

# BALAVIN KURAL

## Balambika Divya Sangam



## Editor's Desk...

As we read this edition of Balavin Kural, the Maha Navaratri celebrations for this year would have come to a close, and we are left to reminisce. Each and every one of us has to just barely blink our eyes, and in the moment of a heartbeat, vibrant images of the festivity at Malur – from the variety of colorful flowers, fruits and kolam, to the dazzling and picture-perfect Bala's alankaram - spin in our minds and captivate our hearts, while making us wish for more! The photo gallery on our smart phones sports a brilliance of rainbow colors, that boasts of the celebrations – from red and pink to orange and yellow, lush greens to a myriad of blues and indigos – a spectacle worth calling 'the pageant of the gods'. And in the very heart of it all, glowing and radiant, charming and graceful, majestic, yet mischievous, is our dearest, most loved Bala, looking simply adorable! As many have aptly commented on WhatsApp, our two eyes are a pair too few, to soak in all that beauty and divinity.

It is no easy task to organize a celebration that calls for both spiritual fervor and festive flair. Navaratri is indeed festive – the socially entertaining golu, sweet-treats, and the musical extravaganza, all bring together the joyful aspect. But weaving in the intrinsic significance of Navaratri – where nine forms of Ambal are worshipped with due respect and impeccable religious rigor is extremely challenging, although a very gratifying experience. Balambika Divya San-

gam thanks each and every one of the coordinators who was instrumental in making this event happen flawlessly, and to our dear members for their supportive and appreciative responses. Inland and overseas, most of us either woke up to the vivid photos, or closed the day with a soul-enriched feeling.

Balavin Kural – literally, the voice of Bala, brings the highlights of the recent celebrations to you in a nutshell. The pictures and photos will truly speak a thousand words as Bala's magic unfolds before your eyes. 'Karunaiyin Vadivamaye' will touch your hearts as you witness Her unfathomable love for Her devotees and the deliverance of Her will and justice. We do hope you enjoy our spectrum of articles - from the architectural grandeur of the Indus Valley, Bhisma's dilemma and enterprise during the Mahabharata war, to our science filled snippets featuring the earliest recording device, and the articulate queries that lead you to yet another science legend in 'Who Am I'. From the editor's desk – we hope you enjoy it!



Mrs. Asha Manoharan  
President—BDS

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## Bala Speaks...



Determination is the power that sees you through all obstacles and miseries. It helps you to build your willpower, which forms the basis for your success. Be confident, self-reliant, and always say to yourself, "I will do it. I can do it. I have to do it." These confirmations build the power of determination.

### Special Pooja & Events

- ♦ The Maha Navarathri 2016 was celebrated with pomp and splendour in Malur Trust House. There was active participation and involvement from the people of Malur.
- ♦ The Delhi Dolai was a resounding success and helped in spreading the word about the upcoming temple for Sri Balambika in Malur.
- ♦ The Breakfast Meal program is in progress and many patrons have come forward to support this initiative.



## Down Memory Lane

By Smt. Asha Manoharan

Background behind the song *Karunaiyin Vadivamae...*

Bala as a mother is depicted in this song along with my long association with Her. As I look back at those days, it makes me wonder whether She ever stops caring about me or anyone in this world. I have been a witness to all those wonderful moments when She has been a medicine for the sick, a support for the old, a friend to the young, and teacher to the adults. Her attributes are many, but what stands out is Her care, Her love and Her selfless sense of duty towards Her children. I have seen more deaths happen, as I went on with my life. Death is the screen drawn after a scene in the drama of life. As a mother, She is the epitome of sincere selfless love, but with karma, She is the Army Chief. To illustrate, here is an incident which I witnessed, being with Bala.

It was a warm summer day, I was around 15 years old. It was the best period of my life, when my relationship with Bala was much stronger and love between us was bilateral. As I stood near the gate, I saw Her coming towards me at a distance. I opened the gate for Her and as She came in, I went and got some water for Her to drink. She looked tired, Her face red with sweat and heat. I sat next to her in silence, looking anxiously at Her to see what She had to say. Over the period, I had learnt when to talk and when not to. She had Her own ways of telling me things, so I waited for that to happen. She took the water from me and drank it in one go. I always had a handkerchief in my hand. In those days, because Bala likes them, it had floral designs with Sunday, Monday printed in its corners. It always had the sweet smell of jasmine on it. I wiped Her sweaty face with it and She smiled from the corner of Her lips.

I asked, “What? Why are you smiling now? Is it funny wiping your sweaty face?” She took my hand and said, “I smiled, because the smell on your handkerchief is so unique, I love it and I want it every time.” I looked into Her deep blue eyes, the eyes that gave Her away once upon a time (read my episode, you will understand), but today, it was filled with love and She lived this moment with me. I shifted my eyes and She immediately said, “Hey, I came here to take you along to a place...”, saying this She paused. I knew She had something else in Her mind. “Yes, charmer, I am ready,” I said. I stood up and shouted to my mum, that I will be back in half an hour. I heard my mother’s mumbled voice behind me, as we left.

We lived on the western side of the Akilandeswari temple. As we walked down the bazaar leading to the temple, it was quite busy with the vegetable market buzzing with people and the cloth stores displaying the sarees and the dresses in an uncreative fashion. We went past it and then around the Naalu kaal mandapam. Here, we turned left into a lane which went down the muddy road leading to kodaiyampettai. I hadn’t seen these streets before, but it was quite nice as it was a very busy neighbourhood. We went further and then it opened out into a very quiet place with fewer houses. Bala stopped, in front of a small thatched house. It seemed like a deserted house built with clay and the entrance was very low, so we had to bend and push ourselves in. When we went in, we saw that it was small inside, but neat and tidy with just one cot at the far end of the room. There we saw an old woman lying with her eyes closed. She was very fragile, nice drawn out face, lean, quite tall, filling the whole length of the cot. There was something about her face which made me happy. Bala went close to the sleeping woman and touched her. The old woman opened her eyes and as she did so, her eyes grew wider, her mouth opened to say something. Bala stopped her and said, “Ok, Shivagami, I don’t want you to tell me anything, I know, you simply take rest.”

The lady got up and fell at Bala’s feet, “Amma, Velari aatha, finally you heard my prayers, I was waiting for you only. I cannot leave this world without giving you this.” She then walked towards the corner of the room stumbling and opened a small aluminium box. Bala and I went closer to see what she had in that box. Inside, she had some hand stitched dresses, she took them out one by one and showed both of us and said, “Oh, this is the one

I got for you when I got Sita (her daughter I guess) her first Diwali pavadai.” Then she pulled out another and said, “This one, I made for you when Neelakandan was born, you remember.” She then pointed out to a brown pavadai, “Oh this one, I got when I got a pay raise at the ice factory,” and she went on and on.

Bala smiled, took them from her and said, “Seri Shivagami, vaa, vanthu utkar, methuva peysu. I will be with you the whole day.” She then looked at me. I nodded, I understood what She meant. I walked past the cot and there was a small stove at the back of the house. It was a small area, which only had a bamboo gate separating the hall from the kitchen. I looked around, found a small vessel, took it and went outside to the nearby shop. I bought 100ml of milk and 1 rupee worth of sugar and a tea packet costing 1 anna. The shopkeeper asked me for whom it was and I pointed at Shivagami’s house. He told me to keep the money which I offered and said, “Are you her daughter. I shook my head to say No. He said, “She deserves a better life you know, I don’t know why she is suffering, she was always a very kind person. She paid my exam fees for my S.S.L.C and she set up this shop for me. She has helped this whole community, but never wanted anything for herself. Her children don’t come around to see her, she lives all alone. I give her all the groceries, sometimes, I send my wife to cook for her. She would always be in Vellari amman temple. She says, one day Vellari amman will come and only then she will die, I salute her faith.”

