

TEMPLE ATROCITIES

■ Vol. 7 No. 2 ■ Price Rs. 70 ■ May 2016

Kerala in Mumbai

The Only English/Malayalam Monthly Magazine linking Mumbai Malayalees



ELECTION 2016 KERALA'S ELECTORAL FESTIVAL



Arundhati's
Ayemenem

Bali: Island of
1000 Temples

Malayalam
Movie World



EDITORIAL

05 Time to revisit Gandhisutra

ARTICLES

10 Arundhati's Ayemenem Sanjith Nambiar

13 Two novels that created history Dr T R Raghavan

16 Arattupuzha Velayudha Panicker V N Gopalakrishnan

21 My mother's goat Jose Chemmassery

24 My tryst with scissors and combs Adv A Viswanathan

26 Mumbai of Balachandran-2 V Balachandran

30 Bali Island of 1000 temples K A Viswanathan

49 Kunnampulam K R Narayanan

SPECIAL FEATURE

07 Elections Sriprakash Menon

REGULAR COLUMNS

06 Letters to the Editor

18 Mine the gold from within you Prof Dr John Mathews

29 Dance ballet-'Ashrudhara' Guru Vijay Shanker

31 Mumbai News Digest KIM News Bureau

41 Kerala News Letter KIM News Bureau

50 Gangotri Kunnampalam Vishnu

56 Beauty & Health Dr (Major) Nalini Janardhanan

60 Old is gold / Ashtamipoonthinkale.. Karthika

61 Malayalam Movie World KIM News Bureau

SHORT STORY

47 An unwanted son Ramachandran

POEMS

25 Loneliness Pranav Menon

34 Valarunna Manushyanum

varalunna prakrutiyaum Rajan Kinattinkara



Publisher, Printer, Managing Editor
P V Vijay Kumar

Executive Editor
K V Satyanath

Feature Editor
Lakshmi Venkatachalam

Feature Writers
K R Narayanan
V N Gopalakrishnan
Sriprakash Menon
Dr. Nalini Janardhanan
Dr. Sujatha Nair
K. Padmakumar

Marketing Manager
Ms Asha Soman
Mob: 08108771247

Office Administration
Neetu Thomas
Sneha Sashidharan

Bureau Chief -Thane Region
Rajan V Nair
Mob: 9004972655

Consulting Creative Director
Shankar S Bhogwekar

Designer
Sudhakaran K M

Photographer
Mangesh U Borade
Mob: 08691902124

Advertisement & Marketing
T R Raghunandan
(Kochi - 09847169725)

Production & Logistics
K V Prabhakaran

Owner

Vibrant Printing & Publishing Pvt. Ltd

Place of Publication
B-105, Twin Arcade, Military Road
Marol, Andhari (E), Mumbai-400 059.
Tel: 022-29209959

Printing Press
Sharprints, 13/679, Sardar Nagar 1,
Sion-Koliwada, Mumbai-400 022.

Email: keralainmumbai@gmail.com
Website: www.keralainmumbai.com

Views and opinions expressed in Kerala in Mumbai are not necessarily those of Vibrant Printing & Publishing Pvt. Ltd. VPPPL does not take the responsibility for returning unsolicited material sent without due postal stamps for return postage. No part of Kerala in Mumbai can be reproduced without prior permission of the publisher. VPPPL reserves the right to use the information published here in any manner whatsoever.

Vibrant
Printing & Publishing Pvt Ltd

B-105 - B, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Marol
Andhari (E), Mumbai - 400 059
Tel: +22 29209959 Telefax: 2920209

Time to revisit Gandhisutra

During British Raj, the rulers wanted to boost the consumption of English product in India and thereby take the Indian local industries downward. To achieve this end, they imported lakhs of English products like pen, pencils, shaving blades, mill cloth etc. All these were made available in India at a lower rate than the equivalent Indian products. Gandhiji did not ask the British rulers to ban the import of their products to encourage our domestic items but asked the Indians not to buy British products and to destroy such items if already bought. The main items we destroyed were textiles and we blocked entries to the shops selling them instead of ravaging them. His mantra to salvage Indian industry was quite a success and was firmly built on non-violence.

In the recent past, India was aggressively moving in the international circles to get the terror players of Pakistan especially the Jaish-e-Muhammad Chief Masood Azhar and their organisations declared terrorist by the United Nations Organisation. When she almost succeeded, our northern neighbour at the instance of our western neighbour, vetoed the proposal thereby hitting India the hardest. The Government of India is at its wit's end and still not recovered fully. So far in retaliation, it only provided e-visa to two Chinese people who are personae-non-grata in People's Republic China, only to revoke them later.

India has not yet forgotten the humiliating defeat at the hands of China in the early 1960s. A large section of land originally belonging to India is still in China's possession and we are taking solace at that fact that 'not even a blade of grass grows there'. China has not given up yet its claim in Arunachal Pradesh even though it is an integral part of India since time immemorial. The frequent diplomatic failure of India against China is a huge embarrassment to all Indians. There should be a remedy to this infirmity.

Thanks to the great urge of Indians to acquire everything that is sold cheap, we are the biggest importer of Chinese products which are colourful and damn cheap. It is shameful we are buying the pictures and idols of Hindu gods and goddesses made in China. Almost the entire range of electronic goods that we use is manufactured in China. We often hear the argument that even if the quality of Chinese goods is poor, it is still cheaper if we have to buy a few of them one after the other in a year than the cost of a single piece made in India.

We wonder where have we lost our self pride and love for our motherland and when. Even the political parties that swear on Bharat Mata patronise Chinese products. The import data of India indicates that the major chunk comes from that country and if we stop buying their products, even if we have to suffer some inconvenience, it would impact their economy severely. In the past, our rulers irrespective of Indian National Congress, BJP or other parties in their efforts to corner votes were damaging our pride and self respect by distributing freebies, subsidies and other economic compensations instead of making our people self reliant and prosperous by enhancing the infrastructure and educational tools. The various state political parties are promising gifts for them during electioneering and ravaging our economic independence. There are hardly any party, not resorting to this path, to choose from. If we continue this dangerous mode, soon we would be slaves to our own greed and instead of moving upward, we would be slipping down to the nadir.

If the political parties are not willing to transform, it is the duty of every patriotic Indian to stop buying all foreign goods, however good they may be, in order to give a spirited soul to our country. This way, we could rein PRC without resorting to a bloody war and in the process make the Mody's Slogan 'Make in India.'

During a hearing about the Puttingal Fireworks Tragedy, the judge is said to have asked the prosecutor, instead of using the powerful Indian crackers, why the temple authorities not used the Chinese crackers. If true, we should bow our heads in shame and in the process, should realise how much even our judiciary has gone down.

If all the parties claiming to have some backbone come forward and would take India forward, we would compliment them, otherwise we should dump them and act ourselves.

Can Nair & Ezhava unite?

In the past, there have been many failed attempts at Nair and Ezhava unity. At present the Nair Service Society and Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, the organizations representing Nair and Ezhava communities have not decided to join hands for many reasons. This is despite the fact that there is the current realization of the need for unity because of the increasing strength of Muslims in the affairs of the state through the Indian Union Muslim League.

The first Nair-Ezhava unity move was made by none but NSS founder Mannath Padmanabhan and SNDP stalwart R Sankar. Mannath even discontinued the use of his title Pillai for the sake of unity. That initiative was mainly aimed to weaken the increasing dominance of Christians in Congress. But the unity did not last. Perhaps egos of two community leaders broke it. Also it was administered from top. Ordinary Nairs and Ezhavas at the grass-roots did not wholeheartedly welcome it. During the period when Kidangoor Gopalakrishna Pillai was general secretary of NSS again there was unity move. But it did not go further. The political conditions of the time saw a power-equilibrium in Kerala among different communities and perhaps that was the reason for the stagnation. The last attempt for Nair-Ezhava unity was in 2007. The then general secretary of NSS P K Narayana Panicker and Vellapally Natesan had joined hands to face threats to Kerala Hindus. It went smooth for a while and Nairs and Ezhavas generally accepted the unity. However, it could not go further over silly issues. The main issue was inability of NSS leadership to control their nominee who headed Travancore Devaswom Board that controls temples in southern part of Kerala and the alleged involvement of a SNDP representative in the board in bribery scams. The issue finally resulted in both organizations parting ways.

However the real reason was said to be manipulations made by some Congress leaders in Kerala who were afraid of the threats posed by the unity to political prospects of Congress in the state. Normally majority of Nairs vote for Congress, but Hindu unity means Nairs may vote for BJP. After Sukumaran Nair became NSS general secretary, he had been sending feelers to Vellappally to revive the unity but the latter seemed to be cautious. The controversy of granting fifth minister to Muslim League and allotting government funds for a large number of educational institutions of Muslims in Kerala are the factors which made Nairs and Ezhavas realize that they have no option but to unite as Hindus.

The current situation in Kerala is entirely different from the

past. Muslim community has become financially and politically dominant. The community has now become the largest single community in Kerala accounting for about 25 per cent of population as per official statistics and 27 per cent according to unofficial ones. The flow of petro dollar from West Asia has made Muslims the richest community in the state. There are more Muslims in Kerala assembly than in the past. When previous unity moves were made, the Nairs and Ezhavas had not seriously thought about Hindu identity. The growing influence of Hindu nationalistic organization RSS and their political party BJP has created a broad Hindu identity among Nairs and other Hindu castes in Kerala. The new generation is not as proud of caste identity as their forefathers. The losing influence of communist party in Kerala means Ezhavas, their support base, are not much influenced by Communist ideology which helped divide Kerala Hindus as backward and forward. Now so called backward Ezhavas don't have attitude of hatred toward forward castes of which Nairs constitute major chunk.

Backward communities in Kerala now do not think Nairs as the group which suppressed them. The rise of political Islam in Kerala has necessitated the need for Nairs and Ezhavas to stand together. So that way there is more chances for survival of unity. Inter-caste marriages are now common in Kerala and Nairs and Ezhavas are more likely to accept each other. While earlier Nair and Ezhava masses did not approve unity, the current unity is forced by them. Even after the unity moves of 2007 and 2012 made by Panicker and Natesan failed, masses of both communities continued to support it. So the present unity move is actually brought by masses. Even if leaders withdrew for some reasons, slow unity of both communities could not be denied.

BIJU CHERIAN
Vasai Road

Tongue twisting names

The British, unable to pronounce many Indian names, twisted them to suit their tongue. For example, Tiru Shiva Peroor was twisted to Trichur.

Please refer to page 18 of your April 2016 issue. Note that Thiruchinapalli is the twisted form of the original Thiruchirapalli (Tiruchi for short) which is in Tamilnadu. Trivandrum is what the British called Thiruvananthapuram (the present capital of Kerala).

Similarly the Thiruvithangoor became Travancore under the British.

RUKMINI VENUGOPAL

We welcome responses from readers. Please forward your responses and suggestions about various happenings concerning Malayalees residing in this part of India. You may send us your piece in either English or Malayalam. (We shall translate and publish it in English) You may send them via e-mail to keralainmumbai@gmail.com or by post to Editor, Kerala In Mumbai, 105-B, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Marol, Andheri (E) Mumbai 400 059.

Attention Subscribers

Please intimate us in case you do not receive your subscribed copy by 15th of each month, in order to help us to take necessary action. Tel: 2920 9959 / 2094. E-mail: keralainmumbai@gmail.com

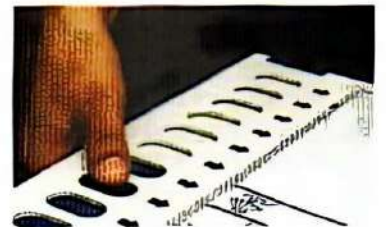
Printed & Published by P V Vijaykumar on behalf of Vibrant Printing & Publishing Pvt. Ltd. & printed at Sharprints, 13/679, Sardar Nagar-1, Sion-Koliwada, Mumbai-400022 & published at B-105, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Marol, Mumbai-400059. Editor: P V Vijaykumar



ELECTION 2016

KERALA'S FAVOURITE ELECTORAL FESTIVAL

Kerala is one of the most politically hyper state in the country hence when elections are round the corner, the state gets charged and everyone seems to be busy engaged in this festival of democracy.



Sriprakash Menon

■ Whether it is panchayat, state or general elections, the people and politicians revel in the 'power play' preceding the polls. A single party rule has been a distant dream for Keralites

and for over six decades it is a coalition comprising right wing and left wing parties which rule the state.

The state has a unique political process, however bad or good a ruling coalition does in their five year tenure they are not allowed to continue hence development and progress is in a state of flux. The people in the state who are responsible for electoral trend are the

ones who have suffered the most as well. When neighbouring states progressed industrially besides good infrastructure, Kerala has been consistently witnessing hartals and bandhs for over decades. Both LDF and UDF have been successfully scoring over each other on this aspect and have political unity to derail the work culture and mar production activities.

Failing agriculture, huge unemployment, lack of skilled and semi skilled workers in the state, though swanky individual houses are coming up, one will not see a factory or plant coming up, a few

traditional industries like tyre, tile factories or rice mills do exist and now IT parks have come up in a few places besides a few surviving public sector plants. What was driving Kerala's economy by default was the liquor business but now only star hotels can serve alcohol. The spice, marine products and tourism industry are just a few silver linings in a highly debt ridden and outside remittance dependent economy of Kerala.



R Kalyanaraman

R Kalyanaraman
'Goodknight Mohan', a well known Mumbai based industrialist and film producer said "both UDF and LDF have



Oommen Chandy



V S Achuthanandan



Pinarayi Vijayan



Kummanam Rajasekharan

not done anything in the state for decades. Kerala can only survive by having a good infrastructure and non polluting industry like tourism on a larger scale. Mushrooming of jewellery and saree shops will not give impetus to development and progress in the state."

Mohan felt "people should experiment new political system especially they should give BJP a chance. As of now Congress or the left they are only concerned about how to wield power. There is no patriotic feeling that country is above self. Look at West Bengal, the left has been in power for decades yet its workers have to travel all over India to get a job. In Kerala things are just opposite they don't want to work and develop the state.

"Kerala gets remittances of about Rs 37,000 crore and out of which Rs. 26,000 crore is remitted out of Kerala by immigrant workers from Kerala to Bihar, WB, Odisha and UP. There is no corporate environment in Kerala. Despite Left being a failed ideology, the intellectuals and educated keep misleading the younger generation," he remarked slamming the leftists for keeping Kerala backward.

"Modi is trying to do his best at the centre though the media is hell bent of giving negative publicity to the BJP. What governments could not do in 60 years now everyone wants things to happen, right away. It is strange, people don't like BJP because it is a Hindu party forgetting the fact that in reality India is a Hindu populated country," Mohan reminded and said "there is no country in the world, where 80 % of the population is unable to do anything for the betterment of their nation".

Prakash Padikkal, businessman and social activist is certain that the LDF will come to power because "people in Kerala has a pattern of voting. The power centre shifts after every five years though it may not be the right thing to happen. Politics in



Prakash Padikkal

Kerala is all about shouting, maligning and making noises about individuals. No one dares to take up developmental work or set up industries which would generate employment. Big

cars, massive houses and other hi-tech comforts at individual level is aspired but at social level everything overlooked."

"Instead of channelising the youth power, the politicians are stuck with Sarita and others. Though highly educated, Malayalees have no wisdom otherwise they could have turned Kerala into the most advanced state. Coming to elections, the voters are not only divided into religion and caste and sometimes even class. By and large Christians and Muslims vote for their candidates, it is the Hindu voters who are confused with Congress, left and BJP leanings. IT, Ayurveda, wellness, tourism industry etc have huge potential but politician don't have time to think about these sectors", Paddikal observed.

Voters in Kerala cannot be swayed by personality or film cult, he recalled and said "people even in the past never voted on those lines. This time the contest should be interesting as there are several stake holders and players to spoil the chances of conventional leaders. Young people should get trained

in politics and should enter the electoral fray, only they can bring about a change and newness in governance".

"UDF will surely retain power this time in Kerala, it has witnessed development and progress in last five years. Media is focusing on personal issues instead of the progress made by government. BJP being a national party, it has improved its image in Kerala with a few known names contesting for them but it will not influence the UDF voters," according to **Jojo K Thomas**, president of All Mumbai Malayali



Jojo K Thomas

Association (AMMA).

The reason behind the slow development of the state is due to the inconsistency in the governance by a single party of a single coalition for 10 to 20 years, also, he pointed out Kerala always had power shortage and labour issues in the earlier years after independence. "BJP is not a threat to UDF but it may gain a few seats because of polarisation of votes. Slowly the attitude of the people has changed. The younger generation wanted progress and development and UDF was always had the support of the youth", Thomas asserted.

Thomas felt "the UDF coming to power will be a boon to Mumbai Malayalees as the government has in the past five years taken several initiatives to resolve local issues and have been supporting cultural and other socio festivals and events.

BJP is not just going to open the account in Kerala, in fact it will play a major role in influencing and the 'power politics' of Kerala asserted, **Uttam Kumar**, BJP president Vasai Road. He

said "after coming to power in the centre, the party is no more untouchable. In fact people are fed up of 'Saritha & Solar scam' and also of the LDF's anti development. Progress agenda will be rejected by this time in state elections."

"I was on a tour recently to Kerala and saw that BJP's campaign in the state is very widespread and have been reaching out to people across all the districts. People wanted a change and now voters have got a chance to throw out the governance nexus between the UDF and the LDF every five years", he recounted.

Kumar said the younger generation is so aware of the political situation in the state through the social media, "one can see the trend at the electorate that people wanted all round development in state which would give them employment and livelihood in their own state", observed Kumar.

Mumbai based senior Congress leader **Lion Kumaran Nair** said "If people wanted development and progress in Kerala, there is no

alternative to Congress led UDF. No doubt the BJP may improve their vote share and may bag a few seats but it is not going to make any major impact in the state as is being projected".



Uttam Kumar

"I do agree allegation of corruption targeting individuals have marred the UDF's image to

some extent but media is forgetting the fact, Congress has been steering progress despite adverse political atmosphere in the state" he cited.

"People should talk about the immense development done in the state during the UDF tenures. What is alarming is the highly educated, mainly the younger generation, is getting attracted to the BJP. The left parties are to be blamed for their negative politics for decades, which has left the unemployed younger lots disappointed over the years" explained Nair.

"The Indian Union Muslim League is contesting 24 seats in Kerala and we

are sure we will bag over 20 seats (we had 21 MLAs last time). Our electoral plank is to fight against terror elements among Muslims in the state besides the fascist forces in Kerala. We feel Congress is the only party in India which can fight fascist forces hence are with us as the coalition partner", stated **Aziz Maniyoor**, working committee member of IUML and head of the Mumbai based Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre (a wing of IUML-Kerala). Maniyoor is also the director of Travancore Cochin Chemicals (TCC).



Lion Kumaran Nair

He said "we are against terrorism and fascism in country. We are fighting the leftists as well because they have been supporting extremism among the Muslims for taking political advantage. As a party we have been focussing on development and progress in the state".

Maniyoor emphasized " IUML have been helping the down trodden and poor irrespective of religion and caste. It is our good work which is making us a popular party in Kerala even if it were from certain region. We are sure the Congress will

come back to power and the CPM led LDF will loose in this state elections. The left parties have been traditionally against development and people no

more depend upon them. Besides harping on the solar issue CPM has no agenda for the people of the state."

Elections in Kerala may throw big surprises this time as political equations may change. A highly polarised electorate, Kerala often termed as the 'political laboratory of India' will be interesting to observe the impending elections and the outcome. Any party or coalition which may come to power can no longer overlook the aspirations and challenges of the people of the state especially the younger generation. It is one of the states despite high degree of social progress is least developed in terms of agriculture or industries resulting in massive unemployment and poor revenue generation within the state. A change of power centre is a must for Kerala's development. ■



Aziz Maniyoor



*We undertake
A to Z of Events & Marriages
in Cinematic Style*

Contact : Aravind - 8898864686

ARUNDHATI'S AYEMENEM

Singularity, familiarity, functionality and attractivity are the prime convergent factors that led to the selection of Ayemenem as the locale for the *The God Of Small Things* (TGOST).

Sanjith Nambiar

Ayemenem is a relatively obscure and ordinary village of Kerala. It is in Ettumanoor taluk of Kottayam district having pincode 686 015. Spelling it as Ayemenem and anchoring literary narratology to this locale, Arundhati Roy made it glorious, gorgeous and extraordinary. Today students of literature world over discuss this hamlet, its historicity and find meaning and attribute significance to it in the context of TGOST.

Five Forests

Ay signifies five and *Vanam* means forest. The name stands for the land of five forests. Local history speaks of Vattakkadu, Thuruthikkadu, Vallyakadu, Moolakkadu, and Mekkadu respectively meaning Circular forest, River bank forest, Original forest, Large Forest and Higher forest. Ayemenem has undergone deforestation and now has only a few *Sarpakavukal*. In the novel, its landscape is largely rural, with some signs of urbanization such as the highway; there is thick vegetation, a rich variety of botanical species, and dense foliage along the river Meenachil. This scene remains unchanged in the novel until its final events. Roy portrays the physical geography of Ayemenem with consummate skill. Luxuriant imageries are crafted by creative writing.

Classical Unity

Aristotlian concept of the three unities of Place, Time and Action is central to classic literary theory. The plot unfolds and revolves mostly around Ayemenem. Excursions from this are contrived only to import events for



Arundhati Roy (left) the book

enrichment of the plot. Kottayam city based events are ingrained into Ayemenem by the blurring of the boundaries. The narrative mixes its fictional elements with factual details on a larger scale.

Time horizon is about three decades from 1969 to 1993. The Aristotelian Unity of time has been reconfigured for nonlinear narratology for the evolution of a string of well-connected events taking place at Ayemenem over a trans-formational period. The story starts with Estha and Rahel as kids growing up in Ayemenem as the author did. The most important moments of the novel take place in this setting with the devolution of generational differences among the characters. Unity of action is not directly traceable as there is no protagonist in the novel.

Singularity

"It was the only place in the world where religions coincide; there's Christianity, Hinduism, Marxism and Islam and they all live together and rub each other down ... I was aware of the different cultures when I was growing up..... To me, I couldn't think of a better location for a book about human beings." This quote from Arundhati is revealing.

Out of the internecine conflicts in the four belief systems she weaves a crosscutting unity in action at Ayemenem. The sociological milieu of the same geographical space over an event horizon of three decades is indelibly portrayed. The community is starting to embrace Communism, which seeks to empower the poor and working classes and to eliminate class and caste distinctions. Diversity of actions of the characters is in tune with the societal shifts happening.

Ammu, Chacko, and Velutha who belong to the middle generation have the most complex relationship with the



changing times. Conflict is luminous in their reactions torn between the norms of an old world and a new brave society. Chacko embraces Marxism. These are natural and probable consequences of an Ayemenem in transition.

Ayemenem is the critical determinant of the cultural identity of the characters. The older characters, Baby Kochamma and Mammachi, are in equilibrium with the social setting of the aristocratic Syrian Christian community which is concentrated and contained in the expanded conclave of Ayemenem. The coordinates of social hierarchy are clear sharp points in the older generation including Vellya Paapen.

At the end of the novel Ayemenem is free from the fault lines of societal stress. Turbulent events have faded out of memory. An eerie quietude descends. Baby Kochamma and Kochu Maria watch television munching popcorn. They let their house fall apart. Ayemenem of 1993 shows us the eerie aftermath of a tempestuous past.

This magnificent obsession with Ayemenem did not serve as a barrier for the carefully planned excursions of the characters. Rahel and Estha are dispatched to the 70 km distant port city of Cochin to harvest attention riveting events for the story.

Familiarity

To quote Roy "My mother would say, why don't you just call the river, the river, or invent a name. I called places with their real names and described their precise geographical locations; when we pass em, I want the places to be remembered, to live on as they were, in my stories."

As a creative author, Roy had the unfettered freedom of conjuring up a geographic space besides Ayemenem as Samuel Butler did with his Erewhon. Her familiarity with Ayemenem, instead of breeding contempt, gave her a potent medium to project her characters.

"May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dust green trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute blue bottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun."

"The nights are clear, but suffused with sloth and sullen expectation. But by early June the southwest monsoon breaks and there are three months of wind and water with short spells of sharp, glittering sunshine that thrilled children snatch to play with. The

countryside turns an immodest green. Boundaries blur as tapioca fences take root and bloom. Brick walls turn moss green. Pepper vines snake up electric poles. Wild creepers burst through laterite banks and spill across the flooded roads. Boats ply in the bazaars. And small fish appear in the puddles that fill the PWD potholes on the highways."

Roy immortalized Meenachil. Although she calls it a river, locally it is named a stream. Named after the Goddess, Madura Meenakshi, the eighty km long river flows through the center of Kottayam and Ayemenem is located on the banks. The river is of ravenous beauty as it gushes and gurgles forth through the rocks and creates baby waterfalls and little pools on the way down.

'Estha walked all over Ayemenem....

In Chapter one, page 13, there is a reference to pollution with Meenachil choked with 'pesticides bought with World Bank Loan'. River bank smells shit. Throughout the novel, the river is portrayed as a local spirit, the tutelary small river goddess of fisher folk who disappear as the river dies. Meenachil, the unstoppable physical force that snatched away Sophie Mol's life, flows quiet.

Meenachil signifies symbolism. It is dynamic with its whirlpools, waterfalls, jetsam and flotsam. Ayemenem society is like a flowing river with small and big things happening. A stream of events changing as one cannot step into the same waters twice as Heraclitus said. River bank is witness to the forbidden love affair of Velutha and Ammu. Across the river is the mysterious History House.

Electrification of the village and



The old church

absence of zebra crossings find mention.

Relating to Ayemenem but away from it we find the American connection which enriches the Ayemenem-centric theme. In the American connection, Rahel went to America and worked for years. She grows up in Ayemenem but, as an adult, lives in the America with her husband, Larry McCaslin. She married Larry McCaslin and moved to Boston. Soon she was divorced because of her emptiness. She worked as a waitress in New York and as a night clerk in gas station at Washington. She left America gladly and returned to Ayemenem. Crime and Underworld life were experienced by Rahel in America. Baby Kochamma attended a course in ornamental gardening at Rochester university for two years.

Functionality

Functionality is a measure of the link of the characters and linkage to the events and actions to the geographic space. Ayemenem is the functional fulcrum for most of the twenty-odd named characters of TGOST and was mentioned no fewer than eighteen times in chapter one itself for anchoring the story.

All began when SophiMol came to Ayemenem Page 32

All began when SophiMol came to Ayemenem Page 33

Ammu moved to Ayemenem p38

Ammu craved to move out of Ayemenem p 39

Paradise Pickles and Preserves is the title of the first chapter. This factory does not exist today. Palat Pickle was a real pickle factory owned by PALAThingal house. Pickle factory provides symbolism to the story. Rushdie also uses a pickle factory as symbol in *Midnight's children*.

carpenter Velutha in a production factory and the Marxist leader manipulating labour force show inner party dynamics and realpolitik.

Attractivity

Roy attracts the attention of western literati by a unique South Indian setting



Meenachil River today

Mammachi's pickle factory is a symbol of the freezing of time. It is an icon of womanly managerial prowess. Mamamchi is patronized to put up a stall in Bible Society Meet. History of Ayemenem house is pickled and preserved. Clandestine production of illegal banana jam, its popularity and the marketing campaign by the sloganeering creativity of Marxist leader Pillai is noteworthy. Here familiarity with an old factory is brought into functionality. Skilled

in striking contrast to the North Indian scenes provided by most Indian English Novels: *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand and *Delhi* by Kushwant Singh. A prolific South Indian Indo- English novelist RK Narayanan used the setting of the village *Malgudi* but it is an imaginary village. Roy gave a detailed graphic account of her own Ayemenem as the setting.

The impact of communism on a Christian body social and the clash of the two cultures is fascinating event for the westerners and they are anxious to hear the tidings of this unique phenomenon.

Roy's description of Ayemenem is not just an aesthetic exercise in creative narratology. The narratives are skillfully blended to describe the actions and behaviour of characters and her intimate familiarity is evident.

The most mysterious house in Ayemenem across the river and in the "heart of darkness" the darkest, most unknown and unexplored territory for Estha and Rahel. They think it is a real house. For them it is Kari Saipu's house in the middle of the abandoned rubber estate where they had never been. It is a fossilized reminder of Angliophily.

