA.

Contact: 95chikki@gmail.com

Abishekam will be performed for the Dolai Utsava moorthy on Tuesdays/Fridays. Devotees who are interested please contact Shashikala Venkatesh (9886895627).

Veda and Tamil online class will start soon. Please do contact us for registration and further information.

Much thanks to

Archana Contribution

Vinay Srinivasan
Sudha Madabhushi
Raghuram & Kanchana
Rohit Joshi
Venkat Murali

Flower & Oil Donation

Jayalakshmi Ananthkrishnan
Sowmya Ganesh
Bhuvana Krishnaswamy
Raghuraman
Purnima Prasad
Indumathi Sundar

Dolai Utsavam Sponsors

Mythili Sundararajan
Raghuram and Lalitha
Kasturi and Priya Rangan
Gowri family

Wish list & Volunteer needs

If you would like to participate, contribute or require more details please contact us via email or website*

Contribution can be made in cash/cheque/DD/online transfer etc. For complete details do email us.

Anbu Thaan Bala

Mala had packed her things and was waiting for her father to come and pick her up. Ten days in her grand parents house was total freedom for Mala. It was a small village with over 50 families. The village was surrounded by Pachamalai which stood proud, shimmering in the heat of the sun. This part of the state opened up in splendor to remind everyone that nature stands above all, no matter what humans do they can never beat its beauty and at the same time the fierceness of it is unimaginable. The mountain in front was like a bull sitting with its front legs folded and eagerly waiting for Shiva, its master. Mala loved this place; it had freshness about it and the smell of wild flowers tickled one's senses in a very comforting way. It was Mala's ancestral place. Her parents, grand parents and their parents had all lived in this village for generations. Her grand mother was a very loving lady, well over 6 feet tall. She had the look of authority about her. She was always well dressed and she always puts up her hair into a big knot. The lines on her face spoke of her struggle and toil in the fields. In the morning she would be off to the fields, to assign work to the people there and then she would be back home for lunch, to instruct the servants about the various jobs that had to be completed. In the evening she would sit with the accountant Surya Narayanan who had been with the family for more than 50 years and who looked after the accounts. She was very dynamic and a highly commendable person who seemed to know everything. She was always very very busy with guests coming and going, but she always had time for Mala. She always sat beside her when she had food and always served her. Sitting beside her she would instruct the servants of the house to do the household chores, and Mala had always admired her potential. The house always buzzed with activity with around 25 people all the time in the house, and her grand mom was the person controlling all of it. She did everything in style. She was always an inspiration to Mala in every respect. She had been telling Mala to stay a while longer but her father was adamant to take her. The ten days had passed very quickly. She had few friends around and Bala was with her for a couple of days. Mala had not expected her. She was sitting on the patio when Bala came. Mala asked her how she had come, and Bala had turned around and said, "Does it matter?" Mala had kept quiet. She knew Bala was annoyed whenever she asked such a question. The two girls had a lot of time together. They walked about the fields. It was on one such typical day. It was early in the morning, the sun was slowly rising. Mala and Bala were walking across the fields. The paddy fields were swaying in the morning breeze with its greenish blades cutting the air as it moved and the cows were grazing on the crescent down below. The ladies were working in the field with the men folk drawing water from the wells with the help of two bulls tied around a wooden plank and these planks were in turn tied to the rounded bucket which had a rubber tubing at its end helping to empty the collected water. The singing of the traditional folk song was something that Mala adored and the smell of the paddy fields inspired her to come there very often. Mala walked in front and Bala behind her touching the paddy grass blades with her little hands. As the two walked passed Krishnan uncle's fields, he called out to her, "Mala, come here, take some mangoes to your grand mother." "I will take it when I go home uncle. I am going to the fields now.", replied Mala. He called back to

