

BALAVIN KURAL

Balambika Divya Sangam



Editor's Desk...

Man is a social animal. We humans are communal creatures, and enjoy living together and celebrating as one community. Worldwide, most festivals involve feasting and dining together with an underlying feeling of sharing and love. Our rich Hindu traditions offer spiritual ecstasy, while making it pleasurable and enjoyable at the same time with so much vibrancy in color, lights, palate pleasing savories, clothes and customs. As we celebrated Deepavali a few days back, we enjoyed a warm sense of togetherness with our close family and friends, while we shared our best preparations and dressed in our new clothes. Most importantly, we thanked God in our own way, which most commonly was a satisfying visit to the local temple. Most events in our life bear a seal of completeness only because of the blessings we receive from the temple in our 'agraharam', our local deity. To the common man, the societal being, the temple offers all that he needs – from spiritual awakening and rejuvenation, to being a focal point for gatherings, and all in between.

Over several centuries, kings have influenced not only the architectural aspect of temples, they have also patronized beautiful art forms and conducted sacred rituals under the guidance of religious leaders. Each temple speaks its own 'sthala puranam' – a quaint testimony for its very existence. Today, a community of like-minded individuals are com-

ing together from different walks of life, from different geographical locations, to achieve a similar goal. The task in this time and age is herculean, as the community strives to fulfill the objective. Being even a minute part of such a lofty ideal is worthy of 'punya'. Our Malur Sri Balambika temple is giving us that rare opportunity to be a part of its creation, from every concrete brick and stone to the invisible aura that will fill the sanctum-sanctorum and solidify each pillar. Balambika Divya Sangam has initiated a group Bala Sahasranamam chanting that gives one and all a chance to send their positive energy towards this cause. We welcome your sincere prayers and heartfelt wishes as we approach the temple kumbhabhishekam.

We hope you enjoy our collection in this edition of Balavin Kural. Paranjothi – a warrior and Shiva bhaktha, and his enlightening experience will leave you pondering as to what true devotion is all about. To add to the same fervor, 'karunai niraitha ambikai neeye' reveals to us our standing in the spiritual ladder. Although our paths may be different, our goal is the same, and it is now up to each one of us to plough forward and scale higher, as we seek Ambal and Her overwhelming grace.



Mrs. Asha Manoharan
President—BDS

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Bala Speaks...



You need to pursue a self-training program, to inspect the working of yourself. For this, one should make a commitment to himself that he will practice regularly and faithfully no matter what, for the sake of his growth,. Remember, this is not the same as following a commandment or a blind injunction.

The reason you do not have the capacity to inspect within, is that you are swayed by your thoughts and identify yourself with your thought patterns. The wisdom to decide what is useful in the mind is not there, so you are controlled by your thought patterns. Inspect within to see what is good and what is not good for your practice. If you do not have that determination, do not inspect your thoughts, because your thoughts will start controlling you and you will be overwhelmed, distracting you from your goal.

BDS Events Corner

- ◆ The Kumbhabhishekam work is proceeding at a fast pace with fervent anticipation of the 'once in a lifetime event'.
- ◆ Sanchara Dolai in and around the villages surrounding Malur is being taken up to spread the word.
- ◆ The Breakfast Meal program is in progress and many patrons have come forward to support this initiative.
- ◆ Bala Sahasranamam chanting groups are being encouraged at various locations as a run up to Kumbhabhishekam.



Down Memory Lane

By Smt. Asha Manoharan

Background behind the song *Karunai Nirainda...*

It was a chilly December morning, I walked out of the house listening to Thiruppavai from the western end of the Ranganathar temple. Never did it strike me as being very important during those days, it was taken for granted. The margazhi masa utsavam brought the city alive, there used to be kacheris everywhere, upanyasams and parayanams.

I was on an errand to the local shop, my mind was thinking about Bala that day. Unusually, She was not around for a few days now, so I thought I will use my secret service to find out what happened. She appeared before me. Excited to see Her, I hugged Her and She was surprised at my affection. She held my hand and asked what happened and I told Her how much I missed Her today. Saying this, we started walking towards the shop. I clung to Her, and She didn't mind it and I started telling Her all that happened when She was not there. We bought the grocery items and walked back home. As we were nearing, She said, "Can we go out?"

Hesitantly, I said "Yes".

She looked at me quirkily.

I smiled and said, "Amma is already mad at me, for not doing my homework, I don't think she will allow me."

She stopped me, took the groceries from me and said, "Ok. Wait here, I will be back." She came back as quickly as She went and got my cycle with Her.

I asked, "What happened?"

She winked at me and said, "Come let's go?"

I knew what She had done. Smiling to myself, I took the cycle from Her and lifted Her onto the front handle bar and off we drove, into the street leading to Kallanai road.

The roads here are very bendy and narrow. Both of us like this ride, because on the right, we have the Cauvery river flowing and on the left, we have huge coconut and mango groves. We crossed the main road and into the dusty road. I was riding fast, because Bala likes me spending a lot of energy. So I raced the wind and She was giggling all the way through. After we had crossed the little bridge, She raised Her hand and I slowed down and when we came to a big banyan tree, She told me to stop.

I stopped and She jumped, and started running towards the river. I stopped my cycle on the river bank and ran behind Her. I knew She was excited about the water, but didn't understand where She was heading. She went near the water and turned around and called me to come over quickly. By now, I was panting. I fell on my feet, gathered myself up, and went near the water. She pointed at the water, and I looked at what She pointed at. The water was clear and through the water, I could see the marine life. I turned around to see if anyone was around, but not a single soul was in sight. Bala dragged me further into the water. I was nervous, because I didn't know swimming. She caught my hand and She plunged into the middle of the river. I was dragged into the water, in a split second, I lost consciousness. I blacked out and knew nothing.

After sometime, I could hear soft and feeble voices around me. I slowly opened my eyes, and there I was, in the middle of nowhere, floating, but lying still. The whole place looked so different. It was jelly like, looked solid, but not solid. I got up and found myself wobbling, but after a minute or two, I felt at ease and started looking around. There was everything in that place, all made from natural things like wood, grass, stems, flowers, etc. The trees were shaped like a sitting area, the flowers were hanging all around, sweet smelling, fruits were not on any table, they were all hanging from the trees. I saw smoke coming from a distance. I started walking towards it. Suddenly, two girls came running towards me and took my hand and asked me to come along. They were pretty, neatly dressed with fibrous material wrapped around them and garlands around their neck. The place was mysterious, but very pleasant. I went along with them, and as we went closer, the sound of music and singing grew louder, but they were very heartwarming. I haven't heard such a sweet voice in my life. As I stepped out of the path, there was a clearing and there were plenty of children sitting around Bala and it was Bala singing to all of them. They were children right from babies up to the age of 10 or 11 years, boys and girls. They were sitting around Her, drenched in that music. Bala sat there, eyes closed, two children on Her lap, the others touching Her feet, the peacock dancing to that music, the calf sitting close to the children looking at Bala with all admiration. Little further away,

was another Bala playing the rudra veena and for the first time, I saw two Balas at the same time. I stood there rooted, aware that I was there. Bala opened Her eyes and smiled at me and continued singing. I was mesmerized by the music, She sang in praise of Shiva, His attributes, valour and His love for Shakti. I sat there waiting for Her to finish. She completed Her song, and all the children around Her fell asleep. She laid them slowly on the floor and got up. The rudra veena Bala got up and slowly merged with Bala. Bala came towards me and smiled, “How are you feeling now, you passed out.”

