

Balavin Kural

Balambika Divya Sangam

From the Editor's desk...

Namaskarams.

For quite some time I was thinking what makes people do some of the most awful things when not watched. Why is it that we are not able to control the little temptations, leave alone the big ones, even the smallest of small things? For example skipping traffic lights when not noticed, shying away from speeding cameras, picking up cookies from the cookie jar when no one is around to quote a few. When psychologists test how people behave with and without oversight, it becomes depressingly clear that no one uses their conscience to guide them and they go astray to do the bad things which is never acceptable. We inhabit such an age and we complain. "Why do bad things happen to good people?" It's a question I find slightly pointless, because perceived goodness is no defense against physics. How could it be? Because sometimes other apparently good people are making the bad things happen. World War II showed our species, just how many hells it could create on earth, a whole generation of researchers devoted themselves to find out what made people do the most awful things. Interestingly,

those post-war researchers - psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists - found answers to that question. They found reliable, repeatable results which suggests that the animal instinct in people is unleashed when no one watches them and this temptation makes them do such things which is quite appalling.

Another reason why people do awful things to others around them is because they are sometimes pushed into toxic situations. For example, Stanley Milgram experimented with a group of people who were put into toxic unbearable situations. They reacted to all of Stanley's commands and were even prepared to electrocute their own mates with terrifying ease, sometimes even beyond the level at which shocks would be fatal. This was conducted on simple normal pleasant people. What does it show? Men can be outrageously cruel when left unmonitored. This condition should change, we should start behaving like a true human being, move away from such toxic environment, to question things if we find it is morally wrong, not to



give into temptation and we should also teach our children the rules of obedience and to stand up for what is right, make them understand things which are morally wrong and help them to follow their conscience when left unattended. This will help us create a healthy non toxic world which will help the younger generation to blossom and be a better human being.

Upcoming Events:

Bala Sahasranamam Parayanam:
Mythili Sundararajan's residence, Bangalore, India
Contact: myyasundar@gmail.com
Chakravarthy's residence, Ohio, USA.
Contact: 95chikki@gmail.com
Anuradha Srinivasan's residence, Chicago, USA
Contact: 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
Smt. Asha Manoharan
asha.raji@gmail.com

Annadanam and Milk scheme:
Annadanam and serving of milk to nursery children, is performed at Modern English School, Malur. Those who are interested in contributing towards this cause, please contact
Smt. Asha Manoharan
asha.raji@gmail.com

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Construction Updates



Construction Updates





The effectiveness of prayer is not found in numbers, frequency, or fervency of those praying.

Bala Speaks...

Prayer is the divinely appointed means, through which one can commune with God.

The effectiveness of prayer is not found in numbers, frequency, or fervency of those praying. Prayer is about communication with God, the means to get closer and to understand the working of Nature. Prayer is a gift from God to bring Her children closer and help them find the purpose of their lives. Sometimes prayer can resemble a business meeting. You lay the docket of your prayer list before God and adjourn for the rest of the day. But prayer offers more than that. Prayer is more than asking God for things, more than texting Her with a "need this" or "thanks for that." It is communion with your God in the splendor of Her glory and the expression of Her care. One of the goals in prayer is to grow to know God, to reflect on Her, understand Her Words, have faith in Her actions, admire Her creations and try not to be in war with yourself but to be at peace, so that prayer can bring all the Joy and happiness into your world.

Did you know? (Sthala Vriksham)

Hindus are great worshippers of Nature. Taking a hindu temple, there will be sthala, theertham and murthy. Sthala refers to the temple, theertham to the temple tank, murthy to the deity worshipped. A temple may also be associated with trees - sthala vriksham. The Kadamba tree for instance is the sthala vriksham at the Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple, and the banyan tree, the sthala vriksham at Tiruvalankaadu. A lone banyan tree adorns the spacious courtyard of the Ratnasabha at Tiruvalankadu, which is believed to have been a forest. Every hindu temple will have a sthala vruksha of different kinds.

