

# Balavin Kural

Balambika Divya Sangam

July 2012 Vol 2 Issue 3



**2012 Lalitha Homam**

**A celebration of another eventful year of Bala's festivities**

**An introduction to Patanjali  
Yoga: page 8**

**Understanding Dharma  
and the Hindu way of life  
page 14**



# SNAPSHOT

## Bala Sahasranamam Parayanam:

August 10th, at 3:00 PM at 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 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

Mrs. Asha Manoharan  
asha.raji@gmail.com



## Lalitha Homam:

2012 Lalitha Homam event which took place from July 6th - 8th, was a grand success. Thanks to all the sponsors and devotees for supporting and being a part of this propitious event.



## CONTENTS

Temple Construction Updates	3
Bala Speaks	4
Divya Tattvam	5
You, Me and our cup of Yoga	8
We are very thankful to...	11
Bala Prastha	12
Inner Whispers...	14
Did you know...?	16

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If you would like to participate, contribute or require more details, please contact us via email or website. Contributions can be made in cash/cheque/DD/online transfer etc. For complete details, do email us.

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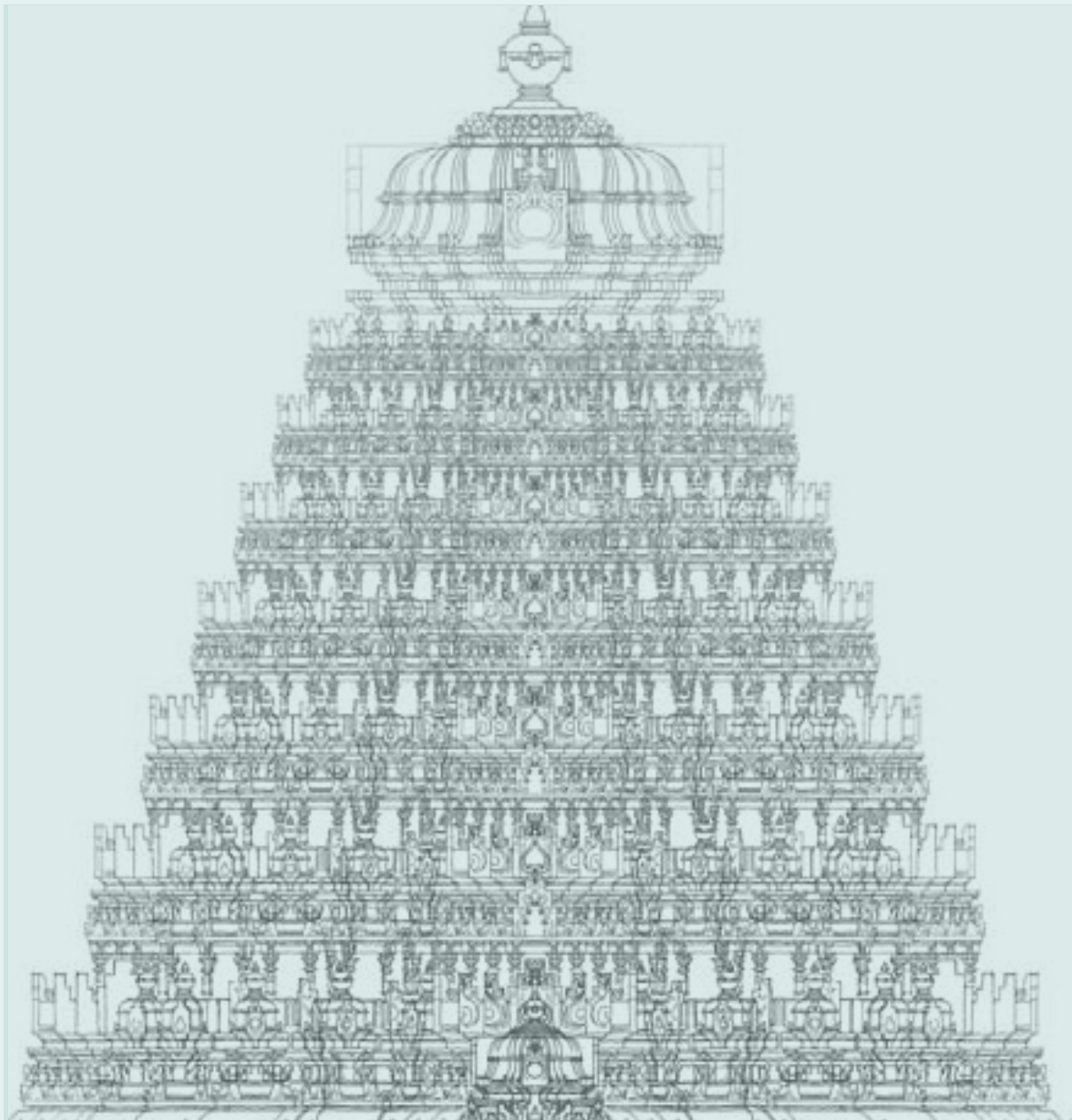
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## MALUR SRI BALAMBIKA TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