I took leave of him, shocked, but happy to meet such a lovely warm person. I went in this time with a lot of respect for this old woman and with tears in my eyes. Bala had now turned herself into a middle aged woman nursing the old woman and silently listened to whatever she said. I went inside the kitchen and lit the stove and made some tea for Shivagami ammal. I filled it in a small tumbler which I found and went and gave it to her. Shivagami ammal gave it to Bala and asked me to get another one and she poured some for me. I was so moved. Even now, this lady never thought about herself, but only about us. I sat on the other side and looked at Bala. My eyes displayed my respects for Bala and for Shivagami ammal. We forced Shivagami ammal to have the tea and I came back with a little for myself and Bala. We all had tea. Shivagami ammal talked into the night and finally, she slept tired and exhausted.

Bala covered her with a sheet and rested Her hands on her forehead and looked at her with so much affection. That “look” is still engraved in my memory. She got up and looked at me as if to say, let's go. I nodded, I came out of the house. Behind me came Bala in Her own kutty Bala form. We both stood in silence on that moonlight night looking at the house and slowly holding hands, we walked back to our own lives.

This song was written with that incident in mind. Hope you like it.

## கருணையின் வடிவம்

கருணையின் வடிவமே அன்னையின் உருவமே  
கற்பகவள்ளியே அலைமகளும் நீயே...  
(கருணையின் வடிவமே)

விக்ருதியும் நீயே, விஜயாவும் நீயே (2)  
வித்யா ஈஸ்வரி அன்னையும் நீயே (2)

கருணையின் வடிவமே அன்னையின் உருவமே  
கற்பகவள்ளியே அலைமகளும் நீயே...

பவானியும் நீயே, பராசக்தி தாயே, (2)  
பாக்யாவும் நீயே, அன்னையும் நீயே.... (2)

கருணையின் வடிவமே அன்னையின் உருவமே  
கற்பகவள்ளியே அலைமகளும் நீயே...

சாரதா நீயே, சங்கரி நீயே (2)  
ஸ்ரீலகரி நீயே, அன்னையும் நீயே... (2)

கருணையின் வடிவமே அன்னையின் உருவமே  
கற்பகவள்ளியே அலைமகளும் நீயே...

நிர்மலா நீயே, நாராயணி தாயே.... (2)  
நிர்குணாவும் நீயே, அன்னையும் நீயே (2)

கருணையின் வடிவமே அன்னையின் உருவமே  
கற்பகவள்ளியே அலைமகளும் நீயே...

## KARUNAIYIN VADIVAME

Karunaiyin vadivame annaiyin uruvame  
Karpagavalliye alaimagalum neeye..... (2)

Vikruthiyum neeye, vijayaavum neeye.....  
Vikruthiyum neeye, vijayaavum neeye.....

Vidya eeswari annaiyum neeye  
Vidya eeswari annaiyum neeye  
(karunaiyin)

Bhavaniyum neeye, parasakthi thaaye  
Bhavaniyum neeye, parasakthi thaaye  
Bhagyavum neeye, annaiyum neeye  
Bhagyavum neeye, annaiyum neeye  
(karunaiyin)

Sharada neeye, sankari neeye  
Sharada neeye, sankari neeye  
Srilakari neeye, annaiyum neeye  
Srilakari neeye, annaiyum neeye  
(karunaiyin)

Nirmala neeye, naraayani thaaye  
Nirmala neeye, naraayani thaaye  
Nirgunaavum neeye, annaiyum neeye  
Nirgunaavum neeye, annaiyum neeye  
(karunaiyin)

## ಕರುಣೈಯಿನ್ ವಡಿವಮೇ

ಕರುಣೈಯಿನ್ ವಡಿವಮೇ ಅನ್ನಯಿನ್ನೆಉರುವಮೇ,  
ಕರ್ಪಗ ವಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಅಲೈಮಗಳುಂ ನೀಯೇ....  
(ಕರುಣೈಯಿನ್ ವಡಿವಮೇ)

ವಿಕ್ಕಾತಿಯುಮ್ ನೀಯೇ ವಿಜಯಾವುಂ ನೀಯೇ...(2)  
ವಿದ್ಯ ಈಶ್ವರಿ ಅನ್ನಯ್ಯುಂ ನೀಯೇ...(2)

ಕರುಣೈಯಿನ್ ವಡಿವಮೇ ಅನ್ನಯಿನ್ನೆ ಉರುವಮೇ,  
ಕರ್ಪಗ ವಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಅಲೈಮಗಳುಂ ನೀಯೇ....

ಭವಾನಿಯುಮ್ ನೀಯೇ ಪರಾಶಕ್ತಿ ತಾಯೇ... (2)  
ಭಾಗ್ಯಾವುಮ್ ನೀಯೇ ಅನ್ನಯ್ಯುಂ ನೀಯೇ... (2)

ಕರುಣೈಯಿನ್ ವಡಿವಮೇ ಅನ್ನಯಿನ್ನೆಉರುವಮೇ,  
ಕರ್ಪಗ ವಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಅಲೈಮಗಳುಂ ನೀಯೇ....

ಶಾರದ ನೀಯೇ ಶಂಕರಿ ನೀಯೇ... (2)  
ಶ್ರೀ ಲಹರಿ ನೀಯೇ ಅನ್ನಯ್ಯುಂ ನೀಯೇ... (2)

ಕರುಣೈಯಿನ್ ವಡಿವಮೇ ಅನ್ನಯಿನ್ನೆಉರುವಮೇ,  
ಕರ್ಪಗ ವಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಅಲೈಮಗಳುಂ ನೀಯೇ....

ನಿರ್ಮಲಾ ನೀಯೇ ನಾರಾಯಣಿ ತಾಯೇ.. (2)  
ನಿರ್ಗುಣಾವುಮ್ ನೀಯೇ ಅನ್ನಯ್ಯುಂ ನೀಯೇ... (2)

ಕರುಣೈಯಿನ್ ವಡಿವಮೇ ಅನ್ನಯಿನ್ನೆಉರುವಮೇ,  
ಕರ್ಪಗ ವಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಅಲೈಮಗಳುಂ ನೀಯೇ....

## కరుణైయిన్ వడివమే

కరుణైయిన్ వడివమే అన్నయిన్నురువమే,  
కర్పగ వల్లియే అలైమగళుం నీయే....  
(కరుణైయిన్ వడివమే)

విక్కాతియుం నీయే విజయావుం నీయే.....(2)  
విద్య ఈక్కరి అన్నయ్యుం నీయే (2)  
(కరుణైయిన్ వడివమే)

భవానియుం నీయే పరాశక్తి తాయే (2)  
భాగ్యావుం నీయే అన్నయ్యుం నీయే (2)  
(కరుణైయిన్ వడివమే)

శారద నీయే శంకరి నీయే (2)  
శ్రీ లహరి నీయే అన్నయ్యుం నీయే (2)  
(కరుణైయిన్ వడివమే)

నిర్మలా నీయే నారాయణి తాయే (2)  
నిర్గుణావుం నీయే అన్నయ్యుం నీయే (2)

కరుణైయిన్ వడివమే అన్నయిన్నురువమే,  
కర్పగ వల్లియే అలైమగళుం నీయే....



### Day-o | Ganapathi Homam: Maha Navarathri'16

Lord Ganapathi was invoked through Maha Ganapathi homam to remove all hurdles, obstacles and to set the path clearly for all of us...

Ambal gave us darshan as Kamakshi who is a reservoir of love. She was worshipped to spread love and happiness throughout this Utsavam...



### Day-1 | Mangala Gowri Homam: Maha Navarathri'16

Day 1 of Navarathri went on well with Mangala Gowri homam...

There are no words to express Ambal's form as Mangala Gowri. When we were chanting Lalitha Sahasranam, she arrived majestically and took Her seat on a beautifully decorated Mandapam. Red being Her favorite color, She was dressed in red, decked in red stone jewelry, and garlanded in red as well. The happiness and that theekshnam look of Her's made us immovable from our place.

