# **BALAVIN KURAL**



#### A Balambika Divya Sangam Publication



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#### The Nine Forms of Ambal:

An article on the unique attributes of the Nine beautiful forms that Ambal takes during Navaratri... **See page 03** 

## Know your mythology : Suyodhana & His Three Decisions

Written by Thulasinathan, this month's mythological feature is on Duryodhana's retrospection on his death bed and Lord Krishna enlightening advice.. See page 10

#### **Science Snippets**

Written by Latha, an interesting anecdote connecting Vishnu Shasranamam & the worlds oldest tape recorder... **See page 12** 

## NAVARATRI MAHOTSAVAM 2020

At Malur Sri Balambika Temple

From: October 16th, Friday To: October 25th, Sunday



#### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Dear BDS Members,

#### Namaskaram.

The festival of Navaratri is just around the corner, and we look forward to celebrating this grand event at our Malur Balambika temple with all the necessary precautions in place for CoVID. We request all the devotees to cooperate with these guidelines to help make this event successful.

In line with the theme of Navaratri, we start off our newsletter with an article on the various forms of Ambal worshipped during the nine days of Navratri, and share interesting details on the attributes of each avataram.

The Q&A section on "Food" emphasizes the importance of rightsizing what we eat, for maintaining good physical, emotional and intellectual health. Furthermore, our President also prescribes best practices that need to be followed with regards to our food intake, for proper digestion and absorption of vital vitamins and nutrients

Continuing with the Bala Sahasranamam commentary, the context behind the word "Sukhadayini" is articulately explained by our President

All of us remember the character Suyodhana (Duryodhana) from the Mahabharata epic. The "Know your Mythology" section presents a dialogue between Duryodhana and Lord Krishna, when Duryodhana was on his deathbed and was reflecting on the 3 decisions he thought he had made that led to his defeat

Do you all remember the old cassette tape recorders we used to have? Ever wondered when the first recording device was invented? The science snippets section reveals this little known fact.

We hope you all have a wonderful Navaratri celebration with your friends and family. Let us all pray to Ambal to give us the strength and courage to get us through these challenging times. In the end, goodness will always prevail over evil.

Please tune to all the BDS communications on WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram for updates on the Navaratri Mahotsavam celebrations at the Malur Balambika temple.

Sarvejana Sukhinobhavanthu.

# EDITORIAL: NAVARATRI - THE NINE FORMS OF AMBAL



celebrations the Navaratri Malur Balambika Temple have always observed with pomp and splendor since the temple's inception on April 10th, 2017. homam, alankaram, Every ritual neivedyam preparation, is planned with intricate detail, with a precise purpose and benefit in mind. The celebrations span 10 days, with the first day dedicated to Lord last day for Vijaya-Ganesha, and the dashami, commemorating the victory of the Goddess Durga over demon day of Navaratri is Mahishasura. Each dedicated to a particular form of Ambal, as outlined in the table below, homams and alankarams are customized to energize that particular manifestation of the Supreme Universal Mother.

# Day 1 : Sri Kamakshi Devi

The Navaratri festival at the Malur Balambika Temple commences with a Ganapathi Homam to avert obstacles

Raja Bala deity is adorned with an alankaram of Goddess Kamakshi

The word Kamakshi is the combination of three words, 'Ka' means Saraswati, 'Ma' means Lakshmi and 'Aksh' means eyes

"Kamakshi" is the 62nd verse in the Lalitha Sahasranamam, which means "She who fulfills desires by her sight"

She carries a noose, goad and parrot on Her top left and right hands, a lotus and a bow of sugarcane on Her left and bottom hands

Her unique padmasana posture instead of the traditional standing pose, represents peace and prosperity

### Day 2 : Sri Mangala Gowri

On this day, we perform pooja to Mangala Gowri, a manifestation of Goddess Parvati

The word "Gowri" appears in the 635th verse of the Lalitha Sahasranamam, and means "She who is white colored"

Known for Her gentle and nurturing nature, Gowri is the goddess of fertility, marriage, and harmony

She is believed to have performed austere penance for several years to win over Lord Shiva

Seated on a cow, She is illustrated with four hands, holding a lotus, trident and drum, and the fourth in a blessing posture

She is predominantly worshipped by unmarried girls wishing to acquire a suitable groom, and couples for harmony in their relationships

