



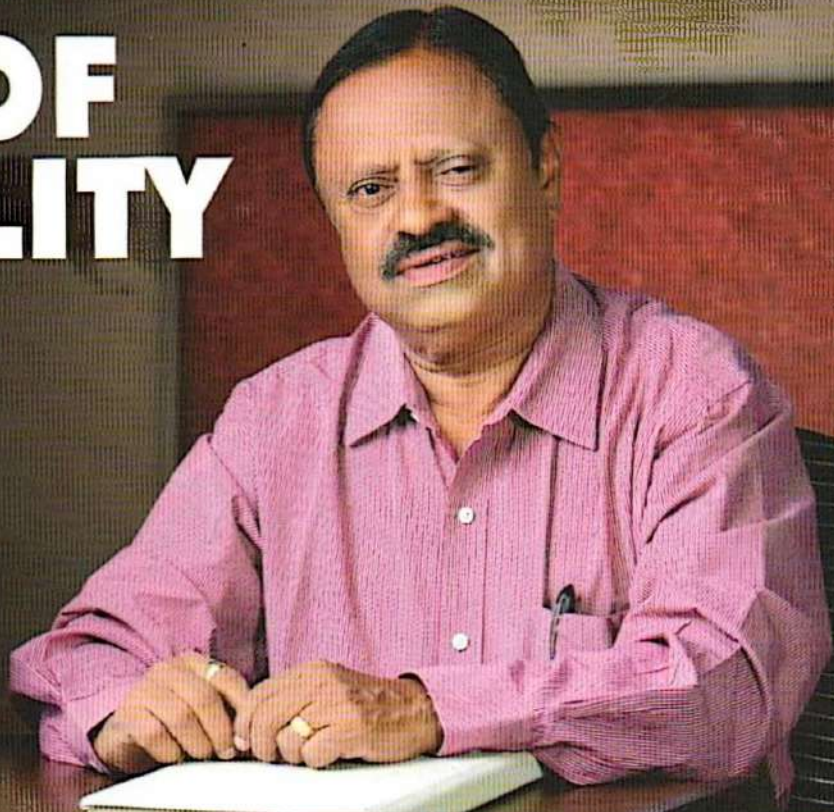
Malayalam Movie World

■ Vol. 6 No. 12 ■ Price Rs. 70 ■ March 2016

Kerala in Mumbai

The Only English/Malayalam Monthly Magazine linking Mumbai Malayalees

MAN OF HUMILITY



- Multi-faceted artiste
- Infertility Treatment- A New approach
- Vayalar- Un questioned Lyricist



**Raagalaya-
KIM Awards 2016**

**Emperor of Rhythm-
Padmashri Mattannur Sankaran Kutty**

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Keep politics out of campuses

One of the negative fallouts of our freedom struggle was taking the struggle into the institutions of learning. In the past, many national leaders, no pun intended, said that it was the need of the hour but many of them never hesitated to admit that it was a grave error. *Loknayak* Jayprakash Narayan, the idol of Indian youth of yore, said on several occasions while he was busy with Vinoba Bhave's Sarvodaya Movement, that dragging the children out of the campus was not only unnecessary but a stain on the Indian freedom fabric. But politicians being politicians, he did not hesitate to exhort them to come out to join on the streets to voice their protests against the then PM Indira Gandhi. He did not stop there. He even asked the armed forces not to obey orders of the government, thus giving the lever to her to declare a state of emergency. Thanks to the integrity of our armed forces, they did not pay heed to him. Otherwise, India would have gone the Pakistan way.

Many of our national leaders, genuinely interested in the welfare of our student population, always strove to keep politics out of their reach. Unlike the western countries, India has a tradition. Here until the children are ready to be independent by all means, the parents support them financially as well as morally. This tradition leaves the children to concentrate only on their curriculum and at the end of their term, come out successful. Here the burden of providing education to children is on parents.

Let us examine some past cases. In Kerala, the freedom struggle did not have much impact in the Kochi-Thiruvithamkoor region unlike Malabar. In the southern regions, people were willing to stand by their kings but wanted the Diwans to be chosen from their own regions and not imposed from outside. They called it the struggle for Responsible Government. The first student agitation in Kerala happened in 1958 when the Alappuzha Boat Struggle took place (this was also called 'orana samaram') in which Congress and Praja Socialist Party instigated the students to take part in the agitation. Some of its leaders were A K Antony, Oommen Chandy, Vayalar Ravi et al and this agitation was a precursor of the infamous Liberation Movement (*Vinochana Samaram*) and the anointment of *Bharatha Kesari* on Mannathu Padmanabhan. Leaders of the present LDF and UDF later admitted that it was a mistake to undertake such agitations even though they attained their goal for some time. In private talks, they confessed that they cannot admit it in public as other parties would take advantage.

Bombay University was a bed of thorns of agitations prior to 1968 and it took all the courage of Dr Gajendra Gadkar, the then Vice Chancellor. He called the student leaders of all political hues and sought their co-operation for five years to bring the standard of education to the world level. They appreciated his sincerity and dedication and agreed to his proposal. Afterwards the Bombay University has not seen any political turmoil, though the new generation leader made some attempt to revive to seal his stamp. Fortunately, the student community did not pay heed to his warming up.

Bharatiya Jansangh had a student wing in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and played havoc with the system there. The word HINDU in the name they thought gave them freedom to do so and the University was forced to close down in 1966. Indira Gandhi appointed Dr Triguna Sen as its VC, based only on his credentials, and he did the trick. BHU never again saw any serious agitation, though Raj Narain and his ilk tried their best to change the scene. When BHU had Hindu student unions, Aligarh did not go far behind. They too followed suit.

However sincere and dedicated the leaders of the University Administration are, if the government in power start interfering in the administration such as Syllabus, appointment of VCs, Pro VCs, Rectors, etc, it is certain that one day it would succumb to the pressures. FTII and many government universities are now clay in the hands of politicians especially since the new government assumed charge at the centre.

Jawaharlal Nehru University was founded with noble ideals but from the very beginning the political parties made it their recruiting centre of their cadre. Recently we saw many of our political leaders proudly stating their association with it and thus indirectly admitted to their role in lowering the prestige of the University by their interference. The leftist parties have a high stake in JNU and then Congress, and the so called Socialist parties. With the new government at the centre more and more educational institutions are getting politically inclined heads. The surprise is that only the government controlled institutions are falling victims to this practice and thus the parents who foot the financial bill of educating their children prefer to send them to private universities.

Will our political leaders wait till the youth complete their education or are they afraid of the possibility of losing the youth once they gain confidence and wisdom? If their concern is truly in the welfare of the youth, dismantle the students wings and leave the children to concentrate on their studies. Please stop this monkey business.

For God's (and India's) sake, keep away from the campuses so that India would prosper after a few years. But will they?

Udayatara Nayar

The photo on the cover and the write up inside the February issue of KiM were a delightful experience. The caption 'Queen of Mumbai Journalists' was apt and to the point and it said all.

Among the lakhs of Malayalees working in industrial, cultural and labour fronts in and around Mumbai and its suburbs, it is not a small wonder to know that there is a silent female journalist working amongst us in the Hindi filmy world.

She plunged into the Hindi film journalism through her 'Kochachan.' After having her interview with Ramnath Goenka, she received her letter of appointment that catapulted her to the top position of the Screen magazine, the most dedicated film journal of that time. There may not be any other female journalist who gave so much to this profession. She was out of her office most of the day spending her time in shooting locations, reporting from there live, interacting with the stars, directors and producers and her views coming through her column 'Tara's Musings' were keenly awaited.

Nayar had direct access to all the leading actors and actresses. From Devanand to Amir Khan, Nanda-Wahida Rehman to Madhuri Dixit was all among her friendly circle. That proximity to such artistes implies the depth of her dedication to work. Her association with the living legend of Hindi cinema and his wife Saira Bano in preparing his autobiography and the appreciation of her work from the legend had no parallel. This work alone increases our love and respect many folds for her. Though many laurels and rewards she earned during the last half a century, I wonder how a national Padma award eluded her. She deserves it and it is the duty of the Malayali organisations in Mumbai to raise their voices in unison so that the Union Government cannot ignore it.

I hope and pray she gets her due soon. Thank you KiM for bringing out a wonderful piece on Ms Nayar!

C K K Poduval,
Bhandup (W)

Excellent Article

February Issue of KIM carried an excellent article of Lakshmi Venkatachalam on Guruvayurappan.

In our quick visits to Guruvayur, we miss a lot of important temples in and around the place. Ms Lakshmi Venkatachalam has given a good account of these temples.

I wish her all the best and am eagerly awaiting to see more such informative articles on Kerala temples in the ensuing Issues of Kerala In Mumbai.

K Aravindakshan,

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

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Goreg

Well Organized Anniversary Celebrations

First of all let me congratulate you for organising such a memorable evening on February 7, the day of Kerala in Mumbai sixth Anniversary Celebrations.

The Raagalaya orchestra that followed the Awards presentation was excellent with a well selected string of Kaithapram's melodious numbers. All the singers were very good.

The Awards were given to deserving Malayalees of Mumbai who have contributed to this city's betterment and also brought pride to their native Kerala. I am happy you felicitated KIM staff also who have put in their efforts to successful sixth year completion of the magazine.

The Music competition was also organized beautifully. I am astonished at the talent we have among us in Mumbai.

