

“Female Voices from Vedic Times”-
Inspiration from female sages
in Sanskrit Epic & Purāṇa Literature
Kuntī, Piṅgalā, Madālasā

World Sanskrit Day Celebrations 2024
Ananda Ashram, NY

“For the love of Sanskrit” ...

- with special emphasis on Song & the “Sound of Sanskrit”: Listening, chanting, and meaning ...
- beautiful and inspiring select Sanskrit verses rendering deep philosophical thoughts. Let us learn from **Queen Kuntī** about *bhakti* (devotion) & surrender, from **Piṅgalā** about freedom from material desires, from Queen **Madālasā** about the essence of our true nature
- may we absorb the wisdom and noble qualities of these female sages and apply them in our everyday lives!

Prayers of Queen Kuntī

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)

Canto 1, Chapter 8, verses 18-43a

Śrīmatī Kuntī Devī :

Female sage from the Mahābhārata: wife of King Pāṇḍu, mother to the five Pāṇḍavas, aunt to Kṛṣṇa himself. In this ancient and intimate prayer, Queen Kuntī addresses Kṛṣṇa - not as her nephew but as the Supreme Being she has recognised him to be: her beloved Lord. Her words are devotional, pure, sincere, and timeless.



“kuntiyuvāca...”

Teachings of Queen Kuntī

Jahnvi Harrison

Composition *“Namo Namaḥ” (2021)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDZx4F0D3BA>

Teachings of Queen Kuntī: Reverence

कुन्त्युवाच

नमस्ये पुरुषं त्वाद्यमीश्वरं प्रकृतेः परम् ।

अलक्ष्यं सर्वभूतानामन्तर्बहिरवस्थितम् ॥ १८ ॥

kuntyuvāca

namasye puruṣaṁ tvādyam

īśvaraṁ prakṛteḥ param ।

alakṣyaṁ sarva-bhūtānām

antar bahir avasthitam ॥

kuntī uvāca— Kuntī spoke; *namasye*—I bow down; *puruṣaṁ*—the Supreme Person; *tvā*—You; *ādyam*—the original; *īśvaraṁ*—the controller; *prakṛteḥ*—of the material cosmos; *param*—beyond; *alakṣyam*—the invisible; *sarva*—all; *bhūtānām*—of living beings; *antaḥ*—within; *bahiḥ*—without; *avasthitam*—existing. **Kuntī spoke: O Kṛṣṇa, I offer my obeisances unto You, because You are the original personality and are unaffected by the qualities of the material world. You are existing both within and without everything, yet You are invisible to all. (ŚB 1.8.18)**

√vac /to speak (2nd conj)

uvāca = she spoke (perfect tense)

Active	Singular	Dual	Plural
First	uvāca uvaca	ūciva	ūcima
Second	uvacitha uvaktha	ūcathuḥ	ūca
Third	uvāca	ūcatuḥ	ūcuḥ

Teachings of Queen Kuntī: “Pray for more problems”

विपदः सन्तु ताः शश्वत्तत्र तत्र जगद्गुरो ।
भवतो दर्शनं यत्स्यादपुनर्भवदर्शनम् ॥ २५ ॥

vipadaḥ **santu** tāḥ śaśvat
tatra tatra jagad-guro ।
bhavato darśanam yat **syād**
apunar bhava-darśanam ॥

*vipadaḥ—calamities; **santu—let there** be; tāḥ—all; śaśvat—again and again; tatra—there; tatra—and there; jagad-guro—O Lord of the universe; bhavataḥ—Your; darśanam—meeting; yat—that which; **syāt—may it be**; apunaḥ—not again; bhava-darśanam—seeing repetition of birth and death. **I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again - so that we could see You again and again. For seeing You means that we will not again see repeated births and deaths.** (ŚB 1.8.25)*

vas, asti /to be (2nd conj, irregular)
santu = let there be (imperative mood)

Active	Singular	Dual	Plural
First	asāni	asāva	asāma
Second	edhi	stam	sta
Third	astu	stām	santu

vas, asti/to be (2nd conj, irregular)
syāt = may it be (potential mood)

Active	Singular	Dual	Plural
First	syām	syāva	syāma
Second	syāḥ	syātam	syāta
Third	syāt	syātām	syuḥ

