

Balavin Kural

Balambika Divya Sangam

January 2013 Vol 2 Issue 9



**Bala Speaks... on realizing
your inner potential, to
reach your goal**
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legends associated with this
festival**
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Dolai Utsava Murthy Abhishekam:

Abhishekam will be performed for the Dolai Utsava Murthy on Tuesdays/Fridays. Devotees who are interested please contact Sashikala Venkatesh (9886895627).



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, Marur. Those who are interested in contributing towards this cause, please contact

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If you would like to participate, contribute or require more details, please contact us via email. Contributions can be made in cash/cheque/DD/online transfer etc. Please give us your feedback and do share your ideas and experiences with us so that we can continue to give you the best.

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BALAMBIKA DIVYA SANGAM WISHES ITS MEMBERS...



A VERY HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

नववर्षस्य शुभाशयाः

ಹೊಸ ವರ್ಷದ ಶುಭಾಶಯಗಳು

ನೂತನ ಸಂವತ್ಸರ ಸುಭಾಕಾಂಕ್ಷಲು

இனிய புத்தாண்டு வாழ்த்துக்கள்

Bala Speaks...



**When you start realizing your potential, your own ability;
by having faith in yourself, you can make things happen the way you want them to.**

If you wait around for good things to happen, you could be waiting forever.

**Rather than bemoaning your situation, or blaming things on bad luck,
there are ways you can create opportunities for yourself every day.**

It's never going to be absolutely easy,

but waiting for the universe to present you with exactly what you want, isn't realistic.

If you know what you want, there's no reason why you can't work towards that and make it happen.

Divya Tattvam

A divine insight into the Bala Sahasranama Stotram - By Smt. Asha Manoharan

Siva:

She who gives *moksha* or liberation from the dualities of joy and sorrow.



We know Siva as a destroyer and part of Shakti. What we don't understand is that Siva is the liberation and it the state of *atma* away from the worldly pleasures and that is the reason why Siva is often described as the yogi who has no attachments to earthly pleasures. The *tattvum* is that Siva is the yogic aspect of Shakti and that is what is implied here in Bala Sahasranamam by calling Bala as Lalitha Siva, which simply means the giver of *moksha* or liberation. To understand this concept, we need to understand the concept of Siva, the liberator and the destroyer, as some would call it.

Siva is pure consciousness and he is represented as a linga. Linga is derived from the Sanskrit root Lika, which means to sculpt or to paint, and Linga means one that sculpts or paints. God being the Sculptor of the Universe, is known as Linga, and this word has become ultimately, to mean any form or symbol that represents Him. Another derivation, of the word Lingam is Ling, which means involution, and Gam, which means evolution. So Lingam is the principle of involution and evolution combined together, and such a combination can only be traced to God, the

primordial cause of the whole *Jagat*.

Every particle of this great *Jagat* is moved by God. There cannot be any movement without God, and the existence of the universe would be altogether impossible without Divine Energy. The principle of creation has been very minutely and systematically described in our *shastras*, according to which Siva Linga is the embodiment of the cosmic creation.

There was the Nirguna Brahman; and there was the primordial cosmic element called Maya. Maya is an extremely subtle matter without any form or shape, and it is of two kinds - Suddha Maya and Asuddha Maya - or the lower and upper Maya. This Maya is in the presence of Sivam or Nirguna Brahman and that of its Shakti or Divine Energy. This Shakti hav-

The name and form - Nama and Rupa - is known as Omkara Pranava; and this is the seed and seat of all matter and force. The Nada is represented by a line and the Bindu by a disc. It is this Nada or vibration that is known as Linga and Bindu is what is known as its Pita.

ing energized Suddha Maya, the mundane egg of the universe was formed. This was Nada or the principle of sound. This was what is known as Nama or name - the first expression of limitation. From this Nada or Name, came out Bindu or Rupa, i.e., the form - the second stage of limitation. This name and form - Nama and Rupa - is known as Omkara Pranava; and this is the seed and seat of all matter and force. The Nada is represented by a line and the Bindu by a disc. It is this Nada or vibration that is known as Linga and Bindu is what is known as its Pita.