Roy used the setting skillfully as a fitting spring board to create, sustain and destroy her characters as she wanted in the human story she narrated. She universalized Ayemenem as an indelible icon in post-colonial Indo-English fiction in the words of critic M Krishnan Nair. ■



PUSHPAM SILKS
WEDDING SAREES

D. S. CUTPIECE & R. M. SHOPPING
HANDLOOM TEXTILES

RAMRAJ DHOTHI, MUNDUKAL, READYMADE SHIRTS, VELCRO DHOTHI WITH POCKETS AVAILABLE

രാമരാജ് ദോത്ഥി, മുണ്ടുകൾ, റെഡിമെയ്ഡ് ഷർട്ടുകൾ
“ഒട്ടിച്ചോ കെട്ടിപ്പകരാ വെൽക്രോ ദോത്ഥി പോക്കറ്റ് ഉൾപ്പെടെ”
ഫാക്ടറി വിലയിൽ ലഭിക്കുന്നതാണ്

No. 2, Matunga Mansion, Opp. Post Office, Bhandarkar Road,
Matunga (C.R), Mumbai - 400 019.
Tel: 2418 1025, 2410 5293, Mob: 98920 67581

TWO NOVELS THAT CREATED HISTORY

A study of two novels that changed the face of Malayalam novels and contrasted what was available earlier.

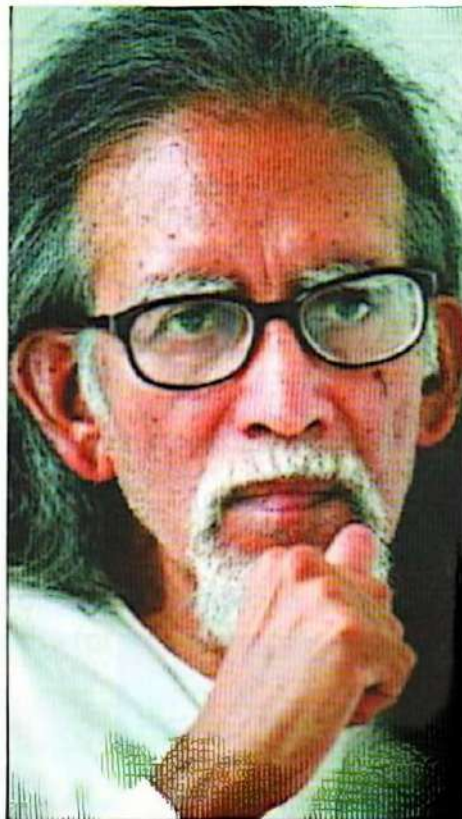


Dr T R Raghavan

Khassakinte Ithihasam

O V Vijayan, a legend of Malayalam literature and one of the most celebrated Indian writers, was a literary genius with prophetic vision. His magnum opus '*Khassakkinte Ithihasam*' made a legend out of him, a legend that would live in millions of minds both within and outside Malayalam. It took twelve years of writing and re-writing for Vijayan to finally serialise the novel in *Mathrubhumi* Weekly in 1969. The book was read and re-read by people, printed and re-printed several times and has been discussed at many fora. And still the reader finds a new dimension to it every time he/she reads it. The place of this book in our literature is that the history of Malayalam literature is now divided to the Pre-Khassak and Post-Khassak periods.

During Pre-Khassak period, we could see novels of great tradition such as *Indulekha*, *Rama Raja Bahadur*, *Balyakala Sakhi*, *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum* and Post Khassak period was remarkable for novels of new consciousness. The novels of new consciousness were introduced in Malayalam by renowned novelists named Kakkannadan and Mukundan. These novelists might have got their awareness of modern predicament from their acquaintance with the French novelist especially of Camus. It did not take them long to see what was done to Western fiction by KAFKA. Kakkannadan and Mukundan felt that the condition prevailing in India in the sixties had much in common with the condition of Europe after the First World War which produced KAFKA and the European situation after the Second World War which produced Camus and Satre. There was ethical and moral erosion in our country as a whole.



O V Vijayan

Name of God has dismissed or disappeared from the human arena and man was hurled into its midst to fight his isolated battle for existence. Kakkannadan and Mukundan endorsed the verdict of Jean Paul Sartre, 'God did not

exist and everything was permissible'. Mukundan's novels like 'Delhi', '*Mayyazhipuzhayude Theerangalil*' are the brilliant artistic productions with heavy existential undertones. Kakkannadan explores the mystery of human existence in '*Anjathayude Thazhvaram*'. Meanwhile we find that the *Aalkootam* and *Marana Certificate* written by the novelist Anand are philosophical novels. These novels and O V Vijayan's *Khassakkinte Ithihasam*, portray the modern human predicament. They analyse man by presenting him against extreme situation attempting to find out his essence which has often proved to be nothingness rather than being. *Khassakkinte Ithihasam* is an artistic achievement of the first order. Though its scope is limited to the philosophical outlook of its character, it gives us insights into the Kerala social set up, the nature of human relations, the variety of human life, the meaninglessness of human values and also the tragic predicament of the human spirit that is to grapple with formidable immensities of life.

The modern writers do not want to go back to the novels of plot and character, with them a novel is an image of an attitude to life or a point of view of life or best the metaphor of a philosophy. No doubt voluminous

novels are produced, but the novels that gain authority in the minds of young and the growing are the novels of new consciousness.

As a marvellous example of a novel of new consciousness, *Khassakkinte Ithihasam* has its unique position in the Malayalam literature. This work of Vijayan reflects the real fire of modernism.

Khassak is the name of a fictitious village in Kerala. Ravi, a young man with an old father and stepmother, has abandoned his studies and left home, so giving up a chance of winning a scholarship to an American University. Unable to find answers to the many questions that plague him as he wanders from place to place, he finally reaches in a village called Koomankavu, where he starts teaching in a school. He does not feel that he is coming there for the first time. The village is inhabited by *Ezhavas* and Muslims, where they have their traditions, cultures and interests. They co-exist, the village has its values but one can drink liquor and lead a free sexual life. In a way it is a sort of permissive society. Ravi leads a reckless life. He loves his students, but pestilence takes away a few of them. The love of Ravi for Amina is the only redeeming aspect about his character perhaps. There is another interesting character in the novel that lives beyond time, Appukkili. After a stay in Khassak, Ravi prepares to leave Khassak. A petition sent by Sivaraman Nair to the school Inspector compels ultimately Ravi to resign his job. The novel ends ambiguously with Ravi's temporary stop at Koomankavu and he is waiting there for the bus to come. It is raining and there is smile on his face. He provokes a snake to bite his feet, and slowly begins his next journey to the other realm.

Khassak and the life as appeared in the novel are reflections of the consciousness of Ravi who is but a projection of the novelist's own alter ego. Life is hollow, traditional values have no relevance. Death has its sway over life. Human existence between birth and death has no substance. It feeds itself on the milk of health, what humans do here and now have no significance; no value. All is vanity. That leaves man with many options; he can lead a totally irresponsible life, and an idler's life. Whatever life he leads, has no ultimate significance or relevance. *Khassakkinte Ithihasam* is a novel with great charm and artistic

excellence but it is the stuff with which dreams are made, devoid of a solid philosophic base, it would find it hard to stand the test of time.

This novel has certain unique qualities too. Every little detail in this book has a purpose and every single character has a soul. The whole village of Khassak comes into being with every stroke of Vijayan's pen. It is the painting of words. This is so powerful a novel about rural life in Kerala that Thasrak, the village in interior Palakkad where Vijayan located the destiny of Ravi its protagonist, has become a centre of literary pilgrimage.

The world that Vijayan showed through this novel was truly magical. One cannot easily forget the characters coming across the novel with pith and marrow. How can we forget Ravi? In fact the most romantic name in our lexicon as college student was Ravi, protagonist of the novel. Another charming character is Appukili, who knows the heartache and pain of generations but not able to grasp the very moment he lives in. Women characters such as Chanthumma, Kunjamina, Mimuna, Abida, and Dhathi are attractive and unforgettable though short lived in this novel.

A lot of younger critics, adjudged the novel as a modern classic due to its language of lyrical and chimerical uniqueness. No doubt the language was remarkable for its suggestive quality. It is not a question of decoration for the sake of decoration, embellishment for the sake of embellishment. Every expression is meaningful. Language intoxicated Vijayan, he delights in the rhythms of Malayalam and its versatility in evoking the many modes of native landscapes and feeling. It was so intoxicating that he himself could not break free from in his later writings.

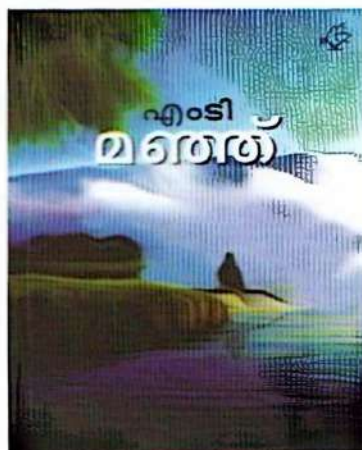
Manju (Mist)

This short novel 'Mist' is one of the finest achievements of M T Vasudevan Nair, the renowned author in Malayalam literature. It is the story of Vimala, daughter of a man who fled from his home in Kerala, came to Uttar Pradesh as the head of a potato seed farm and research centre at Almora and later settled down there. Vimala of Mist is a romantic figure, who has been a teacher in a boarding school for girls in Nainital for about nine years. The entire life of her being is reduced to vain remembrance of a young man named Mitra a Bengali, who has come into her life on one holiday season and gone with a rosy promise to return.

The novel marks a breakthrough in many respects. The novelist has applied the flashback and stream of consciousness techniques for achieving a sustained poetic tonality. The wayward drifting of mist in the hill resort has its symbolism. Memories gleam and fade from the panorama of the past as the landscape of hill and lake also clear and



M T Vasudevan Nair



fade with the drifting mist. Above all it has touched life with its chill stained it with its grey tone.

However since the parting, time has been a stagnant expanse of water like the Nainital Lake, to Vimala. Doubts also crowd into her heart. In Almora where her invalid father is confined to bed, her mother has become involved in a liaison with a neighbour, one Gomez. Her predecessor in the school, Pushpa Sarcar, had to leave the school staff when she was once found entertaining a young man in her room in the girl's hostel of which she was the warden. All these confront Vimala with sex in its corruption. She desperately fights back to preserve the memories of her days with Mitra as totally different and holy. When he asked her to try to remember what she could of her childhood background in Kerala, she had cried. "Please, please don't insist. Let me live in this moment when your words in the fragrance of cigarette smoke caress my cheek." Even as she yearns to freeze the moment of euphoria, she knows that it

must pass and only its memory can abide.

In the opening scene of the novel, Rashmi, one of the students of the boarding school, seeks Vimala's permission to go home for the holidays, with her cousin. Vimala knows that the handsome lad with Rashmi is no cousin of hers. She is sure that they must be planning to stay a night at the lonely tourist bungalow at Haldvani but she pretends to be taken, because she wants Rashmi also to have a precious memory to which she can look back in the grey years of her life. Looking forward too is equally human. Vimala feels strangely drawn towards the boy Buddu, who rows boats for tourists on the lake. Buddu was an illicit son of an Englishman who visited Nainital years ago during a whole holiday season in the company of a Bhotia woman. The boy cherishes a faded photograph of his father. He has only one ambition in life, to see his father at least once. He wants nothing from him, but he yearns to see him once. She too like him, wants nothing from her man, gone away and

been silent for nine years, but she wants to see him again at least once. So every holiday season, hopes revive in both Buddu and Vimala.

One season an elderly Sikh gentleman came for a holiday to Nainital. He too seems to be waiting for something, but with less inward tension than Vimala or Buddu. Then one day he leaves and she learns from her school partner that he had been long ailing from acute lung cancer and the doctor had told him he had only a few weeks left. She now realizes what the union was that the Sikh gentleman had been awaiting with resignation.

Another season is about to be over. A disappointed Buddu is hungry for reassurance from Vimala. "He is certain to come next year, isn't he?" within her too whispers 'Mitra is bound to return'. Thus another year too drifts into emptiness. "In the high crags of time, snow falls, melts in summer, then the mists return and snow falls and hardens again... And still we cling to our hope, keep waiting." ■

For the 1st time in Mumbai, AMC for building Structure.



Saraf Struct-con Pvt. Ltd.

Structural & Rehabilitation Consultants

ISO 9001:2008



Our Services

- Attending the complaint related to structure and leakages within 24 hours.
- Structural Audit of building as per Bye Laws No. 76 and NDT test.
- Advisory consultant/Quality control/budget preparation during the repair work of the building.
- Maintaining leakages of terrace, water tank, bathroom, WC and plumbing.
- Providing do's and don'ts for increasing serviceability of building structure.



Saraf Struct-con Pvt. Ltd.

F-139 Ansa Industrial Estate, Saki Vihar Road,

Saki Naka, Andheri (East), Mumbai 400072

Tel.: 022-28478884/5/6 Cell: +919892001549

Email: civil@sarafstruct-con.com

Website: www.sarafstruct-con.com

THIS IS THE BEST WE DO..... WHAT WE COMMIT YOU CAN GET

Arattupuzha Velayudha Panicker

SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY WHO FOUGHT AGAINST CASTE OPPRESSION



V N Gopalakrishnan

■ Arattupuzha Velayudha Panicker, originally called Kaalisseril Velayutha Chekavar, was a social revolutionary of Kerala and a warrior who fought against caste

oppression by the upper castes. He tried to acquire the cultural and symbolic capitals the upper castes monopolized like temple worship, education, learning arts like *Kathakali* and religious practices including temple rituals. He began the resistance movement of people marginalized by upper castes for centuries and began the egalitarian democratic reformation in Kerala. He was the first *Avarna* to build schools, temples and libraries.

Velayudha Panicker inspired generations of social reformers, philosophers, spiritual leaders and cultural activists. It was he who paved the foundation for social reformation and political protest that eventually culminated in Kerala renaissance through Sree Narayana Guru, Muloor S. Padmanabha Panicker, Kumaran Asan and Sahodaran Ayyappan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Velayudha Panicker was born in 1825 in the affluent *Kaalisseril Tharavadu* in Arattupuzha, Karthikappally Taluk as the third son of Govindan Chekavar. The Chekavars were fierce warriors and the family was known for their proficiency in



Kalaripayattu, Ayurveda and Astrology. The family was following *Marumakkathayam* (matrilinal system). His mother passed away when he was 13 days old and he lost his father a few years later.

Velayudhan studied Ayurveda and Astrology from family *Asans* and Sanskrit and *Kalaripayattu* from his grandfather *Vallikadavil Perumal Chekavan*. Popularly known as *Perumal Chevakar* or *Perumalachan*, he was proficient in *Tulunadan Kalari techniques* which were not familiar in southern style of *Kalarippayattu*. *Perumalachan* one of the richest landlords in the area, was well educated.

He had around 300 acres of land with 14,000 coconut trees, 300 acres of paddy fields, a trading yacht, a few horses, elephants and palanquins. He had collections of gold, silver, brass, copper and iron.

Perumal Chevakar had good trade relations with Dutch and Portuguese as Arattupuzha was one of the busiest ports in the 18th century. During this period, many businessmen from the north called 'Seiths' lived in the Kayamkulam area. By the end of the 18th century, Raja Kesavadasan, the Dewan of Travancore moved the port to Alappuzha and subsequently the 'Seiths' also shifted their base there. It was in 1786 that the first ship entered Alappuzha port.

Meanwhile, the Maharaja of Travancore gave Velayudhan the title of *Panickan* as a compliment for catching a thief who robbed a *Salagramam* (sacred stone) from *Tharananalloor Namboothiripad*, the Tantri of Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple during his travel to Thiruvananthapuram through Kayamkulam Lake. Later the title *Panickan* was modified as *Panicker*. In 1845 Velayudhan married *Velumphy* of Varanapally Tharavad and he moved to her house in Mangalam.

Meanwhile Velayudhan organized a meeting of various lower caste youths and established a brotherhood of socio-cultural activists in Arattupuzha. He also founded an art and cultural wing to stage performances like *Kathakali* that was prohibited then for the lower caste people. He learned *Kathakali* from one of his uncles and started a *Kathakali Yogam* with the help of *Tharananalloor Namboothiripad*. Mritwe Patter, a Konkani Brahmin from Ambalapuzha and a famous teacher of Kottayam *Kathakali Yogam* was also appointed in his *Kathakali Yogam*.

Many people got training in *Kathakali* here including Kunhacha Panicker, Velloor Vattam Kesava Marar and Manakkadan Kunhambu Gurukkal. Ambalapuzha Madhava Kurup, an officer of Chempakasseri Raja was appointed to supervise the *Kathakali Yogam*. Defying the upper caste conspiracy against the artistic pursuit of the lower castes,



Old Kaaliseril Nalukettu of Velayudha Panicker



First temple for the Avarnas installed at Arattupuzha in 1854

Velayudhan helped them to establish their own *Kathakali Yogams* in Changanacherry and Kottayam. He also supported the marginalized communities by running night schools and *Kalaris*. His institutions were open to all sections of the society and he supported them by providing financial assistance in building new huts and renewing old ones.

Velayudhan was also the first social activist in Kerala to question the restrictions regarding the use of breast clothes (*Mulakkacha*) and gold ornaments by women belonging to the lower castes. He fought against the upper caste men for violating the modesty of lower caste women and humiliating them in public. This has prompted the lower caste women to cover their breasts with cloths in public. When the breast cloth controversy was prevalent, he commanded all women belonging to the Channar community to defy prohibition. He had bought and distributed upper cloths to all women from Kayamkulam market.

Velayudhan organised a strike for *Achipudava* (*Achipudava* is a cloth that covers the portion below the knee) and succeeded in his efforts. Permission was granted to lower caste women to wear gold ornaments including nose rings (*Mookkuthy*) following the *Mookkuthy Chantha* incidence in Pandalam. He is said to have made and distributed one thousand gold nose rings among the lower caste women and asked them to wear them in public.

When the breast cloth controversy and the Channar revolt were very much in the air Velayudha Panicker exhorted the lower caste people not to work for the upper castes. This has affected the feudal lords very much who in turn publicly apologized and only then Velayudha Panicker withdrew the labour strike. During the strike period, he

distributed food and minimum wages to thousands of agricultural labourers in the region. He had also flouted caste restrictions using public roads. Such early actions must have influenced Ayyankali and others to organize protest strikes for educational rights in later years.

On another occasion, he had gone to Guruvayur temple dressed like a Brahmin and spent ten days learning *puja* and installation of temple deities where non-Brahmins were not allowed. When his identity was known, he ran away after attacking some *temple officials* who chased him.

Velayudhan had seven sons and he added '*Kunje*' along with their names. Only upper caste Hindus hitherto used such suffixes though they did not raise their voice against his action. He had friends from all castes and religions although more enemies from the upper castes.

In 1852 he travelled to Goa where he learned Brahmanical rites used for temple worship. Two years later, he built

a temple in Mangalam village in 1854. He installed another temple in Cheruvaranam in 1855 near Varanapally. Viswanathan Gurukkal of Kandiur, Mavelikkara installed a Sivalinga and Velayudhan himself conducted the puja there. He allowed all people irrespective of caste, creed and gender to enter and worship in these temples. It may be noted that Sree Narayana Guru installed an idol at Aruvippuram only in 1858!

Velayudha Panicker also practiced inter-dining and he enjoyed inter-caste meals with dalits mostly Pulayas and Parayas. Sahodaran Ayyappan who organized the first documented inter-dining in the history of Kerala at Cherai in 1917 must have taken inspiration from the oral narratives on Arattupuzha Velayudha Panicker!

Velayudha Panicker was assassinated while he was in deep sleep in January 1874 at the age of 49 during a boat journey by a group of upper caste men in the Kayamkulam Lake. Local people still cherish his memories and talk about him as a savior, martyr and ethical fighter for human dignity and rights. He will remain a source of inspiration for the future democratic struggles in Kerala.

Velayudha Panicker used traditional boats with paddles, horses and elephants during his expeditions and interventionist explorations along the south coast. The community hall, the temples built by him, the Kaaliseril Tharavad are some of the monuments that still revitalize his memories. A Research Foundation and Cultural Centre have been created as a registered society under the name of Arattupuzha Velayudha Panicker at Mangalam in Alappuzha. The Foundation is formed for the study of his legacy of ethical and anti-caste resistance. ■



Kerala in Mumbai

You are cordially invited to be a part of Kerala in Mumbai by canvassing subscription and advertisements. Golden opportunity for retired person, home maker and part timers to make substantial earnings on commission basis.

For details contact
Kerala in Mumbai
Phone: 022-29209959/29205641,
Mob: 9820110509.
E-mail: keralainmumbai@gmail.com

MINE THE GOLD FROM WITHIN YOU

Part 1

CREATIVE WORK

THE SOURCE OF ALL HUMAN DIGNITY GLORY AND JOY



Prof. Dr. John Mathews Vazhappilly

■ Nothing good and noble can be achieved in this life without honest labour and sincere, hard work. All the fine, exquisite sentiments in the world weigh less than a single, splendid action. The harder you work, the greater the luck and pluck you have. Remember what the Greek dramatist Sophocles said, "Heaven never helps the man who will not act!" The golden thread that runs through the lives of most successful people is that they all love what they do for a living. All of them have an intense passion for their work. Spending your days doing work that you find rewarding, intellectually challenging and full of fun will do more than all the spa vacations in the world.

We all appreciate the man who does his work when "the boss" is away as well as when he is at home, the man who, when told to deliver a letter to Mr. Gilbert, quietly takes the letter, without asking any silly questions, and with no hidden intention of chucking it into the nearest dustbin, delivers it to Mr. Gilbert. Civilization is built on the foundation of such nondescript, genuine works performed by committed workers. Such a person is wanted in every office, shop, store and factory.

The world pines for such : he is needed, badly needed the man who can "carry a letter to Mr. Gilbert."

Our share of the work in the world may be limited, but the fact is that it is work that makes our life meaningful and useful for others. Darwin could work only half an hour at a time; but in many diligent half-hours he laid anew the foundation for the scientific theory of evolution. Green, the historian, tells us that the world is moved not only by the mighty shoves of the heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.

Work as the Source of Human Dignity and Glory

On a day memorable to me I boarded a traditional boat that is often used in ferrying people across the backwaters of Kerala. The driver of the boat sat in the engine room reading Tolstoy's War and Peace. He was slim and dark, but neatly dressed, and in his eyes was the splendor of ancient wisdom and his whole being radiated an aura of peace and calm. I was intrigued by this driver of an ordinary boat, reading Tolstoy's masterpiece, War and Peace, in the engine room of a boat. I decided to talk to him and as I entered the engine room, I found it gleamed and shone. I also noticed that the characteristic foul smell that usually

emanates from the engine room was not there. Instead of fifth and foul smell I found neatness and order. I asked him how he managed to keep the engine room so spick and span. His answer was loaded with simple wisdom characteristic of innocent people. "Sir", he said, glancing in the direction of the engine, "it is just this way, I get my glory, satisfaction, joy and find my God". I was humbled beyond measure and felt a profound reverence for this man. This driver of the boat exemplified in letter and spirit what Thomas Carlyle had written ecstatically about the glory of human work.

There is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in work. Were a man ever so benighted, or forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in him who actually and earnestly works; in idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Consider how, even in the meanest sort of labor, the whole soul of a man is composed into real harmony. He bends himself with free valor against his task; and doubt, desire, sorrow, remorse, indignation, despair itself, shrink murmuring, fat off into their caves. The glow of labor in him is a purifying fire, wherein all poison is burnt up; and of smoke itself there is made a bright and blessed flame.

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness;

he has a life purpose. Labor is life. From the heart of the worker rises the celestial force, breathed into him by Almighty God, awakening him to all nobleness, to all knowledge.

Alexander the Great, reflecting on his friends degenerating into sloth and luxury, told them that it was a most slavish thing to luxuriate, and a most royal thing to labor. Work, ideally, should empower the body, stimulate the mind, purify the heart and sanctify the spirit. Work less to have, work more to be.

Work is the true philosopher's stone that transmutes all the base metal of humanity into gold. Be happy for the privilege of work. Be grateful for the opportunity to serve your fellowmen. Creative work is the great character builder, the sweetener of life's bitterness, the master architect of human destiny. Every work, whether great or small, is worth doing well. Work is not a curse; it is the prerogative

hands.

Work as the Source of Human Happiness and Fulfillment

When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy.

- Rumi

Work done with joy and love is a masterpiece of creativity. Camus wrote, "Without work all life goes rotten" Work is a blessing, it is a gift. It is a prize. All work can be creative and recreational. Creative work is the fullest human expression of being alive. To set the world on fire, warm up to the work destiny has placed in your hands. Work, therefore, is desirable, first and foremost, as a preventive of boredom, for the boredom that a man feels when he is doing necessary though uninteresting work is as nothing in comparison with the boredom that he feels when he has nothing to do with his

The highest reward for a person's work is not what he gets for it, but what he becomes by it. Work by itself is a mechanical thing and can be made lively and interesting only by injecting enthusiasm into it. Your job is as great as the kind of person you are. You may work grudgingly or gratefully; you may work as a man, or you may work as a robot. There is no work so mean, that you may not exalt it, no work so dead, that you may not breathe life into it; no work so dull and boring that you may not enliven it. A willing, cheerful worker, with his heart in his job, will turn out more work and more satisfactory work in 44 hours a week than an unwilling worker, dissatisfied with his conditions, will turn out in 54 hours.

Love is the secret of all excellence in work. You invest money in your work; invest love in it too. Have a passionate love for your work. Like the materials and the tools with which you work. Love the people with whom you work. Like the place where you work. It brings excellent rewards.

The Story of Three Workers

This is an anonymous story I read many years ago. Once in a village several people were engaged in the construction of a temple. A sage passing by asks a person cutting stone: "What are you doing?" The laborer replies with frustration: "Don't you see that I am cutting stone? Look at my hands! Work is hell. And to make matters worse, you ask me what I am doing?" The sage asks: "I see you are cutting stone, but let me know what is coming up here?" The stone-cutter replies that he has no idea. He is disinterested.

The sage next goes to another man and asks him the same question. "What are you doing?" The man replies: "I'm cutting stone here; that's my job. For eight hours of work I get paid Rs.100. I have a wife and children to take care of. I'm doing my duty,"

The sage asks him: "Do you know what is coming up here?" He says: "Yes, they say they're making a temple. How does it matter to me, whether what is being constructed is a temple or a jail, as long as I get paid?"

Then the sage goes to a third worker who is also cutting stone and poses the same question. The man replies: "We are building a temple. There is no temple here; every year at festivals we have to trek to the temple in the next village. You know, every time I hit the



of intelligence, the expression of manhood, and the measure of human civilization.

The most common lament of the workers is that they do not have "the space" to do anything cool or great. This is rubbish! Relish the "little" assignment or "chore" that no one else wants! SEEK IT OUT! It's a license for self-empowerment, whether it's the redesign of a form or planning a week-end client retreat ... you can turn it into something grand and glorious. Emerson, the great philosopher, speaks about physical work in glowing terms: When I go into my garden with a spade, and dig a bed, I feel such an exhilaration and health that I discover that I have been defrauding myself all this time in letting others do for me what I should have done with my own

days.

Buddhism, normally perceived as a philosophy of passivity and inertia, if correctly understood, lays due stress on creative work. Buddhism considers the function of work to be at least three-fold: to give a man a chance to utilize and develop his faculties, to enable him to overcome his ego-centeredness by joining with other people in a common task; and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a happy existence.

In Buddhism, a work that is boring, stultifying or nerve-racking would indicate a deplorable lack of compassion for the worker and would be an insult to his human dignity. Work and leisure are complementary parts of the same living process and cannot be separated without destroying the joy of work and the bliss of leisure.

stone I hear wonderful music. The temple work has put the sleepy village in a festive mood."

The sage asks: "How long do you have to work on this project?" The man says the timeline is not his concern for as soon as he wakes up in the morning, he gets ready for work and begins cutting stone. He tells the sage that he spends the entire day here, taking a break between mealtimes. "When I go home in the night and sleep, in my dream I think of this construction and feel grateful that I enjoy the work I do. I am truly blessed," he said.

Work as Tonic, Medicine and Joy

J.P. Morgan, then past 70, was asked by the son of an eminent father why he (Morgan) didn't retire. "When did your father retire?" asked Mr. Morgan, without looking up from his desk. "In 1902." "When did he die?" "Oh, at the end of 1904!" "Huh!" snapped Mr. Morgan, "If he had kept on working he would have been alive still." Work is God's best medicine. It is God's medicine for man.

Work for the night is coming;
Work through the morning hours;
Work while the dew is sparkling;
Work mid springing flowers;
Work while the day grows brighter,
Under the glowing sun;
Work, for the night is coming,
When man's work is done.

Work till the last beam fadeth,
Fadeth to shine no more;
Work while the night, is darkening,
When man's work is o'er.

It is only the incessant exertion and working of our sensitive, intellectual, moral and physical machinery that keep us from rusting, and so becoming useless. Inaction saps the vigours of the mind. Work helps young people to avoid the physical and moral sluggishness, which is often a product of an idle mind. It also tones up and strengthens their moral muscles sufficiently to discharge the responsibilities of a mature citizenship.

People do not break down from overwork, but from worry and dissipation. Work, if it is interesting, is a stimulant. It is tension and a lack of interest and enthusiasm for what one does that exhaust and demotivate. Thomas Edison used to say: As a cure for worrying, work is better than whisky.