Vidya
Saki

Congratulations

The Article on the Lord of Guruvayur was very informative and interesting. The writer has indicated a lot of lesser known facts about this temple town which I am sure, many readers like me would have come to know only through your page.

I look forward to more such articles on the temples of Kerala.

SS Chan
Thiruvananthapuram

Wholesome Family Magazine

Kerala In Mumbai has become one of the few eagerly looked forward publication these days. The pages are well designed, the matter is superb and the magazine provides wholesome entertainment and information to the whole family.

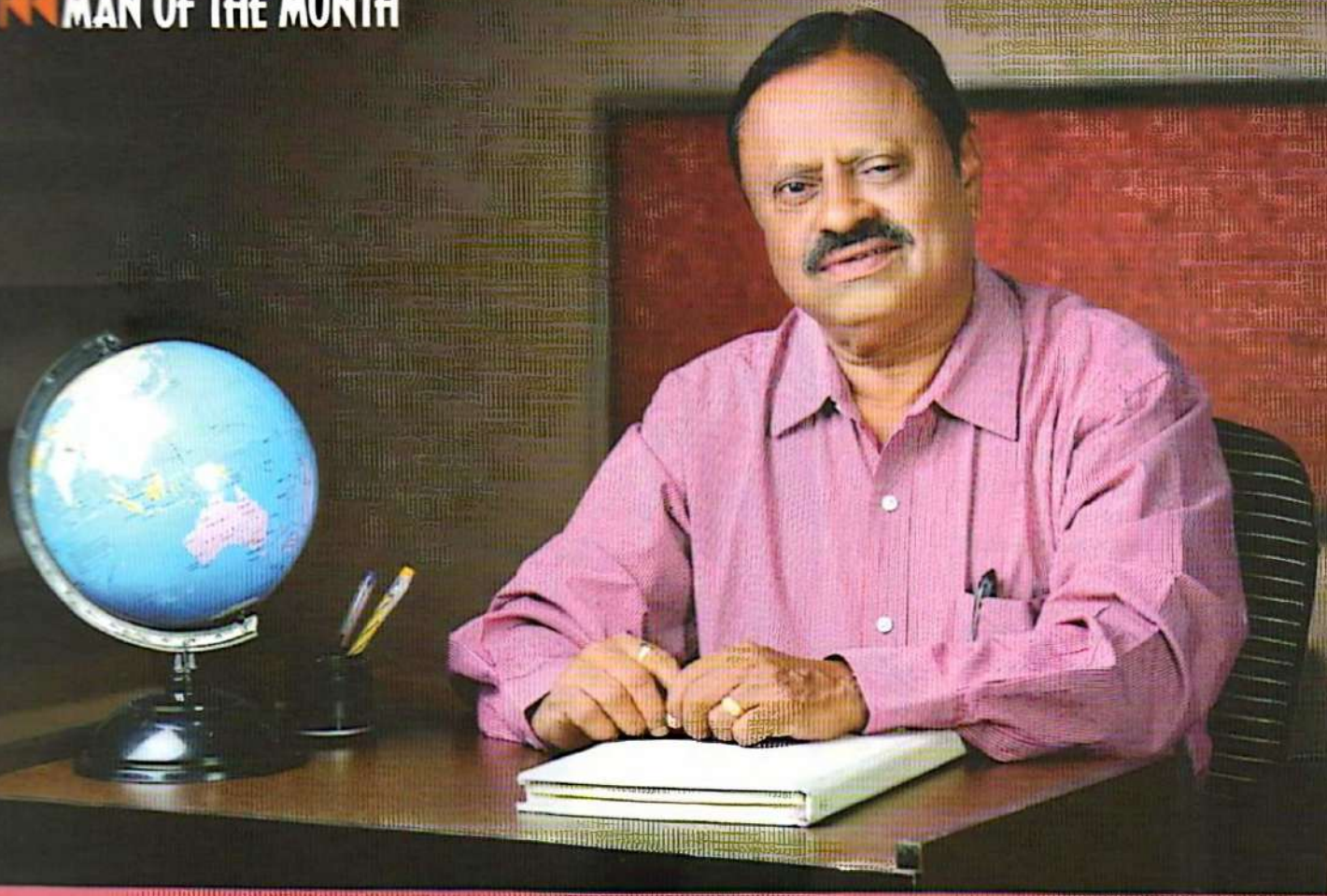
Keep up the good work.

Mala Harith
W

Our April 2016 Issue will be an Vishu Special.

Former Dy Municipal Commissioner V Balachandran starts his new serial on his Mumbai experiences from this issue. It will be delightful to both the old and new generations of Mumbai Malayalees.

Stage personality V V Achuthan comes out with a poem 'Jeevitham'. You can also read a Malayalam short story 'Samasya' by Ravi Thodupuzha.



K G Vallabhan

Businessman with Varied Interests

K G Vallabhan is an unassuming personality who came to Mumbai in 1969, began his career as a typist in a private company and is now running his own business and has carved a name for himself in the Mumbai Malayalee scenario.



Lakshmi Venkatachalam

■ There are certain things in life which we take for granted. One of them is carbon black. It is used in the manufacture of many essential items, like Paint, printing ink, bakelite, pvc, leather

cloth, shoe polish,

Glass Beads, O T C, Kajal, rubber industries and tyre tube, etc. K G Vallabhan's factory Carbochem Industries manufactures this basic product and is sold all over the country as well as abroad like the Middle East countries, South Africa etc. Vallabhan is a very down to earth, humble, soft spoken and unassuming person who attributes the success of his business to God's

Grace and his hard work.

"I come from a family where we generally get into Government or private service and hesitate to start a business on our own. So when I decided to set up my own factory, I knew I had to put in a lot of effort and dedication to bring it up. I took it up as a challenge

"Bombay welcomed me with open arms and I am grateful to this wonderful city that gave me an opportunity to realise my dreams."

and I must admit I had a lot of encouragement and support from my wife Jaya," he says and his wife Jaya agrees with him.

Today Vallabhan's Carbochem Industries is more than 25 years old. It is a leading provider of Carbon black and his wife Jaya is the proprietor of Rashmi Colour and Chemicals, a trading company, dealing with carbon black and graphite that is mainly used in pencils. The factory is in Bhiwandi while the office is in Bhandup. Vallabhan is actively involved in the educational activities of Cosmos English High School that is administered by Bhandup Keraleeya Samajam. He is also involved with other social organizations and extends help when the need arises. He is on the Advisory Board of Pravasi Media Publications

and Smitha Publications. He is a member of the Lions Club of Thane and is its former President. He finds time to involve himself in social and charitable activities like participating in medical camps and check ups, distributing uniforms, books, and other study materials to poor students, helping inmates of old age homes and similar deeds.

Vallabhan is Director of Palace Hospitals Pvt Ltd in Pota Chalakudy which is a 100 bed hospital with all basic amenities. He is a silent helper and has helped with installing street lights in his village and giving monetary aid to the needy and deserving whenever possible, both in Kerala and Mumbai.

Even as a young boy Vallabhan was interested in cultural and arts field and has encouraged and supported artists in Kerala. After settling down in his carbon black business, Vallabhan decided to venture into the film industry and has produced a Malayalam movie *KARUTHA PAKSHIKAL* under GV Productions along with co producer K V Kaladharan. His first film itself was an award winning film. It won the national award for Best Film on Family Welfare (2006) category and he received it from the hands of the then President Smt Pratibha Patil in 2007. The film also won the Kerala Film Critics Association Award. Talks are underway to produce another Malayalam movie.

KARUTHA PAKSHIKAL was directed by Kamal and Mammooty and Padma Priya played the lead role. The film has a social message as well and portrays the inequalities and caste prejudices that is prevalent in today's society.

Vallabhan belongs to Kunnathery



K G Vallabhan with his family

“If you have the dream of doing business on your own, you must be prepared to put in a lot of hard work. Then success surely comes knocking at the door.”

Veedu in Arimbur Village Thrissu District and his father the Late Govindankutty Nair worked as a clerk in a company. His mother is the late Meenakshamma and he has a brother Gopinathan Nair and sister Ambikadevi. The family was well off with income from agricultural lands that they possessed.

Vallabhan studied at Arimbur High School and after passing his SSLC (S



Felicitation during KIM 6th anniversary



Receiving Award from Jwala

X), he learnt typing and shorthand. He developed an urge to leave Kerala and get a job outside the state.

Mumbai, then called Bombay, was his natural choice and he came to this city in 1969 at the age of 19. He first joined a typewriting Institute in Ghatkopar as a teacher. In 1970 he joined Carbon Marketing Co (India) as a typist cum salesman, at a salary of Rs 300/ per month and was provided company accommodation.

Vallabhan continued in this company for about twenty years, understood the different facets of the trade and later decided to start his own in the same field. This was the beginning of Carbochem Industries which was set up as a proprietorial concern at a rented office space in New Marine Lines. The initial investment was three lakhs which he managed to acquire.

Vallabhan worked hard to establish and develop his business. Not just sitting inside the office, he went around the city getting customers for his product, and many of them continue



K G Vallabhan with his wife Jaya

Vallabhan finds time to involve himself in social and charitable activities like participating in medical camps and check ups, distributing uniforms, books, and other study materials to poor students, helping inmates of old age homes and similar deeds.

business with him. In 1999 he established 'Rashmi Colour and Chemicals.'