Siva Linga again is said to be of three kinds - Vyaktam, Avyaktam and Vyaktavyaktam or Sakalam, Nishkalam, and Sakalanishkalam. The pure form of Sat, Chit and Anandham of Sivam is known as Avyaktam or Nishkala Lingam. The form to which name and form are particularly traceable is called Vyaktavyaktam or Sakalanishkala Lingam. It is this that is generally known as Sadakkiam or Siva Lingam. The form in which name and form are fully developed is called Vyaktam or Sakala Lingam.

This Lingam with its Pitam or the principle of Name and Form is still beyond comprehension, and the form that could be comprehended a little better came out of the Bindu, referred above in the order of evolution. This is what is known as Sadakkiam or SadaSivam. This is Rupa-Rupam, or with shape and without shape. From this SadaSivam, came out Maheswara. With fully developed form, from him Rudra, in the region of Asuddha Maya, from him Vishnu, and from him, Brahma.

These nine different phases or Navapitam are the different stages of evolution, which the great God - or properly speaking - His Shakti - assumed in manifesting Itself to the souls - or in fact, to excite their intelligence, and evolve this *Jagat* or universe out of Maya.

Siva Linga again is said to be of three kinds - Vyaktam, Avyaktam and Vyaktavyaktam or Sakalam, Nishkalam, and Sakalanishkalam. The pure form of Sat, Chit and Anandham of Sivam is known as Avyaktam or Nishkala Lingam. The form to which name and form are particularly traceable is called Vyaktavyaktam or Sakalanishkala Lingam. It is this that is generally known as Sadakkiam or Siva Lingam. The form in which name and form are fully developed is called Vyaktam or Sakala Lingam. Under this class of Vyaktalingams fall the 25 forms of Maheswara, such as Chandrasekara, Uma Maheswara etc. These forms are fully developed and are said to

embody the various limbs of a perfect form, such as head, face, hands, legs, etc. It is the embodiment of all these limbs that is called Maheswara Linga, and can we then say that the figure embodying all these limbs represents only one of such limbs - the phallus - and can we call the Avyakta and Vyaktavyakta Lingas which have no body or shape whatever, a phallus?

This Sadakkiam or Siva Lingam is again explained in the Agamas in five other forms; namely, Siva Sadakkiam, Amurti Sadakkiyam, Murti Sadakkiyam, Kartiru Sadakkiyam and Karma Sadakkiam. Of these five, the Murti Sadakkiya-Linga and Kartiru-Sadakkiya-Linga exhibit in their forms fully developed faces, and they are called Mukha-Linga-Murti or Linga with a face.

The Agamas explain at length that this Linga embodies in it the various differentiations of the *Jagat* known as He, She and It, and in fact, they allot different portions of this Linga for the different differentiations. This form, again, embodies in it the Hindu Triad of Brahma, Vishnu, and Rudra, as well as the Vyashti forms of Pranava which is the germ of the 96 elementary principles of the *Jagat* known as Tattvas.

The Siva Linga that is generally seen in many of our temples is the form of Karmasadakkiam, which embodies in it the jnana-lingam of Nadam and the Pita Lingam of Bindu. This is what is known as Sadakkiam, or the form of God in His capacity as the Agent of the five actions of Srishti, Stiti, Sankkaram, Thirobhavam and Anugraham. In other words, Siva in His capacity as the Agent of Panchakrityam is known as Linga, thereby meaning the Sculptor of the Universe, as already explained and as the primordial germ of the cosmic appearance. The Agamas explain at length that this Linga embodies in it the various differentiations of the *Jagat* known as He, She and It, and in fact, they allot different portions of this

Linga for the different differentiations. This form, again, embodies in it the Hindu Triad of Brahma, Vishnu, and Rudra, as well as the Vyashti forms of Pranava which is the germ of the 96 elementary principles of the *Jagat* known as Tattvas.