### Day 3 : Sri Bala Tripura Sundari

The Bala Tripurasundari form of Ambal is worshipped on this day

Sri Bala or Balambika is the child form of Sri Lalitha Tripurasundari

She is also called "Jyothi" and represents the energy in Lord Murugan's Vel

Bala Tripurasundari Moolamantram characterizes Her as the divine combination of Goddess Saraswati's wisdom, the energy of Goddess Maha Kali and the prosperity of Sri Lalitha Tripura Sundari

Her name appears twice in Lalitha Sahasranamam in verses 74 and 965 as "Bala Vikrama Nanditha" and "Bala Leela Vinodhini"

She is depicted having 4 arms, with the divine book of knowledge and the meditation beads in two of them

Worship of Bala Tripurasundari is essential for advancing on the path of Sri Vidya

## Day 4 : Sri Gayathri Devi

This day is dedicated to Gayatri Devi, considered as an incarnation of Goddess Saraswati

She is the personification of the Gayatri Mantra, a widely revered and chanted hymn from the Rig Veda

The word "Gayatri" itself originates from the Sanskrit phrase "Gayantam Trayate Iti Gayatri", which means the one who protects the person who meditates on Her.

Her name appears in the 420th verse of the Lalitha Sahasranamam

She is portrayed as having 5 heads, and seated on a red lotus

The 4 heads represent the 4 vedas, and the fifth head represents the Supreme Brahman. The 5 heads can also be interpreted as the pancha pranas (prana, apana, vyana, udana, samana) or pancha bhutas (earth, water, air, fire, sky)

Her ten hands hold weapons from Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva

Regular meditation on Goddess Gayatri by chanting the Gayatri mantra purifies the mind and enables one to tap into the supreme consciousness

### Day 5 : Sri Mahalakshmi

Mahalakshmi, the goddess of fortune and prosperity, is worshipped on this day

She is first mentioned in the Sri Sukta of the RigVeda, the oldest Hindu scripture

The word "Lakshmi" means the one who leads us to our goals "Laksh"

The word "Mahalakshmi" is the 210th verse of the Lalitha Sahasranamam

She is believed to have originated from the churning of the primordial ocean of milk, choosing Lord Vishnu as Her eternal consort

Depictions and sculptures portray Her with four hands, standing or sitting on a lotus flower

Her four hands symbolize the four aspirations of human life, dharma, artha, kama and moksha

#### Day 6 : Sri Annapoorneshwari

This day is dedicated to Goddess Annapoorneshwari or Annapoorna

The word "Annapoorneshwari" originates from the root words "Anna", meaning food or grain, and "poorna" meaning complete or full.

"Poorna" is the 292nd verse of the Lalitha Sahasranamam

An incarnation of Goddess Parvati, Annapoorna is considered as the goddess of food and nourishment, for not just the physical body, but also the soul

She is typically depicted as sitting on a throne, with a ladle in her lower right hand, and a bowl full of porridge in her lower left hand

"Akshaya Tritiya" is considered as the birthday for Goddess Annapoorna

## Day 7 : Sri Rajarajeshwari

Goddess Rajarajeshwari is worshipped on this day

"Rajarajeshwari" means She who is the ruler of kings and emperors

Her name appears in the 684th verse of the Lalitha Sahasranamam

Presiding over the Sri Chakra, She is one of the most powerful aspects of the divine mother, Sri Lalitha Tripurasundari

She is generally described as having four arms carrying a noose (pasha), goad (ankusha), sugarcane bow and five arrows made from flowers (pushpa bana)

Performing poojas to Her is imperative for controlling our mind and sensory organs and ascending on the path to transcendental knowledge

#### Day 8 : Sri Maha Durga

The Maha Durga incarnation of Ambal is worshipped on this day

"Durga" means "the one who helps us overcome difficulties"

The word "Durga" appears in the 190th verse of the Lalitha Sahasranamam

She represents the manifested form of Parashakti, the supreme eternal energy, which fights and protects Her devotees against all the external and internal evil forces

Her 10 hands, each holding a distinct weapon, is provided by various Gods, and represents a specific virtue every human being should possess to ward off evil influences

The lion on which She rides, represents power, courage and determination

### Day 9 : Sri Saraswathi

Pooja to Goddess Saraswathi is performed on this day

Widely revered and worshipped since the Vedic period, She is the Goddess of knowledge, music, arts, and instruments