I asked Her how much time I was unconscious. She laughed at me and said, “Time stops in this place, so don’t worry, you wouldn’t have lost much time.” She then took my hand and showed the beautiful place around.

Suddenly, She turned around and asked, “Do you know this place?”

I said “No.”

She laughed, “This is the most favourite place of mine, I am here always.”

I looked around and asked, “Who are these children?”

“They?” She asked and stopped.

“They are my children,” She replied.

“Yes I know, but what about their parents?” I asked.

She laughed loudly and the whole place was trembling

“They are the sadhakas who meditate on me, they travel into this plane to be with me. As they fall asleep, they would wake me from their meditation on earth. When they wake up from their sleep here, they will be meditating there.” She said this and touched the air and it showed one of the children sitting in his meditation posture. The moment he felt that we were watching him, he opened his eyes and changed into a bearded man, dressed in dhoti and wearing the rudraksham around his neck. He got up, changed into his pant and shirt, and just went about his ways as though nothing had happened to him.

I was wonder struck. “How can this happen?” I asked Bala.

She said, “Like how it happened with you?”

“But I didn’t do what he did?”

“But you trusted me?” She said.

“Is trust alone enough to be with you?” I asked.

“Yes, that is all you need, if your trust does not waiver even for a blink of an eye, you become a sadhaka like everybody else.”

“Will I trust you totally forever?” I asked with a lot of innocence.

“Time alone will tell?” She then hugged me and said, “This is for the trust you had on me so far...”

கருணை நிறைந்த

கருணை நிறைந்த அம்பிகை தாயே
கவலை தீர்க்க வருவாய் நீயே... (2)
அருள் அமுதே அம்பிகையே
வருவாயே..... வருவாயே.....

உன்னிடத்தில் பக்தி கொண்டேன்
எண்ணமெல்லாம் நீயே தாயே... (2)

அன்னை அவள் நீயிருக்க வேருறவு நானறியேன்
உணர்வாயோ..... கேட்பாயோ.....
கருணை நிறைந்த அம்பிகை தாயே
கவலை தீர்க்க வருவாய் நீயே...

அன்னை உனக்கு பணிவிடை செய்தால்
அருள் செய்ய வருவாய் நீயே...
அன்னை உனக்கு பணிவிடை செய்தால்
அருள் செய்ய வருவாய் நீயே...

என்னை இல்லா விளக்கை போல
தவித்திருந்தேன் உன்னை காண... (2)

தேடியதே மனமே, வருவாயே கேட்பாயே...
கருணை நிறைந்த அம்பிகை தாயே
கவலை தீர்க்க வருவாய் நீயே...

காற்றினில் வந்தன உந்தன் கீதம்
பாடி பாடி நானும் பார்த்தேன்... (2)

அன்பு நிறைந்த உந்தன் உள்ளம்
அருள் மழையென பொழிந்தது என் மேல்
நினைத்தேனே, சிலிர்த்தேனே...
வியந்தேனே..... வியந்தேனே.....

கருணை நிறைந்த அம்பிகை தாயே
கவலை தீர்க்க வருவாய் நீயே...

KARUNAI NIRAINDA

Karunai nirainda ambikai thaaye
Kavalai theerka varuvai neeye...

Karunai nirainda ambikai thaaye
Kavalai theerka varuvai neeye...
Arul amuthe ambikaiye
varuvaaye... varuvaaye...

Unnidathil bhakthi konden
Ennamellam neeye thaaye... (2)

Annai aval neeyirukka veruravu naanariyen
Unarvaayo... ketpaayo...
(karunai)

Annai unakku panividai seithaal
Arul seiya varuvaai neeye... (2)

Ennai illaa vilakkai pola
Thavithirinden unnai kana... (2)
Thediyathe maname, varuvaaye ketpaaye...
(karunai)

Kaatril vandana unthan geetham
Paadi paadi naanum paarthen...(2)

Anbu niraintha unthan ullam
Arul mazhaiyena pozhinthathu enmel
Ninaithe, silirthe...
Viyanthene... Viyanthene...

Karunai nirainda ambikai thaaye
Kavalai theerka varuvai neeye...

ಕರುಣ್ಯ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ

ಕರುಣ್ಯ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಅಂಬಿಗೈ ತಾಯೆ
ಕವಲೈ ತೀರ್ಕ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನೀಯೇ... (2)
ಅರುಳ್ ಅಮುದೇ ಅಂಬಿಗೈಯೇ ವರುವಾಯೇ.....ವರುವಾಯೇ...

ಉನ್ನಿಡತ್ತಿಲ್ ಭಕ್ತಿ ಕೊಂಡೇನ್
ಯೆಣ್ಣಮೇಲ್ವಾಮ್ ನೀಯೇ ತಾಯೆ
ಉನ್ನಿಡತ್ತಿಲ್ ಭಕ್ತಿ ಕೊಂಡೇನ್
ಯೆಣ್ಣಮೇಲ್ವಾಮ್ ನೀಯೇ ತಾಯೆ
ಅನ್ನೈಯವಳ್ ನೀಯಿರುಕ್ಕ ವೇರುರವು ನಾನರಿಯೇನ್
ಉಣರ್ವಾಯೋ.....ಕೇಟ್ಟಾಯೋ.....

ಕರುಣ್ಯ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಅಂಬಿಗೈ ತಾಯೆ
ಕವಲೈ ತೀರ್ಕ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನೀಯೇ

ಅನ್ನೈಯನಕ್ಕು ಪಣಿವಿಡೈ ಸೆಯ್ಯಾಳ್
ಅರುಳ್ ಸೆಯ್ಯ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನೀಯೇ
ಅನ್ನೈಯನಕ್ಕು ಪಣಿವಿಡೈ ಸೆಯ್ಯಾಳ್
ಅರುಳ್ ಸೆಯ್ಯ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನೀಯೇ

ಎಣೈ ಇಲ್ಲಾ ವಿಳಕ್ಕೈ ಪೋಲ
ತವಿತ್ತಿರುಂದೇನ್ ಉನ್ನೈ ಕಾಣ
ಎಣೈ ಇಲ್ಲಾ ವಿಳಕ್ಕೈ ಪೋಲ
ತವಿತ್ತಿರುಂದೇನ್ ಉನ್ನೈ ಕಾಣ
ತೇಡಿಯದೇ ಮನಮೇ, ವರುವಾಯೇ ಕೇಟ್ಟಾಯೇ...

ಕರುಣ್ಯ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಅಂಬಿಗೈ ತಾಯೆ
ಕವಲೈ ತೀರ್ಕ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನೀಯೇ.....

ಕಾಟ್ರಿಲ್ ವಂದನ ಉಂದನ್ ಗೀತಮ್
ಪಾಡಿ ಪಾಡಿ ನಾನುಮ್ ಪಾರ್ತೇನ್
ಕಾಟ್ರಿಲ್ ವಂದನ ಉಂದನ್ ಗೀತಮ್
ಪಾಡಿ ಪಾಡಿ ನಾನುಮ್ ಪಾರ್ತೇನ್

ಅನ್ನು ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಉಂದನ್ ಉಳ್ಳಮ್
ಅರುಳ್ಳಕ್ಕೈಯನ ಪೊಳಿಂದದು ಯೆನ್ನೈಲ್
ನಿನ್ನೈತ್ತೇನೇ, ಸಿಲಿರ್ತೇನೇ....
ವಿಯಂದೇನೇ.....ವಿಯಂದೇನೇ

ಕರುಣ್ಯ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಅಂಬಿಗೈ ತಾಯೆ
ಕವಲೈ ತೀರ್ಕ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನೀಯೇ.....