Teachings of Queen Kuntī: Devotion

“Let my heart flow to you always- like a river to the sea”

त्वयि मेऽनन्यविषया मतिर्मधुपतेऽसकृत् ।
रतिमुद्धहतादद्धा गङ्गेवौघमुदन्वति ॥ ४२ ॥

tvayi me 'nanya-viṣayā
matir madhu-pate 'sakṛt ।
ratim **udvahatād** addhā
gaṅgevaugham udanvati ॥

*tvayi—unto You; me—my; ananya-viṣayā—unalloyed; matiḥ—attention; madhu-pate—O Lord of Madhu; asakṛt—continuously; ratim—attraction; **udvahatāt—may overflow**; addhā—directly; gaṅgā—the Ganges; iva—like; ogham—a stream; udanvati—in the sea (loc). O Lord of Madhu, as the Ganges forever flows to the sea without hindrance, let my attraction be constantly drawn unto You without being diverted to anything else. (ŚB 1.8.42)*

The story of Piṅgalā, the prostitute

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, canto 11, chapter 8, verses 22-44)

“There was once a prostitute named Piṅgalā. One day she (...) was waiting from sunset until midnight for a customer (...) in great anticipation. But as the time passed, her mind became very uneasy. No man came to see her, and in disgust she finally became renounced, giving up her desire for suitors. Thereafter, she engaged herself in thinking only of the Supreme Lord, and her mind achieved peace. The instruction received from her is that hope for sense gratification is the root cause of all suffering. Only one who has given up such desire can truly achieve peace...”



(From: ŚB, Dattatreya - 24 Gurus)

“piᅇgalovāca...”
Teachings of Piᅇgalā

Karnamrita Dasi
Composition “*Piᅇgalā*” (2004)
Album: *Dasi - Prayers by Women*

bit.ly/3AGe0d7

पिङ्गलोवाच

अहो मे मोहवितर्तिं पश्यताविजितात्मनः ।

या कान्तादसतः कामं कामये येन बालिशा ॥ ३० ॥

piṅgalovāca

aho me moha-vitatim

paśyatāvijitātmanaḥ ।

yā kāntād asataḥ kāmam

kāmaye yena bāliśā ॥

piṅgalā — Piṅgalā; uvāca — said; aho — oh; me — my; moha — of illusion; vitatim — expansion; paśyata — just see, everyone! (2nd pl imperative vdrś, paśyati/to see) avijita-ātmanaḥ — of one whose mind is not controlled; yā — which person (me); kāntāt — from a lover; asataḥ — useless, insignificant; kāmam — pleasure; kāmaye — I desire; yena — because; bāliśā — I am a fool. Piṅgalā spoke: just see how greatly illusioned I am! Because I cannot control my mind, just like a fool I desire pleasure from an insignificant lover. (ŚB 11.8.30)

सन्तं समीपे रमणं रतिप्रदं वित्तप्रदं नित्यमिमं विहाय ।
अकामदं दुःखभयाधिशोकमोहप्रदं तुच्छमहं भजेऽज्ञा ॥ ३१ ॥

santaṁ samīpe ramaṇaṁ **rati-pradaṁ**
vitta-pradaṁ nityam imaṁ vihāya ।
akāma-daṁ **duḥkha-bhayādhi-śoka-**
moha-pradaṁ tuccham **ahaṁ bhaje** 'jñā ॥

santaṁ — being; samīpe — most near (in my heart); ramaṇaṁ — the most dear; rati — actual love or pleasure; pradam — giving; vitta — prosperity; pradam — giving; nityam — eternal; imaṁ — Him; vihāya — giving up; akāma-dam — who can never satisfy one's desires; duḥkha — misery; bhaya — fear; ādhi — mental distress; śoka — lamentation; moha — illusion; pradam — giving; tuccham — most insignificant; aham — I; bhaje — serve; ajñā — unwise. I have been unwise to have neglected him, who is eternally situated within my heart and most dear to me: the bestower of real love and happiness and the source of all prosperity. Instead, I have ignorantly served insignificant men who can never satisfy my real desires and who have only brought me unhappiness, fear, anxiety, lamentation and illusion. (ŚB 11.8.31)