Some men find their work in itself exhilarating. The most obvious examples are artists and men of science. Shakespeare says of his verse: "So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, so long lives this." And it cannot be doubted that this thought consoled him in misfortune. In his sonnets he maintains that the thought of his friend reconciled him to life, but I cannot help suspecting that the sonnets he wrote to his friend were even more effective for this purpose than the friend himself. The writing of the sonnets had a therapeutic effect on Shakespeare. Great artists and great men of science do work which is in itself delightful. Work is antidote to most of human maladies. The poet Anna L. Coghill exhorts us to work in all conditions of life :

(To be continued..)



WELCOME TO THE TEMPLE TOWN GURUVAYUR !!!
HERE IS A PLACE TO STAY WITH LUXURY FACILITY IN BUDGET RATE !!



MULTI CUISINE RESTAURANT !!!

Room tariffs are starting from Rs.1400/- !! Luxury wedding hall can accommodate up to 700 members... we undertake all wedding arrangements and special wedding packages can be chosen/selected as per your requirements. For group bookings kitchen facility is available...


Bhasuri Inn

Web: www.bhasuriinn.com

Reservations: reservations@bhasuriinn.com / info@bhasuriinn.com

Contact No.: Ph: 0487 - 2558855 / 2558888 / 2551306, Mob: 9846245678

MY MOTHER'S GOAT



Jose Chemmassery

■ Six decades ago, a life time it takes, our villages were pristine. The ambience was serene and tranquil. The atmosphere was lively and verdant with green patches all around. Single storied

houses were either roofed with coconut palm leaves braided or clay tiles made locally, though called Mangalorean tiles. Our roads were narrow paved with metal, i.e.; small equal sized granite stones occasionally reinforced by road-rollers. We used to walk bare footed, Bata was not known then. Often over stepping the bullock cart trudging carrying agricultural products like paddy harvested bundles, rice sacks, raw coconuts and bananas we strode to our destination. Man pulled carts carried merchandise from and to the local markets. Man pulled rickshaws, where only dignitaries like priests, doctors or sick patients were allowed to occupy, were rare. Tremendous energy locked in animals and men were harnessed to utilize to improve functioning of the rural economy. There was total harmony between men, animals and nature all contributing to the rural welfare. Lack of white collared or blue collared jobs or scarcity thereof led people to be pastoral and farm oriented. It was an economic fashion to breed and rear cattle, cows, goats and hens at home to supplement the daily income. Poultry and cattle wealth at home was an invariable part of existence in the rural setup in the struggle to earn and enhance a simple livelihood.

My maternal Grand- father was a tall person. He wore an angry face on his tall structure. Extremely confident, he appeared to be arrogant; nobody from the family dared to go before him and question his wisdom. He was a shrewd businessman and with a futuristic vision he managed his small shop which used to vend tea and cheap snacks of the order of the day. With great vision and accumulated business acumen, he gave a present to my mother in the lively form of a small black she-goat. A four month old kid she became a pet in our family. As small children we used to pamper her whenever we were free from our studies

and other works. Being a gifted kid we never bothered to count her teeth, but admired and adored her lovely and easy going nature with us. When mother gave her kanji water and coconut cake, a waste product after extracting oil from copra, we took her for grazing in the nearby plots guarding her security. Occasionally we fetched her fresh green leaves of jack fruit trees which she ate vigorously biting from our hands and ruminated at leisure lying in the shadow of any tree. It was a big pass time for us to feed her and watch her eating the green leaves in large numbers. We watched her growing in size and after a few months she became an attractive animal in the eyes of our jealous



neighbours. Her shining black body hair, long ears drooping and marble like green eyes became talk of our neighbours and baptized her as my mother's goat. Her size and beauty after attaining puberty made my mother anxious. She was contemplating to take her to the nearest vet hospital to surrender her to copulation. She deferred the idea in procrastination although finding a male goat for mating was the immediate concern. It was a fortunate reality, as if god sent boon the sudden appearance of a male goat in the neighbourhood. The presence of the male goat announced naturally spreading through the pheromonic smell it emitted as a vital and virulent symbol of male virility and force. Visit of this male goat was neither regular nor periodical but remained occasional for most part of the year. On his four legs the male goat stood almost three feet high and weighed not less than

thirty k g s. An elongated head with a protruded mouth he had always gaping displaying the shiny set of white teeth he had, remained as a mark of attraction. A four inch long beard, what we call goatee emanated from his lower chin proclaiming his brand and identity. Neighbours knew his presence from the smell of virility pervading all around penetrating to the nostrils to an uncomfortable level of attraction. The male goat appeared uninvited and provided the necessary seeds to the eligible she goats paving family way for the next generation goats as nature demanded. His testes prominent and strikingly visible dangled in between his hind legs big and large as if a large padlock fastened to the door of grain shop. The big sized testicle, people thought contained large number of seeds to be sown among the female goats approaching his benevolent service in the act of copulation as a donor.

She grew in size as months passed with affection and admiration showered on her by all the members of the family. When she attained her puberty, it was the wandering male goat that smelt her smitten condition and appreciated her worth in the process of procreation. Their union occurred in the church compound under the shadow of giant female jack fruit tree standing for many decades in the compound as a guide and meeting point for toddlers in the evenings and days of school vacation. There were no witness to corroborate their union but symptoms of her pregnancy started showing after a few weeks of hibernation. She became more docile, attractive and started eating more with enhanced appetite. Soon she was to develop the baby bump and shapely udder with lengthening breasts. My mother observed her more keenly and started attending to her more kindly with a concern that was not extended to her children. It was foreseen that her delivery was due soon and predicted to have more than one kid. We all waited anxiously for the auspicious and miraculous delivery day. My mother did not allow her to stay outside and graze but almost confined her near to the goat house and shadow protecting her from the blazing sun and evil eyes. When the goat reached her final stages of her pregnancy my mother

preferred to have a "home delivery" instead of an outside delivery any where while grazing. Accordingly the goat was tended near the goat house and closely watched her symptoms of labour pain descending on her. It was on a Saturday morning, when the schools were closed for the week end holidays the goat bleated with agony of her pain she was suffering. Tears rolled out from her both eyes and opened her mouth indicating thirst for water. As children of no-school day we were at home and stood under the shadow of coconut tree away from the goat tended in preparation for her delivery. As I watched curiously, I saw the goat bending slightly on her hind legs which spread sideways indicating the signs of her delivery. In the process of her confinement a watery substance oozed out of her womb and suddenly fell to the ground a tiny kid of black hue without any blemish. The kid lied on the ground for a few minutes, and then it started to struggle to stand on its legs the kid fell again and on its fourth attempt it could stand on its legs literally. The mother goat licked out the watery substance from the body of the kid which started shining in the morning sun. After a few minutes, another kid came out of her womb accompanied by tears and agonizing cry. The second kid also imitated the first to stand on its legs establishing a position of respect after the birth. The miracle has happened and as children we were happy and excited to witness the nascent kids appearing on the scene in full form, My mother waited in anticipation for another ten minutes when the mother goat discharged the final remains of her pregnancy i.e.; the placenta which protected the kids in the womb, now a useless appendage. My mother took the placenta and carried it to the extreme south corner of our plot and buried it in a small pit thereby avoiding attention of carnivorous animals on the prowl preying by smell and sight before they devour. Several days have rolled into a few months; the kids have grown; they jump happily while taking big strides before they return to mother goat's udder to feed. There was sufficient milk to the kids to feed and the excess milk extracted by mother went to small tea shop where it was served as part of tea prepared. The money gained in exchange was not much but the earnings enhanced the family kitty which was always starving. The kids with the mother goat went for grazing reaching the precincts of church compound .There

was hardly any grass on the ground , but plenty of leaves fallen from the old jack fruit tree spread on the ground without any order. The elderly parishioners have witnessed the tree as such in the bloated condition for several years. Someone remarked it must be there for more than three hundred years almost as old as the church itself.

Long years of chewing tobacco in combination with betel leaves, areca nut and lime, we call it "murukkan" have earned my grand father the incurable oral cancer. Such a heavy damage had done on his mouth that a portion of his chin gave way to a gaping hole. It was a disturbing sight although the wound was covered with cotton wool to many who encountered his face. As treatment was not easily available, he went to his grave with the uncured cancer. People who gathered for the funeral in the cemetery wept and returned to their ordinary lives in silence. As a child I sobbed and cried shouting, "show me my grand pa" and



that was the last words echoed in the cemetery.

Under the shadow of the tree the kids grazed eating the fallen leaves scattered over the ground at random. It has become a routine for the mother goat and kids to visit the church compound, as the elderly parishioners visiting the church daily for prayers and veneration of their loyal saints who took their shape out of precious wood created by artisans/sculptors with pure imagination and inspiring devotion. The exquisite statue of Mother Mary was carved out of unique marble stone and was imported from Spain. There were many devotees who thronged before Mother Mary's statue seeking her blessings and offering flowers at her feet.

P. Kochappu was a staunch devotee of Mother Mary and visited the church regularly offering flowers secretly plucked from neighbours' gardens early in the mornings before the church service began. Most of the people in the

area used to have nick names based on their physical shapes, , weakness/disability, occupation or physical deformity. A section of the people preferred to call by nick names rather than the name given at baptism after a saint or a famous forefather. One such hilarious name was given to P. Kochappu for his extra ordinary display of adoration to Mother Mary by calling him or indirectly addressing him as Pushpa Kochappu (the flower Kochappu).He was in his late seventies and exhibited his protruding gruel belly about to burst as a gifted asset of his prosperity and personality. He used to wear a piece of shirt to cover his chest only on festivals, ceremonies and social gathering initiated by the church. Being an ardent devotee ,he used to gather few flowers from the neighbours gardens , make it a small bouquet to place it before the feet of Mother Mary's statue. This display of devotion and act of surrender before the Mother was a routine. Flowers

in different hues and varieties are attractive and pleasing and can bring out love and affection from the recipient although the deliverer need not possess these qualities. After the morning service he knelt before the statue closing his eyes and folding his hands he begged for mercy for the remaining years of his life. He was a butcher, slaughtered many goats and sold their meat in small packets of folded teak leaves weighing half pound or one pound in the neighbourhood for past several years.

His family was nicknamed as goats head as they placed the goat head on display for sale in their premises. He had to leave his profession as his boys started earning their livelihood. With intent to regain his status to have better proposals in marriage of his boys he surrendered his professional life to spiritual path. With flowers and prayers he atoned for the deeds of vice he practiced in his youthful life. He found time and devoted more of it to engage in devotional pursuits designed to the aged in preparation for the ultimate departure from this earth to an unknown territory called heaven or hell.

After breakfast, normally a bellyful of rice gruel and pickle in the morning P Kochappu used to go for a walk, which also included collecting fallen leaves from the jack fruit tree in the church compound. These leaves he collected were taken to his home where a small cow was tended and reared. Collecting of these leaves was an art in his hands. He

never picks up the leaves by hands; but uses a pointed sharp three feet long iron rod quarter inch thick with a small grip handle bent to convenience for easy operation and elegant handling. With the pointed edge of the iron rod he pricks in the middle of the leaves and once it is hooked he pushes it backward to the grip as a collection centre. Thus he strolls in the area collecting the leaves from tip of the rod to the end thereof. Ten to fifteen minutes on the job of bending and pricking and after assessing the collection he stops and return to his house. He has become an expert in the job and people started calling him as *ela Kochappu* (leaves Kochappu).

It was on a Friday morning in the month of May and children on summer vacation were loitering and playing under the jack fruit tree. Kochappu after his breakfast came out of his house in the usual format for the leaves pricking job. He wiped the iron rod with a small cloth and felt its pointed tip to ensure its continued sharpness. As he crossed the narrow road in front of his house, he reached the seven steps to the compound of the church. He slowly proceeded to the jack fruit tree. He was happy to see the huge crop of leaves fallen from the tree spread on the ground. He was busy pricking the leaves; suddenly he noticed the black object standing calmly eating the leaves in a monotonous manner. He was annoyed and angry about the sight of the black goat and made a forceful push-sweep with the iron rod. The pointed tip of the rod pierced into the genitals of the goat and penetrated into the innards of the animal which bleated and groaned with excruciating pain. The goat started bleeding and fell on the ground on its side. Rolling its eyes and beating its legs the goat groaned for a while. Within a few minutes lying in that helpless and pathetic condition, the goat became silent and died without any murmur silently suffering the excruciating pain.

The children idling and playing in the compound witnessed the macabre scene; they were sad and astonished at the way life was taken out of the goat. As the children were used to see the goat grazing they have also identified and remembered the owner of the goat. The boy called Rapha ran out and reached our house to inform my mother about the gruesome act and death of the black goat. My mother was stunned; but remained calm as she was a bold lady. Kochappu kept mum and silently went to his house and tried to hide his guilt by wearing gloomy silence. Then the crowd

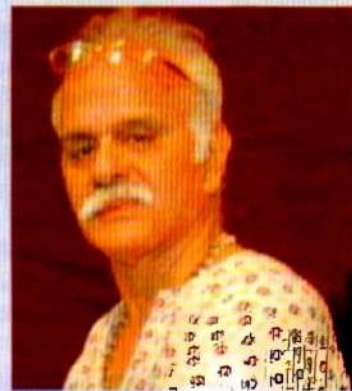
started gathering as the news of death travelled to friends and foes without any discrimination. A few of the unemployed youth and idle card players took charge of the scene. Their compassion was ephemeral. They arrived at the conclusion that there is no point in stretching the issue and the matter has to be dealt with without any loss of time. They unanimously decided to make meat out of the goat to which purpose they summoned the Brahmin Joseph.

He was a handsome young man in his twenties. He came to settle down in our village from his Malabar area as life was intolerable there. His mother became a widow at her young age when communism was spreading in every nook and corner of villages in Kerala. Arya Antharjanam, her name, even participated in the rallies organized by the communist party always wearing a red blouse. Before reaching our village she got her son baptized in a Christian church as a challenge to her orthodox community. With the blessings of the parish priest he was married to an orphanage girl demure and devoted. As they could not find much support for their livelihood and settlement they were constantly searching for both. In desperation they found a piece of no man's land unoccupied in the extreme end of a street leading to a paddy field.

They encroached the arid and naked land and made a small hut as their settled home. Joseph went in search of jobs but could not earn much. Out of desperation he decided to join as a butcher's assistant. On Saturdays and Sundays he sold meat in partnership with the famous butcher of our village. Thus Joseph became an expert in slaughtering, skinning and making meat and bones of animals bought from the cattle fare. The choice of Joseph was apt for the job ; he did his job with dexterity and within half an hour parcels of meat was ready. As directed by the leaders of the crowd the meat portions were distributed among the neighbours free, who were happy to find comfort out of other's miseries. My mother refused to take the meat packet and admonished the delivery boy to find someone else for the purpose. We were all sad after the gloom of death our comely goat bequeathed to the family. We were angry but were not prepared to tackle the situation out of diffidence and ignorance.. Helpless and silent we remained ruminating the memories of by gone days with the black goat. My mother decided never to rear a goat in future and remained with her unbroken vow. We could only support her decision and refrained from challenging her considerations.

Cruelty to animals and animals rights law came into force much later. ■

KIM Salutes



K D Chandran

who is crossing the 80th milestone on the road of life on May 8, 2016, for being

- Our constant supporter.
- Inspiration to the Mumbai stage.
- Philanthropist of social causes and
- Father of talented danseuse Sudha Chandran

MY TRYST WITH SCISSORS AND COMBS

The crowning glory has been a favourite subject not only with women but men also. The author describes here his experiences of haircuts right from the home visits of the barber in his hometown in Kerala to the stylishly displayed saloons of Mumbai.



Adv. A. Viswanathan

■ Homo sapiens or in common words, man, as he evolved through ages was classified as homo erectus, homo economicus, homo hierarchicus etc by anthropologists, economists,

psychologists et al. This evolutionary process also witnessed another phenomenon man's obsession with his locks. Mythology and literature give glimpses of this obsession. Though Samson, for instance, may belong to a mythological world or Belinda of the poet Alexander Pope may be a product of poetic imagination, their strength or rather weaknesses was hopelessly interlocked with their flowing luxuriant locks. Samson, shorn of his locks was anything but strong, as the story goes. In "The Rape of the Lock", Pope's Belinda suffered a similar fate she lost her beautiful locks to a spurned suitor's scissors and thereby her beautiful looks. Modern times witnessed hair cutting as fashion and fad. Celebrities created celebrity hair dressers. For instance Ronald Reagan's hair stylist was described as Da Vinci or Chagall of this profession. Clinton made his hair cut very famous as it was considered as the costliest one. Thus in modern times there are people who are willing to spend a fortune to have a haircut. These incidents take me down the memory lane. If my memory serves me right, my earliest encounter with this tribe took place more than seventy years ago.

Sankaran, the barber, was part and parcel of 'essential services' available in the village. Sankaran, true to the tradition of his tribe and trade used to visit our house twice in a month. The first visit was

exclusively for the haircut of the elders in the family and the second for the juniors. Two things I hated and feared, of course, were the arithmetic class and Sankaran's haircut. As regards the first, being weak in the subject of numbers there were occasions when I used to get a score not exceeding the starting number of Fibonacci i.e. zero and boxing of ears or other corporal punishment depending upon the choice of the teacher. As regards the second, Sankaran's appearance in the courtyard often made me vanish into thin air and it was the servant Balan's task to present me before Sankaran for the ritual. Balan had to use force occasionally to break down my resistance. Sankaran was a tall and lanky man with a long hair and a kit under his arm hiding his tools of trade. He never felt the need for trimming his own long hair. As you know, selfie was not as popular as it is to-day. Once Balan handed over the recalcitrant victim to Sankaran, he would hold his victim tightly between his bony knees so that there would not be slightest movement on the part of the victim an experience very close to that one experiences when undergoing MRI. As part of his customer service he would give to his victim a piece of broken mirror intended to monitor the progress he made in his work; however no one would be in a position to do that, much as he tried. Blurred vision combined with blunt scissors often resulted in tonsorial

barbarity and sometimes resulted in physical injury as the scissors went astray. In one way, Sankaran's reluctance to get his scissors whetted saved us from far more grave physical injuries. His sharpened scissors would have caused more blood shed than an improvement in the efficiency and efficacy of his scissors. Sankaran's tonsorial barbarity was soon evident when I, like Sinbad the sailor, came out of his deadly grip only to be greeted by the jeering crowd of my brothers and cousins who were also victims of Sankaran's tonsorial barbarity. While the senior members of the family never favoured cessation of their patronage, the younger folks waited for the day of deliverance from the tyranny of Sankaran the Barbarian a sobriquet he blissfully did not understand. And we did not have to wait for long. Sankaran's death marked the epilogue of a reign of tonsorial terror and torture.

Sankaran's successor Gopalan was more amiable in his approach and his haircut less painful though his professional proficiency was no better than that of his uncle. He often entertained us with anecdotes of his stint as an assistant in a military camp. We never felt then that he was spinning yarns. I do not have any bad memories of Gopalan. I bade him good bye when I left my village to continue higher studies in a nearby town. There, I was introduced to a new way of life a life full of peer pressures especially in regard to tonsorial

and sartorial matters. One day my friend took me to a particular saloon frequented by a majority of student community. The saloon resembled more a party office than a saloon. Portraits of the trinity of the communist pantheon Marx, Engels and Lenin adorned the




Hair cutting - then and now


walls loudly proclaiming the political allegiance and affinity of the Saloon's owner Kumaran. While plying the scissors and comb he would hold forth on class conflict, dictatorship of the proletariat, total elimination of bourgeoisie etc. as if he was conducting study class on the nuances and niceties of Marxian dialectics. But Kumaran had one grievance which he aired openly after his discourses on Marxism - while choosing the party's emblem, the scissors and comb ought to have been chosen as they were more representative of labour than the sickle and hammer. Kumaran, an ideologue, was short on professional proficiency but long on political ideology. The customers, especially the student community, which was attracted to Marxism not only provided the patronage on which he depended for his survival and also the captive audience he needed for his ideological effusions.

After my graduation, I came to live in Mumbai. My encounter with Ramesh, a youth employed in a nearby saloon in the suburb is still fresh in my memory. Those who patronized him knew of his penchant for music. This lover of music synchronized his hair - cutting with film songs aired by the AIR as if he got the divine afflatus from these songs. His moods and movements were umbilically linked to the songs flowing from the radio, it seemed. Lilted melodies of S.D. Burman or Sankar-Jaikishan accelerated the movements of his hand, and when there was legato, there was considerable slow down in his movement. He even took time off to beat time with his scissors much to the chagrin of his patrons. For all his short comings, I liked him. I could very well imagine the present day Ramesh with plugs in his ears listening to his favourite members and wielding his scissors and comb.

One day Ramesh's absence from duty made me go to another saloon as I lacked faith in the skill of his colleagues. That saloon had a good number of hair dressers on its payroll. But Sunil, a tall and handsome young man clad in Kurta was everybody's favourite. As a result, there was a long queue of patrons eager to avail themselves of his services. I also joined the queue without a murmur. For a while, I sat like patience on a monument. While waiting for my turn I closely watched Sunil at work. He certainly belonged to the class of Ronald Reagan's hair dressers whom a news paper columnist once described as Chagall and Da Vinci. After a long wait,




LONELINESS



Pranav Menon

An empty bench.....
 An empty seat.....
 An empty class...
 An empty life.
 The void rooms echoed in silence
 And peace.
 But a cry of a wounded heart wails
 In a melancholy spectrum.
 Every day was a day of dark clouds and
 Swollen pains.
 The dead twigs and trodden leaves
 Swirl in a whirl.
 Had a day of light passed
 Like a beam of rays?
 Loneliness just swallowed in,
 Like a quicksand.
 Dark and deep, broken
 And shattered in the
 Name of Loneliness.
 It follows me wherever I go,
 It sits beside me and rubs my wet cheeks
 It was the only person who saw my void life
 My broken heart and sorrow bitten skin.
 Loneliness was the only one who was behind Me.
 For it knew that it would be my only
 Friend.



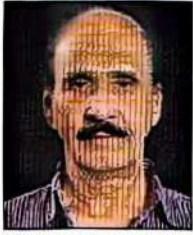
I was summoned to be seated. From the luxury of the well cushioned chair I could get glimpses of Sunil's elite clientele all from the tinsel world. For a moment I felt elated at the thought of joining Sunil's select clientele. My moment of glory was short lived as Sunil returned to work taking a brief respite to savour his favourite masala tea. I could see in the mirror Sunil's huge figure looming large behind me with the scissors and comb well poised for his tonsorial artistry. The opening stroke was typical of Sunil, the artist. He ran his long comb through my mane. The opening stroke was in reality a test to assess my eligibility to become his patron. Soon came the verdict in the form of sage advice "Kindly visit me after a matter of two weeks". It was quite obvious that he was hugely disappointed with the growth of my hair.

I was touched to the quick as I took his advice as an affront more particularly to my hair than to me. With a bruised ego I hurried to the saloon where Ramesh's colleagues would behave as just hair dressers and not Chagall or Da Vinci. After the First World War it was famously observed by an American statesman "Peace is too serious a business to be left to the soldiers". So was my hair cut. It was too serious a business to be left to hairdressers.

Tailpiece: Over the years my tryst with the scissors and comb is reduced to once in a blue moon affair as my once lustrous hair almost disappeared like some of the extinct species of the flora and fauna of our planet earth. ■

Did you enjoy this article? Mail your comments to keralainmumbai@gmail.com.

JOB-HUNTING AND A MISSED CAREER



V Balachandran

■ When I landed in Mumbai, I had an unusual experience that caused me much fear and anxiety. I was to get down at Dadar Station where my uncle was to receive me and take

me home. As I was in an excited state of mind, I failed to get down at Dadar. The train took me to the Terminus which was then V. T. (now C. S. T.). For a few moments, I felt totally confused. Steadying myself, I went out of the station and hired a taxi to take me to Churchgate where my uncle worked at the Western Railway Headquarters. Alas, it was a Saturday and the office worked only for half a day. Remembering that my uncle stayed somewhere in Bhandup, I took a train from V. T. to Bhandup. On enquiry here and there, I learnt that my uncle had shifted to the I N D Colony in Powai. I took a bus to go to the colony and when I was close to it, I saw my aunt looking down on the road from the terrace of a five-storey building. Our relief was immense, so was uncle's as he had been restless after returning home without me.

Uncle was staying then with his wife and child in a friend's house with limited accommodation. I had imagined that he would be staying in a separate house with his family and that I would not be inconveniencing him in any way. Proper accommodation was then a problem, as it is today, with the difference that the rents now are sky-high. I came to know of hundreds of young men from Kerala living in hotels and other lodging houses, and each sharing a small room with two or three others. This quality of adjusting oneself to new environments, in India or abroad, has stood Keralites in good stead and taken them to great heights of achievement in several fields of labour, intellectual and others.

I had to wait for almost a year before I could get a regular office job. Though I attended quite a few tests and interviews, I did not succeed because of three handicaps viz. 1. I knew neither Hindi nor Marathi, neither shorthand nor typing. 2. I was not fluent in English and spoke with a Malayalam accent. 3. As a



Balachandran in his office

fresher from the college, I had no experience. I did some odd jobs including that of a Medical Representative on a small salary; it was hardly sufficient to meet even my day-to-day expenses.

First Assignment

At long last, on March 1, 1958, I secured the job of a 'Milk Recorder' at the Aarey Milk Colony of the National Dairy Development Corporation of India for a progeny research. Though the salary was low, I was provided with a small accommodation. I worked for a year and gave up the job to join the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in March, 1959, as a Technical Assistant on a higher salary of around Rs. 200/-. The short but unfortunate Chinese War of September 19, 1962 - November 20, 1962 gave me a break. I was interviewed and selected for work in Ladakh, on deputation, in the Army Civil Supplies Core. As the war ended, I was discharged. I returned to the FCI godowns in Mumbai, to resume my work as a Technical Assistant. I had fondly hoped that I would be taken into the regular army after my Ladakh assignment but that was not to be, and I missed a coveted career in the army. (I stand 6'4" tall. Even now, when I am in the late seventies, people mistake me for an ex-service man of the rank of at least a colonel).

I was, however, destined to fight battles on a different front against anti-

social elements. More of this, later.

While I was continuing in the FCI, was transferred to Dohad in Gujarat. I was not willing to leave Mumbai. Finally, after much thought, I decided to resign from the FCI. For a long time I was not sure whether it was wise on my part to have done so. Later events in the course of my life showed that I was not unwise and had not taken a leap in the dark.

A change of job

The post of 'Pest Control Officer' fell vacant at the Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). I applied for it, got through a test, and got selected. I joined my post on April 20, 1964. The rest of my official life was bound up with the BMC. Meanwhile, I had taken a Degree in Administrative Management from the Bajaj Institute of Management Studies.

The Ward Officers of the BMC are selected through an examination-cum-interview by the Maharashtra Public Service Commission. I succeeded in my third attempt and was appointed a Ward Officer in Chembur 'M' Ward. I took charge on March 1, 1976, when the country was under Emergency. The ward covered Chembur, Deonar and Mankhurd. It was fairly a large area and 40% of the eastern suburban slums was in it.

I got married to Valsala of Koratti belonging to a well known family, at the temple town of Guruvayur on September

14, 1968. A personal event, a happy one at that, which absorbed like a sponge the misery, if any, caused to me in my hectic, if also a kind of adventurous, official career. We made a humble beginning of our life the simplest way, without anybody's help.

The rapid rise of slums in the metropolis owing to illegal encroachments on public land was a headache to the State Government. Apart from the legal aspect of the matter, the insanitary conditions in which the people lived posed a danger to their lives. Slum improvement became a crying need. I was the Corporation's choice as Ward Officer (Slums).

In that capacity, I had to ensure that there were no further encroachments and no construction of hutments. I came face to face with the 'slumlords' who took upon themselves the role of protectors of the slum-dwellers. They were a law unto themselves. They sought to prevent Government action against illegal encroachments. The 'dadas' had the support of political parties behind them. The term 'Underworld' came into vogue from 1984 onwards.

Special Officer designated

In 1976 the Government carried out a census of the slum-dwellers. Following this census enumeration, basic amenities such as drinking water and toilets were provided as part of a slum improvement programme. The Government decided to collect a nominal rent from the beneficiaries, and the Ward Officer was made responsible for the collection as well as prevention of new slums coming up. Politicians intervened and scuttled all efforts at collection of compensation and demolition of unauthorised slums. Torn between my official responsibility and the resistance from the shielded slum-dwellers to pay the rent, I found myself in an unenviable situation, indeed a fish out of water.