Through this homam, She provides prosperity, mangalam and bestows Sowmangalya bhagam for married couples.



### Day-2 | Bala Tripura Sundari Homam: Maha Navarathri'16

Day-2 of Maha Navarathri was Bala Tripura Sundari homam and alankaram. Pink being Her favourite colour, the theme of the venue was pink. Fruits, flowers, draperies were all in pink; it was a spectacular sight. Ambal was glowing in Her pink attire. Even if She had bestowed 1000 eyes to us to see Her, it would not be sufficient.

She being the embodiment of peace, prosperity and happiness, was invoked through the Homam to give desired boons, to give Jayam in our efforts, to give Santana bhagyam to the childless couples. Jaya Bala's presence was felt everywhere.





**Day-3 | Swayamvara Homam: Maha Navarathri'16**

Malur devotees witnessed yet another beautiful form of Ambal, on the 3rd day of Maha Navarathri. Sri Lalitha Parameshwari was seated majestically on a lion and blessed everyone. Orange being the colour of the day, Ambal was dressed in orange sari, with orange flowers and matching jewelry. She was invoked through Swayamvara Homam to bless everyone with good family life, to removes obstacles/doshas in the path of marriage, to provide a suitable life partner for marriageable girls and boys.





**Day-4 | Gayathri Devi Homam: Maha Navarathri'16**

Ambal was in all yellow and Her energy was equivalent to a 1000 suns. Ambal gave us darshan with 5 heads and 10 hands, signifying that She is Goddess of knowledge, power, wisdom, intelligence, beauty and all round prosperity.

She removes all our agnyanam, the ignorance in us, and through her abhaya hastam, bestows jnyanam on us to bloom the flower of divinity in us...



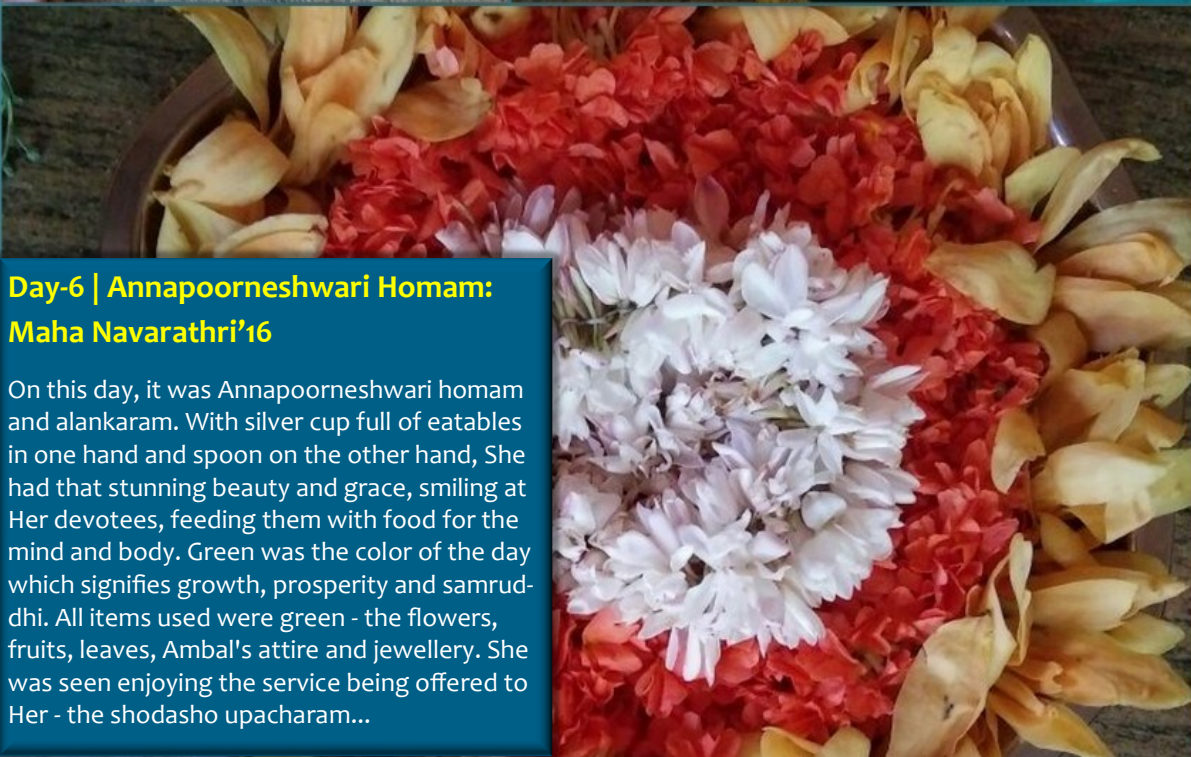


### Day-5 | Srisooktha Homam: Maha Navarathri'16

On this day, we had Srisooktha homam and Maha Lakshmi Alankaram. Goddess of Fortune with two beautifully dressed elephants by Her side, sat on the Mandapam majestically. The devotees felt the instant connection as soon as they saw Her. Prayers flowed from them like a torrential river. So much of bhakti could be felt there...

Eight forms of Lakshmi merged as Maha Lakshmi is the bestower of sakala aishwaryam, remover of poverty and lights up our life with immeasurable tons of energy.





**Day-6 | Annapoorneshwari Homam:  
Maha Navarathri'16**

On this day, it was Annapoorneshwari homam and alankaram. With silver cup full of eatables in one hand and spoon on the other hand, She had that stunning beauty and grace, smiling at Her devotees, feeding them with food for the mind and body. Green was the color of the day which signifies growth, prosperity and samrudhi. All items used were green - the flowers, fruits, leaves, Ambal's attire and jewellery. She was seen enjoying the service being offered to Her - the shodasho upacharam...



**Day-7 | Mathangi Homam:  
Maha Navarathri'16**

The day of Mathangi, one of the Dasa Mahavidya. Her appearance is green in colour and the color of the day was blue. The combo of blue and green brought so much energy to the venue. Being a Friday, there was also Lalitha Sahasranam chanting by the Malur Mandali, consisting of 50 ardent devotees. Their chanting and bhajans glorying Ambal filled the hall with positive energy. It is very true that, when we are all together and do things together with the grace of Ambal, then there is always happiness, success and joy in that...

Mathangi brought all of us together on this day, which is also one of Her qualities...







### Day-8 | Rajarajeshwari Homam: Maha Navarathri'16

On the ninth day of celebrations, it was Rajarajeshwari homam and Raja Rajeshwari alankaram. She was dressed in blue and looked so beautiful and majestic with motherly affection that takes care of us at all times. Everyday is a glorying day for all us as we get to see different forms of Ambal and are being blessed with Her different qualities.

Ambal as Rajarajeshwari takes care of our family, its welfare. She as a warrior, protects us from dangers, both within and outside us. Being a universal Mother, She unites us as a single family and shows no difference between any of Her children..





**Day-9 | Durga Homam: Maha Navarathri'16**

Durgashtami celebrations on the eve of Navarathri Mahotsavam at Malur. This Homam is a powerful and most significant homam to remove all doshas and negative energies.

Ambal was in Maha Durga form, dressed in all Red , with ten hands. She looked so bold and majestic. She was instructing us to come to Her for guidance and support. Being Simha Vahini, seated on a lion, She was at two arms distance from us, as if Garbhagudi was in front of us - such a boon for all us. We could feel Her so close, we could talk to Her, pour out our agony and pain at Her feet. She removed the negativity in us and made our hearts light and happy. Our body and mind was filled with energy and we moved forward. That was our experience on this day...

All glories to the Maha Shakthi and our Prayers to Her Lotus feet.



### Day-10 | Saraswathi Homam: Maha Navarathri'16

On the 11th day of our Maha Navarathri celebrations, it was Saraswathi homam and Goddess Saraswathi alankaram. Ambal as Saraswathi was in cream with green border attire and decked with stone jewelry. She was glittering and glowing with happiness seeing so many devotees. The entire venue was filled with people, chanting and singing Her glories.