Even before they worshipped the Trinity and other deities, they had understood the significance of Nature. It is believed that Gods reside in trees. For example, taking a pepal tree,

Moolatho Brahma roopaya,

madhyatho Vishnu roopine,

*Agratha Shiva roopaya
Vruksha rajaya they nama.,*

Translation:

My salutations to the King of trees.

Whose root is the form of Brahma,

Middle is the form of Lord Vishnu,

And top is the form of Lord Shiva.

Sthala viruksha's main motivation is to use the flowers, leaf for temple poojas. Bilva leaf for Shiva pooja and similarly every tree in the sthala will be used for pooja along with flowers. The significance of growing sthala viruksha is useful for immediate medical purposes. Ladies who fear pimples, apply its paste which is a good medicine for pimples. Even the sting of scorpion is cured when its ashes are applied on the place of bite. As it is an anti-microbial agent, it purifies the environment.

Traditionally, the Indian population has been worshipping rivers, lakes, mountains, trees and other natural resources. People of India have been living very closely with the nature and thriving well on the natural resources.

The Kanakadhara Sthothra chanted by Adisankara brought all riches to a poor woman who gave a gooseberry to Sankara. Amalaki fruit is also mentioned in Jaiminiya Upanishad, Chandogya Upanishad Kurma Purana, Sangraha Purana and many other medicinal works. Nelli is also depicted in the bas-relief of the Stupa at Sanchi. It is believed to be very nutritious. It is associated with the fer-

tility cult.

Women tie red and yellow threads to get their wishes fulfilled. Women who aspire for a son, tie a cradle to the tree and most of them beget children. They untie the thread after the fulfillment of their wishes. Women decorate the tree with sandal and turmeric paste, kumkum, flowers and offer camphor too.

The sthala vrikshas reveal the socio-economic aspects of the region concerned. People's knowledge of the trees and the veneration of the sthala vrikshas inculcate in them a sense of responsibility to protect the environment.

*As narrated by
Prof.Mrs.Balambal.*



Sthala viruksha's main motivation is to use the flowers, leaf for temple poojas.

Navarathri Celebrations—2013





Bala Prastha

Very often we are lost in our own affairs that we fail to see and respond to the needs of others. As good human beings, we should respond to the call of anyone who needs help. These little things help us to lead a very fruitful life. Give yourself that joy and make this world a happy place.

It was a bitter, cold evening. The old man's beard was glazed by winter's frost while he waited for a ride across the river. The wait seemed endless. His body became numb and stiff from the frigid north wind. He heard the faint, steady rhythm of approaching hooves galloping along the frozen path. Anxiously, he watched as several horsemen rounded the bend. He let the first one pass by without an effort to get his attention. Then another passed by... and another. Finally, the last rider neared the spot where the old man sat like a snow statue.

As this one drew near, the old man caught the rider's eye and said, "Sir, would you mind giving an old man a ride to the other side? There doesn't appear to be a passageway by foot."

Reining his horse, the rider replied, "Sure hop aboard."

Seeing the old man was unable to lift his half-frozen body from the ground, the horseman dismounted and helped the old man onto the horse. The horseman took the old man not just across the river, but to his destination, which was just a few miles away.

As they neared the tiny but cozy cottage, the horseman's curiosity caused him to inquire, "Sir, I noticed that you let several other riders pass by without making an effort to secure a ride. Then I came up and you immediately asked me for a ride. I'm curious why, on such a bitter winter night you would wait and ask the last rider. What if I had refused and left you there?"

The old man lowered himself slowly down from the horse, looked the rider straight in the eyes, and replied, "I've been around here for some time. I reckon I know people pretty good."

The old-timer continued, "I looked into the eyes of the other riders and immediately saw there was no concern for my situation. It would have been useless even to ask them for a ride. But when I looked into your eyes, kindness and compassion were evident. I knew, then and there, that your gentle spirit would welcome the opportunity to give me assistance in my time of need."

Those heartwarming comments touched the horseman deeply. "I'm most grateful for what you have said," he told the old man. "May I never get too busy in my own affairs that I fail to respond to the needs of others with kindness and compassion".