ಕರುಣೈ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ

ಕರುಣೈ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಅಂಬಿಗೈ ತಾಯೆ
ಕವಲೈ ತಿರ್ಕ್ಕ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನಿಯೆ ... (2)
ಅರುಳ್ ಅಮುದೇ ಅಂಬಿಗೈಯೇ ವರುವಾಯೆ.....ವರುವಾಯೆ...

ಒನ್ನಿಡತ್ತಿಲ್ ಭಕ್ತಿ ಕೊಂಡೆನ್
ಯೆಣ್ಣಮೆಲ್ಲಾಂ ನಿಯೆ ತಾಯೆ
ಒನ್ನಿಡತ್ತಿಲ್ ಭಕ್ತಿ ಕೊಂಡೆನ್
ಯೆಣ್ಣಮೆಲ್ಲಾಂ ನಿಯೆ ತಾಯೆ
ಅನ್ನೈಯವಳ್ ನಿಯಿರುಕ್ಕ ವೇರುರವು ನಾನರಿಯೆನ್
ಒಣರ್ವಾಯೊ.....ಕೆಟ್ಟಾಯೊ.....

ಕರುಣೈ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಅಂಬಿಗೈ ತಾಯೆ

ಕವಲೈ ತಿರ್ಕ್ಕ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನಿಯೆ
ಅನ್ನೈಯನಕ್ಕು ಪಣಿವಿಡೈ ಸೆಯ್ಯಾಳ್
ಅರುಳ್ ಸೆಯ್ಯ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನಿಯೆ
ಅನ್ನೈಯನಕ್ಕು ಪಣಿವಿಡೈ ಸೆಯ್ಯಾಳ್
ಅರುಳ್ ಸೆಯ್ಯ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನಿಯೆ

ಎಣೈ ಇಲ್ಲಾ ವಿಳಕ್ಕೈ ಪೋಲ
ತವಿತ್ತಿರುಂದೆನ್ ಒನ್ನೈ ಕಾಣ
ಎಣೈ ಇಲ್ಲಾ ವಿಳಕ್ಕೈ ಪೋಲ
ತವಿತ್ತಿರುಂದೆನ್ ಒನ್ನೈ ಕಾಣ
ತೇಡಿಯದೇ ಮನಮೇ, ವರುವಾಯೆ ಕೆಟ್ಟಾಯೆ...

ಕರುಣೈ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಅಂಬಿಗೈ ತಾಯೆ
ಕವಲೈ ತಿರ್ಕ್ಕ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನಿಯೆ.....

ಕಾಟ್ರಿಲ್ ವಂದನ ಒಂದನ್ ಗೀತಂ
ಪಾಡಿ ಪಾಡಿ ನಾನುಂ ಪಾರ್ತೆನ್
ಕಾಟ್ರಿಲ್ ವಂದನ ಒಂದನ್ ಗೀತಂ
ಪಾಡಿ ಪಾಡಿ ನಾನುಂ ಪಾರ್ತೆನ್

ಅನ್ನು ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಒಂದನ್ ಒಳ್ಳಂ
ಅರುಳ್ಳಕ್ಕೈಯನ ಪೊಳಿಂದದು ಯೆನ್ನೈಲ್
ನಿನ್ನೈತ್ತೆನೆ, ಸಿಲಿರ್ತೆನೆ....
ವಿಯಂದೆನೆ.....ವಿಯಂದೆನೆ

ಕರುಣೈ ನಿರ್ಮಂದ ಅಂಬಿಗೈ ತಾಯೆ
ಕವಲೈ ತಿರ್ಕ್ಕ ವರುವಾಯ್ ನಿಯೆ.....

2016-11-05 | Sanchara Dolai @ Kondashetty Halli, Malur

Thanks to Mr. Narayanan & family who generously stepped forward to sponsor this event which is being held in the villages surrounding in and around Malur.



Paranjothi was standing near the Chengattankudi (Thiru Chenkkatukudi) temple. He was a well built man, way above the average height. Countless cuts and scratches on each of his forearms and throughout the front side of his body, revealed that he was an accomplished warrior. All the army practices had made him almost like a moving rock. Only, a very flexible rock. Each muscle still retained and showed the effect of rigorous practices, despite the fact that he stopped himself from doing a lot of exercises and focused only on performing Shiva poojas and doing something for the temple and devotees of Shiva.

Paranjothi...

By Thulasinathan Kandasamy

While waiting for some Shiva devotee/sadhu, his mind started replaying the day he returned from Vatapi invasion and met Narasimhavarman, Paranjothi's friend and the great Pallava king. Narasimhavarman was (and is) known as Mamallan (Great Wrestler) and was one of the 12 Indian kings that never lost in any war in their lifetime to their enemies.

The very thinking of Mamallan made him joyous. Mamallan was a rare combination of a great wrestler, an ardent Shiva devotee, multi-talented person and a staunch supporter of art. Over and above, a good person to move around with. Paranjothi still remembered Narasimhavarman handing him a golden box and telling him that it had what Paranjothi's heart was after and never asked. Inside the box were few documents handing him several villages that can grow all kind of grains and pulses near Chengattankudi. He also relieved him from the Army General position, so that he can continue his devotion to Shiva full-time. Paranjothi still felt the hug and affection that Narasimhavarman had for him. Paranjothi knew that the palace doors will remain open for him any time he needed.

Paranjothi's mind returned to the present day, and was wondering why he couldn't find even one Shiva devotee/sadhu that day. Paranjothi always treated his own body as a temple. He was aware that there is nothing in this whole world that listens to one than one's own body. He knew that one's body obeys to the level of even accepting to destroy itself if asked. He always respected, took care of his body. His body, mind and heart were just functioning as one single unit. He will not even feel hungry if he has not already fed a Shiva devotee to his/her satisfaction. His wife Thiruvengkattu Nangai, was also an ardent devotee of Shiva. They both were living like one person in two bodies. One being male and another female, pretty much Arthanari.

They had a smart child Seeralan. Thinking about his child, Paranjothi realized it was time for him to return from Gurukul. There was nothing in the whole world that Paranjothi loved, more than his only son Seeralan. At the very thought of his son, he wanted to see him. It was getting very late and there was still no sight of a Shiva devotee. Paranjothi recollected that his wife sneezed several times when he started from home. Maybe today is the best day, he thought. He started walking back slowly towards his home. Nangai was standing in the entrance itself. As soon as she saw Paranjothi, she rushed to him and told him that a Shiva devotee came. However, the Shiva devotee refused to enter the home when only women are present. Nangai added that the devotee will be sitting under a tree near the temple.

Paranjothi rushed back to the tree near the temple and saw someone. The Shiva devotee was looking more well built than Paranjothi himself. However the tejas that he had was great. Upon nearing the Sanyasi, Paranjothi felt a peace in his heart that he never felt before. He felt that the whole environment was glowing. Paranjothi humbly requested the Shiva devotee to come home. The devotee said, "Siruthonda!! you don't know about me. Uthirapathi is my name and believe me, I am not the right one to be invited for food. Didn't you remember that your wife sneezed multiple times when you started?. Didn't you also not hurt yourself in a stone near the temple? All that was telling you was something wasn't right. Now, please go back to your home and get some rest."