"Saraswathi" is the 704th verse of the Lalitha Sahasranamam

She is the consort of Lord Brahma, and part of the trinity (Tridevi) of goddesses with Lakshmi and Parvathi

Dressed in pure white symbolizing purity, She is depicted with four hands, and seated on a lotus or a swan (hamsa), thereby also referred to as *Hamsavahini* 

Her four hands hold a book of divine knowledge, a rosary of beads representing spirituality, a pot of sacred water for inner purification, and a veena representing arts

One invokes the blessings of Goddess Saraswathi before starting any new academic or creative pursuits

#### Day 10: Sri Mahishasura Mardhini

The Navratri festival comes to an end with the 10th day observed as Vijayadashami

Goddess Durga is worshipped as Mahishasura Mardhini, to commemorate Her victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura

Her triumph over Mahishasura is depicted in the Devi Mahatmya, a major text in the Shaktism tradition

A Maha Chandi Homam is performed to invoke the blessings of Goddess Chandika, a manifestation of Goddess Durga

Lord Rama's triumph over Ravana is also celebrated as Dussehra

This day reinforces that in the end, Dharma (righteousness) will always prevail over Adharma (evil)



Raja Bala as Mangala Gowri *roopam* during Navratri 2019

இதன் பொருள் பக்தர்களுக்கு நிரந்தர ஆனந்தத்தை கொடுப்பவள் என்பதாகும். அந்த நிரந்தர சந்தோஷத்தை பாலா எல்லாம் கொடுக்கிறாள் என்பதை பார்ப்போம். மனிதனுக்கு ஆனந்தம் என்பது இரண்டு விஷயத்தில். ஒன்று விரும்புவனவற்றை எல்லாம் அடையும் செய்யும் அனைத்து செயல்களிலும் இரண்டாவது தான் கிடைக்கும்போது இது புண்ணியம் அனைத்தையும் கொடுக்கின்றாள். அதனால்தான் திருமூலர் பாடுகின்றார்,

அறிவார் பராசக்தி ஆனந்தம் என்பர் அறிவார் அருஉருவாம் அவள் என்பர்

அறிவார் கருமம் அவள் இச்சை என்பர் அறிவார் பரனும் அவள் இடத்தானே

அதன் பொருள் அமபாளை பற்றி அறிவதில் ஆனந்தம், நடப்பது அனைத்தும் அவள் விருப்பமே, சிவபெருமான் எப்போதும் அவள் பக்கத்திலே என்பதாகும். அப்படிப்பட்ட ஆனந்தத்தை கொடுக்கும் அம்பாளைப் பார்த்து அபிராமி பட்டர் சொல்கிறார்,

நின்றும் இருந்தும் கிடந்தும் நடந்தும் நினைப்பது உன்னை என்றும் வணங்குவது உன்மலர்த்தாள் எழுதாமறையின் ஒன்றும் அரும்பொருளே அருளே உமையே இமயத்து அன்றும் பிறந்தவளே அழியாமுத்தி ஆனந்தமே

# Q & A WITH SMT. ASHA MANOHARAN

#### FOOD:

Today, we are going to talk about "Food", and the sense of taste. It is said that "the one who can detach himself from the need to have delicious and rich food, and only eats the amount that his body needs, can bring all his five senses under control".

Now, we primarily need food to provide the energy to function and stay healthy. The tongue which provides the sense of taste, also seeks delicious food, and causes us to eat in excess, and undermine our health. Therefore, it is imperative to control our tongue.

There is always conflict between the thought processes in our mind. The Prana philosophy prescribes that we need food to maintain our health, whereas the pulan (senses) philosophy asks for food that is also delicious. Along with *udal arogyam* (physical health), it is very important to maintain good mana (mental) and buddhi (intellectual) health.

People who enjoy good physical health will not feel any complaints originating from the body.

Those with good mental health will possess the determination to finish what they started, and will be detached from materialistic things, including food. They will do their duties without any expectations from anyone.

Intellectually healthy people will analyze any life situation thoroughly, and make the correct judgement at the right place and the right time, they will deliberate before making any decision.

Discipline in what we choose to eat is extremely important for good physical health, which lends itself to good mental and intellectual health.

We have to follow certain practices with regards to our food intake.