"Bombay welcomed me with open arms and I am grateful to this wonderful city that gave me an opportunity to realise my dreams," he says.

Vallabhan's wife Jaya belongs to Trikkur in Thrissur district. She is a BA graduate and has a passion for music. Before her marriage she had learnt Carnatic music and now with time on her hands she is learning Carnatic music once again. She proudly mentions that Thrikkur has produced many singers like Anoop Sankar, Jyotsna and several others. Her parents are the late M Govindan Menon and Radha who is now living in Kerala. Jaya comes from a family of two brothers and one sister. She is also socially active in the activities of Bhandup Keraleeya Samajam, like conducting Malayalam classes, organising Onam programmes etc.

Their only daughter Rashmi is married to Biju Menon of Ahmedabad and they have a seven year old son Tanush and a baby Ayansh aged four months. Biju works in a senior position at Nokia in Ahmedabad and Rashmi who is an MBA, is currently taking a break.

Vallabhan's message to youngsters is, "If you have the dream of doing business on your own, you must be prepared to put in a lot of hard work. Then success surely comes knocking at the door." ■

Vayalar Rama Varma

- Satyan

It is an irony of sorts that Kunchacko who drove him out of Udaya Studios when approached requesting a chance for writing lyrics for his films, tried to cremate him within the Udaya Studio premises when Vayalar died.

Vayalar Rama Varma, who rose to be identified by simply VAYALAR, is the most adored lyricist by the Malayalam film music fans. He was not criticised during his lifetime for using meaningless and wrong words. The flamboyant lyricist led a careless life, being pampered by admirers often detriment to his health. Many of his close friends attributed his ill-health to uncontrolled addiction to alcohol. He was willing to sacrifice friendship rather than giving up alcoholism. Some of his 'so called' close friends did not do a benevolent act but led him to an untimely death. He was only 47 when he breathed his last.

Vayalar is a small hamlet near Cherthala in Alappuzha district. Even though it was connected to Cherthala by road only in 1970, it was known to the external world because of the peasants' unrest and Vayalar Rama Varma. Vayalar Rama was born in Raghavaparambu Kovilakam to Ambalika Thampuratti and Vellarappalli Kerala Varma on March 24, 1928. Four generations earlier, another Rama Varma had translated Valmiki Ramayanam in prosaic form and he built a temple for Rama (Raghava) in his compound and hence the kovilakam was known as Raghavaparambu Kovilakam. Following the matriarchal tradition, they were staying at Raghavaparambu Kovilakam itself. Rama Varma was the only child of the couple, born after fifteen years of married life. He lost his father at an early age of over two years. Hence the mother and son were under the protection of his uncle Kerala Varma.

Education

After initiation to the world of letters, Ambalika Thampuratti herself taught him the alphabet and writing. When he turned five, he was taken to the nearby lower primary school. Head Master Mathai Sir gave him a test to assess his intelligence and found him superior to other students of first standard. So Rama Varma was admitted to second



standard and after half yearly examination, seeing his very high marks, he immediately promoted Raghava Varma to third standard. When he passed from UP School, uncle decided that Rama Varma should pursue Sanskrit education while his own sons were sent to English School. This was a ploy to avoid the monthly fee of six and a quarter rupees. This decision badly hurt his mother but she was helpless.

Uncle granted about 400 gms of rice daily and four sets of clothes a year to her. A part of this cloth was used to stitch clothes for Rama Varma. At night, when Thampuratti wept because of their poverty and sad plight, Rama Varma used to console her saying, once he grew up he would make her happy. The boy was sent to Thykattusseri Mana for learning Sanskrit. There he had to do some domestic chores and to carry the betel box of his guru wherever he went and the lessons were done whenever the guru was inclined to teach. However, Rama Varma acknowledged that these lessons greatly helped him to become a poet.

Shortly, because of the intervention of a relative, the boy was taken back and was enrolled in Cherthala English

School. During this period, Rama Varma started writing small poems and when was in 9th standard, he won second prize for writing a poem while the present *Bharatheeya Vichara Kendram* head P Parameswaran won the first prize. Varma thought of getting his poems published in periodicals, and started sending them to various periodicals. When many of them came back reject one was published in *Swarat* under the name G Rama Varma Thirumulpad.

When Rama Varma passed ninth standard, uncle put a stop to his education and took him to Ettumanoor Temple to undergo a one Year Prayer Session in the temple.

Birth of a poet

Karoor Neelakanta Pillai was running a provision Store in Ettumanoor those days. Whenever Vadakkumkoor Rajaraj Varma, K P Narayana Pisharodi, Anandakuttan et al visited the temple, they would meet Karoor and one day Vadakkumkoor told Narayana Pisharodi that this lean boy wrote poems and he should be encouraged. On Pishaodi's orders, Rama Varma send him some poems and within a fortnight, one poem '*Shukranakshatram*' was published. It was based on Subhash Chandra Bose and his fight against the British. After reading that poem some Communist leaders mistook him to be a Communist co-traveller and decided to encourage him.

One day Rama Varma was summoned to meet C K Kumara Panicker (father of Chandrappan who later became MLA and MP) at night. He was a Communist worker hiding from police. Panicker advised him to write on progressive ideas. After a fortnight, Rama Varma received a letter from '*Arunodayam*' asking for a poem. Soon many periodicals associated with Communist leaders asked him for poems.

Rama Varma was a follower of Gandhian philosophy. He was a regular visitor to the office of Cherthala branch of All India Charka Sangh. They were organising nonviolent processions every



Vayalar with Dakshinamoorthy & Thankachan



Vayalar with Devarajan and Yesudas.

month and Varma used to take part in the procession. He was then 15. Uncle Kerala Varma died soon after the demise of his wife and as per tradition, Rama Varma became the head of his mother's clan but unlike his uncle, he did not show much interest in farming and other activities required to earn any money. He wanted to publish a collection of his poems in book form and managed to persuade Madhava Pai of *Narasimhivilasam* Book Depot to do so. When it was printed under the name G Rama Varma Thirumulpad, neither Pai nor Varma had the money to pay for the printing. With a lot of difficulty, Varma raised Rs 75 and got 10 copies of the book released. Pai decided not to get the remaining copies as the poetry had no demand then.

Soon there was an agrarian revolt in Vayalar followed by firing by police. The name of Vayalar reached everywhere. Pai then had a miraculous idea. He raised money and got the remaining copies from the printer, after changing the name of the author from Thirumulpad to Vayalar Rama Varma. Soon the whole lot was sold out. He then got all the rights of the book to himself from Rama Varma and came out with a second edition. Though Rama Varma did not get any money out of this book, '*Paadamudrakal*' (Footmarks), has become soon a recognised name.

Though Pai made plenty of money out of '*Paadamudrakal*', the poet Vayalar Rama Varma did not benefit a paisa. When he approached other publishers, they were all unanimous in their opinion that poetry had no demand. They advised him to write detective novels, an impossible task for him. After learning the style of short stories after reading those of S K Pottekkat, Karoor, Ponkunnam Varkey, Malayalam translations of Maupassant etc, Vayalar

wrote some short stories and got them published in periodicals. When other publishers declined, Madhava Pai was again approached and '*Vettum thiruthum*' came out in book form. However, this book also did not help him earn any money.

Stage actor

Vayalar was convinced that unless the literacy level of people boosted, books printed would remain in the book shelf. To achieve this object to some extent, he took initiative in establishing a library and reading room, '*Navasahiti*' in Vayalar. On the occasion of the first anniversary of *Navasahiti*, they decided to stage T N Gopinathan Nair's '*Akavum Purhavam*' and Vayalar appeared in it as an old man. When audience realised that the old man was none but Vayalar, he was cheered. Then Vayalar thought of making the stage acting a way of living. Soon Communist party decided to exploit Vayalar's talent to its



Vayalar with wife and mother

advantage and he was asked to write lyrics for their plays. Then he deviated to writing plays for the stage and started making some money. However this phase did not last and he was gradually moved again to poverty. He was then only 21.

In one of his early films, '*Chettathi*', Vayalar had appeared as radio singer singing '*Aadiyil vachanamuntayi..!*'

Back to poetry

By this time Kaumudi Balakrishnan, the saviour of many a litterateur in Malayalam, became friendly with Vayalar and asked him to send articles, short stories or poems to *Kaumudi* and Vayalar positively responded. Soon his fame soared and he started earning from literary pursuits. His wide reading, skill for public speaking and ability to write poetry were recognised and more and more people started recognising him. Soon he started writing lyrics for local dramas. His fame as a lyricist spread. Then an event occurred. National Theatres of Kottayam was to stage Ponkunnam Varkey's '*Visarikku Kaattu Venta*' (Fan doesn't need breeze) and they wanted a few songs. On the recommendations of Varkey, the troupe approached Vayalar and he agreed. With his "Chakkarapanthalil thenmazha choriyum chakravarthi kumara...", he became a permanent fixture on Malayalam plays.

This led Vayalar to dream about migrating to cinema. Then Udaya Studio of Kunchacko and Koshy was on a high pedestal. Vayalar decided to approach Kunchacko. Though he managed to see Kunchacko, he was unceremoniously thrown out from the studio. Though he returned to writing lyrics for plays, the ban on such political drama threw him out of job. Then he started a monthly magazine '*Janadhipathyam*' but that was

also banned by the government because of its Communist inclinations. EMS, Puthezhathu Raman Menon, Unni Raja and D K Pottakkad et al were writing for this magazine under pseudonyms.