Paranjothi was amazed, he realized that this Shiva devotee wasn't anyone normal. There was something extraordinarily special about him. The Sadhu's matted hair and basmam (Ash) all over the body were not unique. He was telling as though he saw everything that was happening around. It was so evident that he was in peace. He had an aura around him. Paranjothi requested several times. After long pauses and much hesitation, the Uthrapathi said that he doesn't eat normal food, and eats non-veg only once in a few years. The food needs to be a Narapasu (child) that has no wounds. Paranjothi never heard anything like that before. However, he was happy that he had a child himself. Uthrapathi also told that the food (Narapasu) had to be cooked while the mother does the cutting and father does the cooking. Paranjothi accepted.

On returning home along with the Sanyasi, Paranjothi narrated the situation to his beloved wife. They both didn't show anything in their face. Their face lost color. However, they didn't want to disappoint the Sanyasi who was a Shiva devotee. Nobody noticed that when the Sanyasi entered the home, everything around became lively. Paranjothi called his son with no expression on his face. Nangai treated their only son as a vegetable. They got the food served and invited the Sanyasi to have. They showed the same affection to Uthrapathi that they showed when they first met him. The Sanyasi asked Paranjothi to join and also asked, "Paranjothi! You have a son, how can we eat without him?" Paranjothi requested the Sanyasi to have food. However, the Sanyasi was adamant. He told Paranjothi, "Call your son. Or I am not touching anything."

Paranjothi went to the front and called his son, "Seerala!! Please come, Shiva's devotee is calling you to join." Nangai's eyes shed tears on hearing this. To both their surprise, they heard "Coming Appa...Amma..." He indeed showed up running and all glowing. Paranjothi and Nangai jumped and hugged their beloved child. When they rushed to see the Sanyasi, he couldn't be found where he was sitting. There was an Oracle (a voice from the sky) that said, "Siruthonda!! the sins of your killing many people in the war (and they are also Shakthi's children) was surrounding you. You had to go through the pain of losing your only son to come out of your sins. Now that you have felt what Shakthi (the Mother of all beings in the Universe) felt, you are relieved of all your sins. Live the remaining days in peace and you will join me at the end."

Paranjothi's family had a vision of Ammayiappan (Shiva and Shakthi) as well.



2016-11-14 | Dolai & Pournami Pooja @ the residence of Sri Subramani & family

A warm thank you to all the patrons and devotees who made this event a spectacle to cherish.



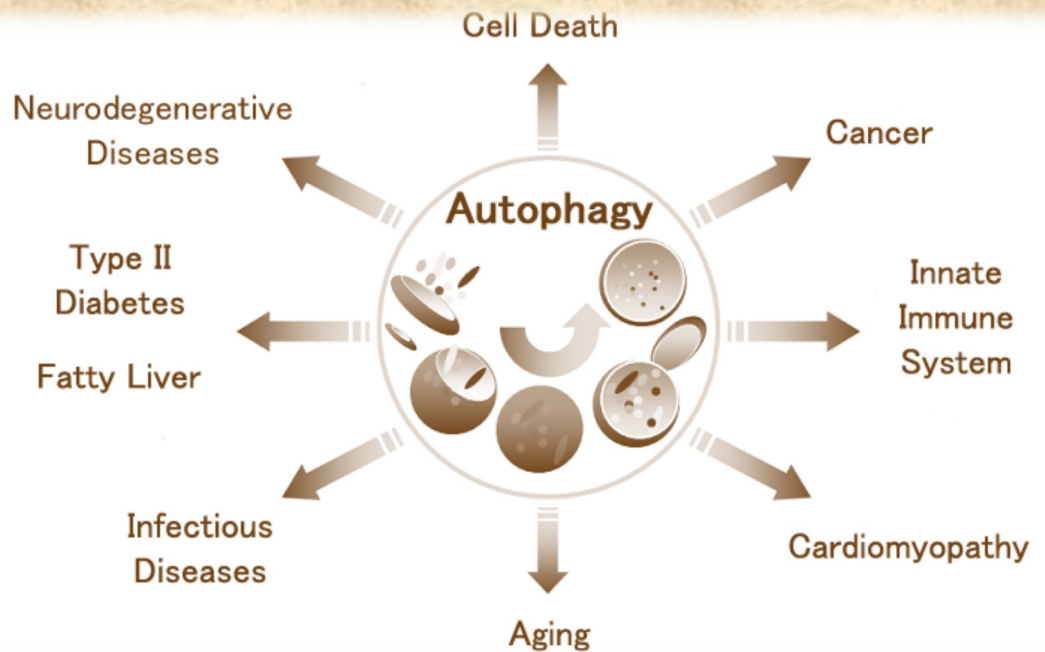


Demystifying Science...

Upavasam and The Nobel Prize?

Most of our households sport a matriarchal elderly member, who performs 'upavasam' on auspicious days, which most commonly are Ekadashi, Sra-
vanam, Pournami, Shashti, Saturdays, Mondays..., well the list goes on, and we folks from the younger generation have devel-

oped a slightly condescending attitude towards this seemingly futile attempt to please the Gods. Other than the usual health benefits that we have heard of, such as control of sugar and salt levels, well, here is some scientific, Nobel Prize winning reason for this apparently meaningless custom. This year's Nobel laureate is a Japanese scientist Dr. Yoshinori Ohsumi, who was awarded for his research on autophagy. Autophagy literally means to 'self-eat', and is a natural physiological process taking place in our cells. It controls the degradation and recycling of damaged proteins and eliminates unwanted by-products of cellular functions. Removal of dead cells and unnecessary cellular matter prevents cancer, counters the negative effects of ageing, and also rids the body of cells infected by bacteria and viruses. Autophagy also kicks in during starvation by quickly providing energy for cellular functions by using up the damaged proteins and thus preventing the accumulation of these degenerated cells which could otherwise lead to disease. By starving during our fasts, our body is inducing autophagy, where we are actually helping the body consume and get rid of waste matter in the cells. Now, let's come to dear old Paddhu Paati's Ekadasi fasting. Every fortnight, she is actually self-inducing autophagy, and making her cells eat up all the waste proteins and degraded matter, helping her stay alive and healthy and of course young, while at the same time, she is spending her time in prayer. This holistic approach to keeping both our mind and body healthy, through spiritual healing and biological rejuvenation has been a lifetime routine in our Hindu culture that was professed by our elderly. One can only appreciate the deep intellect in our ancient minds as they fuse together science with religion and make them go hand-in-hand.



Who am I?

- 1) I was born on 12th August, 1919 in an affluent family of industrialists committed to Indian Independence Movement.
- 2) After passing the intermediate Science examination from the Gujarat College in Ahmedabad, I went to England for my further studies.
- 3) I enrolled at the St. John's College, University of Cambridge from where I received the Tripos in Natural Sciences in 1940.
- 4) I soon returned to India and joined the IISc in Bangalore to carry out research on cosmic rays.
- 5) Soon, under the guidance of eminent scientist C.V. Raman, I published my first scientific paper 'Time Distribution of Cosmic Rays' in 1942.
- 6) In the same year, I married the celebrated classical dancer Mrinalini.
- 7) I convinced the charitable trusts, that my family managed, to establish The Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad in November 1947.
- 8) Darpana, an academy for Performing Arts, was established by Mrinalini (my wife) and myself in 1949.
- 9) I was the founding director of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad which was the second IIM in the country.
- 10) I was the driving force behind the setting up of the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology University (CEPT University) in Ahmedabad in 1962.
- 11) The establishment of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) in 1969 was one of my greatest achievements.
- 12) Dr. Homi Bhabha helped me in setting up the first rocket launching station at Thumba on the coast of the Arabian Sea.
- 13) I am often remembered as the Father of the Indian Space Program.
- 14) I started a project for the fabrication and launch of an Indian satellite, Aryabhata, which was put in orbit in 1975 from a Russian cosmodrome.
- 15) I set up Operations Research Group (ORG), the first market research organization in India.
- 16) I was decorated with two of India's most honorable awards: the Padma Bhushan (1966) and the Padma Vibhushan (awarded posthumously in 1972).
- 17) I died on 30th December 1971.