We were all struck by Her charm. Saraswathi, the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom, blessed all the children with vidya, buddi and jnanam. She blessed elders with wisdom and courage to accept the mistakes and correct themselves. Overall, it was a memorable day for all of us.



### Day-11 | Mahishasuramardini Homam: Maha Navarathri'16

Twelve days of our Navarathri celebrations came to closure with Vijayadashami. Ambal kills Mahishasura on this day. She enshrines all the qualities of Lakshmi, Saraswathi and Parvathi.

On this day, Ambal was given an elaborative abhishekam with 11 varieties of dhruvams and finally, the Maha Kalasabhishekam. She was dressed in Purple colour with suitable jewellery and flowers. She gave us darshanam as Mahishasura Mardhini with trishul in Her right hand piercing Mahishasura, who was at Her Lotus feet. The 10 hands holding different ayudhams, lemon garland and Her open hair, showed Her ugram form. Every year on this day, we do Aksharabyasam for children who are ready to go to school. The child will sit on the lap of his/her father and in front of Ambal, and is made to write OM on a plate of rice.

After Mahamangalarathi and Bhajans, tamboolam was given to all the devotees. This Maha Navarathri concluded with a large scale annadhanam at Tirumala Choultry—Malur, where nearly 165 people had an elaborative prasadam. There were all kinds of people, all age groups present at the venue....





In the evening, all of us chanted Mahishasura Mardhini stotram when the priest was performing milk abhishekam to Ambal. We sang melodious and soothing bhajans to calm Ambal down from Her ugram state. We glorified Her, chanted Her holy names and prayed to Her to become calm. We offered Her fruits and milk as neivedhyam.

Soon after the pooja and mahaman-galarathi, there was heavy down pour of rain. Varuna bhagavan showed His mercy on us. All the devotees were so happy to know that Ambal was pleased and accepted the pooja...

**SARVE JANAH SUKHINO BAVANTU**



## Bhishma...

*By Thulasinathan Kandasamy*

It was the 3rd day of the Mahabharata war. Duryodhan was in search of Bhishma, he was feeling terrible. He just had to hide from Bhima - the mace wielder to avoid that Pandava's rage. Duryodhan didn't think that he was ready yet to encounter Bhima. While Duryodhan was cursing himself for his situation, he saw that most/entire Kaurava army is busy running away from Arjuna to escape his wrath. In disgust, Duryodhan located Bhishma and went straight to him. As usual, he directly started accusing in a very sarcastic tone, that Bhishma is partial towards Pandavas and is not fighting to his capacity. Bhishma was angry and sad, the same prince whom he had sworn to protect, was blaming and doubting him. It was not new to him though.

Bhishma stared at Duryodhan and turned to the Pandava army in anger. He started fighting with such a fury that anything that was moving was hit with arrow(s). It was havoc and it was now the turn of the Pandava army to run away. Hearing the screams of the Pandava soldiers, Krishna bellowed, "Partha!!.. stop him," and pointed to Bhishma. They rushed to face Bhishma. The Grand sire didn't stop the onslaught yet. It was bloody everywhere. Arjuna faced Bhishma and started blocking. The showers of arrows that Bhishma sent, were promptly cut down by Arjuna. He defended every powerful weapon that Bhishma dispatched.

After waiting for a bit, Krishna threw the reins of the horses over themselves and turned his face away. He turned and stared at Arjuna in unprecedented anger that sent chills down Partha's spine. Shaking his head disapprovingly, Krishna turned to the side and in disgust, yelled "Satyaki!" Krishna called the invincible Satyaki and started telling him, "Look at this Pandava, he is defending against someone who is fighting like he is possessed. If we let this continue, the war will be over. Tomorrow, we won't have any army. If Arjuna can't do it, then I will do it". Saying this, Krishna got down from the chariot. In a rage, he took a wheel from the rumbles of a chariot. Started whirling it above his head while roaring, "If any of you wants to run from here, this is the time. I will destroy the entire Kaurava army starting with this Bhishma today." The chariot wheel looked like the Sudarshana chakra in its massive form. Bhishma saw this and waited to accept death.

Before Krishna did anything further, Arjuna rushed and grabbed Krishna's leg and begged, "Please don't break your words Krishna, you told me that you will not use any weapon. I will fight the way you want me to fight. I will not see him as my Grandpa, I will fight the man who is destroying my army." Krishna paused, stared into Partha's eyes to read his train of thoughts. He then turned to Bhishma, gave a gentle smile and mounted on the chariot again. Now, Partha fought true to his words.

Few days passed...

It was the 9th day of the Mahabharat war. Bhishma was fighting furiously, showering a rain of arrows. His mind was replaying his promise to Duryodhan the night before, and it was echoing over and over. "I will either kill Arjuna or make Krishna break his vow and take up weapons."

He adored the way Arjuna was fighting. He was in all appreciation for this brilliant archer. However, he could see that it was not full might of the regular Partha. As expected, the other one who was glaring at all this in fury was Krishna. He saw the shower of arrows filling the sky and falling on them, few of them piercing Arjuna's body through the armour. The one who always kept his emotions in balances, was getting heated up. Krishna saw that Bhishma also just cut the string of Gandiva, Arjuna's bow.

There was sudden and wild thunder and heavy lightning over the sky. Krishna threw the reins of the horses on them and swiftly jumped from the chariot. A sudden thud and a long silence. Krishna started towards Bhishma. The warriors paused and started looking at this. For those who were Saivites, it looked like Lord Rudra was staunchly walking towards a challenge, for Vaishnavites, he appeared as Lord Rama moving in anger, for Shaktas, it was the all powerful Durga getting into a war, for Kaumaras, they saw the God of War Subramanya setting foot on the war field, Ganapatyas saw Ganesh in wild anger. Roaring and moving, it was the Death itself, walking to hug or take someone.

Gangaputra Bhishma was extremely joyous, there can't be a more worthy death. He started praying, "Lord, please be merciful, make this happen." He controlled his breath and started preparing himself to witness his death. Gangaputra was filled with emotions.

With blood red eyes, Krishna just walked with a whip still in his hands. The earth beneath his foot was trembling. For Him, it didn't matter if it was a whip or a chariot wheel or bare hands. The force with which he moved, showed his clear intent, to attack Bhishma. Arjuna jumped from the chariot and tried to stop Krishna. With all his power, Arjuna could not stop Krishna and was just getting dragged along. Arjuna pleaded with tears falling, "Please don't break your vow. I will kill Pitama myself." Krishna lowered his raised hands. Paused and just stood still for a few moments (what felt like years to Arjuna). Then still with anger, without saying anything, he stared at Bhishma, walked back to the chariot and mounted.

Looking at all this, Bhishma was joyous that the Lord broke his promise. However, he didn't know at this time that Krishna did it for his devotees. One for Arjuna who was on the verge of death, and the other for Bhishma, who vowed to break the Lord's promise.



Delhi Maha Dolai Utsavam | Sep-9 to Sep-22, 2016





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## Demystifying Science...

The world's oldest Tape Recorder...