Kadamba Tree

Kadamba tree is the sthala vriksham of our Balambika temple. Here is the little background of the most liked tree of Devi Balambika. The Kadamba tree is also called as “common bur flower tree”. Its botanical name is *Anthocephalus Cadamba*. The flower of this tree is red to orange in colour, occurring in dense, globe-like head. It nicely assumes the shape of a ball. When the tree is in bloom, one can see the tree loaded with numerous beautiful flowers. The flowering usually begins when the tree is 4–5 years old. The Mother Goddess resides in a Kadamba forest, hence she is often referred to as Kadamba Vana Vāsinī. Kadamba tree is suitable for reforestation programs. It can even be used in Agroforestry practic-

es. The fresh leaves can act as fodder for cattle. The ornamental tree is also used for soil reclamation. It sheds large amounts of leaf and non-leaf litter which on decomposition improves some physical & chemical properties of soil under its canopy. This reflects an increase in the level of soil organic carbon, cation exchange capacity, available plant nutrients and exchangeable bases. The fragrant orange flowers attract pollinators like bees, butterflies & birds. Furthermore, this tree can grow best in alluvial sites like riverbanks and in the transitional zone between swampy, permanently flooded and periodically flooded areas. This beautiful tree is also known for its medicinal virtues. The tree has astringent & antipyretic properties. It is believed to have cure for ulcers, digestive ailments, diarrhoea, expectorant, fever, vomiting etc. A yellow dye is obtained from the root bark. Kadamba flowers are an important raw material in the production of attar, Indian perfume with Sandalwood (*Santalum Album*) base in which one of the essences is absorbed through hydro-distillation. The tree is grown along avenues, roadsides and villages for shade. The fresh leaves are sometimes used as serviettes or plates.



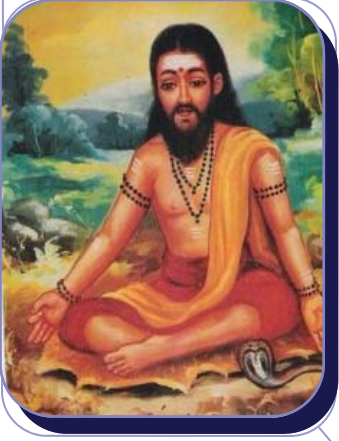
Kadamba tree is the sthala vriksham of our Balambika temple.

2013-12-06: Sthala Vriksham @ Malur Sri Balambika temple premises



2013-12-06: Sthala Vriksham @ Malur Sri Balambika temple premises





He has a flavour for imagination and often mentions that salvation is not possible without love in one's heart.

Siddhar Tharesanam: Pambatti Siddhar

Pambatti Siddhar was among the 18 siddhars who lived at various time periods in India, mainly southern India. His poems are roughly around 600 lines of text which are available today. His poems are written in Tamil and he is famous for finishing his poems with the term 'Aadu Pambe' which literally means 'Dance, O Snake'. His poems are always addressed to the snakes for which he had a fascination. Some of his poems were also addressed to his spiritual teacher or guru (Sattaimuni). Pambatti Siddhar comes from the line of saints who are believed to have possessed siddhis or supernatural powers through rigorous meditation and other spiritual exercises. He is also believed to have caught snakes and sold them for a living before he ventured into his spiritual quest.

Sri Pambatti Siddhar attained the eight supernatural powers called 'Ashtamasiddhi' after performing penance for a very long time in a cave on Marudamalai, near Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. Also he lived in places like Mahalingamalai in Vathiraayiruppu, Kollimalai, Madurai, Puliyur and Bhavani. One notable aspect of his works are the usage of common slang language to explain complex spiritual experiences and siddhis. He has a flavour for imagination and often mentions that salvation is not possible without love in one's heart. He also had performed pooja and meditated near Holy Marudha Tree at Marudamalai and worshipped Lord Murugan. He is believed to have attained Samadhi by practicing his rigorous techniques in Sankarankoil.

He is believed to have lived for about 123 Years.

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