Vikram Sarabhai

was an Indian scientist and innovator widely regarded as the father of India's space programme. He was a rare combination of a scientist, an innovator, industrialist and a visionary. He worked towards acquiring competence in advanced technology for the solution of country's problems based on technical and economic evaluation of its real resources.



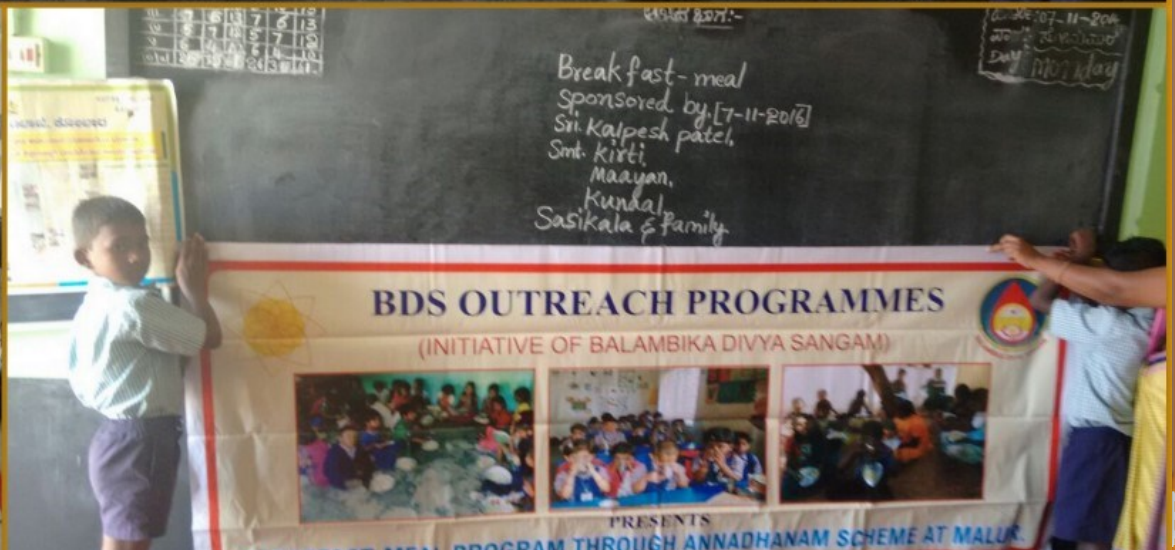
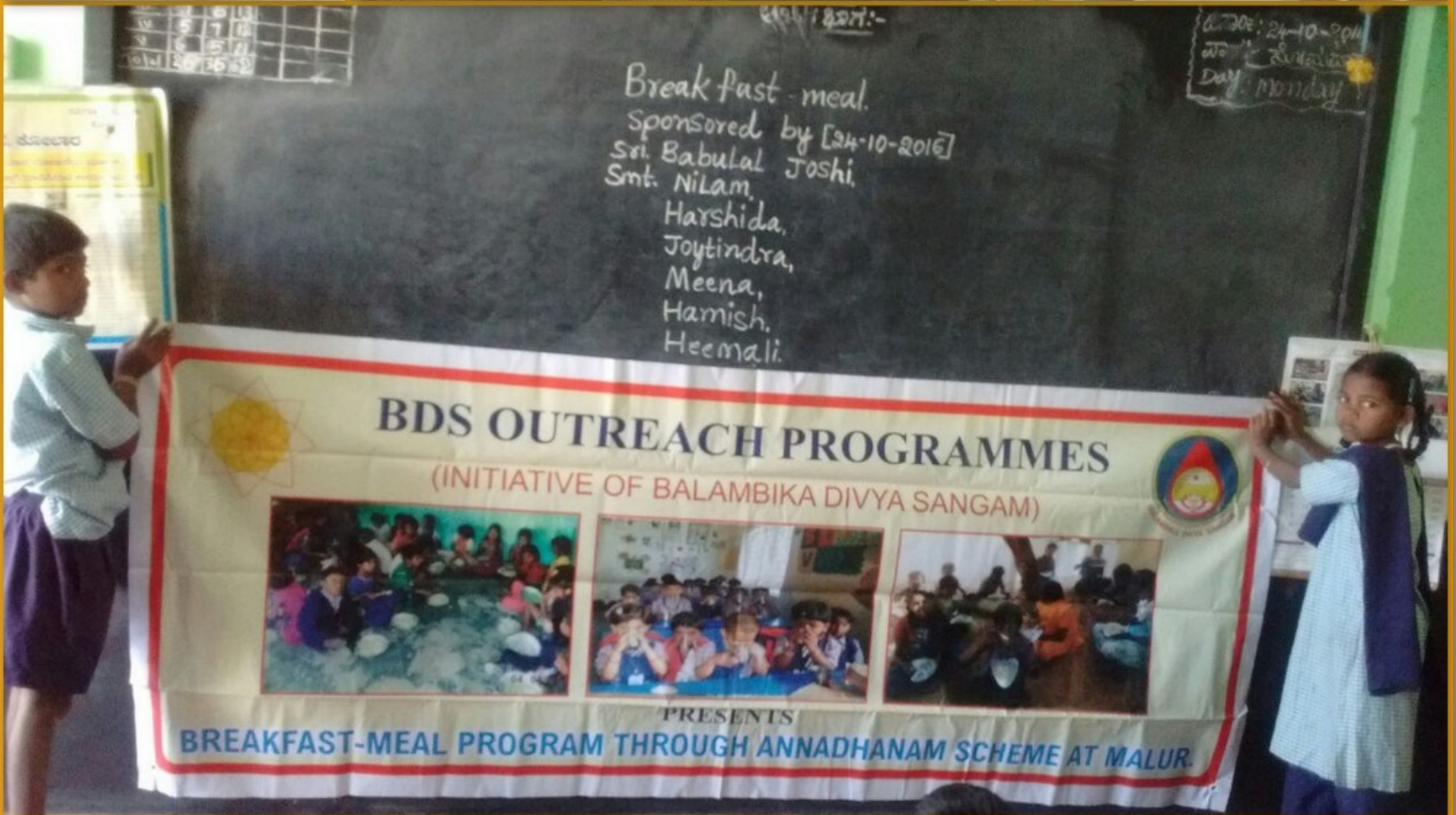
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Indus Valley Civilization: Occupation and trade

Extensive research and excavations suggest that agriculture and allied activities were the main occupation of the Indus Valley people. Similar to other ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece and Mesopotamia, the Indus valley civilization flourished along the floodplains of the Indus River, which was their life-line. The Harappans were agriculturalists and their economy was entirely dominated by horticulture. However, the nature of the agricultural system is still largely a matter of conjecture, due to the paucity of information surviving through the ages. Archaeologists however, speculate that the Indus civilization agriculture must have been highly productive, since it was capable of generating surpluses sufficient to support tens of thousands of urban residents who were not primarily engaged in agriculture. It relied on the considerable technological achievements of the pre-Harappan culture, including the plough. Still, very little is known about the farmers who supported the cities or their agricultural methods. Some of them undoubtedly made use of the fertile alluvial soil left by rivers after the flood season, but this simple method of agriculture is not thought to be productive enough to support cities. There is no evidence of irrigation, but such evidence could have been obliterated by repeated catastrophic floods. It is also believed that there were massive granaries in each city and the Indus River valley was pretty fertile. In addition, there is evidence of the cultivation of wheat, barley, peas, mustard, cotton and rice.