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

During an interview with Maha Periyava – the 68th Jagadguru of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, while the interview was being recorded, Periyava is supposed to have



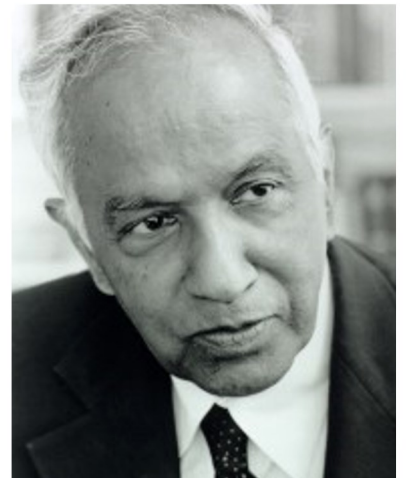
asked the question as to which is the oldest known tape recorder. As no one answered, Periyava asked another question as to who gave us the Vishnu Sahasranamam, to which everyone present replied that it was Bheeshma who gave us the Sahasranamam at Kurukshetra. Then, Periyava asked yet another question,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

## Who am I?

- 1) I was born on 19th October 1910, in a Tamil Iyer family in Lahore (Punjab).
- 2) At the time of my birth, my father was posted as a Deputy Auditor General of Northwestern Railways at Lahore.
- 3) My mother translated Henrik Ibsen's - 'A Doll House' into Tamil and in general, is credited with arousing my intellectual curiosity at a young age.
- 4) My paternal uncle was the great Indian physicist, Sir C.V Raman.
- 5) I was initially tutored at home and eventually, studied at Hindu High School, Triplicane - Madras.
- 6) From 1925 to 1930, I studied at Presidency College (Madras) to subsequently complete my B.Sc (Hon.) in Physics.
- 7) In July 1930, I was awarded a Government of India Scholarship to pursue graduate studies at the University of Cambridge (Trinity College).
- 8) After receiving a bronze medal for my work on degenerate stars, in the summer of 1933, I was awarded a PhD degree at Cambridge.
- 9) In Cambridge, I developed a limit showing that the mass of a White Dwarf could not exceed 1.44 times that of the Sun.
- 10) In an infamous encounter in 1935, British physicist Sir Arthur Eddington publicly ridiculed my concept of the proposed limit; although he was to be later proved wrong.
- 11) After lack of support on my theory from fellow scientists at Cambridge, I moved over to the University of Chicago as an Assistant Professor in the year 1937.
- 12) My expertise in hydrodynamics led Robert Oppenheimer to invite me to join the Manhattan Project, but delays in the processing of my security clearance prevented me from contributing to the project.
- 13) From 1952 to 1971, I was the editor of The Astrophysical Journal and had developed it into a prestigious publication.
- 14) I loved teaching and guided almost 50 students to their PhDs.
- 15) I was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1983, for my studies on physical processes important to the structure and evolution of stars.
- 16) In 1999, NASA named one of its four "Great Observatories" after me.
- 17) There is also an asteroid named after me in honour of my lifetime achievements.
- 18) I died of a sudden heart attack at the University of Chicago Hospital in 1995.

### Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar

(or "Chandra") was an Indian-American astrophysicist, best known for his work on the theoretical structure and evolution of stars. He is also widely known for his celebrated discovery of the Chandrasekhar Limit. While he evoked respect from his students, he also encouraged them to put forth their viewpoints without any fear. He was decorated with Padma Vibhushan by the Government of India.



### BOPS: Breakfast Meal @ Govt. School, Malur

Thanks to Shri Ravindran Seshadri & family for their generous contribution in support of this noble endeavor...



## Indus Valley Civilization: Cities

The Indus Valley Civilization shows evidence of a sophisticated and technologically advanced urban culture, making it the first urban center in the region. The quality of municipal town planning suggests knowledge of urban planning and efficient municipal governments, that placed a high priority on hygiene, which made them develop the world's first known urban sanitation systems.

Wells were the main source of water within these developed cities. Waste water from a room, presumed to be set aside for bathing, was directed to covered drains, which lined the major streets. Houses opened only to inner courtyards and smaller lanes. The ancient Indus systems of sewerage and drainage developed and used in cities throughout the Indus region were far more advanced than any found in contemporary urban sites in the Middle East and even more efficient than those in many areas of Pakistan and India today. Furthermore, even the smallest homes on the outskirts of the city were believed to have been connected to this drainage system, further supporting the conclusion that cleanliness was a matter of great importance. The advanced architecture of the Indus Valley settlements is evident in their impressive dockyards, granaries, warehouses, brick platforms, and protective walls. These walls were massive in construction and is believed to have protected the inhabitants from floods and military invasions. The uniformity and complexity in the construction and planning of both Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, reveal a high degree of organizational skill.

They shared several common characteristics: a "citadel" at the center encircled by a brick wall, below which the city was laid out whose streets followed a grid pattern. In most cases, the citadel was built over the remains of an earlier settlement or atop a pre-existing mound. However, in places like Mohenjo-daro, for instance, the base was built of

baked bricks and mud. This leads to the inference that raising the elevation of the citadel higher than the buildings they contained, was a pre-planned move. However, not all citadels were constructed on an elevation. Those that were not, were still quite clearly isolated from the rest of the settlements by a wall, thereby confirming the fact that the inhabitants of the Indus valley considered the citadel as a distinct and important structure. In addition, several large buildings and structures on the citadel mound, further suggest that this area may have been used for public gatherings, religious functions or important administrative activities. Although the citadels were walled, it is far from clear whether these structures were defensive.

In sharp contrast to other great ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, no large monumental structures were built. There is no conclusive evidence of palaces or temples; or of kings, armies, or priests. Some structures are thought to have been granaries. The most prominent and unique structure found among the ruins at Mohenjo-daro in Sindh, Pakistan, is the enormous well built bath called the "Great Bath", which may have been a public bath. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Great Bath was built in the 3rd Millennium BC, soon after the raising of the citadel mound on which it is located. In the next article, we would delve into the occupation, trade and transportation technology adopted by the people of the Indus valley civilization.



**The Great bath of the Indus Valley Civilization**

By Saqib Qayyum (Own work) via Wikimedia Commons



**The citadel at Mohenjo-Daro, with its later Buddhist stupa or holy mound**

Source: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/indus\\_valley/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/indus_valley/)

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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.

*hrīṅkāri kuṇḍalī dhātrī vidhātrī bhūta samplavā /  
unmādinī mahāmālī suprasannā surārcitā //*

## Hrimkari: She is the seed syllable of the word Hrim

Very often, with shakti worship, we come across this word Hrim and we have wondered why? Hrim means creation, sustaining and dissolution. Since Ambal does all the three, we call Her as hrim. It is one of the shakti mantras as well.

Let us look at some of the mantras:

Om - Pranic energy

Krim - Electric energy

Hum - Power of fire

Strim - Power to stabilize

Aim - Energy of sound

Shrim - Lunar energy

Klim - Magnetic energy

Hlim - Power to stop

Trim - Power to transcend

Hrim - Solar energy

These mantras have a great capacity for transformation that can extend to the deepest of our consciousness and prana. These shakti mantras including Hrim, have a consonant R, which is an important syllable for fire, heaven, light and dharma, and has a stimulating and energizing effect.

Hrim contains a magical force, which is captivating and empowering. It is a specific mantra for the heart at all levels, whether spiritual, or as a physical organ. It energizes the heart, provides warmth and allows both deep feeling and deep thought.

Hrim is related to solar energy. Just as the sun provides heat and light to all forms of life in this Universe, so does the mantra Hrim. This mantra can be used to counter heart diseases of all types, helping us live longer (sustenance). It helps promote the pranic and functional aspects of the heart and with it, the power of circulation of the blood, the lungs and the nervous system. It has a fiery energy called the pitha and some air energy called the vatha, rejuvenating the pranas and emotions (creation). This mantra is also harsh sometimes, it dissolves the prana and carries away the blood circulation, leading to destruction of blood cells (destruction). This mantra on recitation, humbles the person and helps one to understand the divine power, showing us that life starts from the beat of the heart and stops when the beat stops. What is created should be destroyed at the end.

This is the simple truth of life and its life force is Ambal Herself, which She rightly is the Hrim in all of us.



## Kundalini: The frozen energy within

Ambal is the energy, the shakti of this Universe. Shakti is always about creation more than destruction. This energy is the manifestation of Ambal Herself.

It is the creative principle in every atom and every cell in this Universe. They are either dormant or active, depending on the stages of life we are in.

It is also the kinetic energy or the driving force in all stars and planets.

It is the potential energy in every cell and organism.