The Linga is said to represent the sacred fire of the Vedic Yajnas, while the temples stand for the sacrificial grounds. These temples again represent our hearts or Hridaya, and Siva is said to live in our hearts in the form of a Linga or a glow of effulgence, as the soul of our souls.

If we refer to the Puranas, we find the Siva Linga being further explained. When Brahma and Vishnu, in their arrogance, fought with each other for supremacy, the Lord Parameswara appeared in their midst in the form of a flame whose beginning or end they were unable to discover. This flame of immeasurable effulgence is called Linga. This Linga is said to represent the sacred fire of the Vedic Yajnas, while the temples stand for the sacrificial grounds. These temples again represent our hearts or Hridaya, and Siva is said to live in our hearts in the form of a Linga or a glow of effulgence, as the soul of our souls. The following stanza from the works of Sri Ulagudya Nayanar will clearly show the nature of the Sivalinga.

"மலமெனுந்தடத்திற் கருமசேதகத்தின்
மாயையாங்கிழங்கிலங்குறித்து
மன்னுமுவெட்டாந் தத்துவநாள
மலரிதழலித்தை யேழ்வித்தை நலமிருமீசன்
சதாசிவமிரண்டும் நண்ணுகேசரங்களாகுஞ்
சத்திநற்பொருட்டாகு நாதமேவிந்து
நயந்தகண்ணாமென விரவி
யிலகுமென்னுடலபதும பீடிகை
நீயிருந்தருளாசனமென."

The heart is the place of pooja and the Nabhi (abdomen) is the place for homa. Corresponding to the heart there is a place of worship outside, and corresponding to the Nabhi there is the Sivagnihotra kundam.

The tank is Anava. The soil is karma. The root is Maya. The 24 tattvas from prithivi to Prakriti, the stalk. The 8 petals are the 7 vidya tattvas and suddhavidya. The kesaras (stamens) are the Isvara tattva and Sadakya tattva. The pistil of the flower is the Sakti tattva. The Nada and Bindu form the ovary. Here, apart from the Atma Vidya tattvas and suddhavidya, the Linga proper is made up of Isvara and Sadakya, Bindu and Nada tattvas. The Agama acharyas prescribe internal as well as external poojas and Homas. The heart is the place of pooja and the Nabhi (abdomen) is the place for homa. Corresponding to the heart there is a place of worship outside, and corresponding to the Nabhi there is the Sivagnihotra kundam.

Temples of India - A journey through the heritage of time

- By Smt. Asha Manoharan

Our next destination was Thirumulaivayil, also known to the locals as Thirumullaivasal. Thirumullaivasal is a village in Kollidam Taluk, Nagapattinam District in Tamil Nadu. It is 53.1 kms from Nagapattinam, the main city in the district and 205 kms from the state capital Chennai. Kollidam, Maharajapuram, Mahendrapalli, Muthalaimedu, Nalla Vinayapuram, Olaiyanputhur are villages in the same Kollidam Taluk.

The nearby villages with respective distances are Edamanal(1.6 kms), Thirunagari(4.4 kms), Kadavasal(4.6 kms), Palayapalyam (5.3 kms), Puduthurai (5.5 kms). Nearby towns are Kollidam (0.5 k.m.) Sirkazhi (9.3 kms), Sembanar Koil (18.6 kms), Mayiladuthurai(25.3 kms).

The following is the route from Sirkazhi. The total distance is 14.1 kms and it takes about 23 mins to reach the temple.

1.	Head west toward Old NH	0.2 km
2.	Continue straight onto Old NH Pass by Sirkazhi Post Office (on the left)	0.3 km
3.	Turn right	0.8 km
4.	Take the 3rd left	12.1 km
5.	Turn right Destination will be on the right	0.7 km

The temple here is called the Mullaivananathar temple. The *moolavar* is Mullaivananathar also known as Masilamaniswarar or Yuga Parameswarar and the Amman is called Anikonda Kothai Ammai or Sathyananda Soundari. Thirugnana Sambandar had praised the lord of this temple thus:

ஊனேறு வேலின் உருவேறு கண்ணி ஒளியேறு கொண்ட ஒருவன்
ஆனேற தேறி யழகேறு நீறன் அரவேறு பூணும் அரனூர்
மானேறு கொல்லை மயிலேறி வந்து குயிலேறு சோலை
மருவித் தேனேறு மாவின் வளமேறி யாடு **திருமுல்லை வாயில்** இதுவே.