- **The Sangam President, Smt. Asha Manoharan visited the temple construction site at Malur to assess the progress.**
- **A meeting with the temple architect Muthiah Sthapathi will be scheduled.**
- **Various issues such as completion of Phase 1 construction, and possible steps to speed up construction work will be discussed.**





**Traditions and customs are an integral part of any society.**

**But these traditions should be properly understood and it must be tested and experimented.**

**If they are reasonable and conducive both to your happiness and to the welfare of others,  
only then should you accept and practise these traditions and customs.**

**But the customs and traditions must be within the framework of religious principles.**

**In other words, one should not violate the religious precepts in order to follow one's traditions.**

**If people are very keen to follow their own traditions which have no religious value at all,  
they can do so provided that they do not practise these traditions in the name of religion.**

**Even then, such practices must be harmless to oneself and to all other living creatures.**

# Divya Tattvam

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

## Sukhadayani

**She is the giver of happiness.**



Happiness is like a butterfly; the more you chase it, the more it will elude you, but if you turn your attention to other things, it will come and sit softly on your shoulder...

Such a happiness is temporary. She is the giver of happiness that is everlasting. But what makes man happy? What happiness are we talking about. To understand that, the concept of happiness itself should be shaken up. To understand happiness we should understand suffering, because life contains suffering or life itself is suffering. That is why we say Devi is the giver of happiness.

We all experience three types of suffering according to great thinkers:

- The first is gross suffering, the suffering of suffering, which would be pain and unhappiness.
- Then we have the suffering of change, which is

happiness tainted with confusion. We experience ordinary forms of happiness, such as when going for a walk in a beautiful park; but if this were true happiness, the longer we walk, the greater our happiness would become. But after a few hours, the happiness we felt while walking, turns to pain and unhappiness, and we want to stop and rest. The confusion here is that when we experience ordinary happiness, we think that it is going to last, so we grasp it. But of course it doesn't last and then we get frustrated and unhappy. Tainted happiness, then entails the suffering that it changes into unhappiness.

- Then, we have what is called the "all pervasively affecting suffering," which refers to all the aggregate factors of our experience – the so-called "five aggregates" of our body, mind, emotions, and so on, which derive from confusion, are mixed with confusion, and perpetuate confusion in this and future lives. These aggregate factors are the basis for experiencing the first two types of suffering. In this sense, they all-pervasively affect every moment of our experience, making each moment contain one or the other of the first two types of suffering.

One may wonder why I am talking about unhappiness and suffering. To follow the path of happiness one should not forget that the root of unhappiness is

She is the giver of happiness that is everlasting. But what makes man happy? What happiness are we talking about. To understand that, the concept of happiness itself should be shaken up. To understand happiness we should understand suffering, because life contains suffering or life itself is suffering. That is why we say Devi is the giver of happiness.

Spiritual happiness is when we want to know God, or when we want to know who we are, or when we want to know the Self. When we are striving to know it, our happiness increases proportionately, but when we attain God, or the Atman, our happiness can be equaled to a thousand billion. So it is a positive approach to life which brings us closer to God.

our inability to understand what we want.

Aristotle says, "Happiness depends on ourselves." More than anybody else, Aristotle enshrines happiness as a central purpose of human life and a goal in itself. As a result he devoted more space to the topic of happiness than any thinker prior to the modern era. Living during the same period as Mencius, but on the other side of the world, he drew some similar conclusions. That is, happiness depends on the cultivation of virtue, though his virtues are somewhat more individualistic than the essentially social virtues of the Confucians. Essentially, Aristotle argues that virtue is achieved by maintaining the Mean, which is the balance between two excesses.

Socrates says "Happiness is obtainable by human effort." Specifically, he recommended gaining rational control over your desires and harmonizing the different parts of your soul. Doing so would produce a divine-like state of inner tranquility that the external world could not effect. True to his word, he cheerfully faced his own death, discussing philosophy right up to the moments before he took the lethal hemlock.