Demolition of unauthorised constructions was also part of my duties. Here is an instance of the kind of ordeal I had to face on May 15, 1980. As the Ward Officer (Slums) Zone III, I was required to lead a demolition squad to the Baiganwadi area in Deonar. The

demolition squad under me consisted of 200 men in 25 trucks. A police force accompanied the squad. As the Corporation men started the demolition work, the slum-dwellers resorted to stone-throwing. There was no alternative but to hit back. I approached the police and requested them to go into action. The police carried out a lathi charge, and fired tear gas shells. This happened around noon. Stone-pelting by the mob injured some BMC men. After the conclusion of the demolition work, we started preparing to leave the place. As I was nearing the Link Road and the access road leading to the dumping ground, I saw clouds of smoke rising from the hutments on the Chembur-Mankhurd Road. About 2000 huts were in flames. The fire was put down by the fire-fighting vehicles though very little was retrieved. The loss was heavy. Along with me was the Chembur (M) Ward Officer Mr R B Shrikolkar. The slum-dwellers came out



with allegations that the Municipal staff were behind the fire accident. They alleged that the Corporation men tried to demolish the hutments in the area and before leaving the place, had set fire to the slums with the help of the police. They went on to say that they had requested the officials not to destroy the huts, but the officials instead 'ran away' from the site after setting fire to the huts. They also said that the Municipal Corporation's staff, on the pretext of giving medical aid to their men, left the place in a hurry.

After much deliberation, the Government instituted a commission of enquiry to study the matter. Justice N B Naik Commission started recording evidence from April 7, 1981. The enquiry went on till 1982 and the Commission's report was submitted to the Department

of Home Affairs.

The Commission found that the officials on duty had only carried out what they were expected to do, and none of them was guilty. The slum-dwellers themselves had set their huts on fire as a protest against the drive by the Corporation.

A Target For Shiv Sena

In the late nineteen fifties and during the sixties an 'ugly form of regionalism' raised its head. It had its roots in the claim that the sons-of-the-soil should be preferred for employment within the State, and admission to higher educational institutions. As a movement, it gained ground in a few major cities of the country. The Shiv Sena spearheaded the movement in Mumbai. It was founded by the cartoonist-turned politician, Bal Thackeray, in 1966.

The Shiv Sena aimed broadly at promoting

the interests of the Maharashtrians defined as those with Marathi as their mother tongue. In course of time, this aim narrowed down to 'Maharashtra for Maharashtrians', a claim based on a linguistic identity. If acted upon, it involved a kind of discrimination not envisaged in the Constitution (see Article 16(2)). None of the political parties disputed the claim. Unfortunately, the Shiv Sena's aim had a negative aspect, namely, the immigrants should not only be denied employment but even space. The party's movement

did not eschew violence. As it turned out, people from outside the State, particularly from the south including Kerala, had to bear the brunt of the attack. The loss was substantial and there was an all-pervasive fear among the people. The Keralites were in trouble and at one time many thought that they would have to leave Mumbai. Some suffered loss of property.

In 1972 the BMC passed a resolution adopting Marathi as the official language. Since then, the chances of Keralites getting jobs in the BMC became slender. It may even be said that the BMC stopped recruiting persons who knew no Marathi. The same is the case with the State Government.

I became one of the targets of attack by the Shiv Sainiks of those days as I was holding a top government job. The Corporation then was under Congress rule

supported by the Republican Party of India. The Shiv Sena members were biding their time to get me out.

Dangerous move

The opportunity came in the rainy month of June, 1983. At the Panjarapole junction on the Sion-Trombay Road a telephone cable pit had been left open in the night by some careless maintenance workers. It rained heavily that night. A 5-year-old girl had fallen into the pit. The body came up floating on top.

The tragic end of the girl sparked off unrest among the people of the area. Political parties jumped into the fray. The Shiv Sena lost no time in taking up the issue in a militant manner.

The Sena wanted to establish that the little girl died because of the Ward Officer's irresponsibility and carelessness. It was a Monday. About 1000 Shiv Sainiks were marching towards my office. A man at the front carried the dead body of the unfortunate little girl in his arms. The intention of the mob was to place the body on my table and demand instant justice.

On being informed, the police gave us security at the Ward office.

Senior Inspector Joseph was in



Demolition in progress

charge of the Chembur area. He took possession of the body, got the morcha stopped, and arranged to send the body to the JJ Hospital in Byculla for postmortem. I was very much upset. While my heart ached for the child, I was hurt by the allegations made against me.

The death of the child was due to an

accident. The political party was trying to exploit it for its own gain. Harassing a non-Marathi official was fun for them. Political interference in almost all the tasks taken up by the Corporation had become a routine.

To be continued...



WE ARE HIRING

Positions available all across India





I am **FEI**

I will always make **you** feel special

www.feicargo.in

Please send your resume in strict confidence to

opportunities@feicargo.in

Dance Ballet - 'Ashrudhara'

The city's senior performer in Bharatanatyam, senior disciple of the great Maestro Kalaimamani Vidwan Guru T S Kadirvelu Pillai, curator of many festivals and the Vice-President in the Executive Committee of the International Dance Council presented her latest production *Ashrudhara* - *Tears Of Flowing Water*.

Ashrudhara is a visual elegy on the tears of flowing water. Using the potency of Bharatanatyam Lata Surendra has gathered the saga of flowing water. Although she has used the sacred river Mother Ganga as the running thread, as she puts it - 'the saga of the river is not isolated to her alone - it is the lament of the rivers of the world seeking our attention!

The ballet commences with the voice of Mother Ganga reaching out to the audience and recounting the layers of her descent from Heaven. We all know her as a 'stream of cloud and light that descended on Meru Mountain to accord salvation to sixty thousand sons of Sagara' but her rage and reluctance to leave the encushioning heavens, her misuse by humans and her entreaty to bestow unto her a 'heaven on Earth' was brought out very evocatively by the consummate artist Lata Surendra. She highlighted how Ganga came to be known as 'Bhagawad-Padi or Vishnu-Padi' in Kruta Yuga as she emanated from the kamandalam (a spout shaped vessel), when Lord Brahma washed the feet of Vamanadeva (The dwarf Brahmin incarnation of Lord Vishnu) in kruta yuga. Having directly touched that Lotus Feet of Lord Vishnu which was reddish in colour like the filament of Lotus...' Ganga thus gathered the Lord's

pristine essence to become the allayer of the sins of the world. Lata's depiction of the flow of the sacred river with sinuous grace and ease, at the same time retaining the syntax of Bharatanatyam, mirrored not only her awareness of the dance idiom she had gathered as her life, but also, as to how necessary it is for any performer to go deep into any chosen theme in order to

manner by which Lata depicted the tempering of the river's anger by Lord Shiva with his cajoling and masculine energy until she descended unto the earth so near and yet so far from her beloved Lord in this causal word. From the heaven to the mortal world and her ravaging by humans was brought out through poetry and interludes of skillfully choreographed musical interludes.

The 'tears of flowing water' truly awakened the viewers to her terrible fate in this causal world that could never have her flow back towards her origin - the celestial heaven! Each drop of tear she shed - her tears in flowing water urged mankind to awaken to the vital aspect of the water-cycle and life-cycle not at all mutually exclusive of one another. The momentum that the artist created cohesively sought its conclusion in the line 'Gather the salt in the tears of flowing water and give unto me 'a heaven on earth'

A thought-provoking production that truly enframed the didactic potency of the performing arts and its

drawing attention to immediate issues ever so meticulously!

Ashrudhara is a great production in its concept, choreography and delineation by Kalashri Lata Surendra with effective lights by Pednekar, sound effects by Nandlal Rele and musical score composed by N N Siva Prasad.

Although the production was staged at Sathe Auditorium recently for Dr Tina Tambe's -Ninad Arts, its flow began from IIT Powai, Upvan Festival, Mamallapuram Festival, Communication through Art at Bangalore, Keralotsavam and it yet seeks to flow further into waiting and sensitive hearts.

-Guru Vijay Shanker



make it an absorbing experience for the rasikas. Skillful Sancharis had Lata describe the reluctance and rage of the sacred river in having to leave the cradling heavens, to allay the heat ensuing from the meditation of Bhageeratha.

Very interesting it was to gather Ganga as she came to be known as 'Janhavi'. The fury of the celestial river as she flooded the ashram of Maharishi Janhu had the enraged Sage drinking her up and it was only when Lord Brahma placated him by saying that she would be known as his daughter 'Janhavi' did he release her through his ears!

The highlight in the entire layering of the river's descent was the unique



BALI Island of 1000 temples

Bali is an island and province of Indonesia. With a population of about 4,225,000, the island is home to most of Indonesia's Hindu minority. According to the 2010 Census, 83.5% of Bali's population adhered to Balinese Hinduism, followed by 13.4% Muslim, Christianity at 2.5%, and Buddhism 0.5%.



K A Viswanathan

■ There are nearly 1000 Hindu temples in this small island and according to rule, all houses must have a small temple in front of the house.

Restaurants and shops there do not open in the morning unless they finish their morning pooja with flower, deepam and fruits placed in front of the God (Ram or Siva).

Their National Radio broadcast three times a day (morning / afternoon and evening) *Gayatri Mantra* for one hour. This is compulsory.

They are proud to call themselves Hindu. (It is a Muslim country). If you say you are a Hindu you get a lot of respect.

All the crossroads have, in the middle, huge statues of Hindu Gods, Rama, Hanuman, Bhagvad Gita etc. No statues of Politicians.

There is a beach named Pandava Beach. On the side of the cliff are placed figures of the five Pandavas

besides statues of all Hindu Gods like Ram, Seetha, Hanuman, Lava Kusa that are carved in the mountain.

In front of the General Sukarno's bungalow one can see two big ponds where waters from all holy rivers like Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari flows and devotees take bath and perform poojas there.

All Shiva temples are open during full Moon days and locals visit the temples and pray for the whole day. The Sanctum Santorum is open for two days in a month.

Strict instructions for ladies entering the temples, are displayed in a board at

the entrance. Ladies have to tie their hair, should not enter the temple during their periods etc. No footwear is allowed inside (for all), and men have to wear dhotis.

All open air theatres have daily programme on Ramayana. It is always packed to capacity.

One day in a year, called *Black Day*, there is no landing or take off of planes, no transport on the roads, no lights or fire at home, no cooking or drinks at home or hotels and on this entire day people have to recite *Gayatri mantra*.

People are very courteous and hotels and transport are cheap and petrol cost Rs 6 to Rs 9 per litre depends on the size of the vehicles. In Bali for four days, AC rooms, three persons with breakfast I paid Rs.4200// total in a three star hotel. Coffee cost Rs 10/-

In Indonesia a temple complex has all Hindu Gods like Rama, Hanuman, Karthigeya, Balaji, Krishna, Siva and Navagraha and ladies gather every Friday wearing silk sarees and do vilakku pooja. On Saturdays free four course breakfast is given for all. ■

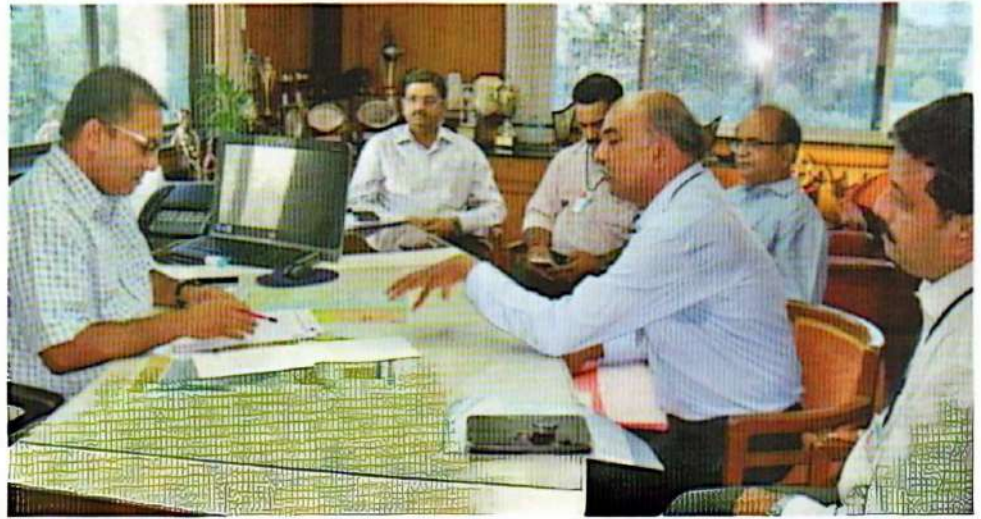
The National Radio in Bali broadcast three times a day (morning / afternoon and evening) *Gayatri Mantra* for one hour. This is compulsory.

KKS Yatrasamiti meets KRCL M D

■ KKS-Yatra Samithi Delegation under the leadership of Yatra Samithi Chairman SashiKumar Nair met KRCL Managing Director Sanjay Gupta on 7th April 2016 and submitted a detailed memorandum highlighting the alarming increase of theft in trains and other safety related issues.

The Chairman was briefed about the well organized theft taking place in Netravati/Garib Rath trains as information gathered from affected victims in past few weeks. The delegation stressed the need of providing the safety measures to the passengers on top priority, which includes deputing adequate police personels, installation of CCTV cameras, frequent announcements and circulation of handbills.

The CMD informed delegation that police patrolling were already started in Netravati trains and Railways are monitoring all the complaints round the clock. Passengers can contact at emergency telephone number 182 to lodge the complaint also can Tweet on Konkan Railway @ Konkan Railway. The CMD further stated that passengers have to avoid cash and ornaments while travelling. The CMD appreciated the initiative taken up by the Yatra Samithi



in distributing the safety awareness Pamphlets amongst the passengers

The officials further stated that in case of theft, passengers have to lodge the complaint immediately to the TTEs and also co-operate with the police officials during the course of investigation.

The delegation raised the issue about the non-availability of pantry cars in most of the long distance trains passing through Konkan Railway. Issue of unclean coach and toilet conditions were also discussed.

The officials stated that food distributing vendors have to carry I-card and Menu card to be produced on demand. The delegation emphatically demanded that officials should not shirk their responsibilities by citing reasons like - not coming under jurisdiction, law does not permit, it's not the duty of RPF, etc.

The representatives of delegation include Shrikumar, GS Pillai and PD Jayaprakash from KKS. Sharath Nair and Rajeev from Thane Zone were also part of Yatra Samiti delegation.

Office bearers of West zone of KSNA

■ The new office bearers of the West Zone of Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademi are P D Jayaprakash (President), Priya M Varghese (Co-ordinator) and Premkumar (Convenor). P K Muralikrishnan, Sankaranarayanan (Pune), Mukundan Menon (Gujarat), M

G Radhakrishnan, Kalamandalam Goplakrishnan, Adv P R Raajkumar and Sreekumar T are members of the Committee.

The year 2016 will be observed as 'Drama Year' in the West Zone, according to information.

Seminar of MMSSS

■ Inaugurating the seminar of Mumbai Malayali Samyukta Samara Samiti, Dr K N Harilal, professor of Centre for Development Studies remarked that Kerala is a community that goes beyond the borders of the state. The difference between the external and internal Keralas is contracting over the period. Keralites from outside the state are interacting with the social life of inside the state but the internal Kerala is ruling over the external Kerala, he said. This situation can be changed only with the inclusion of representatives of external Kerala in the administrative system, he suggested.

Chairman of Navi Mumbai Transport Corporation Sabu Daniel was the chief guest. Chief Academic co-ordinator of Mumbai Malayalam Mission Rugmini Sagar also spoke. Chairman P D Jayaprakash presided and convenor Dr Jose George welcomed the gathering.



P D Jayaprakash
(President)



Priya M Varghese
(Co-ordinator)



Premkumar
(Convenor)

Golden Jubilee of Dahisar Samajam concluded

■ The yearlong golden jubilee celebrations of Dahisar Malayali Samajam were concluded on April 2 in Vidyamandir School Grounds of Dahisar East. The highlights were the music concert of Biju Narayanan, mimicry of Kalabhavan Abhishek and folk songs of Rekha Kodungalloor.

The final event started with the lighting of the lamp by Samajam President Balan Komath and members of the management. Corporator Abhishek Gosalkar was the Chief Guest. Programme Committee convenor Achuthanandan and Secretary Vikram Kurup felicitated Biju Narayanan. Convenor of Cultural Committee Venugopal was the anchor.

There were drawing competition, Cooking contest, Free Ayurvedic Consultancy etc. Very soon the Samajam will start Acupressure clinic, yoga class and cultural centre.



Drama enthusiasts form group

■ The Malayalam drama enthusiasts of Mumbai formed a group to promote the drama culture of Kerala and the spirit of Malayalam drama of Mumbai among youngsters. They clarified that they were in the move to nurture a new fusion among the divergent presentation styles of Mumbai and modernism. Fifteen enthusiasts met at NRMU office in Matunga and formed this group. Organising small groups of drama workers, conducting workshops for scripting, direction, acting, stage craft, light and stage management etc, organising drama competitions and seminars are in their agenda.

Tentatively called Nataka Vedi, it has Surendra Babu as its Chairman, and Ravi Thodupuzha as convenor. Srikant Nair, Valsan Moorkoth, Harikumar, Joseph Vennoor, A Satheesan, Pavithran Kannapuram, Balaji, Rajan Thekkummala, Ayaloor Ramanunni, P Sivadas, P Ramankutty, John Jacob, Kannan Thattayil and Sukesh Pookkulangara are the committee members.

K S Menon condoled

■ In a meeting held at Adarsh Vidyalaya, Chembur, Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana condoled the death of K S Menon (Sreeman). President K Gopalan Nair presided.

In his address, Gopalan Nair remembered Sreeman as a personality who rose above petty politics and casteism and exhorted the young generation to model themselves on Sreeman. KPES President S Naman, its Secretary Hariharan, P V Chacko, Adv K Sahadevan, Velappan Nair, C K K Poduval, K Prakasan, Joy, Devan Tharappil, V V Achuthan, Ramachandran, Uzhavoor Sasi, Sahadevan Nair, T Murali, Madhu Nambiar, Premkumar, Dr P Harikumar, K Rajan, G S Pillai, K V Prabhakaran, P



D Jayaprakah, N V Devan, E S Sajivan, Dr Venugopal, Girija Panicker and Mathew Thomas spoke about their experiences with Sreeman.

■ Azad Nagar Malayali Samajam, Thane moved a resolution to condole the death of writer-journalist and former president of Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana K S Menon (Sreeman). Samajam President Jayadevan Nambiar presided and Secretary A B Mohandas moved the resolution.

■ Mulund Kerala Samajam moved a resolution condoling the death of K S Menon (Sreeman). Samajam President K Gopalan Nair presided over the meeting.

Oommen Michael, C K K Poduval, Laksmi Narayan, E Ramachandran, Santha Vasudevan, Sujatha Nair, A Radhakrishnan, Santhi and Girish spoke on the occasion.



Kalabhavan Mani remembered

■ Mumbai Nattaragu organised an event to remember the departed actor Kalabhavan Mani in Model English High School, Dombivli. Chairman Ravi Thodupuzha presided. N Ramanan, Oommen David Suresh Varma, Premlal, E P Vasu, P Mukundan, Madhu Balakrishnan, Roy J Kottaram and C G Warier spoke about Mani and his contributions to the cultural arena. Poet ONV Kurup, actress Kalpana, V D Rajappan and Jishnu Raghavan were also remembered.

The young artists of Mumbai Savior M J, Ashwin, Nihith, Ajith, Vinayan, Jose, Sreeranj, Jenya, Jubin and Aishwarya rendered the folk songs originally rendered by Mani. Wilson Dombivli welcomed the audience and Savior proposed a vote of thanks.

Panvel Cultural Society on warpath against Railways

■ Panvel Kerala Cultural Committee has submitted a memorandum to the minister of Railways, President, Prime Minister, Home Minister of Kerala demanding police protection for railway passengers against train robbery. The memorandum contains details of all robberies including the train, name of victims and the value of materials stolen etc.

If suitable action is not taken, strong protest, including obstructing the trains, will be taken, the memorandum warns.

Rahul Hari stages his arangetram

■ Mridanga Vidwan Guruji M S Parameswaran presented the mridangam arangetram of his disciple Master Rahul Hari at CIDCO Exhibition Centre, Vashi on 10th April 2016. Rahul, 14 years old, accompanied leading senior vocalist Sangeeta Visharada Smt. Lakshmi Rajagopalan.

Rahul Hari's versatility was displayed

when he accompanied the vocalist. The support of Shivkumar Anantharaman on the violin, Shaktidharan on the ghatam, K N Gopalan on the morsing and Master Vishwaprasanna (another disciple of Guruji M S Parameswaran) on the ganjira kept the audience attentive to the resounding beats of music.



Ramanavami celebrations at Asthika Samaj

■ Ram Navami festival was celebrated at the Asthika Samaj at Matunga in Mumbai on April 15. This is an eight decade old temple and is one of the oldest temples in Mumbai. In this temple, Ram Navami is celebrated every year in a grand manner with recitation of veda parayanam, sita Rama Kalyanam, cultural items like dance and music. As per the traditions of the Samaj greater importance is given to the 9-day Garbhotsavam of Lord Sri Ramachandra. The idols of Sri Rama with his consorts are kept in a Swarna Mandapam .

The Special features of this year's Rama Navami festival was the "Samrajya pattabhishekam" and homam, performed after a gap of 50 years, said K Ramakrishnan, secretary of the temple. A total of 65 vedic pandits from other states had come for this purpose. 27 vedic scholars were reciting Srimad Valmiki Ramayanam and nearly 20 were performing homam and the rest other rituals. On the Rama Navami day, as part of the Samrajya pattabhishekam, milk abhishekam was done on the idols by the devotees and water from holi rivers from India by eight young girls and eight vedic pandits. Only on the Rama Navami day both male and females are allowed to participate in the milk abhishekam. Once a year the devotees get a chance to do this ritual, said Ramakrishnan.



Bharata Natyam Debut By Teenagers

■ Madhavi Nritya Vidyalaya (Mira Road) presented the debut Bharata Natyam by five teenaged disciples of Guru Unnikrishnan, watched by the packed audience, at the Bilawa Bhavan auditorium in Santacruz East. The debutants were Siya Salunkhe,,Avani Rajesh Kahar, Simone Nazareth, Prachi Talkokul and Samiksha Kutty.

Commencing with Pushpanjali and concluded with the Naatu Bhairavi Thillana, the dancers performed nine items from the Bhrata Natyam repertoire. The highlight of the evening was the Dashavataram number wherein the dancers portrayed the ten incarnations of Lord.

The dancers received orchestral

support from Guru Unnikrishnan on nattuvangam, Vishnudas for the powerful vocal, Saktidharan for mridangam, Narayana Parthasarathy for violin, V R Narayanan for flute, make-up by Raji Sakthidharan and the compere for the evening was by Sindu Nair.

The chief guest was renowned Mohiniattam exponent Dr Geeta Radhakrishna. The other guest of honour included Kuchipudi exponent and dance critic Guru Vijay Shanker, TV actor Chaitanya, director Saseendran P S, Sreerama and Unnikrishnan and sisters from Holy Cross High School.



Five disciples of renowned dance Guru Sushama Gopinath had their arangettam recently. Lata Rajesh of Nrtyanjali Dance Academy was the Chief Guest.

2016-'17 Year of Drama

■ In a meeting held in Kerala House recently, the West Zone of Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademi had a lengthy and meaningful discussion on the plight of drama in this metropolis. The meeting stressed to the need to have a long perspective and direction. The meeting that had representatives from Khopoli to various suburbs of our metropolitan city, felt that this year 2016-'17 should be observed as the year of Drama.

The senior stage maestro V V Achuthan inaugurated the meeting along with K D Chandran, attended by drama activists and enthusiasts, by lighting the lamp. The meeting started by paying rich tributes to the writer and social activist K S Menon.

The meeting felt that every Malayali in the city should see at least one drama during this year. To meet this end, each of the various Malayali associations, numbering several hundreds, should utilise their festivals, celebration and other cultural events, should stage at least one play lasting not less than half an hour, in a year. The meeting sought whole hearted support from each and every organisation in the city.

To help the organisations, workshops by experts of Malayalam plays from Kerala should be held, 'inspire series' classes, even involving experts from other language theatres here to be conducted, the meeting felt. Novelist Balakrishnan, Chairman of Malayalam Mission promised all support. chief Co-ordinator Rugmini

Matrimonial Meet of Mandira Samiti

■ The matrimonial meet organised by Sree Narayana Mandira Samiti was jointly inaugurated by New India Assurance Company Dy General Manager Ranjit Gangadharan and his wife Anjana. He also inaugurated the website developed by the Samiti for this purpose.

Hundreds of young men and women from Baroda, Nashik, Pune, Raigad, Barooch etc. attended the Meet. In his address Ranjit Gangadharan reminded the youngsters that a marriage was a meeting of two families and the mutual respect and cooperation between them was the key to success of the wedded life. Samiti General Secretary N S Salimkumar and co-ordinator O K Prasad also spoke on that occasion. Active leaders of the Samiti provided guidance to the meet.



V V Achuthan inaugurates the meet

Sagar also promised support.

Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademi could also be cold persuaded to come forward with financial aid, to organise drama contests and provide affordable premises to conduct rehearsals etc, they felt. The other zones of the Akademi could be persuaded in this respect.

P D Jayaprakash presided and Premkumar welcomed the participants. Co-ordinator Priya M Varghese gave the necessary inputs to the meeting. Valsan

Moorkoth, Shrikant Nair, KKS Secretary Mathew Thomas, Dr Harikumar, Satish K Satish, Suresh Varma, C KKPoduval, M V Ramakrishan, Vinayan Kalathoor, Dr Venugopal, P D Babu, Jose Paul, Vijaykumar, Roy J Kottaram, Surendra Babu, Madhu Nambiar, Vinayan, Sukesh Pookulangara, Ashish Abraham, Smt Vijaya Menon, Smt Suma Mukundan and Smt Girija Menon participated on the discussion.

Smt Priya M Varghese proposed a vote of thanks.

Aravindan remembered

■ Aravindan was a director who could make multidimensional international films. He was a hermit who could sense the intimate relationship between man and nature., Kannan Perumadiyoor, film director, remarked.

He was speaking in a memorial event organized in honour of the now

dead Malayalam film director and artiste. Malayalam music director Kalamandalam Joy Cheruvathur recited lines from Kathakali and hymns. George Ookkan welcomed the audience and President of Pratiksha Trust Uttamkumar proposed a vote of thanks.



Kannan Perumadiyoor speaks at Vasai

AIMA music contest concluded

■ The music contest and workshop conducted by the Maharashtra Chapter of All India Malayali Association concluded successfully. It was inaugurated by music maestro Vidyadharan Master, writer Manasi, MGA Menon, Indira Menon, Prakash Padickal, Harikumar Menon and Shrikant Govind jointly. Adv Prema Menon welcomed the participants. T A Khalid, Mohan Kandathil, K T Nair, P R Sajiv, Kaviyoor Babu, Adv Padma Divakar and Madhavan spoke on the occasion. The music workshop was conducted by Vidyadharan Master and Premkumar.

In the music contest, Vidyadharan Master and vocalist Saraswati were the judges and they chose Rohan Pillai and Stalin Raju in the senior section and Reshma Ramachandran and Namita Menon in the junior section for the first and second places respectively. The winners received citation and trophies from Vidyadharan Master and Saraswati.

The winners will participate in the finale to be held in Kochi on April 27 and 28 and that event will be telecast live on Flowers Channel. The programme was managed by Adv Prema Menon, Premkumar, Komalan, Murali, Suma Mukundan, Niranj Menon and Sindhu Nair.



Prizes being presented (above) Vidyadharan Master and (below) Smt Saraswati



Pune Malayalotsavam concluded

■ Malayalotsavam of Malayalabhasha Samskarika Pracharana Sangham concluded in Pune. General Secretary of Purogamana Kalasahitya Sangham Prof V N Muralidharan Nair inaugurated the valedictory session. Poet Murugan Kattakkada, Mathrubhumi Circulation Manager M C Sathish et al were special guests.

In his address Muralidharan Nair remarked that ONV Kurup taught people of Kerala that the pride in the mother tongue was self respect itself. According to him, ONV was second only to Poet Vallathol. Murugan Kattakada presented his poems *Nellikka*, *Renuka*, *Kannada* etc. Pracharana Sangham Chairman P V Bhaskaran, Prof Y Mathai, Gen Secretary K S Ravi, treasurer P Amrutaraj and Mission President B Sasidharan Nair also spoke.

Winners of various contests were presented with prizes. Prof V N Muralidharan Nair also inaugurated the website of Pracharana Sangham.

Kharghar Ayyappa Seva Sangham pilgrimage

■ Kharghar Ayyappa Seva Sangham is organising a pilgrimage to Kanyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram based temples.