Temple entrance

As I walked through the corridors of this temple, I observed that there was no Palli Arai in this temple. Palli Arai puja is performed at all Shiva temples, both in the morning and at night. But the Tirumullai-vayil temple has no such Palli Arai. Lord Mullai-vananathar is a 3.5 feet tall and big *swayambu murti*. He is also praised as Yuthika Parameswarar. Mother

Anikonda Kothai, also praised as Sathyananda Soundari, worshipped the Lord here to learn the Panchakshara Mantra. Lord is a Guru here, so no regular pujas are conducted like the other Shiva temples. The Palli Arai puja is also not there, because Shiva and Ambal have only a guru shishya relationship.



Poojari opening the door for us to have darshan of Mullaivananathar

The legend about this temple is that, Susavi, the eldest son of Vamadeva placed his father's bones after his demise in the holy water at the temple premises. When he put the bones in the water, they turned into diamond. He immediately performed all the last rites for his father in this place that

granted total salvation to his father. It is still believed that Holy Ganga springs here on the north-west direction of the temple. The temple was built 1300 years ago by King Killivalavan.



In the evenings, the *siddhars* visit the temple and in this photo they are seen as spots of light. The cameras were very sensitive to capture them.





Ambal Sannadhi

King Killi Valavan, grandfather of Karikal Valavan was suffering from skin problems. Palace doctors advised him that he should have a bath in a reputed Shiva Sthala. He came to this place for a bath in the sea. The place was dense with *Mullai* plants which bound the legs of the horses. They could not move further. The king removed the plants with his sword. The sword hit a Shivalinga hidden under the bushes. It began to bleed. The king was shocked

and thought he had killed somebody and on cleaning the place, he found the Linga bleeding and attempted to kill himself for the mistake he had committed. Lord with Mother Parvati immediately appeared before him on His Nandi vehicle and protected Killivalavan. Thus the place came to be known as Tiru Mullai Vayil. The scar on the Linga is still visible.



Temple Vimanam

The early Cholas built numerous temples and this temple comes under this category. The early temples were simple stone temples with stone carvings in the *vimanam* alone. Aditya-I and Parantaka-I were prolific builders for their faith. Inscriptions of Aditya-I record that he built a number of temples along the banks of the river Kaveri. These temples were much smaller in comparison to the huge monumental structures of the later Cholas and were probably brick structures rather than stone.

You, Me and our cup of Yoga

Different Streams, One Goal - By Gargi Parthasarathy

Yoga has become synonymous with an overall body-mind fitness solution for many people around the world. As its popularity is increasing, so are the different types of Yoga classes. If you step out today to find a Yoga class, you might find that the choice is quite baffling. There are so many different disciplines and techniques which have evolved into a stream of their own. Each Yoga style offers something to everyone; there are classes specifically designed for those who need a lean limber frame, to classes designed to suit a more meditative approach and everything in between the two.

Traditionally, Yoga was practised solely to experience spiritual enlightenment, to experience one's own true nature and self. But as with everything, it has been trimmed to meet the demands of a fast paced life with the ultimate hope that once you pick a style, no matter which one, it will eventually lead you onto the final goal.

With so many different styles, it sometimes gets confusing to pick and choose one method to start with. It is important to find out which style benefits your body, mind and soul. Here I've enlisted a gist of the most important styles and the basic differences in approach to each one of them. The idea is to understand what you need at this point of time in your life and pick an appropriate path of Yoga and follow it. As you try out different classes, you will notice there are a lot of common aspects in every type of Yoga. Not every type is an island unto itself. They all borrow or lend into the other types, which makes it very flexible for an individual to alter their personal practise depending on their phase of life.