Chandogya Upanishad 7.23 talks about happiness: When totally free from outer contacts a man finds happiness in himself,

He is fully trained in God's discipline and reaches unending bliss.

The experiences we owe to our sense of touch are only sources of unpleasantness.

They have a beginning and an end.

A wise man takes no pleasure in them.

That man is disciplined and happy who can prevail over the turmoil

That springs from desire and anger, here on earth, before he leaves his body.

Bhagavad Gita also suggests happiness:

Diseases have hunger as their worst. Sufferings have dispositions as their worst. Knowing this in proper perspective, freedom (Nibb-ana) is the ultimate happiness. Of all gains, good health is the greatest. Of all wealth, contentment is the greatest. Among kinsmen, the trusty is the greatest. Freedom (Nibb-ana) is the ultimate happiness. Having imbibed the essence of solitude and the essence of tranquility, and imbibing the joyous essence of righteousness, one becomes free from anguish and free from evil.

Chandogya Upanishad 7.22 says:

Mother mine! Bliss have I attained in union with the Divine Master:

Spontaneously has union with the Divine Master come about--

In my mind resounds joyous music.

Fairies of the family of jewel harmony have descended to sing holy songs;

Sing all ye the Lord's song, who have lodged it in heart!

Says Nanak, Bliss have I attained on union with the Divine Master.

According to the Vedas, there is a gradual increase in happiness as we evolve in life: worldly happiness, mental happiness, spiritual happiness.

Stage one: In this world, however much we may

try, however much wealth we may have, however much enjoyments we may have - all our enjoyments will be only to some extent. Not much. Let us say it is to be equal to 1. If a person lives in this world without diseases, having a perfect body, and enjoying everything every moment, his joy can be compared to one.

Stage two: We all believe in heaven. What is the type of heavenly pleasure? In the higher worlds, the happiness will be equal to 100 times more than in this world. If the joy we get here is one, that which we get in heaven is 100. But, both these joys are temporary. We have sufficient experience in this world of such temporary joy to understand this truth. Even in the case of heaven, according to Hinduism, after our good karma is exhausted, we shall have to return. In fact, we shall have to lead more miserable lives here after coming back. So we must seek something still higher. This leads us to stage three.

Stage three: Spiritual happiness is when we want to know God, or when we want to know who we are, or when we want to know the Self. When we are striving to know it, our happiness increases proportionately, but when we attain God, or the Atman, our happiness can be equaled to a thousand billion. So it is a positive approach to life which brings us closer to God.

Once, there was a woodcutter. He used to cut wood in the forest, sell it, and earn money. One day, he met a monk on the way. The monk told him, "Go forward." That's all. This woodcutter did not understand the teaching. He went to the forest, and began cutting wood. Suddenly he remembered the monk's words, "Go forward? Let me go forward then." He went a little forward. There, to his surprise, he saw sandalwood. He was astonished. "Ah! All these days I was only selling ordinary wood. If I had known this place, I could have made much money," he thought. Then he began cutting wood there. Some

time later, he again remembered the monk's words, and went further into the forest. He was surprised to see a mine of gold!

So stage 1 is like the ordinary wood and stage 2 is sandal wood and stage 3 is the gold mine which is the understanding of Devi Herself. Search for eternal bliss which draws you closer to Devi. The bliss is of different types:

Vishayananda: The bliss born of sensuality. This is extremely ordinary. It is, in fact, pain, but confused as bliss.

Shamananda: The bliss born of self-control. We think if we let loose our passions we are great. No! When we control our passions, we are great. Passions are not powers, but our expressions of weakness.

Bhajananda: The bliss born of spiritual practice. The name of God is extremely sweet. By repeating it, we will attain bliss. Initially it is not possible. But as we go forward, there will be immense bliss.

Brahmananda: The bliss born of supreme attainment of Truth. There can be no comparison with this bliss. Because all coverings are removed, we know ourselves as beings of bliss. If you want to find that eternal bliss the easiest way is to surrender yourself to God and think of nothing else.

## You, Me and our cup of Yoga

### Patanjali Yoga Sutras - An Introduction - By Gargi Parthasarathy

Yoga Sutras by Patanjali is a basic and classic literature followed by any yoga enthusiast. It consists of around 196 pithy sayings which gives the reader an essence of Yoga. 'Sutram' in Sanskrit basically means a thread. Just as a thread binds together many beads in a rosary/chain, so too yoga sutras bind together the most important aspects and concept of yoga together. Each sutra/phrase is linked to another through the thread and there is an underlying continuity of idea despite the apparent discontinuity in the concepts presented. This method of instruction focuses more on the internal understanding of the concepts where a student memorises the sutras and then meditates on its deeper meaning.