Human race is always in constant search to harness different energies in this universe, like solar energy, wind energy, tidal energy, atomic energy, etc. Not many understand that they can harness energy for the individual self within themselves. The primary objective of mankind, should be to awaken the full potential of human awareness in each individual, that is to recognize, refine and expand it to our unlimited self. Many pundits teach and train individuals in kundalini yoga to awaken that energy, but for a common man, drowned in his duties and complex work structure, here is how I can help.

### 1. Recognize your awareness about yourself:

To harness your own potential energy, you need to have a clear perception of your personality, including your strength and weakness, thoughts and beliefs, motivation and emotion. Self awareness helps you to understand other people, the way they think about you and perceive you. This is the first step you need to master in your life. You cannot be in false pretenses about yourself.

For eg., always say you are a friend to somebody, never say she is my friend. The meaning is the same, but the awareness has made you to shift the centre of importance to your friend, which will be appreciated and reciprocated.

### 2. Refine your awareness:

When you begin to understand who you really are, then you can change the interpretation about yourself in your mind. What you think changes, hence emotion changes and a shift in emotional quality changes leads to changes in the quality of relationships. Having a clear thought of who you really are, helps with your behaviour patterns, which helps people to understand you better. This shift helps both your professional and personal relationships.

### 3. Expand your awareness:

Once you refine the understanding about yourself, then expand that understanding to understand others as well. Empathize on their strong character, politely avoid their negatives. Avoid confrontations on a personal level. For eg., never tell anyone how incompetent they are in a discussion, never make anyone feel uncomfortable in your presence, always be a good host, then a dominating one.

In short,

- \* Stop reacting emotionally to situations.
- \* Understand yourself and your core beliefs.
- \* Develop communication skills and respect in relationships.

Create love and compassion for others, never try to embarrass anyone for whatever reason.

## Dhatri: Our foster Mother

Ambal is referred to as our foster Mother, not because She replaces our earthly mother, but because even if our earthly mother disowns us, She will be there watching over us.

All true worship begins with our adoption. All prayers, all praises, all singing, all our thoughts relating to God, begins with being able to come to Her as Her children. Our earthly mother may be busy, but our heavenly Mother is not busy for us. She is not a deadbeat, absentee or a disinterested Mother. When we talk to Her, She hears, when we pray and ask, She listens and better yet, She always knows what is best for us. She provides our needs and shapes us, disciplines us like a good mother would her children. It makes Her happy to do so, because She delights in us. She actually wants us. No one forced Her to be our Mother,

no amount of good deeds would get us close to Her, unless She wants us, so being our Mother is Her wish and She loves being our Mother. Worshipping Her is responding to Her love and affection and acknowledging Her as our Mother for what She has done for us. Our earthly mother will depart from us one day, but our heavenly Mother will never abandon us.

We need to be captivated by the truth and let it produce a response of awe filled adoration for Her in us. She is perfect in Her love and care, wisdom and concern for us. She knows us individually and loves us more than we can comprehend and She really wants us to find true happiness.

So how do we find true happiness?

As a mother, She has taught us a few basic things, let us look at it over again,

1. Giving: Giving people something brings immense happiness when we don't expect anything in return, like a silent blessing in your heart, a kind word of support, or a helping hand, whenever you spot an opportunity. This brings true happiness.
2. Silence: In this modern age, we are too busy and overwhelmed with what is happening around us. Our inner self needs a little time to quench in silence, so sitting with a hot cup of tea or coffee in silence in the morning for 10 minutes, brings true happiness within.
3. Being grateful: Being grateful to God for a wonderful day and for the things She has given us, enjoying the little things that makes our life an experience, is where true happiness lies.
4. Acceptance: A scholar once said, "The intensity of pain depends on our level of resistance to the present moment." By accepting the present moment as it is, you derive peace and it frees you from unhappiness.

So, make the changes and relish true happiness which lies frozen inside you.

### **Vidhatri: female creator**

Ambal, the Mother of the Universe, the creator of this Universe, displays Her creativity, Her grace, Her affection, Her strength and Her resilience, in all Her creations. You will find Ambal and nature being repeated over and over again. It is because, She has hidden clues about Herself and about Her objective in the things She has created. We only need to look more closely to see the pattern and Her laws of nature. We consider our life to be a chaotic one with the experiences to be random, but when we observe closely incident by incident, one leads into another, nothing happens by chance, be it the people we meet or the incidents in our life. It is based on a simple rule, "Nothing in this world happens by chance, it is for a reason." This entire universe stands as a witness to the awesome intelligence of its creator. The evidence of an all powerful creator and many of Her attributes are clearly seen by those who are willing to see.

Ambal reveals Herself to mankind in two ways.

1. Through people and their wisdom, She unravels Herself like a painting coming alive in front of its admirer.
2. The other way, is through Her creation. The complexity of our planets and life in all its forms is evidence and proof of a supremely intelligent and wise creator. There is a cause to every effect, the cause of creation is the Mother Herself.

It is not necessary for every person to make a formal study of creation, but it is important that in our thoughts, we continually make a connection between the creation and the creator. Understanding and knowing that Ambal created everything, should shape our thinking and guide our actions.

Here are a few things that God's creation teaches us,

1. To constantly be aware of our creator and pay reverence at possible times. For eg., on a hot summer day, when we have to walk long distances, God created the trees so that we can take shelter in its shade, until we think we are fit to carry on. Stop and say thank you for the wonderful gesture.
2. It teaches us that Ambal has great love for us and all mankind. Ambal created us in her own image, making us special and showers all Her love on us like a mother would do, by producing the most gorgeous fruits on this planet, milk to feed, sea waves to have fun cradling and rocking in the huge seas, just to entertain us.
3. It teaches us to conserve, protect and to take care of God's property.

Ambal is the sole owner of everything we see around, because She created them. So, we must preserve and protect what is given to us. Nature warns us every time we cross the line. We see the aftereffect of our pollution, drilling, mining, etc., in the form of floods, heat wave and earthquakes. They are just reminders of our position in this universe.

So offer each day to the creator with a small silent prayer of "thank you Mother for the lovely flower or the juicy mango". Walk and talk to Ambal like never before, you will see your life taking a new dimension.

## Bhuta: Taking any form

Ambal, the source of energy in this universe, takes different forms at different times. That is why it is said "Energy can neither be created nor destroyed, it is converted from one form to another," because this energy has basically come from Ambal, the prime source of all energies in this universe. In some forms, She is benign and gentle, while in other forms She is dynamic and ferocious, but be it any form, Her grace for Her devotees remains the same.

Here, I am going to discuss the forms of Ambal based on Her prime six energy forces:

1. The most dynamic force She represents is the cosmic force, where She destroys the demonic forces that threaten the universal equilibrium. She takes the visvarupa form to counter attack these forces.
2. The next form that She manifests in, is the beautiful scenic form. Here She displays colour, beauty, attractiveness and productiveness in all life forms. She is the creative force inside every living thing: "The Seed". She resides as a force responsible for periodic renewal of life.
3. The third form She takes is the gentle form of the Mother, She is the protective force here. She spins off Her loving and caring nature to all living things who display this attribute at the birth of their young ones. No life form is an exception. This caring and protecting quality is a special feature which is universal and it can come from none other than HER.
4. The subtle form is the next form which is latent, but resides as a potent energy form inside every human being. Man possesses tremendous amount of energy which is exhibited at the time of crisis. A weak person fights a strong murderer when his life or his family's are at risk. A normal king turns into a saint when confronted by death and suffering. A peace loving prince waged war when his wife was kidnapped by a demonic king. When man is at the brink of disaster, Ambal rises up as a kundalini shakti to protect him. The kundalini shakti is the huge atomic energy inside every man.
5. The fifth force is the life force. Here, Her manifestation is unique. She resides in the breath of every living thing, the oxygen force of this universe. She has transformed Herself from the cosmic force to a life force. She nourishes every cell and every atom in the body helping them build their structure and form so as to support life on this earth. The energy that enters here is used by the body and comes out as a different form which serves as a source of energy for another life form. Oxygen, which enters as a source of energy in man, comes out as carbon dioxide which is then used up by plants to manufacture their food for survival. Everything is recycled in nature. No one can equal Her in that aspect.
6. The sixth form is the manifestation of knowledge power. She resides as knowledge in every living thing. Every being big or small, understands its environment, understands its needs and understands its life path by simply having this power of knowledge - to know and understand. In every living being, She is that power, She is the jnana of this world, the only power which helps us understand HER for what She is.