By this time Vayalar established close contacts with many influential personalities such as Thakazhi, V B Nair, Padmarajan, Kakkanadan, VKN, and *Malayalanadu* S K Nair and used to meet in Alappuzha. During their frequent meetings there, Vayalar raised the subject of raising a building for Press Club. Home Minister K Karunakaran allotted five cents of land for this purpose but people on whom expectations were resting, were reluctant to donate money for the construction. Then Vayalar and friends decided to organise a Star Nite in Alappuzha. They got tremendous support from the film fraternity and the dream turned into a reality.

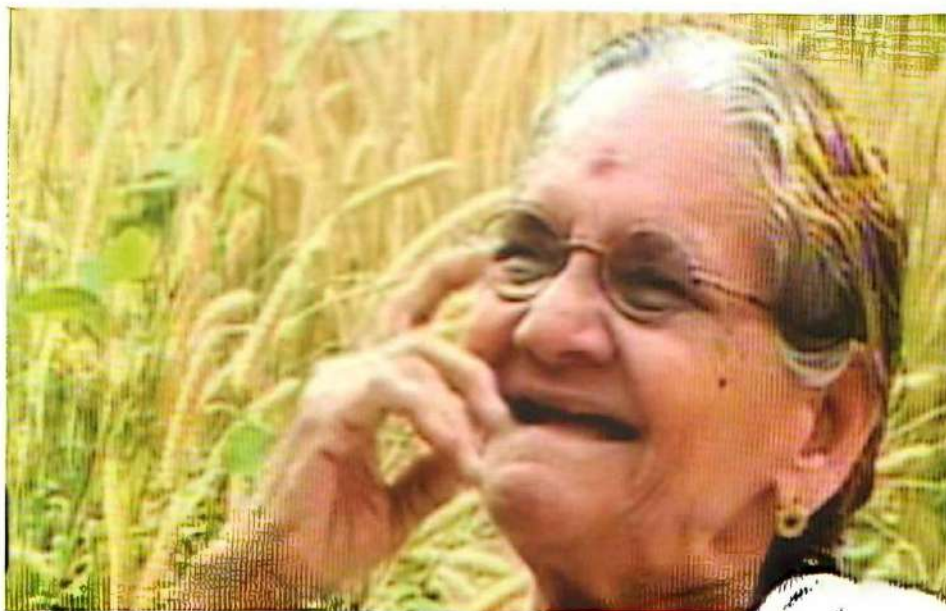
Family life

By this time Vayalar was persuaded to marry. Chandramathi Thampuratti of *Varanattu Puthankovilakam* of Cherthala was the bride. The wedding created a sensation as Vayalar insisted on a wedding feast for people belonging to all communities and religions. When the couple did not have a child of their own even after six years, Vayalar decided to annul the marriage and marry his wife's younger sister Bharathi Thampuratti. They were married in Guruvayur Sri Krishna Temple. Chandramathi Thampuratti left Raghavaparambu Kovilakam before this marriage and never returned there.

Bharathi Thampuratti gave birth to four children Saratchandra Varma, Indulekha, Yamuna and Sindhu. Saratchandra Varma is now a recognised lyricist.

Vayalar the lyricist

The first film for which Vayalar wrote lyrics was *Vazhivilakku* (Street lamp), a



Bharathi Thampuratti

film that was never released. He wrote five songs for this movie and Vimalkumar of *Thiramala* fame provided the tunes. The second film was *Kootapirappu* (Sibling)(1956) whose songs were well received. K Raghavan provided the music. It was a masala film that had all ingredients needed for a family film. The famous lullaby '*Thumbi thumbi Vaa Vaa..*' is from this film. It had ten songs. Its songs would remind us those of '*Neelakkuyil*', also a Raghavan film. His next films were '*Avarunarunnu*' (V Dakshinamoorthy), '*Chathurangam*' (G Devarajan), '*Palat Koman*' (M S Baburaj), '*Kannum Karalum*' (M B Srinivasan) and so on. No other lyricist would have this fortune to write songs at the beginning of his career, to be composed by leading musicians of those times. Each one of these movies made their marks in the minds of discerning listeners. Soon he became an inseparable part of Malayalam movie world and wrote more than 2000 songs for more than 223 movies besides stage plays. Among his most popular songs is the one he wrote for theatre, the KPAC

naatakagaanam, "*Balikudeerangalae..*

During the second half of the sixties, Vayalar worked as an editor of a Malayalam monthly '*Anveshanam*', a class monthly magazine. S L Puram's '*Agniputri*' was based on '*Kurhacharhiyuka Aere viswasikkuka*' published in this magazine as a serial. A short story '*Ettukaali*' of O V Vijayan published in this drew a lot of controversy. Vayalar's own '*Oru Kaviyute Diary*' was serialised in this magazine.

Awards

He was awarded Kerala Sahithya Academy Award in 1961 for *Sargasangeetham*, the President's gold medal for best lyricist in 1974, and the Kerala state film award for best lyricist three times. The Vayalar award for Malayalam literature, given on October 27 each year, was instituted in his memory.

Vayalar the person

Vayalar is one of the most misunderstood person in Malayalam movie world. He was one with a



Some books of Vayalar

unstained heart and never understood the working of human mind. Many persons whom he thought of as his closest friends betrayed during his life and after. He entered movies without any money and when he left, the pockets were empty. His financial management was very similar to that of music composer Baburaj.

When KPAC was formed, ONV was asked to write songs for their films while he was a student in Kerala University. Yet the leaders of KPAC felt that Vayalar also should write songs for them and deputed a team to discuss this matter with Vayalar. Vayalar asked for some day to ponder over the matter and next day wrote to them that though he wanted to be a part of KPAC, his joining them would adversely affect ONV's finances and that he should be excused.

Vayalar was no doubt fond of liquor but he drank only in the company of close friends. Many friends vouched for his hesitation to drinks with strangers and just acquaintances. On several occasions, he drove them out or he walked out from the scene. Until the story and situation for which he had to write the lyric, he could not touch the pen and many misinterpreted this motion to his weakness for alcoholism. When he was struggling for words for a song, he would explode if anyone tried to obstruct the process. He used to take longer time than others but once handed over, there would not be any corrections later.

Many thought of him as a Communist sympathiser but he was never a member of the party. He was a strong follower



Vayalar Sarath-Chandra Varma

of Gandhism. His songs and talks were based only on the basis of need. After the 1961 Indo-Chinese war, on the Martyr Day, he spoke strongly against China. This incidence prompted many Communist leaders to brand him Anti-Communist.

When Vayalar was bestowed with the national award for the best lyricist of the year 1973, his admirers planned a grand reception for him at Cherthala and invited about hundred and twenty leading actors, directors and producers who were thought to be his intimate friends. Among them were Prem Nazir and K P Ummer and on their oral confirmation, their names were printed on notices circulated to the public. In spite of repeated requests and reaffirmations, the said persons did not participate in the meeting despite being in the neighbourhood. This incident deeply hurt Vayalar. Though he did not display his sorrow outwardly, he stopped attending similar functions in

later life.

Towards his end

Often in the past, doctors like P K Varier, Dr C K Ramachandran, Dr Pai and many others had warned him to stay away from alcohol but he did not pay heed. On October 22, 1974, Vayalar himself felt uneasiness and then vomited blood. Hearing this CM C Achutha Menon rushed two doctors Dr P K R Varier and Dr Ramachandran of Medical College to Cherthala with instructions to bring him to medical college if necessary. On Oct 24, he was admitted in Medical College Hospital but surgery was impossible for various reasons. On Oct 27th, Dr Varier performed the surgery but his expertise could not save the patient. At 4.30 a m, Dr Varier said, "He is gone!"

Vayalar was given one of the mammoth send offs by the people of Kerala, that has no parallel. Soon a committee was formed under the patronship of CM Achutha Menon and his ministerial colleagues with well known friends of Vayalar, such as K M Mathew, S K Nair, Malayattoor Ramakrishnan etc to raise funds to repay the poet's debts, ensure the future of his children, to safeguard the interests of his family and also to institute an Award to perpetuate his memory. Malayala Manorama was in the forefront of this drive. Many unknown persons contributed good amounts but some close friends failed to hand over the amount that they generously announced in public functions. About one of them, a famous singer whom Vayalar promoted like his younger brother, failed to pay even one rupee though he announced Rs.25,000 in a public meeting, according to Malayattoor Ramakrishnan.

After some time A P Udayabhanu submitted a complaint against Malayattoor Ramakrishnan, then Revenue Board Member, for having collected huge amounts using his official position. In his complaint Udayabhanu described Vayalar as 'a minor poet and a victim of alcoholism' and Malayattoor threatened to resign from civil service. However, CM Achutha Menon set aside the enquiry.

According to Malayattoor, the fund raising resulted in fetching Rs.5,29,000 out of which Rs.30,000 was used to clear Vayalar's debts, Rs.2,20,000 to maintain his family, Rs 50,000 to establish a hospital in his name in Vayalar, Rs.15,000 towards an FD to give scholarships to students, Rs.2, 12,000 towards Vayalar Literary Award of Rs.25,000 every year.