So is it necessary for an aspirant to read and understand this literature of yoga when we are already practicing techniques of asana and pranayama? Let us answer this question with the help of an analogy. When you meet an interesting person, the first thing which you would notice and study about this person would be their physical attributes, the way they look, speak mannerisms etc. Meeting this same person again you would recognise them but you cannot really claim to "Know" this person. To really know someone you would need to talk to them understand their emotions, their past, their aspirations for the future. In a similar vein, practise of just the asanas and pranayama on a physical level entitles you to just recognise 'Yoga' not 'Know' or experience it in entirety. Yoga is a state of existence. These sutras give the serious practitioner a means to this state of existence. Hence, it is important for any genuine yoga student to read and meditate on the sutras.

The sutras are broken into four parts :

**1. Samadhi Pada-** This section deals with the general nature of Yoga. It seeks to answer the question "What is Yoga?". In Ashtanga Yoga 'Samadhi' oc-

cupies the most important position. Samadhi Pada section is geared towards this goal of Yoga.

**2. Sadhana Pada -** This section seeks to answer the question "Why should anyone practise Yoga". It looks at the misery and suffering inherent in human life and prescribes external (Bahiranga) yogic techniques to prepare a sadhaka for the practice of samadhi. Since this section prepares an aspirant physically, mentally, emotionally and morally for the ultimate practice of higher Yoga it is called Sadhana Pada.

**3. Vibhuti Pada-** This section details the internal yogic techniques (antaranga) which lead an aspirant towards the path of samadhi. It also discusses in detail all the accomplishments achieved through the internal practice of Yoga.

**4. Kaivalya Pada-** This section deals with all the philosophical problems which are involved in the study of Yoga.

#### Section 1 - Samadhi Pada:

##### Sutra 1: Atha Yoga anushasanam:

Translation: Atha (Now) begins the exposition of Yoga.

One might think why even include this as a sutra since it obviously doesn't discuss any great concept of Yoga. But generally a text in the form of sutras begins with an idea of the nature of the text. Another thing to be noticed here is that the author (Patanjali) states in this one sutra that he is not the discoverer but rather an expounder of the science of the Yoga.

##### Sutra 2: Yogas chitta vritthi Nirodaha

Translation: Through the practice of yoga one can stop/cease the fluctuations of the mind.

This is one of the most definitive sutras. It states the basic essence of Yoga. Its like any other physical science where certain concepts are core and definitive to the entire study.



In this article we will look at the application of this particular sutra in 'Yamas'-the first limb of Ash-tanga Yoga. There are many interpretations about Yamas. The Bhagavata Purana states 12 yamas or Yogic restraints. Patanjali advocates 5 yamas as universal vrathas/vows which can be followed irrespective of time or circumstances. These five are:

### **1. Ahimsa -Non violence**

Non violence is often taken as just a physical form of aggression. But violence could also be through speech and thought. Violent thought processes or speech and actions often create mental and emotional turbulence. The real aim and goal of Yoga is to unite the jivatman with the paramatman (The basic definition of Yoga). This can be achieved only when you have a calm and steady mind capable of looking above and beyond yourself. Through the practice of yoga we can calm our minds and discipline it enough to achieve a more non violent state of mind. Conversely the practice of ahimsa without the direct practice of yogic techniques also makes the mind free of all mental modifications.

This brings about a very interesting question. One might ask do we attain a state of yoga through the practice of these limbs or just by the practice of these yamas do we automatically start walking on the path of Yoga. The truth is no matter where you start first, through the conscious practices of yogic techniques or the subconscious imbibing of the yama and Niyamas the path ultimately converges to a path of yoga or a path where the jivatma is on a journey to consciously unite with the paramatman.

### **2. Satya-Being truthful**

Dishonesty is not as simple as calling something red in color a blue object. It is looking inside oneself and being honest with our own nature and coming to terms with it. Lying is often like cloaking our true self which is transparent with layers and layers of dirt. With each layer of dirt you add on, you also create a modification in your mind and convince it to believe in the lie. Being untruthful makes the

transparent and clear jivatman opaque and indistinguishable. Yoga helps an individual discover and maintain 'Satya' and helps in removing these layers one by one.Thus 'Yogas chitti vritti nirodhaha'.