The pilgrimage will start on August 12 and end on Aug 18. Pilgrimage will cover Suchindram Temple, Kanyakumari Amman Temple, Keralapuram Temple, Thiruvattar Sri Adi Kesava Perumal Temple, Vedivechen Kovil, Aekakshara Ganapati Temple, Kuzhithure Mahadeva Temple, Vellimala Kumar Kovil Subrahmanya Temple, Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple, Madhur Ganapati, Attukal Devi Temple, Vivekananda Smarakam, Thiruvallur Smarakam, Padmanabhapuram Palace etc. For details contact 93242 07022 or 97572 37723.

Annual Day of SNMS

■ Sri Narayana Mandira Samiti is celebrating its annual day on May 8 at Chembur. Chief Minister Devendra Phadnavis will be the chief guest during the event, to be held in Sri Narayana Nagar in P N Lokhande Marg. Managing director of SFC group K Muraleedharan, Kirit Somaiyya MP and Kapil Patil MP will be special guests. The salient feature of the event will be the cultural programmes starting at 5 pm, presented by Kottayam Nazir and group and general meeting. There will be community feast at 9.45 pm.

For free entry passes contact 2525 6104, 2525 5337 or 2771 8283.



Raagalaya spreads its wings

■ Mumbai has a tradition of inviting celebrity singers from Kerala to stage Musical shows and other cultural programmes here. It appears the trend is reversing. Raagalaya of late started promoting artistes from this city itself to come forward to display their talents. Now it has taken them to Kerala to exhibit their talents in their native land.

Sree Annapoorneshwari Temple of Cherukunnu, Kannur celebrates Vishu Vilakkutsavam spanning eight days every year. Besides processions of caparisoned elephants and fireworks, they also conduct cultural shows by

well known cultural groups. This year Raagalaya Academy of Music and Arts was invited to perform at the temple complex on April 15. The leading light of Raagalaya Vijaykumar took his troupe of singers and members of orchestra to Cherukunnu and performed before a record crowd of more than 3,500 people.

Though Raagalaya planned to present only devotional songs, the audience demanded they present songs from films as well. The troupe was compelled to oblige and the audience responded exhilarating.



P V Vijaykumar, Madhu Nambiar, Viswanath, Ashish Abraham and Satish performing at Cherukunnu Temple, Kannur

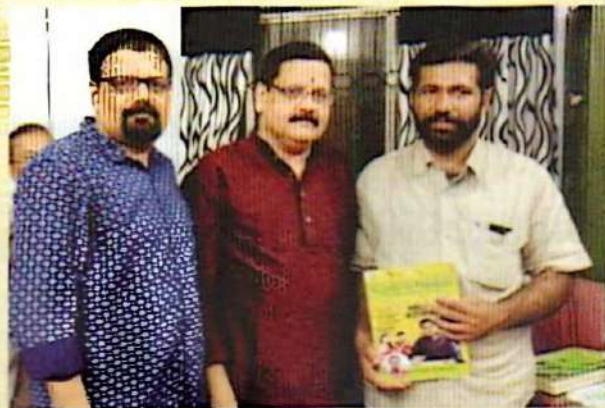
Free Eye Check up Camp

■ A free eye check up and treatment camp was organised by Mulund Nair Welfare Society and Powai Giants International Group at Malanad Education Welfare Association's Vidyaniketan School, Vartak Nagar, Thane. More than 400 students participated. Expert doctors examined their eyes and prescribed medicines and gave away spectacles to the needy. Prakash Padikkal of NSS explained the need of such camp. MES Secretary Adv Prema Menon inaugurated the camp. P Srinivasan Nambiar explained Prime Minister's Swachh Bharat concept and read out the oath to them.

The camp started at 10 am went on upto 4 pm. Society's Vice President Unnikuttan Nair, General Secretary Kuruppath Vijaykumar Nair, C R Unni, C K K Poduval, Muralidharan Nair, Suresh Nair, Sudhish Nair, K Vijayakumar, Adv S Balan and Latha Balachandra Menon provided the necessary leadership to the camp.

MCS Kalakshetram

■ To promote the folk art forms of Kerala, including dances and music, Chikkali Malayali Cultural Society started Kalakshetram. It was inaugurated on April 19 in Srikrishna Temple Maidan in Nigadi.



Vijaykumar and Madhu Nambiar with T V Rajesh MLA

Office bearers of Keraleeya Cultural Society

■ M S Manojkumar (President), C Radhakrishnan (Vice President), Murali K Nair (Gen Secretary), Shiby Varghese (Jt Secretary), Sreekumar P Nair (Treasurer) and O C Alexander (Jt Treasurer) are the new office bearers. Sajan P Chandy, Binoy Mathew and Unnikrishnan Nair are the members of the Committee. Anilkumar Pillai, Ramesh TV and Sajeev Jose Kallunkal are respectively (Gen Convenor), Jt Convenor and Internal Auditor.

Malayali Samskarika Samiti, Trombay

■ Malayali Samskarika Samiti, Trombay elected their new office bearers. They are P Radhakrishnan (President), K P Soman (Vice President), Venu Raghavan (Gen. Secretary), M C Raji, Chandran Raman (Jt Secretary), P K Sadasivan (Treasurer) and K K Sreedharan (Jt Treasurer). A K Achari, Laldev Panicker, T R Sreedharan, Sajin Nair, Shyamala Mohandas, Harilal Viswambaran, Satyaseelan, Kaladhara Menon, Gopalankutty Nair, Saileshkumar and Sheeba Sreedharan are members of the managing committee.

SNDP Nerul East office bearers

■ SNDP Nerul East branch elected their new office bearers. They are V V Udayan (President), K T Prakasan (Vice President) and P K Balakrishnan (Secretary). Committee members are N D Prakash, P K Balan, K P Vijayan, P Karthikeyan, C P Ravindran, K Janardhanan, Girish and A R Sasidharan.

Kerala Catholic Association of Surat

■ Kerala Catholic Association of Surat elected Babu Puthur its President. Other office bearers are Jaison Thomas (Gen Secretary), K J Jose (Vice President), Shaji Antony (Jt Secretary), K M Paul (Treasurer) and M Thomas (Auditor).



Great Dancers - Like Jhelam Paranchepe, Mandakini Trivedi At Gauhati, Shankerdev Utsav - Kalashri Nambisan on Edakka/Maddalam, Rohan on Mrudang

Malayalam Mission in Surat

■ Malayalam Mission started its activities in Surat also with assistance from Surat Kerala Samajam. Samajam President Suresh Babu inaugurated the classes in SMC Community Hall of Rustumpura. General Secretary Rajesh Kodunthirappulli, Babu Puthur, Jeevan Kunnel, K S Nair, Shaji Antony et al spoke on the occasion. Chief Co-ordinator of Malayalam Mission of Gujarat Jayaram Kadambanath and V G Joy addressed the teachers who numbered about 100.

Consecration Festival at Dharma Sastha Temple

■ Sri Dharma Sastha Temple of New Mumbai Ayyappa Mission of Vashi celebrated its consecration from April 19 to 21. On 19th Deeparadhana flagged off the festival. Next day saw nirmalya pooja, Ganapati homam and ushappooja, udayasthamana pooja, kalasa pooja, kalabhabhishekam, uchha pooja, Sri Bhootabali, distribution of prasadam, evening deeparadhana and athazhappooja and pushpabhishekam. April 21 witnessed special pujas for upadevatas, uchha pooja, deeparadhana and athazha pooja.

Vaidyaratnam Seminar at Ahmadabad

■ As part of the Vaidyaratnam platinum jubilee celebrations, a national seminar was held in Hotel Silver Cloud on April 24. The state's minister for health Shankar Chowdhary inaugurated the seminar while Ashtavaidyam E T Neelakandhan Moossad presiding. Member of CAT, Bharatbhushan was the chief guest. Director of Indian Systems of Medicines, Dr K R Desai delivered the keynote address. The theme of seminar was 'Psoriasis and Ayurveda'. Many experts took part in the seminar.

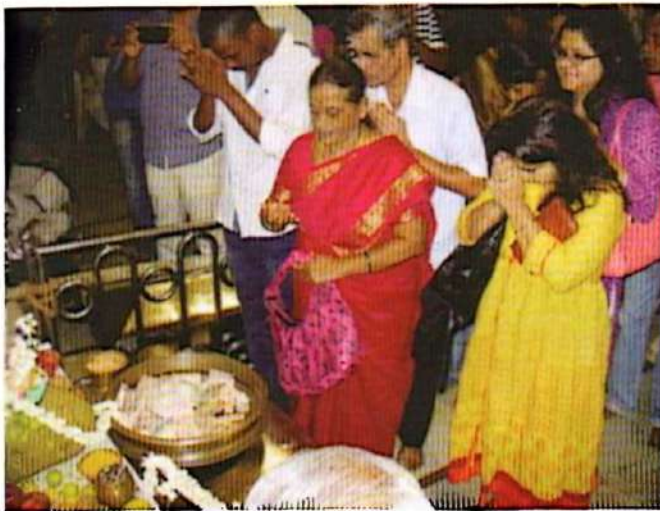
In this second seminar to be held outside Kerala, more than 200 experts would participate.

Balagokulam Vasai unit

■ The Vasai unit of Balagokulam was inaugurated by Sathi Vijaykumar in an event held in BKS School premises. Tapasya Kalavedi president Pratapkumar presided. Secretary Aravindakshan explained the need of Balagokulam.

Chandrasekharji was elected as patron of the unit and Jyoti Mohandas and Divya Raghunath were made Balamitra. All participating children were given Vishu Kaineettam.

Vishu celebrations at the Kochu Guruvayoorappan temple, Matunga



In Mumbai Vishu was celebrated in most temples where the idol of Lord Krishna is kept. At the Kochu Guruvayoorappan temple at Matunga, where Keralites from most part of the city visit, men and females wearing traditional dress came in group to pay respects to Lord Ram..

Magnanimous Dombivli Samajam

■ Dombivli Keraleeya Samajam announced a donation of Rs. one lakh to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund of Kerala to mitigate the sufferings of the victims of the Fireworks tragedy of Puttingal Temple of Paravur.

Mira Road NSS Annual Day

■ Nair Services Society of Mira Road celebrated its Annual Day on April 24 with inauguration of the Nair Samajam Road and Family Get Together. On Vishu Day, there was Kani and Kaineettam at the Office premises.

Office bearers of Kairali

■ New office bearers of Thane Kairali Cultural Association are P Prabhakaran Nair (President), Mohan K Menon,

Ramachandran Nambiar, K Unnikrishnan (Vice Presidents), B Padmanabhan (Gen Secretary), K Balakrishnan and E Ramakrishnan (Jt Secretaries), VPR Nair (Treasurer) and Ajitkumar Vakkat (Jt Treasurer).

Committee members are R Jayakumar, R Ajitkumar, Sajil Nair, Narayanankutty Nambiar, P K Ramesan, K M Suresh, Jinachandran, Sasikumar K Menon and Prakash Nair.



P Prabhakaran Nair (President)



B Padmanabhan (Gen Secretary)



VPR Nair (Treasurer)

Kairali faces closure

■ The Sales Depot of Kerala Handicrafts, currently operating from Vashi, under Kerala Handicrafts Developments Corporation faces closure. It was working at Nariman Point earlier and following the unpaid

rent and its subsequent interest liabilities, was shifted to Kerala House in Vashi. As per the district court order, Kairali is bound to pay Rs.6,47,00,000 towards rent and interest and it sought a stay from high court on the order. Now that the stay was not allowed, it is under threat of permanent closure.



Raagalaya Team

ONV remembered



Section of audience

■ Raagalaya Academy of Music and Arts jointly with Kerala in Mumbai organised a memorial event to honour the recently departed poet ONV Kurup. The venue was the auditorium of Marol Education Academy in Maol on April 10.

There was no long speech or other paraphernalia associated with such functions. The compere Ashish Abraham went through the poet's life while introducing the songs ONV had written for stage plays and films. He quoted several anecdotes from the life of the poet's private and public life to enliven the audience.

P V Vijaykumar, Madhu Nambiar, Viswnathan, Deepa, Shweta, Swati, Shruti Mohan, Shruti Sunil and others rendered the choicest songs written by ONV and composed by varied music directors to the ecstasy of the discerning audience.

Poetry reciting group in Mumbai

■ A group of people spreading poetry through What'sApp arrived in Mumbai. They presented their programme on April 16 at Nerul Samajam and on 17th at Janashakti Dombivli.

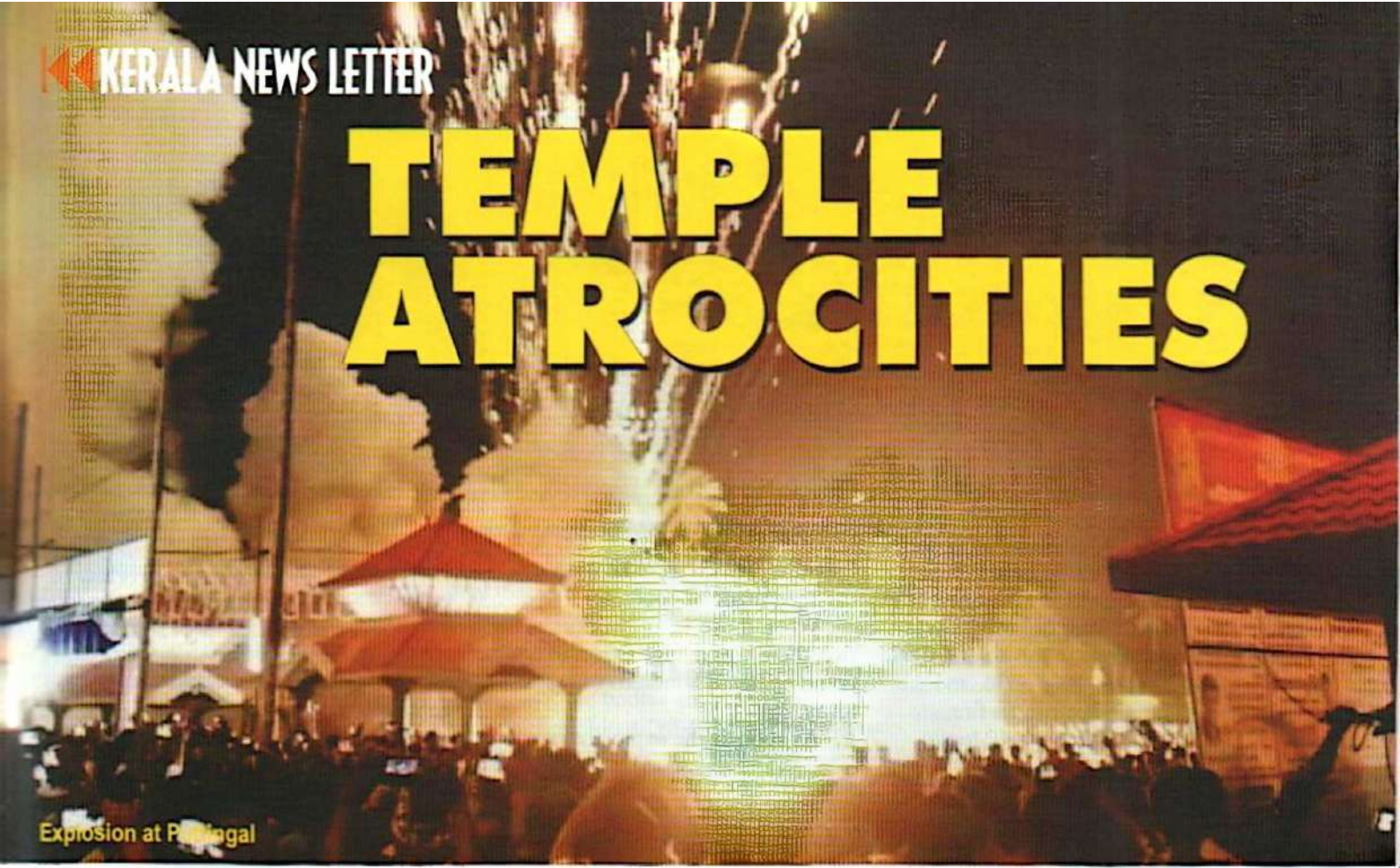
The programme in Nerul was held at 6 pm in New Bombay Keraleeya Samajam and in Dombivli. The programme had components like recitation, discussion, introduction etc.

Malayalam Bhasha Pracharana Sangham Vasai-Virar

■ The Vasai-Virar Zone Meet of Malayalam Bhasha Pracharana Sangham was held on April 9 in Bassein Kerala Samajam School. Writer Manasi inaugurated the meeting. Jayakumar Kalpathi presented a magic show and children presented cultural programmes.

Certificates to the students passed the Malayalam Mission examination were distributed by Smt Manasi during the Meeting.

TEMPLE ATROCITIES



Explosion at Puttingal

AVOIDABLE TRAGEDIES, IF WE HAVE THE DESIRE

India woke up to the terrible tragedy at Puttingal temple in Paravur at Kollam, Kerala, on April 10. A huge fire broke out following an explosion during the fireworks display at the temple in the wee hours of Sunday. At least 110 people have been declared dead so far, and several hundreds have been admitted to hospitals in Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram.

It has been established beyond doubt that the temple authorities did not have the required permission to conduct the fireworks display. Every year, during Meenabharani celebrations, the Puttingal Temple in Paravur provides a visual treat for the devotees: a massive fireworks display. This is an old tradition. Thousands of people assemble at the temple grounds to witness the spectacle.

A shot of the fireworks held in Puttingal this year is shown here. Here's how the fireworks look, this is how

huge they are.

But it is not just a fireworks display, it is also a competition. Judges would witness the fireworks and declare a winner each year.

At the temple, every year, there is a fireworks face-off. Two sets of people form groups and try to outdo each other



Before explosion at Puttingal

in the fireworks. The competition is to see whose fireworks are more grand, the explosions louder and the sights

magnificent. On that day there were more than 700 high intensity and 50,000 low intensity local made crackers stored in the store in the vicinity (Kambappura)

According to sources in Kollam, till Saturday afternoon, there was no clarity over whether the fireworks competition will happen since permission had been denied.

And then word spread that the event will go on, but not a competition. According to a local resident, "The fireworks started around 11 50PM on Saturday, but there was no competition."

The Superintendent of Police, Kollam told the media that despite the ADM's refusal, the temple committee informed the police that they had sought "oral permission". The SP said that the festival went on in spite of the police asking them not to. The Kerala government has promised an investigation to determine the cause of the incident.

Sometime between 3AM and 3

of fireworks to be used, there was a high possibility that the temple could end up using much more than the stipulated amount. The SP also notes that there was a high possibility of a fire tragedy.

Both the Assistant Divisional Fire Officer, and the Environment Engineer of the area say that the festival could go on as long as certain conditions were strictly met.

Paravoor sub inspector's report notes that in future, the event should be shifted to a place with less people. But taking into account all these reports, the ADM decided to not give permission for the fireworks.

Chathanur MLA GS Jayalal has said: "From what I know, written permission was taken by temple authorities to make sure that the festival is done within certain stipulations. But it does not look like it happened."

Prakash, a resident said: "We have been suffering for three years as our houses would get damaged. Around eight to 10 of us got together and gave a complaint to the Collector. The authorities helped us and tried to intervene. I think someone exerted pressure and allowed the festival to go on."

At Hospital

Around 84 people are feared dead and over 300 injured after a huge fire broke out at Puttingal temple at Paravur in Kollam District, Kerala early next day.

The injured have been rushed to Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam government hospitals. Eighty of them have been rushed to the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College Hospital. Most number of injured have been taken to the Kollam district hospital

"This is traumatic. Many relatives have rushed. The bodies are so badly burnt that it is difficult to identify if it's a man or woman," said a staff member at the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College.

The bodies are badly charred, and some of the bodies are yet to be identified. Identifying the bodies will be a tough challenge and one body was wrongly handed over to another family.

Political exploitation

Considering the approaching assembly polls, all the political leaders found a golden opportunity to endear them to the voters without wasting seconds and rushed there. Prime

Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Rajnath Singh rushed by special planes and Rahul Gandhi soon followed suit. Kerala CM Oommen Chandy and Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala were not left behind.

CM Chandy declared Rs.10 lakhs to the next of kin of the dead and Rs. 50,000 to the injured, besides the entire medical treatment free of cost. Narendra Mody declared Rs.2 lakh each for the kin of the dead and Amrutanandamayi Mutt Rs.1 lakh each besides free treatment in their hospital.

The doctors attending the victims registered their protests against the visit of VIPs immediately after the tragedy and their presence created an impediment in the treatment. The District Collector of Kollam who denied permission for the fireworks and the DGP of the state got engaged in a verbal duel blaming each other for failure in their duties.

Some temples in the state soon cancelled their fireworks for festival in view of the tragedy but Thrissur Pooram was conducted as usual despite initial adverse reports.

Come what may, Kerala will move forward despite natural or manmade tragedies as we cannot forsake our pleasures. ■

Growth for death?

The state of Kerala is known for literacy, medical infrastructure, social development, greenery (not granary) etc. Now it can add a few more characteristics such as killer diseases like cancer, heart ailments, obesity, diabetes, liver ailments etc. to the list. God's own country is also a favourite of God Yama's country. Last month Kerala drew attention of the world as the land of fortune as a youth from Kolkota turned a multimillionaire the day he landed in the state. When he reached Kerala seeking fortune did not expect that he would be embraced by the goddess of Fortune so fast.

During the last few decades, Kerala has seen a rapid growth of medical facilities across the state. Despite several hospitals attached to government medical colleges as well as non-attached to any, the private enterprises also contributed to this growth. Multi-speciality hospitals have become the new norm. Yet the state is seeing more deaths than before but with a difference. It is not age related but disease related.



About 2,50,000 people in the state are cancer patients and every year about 42,000 people are added to this list. This data is based on the cancer registry of Regional Cancer Centre, TVM. As it is, this number is most likely to be on the lower side as there are several cancer specialist hospitals as well as general hospitals whose data are not accessible. While lung cancer and oral cancer are prominent among men, the breast cancer is on the increase among women. Since the people of Kerala are aware of the impact of diabetes on heart ailments, they are taking precautions but despite that it is on the rise. Kidney ailments take longer time

to get detected and as such transplants are on the rise. Kerala sees every year 3,500 new kidney patients. Naturally this leads to a thriving illegal kidney market. According to WHO, 10% of the people worldwide get affected by kidney ailments, in Kerala it is much more due to infection and congenital problems.

The last decade witnesses a mushrooming of speciality hospitals all over the state and this enabled early detection of the cases.

Rising affluence, change in life style, new food habits and dislike for physical labour, pesticide residue in vegetables, high liquor consumption et al contribute to this gradual rise in diseases.

One positive aspect is that people these days gradually move towards organic vegetables to avoid pesticide residues.

According to experts, there is need to set up modern diagnostic equipments in every district headquarters to detect these killer diseases early. There are also move to introduce mobile units to detect the breast cancer among women. This van will be a Volvo bus with mammogram unit, scanning machine, testing centre, changing room etc. There will be one doctor and two nurses to help the patients. ■



Injured Elephant for temple procession

All respects after death

Majestic look is a sin

The most majestic looking animal in the world, elephant, has long before realised that looking good and majestic are not conducive for a peaceful living. Even the Supreme Court of India cannot save them, they recently found out.

India has approximately 3,500 captive elephants of which a large majority, around 2,500, are owned by private individuals, followed by the forest department, temples, circuses, and zoos. Among the states, Kerala has maximum number of captive elephants, over 700, with tuskers accounting for 80% of them.

The highly intelligent social animals which in the wild spend approximately 18 hours a day walking, feeding, bathing in waterholes, and interacting with other elephants in close-knit family groups, are in captivity sentenced to a lifetime of confinement, loneliness and abuse.

The rampant abuse of elephants and other circus animals is in violation of many acts: Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960; the Performing Animals (Registration) Rules, 2001; The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; Recognition of Zoo Rules, 2009; and other guidelines. The Section in question pertains to prevention of cruelty to captive elephants. The most

important rule of the Section is that elephants in musth should not be used for any function.

The Section also says that heavy chains with spikes or sharp edges should not be used for tethering elephants. Bursting of crackers near the elephants or making the animals stand for long durations in the sun will not be permitted. It should also be ensured that sufficient food and water are provided to

the book. Now you see how they are treated.

In a public interest litigation, Heritage Animal Task Force Secretary V K Venkatachalam stated that "All these violations took place with direct support of Kerala government." The letter alleged that the organisers of the Pooram had also paraded 74 elephants for 36 hours on April 17 and 18 as part of the festival, who had wounds all over their bodies due to torture for compelling the jumbo to stand and walk. These elephants had no opportunity to drink water or take food for 36 hours, it said.

"This type of organised crime against elephants was a violation of Supreme Court August 18, 2015 order which specifically authorise the Kerala Forest Department to arrest all the persons who are party to torture any elephant as part of any elephant parade," the letter said. The order also specifically authorises the department to seize all the elephants, being

paraded without any valid ownership certificate duly issued by Kerala Chief Wildlife Warden.

All the 74 elephants do not have any valid ownership certificate, the letter said, adding, that the three-layered structure of the western 'gopuram' (tower) of Vadakkumnathan Temple, in front of which Pooram was performed, was also destroyed in the event. ■



Precarious transportation of elephant on busy road

elephants that are made to participate in functions.

The circular says that if cruelties to captive elephants are detected, in addition to criminal prosecution proceedings against persons concerned, action such as confiscation of the elephants should be initiated. The maintenance of such confiscated elephants will be at the cost of the owner.

The rules and rulings are firmly in



Cruel taming of musth elephant



Elephant attacks mahout



Parting gift leaves bitter taste

Centuries ago, a boy was punished by his teacher for not doing his studies properly and this act gravely hurt the boy's mind. He decided to avenge this insult by killing the teacher. He stealthily entered the bedroom of the teacher and hid himself under the cot. At night the teacher's wife asked her husband why did he do that to the boy. The teacher told her that he loved the boy more than anyone else and he had a bright future if guided properly. The boy felt very bad about his intentions and came out from down under and sought his pardon. The teacher certainly got surprised and pardoned him. The boy was not satisfied with the pardon and wanted the most suitable punishment that could be meted out for thinking of

killing of one's teacher. Teacher reassured the boy that he was pardoned and hence there was no need of undergoing punishment. On persuasion, the teacher revealed the punishment as burning oneself to death by sitting inside a heap of chaff, the slowest death ever possible. The student prepared a heap of chaff so as to cover his body and submitted himself to death. During that he recited a poem in praise of his teacher but before completing it, the death swallowed him. It was said poet Kalidasa considered that student, named Kumara, a much better poet himself.

On March 31, a principal of a well known college in Kerala entered her campus and noticed a tomb newly made with all paraphernalia needed, including a wreath (A death note was also placed next to

it) to make the heap of mud a grave and enquired a boy near the tomb what



it was. The boy named Akhil replied that it was the tomb built for the principal herself on her last day as a teacher and Principal of the College. He sought her permission to demolish it as he could not look at it without being hurt. She refused permission and as soon as she entered her office called the local police. However, by the time the police arrived at the scene, the tomb was not there as Akhil demolished it.

The college was the oldest one of Malabar, Government Victoria College,

Palakkad that completed 127 years of existence. The principal was Dr T N Sarasu M Sc., Ph D., M A., DOA who taught in the college for 27 years and was its Principal for the last eight and a half months. The saddest part was, that day was her last day as a teacher and principal. She felt sad about the gift she received for trying her best to serve the

institution and its students.