A bust of Vayalar Rama Varma has been erected at Thiruvananthapuram to perpetuate his memory. ■



PUSHPAM SILKS
WEDDING SAREES

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

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

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“ഓട്ടിപ്പോ കെട്ടിക്കൊ വെൽപ്രകോ ദോത്തി പോക്കറ്റ് ഉൾപ്പെടെ”
ഫാക്ടറി വിലയിൽ ലഭിക്കുന്നതാണ്

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GRAPHIC CARTOONIST UNNY

"Inside the Malayali, there seems to be a micro-Asterix. A subtle, subversive variation of the comic hero. But quite unlike the little Gaulish village conceived of by Goscinni and Uderzo, Kerala resists nothing consciously. In anything, it is only too eager to yield. If there were Romans surrounding it from all sides, it would have readily given in. The Romans would have rushed in and regretted it in ways far too complex for a comic book to delineate..." These are the observations of a reputed Indian political cartoonist in his book titled *Spices & Souls: A Doodler's Journey Through Kerala*. This is none but the Palakkad born Ekkanath Padmanabhan Unny, E.P.Unny or simply cartoonist Unny.

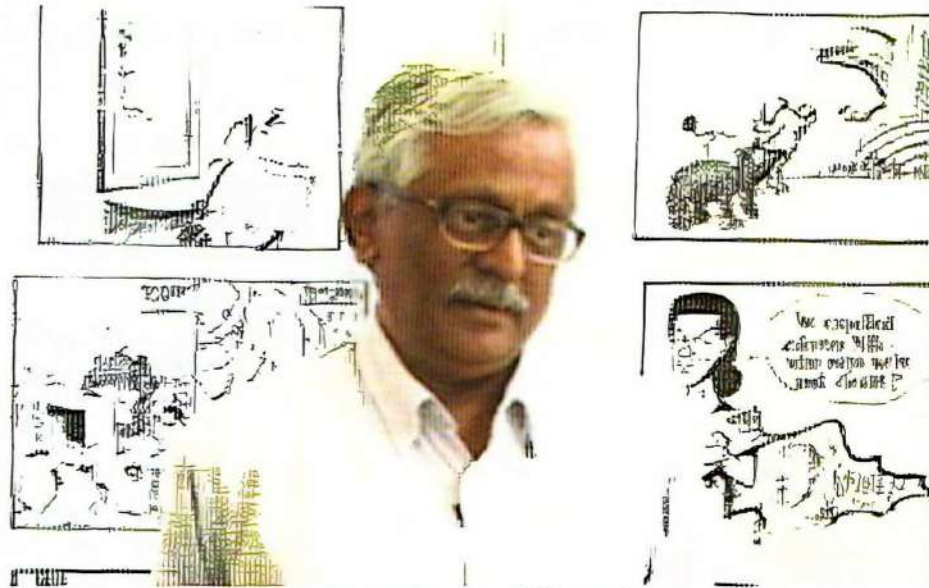


K. R. NARAYANAN

■ Unny, the chief political cartoonist at the Indian Express and a graphic narrative pioneer in India used to do graphic shorts in Malayalam literary journals as early as the 1990s. Uneasy

with the convenient urban or exotic thematic subsets that are more than eager to cross over, Unny locates the creative challenge for the Indian graphic novel in "learning and unlearning Western formats and getting down to confront the here and now robustly", which might begin to happen in regional languages as Aravindan did way back in the 1960s.

The cartoonists came into existence in India only during the last one and a half centuries of British rule. Only after India became independent in 1947, a real boost to the Indian journalists' and cartoonists' creativity was provided by the new and democratic atmosphere. Initially most of the Indian cartoonists used to be influenced by the British cartoonists. The most prominent among the first generation of Indian cartoonists was Shankar (Mr. Shankar Pillai). Pillai had his own cartoon weekly called *Shankar's Weekly*. This periodical and Shankar's cartoons became very popular in the independent India. Shankar's cartoons held a mirror to the strength and weaknesses of those in the high places in the socio-politico-economic realms in the then India. Even the Prime Minister of the country was not an exception to this. Unfortunately this periodical was closed down, as Shankar grew old and retired. Some of the next generation cartoonists were groomed by this stalwart and a few among them started their careers in *Shankar's*



Unny with some of his work

Weekly.

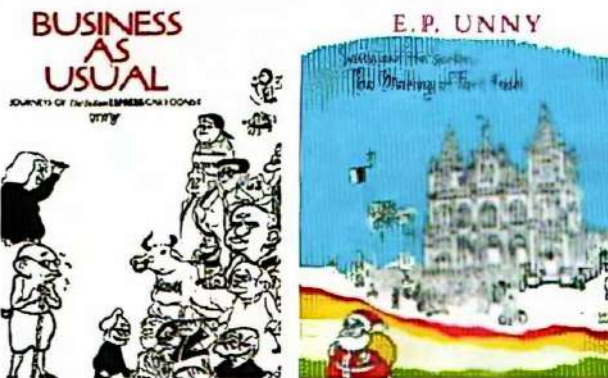
Many English and regional periodicals started publishing various types of political cartoons in our country. The *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *The Times of India*, *Hindustan Times* and the like carried innumerable cartoons created by the then giants - like R K Laxman, Dhar and the like - for almost five and odd decades. "*Marmik*" was one which was started by the veteran Marathi cartoonist and Mumbai's prominent political leader Bala Saheb or Bal Thackeray. *Cartoon Watch* which dominated the Hindi world

was published for many years by Triambak Sharma, a cartoonist from Raipur.

Unny shared a prominent place with them all through his inimitable political cartoons in the Indian Express. He was one of the seven veteran Indian cartoonists honored with lifetime achievement awards by the Indian Institute of Cartoonists in Bangalore on the 18th of May, 2009.

Having been born and brought up in the aristocratic Ekkanath family of Palakkad and graduated in Physics from Victoria College in the Calicut University of Kerala, Unny's first cartoon appeared in *Shankar's Weekly* in 1973. However, he began his career only in 1977 with *The Hindu*. Subsequently, Unny went on to serve in the *Sunday Mail* and *The Economic Times*. He is now the Chief Political cartoonist with the Indian Express.

According to Gokul Gopalakrishnan, this Indian Express cartoonist who has been drawing non-stop for four



Unny's Book

decades, having worked at The Hindu, The Sunday Mail and The Economic Times earlier, has seen Indian cartooning go through various phases, facing challenges from humorless clampdowns of authorities across the political spectrum. But, the challenge that faces the cartoonist in India and across the world now is of a different order, says Unny. Under the influence of an emerging brand of mainstream politics that draws its self-image from a dominant religion and is impacting the very fabric of our everyday lives, social attitudes are hardening into extreme positions. The newspaper reader cannot remain untouched by this phenomenon. Therefore, the challenge today, he feels, is to find creative ways to be persuasive with a large section of readers, especially the younger generation.

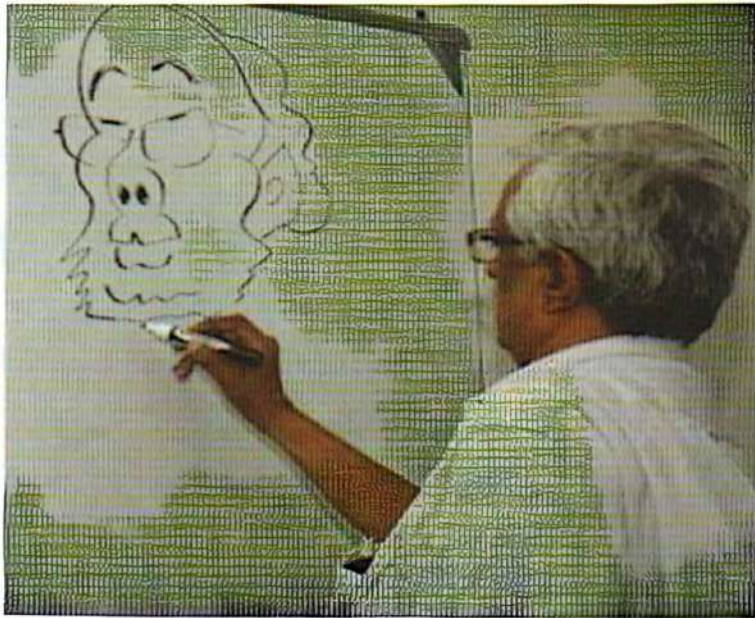
His cartoon series titled *Business As*



G Aravindan the Cartoonist

Usual had been appearing for a long time in the Indian Express, more or less in the way Laxman spoke through his "You Said It". These were later compiled and became a major attraction in the book stalls within the country and abroad.

His presentations took a different turn, when he wrote and sketched a travel book on Kerala under the title "Spices and Souls - A doodler's journey through Kerala". He has done a couple



E P Unny caricaturing Narendra Modi

of graphic novels and stories as well. He is perhaps the first ever to direct his sketching in these new areas in India.

"*Santa and the Scribes The Making of Fort Kochi*", Unny's very recent (2015) illustrated book on Fort Kochi too goes along a novel way. He sees Kochi as "one square mile of history and heritage, tourist trap, muse for artists and writers, and backdrop for movies and advertisements, packed with antiquity and "a million mosquitoes". According to him, Fort Kochi is the kind of place, where "just about everything except the fishermen on little canoes fitted with rusty Yamaha outboard engines are a couple of centuries old, or so you are assured".