- i. Food rich in vitamins and essential components are vital to provide energy and immunity.
- ii. We need to eat only for 50% of our stomach, fill 25% with water and the remaining space should be left for churning and digesting the food. This will help the stomach to properly digest the food and extract all the benefits from it. A thought or prayer to God before we start eating is highly recommended.
- iii. Food needs to be prepared fresh daily in a calm relaxed state of mind, and not kept in the refrigerator for prolonged periods. In addition, food should not be consumed just because it is getting wasted.
- iv. We need to eat food that we are used to. Trying to consume synthesized food might lead to indigestion, as we might not have the enzymes to digest it.
- v. Fasting should be controlled on a monthly basis, and not be done excessively.
- vi. Do the household chores yourselves, otherwise, most of the food will be converted to fat as the body gets no exercise.
- vii. The amount of spice in the food we consume, should be controlled.
- Only if the physical body is healthy, will we achieve good mental and intellectual health. I would like to leave you all with a couplet from Thirukkural
- which says:
  "Propriety of conduct leads to eminence, it should therefore be preserved more carefully than life"

# வாசகரின் கேள்வியும் திருமதி ஆஷா மனோகரன் பதிலும்

#### <u>ഉ</u>ത്തവ

நாவைக் 'எவன் ஒருவன் சுவையான உணவை மறுத்து கட்டுப்படுத்துகிறானோ அவன் ஐந்து புலன்களையும் மனக் கட்டுப்பாட்டிற்குள் கொண்டுவரமுடியும்<sup>,</sup> என்கிறது நூல். இரண்டு காரணங்களுக்காக நமக்கு உணவு தேவை. ஒன்று, உடலை இயக்க மற்றொன்று, ஆரோக்கியமாக இருக்க புலன்களில் ஒன்றான நாக்கு, சுவையை நாடிச் சென்று, இன்பத்தின் வசப்பட்டு, உடலுக்கு கேடு தரக்கூடிய உணவை நாடி,உண்டு, உடலை நோய்க்கு இறையாக்கி விடுகிறது. எனவே, இந்த நாவே உடலுக்கும், ஆரோக்கியத்திற்கும் கேடு விளைவிக்க காரணமாகிறது. இந்நிலையில் நா கட்டுப்பாட்டை தவமாக மேற்கொள்வது அவசியமாகிறது. நம் உடலில் உள்ள பிராண தத்துவம் உடலை இயக்கும் பணி செய்கிறது. புலன் தத்துவம் இன்பத்தை அறியும் கருவியாகிறது. இங்கு சுவையான உண்வை விடுத்து நல்ல உணவை தேர்ந்தெடுக்க வேண்டும். நமக்கு மூன்று இடங்களில் ஆரோக்கியம் தேவைப்படுகின்றது.

நமக்கு மூன்று இடங்களில் ஆரோக்கியம் தேவைப்படுகின்றது. ஒன்று ஸ்தூல உடல், நோயில்லா ஆரேக்கியம் மட்டுமன்றி சௌக்கியமாகவும் இருக்க.

இரண்டு, மன ஆரோக்கியம். எடுத்த காரியத்தை முடிக்கும் மன உறுதியும்,சுதந்திரமாக பற்றில்லாமலும் இருக்க. மற்றும் எந்தவிதமான எதிர்பார்ப்பும் இல்லாமல் கடமையை செய்து, மனதிடத்துடன் உலக அனுபவங்ளை எதிர்கொண்டு, புரிந்து கொள்ள.

முன்றாவது புத்தி ஆரோக்கியம், சூழ்நிலையை புரிந்து, சிந்தித்து முடிவெடுக்கவும், நன்மை தீமை பிரித்து பார்க்கவும்.

மன ஆரோக்கியமும், புத்தி ஆரோக்கியமும் ஸ்தூல ஆரோக்கியத்தை சார்ந்தே இருக்கிறது.

நாம் உணவு உட்கொள்ளும் போது மூன்று கோட்பாடுகளை கடைப்பிடிக்க வேண்டும்.

ஒன்று, ஹிதமான உணவு, உடலுக்கு சத்துள்ள நல்ல உணவு. இரண்டு, மிதமான உணவு, சக்தியை கொடுத்து நன்றாக செறிக்கும் மிதமான உணவு.

மூன்று, நேத்தியம், அன்றே சமைத்த தூய்மையான உணவு. சமைப்பவர் மனஅமைதியுடனும், சாந்தமான மனதுடனும் சமைக்கவேண்டும்.