I quote Devi Gita here as told by Ambal, "The knots of the heart are let loose by Jnana and the knots are knit more by karma." Indirectly, She nudges us towards the understanding of Her, as She is our liberator.

## Samplava: The origin

Ambal is the origin of every living thing in this universe. She is the cosmic energy creating, controlling, maintaining and rejuvenating Her creation and life forms.

The question is, how does She manifests in the universe:

space - invisible

fire - agni

The three states of matter:

solid - Pruthvi

liquid - Jal

gas - Vayu

Ambal resides in all these 5 elements. Their combination in different ways gives rise to the various life forms in this planet. As for the individual self, She changes Her game plan.

Atma which was originally a part of Her, remains inert until awareness sets in. The atma transforms into jeevan (individual soul) at the touch of awareness. Awareness transforms the atma into jeevan by performing four kinds of work called the antahkara-na.

1. Manas (mind): doing the work of thinking in different ways (sankalpa and vikalpa)
2. Buddhi (intellect): making decisions (adhyavasaya)
3. Chitta (memory): process of knowing and storing information
4. Ahamkara (ego): identifies the self

So, the jeevan is ever trying to realize the soul and dissolve itself into the cosmic energy - its source. The search begins.

So what are the ways in which the soul existing as a jeevan, can break its ties and get back to the ultimate source - cosmic energy or Ambal?

1. Realization of Ambal:

God realization is the highest form of realization. This can be achieved through prayer, japa, thinking about Her in whatever we do, singing praises of Her and constantly trying to understand Her ways.

2. The second aspect is making decisions based on Ambal's will:

We take numerous decisions in life. Every decision that we make, should be made with Ambal's grace and will. How do we do that? Asking for Her guidance, trusting Her ways, understanding that She knows our past, present and future and acknowledging that She knows our strengths and weaknesses, believing that She will protect us at all times and in all situations.

3. Remember to learn from past experiences:

No man is perfect, so we all tend to make mistakes time and again. Don't panic. Learn from those mistakes, remind yourself never to repeat them again and move on. Turn those negative experiences or failures into your positives.

4. Don't lose your identity:

You are what you are, never give up on things that you firmly believe in. Truth and courage will always lead you into Ambal's kingdom. So never lose sight of them.

By conquering the manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara, you will become a liberated soul ready to be dissolved into the cosmic energy - the origin called Ambal.

## Unmadini: Intoxicating

Ambal and Her ways are intoxicating to Her devotees.

Here, there are two views:

1. To the devotees, She is intoxicating.
2. To the non-believers, She is confusing and incomprehensible.

For both the groups, my answer here would be the same. The beauty, the enormity, the unlimited, the vastness, is all mysterious and exciting.

Let me try and explain why we feel the way we feel.

Take a very simple example.

I see a flower which is turquoise, a person who we say is colour blind sees it as light green, a dog sees it as dark blue and finally a blind man sees no colour at all. They are all looking at the same flower. These are all relative observations, so who is to conclusively describe the colour of the flower - Nobody. Not a single person knows the true colour of the flower, but at the same time, they all know the colour of the flower. The flower is all colours and it is, but one. So the body's perception of the flower is distorted, so the reality experienced by the mind becomes relative, because each of our experience of the universe has to pass through a flawed medium (the physical self), the final experience we perceive is impure and diluted.

A self cannot for certain, determine the true colour of a flower, how can it determine the nature of Ambal?

She is the TRUTH.

Duality actually separates this Truth into two parts:

1. The perceived relative truth.
2. Inherent absolute truth.

What the physical self perceives about Ambal is relative truth, the mind which relates information, experience and senses, is the inherent truth. So, is the physical self right or the mind? Both sees only from one perspective, so it is both relative.

How do we conquer this perception and reach the TRUTH (Ambal)?

1. Lead a simple disciplined life:

A well trained physical self, is the key to controlling the mind. When the mind and body is in sync, then it is in harmony with each other, making two into one, thereby bringing Ambal to the forefront.

2. Listening to your conscience:

It is the voice of God. It speaks only the truth, no if's and but's. You need to practice listening to it more frequently than you normally do.

3. Experience:

The individual and collective experience of the race, embodied in history and tradition expressed in literature, draws you closer to God. You can even know Her through other's experiences of Her and great literature.

4. Prayer:

Prayer connects with Ambal directly. Learn more about Ambal from a few minutes of prayerful repentance, than through a lifetime in a library.

## **Mahamala: One who wears a beautiful garland**

Ambal is always seen wearing a mala, either made up of flowers or ornaments.

A flower garland symbolizes happiness, aspiration, inner strength, enthusiasm, and zeal for life. Then, life becomes the medium to secure these feelings and emotions, like the thread in a garland. Ambal, the shakti of all energies, emotions and feelings within you, constantly reminds you how important it is to live a "full life" within the boundaries of self, family and society. She helps us to understand that happiness, aspiration and other feelings are all interconnected and it is tied up to the self through the thread called life. Life doesn't distance itself from any of these emotions or feelings, it holds them together and this beautiful garland tied up with feelings and emotions is offered to Ambal, which She is seen wearing with Happiness as its focal point. So, it becomes imperative to discuss about Happiness and what it represents.

Happiness, as we all know, is an emotional state of a human being wherein the person feels he owns the world. This emotional state is attained in 3 ways.

1. Happiness due to pleasure: If a person indulges himself in good food, good company, and is in a good place, he thinks he is happy. It is happiness derived from worldly things.
2. Desire: Here, happiness is a matter of getting what you want, with the content of the want left to the person who does the wanting.

For eg., a small girl wants a doll, she gets it, she is happy, whereas a small boy might not want a doll, so the doll doesn't make him happy. So here, it depends on what you want and desire.

3. Objective: Happiness consists of a human life that achieves certain things from a list of worldly pursuits, such as career accomplishments, friendship, freedom from diseases, pain etc.

The above mentioned ones are the common factors on which happiness generally depends on in real life, not the ideal life.

I often wondered whether it is wise to indulge in all these. I strongly believe that it is not wrong in searching for happiness through one of these means, but it comes with a responsibility. Life can be divided into three types, based on what we choose.

1. Pleasant life (filled with pleasures of the senses): Experienced during our formative years in life.
2. Good life (filled with aspirations, zeal, enthusiasm): Experienced during our adulthood.
3. The meaningful life (life filled with love, being generous, affectionate): Experienced during our old age.

All three are needed for the soul to experience and feel the qualities of life. These three comes to us in different stages of our life time, like a garland tied to the string at regular intervals.

So, being responsible about the way we lead life is the first and the most important step towards being Happy.

## Suprasanna: Very gracious

Many of us are of the impression that Ambal likes to torment us with Her leelas if we don't appease Her with prayers and poojas. That is totally wrong.

Our choices in life are the ones which impacts our lives. Ambal appeals to our senses and emotions to do the right thing that will set the course of our path, which is then directed towards liberation our soul. God's responses will always precede our responses and actions. So the greatest gift ever given to man for his good, is a tool that can be used for or against him, and that is the choice and free will. Ambal courts Her people, rather than take from them the gift that allows true worship and provides the foundation of a relationship with all mankind. Ambal's plan for us is multifaceted, with one purpose: to save and preserve mankind. The unfortunate thing is that we do not always recognize God's loving acts towards us, despite experiencing the benefits which we have taken for granted.

A friend of mine once asked me a question—How do we really know that Ambal has a plan for us?