Unny sketches, through 135 drawings and five chapters, an annotated history of Fort Kochi, which was an eye witness to centuries-old hectic trades, conquests, migrations and assimilation of cultures. He provides interesting commentaries on the history of this place, as recorded over the years and repeated off and on by tourist guides and operators. "Unlike Unny's newspaper cartooning style, which has thick lines and discernible caricatures, his squiggles for his own projects are marked by wispiqueness. The lines are thinner, more dense, sometimes spectral, and seem to suggest a throwaway quality at first glance; a second one reveals minor details" says a recent review of this book.

It appears that the Malayalam cartoonist Aravindan has had a great influence on him through his graphic story in the Mathrubhumi weekly (1963-71) that made him think in terms

of graphic sketches and cartoons. (Aravindan is considered a pioneer in the graphic narrative for recognizing the medium's potential for narrative complexity and the ability to deal with mature subjects and current affairs, as early as 1961).

While talking about his inspirations Unny is reported to have said: "My first influence is Aravindan, whom non-Malayalam audiences know mainly as a filmmaker. I liked cartooning as a child because I grew up on Aravindan's story-telling cartoon. My cartoon

reading itself was conditioned by this gentle master. When I came to the political cartoon later, I learned from many: Shankar's Weekly was to be found



Rahul and Priyanka

even in small towns; it had a significant institutional circulation. There was a club in Palakkad, where I grew up, which subscribed to the magazine. The weekly had PKS Kutty to Jules Feiffer apart from Shankar himself. Then there was Vijayan, drawing bilingually for The Hindu and Mathrubhumi, and Abu who could be seen six days a week in The Indian Express. The fare was rich enough to fall for".

Unny's cartoons are still going on delving into the newer and deeper dimensions of Indian life, with diversities in its people, culture, history, art, corporates and the like, as they are the basic raw material for his newer creations !! ■

BEE VENOM THERAPY

EXPERIENCES WITH NEW APPROACHES IN INFERTILITY TREATMENT

Dr. Ajoy V. Kurup PhD., MD (U)

Treatment, the way we understand it most of the time, implies addressing a particular symptom or complaint that brings a patient to the doctor's office.

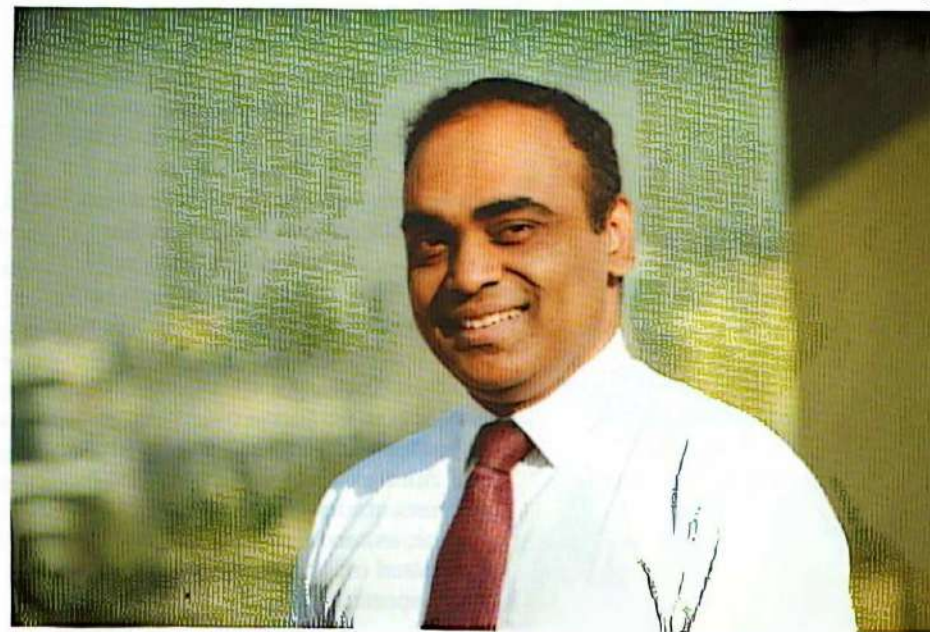
The treating doctor then looks for ways to eliminate the symptom. If somebody has depression there are ANTI-depressant medications; for anxiety there are ANTI-anxiety medications; for infections, we would use ANTI-biotic medications, and so on. This *ANTI* mentality has led to a military type approach to wellbeing. The word Anti has its origin in the ancient Greek language meaning 'against'.

On the other hand, a more holistic approach looks at a symptom as a sign that something is wrong or something is out of balance. The goal then is to help the body and mind achieve balance again. For example, somebody with back pain may have stress, trauma or a conflict in their life that needs to be resolved and addressed. Here comes the role of talking to the person, counselling to arrive at the imbalance and then treat it.

The role of counselling is of utmost importance.

Now, there is more to the body than just the physical system. There is a nonphysical system that co-exists with the physical system. This is the energy system. The energy that flows throughout the body!

The energy aspect of our body has long been accepted by all traditional healing systems such as Ayurveda, Acupuncture, Tai Chi, the Chakra system, meditation,



yoga, and shamanism etc.

Everything that happens within us is a biochemical reaction. Any biochemical reaction has an energy component. Thoughts, emotions, behaviour and actions, all have an energy component.

This energy moving within our body creates an electromagnetic field. This field connects to everything inside and outside of us. Our cells, organs, body, mind, other human beings, animals, plants and even the planets and the stars.

The primary assumption is that there is no significant separation between the physical

and energy worlds.

Hence working through the energy imbalance of our body, there is the ability to change the physical and emotional illnesses we are dealing with.

The energy components of our body can be felt by several sensations; such as tingling, electrical impulse, heat, or a movement sensation through the body. Many times during light meditation we often experience and separate the energy field and physical parts of our body.

On the other hand, any imbalance in the energy component can be experienced

manifest imbalance in one or more of the above sensations.

Like imbalance in electrical impulse can cause symptoms like epilepsy, arrhythmia in the heart beat etc.

Excess heat can cause chronic inflammation of a particular area or organ. There are five characteristics of inflammation i.e. redness, heat, pain, swelling and malfunctioning of organ.

This in turn results in several conditions like arthritis, blocks in the cardiovascular system for men, and pathology in the reproductive system for women etc. The increased cases of ovarian cysts, cancer of the cervix, fibroids in the uterus are all manifestation of the chronic inflammatory presentation in the respective organ area.

These conditions have more often known to create impediments to functioning of the reproductive system. Some Examples for fifth characteristic of inflammation being:

failing conception, completion of term and foetal survival in pregnant females.

This is where Bee Venom Therapy has its relevance and effectiveness. The administration of bee venom has notably helped fortifying the female reproductive system by reducing inflammation and acting as a natural antiinflammation and anti-bacterial component. Thus making it ready for normal function. In this there is no treating of symptoms, no medication and no surgery.

Apitherapy can deal with this conditions in a very organic process. Administration of bee venom activates the immune system through release of Mellitin and Apimine, the two polypeptides that are among the strongest known anti-inflammatory agents.

Mellitin reduces the inflammatory response in organs, it has the power to block the expression of the inflammatory genes. This is much like the Cortisol inhibitory drugs, which is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis. It has anti bacterial and anti fungal effects, cleansing the affected tissues in organs and healing them.

Other products of the hive like Royal Jelly are then used to fortify the system and induce better ovulation, egg quality and longer gestation of the egg in the system resulting in higher probability of fertilisation.

It also prepares the womb and the allied system while carrying the foetus to term. Far less difficulties are reported by women during term and at labour while they have been on Royal Jelly.

The process of anti-inflammatory treatment and the enhancing of fecundity in the female reproductive system from the use of Royal Jelly has proven outcomes from my experience and practice. It is the most natural way of enabling and enhancing the probability of conception in females with problems of conception.

This is the submission I make to this forum, women trying to conceive, infertile couples in general and the world at large, in supporting the Apitherapy movement and also encouraging sustainable bee keeping across the world. The bees are there for you. So stop worrying and have belief!

Bees are the integral part of Man's eco system. It is inseparable from our sustainability and wellbeing. It needs us now, more than anytime so far. Let's do our bit to strengthen the Bee Keeping movement.

You may write to Dr. A V Kurup at dravk2014@gmail.com for consultation and specific queries or call on +91 9769650763

Ask The Doc:

Q. Doctor Is Bee Venom therapy painful.

A. Not really. Its like a ant bite initially. The mellitin in the venom creates a burning sensation later in the skin which lasts for a few minutes. Nothing compared to any other cuts or injections we bare, Well no pain no gain they say.



Q. Are there any side effects of bee venom treatment.

A. Let me tell you frankly here. If you are allergic to bee venom then you cant take the treatment. So we will first do a test sting on you for allergy, wait fifteen minutes. If there is no symptoms of allergy we start treatment. Then it doesn't matter whether you take one sting or fifteen, you will not have any side effects.

Q. Doc, how expensive is the treatment.

A. I do not charge for bee venom consultation. It's FREE. I don't make my living out of this. Its my way of service to society. The reason I don't mention this is only because I have limited time and can only handle limited cases. I don't want a queue outside my office every morning right!!!

Q. How does the therapy work, especially for joint pains.

A. Well let me explain in simple non medical terminology. Usually Cortisol hormone steroids injections are used to treat joint pains. But they are synthetic substitutes. In beevenom therapy the venom triggers the body to produces it very own cortisol steroid from within. Completely natural and no side effects or complications. Get the point!