Arts and Crafts:

Apart from agriculture, the discovery of various equipments made of bronze and copper indicate metal work as the major profession of the people living in the cities. Other occupations were spinning, pottery and weaving. Furthermore, the discovery of several seals made of clay gives more information of the importance of domestic animals in Harappan so-

ciety. Many of the Harappan seals had pictures of animals that imply a wet and marshy environment, such as rhinoceroses, elephants, and tigers (Fig.1).



Fig. 1: Indus Valley seals, British Museum

The Indus valley inhabitants were great lovers of the fine arts, especially dancing, painting, and sculpture. Various sculptures, seals, pottery, gold jewelry, terracotta figures, and other interesting works of art indicate that they had fine artistic and highly realistic sensibilities. The anatomical detail of much of their art is unique, and terracotta art is also noted for its extremely careful modeling of animal figures. Many crafts including shell working, ceramics, and agate and glazed steatite bead making were practised and the pieces were used in the making of necklaces, bangles, and other ornaments from all phases of Harappan culture. Some of these crafts are still practised in the subcontinent today. The most famous artefact of the Indus Valley civilization is the seated male sculpture or "Priest King" from Mohenjo-daro, made from white, low fired steatite (Fig.2).

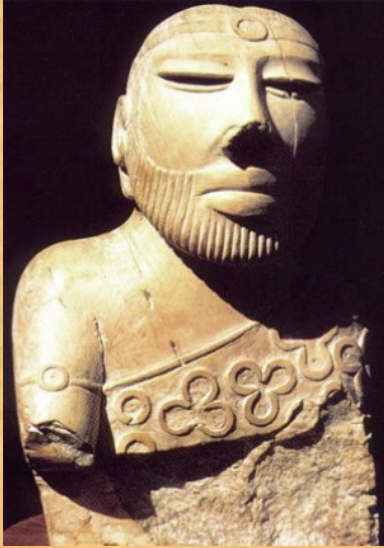


Fig. 2: "Priest-King", Mohenjo-Daro. Indus Valley civilization, c. 2000-1900 BCE. Steatite

Trade:

The Harappan cities were connected with rural agricultural communities and distant resource and mining areas through strong trade systems. They used animals, river boats and bullock carts for transport. This trade is reflected in the widespread distribution of exquisite beads and ornaments, metal tools and pottery that were produced by specialized artisans in the towns and cities. The major commodities in internal trade consisted of cotton, lumber, grain, livestock and other food stuffs. The Indus valley people also had close commercial relations with Central Asia, the Arabian Gulf region and the distant Mesopotamian cities. Trade also existed with Northern Afghanistan, from where the Harappans bought the famous blue gemstones.

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Sri Bala Sahasranamam

With Meaning & Commentary by Smt. Asha Manoharan

References to Goddess Balambika (Bala) can be found in the Brahmanda Puranam. Sri Bala Sahasranama Stotram describes and praises the various attributes of Sri Balambika in 113 verses. Since each *nama* represents a unique nature and quality of Sri Balambika, it can be interpreted and discussed to cater to the different needs of an individual. Along with a direct meaning of each *nama*, Smt. Asha Manoharan has provided us with intriguing commentary and examples that a common man can relate to and apply in everyday life. So the next time we chant Sri Bala Sahasranamam, we will not only know the literal meaning of the *stotram*, but will also find a unique way to connect and relate to Sri Balambika.

*paramānanda niṣyandā paramārtha svarūpiṇī /
yogīśvarī yogamātā haṁsinī kalahāṁsinī //*

Paramananda: Ultimate bliss

Ambal is not only the Mother of creation, but also the ultimate joy in this world.

Bliss means absolute happiness, the complete freedom from all pain and suffering. It is also known by the term moksha. We look for this blissful state everywhere and in the wrong place. This ultimate bliss is Ambal Herself.

The closest to this Supreme self (Ambal), is our own atman, our consciousness. So to attain this blissful state, we need to establish our own self first, to realize the Supreme Self (Ambal) and only then, can one find this happiness.

So what are the steps we need to follow, to understand ourselves.

1. Knowing yourself: You do not get to know yourself, by just growing up. It needs tremendous amount of effort from your side. You need to do it with intention and purpose. Understanding your personality is the first key. All of us have 2 faces, one is a private face which is seen only during our private moments and the other face is our public face, which we project to others. Ask yourself, who you really are? How are you on a good day and a bad day? In the face of a challenge and in reward, how do you react to the situations around you?

2. Understanding your core values: The moral codes that you hold dear and near to your heart, such as honesty, integrity, flexibility, loyalty, responsibility, etc. You need to find out if you apply it in every aspect of your life. For eg., honesty - you may be holding this core value at home, but not in your workplace. You may be flexible towards others at work, but not at home. So get that sorted out first. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you value loyalty above excellence?
- Responsibility above ambition?
- Innovation over improvement?

3. Understand your likes and dislikes: This looks to be a very simple thing, but it is the most important one. Take time to define your likes and dislikes. Stay true to them. Nobody needs to like them.

4. Have a conversation with yourself: Having a conversation with yourself is necessary for finding yourself, never ignore or even try to ignore yourself. Understand your wants and needs, be frank and understanding to yourself. Never get into an argument or try to justify your actions. Conversation with yourself, is not about condemnation or justification. It is getting to know yourself. Describe yourself as a person, as a spouse, as a parent and as a child. For eg., as a person, you could be funny, intelligent, energetic, loving etc. Through periodic assessment of yourself, you understand, appreciate and get to know yourself, which helps you to get closer to the Supreme without any fuss and frolic.

Play fairly (according to dharma), trust Ambal (faith) and expand your realization (sanctifying your mind and senses). You will reach a state of ananda and dissolve into the paramananda.

Nisyanda: flowing energy

Ambal is called nisyanda, because She is always in motion, the energy behind all things in this Universe. She is that tremendous energy with high intensity which is present in stars like our sun. It may be of low intensity, as in the case of inert things like rocks. Irrespective of whether it is high or low, the existence cannot be denied.

The next question which I am looking to answer is, why do we say that God brings into us a positive outlook, if we pray and follow Her rules or ways? Our body is known to possess spinal energy. This energy flows in two directions - up towards the brain and down towards the lower spine region. When the upward flow is stronger, one's consciousness also rises and produces a positive outlook, which makes us happy. Thus, an interrelationship exists between the directional flow of energy and consciousness. The energy flow is controlled by our emotions beginning from the heart. Positive emotions direct the flow upward, negative feelings drive it downward. When energy flows upward, it inspires us to be happy. That in turn, creates a desire, so desire plus energy produces will power. The will directs the flow upward or downward depending on whether the desire is positive or negative. The energy flow facilitated by will power creates the sense of happiness. A downward flow of energy is produced by depressed feelings. There are several factors which draw the energy downward.

1. Unhealthy eating:

This is the common cause for all negative emotions in the body. Junk foods like chips, oily snacks, burgers, masala mixed foods, and spicy foods have excessive stimulants which is basically made up of alkaloids and terpenoids. These produce toxins which inhibit the hundreds of receptors in the body, thereby hindering the flow of energy upward which leads to depression, anxiety and anger.