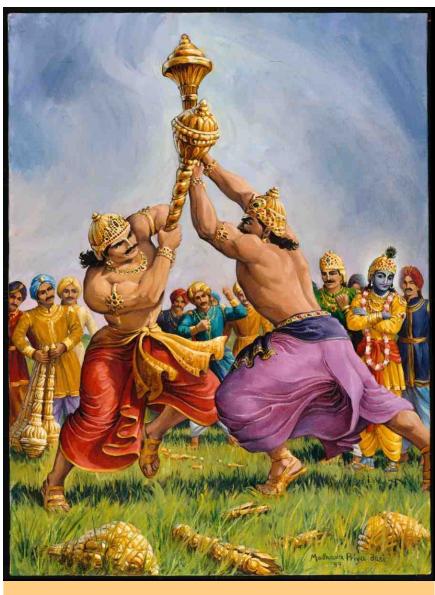
- உணவு உண்ணும் முன்பு அர்ப்பணம் செய்வது அவசியம்.
- உணவு ஒழுக்கத்திற்கு கீழ் கண்டவற்றை செய்வது அவசியம்
- 1, பச்சைக் காய்கறி உண்பது.
- 2, சிறு வயதில் சாப்பிட்டு பழகியதையே தொடர்ந்து சாப்பிடுவது.
- 3, மாதத்திற்கு ஒருமுறையேனும் விரதம் இருப்பது.
- 4, உணவிற்கேற்ற உடற்பயிற்ச்சி செய்வது.
- 5, அமைதியான நல்ல துழ்நிலையை உருவாக்கிக் கொள்வது.
- 6, ஒரு இடத்தில் உட்கார்ந்து உணவருந்தும் பழக்கத்தை கடைப்பிடிப்பது
- 7, உணவருந்தும்போது நீர் அருந்தாமல் இருப்பது.
- 8, உப்பு, காரம் இரண்டையும் மிதமாக உட்கொள்வது.

மன ஒழுக்கத்திற்கும், உடல் ஒழுக்கத்திற்கும் மிகத் தேவையானது உணவு ஒழுக்கம். இதனை வலியுறுத்தும் ஒரு திருக்குறள்

ஒழுக்கம் விழுப்பந் தரலான் ஒழுக்கம் ஒழுக்கம் உயிரினும் ஓம்பப்படும்.

ஒருவருக்கு உயர்வு தரக்கூடியது ஒழுக்கம் என்பதால் அதுவே உயிரைவிட மேலானதாக போற்றப்படுகிறது.

# KNOW YOUR MYTHOLOGY: SUYODHANA & HIS THREE DECISIONS



Suyodhana and Bhima's Battle during the Mahabharata war

On the eighteenth day of the Mahabharata war, after the Pandavas had left him there, Suyodhana (Duryodhana) was struggling to breathe and was raising his three fingers. People around him were trying to understand what Duryodhana was trying to communicate

Vasudev Krishna who came by, said, "Those decisions would not have worked!" Everyone around was puzzled, including Suyodhana. Krishna responded, "those three fingers raised by Suyodhana meant to say that three decisions could have won the war in his favour, to which my response is, No".

Let me explain to you, Suyodhana. By one of the three decisions, you think that you should have built a massive fort and wall around your kingdom. If you did that, I would have asked Nakul and Sahadev to bring that down. As you know, they are experts in the art of siege and warfare. I myself have handled several sieges with Jarasandha (Jarasandha is actually Vali of Ramayana reborn). So, I know both sides of any siege.

By another decision, you meant that you should have made Aswaththama your Senapathi long before. If you did that, I would have made Yudhishtira angry. As you know, Yudhishtira never gets angry, even in the hall of dice, he felt a sense of self-pity, not anger. If he gets angry, everything he sees will get reduced to ashes.

Continued...

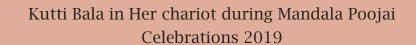
### Suyodhana & his Three Decisions Continued...

Your third decision, somehow coercing Vidura into the war for you. It would not have worked, since Vidura is always on the path of Dharma and never deviates. Even if you would have achieved it by any means, I would have picked up weapons myself. So, you would have still lost the war.

Vasudev Krishna continued, "Suyodhana, realize! it was not the decisions, it was the wrong path that led to all of this. If not now, when will you see it?"