Q. What happens after a sting session?

A. You can get redness on the skin, itching and swelling for sometime. This can happen immediately and in some cases after a week also. This is not allergy, it is the venom beginning its work on the body, blood circulation improves to the area and all symptoms and pain disappear gradually. These reactions are general and local in nature. In fact the more severe the reaction the closer you are to recovery!



PATIENTS SPEAK

Mrs Priya Menon
Singapore

I was diagnosed with unexplained infertility issues and had used several modern day medicines, undergone several surgeries and treatments to cure the same without much result. I was then introduced to apitherapy by Dr. Kurup, who practices alternate medicine using bee venom and bee products which I used consistently. We are now proud parents of a healthy baby girl. I would stonry advocate apitherapy to others.



Vagbhatananda

GREAT ORATOR WHO OPPOSED IRRATIONAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Kunjikkannan Gurukkal or Vagbhatananda, as he was popularly called, was a contemporary of Sree Narayana Guru, a social reformer who worked to eradicate caste prejudices and other evils prevalent in society. He was a nationalist who met Mahatma Gandhi and participated in the Guruvayur temple entry satyagraha. A poet and journalist, he was influenced greatly by NK Guru and established Atmavidya Sangham and a Sanskrit school in Kozhikode known as Tatvaprakas providing education to children of all castes and classes.



V N Gopalakrishnan

■ Vagbhatananda was one of the great social reformers of Kerala. He was an erudite scholar, reformer, organiser, journalist and above all a nationalist. He founded Atmavidya

Sangham (School of Self Awareness), comprised mostly of professionals and intellectuals and had a secular approach to reform. The principles of Atmavidya Sangham were outlined in *Atmavidya*, a treatise on Advaita philosophy. His authority was the ancient wisdom of Hinduism and not the dogmatism of theology.

The second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of many socio-religious reform movements in Kerala spearheaded by Sree Narayana Guru, Chattampi Swami, Ayyankali, *et al.* Sree Narayana Guru established Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam in 1903 with "One caste, One religion and One God for Man" as its main slogan. He challenged Brahmin supremacy and consecrated a Shiva idol for the Ezhava community. Ayyankali, a member of the Pulaya community founded Sadhujana Sangham whose activities were limited to Travancore. Mahatma Gandhi once referred to Ayyankali as Pulaya Raja or King of Pulaya.

Vagbhatananda was born in 1887 in the Thiyya community as the son of Koran Gurukul and Cheeruvamma at Patyam near Kootuparampu in Kannoor district. Kunjikkannan was the name given by his parents and was educated in the traditional Gurukkal system. His father was a teacher and had good knowledge in Sanskrit and medical science.



Vagbhatananda was influenced by the activities of Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan, an active participant of the Brahma Samajam. He became a disciple of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, a contemporary of Sree Narayana Guru. He wrote *Mokshapradeepam* in 1905 which focused against idol worship and other evil practices in the society.

Kunjikkannan's life was greatly influenced by his father and he gained proficiency in scriptures and philosophy by reading epics and puranas from childhood. He accepted N.K.Gurukkal as his teacher at the age of thirteen. Later he came to be known as V. K. Gurukkal or Kunjikkannan Gurukkal. He was invited

to Kozhikode to deliver a speech which he stayed there and engaged in social work.

In 1906, Kunjikkannan Guru established a Sanskrit school in Kozhikode known as Tatvaprakas providing education to children of all castes and classes. Soon the school became popular. He was influenced by the activities of Dr. Ayyathan Gopalan, an active participant of the Brahma Samajam. He became a disciple of Brahmananda Swami Sivayogi, a contemporary of Sree Narayana Guru. He wrote *Mokshapradeepam* in 1905 which focused against idol worship and other evil practices in the society.

In 1911, Vagbhatananda established an association with Brahmananda Sivayogi, an organization named Rajayogana Kaumudi Yogasala at Kallai in Kozhikode and conducted discussions regarding Brahmananda Sivayogi's doctrine of Rajayoga in different parts of Malabar. Vagbhatananda published a journal titled *Sivayogivilasam* from Calicut in 1914 for propagating the ideas of Brahmananda Sivayogi and for propagation; he undertook a campaign from Mangalore to Madras. Though Vagbhatananda was a disciple of Brahmananda Sivayogi for a long time, he began to criticise the views of Brahmananda on God, Mind and Raja Yoga at a later stage. However, it was Brahmananda Sivayogi who gave him the name Vagbhatananda to V.K. Gurukkal *alias* Kunjikkannan on account of his oratorical skills. In spite of the differences, Vagbhatananda maintained cordial relations with Brahmananda. When Brahmananda Sivayogi died in 1922, *Atmavidya Kahalam* carried an editorial on him and Vagbhatananda made a condolence speech at the meeting.

conducted at Ganapath High School, Kozhikode.

Vagbhatananda who had closer relationship with Brahmananda Sivayogi was not as popular as Sree Narayana Guru but had excelled himself in erudition and oratory. In 1920 he established Atmavidya Sangham (School of Self Awareness) through which he campaigned against caste system, intoxication and drug abuse. He criticised the economic exploitation and the role of foreign governments in supporting it. Many people including members of the upper castes were attracted towards him. He had large number of disciples in the northern parts of Kerala as well as the rest of the places including Alappuzha, Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram. Even when accepting the existence of God, he opposed irrational religious beliefs. He encouraged inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriages. In order to stop animal sacrifice in temples, he took his agitation inside the temple premises.

Vagbhatananda entered into the literary world through poetry. The poems *Iswara Vicharam* (1915) and *Swathanthra Chinthamani* (1921) spelt out the shackles of caste system and idolatry. Some of his literary works were based on religion, philosophy and social reforms. He published *Atmavidya* in 1925 which was a manifesto of Atmavidya Sangham. He emphasized in this book on the physical and mental upliftment of the people through cultural means. The first five chapters of the book laid stress on the study of Vedanda and the rest eight chapters contain advices against evil customs and beliefs in the society. Vagbhadananda voiced against many social evils and customs like Thalickettu Kalyanam and Tirandukuli.

Vagbhatananda worked as a journalist for 25 years and expressed his ideas through the journals published by him. He considered journalism as a way of propagating Dharma and wrote articles in the publications such as *Sivayogivilasam*, *Abhinava Keralam*, *Atmavidya Kahalam* and *Yajamanan*. *Atmavidya Kahalam* was a daily which reflected the activities of Atmavidya Sangham. It supported Mahatma Gandhi's ideas like protection of Harijans, promotion of Khadi, eradication of untouchability and abstaining from drinking. *Yajamanan* was another daily started in 1937 aimed at publishing articles which other newspapers disagreed to publish.

The philosophies described in Atmavidya were widely discussed in a

Atmavidya Sangham supported Mahatma Gandhi's ideas like protection of Harijans, promotion of Khadi, eradication of untouchability and abstaining from drinking. Yajamanan was another daily started in 1937 aimed at publishing articles which other newspapers disagreed to publish.

book titled *Atmavidya Lekhanamala* published in 1934. It is a collection of articles published in *Atmavidya Kahalam* and *Mathrubhoomi*. He wrote few prayer songs for reciting on the occasions of marriage and death. *Prarthananjali* published in 1937 is a compilation of such prayers. He made a critical review on *Kavyamrutham* written by Krishnan Nair in 1937 which is a study on *Mayurasandesam* of Kerala Varma Valia Koyi Thampuran, *Bhashabhushanam* of A.R. Raja Raja Varma and *Sahityasarvaswam* of Vadakkumkoor Raja Raja Varma. Another book titled *Adyatmayudham* is a critical study on *Anandadarsanam* by Brahmananda Sivayogi. *Mathrubhumi* published a book titled *Vagbhatanandante Sampoonakritikal*

(Complete works of Vagbhadananda).

Vaikom Satyagraha was an important movement for temple entry spearheaded by leaders such as Mannathu Padmanabhan, K. Kelappan and P. K. Madhavan. As a result of the movement, the road in the western part of Vaikom temple was opened for all. Vagbhatananda took a leading role in the Guruvayur temple entry Satyagraha.

During the freedom struggle, Vagbhatananda appealed his disciples to rally behind Mahatma Gandhi. The British rulers were critical of Vagbhatananda's writings and they warned him several occasions during the Civil Disobedience Movement. Many of his followers including M.T. Kumaran, T.V. Anandan, P. Achutanandan, T.V. Kutty, A. Chathu Master, K. Kumaran and Dr. Chandu actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement and were arrested.

In 1914, he met Sree Narayana Guru and they conversed for a long time. It is said that the questions asked by Vagbhatananda might have influenced Sree Narayana Guru in the consecration of a Siva idol in 1917. He married Vagdevi, daughter of Tharu and they had four sons and three daughters. Vagbhatananda died in October 1939 at Karappuram in Kozhikode. The relevance of Atmavidya Sangham declined after his demise which was superseded by other secular-oriented reform groups such as the Karshaka Sangham that adopted its agenda. ■

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A Close Look at the Majestic Crow

The Scientific crow is emerging as a management role model with craftiness, strategic decision making, sociable skills and numeracy.