The life that lies before us is the course laid out by Ambal. Life is all about hope and Ambal provides that hope for us to prosper and not to despair. She wants to do great things for us and it is up to us to take the first step towards Her. So how do we do that?

1. Get to know Her better by offering a daily prayer to Her.
2. Help those who are vulnerable in the society, like street children, terminally ill people who want nothing, but some of our time, or the aged and weak who only want a little attention from us.
3. Taking life as it comes - This is achieved by reducing our wants and focusing on what is in our hands.

The second question is, what happens when you use your free will?

Ambal does not control every aspect of our lives, you do have the free will and you have the ability to exercise that free will, but remember, you live with the consequences. The important lesson Ambal is trying to teach, is the "Law of consequences". Good choices have good results. Bad choices cause unpleasant or even disastrous outcomes. She is basically trying to teach us to think like how She would think. She can't accomplish that by doing our thinking for us. We must have the freedom of choice, eventually that way, we choose to live our lives. Choices that we make might be wrong and conflicting with Her plan, but our ability to choose, is a gift from Her. So at times, we do make wrong choices, but remember, Ambal will always come to our rescue to find our way back and realize all the good things She has in store for us.

## Surarchita: worshipped by the Universe

Ambal is worshipped by the whole universe, because She is the Maya, She is the indestructible form of the universe, the great primal energy and the seed of the world. The Mother who is the light of knowledge, gives refuge to every single creature in this world. She engulfs the Universe with Her beauty, love and mercy. Ambal is creatrix of the Universe, the whole world is Her body, mountains are Her bones, rivers Her veins, ocean is Her bladder, Sun and Moon are Her eyes, wind is Her breath, agni is Her mouth. She runs the world show. This cosmic form is also the Mother to millions of creatures, including mankind. She helps us to get all that we want in this world. Our growth, development and sustenance are all looked after by Her.

She consoles us when we are sad, She protects us when we are afraid and feeds us when we are hungry. She has absolute love and affection for Her creation. This divine Mother exists as a combination of three:

Gunas - Sattvic, Rajasic, Tamasic  
 Shakti - Iccha shakti- will  
 Kriya shakti - action

Jnana shakti - knowledge

She is the:

Brahma shakti - Saraswati

Vishnu shakti - Lakshmi

Siva sakthi - Durga

There are 3 superlative hymns in praise on Ambal in the form of Lalitha:

1. Arya Dwishati - also called Lalitha Stava Ratnam, a 200 sloka piece by Sage Durvasa.
2. Soundarya Lahiri - which is made up 2 parts:
  - i. Ananda Lahiri - a 41 sloka piece brought from Kailasa by Adi Sankara himself.
  - ii. Soundarya Lahiri - 59 slokas composed by Adi Sankara himself.
3. Pancha Shati - a 500 sloka piece by poet Muka.

Durvasa's Arya Dwishati provides a rich spiritual experience with the Mother Goddess. He describes extensively about Sri Chakra and its complicated structure.

The poet Muka composed 500 slokas in praise of the Mother, he is a dumb poet who was given a superlative fluency by Ambal Herself.

Then comes Soundarya Lahiri, which praises Ambal so extensively that it brings tears of joy to the readers. Adi Sankara brings Ambal right in front of you with his poetic expressions, there is no other poem to beat it till date. It is a devotee's ultimate bliss.

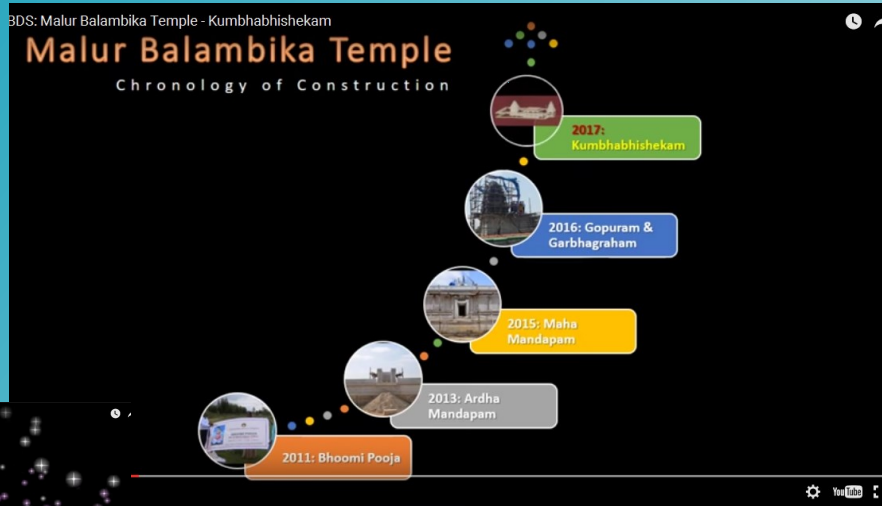
Ambal resides in the three Gunas, as three shaktis and breathes three great poems. Ambal inspires poets to sing praises of Her and She also directs them to mention about the role of women in a man's life. Soundarya Lahiri makes a point on this about the role of women as a daughter, wife and as a mother. The last two you see in every sloka, beginning with shivah - saktya and shivah saktih kamah kshiti; mentioning about the role of a wife and mother. The daughter reference is very rarely seen in any of the praises of Ambal, but Soundarya Lahiri mentions it as 'himagiri suthe', 'tuhina giri - kanye', in addition to janaka-janani, the mother-father role of Shiva and Durga.

Thus, worshipping Ambal, our universal Mother, liberates the soul of all bondages, because She is the Avidya-Maya which covers the truth and binds you to samsara. She is also the Vidya-Maya, who removes the cover and enables you to perceive the truth.

So free yourself by worshipping the divine Mother in all Her glory.

**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: 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2017**



## We thank all the Sponsors of Maha Navarathri 2016...

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Thank you all for making this event a grand success.

*If we have missed any name here, it is due oversight, and not intentional...*

## BDS Contacts

### Bala Sahasranamam Parayanam:

Chakravarthy's residence, Ohio—USA.

• [95chikki@gmail.com](mailto:95chikki@gmail.com)

Anuradha Srinivasan's residence, Chicago—USA

• [asriniv65@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:balambikadivyasangam2015@gmail.com)

### BDS Outreach:

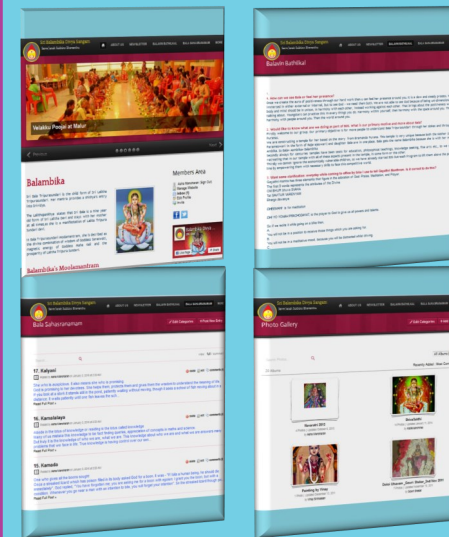
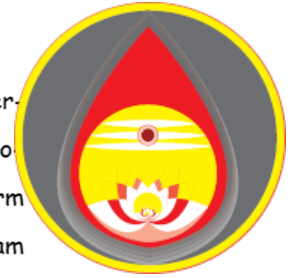
We are having health and hygiene awareness and also dental care for children , if you could sponsor for this program, we would cover more children and help them have proper dental care.

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

[balambikadivyasangam2015@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:asha.raji@gmail.com)



### Archana Contributions

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Prathik Chakravarthy

Gopal

Arjunram

Kasturi Rangan

Arundhathi

Venkatesh

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### Delhi Dolai

Special thanks to all patrons who made Delhi Dolai possible. Your participation and sponsorship made the whole event a grand success.

### Breakfast Meal

Ravindran Seshadri & family