01. Vinyasa Yoga:

A type of Yoga which correlates breath to movement and unifies the body and mind. This is usually a fast

paced workout with a series of asanas being practised in a sequence. The Surya-Namaskaram asana sequence is an example of Vinyasa. Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga, the main proponent being **Shri Pat-tabhi Jois** is a type of Vinyasa. There are other Yoga forms which use the same concept of linking movement to breath like Power Yoga which was created mainly for an American audience but having the same backbone and structure of Vinyasa.

2. Iyengar Yoga:

Shri B.K.S Iyengar, is the main proponent of this style. Here you can go into detail in every pose and experience the effects and benefits of every asana. Its main calling card is an intense focus on the subtleties of each posture. Most poses are held for a longer period of time. Another unique feature of this style is the use of props to intensify the practise.

3. Viniyoga:

This is an individualized yoga technique which tailors a yoga routine that will help address and integrate the physical, emotional and spiritual transitions we face in life on a regular basis. In this practice, created by **Shri T.K.V. Desikachar**, poses are synchronized with the breath in sequences determined by the needs of the practitioner.

4. Bikram Yoga:

This style of Yoga is practised in a room heated to 95 to 100 degree F, to replicate Yoga's birthplace climate. It's typically a series of 26 poses that allows for a loosening of tight muscles and sweating. This is also called Hot Yoga in some places.

5. Kundalini Yoga:

This style stems from the Tantra yoga path. The practice of Kundalini Yoga incorporates postures, dynamic breathing techniques, and chanting and medi-

tating on mantras. Practitioners concentrate on awakening the energy at the base of the spine and drawing it upward through each of the seven chakras.

6. Kriya Yoga:

This ancient yoga practice was re-introduced to the world by **Mahavatar Babaji** and is being taught under a Guru-shishya parampara. This style is more meditative and spiritual based. It focuses on the aspects of Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga to achieve enlightenment.

7. Hatha Yoga:

This style of Yoga traditionally focuses on physical culture through hatha (persistence), thus preparing the body for the next step of enlightenment. It includes asanas, pranayama, shatkriya, mudras and

meditation to guide a person on the yogic path.

An interesting point to note is that the proponents of the major styles listed above like Vinyasa, Iyengar and Viniyoga were all disciples under the same guru, the great **Thirumalai Krishnamacharya**.

There are many other styles out there like Anusara, ISHTA, Kripalu, Sivananda, Jivamukthi etc. I have just covered the most basic disciplines. As always, Yoga is what you make of it. Its ultimate goal is spiritual enlightenment, no matter where and how you start. In the words of Swami Vivekananda *“You have to grow from inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.”*

2012 Lalitha Homam festivity



Preparations for Lalitha Homam



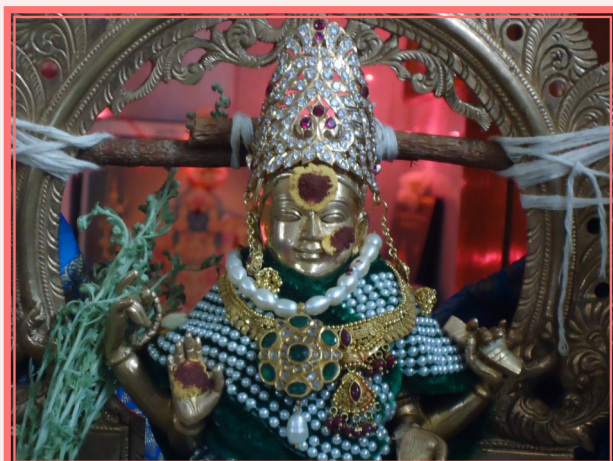
Sangam President Smt. Asha Manoharan honoring a '*pasu madu*', a customary ritual, to consecrate this propitious event.



Offering of food to the *homa*.



Kanya pooja, Sumangali pooja, and Brahmachari pooja



Chinna Chella Bala, Kanmaniyae Bala, Azhagu Deiva Bala, Engal veettu chella pillai Bala

Did you know...?