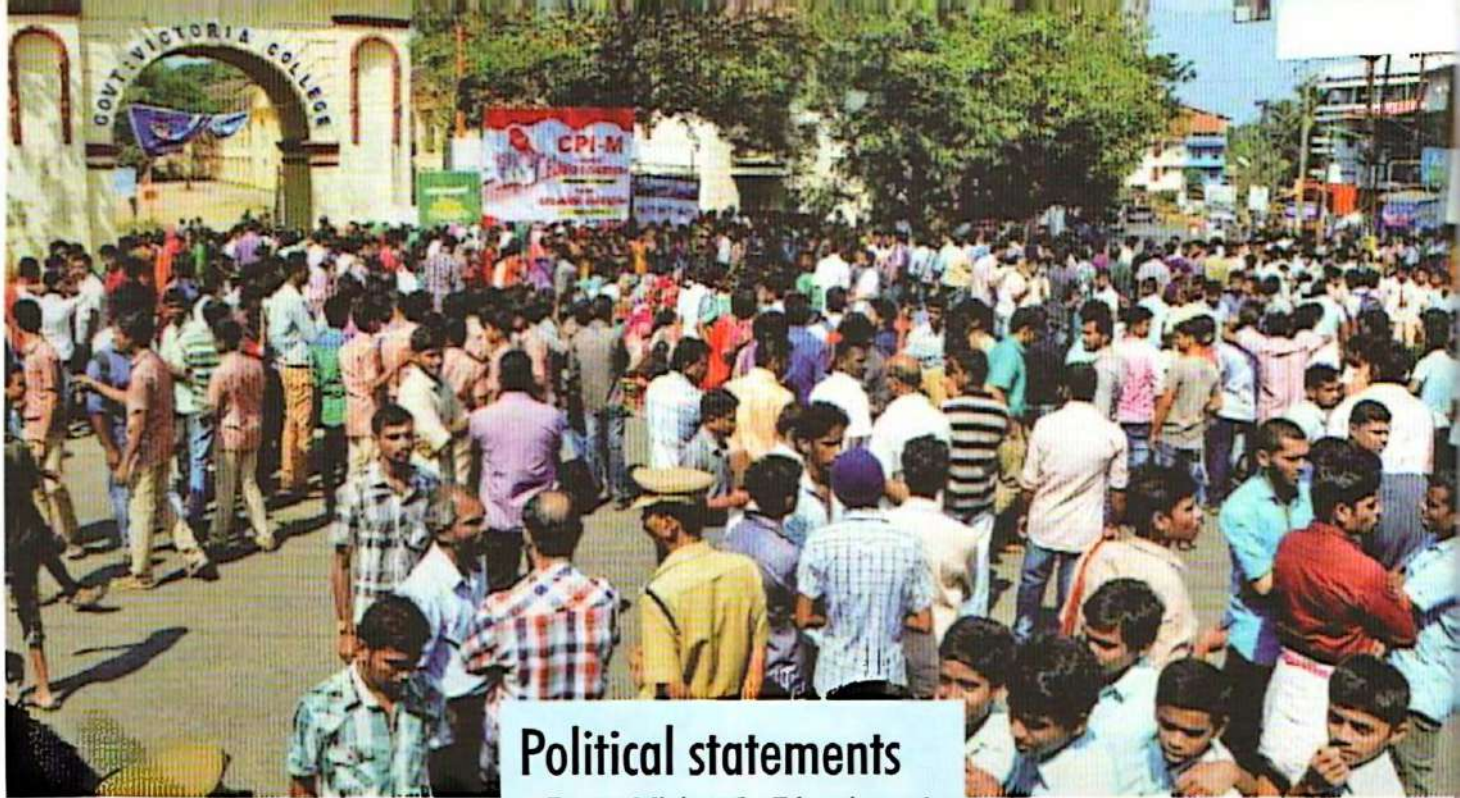
Days later, the issue has blown up into a controversy, with fingers being pointed and a case registered against those believed to be responsible.

According to Dr Sarasu, it was a Left-leaning teachers' organisation which was behind the insult. "They were not happy with the good developments I brought to the college. So they considered my retirement day as the day of my death and made a grave for me. I am sure that teachers belonging to Left organisations made some SFI students to do it. There is no doubt in it."

She stated that earlier she was also a member of the left oriented union but left it subsequently as she felt it did not stand for the cause of education. She stressed that her husband was still a member of the same union.

Sarasu has lodged a complaint with the police. "I will take legal action against this," she said. She stated that one of the students also burst crackers at 5 pm to mark her departure.

Sarasu said that a large number of restrictions had been imposed by the government in colleges in the aftermath of the accident at the College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram. She was strictly implementing those restrictions and this was not liked by some of the teachers and students



Political statements

■ Former Minister for Education and present CPI(M) Polit Bureau member MA Baby said that the 'grave' created by the students for their college principal, was not a grave at all.

Two days after the Palakkad police arrested 5 SFI activists for digging up a grave for the retiring Principal, Baby has said that he did not consider the grave as a grave. Rather, it was an art installation, he said.

Baby also alleged that the principal's attitude towards students was strange and said there should be an enquiry on how she behaved.

Not to lag behind, other parties also came out with counter allegations. Old Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader and present State BJP President Kummanam Rajasekharan called the act as barbaric and inhuman.

Union minister Rudrapratap Rudy, who was in Kerala in connection with the state assembly elections, rushed to Palakkad and conveyed his anger at this dastardly act to Principal Sarasu.

Some other political parties found out in the meanwhile that Principal Sarasu belonged to a depressed class and wanted CPI (M) to retrospect their act and apologise. The State Women Rights Commission has taken a suo motto case against the act and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

procession condemning the act.

Government Victoria College is considered very prestigious. It is the almatmater of several illustrious Keralites such as E M S Namboothiripad, T N Seshan, O V Vijayan, M T Vasudevan Nair, novelist C Radhakrishnan, Metroman E Sreedharan et al. Several highly respected teachers had taught there. Among them were Prof S Guptan Nair, Prof C P K Tharakan, Dr M Leelavathy, Prof A Balakrishnan Warriar, spiritual leader Prof G Balakrishnan Nair, Prof Pammana Ramachandran Nair, Prof V P Kannan Nair, Dr M Achuthan, novelist Prof K P Sasidharan et al.

Till the seventies, the teachers and the students strenuously kept all political parties out of the campus and never allowed any college election to be held under the influence of politically active student leaders.

Now the atmosphere has thoroughly changed. There is a fatal grip of the left oriented parties in the college campus. A few years ago, a principal told Kerala in Mumbai that he was desperate to leave Palakkad for any other government college as the staff and students did not allow any apolitical activities to be held in the college. Because of the politicisation, all affluent and affordable students are moving to other prominent private colleges in Thrissur, Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram,

Kozhikode etc and academic pride is gradually coming down.

Soon after the incidence became of public knowledge, people rushed there and many old students and concerned elders expressed their disapproval. ■

belonging to the left parties.

"I had been their Principal and had not given in to their unjust demands which could have angered them," Sarasu stated. "I have done my work truthfully. A lot of good work was done during my period," she said, adding, she had worked in the college as Zoology professor for 27 years before taking over as Principal this academic year."

Principal Sarasu has no children of her own and so she considered all students as her own. She was an NCC officer and has done a lot of service activities for the students and also for the local people. She encouraged cadets to grow trees and plants in the college campus so that the college would be surrounded by greenery. She enthused the cadets and other students to donate blood for the needy and conducted several blood donation camps in the campus. Any time the hospitals in Palakkad needed blood, they always rushed to the college. She helped several students financially from her own pockets to ease their financial strain. One old student recalled how she borne all expenditure for his surgery in the hospital and stated that he was alive today only because of her.

Some of the lecturers have supported Sarasu, even staging a



An Unwanted Son

-Ramachandran

My son Devan was insisting on my shifting with him when he bought a new flat. I was determined not to move with him. This flat where I was living for the last forty five years was the only flat I bought with my hard earned money. As soon as my marriage to Revathi was fixed, I was worried where I would bring her to. To own a flat was a prestigious matter for everyone in the megacity. The money one earned those days was just enough to sustain and there was no excess amount to save for the rainy day.

Ramadas was my close friend in the office and we used to share our joy and sorrow with each other. When I opened my heart to him, he advised me to go for a small flat and offered me Rs.2000 from his savings to make the initial payment. He was of the opinion that a small flat was indeed a better option than a leased one and housing loan was available from State Housing Finance Corporation. Finally I heeded to his benevolent counsel.

Revathi was shocked to find such a small dwelling unit. In her house, the kitchen itself was bigger than our one room kitchen flat. Her apprehension was where we would accommodate when people from her or my family come on visit. I consoled her saying that seeing the size of our home, none of them would ever think of staying for long.

Devan was brought up in this flat. He was a bright boy and was very practical in life. He was in his final year in college when Revathi left us two years ago, surrendering to Cancer. With his brilliant marks and dominating personality, it was easy for him to land in a good private company. He completed his Master's degree in management sciences and changed his employer often with much bigger compensation than that I could ever dream of.

He is only twenty six and has already bought his first flat having three bedrooms and other paraphernalia. It was on the twelfth

floor and had wonderful mind blowing sights on all three sides; Arabian Sea on one side, greenery on the opposite side and a good shopping complex on the third. I was happy to see his new acquisition but was content to stay in my humble abode where we three had a memorable life. When I insisted on continue staying in mine, he stayed with me, keeping his proud possession under lock and key.

Now his marriage is fixed with Rohini, daughter of a well off businessman K N Menon and soon he is needed to shift.

When we went to Menon's duplex flat, he asked me when we were shifting. I told him that Devan could shift anytime he wanted. To my surprise, Devan then intervened, "No, I am not shifting. We would stay where my dad stay."

Menon sent me a glance inquisitively.

I kept my silence.

"I cannot leave my dad alone. We will stay where he is."

I had no way to escape. Slowly I replied, "Of course I shall move with him when he wants me to."

An air of relief spread in the room.

Menon asked his next question. "Is your flat well furnished?"

"No, it is empty. Let Rohini decide what she wanted. She can furnish according to her taste."

The matter is well settled.

Now I am going through my proud possessions, things I wanted to take with me to the new home. When I was going through my old steel trunk, an old magazine caught my attention. It was a copy of my old school magazine containing my first literary creation, a poem.

I took it in my hands and perused through its pages. My eyes were stopped on a page in which a poem written by my favourite teacher, Malathi Teacher, appeared. I always remembered a couple of lines of that poem:

"In the dreams of an unknown couple

Bloomed that little beautiful boy."

That poem had created a storm in the school and in the household of Malathi Teacher. Her elder sister Parvathi Teacher who also taught in the same school accused her of clandestinely publishing such poem behind her back. Both the teachers were unmarried and they had only one younger brother who was brought up by the teachers.

Their quarrel soon found its reflections in their mutual conduct in the Teacher's Room. Other teachers looked amusingly among themselves. Some elder school mates thought I knew something about it as my house was close to their residence and our families were known to each other. However, as a child of thirteen years, I knew nothing about the household affairs of these teachers.

After a couple of months of the release of the magazine, its echo reached my house also. One day I overheard my mother talking to one of her friends during their usual afternoon chat, "Whatever it may be, Malathi should not have written it in the school magazine."

I went before them and asked mother what was the problem.

Mother admonished me saying, "What business you have when we elders talk. Go away."

I explained to her, "Many students asked me about it but I could not find anything wrong with it."

"Small children need no know all these issues. You go away," sternly she said.

This strange statement made me more inquisitive and I was determined to find out. Very soon I got the explanation that I sought.

Last year the entire school was abuzz with news that Parvathi Teacher adopted a child from an orphanage. What was wrong with that? Nothing, except that orphanage was far away whereas another orphanage was close by. If it was a matter of adoption, why not from the neighbourly orphanage? People knowing the teachers' family

were asking that question.

Prior to the adoption, Parvathi Teacher was on medical leave for four months. She was complaining about some stomach ailment and went to a distant city for treatment and not to the neighbourly medical college hospital. The orphanage in question was also from that city. During her treatment, Malathi Teacher never went to see her sister and colleague. It was their eldest sister, an unemployed spinster, who accompanied Parvathi Teacher.

Much earlier than the expiry of the medical leave, Parvathi Teacher returned but after a few days she went back to that city and came back with an adopted son, who was only a few days old. People added two plus two and came out with the solution: the adopted child was her own son, outside the marriage. The rumours were strengthened when a very handsome sportsman who used to play badminton in a court adjacent to the teachers' house, disappeared from the scene.

Vinod the adopted child was a lovable boy and everyone who saw him adored him. When he was enrolled in the neighbourhood school, he wore the most expensive clothes which no other kid could aspire. Malathi Teacher's poem was about this boy.

After passing my SSLC, I joined College in a distant place where my elderly relatives studied earlier. During those days, I found Malathi Teacher was pursuing a degree so that she could teach in higher classes. She herself told me this when we accidentally met in railway station. Being neighbours we travelled together to our town and during the journey we discussed several issues about my education. She said soon she would go for higher educational degree as she was having only a diploma in teaching.

For the next two years we never met or I did not have any news about them.

When I was in my final year, I happened to see a wedding photograph of Malathi Teacher in one of the leading Malayalam weeklies that used to feature a wedding column. She was married to a colleague who was undergoing a B Ed course along with her in the same training college. We all wished her well.

Parvathi Teacher remained

unmarried.

Not much later, I came to know that Divakaran Master, Malathi Teacher's husband, was already married and had a daughter. He divorced his wife to marry Malathi Teacher but was looking after his daughter's educational expenses.

Soon there was another bomb exploding.

Parvathi Teacher had another stomach ailment and history repeated. Parvathi Teacher adopted another son from the same orphanage.

The volcano erupted again but not through another poem. Malathi Teacher moved from her house and sought transfer to a distant school and forced her husband to follow suit. There were also rumours that Divakaran Master sought divorce from her but she refused to comply with his demand.

It was rumoured that he wanted divorce to marry Parvathi Teacher as Malathi Teacher was barren.

Soon the inseparable sisters were moved away from each other. To meet the demand of Divakaran Master to have a child, Malathi Teacher adopted a girl child from the neighbourhood orphanage.

After being away from my native place for several years, I finally settled down in Mumbai. When I visited my place later, I came to know that Parvathi Teacher died of cancer of uterus. She never acknowledged Vinod as her own child but she was compelled to acknowledge Praveen as her own child. She also made it official that Praveen was her son from Divakaran Master. This information was given to me by Joseph Master who taught us science in standards IX and X. He later became District Education Officer. Towards her end once Parvathi Teacher requested him to call on her and at the meeting requested him to help make officially Praveen her own son and named him as her heir to inherit her properties after her death as well as to receive all her dues from the government if she died before retirement.

After a thought, Joseph Master hesitatingly stated that it was wrong on her part to disinherit Vinod wholly. She did not provide for his higher education when he passed SSLC with a first class. She was exhibiting a kind of animosity towards him, probably

because his real father never visited her nor enquired about him whereas Divakaran Master was providing financially for Praveen's education and other expenses, not that she needed it, without the explicit knowledge of his legally married wife.

Heartbroken with the neglect by his biological mother and not acknowledging him as her child unlike in the case of Praveen, Vinod joined Indian Navy.

Once surprisingly, Vinod came to my residence to pay a visit. My younger brother provided him with my address. He had lunch with us and he opened his heart before me.

During our talk he said he used to send money to Parvathi Teacher. Though she received it, she never wrote to him. She never expressed her desire to see him even once. This pained him to no end. He was telling me that after Praveen came to their life, he never received any affectionate gestures from her and he was having a mechanical life. Often he had to ask her for new clothes as he outgrew them or they were torn. Of course she provided them to him but never expressed any concern. All teachers in the school were very sympathetic to him but they were helpless to do anything about his condition.

While leaving he said, "I still do not understand why she brought me from the orphanage. I would have got a little more love and affection there. Probably I am an unwanted man in this world."

When I asked him if he did receive any support from Malathi Teacher, he said that she was more concerned about him. Whenever he was seen talking to his aunt, he was admonished at home.

Afterwards I never met him nor heard about him.

The last time I heard about Praveen, I was informed that he sold the house he inherited and left the place. Now nobody seems to have any information about him.

"What are you thinking holding a very old magazine in hand?" I woke up when Devan asked.

"Nothing. I just lost myself in my younger days." I told him.

All these old books and magazines are not useful to me anymore. They would only disturb my peace. I threw them into the basket to be discarded later and got up. ■

കുന്നംകുളം



കെ ആർ നാരായണൻ

ഈയടുത്ത കാലത്താണ് ഞങ്ങളുടെ തൃശ്ശൂർ ജില്ലയിൽ സാൽപ്പം വടക്കായി, തലപ്പിള്ളി താലൂക്കുമായി അടുത്തു കിടക്കുന്ന കുന്നം കുളം എന്ന പട്ടണത്തെ കുറിച്ച് ആലോചിച്ചു തുടങ്ങിയത്. അവിടത്തുകാരനായ ഒരു സുഹൃത്തിന്റെ നോട്ടാൾജിക്ക് ആയ ഒരു ലേഖനമായിരുന്നു കാരണം. മറ്റൊരു കുന്നം കുളത്തുകാരൻ ചങ്ങാതിയും ഇടയ്ക്കും

തലയ്ക്കുമായി ഈ സ്ഥലത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ചിന്തകളെ തട്ടിയുണർത്തുക പതിവാണ്. ഇവരെല്ലാം പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ അച്ചടിക്കുന്നവരും ബൈൻഡ് ചെയ്യുന്നവരും ആയിരുന്ന അക്കാലത്തെ കുന്നംകുളത്തെ അനവധി കൃസ്ത്യാനി കച്ചവടക്കാരെ ഓർമ്മയിൽ കൊണ്ടുവരാറുണ്ട്. പഴയ കാലത്തെ ചില പുസ്തക കച്ചവടക്കാർ ഉണ്ട്, ഇട്ടുപ്പ്, ചുമ്മാർ, വാറു തുടങ്ങിയ പേരുള്ളവർ. അവർ ഇന്നും എന്റെ മനസ്സിൽ തങ്ങിനിൽക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

സ്കൂളിൽ ഒന്നാംക്ലാസ്സിൽ ചേർന്നപ്പോൾ, ചക്കാലമ്പൻ ലോനപ്പേട്ടൻ എന്ന, ഞങ്ങളുടെ മുത്തച്ഛന്റെ പ്രായം വരുന്ന, പുസ്തക കച്ചവടക്കാരൻ നടത്തിയിരുന്ന നാട്ടിലെ ഏക പുസ്തക-സ്റ്റേഷനറി കടയിൽ വച്ചായിരുന്നു കുന്നംകുളത്തെ കുറിച്ച് ആദ്യമായി കേൾക്കുന്നത്. “മ്മടെ കൊച്ചിരാജ്യത്തിന് വേണ്ട പുസ്തകകൊക്കെ വരണത് കുന്നം കൊളത്തിനാ, റ്റേൻ സാമിക്കുട്ടേ?” എന്ന ലോനപ്പേട്ടന്റെ വാക്കുകൾ ഇന്നും എന്റെ ഓർമ്മയിലുണ്ട്.

കുട്ടത്തിൽ, ഒരു സംഗതിയുംകൂടി പറഞ്ഞു ലോനപ്പേട്ടൻ. “ങ്ങടെ അപ്പാപ്പൻ കേ ജീ മാഷോട് ചോയിക്ക്, അപ്പോ അറിയാം കുന്നംകൊളത്തെ വിശേഷ ങ്ങൾ!”

പല തവണയായി ഒരുപാട് കാലം കുന്നംകുളത്ത് പഠിപ്പിച്ചിരുന്ന മുത്തച്ഛന്റെ ഒരു അനിയൻ, നാട്ടിലും പുറത്തും ‘കേ ജീ മാഷ്’ എന്നറിയപ്പെട്ടിരുന്ന കേ ജീ നാരായണയ്യർ ആയിരുന്നു കുന്നംകുളത്തിന്റെ ചില ചരിത്രങ്ങളും കഥകളും മറ്റും പറഞ്ഞുതന്നിരുന്നത്. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിൽ കൊച്ചിരാജ്യത്ത ഏറ്റവും എന്റർപ്രൈസിങ്ങ് ജനങ്ങളാണത്രെ കുന്നംകുളത്തെ കൃസ്ത്യാനികൾ. അദ്ദേഹം പഠിപ്പിച്ച, അദ്ദേഹം അറിയുന്ന, ധാരാളം കുന്നംകുളത്തുകാർ അദ്ദേഹത്തെ പതിവായി കാണാൻ വരാറുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹം പറഞ്ഞാണറി യുന്നത്, ഞങ്ങളുടെ പഴയ കൊച്ചിരാജ്യത്തിലെ സ്കൂളുകളുടെ ടെക്സ്റ്റ്പുസ്തകങ്ങളും, നൂറും നൂറ്റമ്പതും ഇരുന്നൂറും നാനൂറും പേജുകൾ ഉള്ള നോട്ടുപുസ്തകങ്ങളും (എക്സർസൈസ് ബുക്ക് എന്നാണ് ഇതിന്റെ മറ്റൊരു പേര്), മാത്രമല്ല, വസ്തുവഹകളുടെ വരവുചെയ്യുകയോ കളയും, നാൾവഴികളും മറ്റും എഴുതാനായി പല കുടുംബക്കാരും ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരുന്ന പച്ച, ചുക്കപ്പനിറങ്ങളിൽ കുറുകെയും നെടുങ്കെയും വരകൾ ഉള്ള പേജുകൾ നിറഞ്ഞ, നല്ല കനത്തിൽ ബൈൻഡു ചെയ്ത, നീളൻ കണക്കുപുസ്തകങ്ങളും, ലെഡ്ജറുകളും എല്ലാം അക്കാലത്ത് വന്നിരുന്നത് കുന്നംകുളത്തു നിന്നായിരുന്നു എന്ന വിവരം.

കൃസ്ത്യാനികൾ കൊടികുത്തി വാണിരുന്ന കുന്നംകുളത്ത്, എന്നും രാവിലെതന്നെ അമ്പലക്കുളത്തിൽ കുളിച്ച്, തൊഴുത്,

പ്രസാദവുമായി മുണ്ടും, മേൽമുണ്ടും, പുണുലും ധരിച്ച് കേ ജീ മാഷ് നാട്ടുകാരോട് കുശലവും പറഞ്ഞ് നടന്നു വരുന്ന കാഴ്ച കാണാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ശിഷ്യഗണങ്ങളും അവരുടെ കുടുംബക്കാരും കാത്തിരിക്കാറുണ്ടെന്ന കഥ പറഞ്ഞത് അവിടത്തെ ഒരു പഴയ കൃസ്ത്യാൻ മാഷായിരുന്നു.

ആയിടയ്ക്കാണ് വെളുത്തു കൊഴുത്ത ഫ്രാൻസിസ് എന്ന കുന്നംകുളത്തുകാരൻ മാഷ് ഞങ്ങളുടെ സ്കൂളിൽ ട്രാൻസ്ഫർ ആയി വരുന്നത്. ധാരാളം ബിബ്ലിക്കൽ കഥ പറഞ്ഞിരുന്ന മാഷ് ഒരു സുന്ദരനായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും, അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ കുന്നംകുളം ഭാഷ ഞങ്ങളുടെ ഇരിഞ്ഞാലക്കുട ഭാഷയെക്കാൾ കുഴപ്പം പിടിച്ചതായിരുന്നു. എങ്കിലും “ഞങ്ങളുടേതുകാർ...” എന്നു തുടങ്ങുന്ന മാഷിന്റെ കഥകൾ കേൾക്കാൻ എന്നും ഇഷ്ടമായിരുന്നു ഞങ്ങൾക്ക്. തോമാശ്ലീഹ കാണിച്ച അത്ഭുതങ്ങളും, പാലയൂരിൽ പള്ളി സ്ഥാപിച്ചതും, കുളത്തിൽ കുളിച്ചിരുന്ന ബ്രാഹ്മണരെ ജ്ഞാനസ്നാനം കഴിപ്പിച്ച് കൃസ്ത്യാനികൾ ആക്കിയതുമായ എത്രയത്ര കഥകളാണ് മാഷ് പറയാറുള്ളത്! കഥകളുടെയെല്ലാം അവസാനം മാഷ് അഭിമാനത്തോടെ പറയുന്ന ഒരു വാചകം ഉണ്ട്: “ഞങ്ങളുടേതുകാർക്കും പട്ടന്മാരും, ട്രോ... തോമാശ്ലീഹാ പറഞ്ഞപ്പോ പുണുലാ അഴിച്ചു, കൊന്തയാ ഇട്ടു... അത്രേള്ളു സംഗതി!!”

ഉത്തര-പശ്ചിമ തീരത്തെ ഒരു തുറമുഖത്ത് ജോലിയിൽ ചേർന്നപ്പോളായിരുന്നു കുന്നംകുളം ജീവിതത്തിൽ വീണ്ടും കടന്നുവന്നത്, എ വി തോമസ് എന്ന തോമാച്ചന്റെ രൂപത്തിൽ. ഒബ്സർവേറ്ററിയിലെ ഉയർന്ന ഒരു ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥനായിരുന്നു ഈ പാവം നാടൻ കൃസ്ത്യാനി.

പത്തൊമ്പതു വയസ്സുകാരനായ എന്റെ, ഒരുതരത്തിൽ പറഞ്ഞാൽ, ഗാർഡിയനും / കാരണവരും, ചപ്പാത്തിയും കറിയും മുടങ്ങാതെ ഉണ്ടാക്കിത്തന്നിരുന്ന അന്നദാതാവും കൂടി ആയിരുന്നു തോമാച്ചൻ. ഉറങ്ങുന്നതിനു മുമ്പുള്ള, തോമാച്ചന്റെ പഴയനിയമത്തിലേയും പുതിയ നിയമത്തിലേയും സംഭവങ്ങളെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയുള്ള കൊച്ചുകൊച്ചു കഥകളും കേട്ടായിരുന്നു അന്നെല്ലാം ഉറങ്ങാറുള്ളത്.



VKN

കുന്നംകുളത്തെ പുസ്തക കച്ചവടക്കാരും, അവരുടെ ഭാഷയും, ജീവിതരീതികളും, കച്ചവടതന്ത്രങ്ങളും എല്ലാം അവരുടെ അടുത്ത നാട്ടുകാരനായ തിരുവിലാമലക്കാരൻ വടക്കെ കുട്ടാലെ നാരായണൻകുട്ടി നായരെ (വി കെ എൻ) ഒരുപാട് ആകർഷിച്ചിരുന്നു എന്നു പറയുന്നതിൽ തെറ്റില്ലെന്ന് തോന്നാറുണ്ട്. അതാണല്ലോ ഈ അഭിനവകുഞ്ചന്റെ പ്രോട്ടഗോണിസ്റ്റുകളിൽ പ്രമുഖനായ ഇട്ടുപ്പ് മുതലാളിക്ക് പയ്യൻസിന്റെ ജീവിതത്തിൽ ഇത്രയധികം സാധിനമുണ്ടായത്. ഇംഗ്ലീഷുഭാഷ തൊട്ടുകുളിച്ചിട്ടില്ലാത്ത, ഇട്ടുപ്പിന്റെ “യൂ തീഫ്.. ഐ.. തീഫ്... ഓൾ തീഫ്! സ്കൂൾ ഓപ്പനിംങ് ഗുഡ് സീസൺ, സെൽബുക്ക്, മെയ്ക്ക് മണി, കണ്ടക്റ്റ് ആൻഡ് എൻജോയ്,” തുടങ്ങിയ കച്ചവടസൂക്തങ്ങളെ ഈ പരിഹാസ സാഹിത്യകാരൻ അനശ്ചരമാക്കിയത് അതുകൊണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ലേ? ■



Gangotri - Dham

ഗംഗോത്രി



■ ഐതിഹ്യം

ഉത്തരകാശിയിൽനിന്നു വരുന്ന വഴിയിൽ പല ഗ്രാമങ്ങളും പിന്നിട്ടത് ഞാൻ ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചു; സുഖിടോപ്പ്, ഡ്വാല, ഹർസിൽ, ജംഗ്, ലങ്ക, ബൈരോഫട്ട് എന്നിങ്ങനെ. പതിനൊന്നര മണിയോടെ ഞങ്ങൾ ഗംഗോത്രിയിലെത്തി. ഗംഗോത്രി ക്ഷേത്രത്തിന്റെ മുൻവശംവരെ പാതയുണ്ടെങ്കിലും തിരക്ക് നിയന്ത്രിക്കാൻ പോലീസിന്റെ നിർദ്ദേശപ്രകാരം ഒരു ഫർലോങ്ങ് അപ്പുറം ബസ് നിർത്തേണ്ടിവന്നു. ഞങ്ങൾ ഇറങ്ങി ക്ഷേത്രം ലക്ഷ്യമാക്കി നടന്നു. ഭാഗീരഥി നദിക്കരയിലുള്ള ഒരു കൊച്ചു ക്ഷേത്രം.

ഭാഗീരഥിക്ക് ആ പേര് വന്നതിന്നു പിന്നിൽ പുരാണങ്ങളിൽ ഒരു കഥയുണ്ട്. അജയ്യനായ സഗര ചക്രവർത്തി അസുരരാജാക്കന്മാരെയെല്ലാം കൊന്നൊടുക്കിയശേഷം നിരവധി യാഗം നടത്തി. അതിന്റെ പര്യവസാനമായി ഒരു അശ്വമേധയാഗം ചെയ്യാനും തീർച്ചപ്പെടുത്തി. ഒന്നാംതരം ഒരു വെളുത്ത കുതിരയെ യാഗാശ്വമാക്കി വിട്ടു. സഗരന്റെ ഒന്നാം ഭാര്യയായ കേശിനിയിലെ പുത്രനായ അസമഞ്ജസ്സിനെ യാഗത്തിൽ അച്ഛനെ സഹായിക്കാൻ വിട്ട്, യാഗാശ്വത്തെ അനുഗമിക്കാൻ രണ്ടാംഭാര്യയായ സുമതിയിലെ അറുപതിനായിരം പുത്രന്മാരും ഏറ്റവും നല്ല പടയാളികളും പുറപ്പെട്ടു. അശ്വമേധ

നിയമപ്രകാരം യാഗാശ്വം അതിന്റെ ഇഷ്ടംപോലെ യാത്ര ചെയ്യും. ആ യാത്രയിൽ, ആർക്കെങ്കിലും ചക്രവർത്തിയുടെ അധീശത്വം അംഗീകരിക്കാൻ വൈമനസ്യമുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ, അശ്വത്തെ ബന്ധിച്ച് പടയാളികളോട് ഏറ്റുമുട്ടി വിജയിയ്ക്കാം. അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ചക്രവർത്തിയുടെ സാമന്തപദവി സ്വീകരിച്ച് സമാധാനം വരിയ്ക്കാം. അശ്വമേധം എതിരില്ലാതെ വിജയിച്ചാൽ, ഇന്ദ്രപദവിക്ക് തുല്യനാകും ആ ചക്രവർത്തി എന്നാണ് വിശ്വാസം.