सन्तुष्टा श्रद्धधत्येतद्यथालाभेन जीवती ।
विहराम्यमुनैवाहमात्मना रमणेन वै ॥ ४० ॥

santuṣṭā śraddhadhatyeta
yathā-lābhena jīvātī ।
viharāmyamunāivāham
ātmanā ramaṇena vai ॥

santuṣṭā — **completely satisfied**; **śraddhadhatī** — now having complete faith; **etat** — in that ; **yathā-lābhena** — with whatever comes of its own accord; **jīvātī** — living; **viharāmi** — **I enjoy life**; **amunā** — with that one; **eva** — only; **aham** — I; **ātmanā** — with the Supreme; **ramaṇena** — who is the real source of love and happiness; **vai** — indeed. **I am now completely satisfied, and I have full faith in that (grace). Therefore I will maintain myself with whatever comes of its own accord. I shall enjoy life with only the Lord, because He is the real source of love and happiness. (ŚB 11.8.40)**

आशा हि परमं दुःखं नैराश्यं परमं सुखम् ।
यथा सञ्छिद्य कान्ताशां सुखं सुष्वाप पिङ्गला ॥ ४४ ॥

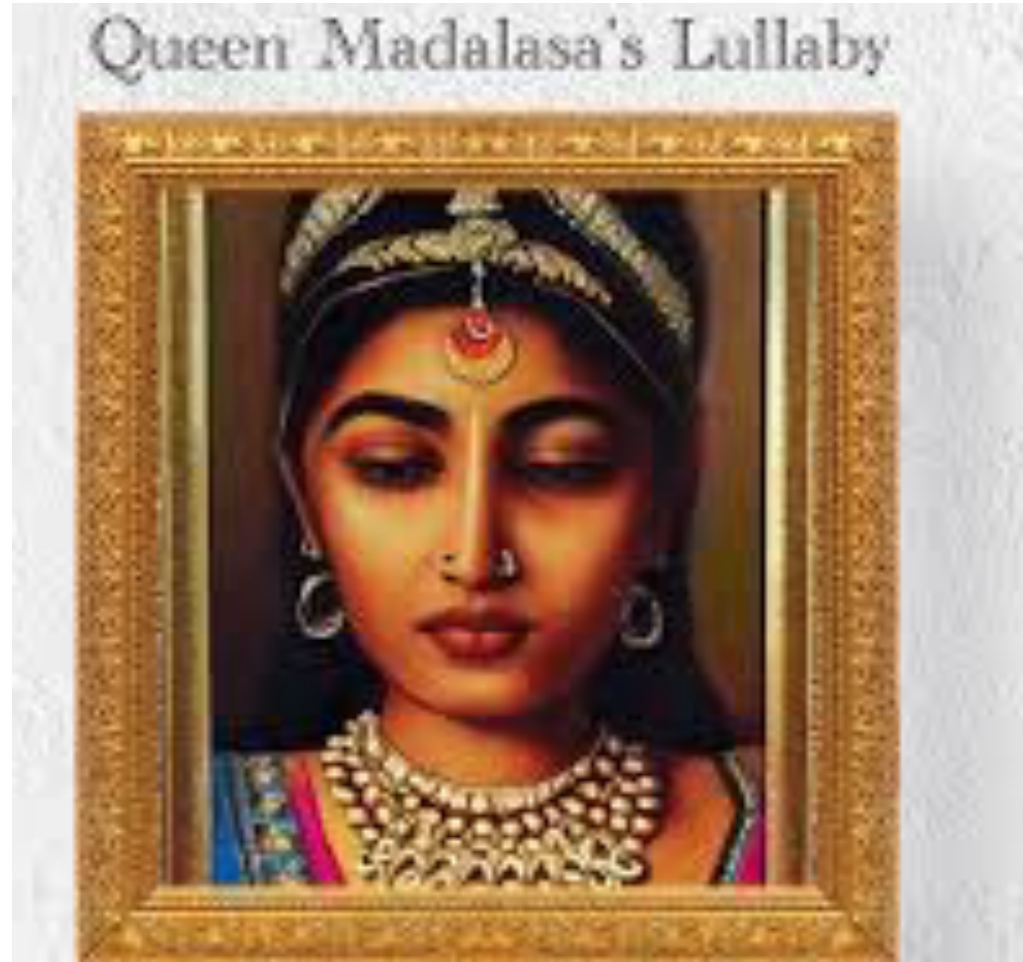
āśā hi paramam duḥkham
nairāśyam paramam sukham ।
yathā sañchidya kāntāśām
sukham suṣvāpa piṅgalā ॥