By Smt. Asha Manoharan

Pongal is celebrated to say thank you to the Sun, Water, the cattle and the farmers who have brought us the food that would keep us fit and healthy. It is the first festival which comes in the beginning of every new year. As the dates for this festival are calculated by the solar calendar (i.e. Western), the dates of January 13-16 never change. This period is referred to as Uttarayan Punyakalam and is considered auspicious. Legend has it that the Devas wake up after a six-month long slumber during this period. So it is believed that those who pass away during Uttarayana attain salvation. In fact, Bheeshma is believed to have waited for the dawn of Uttarayana before he gave up his life. There are many legends associated with Pongal.

Legend of Mount Govardhan

The first day of the festival **Bhogi Pongal** has an association with the legend of Lord Indra (the God of clouds and rains) and Lord Krishna. Earlier, people used to worship Lord Indra who was the King of the deities. This honor given to Lord Indra made him swell with pride and arrogance. He thought of himself as the most powerful of all the beings. When child Krishna came to know about this, he thought of a plan to teach him a lesson. He persuaded his cowherd friends to worship Mt. Govardhan rather than Lord Indra. This angered Lord Indra and he sent forth the clouds to generate non-stop thunder, lightning, heavy rains and to flood the land. As per the tale, Lord Krishna lifted the huge Govardhan Parvat on his little finger to protect the cowherds and the cattle. He kept standing with the lifted mount to save all humans from the ravaging storm of Lord Indra. The rains continued for three days and at last, Indra realized his mistake and the divine power of Lord Krishna. He promised humility and begged Krishna's forgiveness. Since then, Krishna allowed the Bhogi celebrations to continue in honor of Indra. Thus, this day gave the origin to the Pongal celebration. The

festival got another name of **Indran** from this legendary story.

Legend of Lord Shiva

Another legend associated with this festival relates to Lord Shiva. The third day of Pongal known as **Mattu Pongal**, involves Lord Shiva and his mount, Nandi (Basava), the bull. According to the legend, Lord Shiva once asked his bull to go to Earth and deliver his message to the people to have an oil massage and bath daily and to eat food once a month. By accident Basava announced to have an oil massage and bath once a month and eat food daily. Enraged Shiva cursed Basava and said that due to this mistake, there would be lack of grains on Earth. He banished the bull to live on earth forever and help people plough the fields. Thus, Mattu Pongal has an association with the cattle. Each day of this festival has a special significance, however, it is celebrated more grandly in the villages, while the city folk mainly celebrate only on the second day.

First Day - Bhogi:

The first day of the festival is called Bhogi. On Bhogi, everyone cleans their homes from top to bottom, and collects all unwanted goods. In the evening, they light bonfires and burn what can be burnt.

Second Day - Surya Pongal:

The second day of the festival, Surya Pongal, is the day on which the celebrations actually begins, and it is the first day of the Tamil month *Thai*. On this day, Surya, the sun God is worshipped and women wake up early to create elaborate *kolam* (Rangoli) on the grounds in front of their doorway or home. *Kolams* are created with colored rice flour placed on the ground. Everyone wears their new dresses and uses the new utensils or household items, which will replace the ones discarded the previous day. On this day, the new rice is collected and cooked in pots un-

til they overflow. It is this overflowing which is known as *ponguthal*, hence the festival is called Pongal. This overflowing of rice is a joyous occasion, and the children and adults will shout out 'Pongal o Pongal!' Children dance and make music to the tune of these words. The rice is cooked and prepared as a dish called Pongal. This Pongal variety is called *ven pongal*, *ven* meaning white. Another variety is also prepared with dal and jaggery (sweet), called *Sakkarai Pongal*, *sakkarai* meaning sweet. To accompany the *ven pongal*, *kara avial* or *sambar* (stew), is made along with *vadai*, *idli*, and spicy accompaniments.

Third Day - Mattu Pongal:

The third day is called Mattu Pongal, *mattu* meaning cow. This day is devoted to paying homage to cattle. Cows and Bulls are decorated with paint and bells and people pray to them. In fact, in my Pongal experience, the cattle were decorated with bells on their neck, and *kumkum* placed on their head. People pay respect to them by bending down, like praying in a temple, and touching their feet and foreheads, followed by an *arati* (showing fire to the object of praise) and offering the cattle *prasadam* (food offer-

ing, in this case, pongal). In some villages in south India, there are bullfights of varying types.