### **3. Asteya-Non covetousness**

Asteya also means being free from envy. It promotes self sufficiency and feeling of completeness. We say that the jivatma is nothing but a partial expression of the paramatman. When the paramatman is complete no matter how minute the jivatman it should also be complete. If there is a sense of self sufficiency and completeness within where is the question of covetousness or envy or greed? Only when man encounters greed or envy does he stray from the path of Yoga. Thus practice of asteya ensure one to be free from unnecessary mental modifications.

### **4. Brahmacharya-Celibacy.**

This Yama essentially means to constrain one's sensual pleasures in order to direct the search for the supreme. History is proof that the need to satisfy sensual desire has only created more problems. The citta is the medium through which a jivatma creates his unique world and evolves in it until the ultimate is reached. Falling prey to sensual pleasures creates 'Citta Vrittis' which can be compared to spirals. Following these spirals will lead you away from the goal of Samadhi not towards it. Yoga stills the mind and stops any more modifications and through its continuous practice one can also get rid of previously accumulated mental ramblings.

### **5. Aparigraha-Non possessiveness**

Possessiveness can also be compared to being stagnant. This is against the law of nature. When you hold onto some things (material or nonmaterial) , it keeps you away from the next essential step. Sometimes the thought of holding onto what you have, becomes so strong and all pervasive that it completely blankets any other aspect of your life. Practice of Yoga slowly tunes your mind to realise the beauty of change and to adopt a non possessive view of life.

Here I have illustrated a simple method to experience the concept of this sutra on yamas using the tool of Asanas. Let us say we are practising Uttanasana. The asana dictates that you have to incorporate slow breathing and push yourself slowly to achieve the final position. When you start doing this your mind which is always wavering is forced to focus on the task at hand. If you are experiencing anger or violent thoughts, the mind which is being gradually led away from the anger automatically becomes more calm. During the course of the Asana you start rationalising the situation and the anger you once felt slowly starts dissipating. If you are a person who is prone to anger, doing this regularly

will automatically tune your mind to divert itself from situations which makes one more violent.

Once Ahimsa is attained through the practice of asana and slow breathing techniques, the mind gradually starts focusing inwards since all the external worries and modifications have been conquered. When the mind starts moving inwards bliss is experienced. Thus we can achieve or experience a drastic shift from a violent state of mind to a more calm and focused mind. This is a classic example of how yoga can calm the fluctuations of the mind.

## We are very thankful to...

### Archana Contribution

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### Pooja items for Bala's House

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### A STORY TO PONDER....

Once upon a time, there was a child ready to be born. One day the child asked God, “They tell me you are going to send me to earth tomorrow, but how am I going to live there being so small and helpless?”

God replied, “Among the many angels, I have chosen one for you. She will be waiting for you and will take care of you.”

The child asked, “But tell me, here in Heaven I don’t do anything else but sing and smile.”

God replied, “Your angel will sing for you every day. And you will feel your angel’s love and be happy.”

The child looked worried and asked, “How am I going to be able to understand when people talk to me, if I don’t know the language that men talk?”

“That’s easy,” God said, “Your angel will tell you the most beautiful and sweet words you will ever hear, and with much patience and care, your angel will teach you how to speak.”

The child looked up at God saying, “And what am I going to do when I want to talk to you?”

God smiled at the child saying, “Your angel will teach you how to pray.”

The child said, “I’ve heard on earth there are bad men. Who will protect me?”

God replied, “Your angel will defend you, even if it means risking her own life!”

The child looked sad, saying, “But I will always be sad because I will not see you anymore.”