ആരും എതിരില്ലാതെ നടക്കുന്ന അശ്വത്തെക്കണ്ട് ദേവരാജനായ ഇന്ദ്രൻ അസുയയായി. തന്റെ പദവിക്ക് ഇളക്കം തട്ടുമോ എന്ന ഭയത്താൽ, അശ്വം കപിലമഹർഷിയുടെ ആശ്രമ പരിസരത്ത് എത്തിയപ്പോൾ, രഹസ്യമായി ഇന്ദ്രൻ അശ്വത്തെ ബന്ധിച്ച് ഓടിപ്പോയി. (അതങ്ങനെയല്ലേ? ഇന്ദ്രനെപ്പോലുള്ള ഭരണകർത്താക്കൾക്ക് കാര്യസാധ്യത്തിനായി എന്തു വൃത്തി കേടും കാണിച്ച്, പിന്നീടും മാനന്യനായി ഇരിക്കാമല്ലോ.) അശ്വത്തെ ബന്ധിച്ചതു കണ്ട് സഗരപുത്രന്മാർ കാശ്യപ മഹർഷിയാണ് അത് ചെയ്തത് എന്നു കരുതി മഹർഷിയെ ആക്രമിച്ചു. കാര്യമറിഞ്ഞ മഹാമുനി ആത്മരക്ഷാർത്ഥം സാഗരന്മാരേയും പടയാളികളേയും തന്റെ തപശ്ശക്തിയാൽ ഭസ്മമാക്കി. സഹോദരന്മാരെ നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട അസമഞ്ജസ് കപിലമഹർഷിയോട് മാപ്പ് അപേക്ഷിക്കുകയും, ശാപമോക്ഷം



Gangotri board

പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. കപിലമഹർഷിക്ക് മനസ്സലിഞ്ഞു. ദേവനടിയായ ഗംഗയെ ഭൂമിയിലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുവന്ന് തർപ്പണം ചെയ്താൽ സഹോദരങ്ങളെ തിരികെ ലഭിക്കുമെന്ന് ആശ്വസിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.

അസമഞ്ജസ് കഠിനമായ തപസ്സിലേർപ്പെട്ടു. വളരെക്കാലം തപസ്സുചെയ്തു. പക്ഷെ ഉദ്ദിഷ്ടഫലം ലഭിക്കുന്നതിനുവുമുമ്പായി അസമഞ്ജസിന്റെ ആയുസ്സ് തീർന്നു. അസമഞ്ജസിന്റെ പുത്രനായ ഭഗീരഥൻ അച്ഛൻ നിർത്തിയേടത്തുനിന്ന്

പുനരാരംഭിച്ചു തപസ്സ് തുടർന്നു. അവസാനം സംപ്രിയയായ ഗംഗ പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെട്ടു ഭൂമിയിലേക്ക് വരാമെന്നേറ്റു. പക്ഷെ ആ ജലപാതത്തെ താങ്ങാൻ ശക്തിയുള്ള ആരെങ്കിലും ഇവിടെ വേണമെന്നുമാത്രം. ഭഗീരഥൻ വീണ്ടും കപിലമുനിയെ അഭയം പ്രാപിച്ചു. മഹാദേവനല്ലാതെ മറ്റാർക്കും അതിന് ശക്തി ഇല്ലാത്തതിനാൽ, ശിവനെ തപസ്സു ചെയ്തു പ്രസാദിപ്പിക്കാൻ കപിലമുനി ഉപദേശിച്ചു. ഭഗീരഥൻ ശിവനേയും നീണ്ടകാലം തപസ്സുചെയ്തു പ്രസാദിപ്പിച്ചു. ശിവൻ ഗംഗയെ തന്റെ ജടയിൽ സ്വീകരിച്ചോളാം എന്നേറ്റു. വീണ്ടും ഗംഗയെ തപസ്സുചെയ്ത് പ്രസാദിപ്പിച്ച് ഭൂമിയിലേക്ക് ചാടാൻ പറഞ്ഞു. ഗംഗാദേവി സ്വർലോകത്തുനിന്ന് പതിക്കുമ്പോൾ ശിവൻ അതിനെ ജടയിൽ പിടിച്ചു. ആ സമയത്ത് ചില തുള്ളികൾ താഴേക്കു പതിച്ചു. അതാണ് ഗംഗ. ഭഗീരഥൻ കൊണ്ടുവന്നതിനാൽ അതിനെ ഭാഗീരഥി എന്നു വിളിച്ചു. ജടയിൽനിന്നു തെരിച്ച ജലം പലയിടത്തായി വീണു അവിടെയെല്ലാം നദികളുണ്ടായി. ഇവയിൽ നിരവധി വലുതും ചെറുതുമായി ഉണ്ടായ നദികൾ ചേർന്നാണ് വിശാലഗംഗ ഉണ്ടായത്. യമുന, ബ്രഹ്മപുത്ര എന്ന മഹാനദികളും പിന്നീട് ഗംഗയിൽ ചേരുന്നുണ്ട്.

ഗംഗോത്രി ക്ഷേത്രം

ഗംഗോത്രി ക്ഷേത്രം നല്ല വൃത്തിയും വെടിപ്പുമുള്ള ഒരു ചെറിയ ക്ഷേത്രമാണ്. പിഞ്ചുകുഞ്ഞായ ഭാഗീരഥനദിയുടെ കരയിൽ, സമുദ്രനിരപ്പിൽനിന്ന് 12,300 അടി ഉയരത്തിൽ. ഭാരതത്തിന്റെ ജീവനാഡിയായ ഗംഗയുടെ ജന്മസ്ഥലത്തിന്നരികിൽ. ക്ഷേത്രം ഗംഗോത്രിയിലാണെങ്കിലും ഇവിടെയാരും തന്നെ ഈ നദിയെ ഗംഗ എന്നു പറയാറില്ല. ഭാഗീരഥിയും



Staues of Shiva, Bhagirath and-Ganga in the-compound of the Gangotri Temple

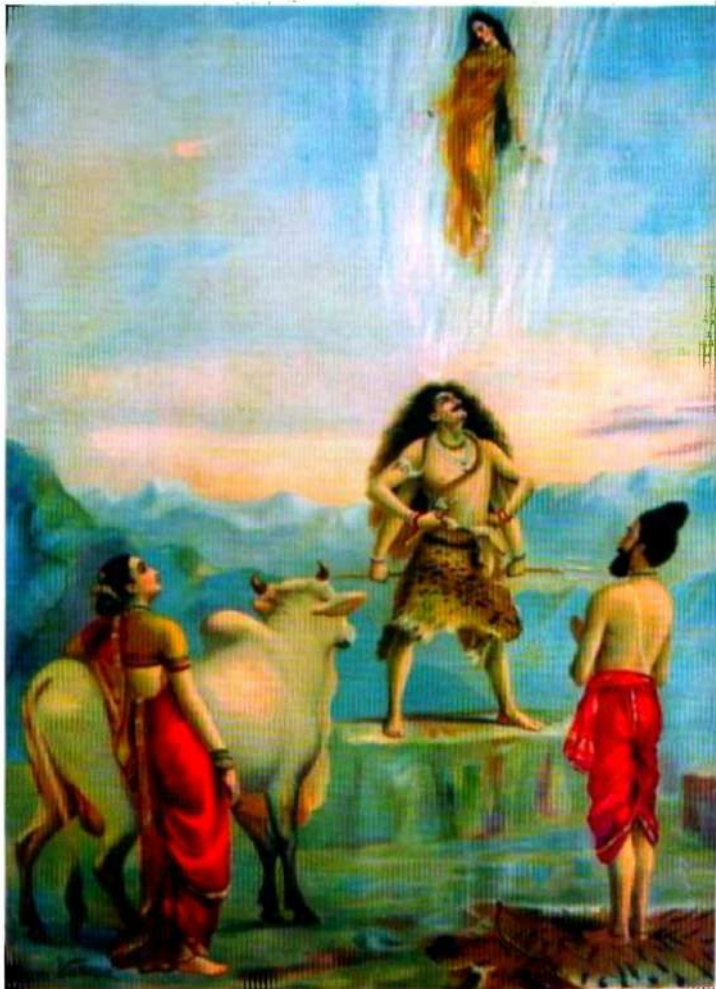
അളകനന്ദയും ദേവപ്രയാഗയിൽ കുടിച്ചേരുമ്പോഴെ ഗംഗയാ കുറുന്നള്ളി.

ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ വലിയ തിരക്കൊന്നും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. ആരംഭദിവസങ്ങളല്ലേ! ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് സുഖമായി ദർശനം സാധിച്ചു. ഗംഗാദേവിയുടേതാണ് പ്രതിഷ്ഠ. വലിയ ഒരു പാറമലയുടെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ വെളുത്ത ക്ഷേത്രം. കേറിച്ചെല്ലുന്നത് ഒരു മണ്ഡപത്തിലേക്കാണ്. മണ്ഡപത്തിനു തൊട്ടു ശ്രീകോവിൽ. മണ്ണുകൊണ്ടുണ്ടാക്കിയതാണ് പ്രതിഷ്ഠ എന്നു തോന്നി. ക്ഷേത്രമുറ്റത്ത് ധാരാളം സ്ഥലമുണ്ട്. ക്ഷേത്രമതിലിനപ്പുറം പുഴയിലേക്കിറങ്ങാൻ ധാരാളം പടവുകളുണ്ട്. ഇവിടെയും ഭാഗീരഥിയെ ഒന്നു തൊടുകയെങ്കിലും ചെയ്യേണമെന്ന് നിശ്ചയിച്ച് ഞങ്ങൾ പടികളിറങ്ങി. മൂന്നിൽ നദി കൂട്ടിച്ച് ഒഴുകുകയാണ്. ദൈവമേ, എന്തൊരൊഴുക്ക്! വിരൽ വച്ചാൽ മുറിയുമെന്ന് തോന്നി. ഒഴുക്കുപോലെത്തന്നെയാണ് വെള്ളത്തിന്റെ തണുപ്പും. ഫ്രിഡ്ജിൽനിന്ന് എടുത്ത വെള്ളത്തേക്കാൾ തണുപ്പാണ്. വെള്ളത്തിന് ഒരുതരം കലക്കമോ നിറമോ ഉണ്ട്. ഋഷി കേശിൻ കണ്ട പോലെ തെളിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ല. പക്ഷെ ഗംഗോത്രിയെ മുകളിൽ മനുഷ്യവാസമേ ഇല്ലാത്ത സ്ഥിതിക്ക് മലിനീകരണം ഉണ്ടായിട്ടില്ല എന്നും, ജലം തീർത്തും പരിശുദ്ധമാണെന്നും തീർച്ചയാണ്. ഞങ്ങൾ എല്ലാവരും പോരുമ്പോൾ അല്ലാലും ഗംഗാജലം ഓരോ പാത്രത്തിൽ എടുക്കുകയുണ്ടായി.

ഗംഗോത്രി ശ്രാദ്ധം

പത്തുപതിനഞ്ചു പടവുകൾക്കു മുകളിൽ ഒരു വശത്ത് പ്ലാറ്റുഫോം പോലുള്ള ഒരു പരന്ന സ്ഥലമുണ്ട്. അവിടെ ഒരു പാണ്ഡ്യ നിൽക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ഞങ്ങളെ കണ്ടപ്പോൾ അദ്ദേഹം അടുത്തേക്കു വിളിച്ചു, വളരെ നല്ല ഹിന്ദിയിൽ പറഞ്ഞു. "ഈ സ്ഥലത്തിന്റെ പ്രത്യേകത അറിയുമോ?" അദ്ദേഹം വാചാലനായി. "ഗംഗയുടെ അഥവാ ഭാഗീരഥിയുടെ ഉത്ഭവസ്ഥാനം ഇവിടെയല്ല. വളരെ മുകളിൽ ഗോമുഖിലാണ്. പക്ഷെ ഗംഗയെ ഭൂമിയിലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുവന്ന് ഭഗീരഥൻ തന്റെ പിതൃസഹോദരങ്ങൾക്ക് തർപ്പണം ചെയ്ത സ്ഥലമാണ് ഗംഗോത്രി. ഈ പുണ്യസ്ഥലത്ത് പിതൃക്കൾക്ക് തർപ്പണം ചെയ്താൽ, പിതൃക്കളുടെ ആത്മാക്കൾക്ക് സംതൃപ്തിയും നമുക്ക് അവരുടെ അനുഗ്രഹവും കിട്ടും. ഗംഗോത്രിയിൽ വന്ന് തർപ്പണം ചെയ്യാതെ പോയാൽ നിങ്ങൾക്ക് അത് തീരാമനുഷ്യവുമായിരിക്കും." ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് പാണ്ഡ്യയുടെ വാചകം ഒരു ബിസിനസ്സ് ചൂണ്ടിയായേ തോന്നിയുള്ളൂ. പക്ഷെ ഞങ്ങൾ മാറിനിന്നു കുടിയലോചിച്ചു. ഇനിയൊരിക്കൽ ഈ വഴിക്ക് വരാൻ സാധിച്ചെന്ന് വരില്ല. അതിനാൽ എന്തിന് വേണ്ടെന്നു വെയ്ക്കണം? അദ്ദേഹംതന്നെ എല്ലാ സൗകര്യങ്ങളും തർപ്പണത്തിനുവേണ്ട സാമഗ്രികളും ഒരുക്കിത്തന്നു. "അച്ഛനോ അമ്മയോ ജീവിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ഇവിടെ ബലി തർപ്പണം ചെയ്യരുത്. മാതാപിതാക്കൾ രണ്ടുപേരും മരിച്ചെങ്കിൽ മാത്രം ബലിക്ക് ഇരിക്കുക. നിങ്ങൾ വിവാഹിതൻ ആണെങ്കിൽ ധർമ്മപത്നിയോടൊപ്പം ഇരുനേ ശ്രാദ്ധം ചെയ്യാവൂ." ഞങ്ങൾ മൂന്നു കുടുംബങ്ങളാണ് ഒപ്പമുള്ളത്. ഞങ്ങൾ മൂന്നു കുട്ടർക്കും പറഞ്ഞ കണ്ടിഷനുകൾ ശരിയുമാണ്.

ഞങ്ങൾ നിരന്ന് ചമ്രം പടിഞ്ഞ് നിലത്തിരുന്നു. പാണ്ഡ്യ സംസ്കൃതത്തിൽ എന്തെല്ലാമോ ചൊല്ലി. കുറച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞ് ഓരോരുത്തർക്കും ഓരോ ലോട്ടു തന്നു. പുഴയിൽ പോയി വെള്ളമെടുത്ത് വരാൻ പറഞ്ഞു. അപ്പോഴെല്ലാം അദ്ദേഹം സംസ്കൃതത്തിൽ ഓരോ മന്ത്രങ്ങൾ ഞങ്ങൾ കേൾക്കേ ചൊല്ലിക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. പിന്നെ അരിയും പുവും എള്ളും കയ്യിൽ തന്നു. അതെല്ലാം കയ്യിൽ പിടിച്ചിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ, അച്ഛന്റെയും മുത്തശ്ശന്റെയും മുതുമുത്തശ്ശന്റെയും അങ്ങനെ പ്രപിതാമഹാന്മാരുടേയും, അതുപോലെ അമ്മ, മുത്തശ്ശി എന്നിങ്ങനെ ഏഴു തലമുറയിലെ പ്രമാതാമഹികളുടേയും പേരുകൾ ചോദിച്ചു. ഏഴു തലമുറയിലെ ആണുങ്ങളുടെ പേരുകൾ ഉറപ്പിച്ചു പറഞ്ഞു. (നമ്പൂതിരിമാരുടെ ഇടയിലെ പതിവനുസരിച്ച് മുത്ത



Ravi Varma painting - Descent of Ganga

പുത്രന്റെ പേര് അവന്റെ മുത്തശ്ശന്റെതായിരിക്കുമല്ലോ. എന്റെ അച്ഛൻ അഷ്ടമൂർത്തി, മുത്തശ്ശൻ ശങ്കരൻ, അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ അച്ഛൻ അഷ്ടമൂർത്തി, അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെയും അച്ഛൻ ശങ്കരൻ, അഷ്ടമൂർത്തി, ശങ്കരൻ, അഷ്ടമൂർത്തി, പോരേ, ഏഴു തലമുറയിലെ പ്രപിതാമഹാന്മാരുടെ പേരുകളായില്ലേ? പക്ഷെ അമ്മ, മുത്തശ്ശിവരെ മാത്രമേ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ പേരറിയൂ.) എല്ലാം കേട്ട് അദ്ദേഹം മന്ത്രം ഉറക്കെ ചൊല്ലി "സർവ്വകുലശ്രാദ്ധം സമർപ്പയാമി". കയ്യിലുള്ളത് എല്ലാം താഴെവെച്ച് ഞങ്ങൾ തൊഴുതു. അച്ഛനമ്മമാരെ മനസ്സിൽ സ്മരിച്ച് ജലവും വീഴ്ത്തി. അതിനുശേഷം അതെല്ലാം വാരി നദിയിൽ കൊണ്ടുപോയി ഒഴുക്കി. പിതൃക്കൾക്ക് സംതൃപ്തിയായി കാണണം. പാണ്ഡ്യയ്ക്ക് ദക്ഷിണ കൊടുക്കണമല്ലോ. എന്തു ദക്ഷിണ വേണം എന്നു നേരിട്ടു ചോദിച്ചു. മനസ്സിനിഷ്ഠമുള്ളത് എന്നായി അദ്ദേഹം. ഞങ്ങൾ മനസ്സറിഞ്ഞ് കൊടുത്തു. അദ്ദേഹം പ്രസന്നവദനനായി അനുഗ്രഹിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. അദ്ദേഹം ബിസിനസ്സുകാരനല്ല എന്ന് ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് ബോദ്ധ്യപ്പെട്ടു.

ഗോമുഖ്

ശ്രാദ്ധം കഴിഞ്ഞ് മുകളിലെത്തിയ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് അവിടെ പരിചയപ്പെടാനും ഒരു അവസരം കിട്ടി. അവിടെ വഴിയിൽ ഒരു ബോർഡ് കണ്ടു 'ഗോമുഖ് 19 കി.മീ.' പത്തടി ദൂരത്തിൽ മുകളിലേക്ക് കയറാനുള്ള പടികൾ. മുകളിൽ എത്തുമ്പോഴേക്കും അത് മഞ്ഞിൽ അപ്രത്യക്ഷമാകുന്നു. സത്യത്തിൽ ഗോമുഖിൽ പോകാതെ ഗംഗോത്രിയാത്ര പൂർണ്ണമാകുന്നില്ല എന്നു കേട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. ആഗ്രഹമുണ്ടെങ്കിലും, സമയക്കുറവുകൊണ്ട് പോകാൻ ശരിയ്ക്കും ഉദ്ദേശമില്ലായിരുന്നു. എങ്കിലും ഗോമുഖിലേക്കുള്ള യാത്രയുടെ സാദ്ധ്യതകളെപ്പറ്റി ഞങ്ങൾ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ അന്വേഷിച്ചു. കിട്ടിയ വിവരമനുസരിച്ച്, അത് യാത്രാസീസണിന്റെ ആരംഭദശയായതിനാൽ വഴിയൊന്നും ശരിയായിട്ടില്ല എന്നാണ്. പലയിടത്തും മഞ്ഞുമുടി



Gomukh

കിടക്കുകയാണ്. വഴി എന്നാൽ കൊടുമുടിപോലുള്ള മലകളെ ചുറ്റിച്ചുറ്റി പോകുന്ന ഒറ്റയടിപ്പാതകൾ എന്നർത്ഥം. അല്ലാതെ യാത്രായോഗ്യമായ പാതകളൊന്നുമല്ല. വഴിയിലെല്ലാം ശക്തിയായ വഴുക്കലുണ്ടാകാൻ സാധ്യതയുണ്ട്. അതിനാൽ അന്നു പോകുക അസാധ്യമാണ്. സാധാരണയായി ആദ്യം ഹിമാലയവും വഴികളും അറിയാവുന്ന സന്യാസിമാർ പോയിത്തുടങ്ങും. വഴി ഒന്ന് ശരിയായി എന്ന് തീർച്ചയായിട്ടേ സാധാരണ തീർത്ഥാടകർ പോകാറുള്ളൂ. ഞങ്ങൾ ഗോമുഖ് എന്ന ആഗ്രഹം ഞങ്ങളുടെതല്ലാത്ത കാരണത്താൽ ഉപേക്ഷിച്ചു. അതായത് ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് പോകാൻ സമയമുണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും തയ്യാറായിരുന്നെങ്കിലുംകൂടി അന്ന് പോകാൻ സാധ്യതയില്ലായിരുന്നു.

ഗോമുഖ് എന്നത് ഭാഗീരഥിയുടെ ഉത്ഭവസ്ഥാനമാണ്. ഒരു വലിയ മഞ്ഞുമലയുടെ വശത്തുള്ള ഒരു ഗുഹയിൽനിന്നു മണൽ നദി പുറപ്പെട്ടു വരുന്നത്. സങ്കല്പിക്കുമ്പോൾപോലും മനസ്സിൽ കുളിർ കോരിയിടുന്ന, അതിമനോഹരമായ, അതിദിവ്യമായ ഒരു കാഴ്ചയായിരിക്കണം അത്. വലിയ ഒരു മഞ്ഞുമലയുടെ ദ്വാരത്തിൽനിന്ന്, കിണ്ടിയുടെ മുരലിൽനിന്നെന്ന പോലെ, കുതിച്ചു ചാടി കുത്തിയൊഴുകുന്ന നദി, പക്ഷെ ഭാഗ്യഹീനരായ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് അതു നേരിൽ കാണാനുള്ള വരം ലഭിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. പല യാത്രാവിവരണങ്ങളിലും ഗോമുഖിനെ പറ്റി വിവരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. അവിടെനിന്നു കുറെ കൂടി മുകളിലേക്കു പോയാൽ 'തപോവനം' എന്ന സ്ഥലവും ഉണ്ടെന്നു കേട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. മലയാളിയായ തപോവനസാമികൾ അവിടെ ഇരുന്നാണത്രെ തപസ്സ് അനുഷ്ഠിച്ചത്. അവിടെയെല്ലാം സന്യാസിമാർ ഇന്നും തപസ്സ് അനുഷ്ഠിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്ന് കേട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട്. അവർക്ക് മഞ്ഞും തണുപ്പും ഏകാന്തതയും ഭക്ഷണമില്ലായ്മയും ഒന്നും ഒരു പ്രശ്നമല്ലെന്നും. (ഒരു കാര്യം പറയാൻ മറന്നു. ഗണേശനും സഹായിയും ഭാഗീരഥിയിലെ ആ തണുത്തുത്ത വെള്ളം തലയിൽ കോരിയൊഴിച്ച് കുളിച്ചിട്ടാണ് ദർശനം നടത്തിയത്.)

എല്ലാം കണ്ട് തിരിച്ചുവരുമ്പോഴേക്കും സമയം ഏറെക്കുറെ രണ്ടരയായിരിക്കുന്നു. നല്ല വിശപ്പ്. പാതയ്ക്കരികിലുള്ള ഒരു മരത്തണലിൽ ഗണേശൻ ഞങ്ങളുടെ കയ്യിൽ ഭക്ഷണം വിളമ്പിയ പ്ലേറ്റുകൾ വെച്ചുതന്നു. നല്ല കാലാവസ്ഥ. ഭാഗീരഥിയുടെ സംഗീതവീര്യം പക്ഷമേളത്തിന് ഏതാനും കിളികൾ കുജനം നടത്തി പറന്നു നടക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. പ്രകൃതി വീണ്ടും ഞങ്ങളെ ഓർമ്മിപ്പിച്ചു, "നിങ്ങൾ ദേവലോകത്താണ്." ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കാൻ ഇതിലും നല്ല പശ്ചാത്തലം ഏതു പഞ്ചനക്ഷത്ര ഹോട്ടലിലാണ് ലഭിക്കുക?

കുറച്ചപ്പുറത്ത് അല്പവസ്ത്രധാരികളായ ചില താടിക്കാർ ഇരുന്നിരുന്നു. നാട്ടുനടപ്പനുസരിച്ച് അവരോടും ഞങ്ങളോടൊപ്പം ചേരാൻ ക്ഷണിച്ചു. വിളി കാത്തിരുന്നപോലെ അവർ വന്നു. സംതൃപ്തരായി നല്ലവണ്ണം കഴിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. ഭക്ഷണശേഷം തണലത്തിരുന്ന് അവരുമായി സംസാരിക്കാൻ ഒരു ശ്രമം നടത്തി. ഏതോ ഒരു പ്രത്യേക അകാശ (സന്യാസി സമൂഹം)യിലെ സന്യാസിമാരാണവർ. വിചിത്രമായി തോന്നിയ ഒരു ഹിന്ദിയിലാണ് അവർ സംസാരിച്ചത്. ശരി, അത്രയും ഭാഗിയായി. അതു കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ എന്തെങ്കിലും ദക്ഷിണ കിട്ടിയാൽ കൊള്ളാമെന്നായി അവർ. ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ ഭിക്ഷയാചിക്കുകതന്നെ. അത് എനിയ്ക്കത്ര പിടിച്ചില്ല. എന്നിട്ടും ഞങ്ങൾ കൊടുത്തു. സർവ്വസംഗപരിത്യാഗികളെന്നു ഭാവികുന്ന അവർക്കും കാശിനോടിത്ര ആർത്തിയോ? 'കഞ്ചാവടിക്കാനായിരിക്കും!' എന്ന് ഞങ്ങളുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിലൊരാളുടെ കമന്റ്. ആയിരിയ്ക്കാം, ഹിമാലയത്തിൽ കഞ്ചാവും ഭാഗ്യം അടിക്കുന്ന ധാരാളം സന്യാസിമാരുണ്ട്. അവരുടെ ഏതാനും ഫോട്ടോകൂടി എടുത്തപ്പോൾ അവർക്ക് ശരിക്കും സന്തോഷമായി. ആ ജടാധാരികൾ ഞങ്ങളെ വിസ്തരിച്ച് അനുഗ്രഹിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.