her, "Ok. I have kept them near the machine room, come and take it even if I am not there." "Ok uncle.", shouted back Mala, as she walked along. The two of them walked into the small walk way which was used during the summer months for carts to go near the fields which otherwise was very difficult because of the vast stretch of fields that laid out like a carpet. The walk way was a rough stretch and Mala hated walking on it. Bala was thrilled about the stretch way which had a lot of cobble stones which were very smooth. Mala stopped her from running and the two of them started walking slowly. Mala was very thirsty she looked around for something to eat. Bala looked around and pointed out something to Mala. "What is that?" Bala went closer to the bushes nearby, she plucked some berries and gave it to Mala "Hey, have this.", she said. "What is that?", asked Mala. Bala smiled and said, "Are you scared of eating wild berries? Don't be scared, nothing will happen.", saying which she gave the berries to Mala. Just then, they heard a wild scream. She looked around to see who it was and the screaming continued, and impulsively, Bala ran towards the scream and Mala followed her. As she neared she could see a small girl about her age, lying on the ground and frothing from her mouth. Bala stopped. She looked at Mala and signaled her to go in the front. Mala went close to the girl. The girl's mother was sobbing. She touched her shoulder and the mother turned around. Mala asked, "What happened to her?" The mother replied, "I was inside the machine room, she was playing when I went in. But after a while when I came out I saw her lying on the ground. I don't know what to do.", saying this she started sobbing again. Bala went near the girl and bent to see what happened. She turned to the mother and said, "Go and bring some 'Vazhai mattai'." Bala looked at Mala and said, "Hold her head in a raised way, I will be back.", saying which she moved into the bushes and was gone and in a few minutes she was back with a small creeper. Mala asked, "What is that?" As Bala plucked the leaves from the plant, she said, "This is 'vishnukranthi', a medicine for snake bite. The fields are filled with these precious medicinal plants. These medicinal plants are worth more than they look. It saves lives.", saying she squeezed the juice and took the 'vazhai mattai' from the lady and started dripping the juice into the girl's mouth. The lady stood watching Bala work and after a few minutes Bala stood up. The lady looked at Bala and asked, "Can you save her?" Bala came close to her and said, "Do you trust me?" The woman nodded. Bala smiled and said "Go, get some something for me to eat.", saying she sat next to the girl. Bala sat and closed her eyes and sat in a yogic posture. Mala saw something strange. Bala was glowing like light and the outline of her body was covered with light and for a moment she felt the place around her stand still! Nothing moved! Even the air particles stopped moving! Mala was mesmerized by that sight! She looked at Bala and the girl and back at Bala. After a brief moment Bala came up to the girl, touched her forehead with the leaves and called out her name softly. "Mallika, get up. Can you hear me? Mallika.....". Her voice was soft as silk and it was like the air coming out of the flute with an elegant sound. She sounded very reassuring. Bala moved closer and whispered something in the girl's ears. The girl opened her eyes to the delight of her mother. Her mother went closer to her, bent and picked her up in her arms. The girl looked around and asked her mother, "What happened to me?" Her mother replied, "Nothing you are fine aren't you?" saying which she looked at Bala with gratitude. Bala smiled at her. The girl was up in seconds and she was as normal as anyone. When they bid her mother goodbye, she stopped them, went inside the machine room, came out with some black berries and offered it to Bala. Bala looked at her and said, "I have kept up my word, didn't I?" The lady was perplexed! Bala took the berries from her and said bye and Mala followed her. The lady was shocked when Bala uttered those words. As they went a little further, the lady followed them and stopped Bala. Looking at her with amazement she said, "Chelli!", and fell at Bala's feet. Bala held her and said, "Yes Parimala, I came back as promised." The lady's eyes flooded with tears, she wiped them with her 'saree' and she looked at Bala with reverence. Bala said, "I have saved your daughter, go and be happy." The lady was overjoyed and again fell at Bala's feet. "I knew you would come! Oh my God!", she cried, "I knew you would come some day. How could I be so stupid not to realise the moment I saw you." Bala smiled at her. "Oh God, how could I be so foolish not to have known you. You are my life, you are everything to me. Oh, I am so sorry Chelli, forgive this stupid lady!", saying which the lady held Bala's hand wanting her to stay. But Bala consoled her and said something in her ears and the lady wiped her tears and nodded. She smiled at Bala with tears in her eyes and bid them good bye

Abayum Thodarum.....

Glossary:

Vazhai mattai: bark of banana tree

Chelli: the local village deity Chelliamman

Abayam thodarum: Her grace continues....



Bala speaks.....

"The Yoga does not exist in the Heavens; nor does it exist on earth or in the nether regions (Pâtâla). Realisation of the identity between the Jivâtma and the Paramâtmâ is Yoga." To become a yogi one should give up lust, anger, ignorance, vanity and jealousy. To give up these one should practice **Yama**. Yama includes Ahimsâ (non-injuring; non-killing); truthfulness; Asteyam (non-stealing by mind or deed); Brahmacharya (continence); Dayâ (mercy to all beings); Uprightness; forgiveness; steadiness; eating frugally, restrictedly and cleanliness (external and internal). **Niyama** which includes ten qualities:--(1) Tapasyâ (austerities and penances); (2) contentment; (3) Âstikya (faith in the God and the Vedas, Devas, Dharma and Adharma) (4) Charity (in good causes); (5) worship of God; (6) hearing the Siddhântas (established sayings) of the Vedas; (7) Hri or modesty (not to do any irreligious or blameable acts); (8) S'raddhâ (faith to go do good works that are sanctioned); (9) Japam (uttering silently the mantrams, Gâyatrîs or sayings of Purânas) and (10) Homam (offering oblations daily to the Sacred Fire).

Significance of 'ganga snaanam' on the morning of Deepavali

Through the years we have all woken up early on the morning of Deepavali day, decorated our feet with 'nalangu', smeared oil on our head, and we have enjoyed the traditional 'ganga snaanam', worn new clothes, gulped down the medicinal 'leghiyam', and then rushed outside for the one exciting event—fireworks! We can all recall this beautiful tradition year after year. All our friends and relatives would then call or visit and enquire with the same standard question—“Ganga snaanam aachchaa?” One might wonder what it signifies, even though Ganga does not flow all over the world!

As per popular belief, Deepavali celebrates the victory of Lord Krishna over the demon Narakasura, which occurred on the 'amavasya' day. It is thus the triumph of good over evil. Traditional oil lamps are lit to celebrate this victory, and fireworks are burned to ward away evil spirits. It is also believed, that when one wakes up in the early hours of Deepavali day, during the 'brahma muhurtham' that is typically between 4:30 AM to 6:00 AM, and takes an oil bath during the 'brahma muhurtham', all the water in the world is as revered as the waters of the sacred river Ganga, and one has cleansed and purified himself in his home in waters that is symbolically equivalent to a dip in the holy Ganga! Such is the importance of the 'ganga snaanam' on the morn of Deepavali.

So next year on the morning of Deepavali, as you wake up to the delicious aroma of sweets and savories, and as you rush through the ritual of the oil bath so that you are the first in the neighborhood to burst the loudest 'vedi', take a moment to savor the tradition of the 'ganga snaanam', and you be the one to wish a relative or friend and ask—“ganga snaanam aachchaa?”



*Pictures of ongoing activities at Malur Sri Balambika Temple site
-digging of borewell-*





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