



SAKTHI FOUNDATION -Uni5 EDUCATION

Srimathy Chellammaal Bharathiyar [Poet's wife]

Photo: Bharathiyar with his wife in Pondichery. 1919.

Her previous birth penance, service and prayers gave her the opportunity to become the wife of Mahakavi.

She got married to him when she was a child. Child marriage system has been there in Tamil society at that time. But she was brought up by her parents in Kadayam when her husband left to Kasi for higher studies. Before he departed, he requested her brother to make her to learn good Tamil and English. She has been gifted to be his wife. From her he has laid the foundation for women liberation.

When he returned back to Ettayapuram with the King, she expected to have a good comfortable life like all women. But she could not accept immediately the drastic changes in his life. She has to suffer a lot because of her self-ego and attachment to materialistic needs. In this context we like to refer to Srimath Ramanujar's wife and SriRangavendra Swamy's wife who all suffered because they could not accept the reality of their husbands. They have been that much ignorant and forgot their prayers in previous birth. So we must be very careful while praying to God regarding our partners and associates. She has slowly changed but to what extent we do not know. She was much focused with the daughters and their welfare as her duty. To perform that she has to even leave her husband and join with people of her family who were against Bharathiyar.

She has been warned about her husband's changes in Kasi by his brother-in-law. So she has written a letter to change him. Will he change from awareness? Some of the incidents have supported the poet's mission and showed her greatness.

It is very interesting to read poet's letter to his wife from Kasi.

"My dear lovable Chellammaa!

I got your lovable letter. You need not get scared about my actions. There is nothing to be worried about me. Viswanathan [in-law] has created unwanted confusion within you about me. I will never go wrong in my life as you feel. When I meet you I will talk about it. Instead of worrying about me better learn Tamil. I will be happy with that.

You're beloved
C. Subramanya Bharathi."

She has been pulled between husband's character and society which was against him. She has experienced several self-conflicts. She was able to understand her husband but could not accept his actions. This was because of her caste, community and social setup which were stressing her family. She was very much particular that her daughter's life must not become a dark room.

We need to imagine her situation as a young widow mother with 2 daughters. She has to depend upon her family for all needs. She has been recognized as the wife of a great poet and Siddar. Other than this she has never experienced any luxury. After poet's demise she and daughters were blessed with a good life.

Husband's death at very young age, society's comments about his attitudes, future of 2 girls and poverty were the battles of Mahabaratham faced by Mrs.Chellammaal. When he died there were no one to dispose his sacred body and even they have to collect money from public for funeral. We must think about her situation and also think about present celebrities and their family.

We wish to share few incidents from her life which expresses her greatness.

1. Please read the article Associates of Bharathiyar - part 8 in which we have shared about Mrs.Chellammaal's affection, respect and care to Sri. Surendranath Arya.
- 2.As a Bhramin lady she observed all prayers, rituals, fasting perfectly with special prayers for her daughters and husband which were blessed. So it is very important for a woman to pray for her family.
3. Once during Navarathry festival she accepted her husband's wish to serve food to 50 untouchable Harijans in her house. She also thanked her husband not for making her to clean the place and eat along with them. This one incident shows her level of transformation.
4. In a time period she stopped arguing with her husband and started accepting his actions.
- 5.She was able to accept many friends and guests to her house. She was able to accept an autism boy of 9 years old to stay with her family for several months. She was able to share the little food which she had for her daughters to any one at any time who came to see Bharathiyar. She has accepted many people's service to her family.

6. When Bharathiyar read about Vallalar's ahimsa - non-violence he immediately asked her to give away all the silk garments to poor. Immediately she accepted that and gave them away. It is very hard for Indian women to give away silk.

7. She has realized her husband's strong spiritual strength. She has never distracted him in any way. She deviated her thoughts and concentrated in her daughter's life.

8. The house was blessed with both poverty and joy. The couple has never given up their true love and affection. Many have admired how they can laugh, make fun and live happily in horrible poverty. Many have admired surprised and inspired to see their family's joy and fun.

9. She was one among very few Bhramin women who was taken out by her husband by holding the hands.

10. We must think how it would be difficult for her to put an end to others talking ill of her husband.

12. When she has arranged the marriage for her elder daughter she could not inform to her husband and get his permission. At that time Bharathiyar was in the peak of deviations. She must have felt very bad about it. She was put in a position to act on her own. This was the toughest time she has to face.

13. She has appreciated his writings, songs. She has encouraged his work. She has accepted his transfer from one job to another. She had the inner pride for her husband as "Mahakavi".

14. Once she has to go to her native place because of a conflict. When she came back home she had very tough time in her home with her husband.

15. His sick, mental distractions, addiction to drugs made her very much sacred about the future. We cannot erase those scenes.

16. When she came back to Chennai in 1919, she has to stay with Surendranath Arya who has changed into a Christian and married to an American. She could not accept them and eating along with them. She cooked at the upstairs room and Bharathiyar was very angry about her attitude.

17. She must have realized many of her ignorance at the later part of her life. That will be her starting point of transformation.

18. Thiruvallikeni house

Entrance with floral designs, lamps, pooja corner, kitchen, and hall, resting room, chatting voice, temple and many other past scenes are making my heart to feel great for this noble woman. When I think about the poverty, social abuse, death of her husband and her situation without even a single penny my spills blood. I used to ask the God, "I must have lived at that time to help!"

Now I can hear to the divine inner voice saying, **"Son! Better help poor woman who struggle for the development of their family"**

This article will be a lesson for many women who are linked with modern celebrities and enjoy their life. I conclude this article with my respect to her feet.

OM SAKTHI!

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