āśā — material desire; hi — certainly; paramam — the greatest; duḥkham — unhappiness; nairāśyam — freedom from material desires; paramam — the greatest; sukham — happiness; yathā — in that way; sañchidya — having completely cut off; kānta — for lovers; āśām — the desire; sukham — happily; suṣvāpa — she slept (3rd sg perfect tense of √śvap, śvapati (2nd conjugation)/to sleep; piṅgalā — Piṅgalā. **Material desire is undoubtedly the cause of the greatest unhappiness, and freedom from such desire is the cause of the greatest happiness. Therefore, having completely cut off her desire for lovers, Piṅgalā very happily went to sleep. (ŚB 11.8.44)**

Queen Madālasā's Lullaby

(From **Madālasā Updeśa**, **Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa**, Ch.25-30)

Queen Madālasā is known as one of India's most ideal and learned women from ancient vedic times. It is considered that she attained enlightenment. Madālasā used to recite this vedantic lullaby to her baby sons when they cried. Due to her direct teachings (she was their main gurvī), three of her four sons gave up the throne and went for penance. A beautiful example of how our mother can be our very first teacher /guru in life ...



“madālasovāca...”

Teachings of Queen Madālasā

Gabriella Burnell (Gaiea)

Composition: “Madālasā” (2018)

(Commissioned by School of Practical Philosophy, Australia)

<http://bit.ly/4dvl76Y>

Teachings of Queen Madālasā: Our True Nature

शुद्धोऽसि बुद्धोऽसि निरञ्जनोऽसि संसारमाया परिवर्जितोऽसि ।
संसारस्वप्नं त्यज मोहनिद्रां मदालसोल्लपमुवाच पुत्रम् ॥

śuddho'si buddho'si nirañjano'si
saṁsāra-māyā-parivarjito'si ।
saṁsāra-svapnaṁ tyaja moha-nidrāṁ
madālasollāpam uvāca putram ॥

“You are forever pure, enlightened, and untainted - untouched by the illusions of Samsara. So give up this dream-world of of Samsara - and wake up from the deep slumber of delusion.” Thus spoke Madālasā to her crying son.

शुद्धोऽसि रे तात न तेऽस्ति नाम कृतं हि ते कल्पनयाधुनैव ।
पञ्चात्मकं देहं इदं न तेऽस्ति नैवास्य त्वं रोदिषि कस्य हेतो ॥

śuddho'si re tāta na te'sti nāma
kṛtaṁ hi te kalpanayādhunaiva ।
pañcātmakaṁ deham idaṁ na te'sti
naivāsya tvaṁ rodiṣi kasya heto ॥

You are forever pure, you do not have a name. A name is only an imaginary superimposition on you. This body made up of five elements does not belong to you nor you to it.

This being so, what is the reason for your crying?

vas/to be (2nd conj, irregular)

asi = you are (present tense)

Active	Singular	Dual	Plural
First	asmi	svaḥ	smaḥ
Second	asi	sthaḥ	stha
Third	asti	staḥ	santi

तातेति किञ्चित् तनयेति किञ्चित् अंबेति किञ्चिद्धयितेति किञ्चित् ।
ममेति किञ्चिन्न ममेति किञ्चित् त्वम् भूतसंघं बहु मा लपेथाः ॥

tāteti kiñcit tanayeti kiñcit
ambeti kiñciddhayiteti kiñcit ।
mameti kiñcinna mameti kiñcit
tvam bhūtasamgham bahu mā lapethāḥ ॥

Some may call you father and some may call you son; some may call you mother and some may call you wife. Some say “you are mine” and others “you are not mine”. These are all references to this body (“combination of bhūta/physical elements”), do not identify with them.



**śuddho'si buddho'si nirañjano'si
saṁsāra-māyā-parivarjito'si |
saṁsāra-svapnaṁ tyaja moha-nidrāṁ
madālasollāpam uvāca putram ||**