Fourth Day - Kanu Pongal :

The fourth day is termed as Kanu Pongal. On this day, people travel to see other family members, the younger members of the family pay homage to the elders. Another thing many do is leave food out on banana leaves for birds to have. Every sister keeps leftover food from Mattu Pongal for sparrows and crows. They put *pudi* in banana leaves. While keeping the food on the leaves, they say "Kaka Kurvi k' Kalyanam" and they serve this food to the birds and pray for the well being of their brother(s).

**“Vazhkaiyel anandam ponga
uldalil arogyam ponga
mugathil seripu ponga
pongadum intha thai pongal
ungal ethaithil...”**



Ambal's Keerthanai

Neeye Thunai...

Composition: Smt. Asha Manoharan

Sung by: Smt. Ambika Arvindd

Ragam: Hamsadhwani

Talam: Adi

Pallavi

Neeye thunai endrum neeye thunai

Ver yevarum yenaku illai

Anupallavi

Oliye mangala oliyum neeye

Arule arulin alaikadal neeye

Adarippai neeye odi vanthu ingu

Charanam

Charanam adainthen unnidame

Aadarithe arula tthadai ingu yenna

Bhuvana sundari bhuvana sundariye

Kaathirundu yennai aadarippaye



Sangam Annadanam Initiative at Modern English School, Malur



Annadanam hosted by Sangam, offers varieties of delicious rice items, including vegetable *pulav* and *pongal* to 183 students.

“Balambika Divya Sangam would like to thank all the Annadanam sponsors for their support.
May Bala shower Her blessings on you and your family”

-President
Smt. Asha Manoharan

Sangam Milk Scheme Initiative at Modern English School, Malur



Children visiting Bala Temple on New Year, Malur



Bala Prastha

One beautiful spring day a red rose blossomed in a forest. Many kinds of trees and plants grew there. As the rose looked around, a pine tree nearby said, "What a beautiful flower. I wish I was that lovely." Another tree said, "Dear pine, do not be sad, we can not have everything." The rose turned its head and remarked, "I am the most beautiful plant in this forest." A sunflower raised its yellow head and asked, "Why do you say that? There are many beautiful plants in this forest. You are just one of them." The red rose replied, "I see everyone looking at me and admiring me." Then the rose looked at a cactus and said, "Look at that ugly plant full of thorns!" The pine tree said, "Red rose, what kind of talk is this? Who can say, what beauty is? You have thorns too." The proud red rose looked angrily at the pine and said, "I thought you had good taste! You do not know what beauty is. You cannot compare my thorns to that of the cactus." "What a proud flower", thought the trees. The rose tried to move its roots away from the cactus, but it could not move. As the days passed, the red rose would look at the cactus and say insulting things, like: This plant is useless? How sorry I am to be his neighbour. The cactus never got upset and he even tried to advice the rose, saying, "God did not create any form of life without a purpose." Spring passed, and the weather became very warm. Life became difficult in the forest, as the plants and animals needed water and no rain fell. The red rose began to wilt. One day the rose saw the sparrows stick their beaks into the cactus and then fly away, re-

freshed. It was puzzling, the red rose asked the pine tree what the birds were doing. The pine tree explained that the birds got water from the cactus. "Does it not hurt when they make holes?" asked the rose. "Yes, but the cactus does not like to see any birds suffer," replied the pine. The rose opened its eyes in wonder and said, "The cactus has water?" "Yes, you can also drink from it. The sparrow can bring water to you if you ask the cactus for help."

The red rose felt too ashamed of its past behaviour, to ask for water from the cactus, but then it finally asked the cactus for help. The cactus kindly agreed and the birds filled their beaks with water and watered the rose's roots. Thus the rose learned a lesson never to judge anyone by their appearance again.



Our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors and patrons for supporting the services of Balambika Divya Sangam

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