
Jaya Madhurashtakam

ಜಯಮಧುರಾಷ್ಟಕಂ

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According to legends, Goddess Parvati, consort of Lord Shiva, came down to earth in the form of Kali to destroy the asura (demon) Charukan, who had been terrorizing the innocent and helpless humans living in these hills. After Kali destroyed him, Lord Shiva appears and

cools her anger. He blesses Kali and asks her to stay as the Sozha Muthu Ayyan, village god guardian and benefactor of the people in the hills.

Another legend regarding the goddess name "Madhura Kaliamman" is attributed to the story of five rishis. The five Rishis- 'Mudavar, Panthagar, Boumar, Arunar and Sigandeesar' were doing penance in the hills. Each day of the week except on Monday's and Friday's each rishi used to take turns to perform various rituals to Goddess Kali. The goddess appeared before each of them and showered her blessings on them. Overwhelmed by the Goddess's visit, the rishis requested her to make home under the Kumkumam (Thurakai) tree, so that they could visit and pay obeisance. The Goddess granted their wish. Each day when each rishi prayed to her, honey drops from a beehive above the Goddess used to fall on their lips. This honey drops was regarded as divine nectar, hence the Goddess was called "Madhura Kaliamman", Madura meaning divine nectar.

Perumaruda malai the hill behind Madhira malai is now known as Periasamy malai. A legend regarding this hill is the story of three Siddars - 'Notchindar, Neminadar, Sambu' who lived here. One day they came across a foundling and brought him up. He grew up as Sozha Muthu Ayyan, village god near Temple tank Boodhar and was educated by the 3 siddhars. On the completion of their earthy duties, the 3 siddhars were transformed into honey bees, a curse of their previous birth when as shepherds they stole honey from a saint. The saint cursed them to become honey bees in their next birth to atone their sins.

The 3 siddhars as honey bees made their home in the beehive of Thuraka Tree at Madhira Malai. These honey bees made honey which fed the 5 rishis when they came to pray Goddess Kali. This feeding of devotees through hard work absolved them of past sins. Boodhar who had come to pay respects to his teachers (3 siddhars) saw the rishis praying to the Goddess. He realised his true self and fell at the feet of Goddess Kali. She recognized him as the incarnation of Lord Narada and blessed him. Boodhar requests his teachers to pray to Kali to get back their human forms. They do so and the Goddess pleased with their devotion blesses them and gives them their human form. Boodhar requests the Goddess that he should always think of her and pray to her.

Kali grants his wish by giving him permission to perform rituals on Mondays and Fridays as the other days of the week rituals were performed by the 5 rishis. Hence the practice of performing pujas to Madurakali Amman only on Monday's and Fridays came into practise, which is followed even today.

Another popular legend regarding her descent from the hills to the foothills revolves around the great Saint Adi Shankara. One day Adi Shankara passing through the foothills of Madhira malai rests under a tree due to thirst. With his concentration on the Goddess, she appears before him as a spring to quench his thirst. She shows her true form to Adi Sankara, blesses him and becomes an idol. Adi Sankara then consecrated this idol which is now worshipped as Madurakali Amman.

Shri Mathurakali Amman of Siruvachur is the Kula Deivam of Shri Maha Periyavaa.

The author of this prayer is Sri Muthuswami, who was generally called Semmangudi Swamiyar (Sage of Semmangudi).

The aShTakam is reconstructed, thanks to Rajani Arjun Shankar, improving the wordings and metrical form keeping the overall meanings intact.

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