2. Untimely sleep pattern:

In this modern age, with the advent of latest technologies and work patterns, we are often deprived of the basic thing in life - sleep. The body needs 6-7 hours of uninterrupted sleep, so that the vital organs alone function, leaving the other parts to rest and get repaired for the next day. This needs energy, so when a person is deprived of sleep, two things are restricted.

- a. The repair work is delayed.
- b. The flow of energy is blocked by the injured organs.

So proper functioning results in proper flow of energy and proper flow leads to a positive outlook.

3. Deprivation of physical activity:

Physical exercise is an integral part of our body processes. The energy consumption takes place only because the body is bound to work, so with our modern day work patterns, there is no physical exertion at all, only mental exercise. This deprives the body of its major function, leading to a downward flow of energy.

So to lead a positive way of life, balance your food, sleep and activities.

Paramartha: Divine truth

In this modern age, truth is a fact or reality. The concept of truth has been debated upon for centuries, more so with divine truth.

Around the world, wise people divide truth into 2 categories.

1. Conventional truth.
2. Real or ultimate truth.

Conventional truth is something that is how it is. We know they aren't permanent, but still believe it is. For eg., I might say, "I am happy." This is the conventional truth which appears to be true and permanent, but it is not. The condition might change the next minute or the next, but we still cling on to it. Ultimate or divine truth is how things really are. They are ever changing and dependent on circumstances. For eg., I was sad yesterday, but happy now, my moods keep changing, but I am not a sad person altogether. True I feel happy now, but I know that tomorrow, things might change.

We start our life based on conventional truths and end up knowing the absolute truth. So, conventional truth is also used as a ladder to reach the ultimate truth. It is all about choices.

Once upon a time, there was a man who wanted to cross a river. He built a raft, got into it and crossed the river. On reaching the other side of the river, he had three choices.

1. To open the raft and use the pieces for something else.
2. Leave the raft, so that others can use it.
3. Carry the raft on his back, for the outward journey.

He decided to discard the raft, so if he needs one, he can always rebuild it again.

This choice he makes, leads him to conventional truth, which is, he may or may not need. They are useful at various stages in our life journey, but we can discard them when we no longer need them. We need to use the material of this delusional world in order to build a raft to cross the river of life, but that should not become a burden.

Discard it and move on.

Divine truth is focused on the reality which feels no pain, no sorrow. It exists.

Let me give you another example.

When we look at the moon, it waxes and wanes (growing and diminishing). These are conventional truths. It happens, it is not a lie. The moon appears like this, but it is not the ultimate truth, because science tells us that the earth comes in between the moon and the sun, so the shadow is cast on it. It appears as though the moon is waning, which is not.

So divine truth is real and perfect.

So, what are the basic rules to attain divine truth.

a. Compassion:

This also happens to be the basic divine truth, it is a form of sacrifice. When the word is split, it is come-passion, it swells up in the heart to serve and save humanity.

b. Recognizing the love of God:

Ambal is here, present among us and in all forms of expression. She includes, pervades and remains beyond. She is greater than all appearances. She reveals herself progressively and cyclically, as we get ready for further knowledge.

c. Transcendence:

When the soul is illumined, the mind is ready to be guided by Ambal through love, will and intelligence. Man transcends his jealousy, prejudice, hatred and selfishness, and becomes united with God, the conqueror of hearts.

Yogeeswari - The queen of yoga

The queen of yoga in Devi Gita said, "Yoga does not exist in the heavens nor does it exist in either worlds, it exists right here amidst its common enemies lust, anger, greed."

So, if you want to lead a yogic way of life, you need to shred the enemies and embrace the teachings of Ambal.

So let us see how we can do that.

1. Lust (passion): Lust has been with mankind throughout history. The roots of lust run deep, that it is almost instinctive. Once we begin to fulfill our own lust, it turns into a vicious cycle. Lust leads to sin. Sin breaks our relationship with God. We become numb to its impact, so we think, we can lust even more. It is an unquenchable thirst for more and more. More money, power, revenge, food, clothing, and love. Unless our desires are turned over to Ambal, we will never be satisfied. Sometimes we are too ashamed to take the first step. Don't try to fight the battle of lust on your own. Ask Ambal for help, this is what humility is all about.

A simple sentence to bear in mind is, "Don't love the world of lust or anything that belongs to it."

2. Anger: Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure. It is often forceful, violent, and could lead to action directed at the source or it can be manifested into strong words. Evidence shows nowadays that anger is linked to physical, mental and social problems. Chronic anger leads to heart diseases, cancer and stroke. High levels of anger leads to self harm and depression.

You could ask if anger is a sin? It is in most cases, but righteous in a few of them.

Examples of righteous anger:

- i. When an innocent individual is unlawfully convicted for murder.
- ii. Small children below the age of 5 are raped by older men.
- iii. The calf is not allowed to feed milk from its mother.
- iv. Kindness of one is treated as vulnerability by others.

Human anger is an expression of unfulfilled lust, hatred, resentment, and desire. So that is the reason why anger is the unwanted element in yoga practise. So tell yourself, "Anger is short term madness."

3. Greed: Worldly pleasures are the root of all kinds of evils, including greed. It is an endless desire to get more and more things in life. Greed dictates our actions and thoughts. Greed is thinking about oneself all the time. It has no limit. If you think having a big house or a room full of money will satisfy your greed, you are wrong. It is a dangerous thing not only for you, but for the entire human race. The good news is, greed cannot be satisfied, but it can be controlled.

Steps to control greed.

- i. Learn to say no, to a few of your wants, however desperate you are to get them.
- ii. Ask yourself why you want it.
- iii. Be generous to share what you have got.

Remember, "Greed is the father, and lust the mother of injustice."

Your life will become more peaceful, happier, and satisfactory when you give up greed in every aspect of life. Be it friendship, relationships, or people, you'll be on your way towards living a simpler, meaningful and yogic life as talked by Ambal in the Devi Gita.

Yogamata - The Mother of yoga

We earlier saw Ambal's verse on yoga. She spoke about the enemies of yoga, we tried to find ways to destroy it.

Today's word is the extension of yesterday's post. Here, Ambal is referred to as yogamata for Her in depth explanation to Her devotees about the yoga techniques. By the practise of yoga and its accompaniments, one can attain the jiva mukti through various stages of practice.

1. Yama: includes ahimsa, truthfulness, asteyam, brahmacharya, daya, uprightness.

2. Niyana: includes ten qualities. Tapasya, contentment, astrikya, charity, worship of God, hearing siddhantas from the vedas, modesty, shraddha, Japam and Homam.
3. Asana: includes Padmasana, Svastikasana, Bhadrasana, Vajrasana, Virasan.
4. Pranayama: Taking in breath by the Ida (left nostril), count OM 16 times, retaining it in the sushumna so long as we count OM 64 times and then exhaling it slowly by the pingala nadi (right nostril), as long as we count OM 32 times.

The first process is called Puraka.

The second process is called Kumbhaka.

The third is called Rechaka.

This is one pranayama.

5. Pratyahara : Our senses travel spontaneously towards their objects, as if they are without anyone to check. To curb them preforce and to make them turn backwards from those objects is called pratyahara.
6. Dharana: Holding the prana vayu on toes, heels, knees, thigh, navel, heart, neck, soft palate, nose, between the eyebrows and the top of the head is called dharana.
7. Dhyana: Concentrating the mind on the consciousness inside and then meditate on the ishta devata within the jivatma. This is dhyana.
8. Samadhi : It is the fusion of jivatma and the paramatma.