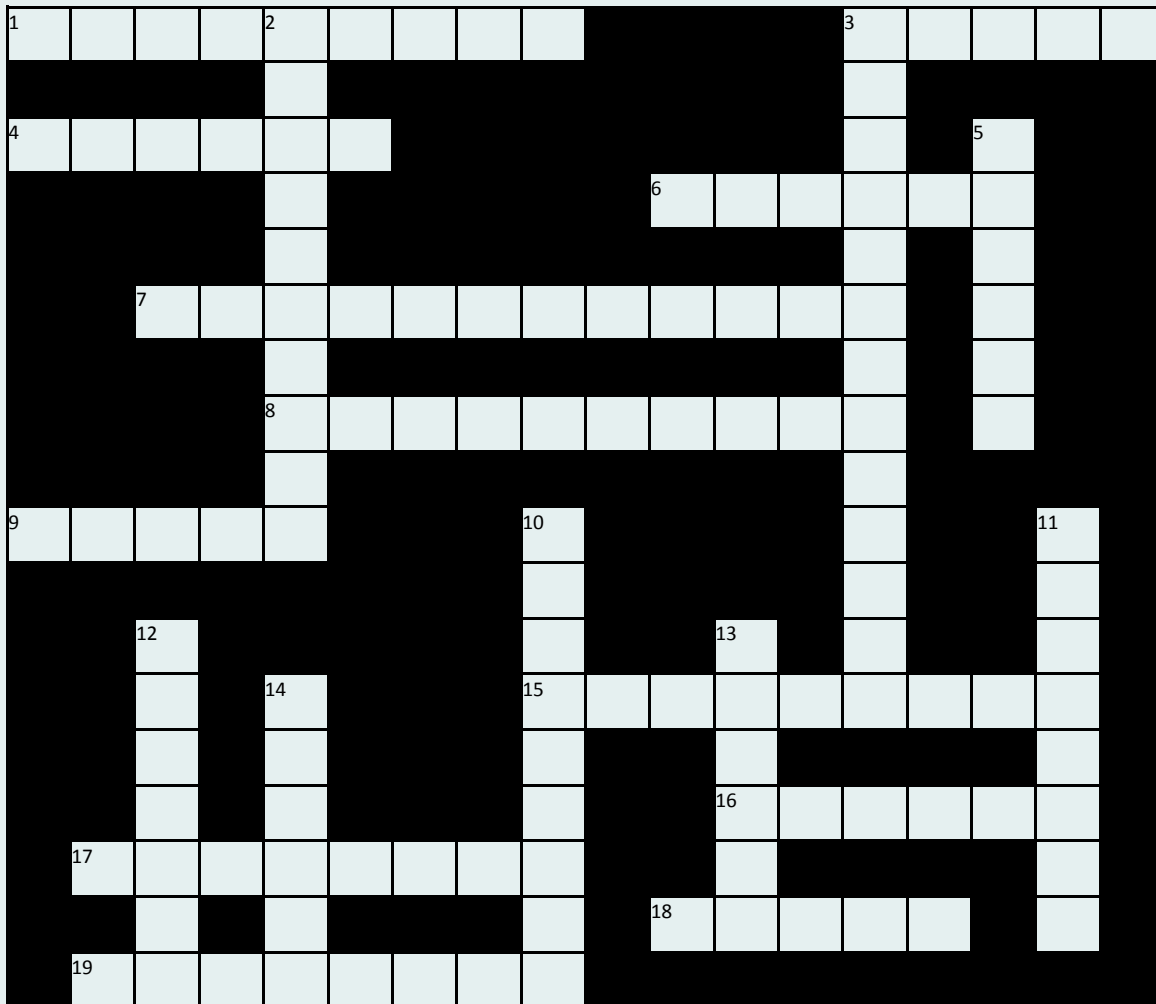
God replied, “Your angel will always talk to you about me and will teach you the way to come back home, even though I will always be next to you.”

At that moment there was much peace in Heaven, but voices from earth could already be heard. The child in a hurry, asked softly, “Oh God, if I am about to leave now please tell me my angel’s name!”

God replied, “Your angel’s name is of no importance... you will simply call her **MOTHER!**”



## CROSSWORD PUZZLE—Based on the characters from the Mahabharata



### Across

### Down

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Was blessed to have a hundred sons</p> <p>3. The teacher of the Kuru Princes</p> <p>4. _____ was uncle and well-wisher of the Pandavas</p> <p>6. Mother of Dhritarashtra</p> <p>7. _____ was the ruler of Indraprastha and the son of Yama</p> <p>8. Drona's son</p> <p>9. Drona's brother-in-law</p> <p>15. Krishna's nephew and Arjuna's favorite son</p> <p>16. Ace archer and Hero of the Mahabharata</p> <p>17. Son of Ganga who took a great vow</p> <p>18. Son of Surya who was orphaned at birth</p> <p>19. Nakula's twin brother</p> | <p>2. Caused the destruction of the Kuru clan</p> <p>3. _____ became king after Pandu left for the forest</p> <p>5. Son of Madri</p> <p>10. Dictated the entire Mahabharata and was a great sage (2 Words)</p> <p>11. Had five husbands</p> <p>12. Arjuna's charioteer in the great war and an incarnation of Vishnu</p> <p>13. The Pandavas hid in _____'s kingdom during exile</p> <p>14. _____ was son of Vayu and nemesis of Duryodhana</p> |
|---|---|

