

KARAM BINTI – SANTHALI

The Santals (Santhals), who are the speaker of one of the oldest languages of India, belong to the Austro-Asiatic race of the Munda branch. Their creation myth, Karam Binti, starts with utter darkness when there was no earth, no sky and no humans. The beginning was made by a VOICE followed by a series of voices but all incognito as the pitch darkness would not let anyone see anything. And then appeared light followed by darkness and deluge. The voices belonged to various god-like creatures – Thakur Jiv and Thakurain Gogo. The former created a human figure out of clay which got destroyed by a horse in a deluge. On request, Thakur Jiv gave life to the mutilated clay which turned into a pair of birds, Hans-Haansil, i.e., geese that needed to make a nest. Thus, Thakur Jiv created a tree. Subsequently, the pair of birds laid two eggs which hatched as two human figures. Then followed the creation of dharti or the earth, pataal or the abyss, cows, bulls, trees of saal and mahua, and various other plants.