Samadhi is of two types:

- i. Samprajnata samadhi - This is the samadhi where the yogi is absorbed in the pratyaya at a particular level of consciousness. Samprajnata samadhi can occur at each of the four main levels of consciousness.

These states of consciousness progress from the surface to the innermost depths of consciousness.

- a. Savitarka Samadhi = Vitarka
- b. Savicara Samadhi = Vichara
- c. Ananda
- d. Asmita

- ii. Asamprajnata Samadhi - This is a transition state between two levels of consciousness.

The transition is as follows:

- Nirvikalpa = vitarka to vichara
- Nirvichara = Vichara to ananda
- Ananda to asmita
- Asmita to Nirbija samadhi.

The journey continues...

Kala Hamsini - Master of all art forms

Bala as Saraswati is the creator of 64 art forms.

I am tempted to give you the entire list, but stopped myself from doing so.

She is the prototype of an artist.

She invented writing, so that wonderful songs could be composed.

She designed music, so that words can get into its wagon and ride off on a journey.

She created dance so that Her abinaya is understood by every common man.

She is Tapaswini teaching us the yogic science.

She is Manaswini, signalling that mind has to be controlled, for She is the embodiment of sabda brahman.

She is the veda and the vedanta beyond all virtues and vices.

The perfectionist who wants Her children to be perfect too.

How do we do that?

1. Determine your core values:

What do you stand for?

What makes you a good person?

Are you really happy with it?

Answer these questions and you get to understand who you really are, then determine your basic values in life.

2. Approve yourself:

If you don't approve of yourself and your behaviour and actions, then you'll walk around with an uncomfortable feeling all day, this is the biggest obstacle you will face.

3. Let go of the past bitter experiences:

All of us have good memories and bad experiences in life. Preserve the good and wash away your bad experiences so that they don't burn you. It is like an acid, it does more harm to you than to others.

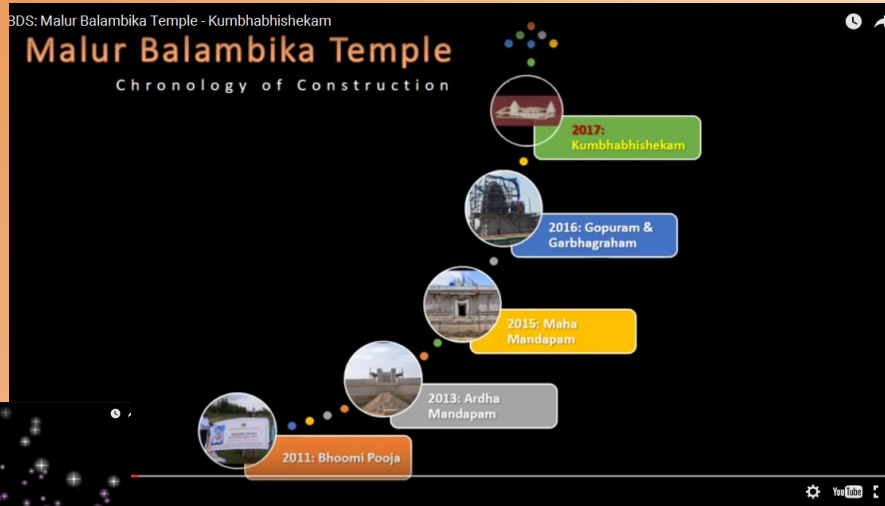
4. Always remember, the world owes you nothing. Many of us think, that the world should be providing you with a living, it owes you everything. No, the world was here before you, it owes you nothing.

5. Keep your focus at all times:

You need to understand yourself, your positives and negatives and set a goal and stay focused on it. Don't focus on the problems and dwell on your suffering and have a victim mentality. Be positive, learn how to deal with situations and try to reach your goal. Make realistic goals. Don't over estimate yourself and under work.

Bala Sahasranamam on Website, Facebook and YouTube





BDS: MALUR BALAMBIKA TEMPLE - KUMBHABHISHEKAM

As we fervently move towards the completion of the Temple construction and Kumbhabhishekam, here is a video which traverses through this beautiful journey. The Kumbhabhishekam is the divine culmination of a beatific dream and we want all of you to join hands and be a memorable part of it.

<https://youtu.be/HuUSJdzg4Fg>

Kumbhabhishekam: 10th April, 2017

BDS Contacts

Bala Sahasranamam Parayanam:

Chakravarthy's residence, Ohio—USA.

• 95chikki@gmail.com

Anuradha Srinivasan's residence, Chicago—USA

• 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 Temple Manager:

balambikadivyasangam2015@gmail.com

Annadhanam Scheme:

We are feeding the under nourished, low income children in government higher primary school.

Those who are interested in sponsoring, please contact Temple Manager :

balambikadivyasangam2015@gmail.com

BDS Outreach:

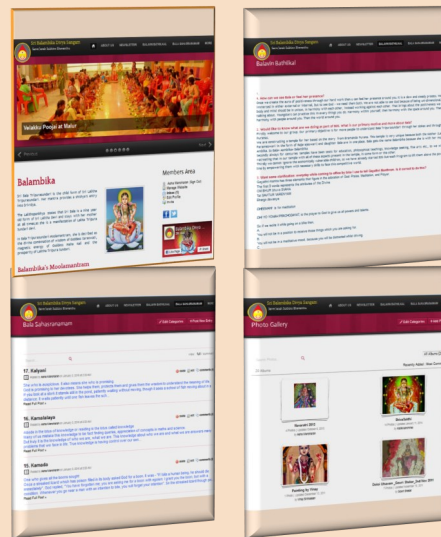
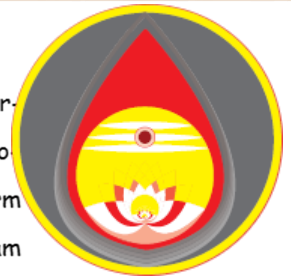
We are having health and hygiene awareness and also dental care for children , if you could sponsor for this program, we would cover more children and help them have proper dental care.

Those who are interested in contributing towards this cause, please contact Temple Manager:

balambikadivyasangam2015@gmail.com

Vision of Balambika Divya Sangam

As passionate devotees of Goddess Balambika, and overwhelmed by her grace and benevolence, we have come together from diverse scenarios as one unifying force to form Balambika Divya Sangam. The principal focus of the Sangam is to pursue the age old tenet—**sarvejana sukhinobhavanthu** and pay obeisance to the divine Mother, who is the cause of welfare of the world. Through worship we realize that cast, creed, religion and social status, all melt away before her, for in her eyes, we are all her children.



We are on the web!

<http://balambikathirupanitrust.webs.com>

This is a good place to catch up on all the Sangam activities such as About Us, Temple Updates, Balavin Bathikal, Bala Sahasranamam, archives of earlier Newsletters etc.

Join us on WhatsApp!

To join Balambika Divya Sangam WhatsApp group, please send an email along with phone# to our President Smt. Asha Manoharan at asha.raji@gmail.com



Breakfast Meal

Ravindran Seshadri & family
Sampath Iyengar & family
Sasikala & family
Babhulal Joshi & family
Praveen Moda
Vinay Srinivasan
Vinay KS & Saranya
Swetha Patel
Kalpesh Patel & family
Kirti Maayan & Kunal

Sponsor's Corner

Archana Contributions

Annapoorni Sreenivasan
Sudha
Vinay Srinivasan
Raghuram & Kanchana
Venkat Krishnan Murali

Sanchara Dolai

Narayanan & family
Subramani & family