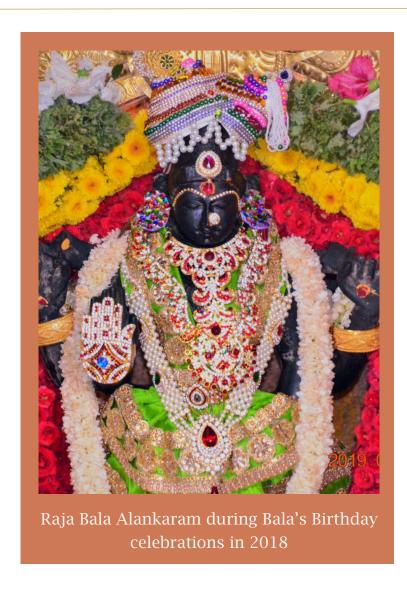
Something changed within Suyodhana. For someone who is extremely strong and can literally lift and throw any Maharathi, including Bhimasena himself, Suyodhana was finding it very difficult to lift his own eyelids. He wanted to look at Vasudev Krishna. He was finally able to do it with extreme difficulty. Suyodhana had heard Krishna's words several times in the past, but not with this intensity. When someone speaks, Suyodhana usually thinks fast to either have a counter question or response, even before the speaker finishes his/her speech. He thought he was smart and never bothered to listen. Suddenly, Suyodhana realized that he never was the master of his own mind. His mind had many masters, including Shakuni. This time, when Vasudev Krishna said, "When will you see it?", he felt something that had never happened before. Suyodhana's mind has taken a pause from its nonstop chatter. Suyodhana had become a master of his own mind for the first time. In front of him, was Vasudev Krishna, the master of masters, King of kings. Now, Suyodhana noticed something so different. Everytime Vasudev Krishna used the word "I' Suyodhana listened and felt for sure that it was just a grammatical decoration. The word meant nothing. To be precise, the word meant "no - thing". It was all inclusive and everything. The speaker was not attached to anything. Suyodhana's hands folded in a namaste to Vasudev Krishna. This time, it was not just a physical gesture with no meaning, it meant something very deep.

Suyodhana again struggled to get one more look at Vasudev Krishna, his eyelids refusing to remain open. A teardrop slid across his temples. Now, something mystical happened. He could still not open his eyes. However, Suyodhana could see Vasudev Krishna with his mind's eye. Now, death did not seem like something that he cared or feared. He started breathing normally, rhythmically and he was ready.





# SCIENCE SNIPPETS : THE WORLD'S OLDEST TAPE RECORDER



What is common between the Vishnu Sahasranamam and the world's earliest recording device? Here's an interesting anecdote that establishes the connection while revealing the scientific depth of our Hindu culture.

During an interview with Maha Periyavaa – the 68<sup>th</sup> Jagadguru of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, while the interview was being recorded, Periyavaa is supposed to have asked the question as to which is the oldest known tape recorder. As no one answered, Periyavaa asked another question as to who gave us the Vishnu Sahasranamam, to which everyone present replied that it was Bheeshma who gave us the Sahasranamam at Kurukshetra. Then, Periyavaa asked yet another question, as to who actually noted down the thousand names, as Bheeshma was extolling the Lord. After the silence that ensued, Periyavaa went on to explain that as Bheeshma was praising Sri Krishna with sahasranama, all those present – the Pandavas, including Sri Krishna and Vyasa were so engrossed and mesmerized, that no one remembered to make a note of the sahasranama or the sequence in which it was delivered. Even Sri Krishna stood overwhelmed and enraptured, listening to His staunch devotee's words of praise and acclaim. Realizing that this priceless treasure was not captured, all those present felt helpless, and turned to Sri Krishna for a solution to help them salvage what was probably lost forever. Sri Krishna advised that the only way the sahasranama will be recovered is through Sahadeva and Vyasa. As Sahadeva was the only one present there wearing a 'sutha spatikam', whose nature is to capture sound waves in a calm environment, only he will be able to meditate on Lord Shiva, (who also exists in the form of the spatikam), to convert the sounds of the nama, into waves that Vyasa will then be able to translate and write as the sahasranama.

Therein was revealed the oldest known recording device – the 'sutha spatikam', that Sahadeva was wearing, which with the efforts of Vyasa, gave us the Vishnu Sahasranamam.

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