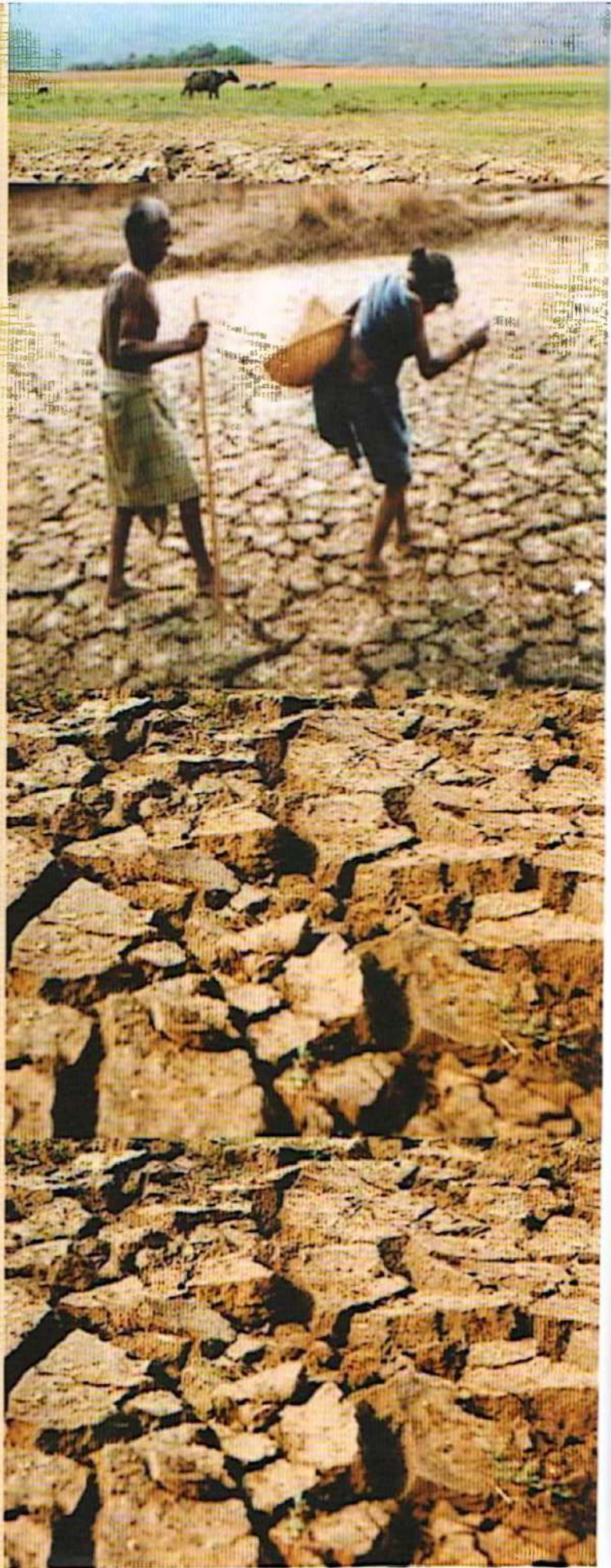
ഭക്ഷണശേഷം ഞങ്ങൾ ഗംഗോത്രിയോട് യാത്ര പറഞ്ഞു. 'ഗംഗാമയ്യ' കളകളെ ശബ്ദത്തിൽ പൊട്ടിച്ചിരിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് യാത്രാമംഗളം നേർന്നു. സന്ധ്യയോടെ ഞങ്ങൾ ഹോട്ടലിൽ മടങ്ങിയെത്തി. ഇരുട്ടു വീണതിനാൽ ഇനി പുറത്തുപോക്ക് നടക്കില്ല. ആദ്യം ചുടോടെ ഒരു ചായ. പിന്നെ ചുടുവെള്ളത്തിൽ ഒരു കുളി. പെട്ടെന്ന് വൈദ്യുതി പോയി. കുറ്റാക്കുറ്റിരുട്ട്. പുറത്തു കടന്നപ്പോൾ നക്ഷത്രം നിറഞ്ഞ ആകാശം. നിതാന്ത നിശ്ശബ്ദം. അങ്ങകലെനിന്ന് ഭാഗീരഥി ഒഴുകുന്ന ശബ്ദമാത്രം കേൾക്കാം. മുബൈനഗരത്തിലെ വെളിച്ച-ശബ്ദമലിനീകരണത്തിൽ നാല്പത്തഞ്ചുകൊല്ലം കഴിച്ചുകൂട്ടിയ എനിക്ക് ഏതോ അന്യഗൃഹത്തിൽ എത്തിയപോലെ. ശരിയാണ്, ഞാനിപ്പോൾ ഭൂലോകത്തല്ലല്ലോ, ദേവലോകത്തല്ലേ?

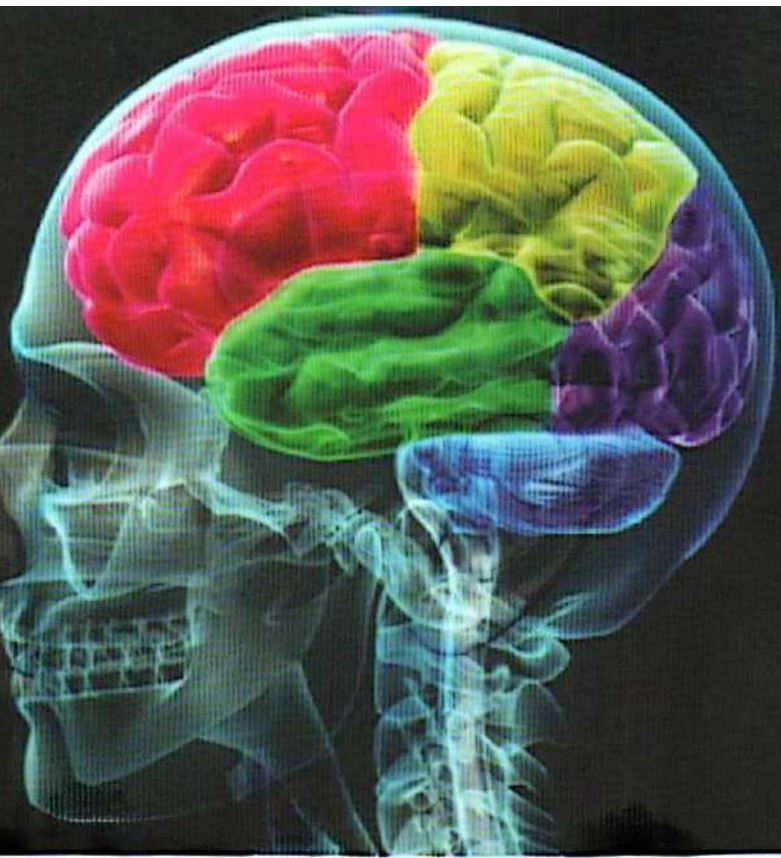
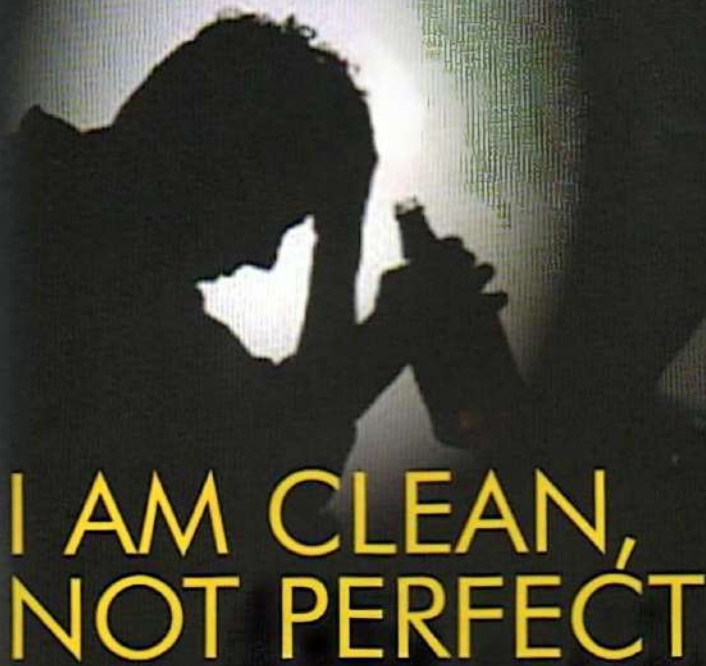
പെട്ടെന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ ഭൂവിലേക്ക് കൊണ്ടുവരാതെന്നപോലെ ജനറേറ്റർ വലിയ ബഹളത്തോടെ വെളിച്ചം കൊണ്ടുവന്നു. ഏറെ കഴിയാതെ ഗണേശൻ്റെ വിളിയും വന്നു. ചുടോടെ ചോറും രസവും. മനസ്സു നിറഞ്ഞു. ഒൻപതര മണിയോടെ ഞങ്ങൾ പുതപ്പിനുള്ളിലേക്ക് വലിഞ്ഞു. തല തലയണയിൽ മുട്ടിയതും ഉറക്കം. ഡ്രൈവറുടെ കല്ലനപ്രകാരം കാലത്ത് നേർത്തേ പുറപ്പെടേണ്ടതാണ്. ■

വളരുന്ന മനുഷ്യനും വരളുന്ന പ്രകൃതിയും

എന്റെ കണ്ണിർചാലുകളിലെ
 വരണ്ട ഈർപ്പംപോലും
 ഉററിയെടുത്താണ്
 നി മാളിക പണിഞ്ഞത്...
 എന്റെ കൈകാലുകൾ
 അരിഞ്ഞുവീഴ്ത്തിയാണ്
 നിന്റെ സൗധത്തിലേക്ക്
 നടവഴിയൊരുക്കിയത്...
 പിടിച്ചുപിടിച്ച ചെമ്മൺപാതയിൽ
 കോൺക്രീറ്റ് പാകിയത്
 എന്നെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ഓർമ്മപോലും
 കുഴിച്ചുമുടാനായിരുന്നു...
 പടിപ്പുറത്ത് തണൽ വീശിയ
 എന്റെ കൂഴി തോണ്ടിയത്
 ഞാനൊരു അപശകുനമെന്നു
 തോന്നിത്തുടങ്ങിയപ്പോഴാണ്...
 എന്നും തെളിനീരു നൽകിയ
 എന്റെ നിർമ്മലഹൃദയത്തെ
 നീ മണ്ണിട്ടു നികത്തിയത്
 കാർഷെഡ് കെട്ടാനായിരുന്നു...
 പുകയ്ക്കും കിളികളും
 വഴി മാറിയ എന്റെ മുറുത്ത
 ഞാനേകനായിപ്പോയത്
 നിന്റെ സാർത്ഥതയായിരുന്നു...
 അനാഥമന്ദിരത്തിലെ
 ഏകാന്തവാർദ്ധക്യംപോലെ
 ഇന്ന് ഞാനീവഴിയിൽ
 വരണ്ട ഹൃദയവും
 വറ്റിയ കണ്ണീരുമായി
 തളർന്നു നിൽക്കുമ്പോൾ
 അതിരുകളില്ലാത്ത നിന്റെ
 അഹന്തയുടെ അപമജീവിതം
 മനസ്സും ശരീരവും
 അഗ്നിയിലുരുക്കുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരു കുളിർകാറ്റിനായ്
 ഒരിക്കൽ ചവിട്ടി തള്ളിയ
 പഴയ വഴികളിൽ, ഇന്ന് നീ
 നിശ്ശബ്ദം അലയുന്നു...
 നിന്റെ ദുര്യോഗത്തിൽ
 പൊഴിക്കാൻ എനിലിന്നൊരശ്രം-
 കണംപോലുമില്ല.

രാജൻ കിണറ്റിൻകര





Dr Sujatha Nair

■ Addiction is a painful process of living day and night in the clutches of the substance. The family goes through loss of identity and emotional roller coasters with the

person addicted trying to control his/her using.

Finally, the dependent decides to seek help he goes to an alcohol/ drug rehabilitation program for treatment for a certain duration of time. The family or co dependent can be under the impression that he will come out of the rehab as though he has been dry cleaned and all will be perfect.

The reality is, the real issues surface after the return from the rehab

The family, not having the benefit of living away from emotional triggers like the addict in a residential rehab program, takes time to understand the process he has gone through to help him continue to not find the need to drink/use. If they have not undergone co dependency counselling they will look at him with 'old eyes' and emotions of fear, apprehensions, mistrust, and judgement.

Earlier, the substance was the buffer to escape from the realities of life for the alcoholic /drug addict. Life was going on around him but he was only with the substance.

He is now just about getting comfortable in his own skin living day to day without any substance. The crutch / substance that made him become oblivious of emotions is no longer present and emotions are felt in its entirety and depth. Dealing with them with the tools learnt and finding one's footing is happening. The person has changed.

However, the spouse and family look on him as if since he has become 'rehabilitated' he can now handle family responsibilities and job and businesses. The spouse thinks now my world is finally in place. He will take care of my emotional and other needs. That is the illusion of the co dependent.

The person who has undergone treatment also wants to take on work and the financial reins into one's hands. However, trust is difficult to get by. Mistrust over using or not using returns. The emotional roller coaster ride comes back with a vengeance in the family. Most separations and divorces happen surprisingly after the dependent returns home from a rehabilitation centre. The co-dependent who till now was 'right' about a lot of issues only because of the other person's drinking / using begins to realise that the person now has changed and does not indulge in emotional conversations and does not allow himself to get mood altered.

This entire conflict is the result of

the myth that the suffering addict is not just clean but because he has undergone treatment he should be 'perfect'

The solution here, for the dependent - be patient with himself and the family. Take on graded responsibilities. One's emotional stability and being sober are one's primary responsibilities. Be in touch with one's counselors at all times is essential. The thought "i can handle it" has handled the addict most times.

For the family/ co dependent - give him/her time to get back to life and living. Taking care of themselves through counseling is required as much for the family as for the person addicted to a substance.

At AH we provide a luxury rehab facility with an Alternate life therapy program wherein the alcoholic/drug addict finds life and living beyond addiction to alcohol and drugs using various tools like counselling, meditation, writing, along with movies, meals out, hiking etc; in short, living a complete life, not finding the need to drink or use. The family too undergoes a similar process simultaneously so that both grow at an individual capacity and are able to then meet at a common platform of understanding.

For any clarifications contact
Dr Sujatha Nair on 09820330439



Anatta Humaniversity Pvt.Ltd.
Contact Person:
Ms. Vandana Hiranandani
+91 9967334000
Website- www.anatta.in

BEAUTIFUL AND HEALTHY NAILS

Beautiful hands with well groomed nails create a good impression and enhance your beauty. Dirty and cracked nails with chipped nail polish indicate low standards of nail care. Let us know about some problems of nails, 'nail-diet', and care of nails.



Dr. (Major) Nalini Janardhanan

Care of Nails

A weekly manicure is a must for keeping your nails in a good condition. Remove your old nail polish with a good nail polish remover one day in advance and leave your nails without nail polish for a day. Next day, apply a thin layer of nail polish. Let it dry, then apply a second thin coat of nail polish. When it dries, apply a final thin coat.

Nail Polish colours:

If you are dark complexioned, choose a nail paint darker in shade like Red, Dark Brown, Maroon, Dark Orange etc. For lighter skin tones, you may choose Pink, Blue, Cream etc. For special occasions you may apply gold or silver shades.

Shapes of Nails:

You may choose from square, oval, round or almond shapes according to your fingers. If you have long fingers choose round shape. Square shape suits plump fingers. Oval shape is the best shape chosen by most of the ladies.

Take care of your nails:

- **Using detergents:** Women who do washing utensils and clothes have to take more care of their finger nails. Exposure to the harsh chemicals in detergents makes your nails brittle and they easily break down.
 - Use only good quality detergents: Avoid cheap detergents.
 - Don't expose nails to soapy water for a long time.
 - After washing, wash your hands well and keep them dry.
- **Using Gloves:** While doing manual work, you may use rubber gloves lined

with cotton. It will help to prevent your nails from breaking and discolouration and also prevents chipping of nail polish.

■ **Oil bath to nails:** You may apply oil on your nails for keeping them soft and smooth. Take 2 teaspoonful of Almond oil or Olive oil and put it in two squeezed out lime halves. Dig your nails in the lime halves for 5 minutes and then wash off.

■ **During Manicure:** Don't use blade, safety pin or knife to remove nail polish. Use a nail polish remover. Avoid pushing cuticles every time during manicure. It may retard the growth of nails. Don't use metal filers to file your nails as they may cause damage to your nails.

■ **Nail Polish:** Avoid dark nail polishes (kept for a long time) on nails as they may lead to staining of nails. Alternatively, before applying dark nail





polish, you may apply a translucent nail polish first. Once it dries, you can apply a dark nail polish on it.

Some nail problems:

- **Pale Nails:** This could be due to diseases like Anaemia, Heart diseases, Liver diseases etc.
- **Yellow Nails:** Wearing red nail polish for a long time may give a yellowish tint to your nails. Fungal infection can also give yellow colour to nails.
- **Blue Nails:** If you are exposed to extreme cold, your finger tips and nails may turn blue. Blue nails can also be due to reduced oxygen supply in your body most often due to lung diseases or heart diseases.
- **Cracked and Split Nails:** Frequent cracking and splitting of nails could be due to thyroid diseases.
- **Pitting of Nails:** A few pits in nails may be due to injuries to nail bed while nails are growing. But too many pits may be a sign of diseases like Psoriasis, Arthritis etc.
- **Blue black or purple black lines under nails:** These lines may be an indicator

of Melanoma, a type of skin cancer.

- **Puffy and Red Cuticles:** Harsh nail polish remover may lead to puffy and red cuticles. It can also be due to lupus disease or connective tissue disorders.
- **White spots on nails:** These may be due to injury or deficiency of minerals like Zinc in your diet.
- **Cuts and cracks in and around nails:** This may be due to dry skin and reduced water content in our body. It is advised to drink 10-12 glasses of water daily to keep our body hydrated.
- **Dry and Brittle Nails:** This may be due to deficiency of Vitamin A and Calcium in diet. Take food rich in calcium and Vitamin A.

For the above problems, Fungal or infections and in growing nails it is better to consult a doctor and take advice.

Diet for Healthy Nails:

Most of the nail problems like brittle and dry nails, discolouration of nails or spots on nails may be due to lack of

Vitamins and minerals like Vitamin A, B,C, B12, Calcium, Zinc, Iron and Phosphorus. So it is better to have a balanced diet containing Vitamins and minerals to have strong and healthy nails. Include more onions, broccoli, vegetables and yeast in your diet as they are good sources of minerals like Zinc and Phosphorus. Other sources of Vitamins and minerals are:

- **Vitamin A:** Green leafy vegetables, Yellow vegetables, carrot, mango, papaya, beetroot, pumpkin, fish, egg, liver, dairy products, green peas, margarine.
- **Vitamin C:** Fruits, Amla, Citrus fruits (like lemon, orange, sweet lime etc), Tomato, Peas, Capsicum, Potato.
- **Vitamin B:** Green Vegetables, Liver, Pulses, Lentils, orange, banana.
- **Vitamin B12:** Yeast, Liver, Milk.
- **Iron:** Spinach and other green leafy vegetables, chillies, urad dal, rajma, Ragi.
- **Calcium:** Dairy products like milk, cheese, butter, curds, paneer, fig, green leafy vegetables, peas, Ragi. ■



IMMUNISATION

'World Immunisation Week' was observed from 24 to 30 April. The last week of April each year is marked by WHO (World Health Organisation) and partners as World Immunisation Week. It aims to raise public awareness of how immunisation saves lives, encouraging people everywhere to vaccinate themselves and their children against deadly diseases. We should know the importance of Immunisation and Global Vaccine Action Plan.

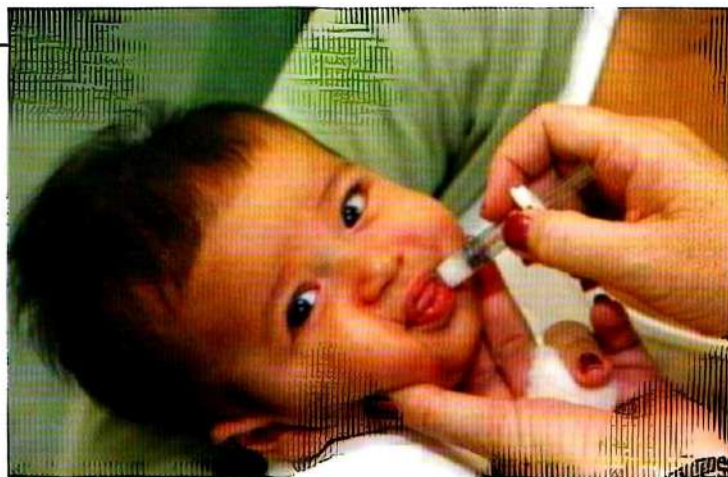
Dr (Major) Nailini Janardhanan

What is Immunisation?

Immunisation is a process whereby a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease typically by administration of a vaccine. Immunisation prevents illness, disability and death from vaccine. Preventable diseases like Tetanus, Polio, Mumps, Cervical Cancer, Measles, Diphtheria, Hepatitis B, Rubella, Whooping Cough etc.

Immunisation currently averts 2-3 million deaths every year. An estimated 18.7 million infants (one in five children) all over the world are still missing out on basic vaccines. If global vaccination coverage improves, we can avoid additional 1.5 million deaths.

Vaccine preventable infectious agents or



Encephalitis, Haemophilus influenza Type B, Rabies, Varicella, Herpes Zoster, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), Rotavirus, Gastroenteritis, Yellow Fever and Japanese Encephalitis.

Global Vaccine Action Plan 2011-2020 (GVAP)

This plan was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2012

diseases:

The following infectious agents or diseases can be prevented by immunisation:-

- Anthrax, Measles, Rubella, Cholera, Meningococcal disease, Influenza, Diphtheria, Mumps, Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, Pneumococcal disease, Typhoid Fever, Hepatitis E, Polio myelitis, Tick borne

to achieve the 'Decade of Vaccines' vision by delivering universal access to immunisation. It is a commitment to ensure that no one misses out on important immunisations.

India has eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus and improved coverage of the Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis containing vaccines (DTP 3) to 83%. This was one of the major breakthroughs last year.



As per GVAP, countries are aiming to achieve vaccination coverage of greater than 90% nationally and greater than 80% in every district by 2020. Polio eradication is set as the first milestone. GVAP also aims to increase research and development for the next generation of vaccines. One of the targets was to introduce 1 or more new or under utilised vaccines (like HPV, pneumococcal conjugate vaccine or PCV, Rubella etc) in at least 90 degree low income and middle income countries by 2015.



WHO is calling on countries to reach more children missed by routine delivery systems. More than 60% of children who are unvaccinated live in 10 countries like India, Indonesia, South Africa etc.

GVAP recommends 3 key steps for closing the immunisation gap:

- Integrating immunisation with other health services such as postnatal care

for mothers and babies.

- Strengthening health systems so that vaccines continue to be given even in times of crisis.
- Ensuring that everyone can access vaccines and afford to pay for them.

Goals of the Decade of Vaccines (2011-2020)

- Achieve a world free of Poliomyelitis.
- Meet global and regional elimination targets.
- Meet vaccination coverage targets in

every region, country and community.

- Develop and introduce new and improved vaccines and technologies.
- Exceed the Millennium Development Goal 4 Target (MDG4) for reducing child mortality.

If these goals are achieved, hundreds of millions of cases and millions of future deaths will be averted by the end of the decade.

So far Polio was eliminated in one country, Tetanus in 3 countries and Rubella in 1 geographical region. Eradication of smallpox is one of the greatest accomplishments. Immunisation is beneficial as one of the most successful and cost effective health interventions. WHO advised to observe World Immunisation Week every year to highlight the recent gains in immunisation coverage to outline further steps countries can take to “close the Immunisation Gap” and meet global Vaccination targets by 2020. ■

TOMS is no more

He was the creator of 'Bobanum Moliyum', the back-page cartoon series published in Malayala Manorama weekly for nearly three decades.

Toms, a household name in Kerala for the past half century and more for his cartoon siblings Boban and Molly, is no more. He was 87. He died on April 27 in SH Medical Centre, Kottayam.

Few knew him as V.T. Thomas, born to V.T. Kunjuthommen and Cicily Thomas in the Kuttanad in 1929, for he was for a whole generation just 'Toms', the creator of 'Bobanum Moliyum'



since 1957, the back-page cartoon series published in Malayala Manorama weekly for nearly three decades.

Besides 'Bobanum Moliyum' Toms created and communicated to the Malayali milieu through several characters like Kunchukurup, Appy Hippy,

Unnikuttan, Chettan and Chettathi, representing an entire neighbourhood. Each of his characters found a special place in the hearts of the Malayalis and a part of Malayalam popular culture.

After leaving Malayala Manorama in 1987, he wanted the copy right of his characters Boban and Molly and filed a case against the Malayala manorama. Though Manorama won the case, the very next day, it gave away its rights to Tom. Since then, 'Bobanum Moliyum' was published as a magazine under his supervision.

When asked by a young fan about the genesis of Boban and Molly, Toms said he had named them after two children in the neighbourhood who one day came to him and asked him to draw their picture. In their web page, the Indian Institute of Cartoonists quotes Toms as having said: “This took place after these two naughty children thwarted every attempt of mine to prevent them from jumping the fence around my house and walking through the kitchen, on their way to school.”



Alakal (1974) / Ashtamippoohinkale...



Lyrics: Mankombu Gopalakrishnan Music: V Dakshinamoorthy
Singers: KJ Yesudas Ragam: Kambhoji

Karthika



Mankombu Gopalakrishnan

അഷ്ടമിപ്പുത്തികളേ... അഷ്ടമിപ്പുത്തികളേ... എൻ
അനുരാഗമലർത്തികളേ എൻ
അഷ്ടമിപ്പുത്തികളേ... എൻ അനുരാഗമലർത്തികളേ എൻ
അഷ്ടമിപ്പുത്തികളേ...

നടയിൽ നിൻനടയിൽ (2)
നടനകേളിതൻ തിരനോട്ടം ആ.. ആ.. (നടയിൽ)
ഉടലിൽ പുവുടലിൽ ഉദ്യാനലക്ഷ്മിതൻ വിളയാട്ടം
(അഷ്ടമിപ്പുത്തികളേ...)



V Dakshinamoorthy

നിൻപദതളിരിൻ താളലയങ്ങളിൽ നിറപാർണ്ണമിയുടെ കളിയാട്ടം
നിൻ മിഴിയിതളിൽ രാഗമനോഹര നീലിമകൊണ്ടൊരു മയിലാട്ടം

നിൻ അധരങ്ങളിലുതിരും പുഞ്ചിരി നീളേ വിളിക്കും കതിരോട്ടം
നിൻ കവിളിണയിൽ സ്വർഗസുധാരസ നിർവൃതിയടയും നീരോട്ടം

കുറുമിഴിയെങ്കിൽ പുത്തോട്ടം കുറുനിരയെങ്കിൽ നിഴലാട്ടം
വസന്തം ചിരിക്കും അരങ്ങിതിൽ തുള്ളുമുമ്മീ
സംഗീതം ശ്രുതിമധുരം താളം ലയമധുരം നീ അതിമധുരം
(അഷ്ടമിപ്പുത്തികളേ...)



K J Yesudas

Alakal is a 1974 Indian Malayalam film, produced and directed by MD Mathews. The film stars Rajesh, Vijayasree, Adoor Bhasi and Pattom Sadan in lead roles. Other actors are Sankaradi, T. R. Omana, Paul Vengola, Dr Chinnayyan, Kavitha, Leela, Meena, PO Thomas, Shyamkumar.

Its Story is also written by M D Mathew, while sceenplay and dialogue by A Sherif.

The film had musical score by V Dakshinamoorthy. Singers are Ayiroor Sadasivan, K J Yesudas, P Leela and S Janaki. It had five songs all written by Mankombu Gopalakrishnan.

Chandanakkuri charthi, Pournamichandrika,, Premanubhoothiyumay..., Vasanakkulirumai are the other songs and all of them were well received.

Vilakkumaram (Lamp Post)

■ It is directed by Vijay Menon who was the hero in Bharathan's 'Nidra.' Produced by Shivani Creations, it has Bhavana as heroine. Manoj K Jayan, Suraj Venjaramoodu, Nandu, P Sreekumar et al lend support to her. The shooting will commence on May 12 in Thiruvananthapuram.



James and Alice

■ Dr S Sajikumar and Krishnan Sethukumar produce this film for Dharmic Films and cinematographer Sajin Vasudev directs it. Prithviraj and Vedika share the leading roles. Saikumar, Sudhir Karamana, Sunil Sukhada, Shaju, Sijoy Varghese, Nazir Samkranti, Manju Pillai, John Samuel, Parvathi Nair and Uma are in the supporting cast. Dr S Janarddhanan writes the screenplay for the story of Sujit Vasudev. Gopi Sunder provides music and Rafiq Ahmed along with Hari Narayanan write the lyrics.

Atupuliyaattam

■ It is produced by Naushad Alathur Habib Haneef for Grand Film Corporation and Kannan Thamarakkulam directs. Jayaram and Shilu Abraham are in the lead. Om Puri from Bollywood and Ramya Krishnan from Mollywood join them. Siddiq, Pashanam Shaji, Ramesh Pisharody, Sreekumar, Lenson, Thampy Antony, Veena Nair, Basant Nagar Ravi and Sampath are also in the film. Dinesh Pallath wrote the screenplay. Sasikala Menon, Kaithapram and Mohanraj wrote lyrics Rathish Vega provided music.



Avarute Raavukal

■ Three individuals born and brought up in indifferent set up, reach Kochi from three different places to build their lives. As you know, Kochi is also in continuous transformation. They stay together in a house belonging to an old man. Avarute Raavukal is all about their nights, problems and their remedies. The movie carries a message to the present young generation. It is coming after 'I love we' that saw both Asif Ali and Unni Mukundan. Honey Rose is the heroine and Vinay Fort and Nedumudi Venu have important roles in it. It was shot in Attapadi and Kochi and expected to arrive in theatres in May.



10 Kalpanakal

■ Well known film editor Don Macs writes and directs 10 Kalpanakal. Anoop Menon, Murali Gopi, Meera Jasmine, Kaniha, Joju George and Thampy Antony handle important roles. Music is provided by Sangeeth Jain.



Thoppil Joppan

■ Johnny Antony who gave several interesting characters to Mammooty is again giving him another interesting character in this film. Amala Paul is his heroine. Its shooting will start soon in Pala, Vagamon and Thodupuzha.



Parhava (Birds)

■ Soubin Shahir wanted to be a director but ended up as an actor. Finally now he is fulfilling his dream. He along with Anwar Rashid and Shyju who produced 'Bangalore Days' and 'Premam', produces Parhava. Soubin Shahir along with Munir Ali writes the screenplay and quite a few new faces face camera in this film.



Kerala in Mumbai

LINKING MUMBAI MALAYALEES

Email: keralainmumbai@gmail.com

Website: keralaimumbai.com

— 98201 10509 —