# Inner Whispers...

By Smt. Asha Manoharan

## (1) What is dharma? How is it codified in vedic texts?

Dharma is a symphony of religious duties and political righteousness. The vedic texts express, this tacitly or explicitly, as revelations and given to people in their varying capacities of receptivity as direct lines of approach to the truth either through a discipline or spiritual practice or through symbolism or through significant ritualism of the sacrifice. It is from this complex scheme and formulation that the later idea of Dharma grew and developed. Dharma has always remained some indefinable thing. Thus although Dharma has been upheld as the highest non-legislative law which even the highest state authorities had to obey, there is no where in India, one fixed and uniform formulation of Dharma. Indeed, there have been several formulations and in many respects these formulations themselves have been in conflict with each other, and there are attempts even to reconcile this conflict resulting in some new flexible and synthetic formulation of law. From this complexity of the situation, there has arisen in India some universal and general idea of Dharma and certain recognized variations of the formulations of Dharma. The great Smritis of Yajnavalkya and Manu are attempts to codify this Dharma, and although these two are themselves in conflict with each other in many respects, they have provided a general background of a common formulation of the basic idea of Dharma. But this codification itself was never regarded as absolute, and although in later times they came to be applied rigidly, there were always supervening claims of the unformulated Dharma.

Dharma is indeed a law or a guideline to prevent human beings from falling into *wicked ways* of the ordinary and unbridled demands of impulses, desires, ambitions and egoisms. That is why, Indian culture enjoined upon individuals to restrain the life

of desire for enjoyment and for personal profit under the control of the uplifting law of Dharma. Thus we find in India, the prevalent idea that *Kama and Artha*, passion and personal gain are only the first elementary motives of life for the ordinary man and that they are not to be ends in themselves. *Kama and Artha*, are to be superseded by Dharma. The individual is asked to grow out of passions and impulses and his selfish and egoistic interests to reach the life of ideal law of Dharma.

But even Dharma is not, according to Indian culture, the highest stage or motive of human life. For Dharma itself is not something fixed or rigid. And even if the initial stages of the pursuit of Dharma are guided by some fixed and acceptable code of conduct and action and behavior, the individual has to discover *Swadharma*, one's own specific law of the right rhythm of self-development. For Indian culture recognizes that every individual has his own specific dharma, the peculiar and individual law of the rhythm of his growth appropriate to his own individual functions and special combinations of his qualities and capacities. Thus the life of Dharma has to be a life of inner search, a life of self-knowledge. And when one begins to deal with himself, he discovers series of rhythms and ascending lines of Dharma. The individual is asked and allowed by the Indian culture to follow his *swadharma* to its own extreme limit, and at the height of this pursuit the individual discovers the real truth of himself, the true spiritual stuff of himself and also the true spiritual way of action, which cannot be bound by any previously formulated law of Dharma. This is the inner meaning of spiritual liberation, or *moksha*, which is placed before the individual as the superior or supreme aim of life.

## (2) What is the Hindu way of life?

Hindu way of life is the practice of rules laid out in the Vedas.

1. Practice non-injury, by not harming others by thought, word or deed, even in your dreams. Live a kindly life, revering all beings as expressions of the One Divine energy. Let go of fear and insecurity, the sources of abuse. Knowing that harm caused to others unfailingly returns to oneself, live peacefully with God's creation. Never be a source of dread, pain or injury. Follow a vegetarian diet.

2. Adhere to truthfulness, refraining from lying and betraying promises. Speak only that which is true, kind, helpful and necessary. Knowing that deception creates distance, don't keep secrets from family or loved ones. Be fair, accurate and frank in discussions, a stranger to deceit. Admit your failings. Do not engage in slander, gossip or backbiting.

3. Uphold the virtue of nonstealing, neither thieving, coveting nor failing to repay debt. Control your desires and live within your means. Do not use borrowed resources for unintended purposes or keep them past due. Do not gamble or defraud others. Do not renege on promises. Do not use others' names, words, resources or rights without permission and acknowledgement.

4. Practice divine conduct, controlling lust by remaining celibate when single and faithful in marriage. Before marriage, use vital energies in study, and after marriage in creating family success. Don't waste the sacred force by promiscuity in thought, word or deed. Be restrained with the opposite sex. Seek holy company. Dress and speak modestly.

5. Exercise patience, restraining intolerance with people and impatience with circumstances. Be agreeable. Let others behave according to their nature, without adjusting to you. Don't argue, dominate conversations or interrupt others. Don't be in a hurry. Be patient with children and the elderly. Minimize stress by keeping worries at bay. Remain poised in good times and bad.

6. Practice compassion, conquering callous, cruel

and insensitive feelings toward all beings. See God everywhere. Be kind to people, animals, plants and the Earth itself. Forgive those who apologize and show true remorse. Foster sympathy for others' needs and suffering. Honor and assist those who are weak, impoverished, aged or in pain. Oppose family abuse and other cruelties.

7. Foster steadfastness, overcoming non perseverance, fear and indecision. Achieve your goals with a prayer, purpose, plan, persistence and push. Be firm in your decisions. Avoid sloth and procrastination. Develop willpower, courage and industriousness. Overcome obstacles. Never carp or complain. Do not let opposition or fear of failure result in changing strategies.

8. Maintain honesty, renouncing deception and wrongdoing. Act honorably even in hard times. Obey the laws of your nation and locale. Pay your taxes. Be straightforward in business. Do an honest day's work. Do not bribe or accept bribes. Do not cheat, deceive or circumvent to achieve an end. Be frank with yourself. Face and accept your faults without blaming them on others.

9. Be moderate in appetite, neither eating too much nor consuming meat, fish, shellfish, fowl or eggs. Enjoy fresh, wholesome vegetarian foods that vitalize the body. Avoid junk food. Drink in moderation. Eat at regular times, only when hungry, at a moderate pace, never between meals, in a disturbed atmosphere or when upset. Follow a simple diet, avoiding rich or fancy fare.

10. Uphold the ethic of purity, avoiding impurity in mind, body and speech. Maintain a clean, healthy body. Keep a pure, uncluttered home and workplace. Act virtuously. Keep good company, never mixing with adulterers, thieves or other impure people. Never use harsh, angered or indecent language. Worship devoutly. Meditate daily.

Do you have any questions which needs answers, then send in your questions to [asha.raji@gmail.com](mailto:asha.raji@gmail.com). Your questions will be answered in the forthcoming issues.

## Did you know...?

By Smt. Asha Manoharan

This section deals with the Indian medicinal plants and its uses even in today's world.

Mehndi is also called Henna and its scientific name is *Lawsonia inermis*. Linn (Lythraceae) is a perennial plant commonly called as Henna, having different vernacular names in India viz., Mehndi in Hindi, Mendika, Rakigarbha in Sanskrit, Mailanchi in Malayalam, Muruthani in Tamil, Benjati in Oriya, Mayilanchi in Kannada and Mehedi in Bengali. It is not Indian in origin, but was adopted from North Africa. Almost 5000 years ago, the Egyptians discovered that paste from the henna plant had preservative properties and was therefore applied to the hands and toes of dead Pharaohs as part of the mummification ritual. The Mughals introduced Mehndi in India during the 12th Century. The use of henna can be traced back to 2100 BC, to the Babylonian and Sumerian civilizations, where it was widely used as a dye. It became popular in the northern states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Gujarat. Early Ayurvedic texts show henna as a potent medicine for curing a number of skin and hair ailments. It also acts as a preservative for cloth and leather. The aromatic flowers of henna are used to make perfumes. As for the medicinal benefits let me list the benefits as follows:

**Root:** It is used for burning sensation, leprosy, skin diseases, amenorrhoea, dysmenorrhoea and premature greying of hair.

**Leaves:** Bitter, astringent, acrid, diuretic, emetic, edema, expectorant, anodyne, anti-inflammatory, constipating, depurative, liver tonic, haematinic, styptic, febrifuge, trichogenous, wound, ulcers, strangury, cough, bronchitis, burning sensation, cephalalgia, hemicranias, lumbago, rheumatalgia, inflammations, diarrhoea, dysentery, leprosy, leucoderma, scabies, boils, hepatopathy, splenopathy,

anemia, hemorrhages, hemoptysis, fever, ophthalmia, amenorrhoea, falling of hair, greyness of hair, jaundice.

**Flowers:** Cardiotoxic, refrigerant, soporific, febrifuge, tonic, cephalalgia, burning sensation, cardiopathy, amentia, insomnia, fever.

**Seeds:** Antipyretic, intellect promoting, constipating, intermittent fevers, insanity, amentia, diarrhoea, dysentery and gastropathy .

Henna also represents good luck and prosperity. In Morocco, the doors of newly built houses are painted with henna to ward off any kind of evil.