Dr A P Jayarman

■ The word 'crow' conjures up the dark black image of a dirty bird favourably dismissed at best as a scavenger. The bird makes its enigmatic voice of *kaakaa* and is called caw. In

Malayalam the sound of the bird gave it, its name *Kaakka*. No one except some madly sober scientists keep them as pets. We have our beloved parrots and love birds to keep happy company with.

Crow in faith

The faithful believe that the crows are the medium of their beloved departed souls. The annual feeding of the crows is a sanctimonious ritual and a pious practice in the belief system and is known as *Srardham*. It involves making rice balls and invoking the crows to feed on them. The delay in the arrival of the omnivorous crow to consume the pure vegetarian rice ball creates anxious moments for the relatives.

Cawing is considered by many as the advance information of the arrival of a guest.

Sankunni's Crow

In *Eithiyamala* of Kottathil Sankunni, there is a story about Kakkasseri Bhattathiri. The Bhattathiri boy would identify each crow from the others and would tell his mother which crow had visited the previous year and which did not partake in his father's *Srardham*. This spectacular power of observation and the uncanny knack of identification of the crows, gave the boy the pet name of Kakkassery.

This is reminiscent of the concept of the hypothetical Maxwellian demon in thermodynamics with the postulated power of identifying moving molecules.

Roy's Crow

In page 13, chapter 1 of *Arundhati*



Roy's famous novel *The God of Small Things* we read, 'Black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still dust green trees.' Literary critics cite this as a sexy imagery signifying *Velutha*.

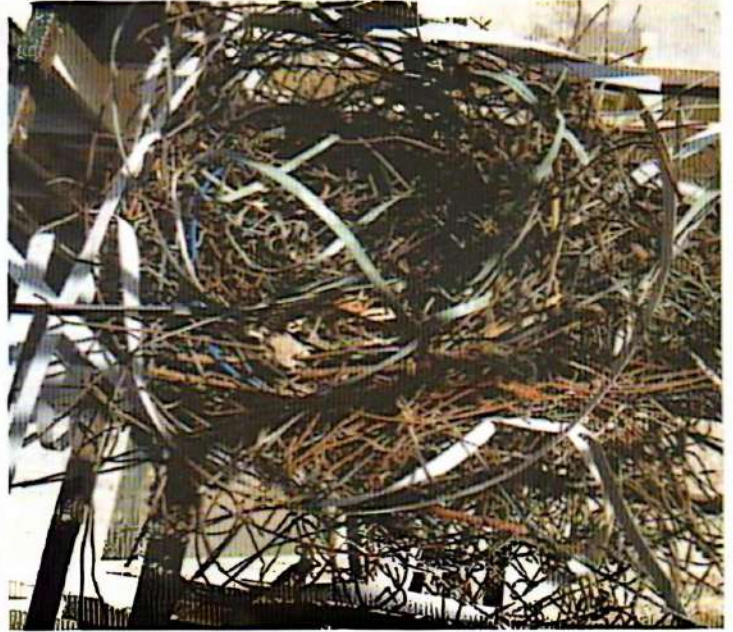
In my unguarded unscientific moments, I used to wonder why the authoress used black as an adjective for crow. There are colourful members in the Covid family and even white crows have been identified by ornithologists.

Crowless Singapore

Singapore has a magnificent obsession with stainless cleanliness. Crows have no place in their public health space and are relentlessly decimated. Armed with shotguns, members of the Singapore Rifle club systematically terminate crows and there was a monetary incentive of two Sing dollars per crow culled. The crow population is estimated at a manageable level of 10,000, as



Mission successful with three eggs functional nest



Totally assembled completed nest

compared to 120,000 in 2001.

Sciency Crow

The crow has a small brain. It measures up to our thumb size. But its brain size is big compared to its body. This makes it a brainy bird. Scientific curiosity springs from the ratio of brain weight to its body weight. Science has uncovered a string of fascinating facts about the crow. To scientists from diverse interdisciplinary domains such as neurocognologists to sociobiologists, the crow is a source of inexhaustible curiosity for experimentation and observation. The lowly bird is a veritable source of studies and its latent and innate intelligence has been revealed recently.

biological roots of counting capabilities. When a crow looks at three dots, three grains or three menacing children, single neurons recognize the groups' 'threeness'. This discovery shows that the ability to deal with abstract numerical concepts can be traced back to individual nerve cells in crows.

Tool Maker Crow

We are noted for our great skill in using tools. Our technological culture is a pure product of that skill. Smart are crows are also good at using tools. Crows have been observed using tools

they have made out of long, narrow, palm-like leaves

Crows and humans share the ability to recognize faces and associate them with negative, as well as positive, feelings. The way the brain activates during that process is something the two species also appear to share. Crows take to the skies more quickly when an approaching person looks directly at them, as opposed to when an individual nears with an averted gaze.

Eureka Crow

Every child has a vivid memory of the

Smart Crow

Crows can remember facial features recognizing and remembering individual faces. Friends and foes are distinguished and it could be nasty to mess up with crows. This has been verified by testing crows under sedation and subjecting them to PET-Positron Emission Tomography. Different brain areas of the crow lighted up based on seeing a friend and a foe.

Crows communicate in sophisticated ways. They also have the brain power to solve higher-order, relational-matching tasks, and they can do so spontaneously. Thus they join humans, apes and monkeys in exhibiting advanced relational thinking

Neurobiologists have discovered cells in the crow brain that respond to a specific number of items. The study provides valuable insights into the



White crow

smart crow which dropped pebbles into a pitcher and brought water level up to drop enabling it to drink. They have been trained to drop objects into containers of water to raise the water's level so they can snatch floating food. Our kids cannot solve this problem until they are five or older. Like Archimedes in his bathtub, crow knows how to displace water. The amusing fictional story of the pitcher and crow is now an amazing experiment in psychology of animal behavior.

Crow study doctorates

New Caledonian crows were subjected to this test. Sarah Jelbert at the University of Auckland placed scraps of meat just out of a crow's reach, floating in a series of tubes that were part-filled with water. Objects potentially useful for bringing up the water level, like stones or heavy rubber erasers, were left nearby. The crows successfully figured out that heavy and solid objects would help them get a treat faster. They also preferred to drop objects in tubes where they could access a reward more easily, picking out tubes with higher water levels and choosing tubes of water over sand-filled ones. I am sure she would have received her doctoral degree for this research work.

Inscrutable Japanese Crows

Somewhere in the front line of crowine intelligence stands the Japanese

Crows can remember facial features recognizing and remembering individual faces.

Friends and foes are distinguished and it could be nasty to mess up with crows.

This has been verified by testing crows under sedation and subjecting them to PET-

Positron Emission Tomography. Different brain areas of the crow lighted up based on seeing a friend and a foe.

carriion crow. They perch at traffic junctions and wait for a red signal to arrive. When the traffic comes to a halt, crows fly down and place walnuts in front of the tyres. The light changes, move on crushing the nuts. The crows then scoop down to pick up the crushed nuts. In the Brazilian city of Rio de Jenario, I have seen rag pickers keeping their beer can bags under the tyre of a bus and get it compressed.

Engineer Crow

I now come to my encounter with a female crow in the balcony of my apartment in Mahalaxmi, Mumbai. It

was nesting time. She chose the iron grill protection provided to the balcony windows of the tenth floor flat very seldom occupied. Rest of the building fully occupied. How did she zero in on that nesting site? Site selection itself reflects a rational choice. Rejection of other sites and zeroing on a relatively uninhabited space fascinates me.

Material supply

All the materials she used for her nest were from the construction industry. Steel wires of same diameter but of varying lengths from 1 cm to 50 cm were used for fabricating the steel nest. The project was completed in ten days. Materials of nest construction were not collected in one go. They were brought as the project progressed. Plastic strappings of tile packaging and a specialty cable of three metre length could be seen. What a choice! What excited my interest was the way the crow connected and anchored the wires to produce the three dimensional layered network positioned in place in high integrity. Decommissioning the nest network from the site and disassembling to disentangle the intricate work to stucco components were tough task to me. It was an elegant engineering work gracefully executed in good time in project management mode with a tight timeline by the crow. The urban crow has developed appropriate skills as a survival tool is abundantly clear. ■

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(Publisher)



LEARN TO RELAX, PLEASE

A break from our daily routine of activities is necessary in our lives. At least once a while it is required to drop all calculations, jettison all blue prints for self improvements and simply be yourself. This helps your inner well-being. Such breaks help the enormous expansion and enrichment of one's being.



Prof. Dr. John Mathews Vazhappilly

■ We are living in an age of hurry, haste, tension, speed and frantic competition. We hurl ourselves through life at a breathless pace, trying to keep up with the people who are trying to keep up with the Joneses. Is it worth it? To know the true joy of work one should know how to be intense and relaxed at the same time. These days young professionals in their mad pursuit of material success have forgotten how to relax without being lax, how to be intense without becoming tense. Many people know how to excel in work; many others know how to excel in play, but very few persons know to induce playfulness into work, and some fruitful work into leisure.

A distinguished explorer who spent a couple of years among the savages of the upper Amazon, once attempted a forced march through the jungle. The party made extraordinary speed for the

first two days, but on the third morning, when it was time to start, he found all the natives sitting on their haunches, looking very solemn and making no

When there is no time for quiet, there is no time for the soul to grow. The man who walks through a country side sees much more than the man who runs. When we walk through the country side leisurely, we begin to develop truer appreciation of essentials; the landscape ceases to be a blur and becomes a country side with detail, colour, dimension and depth. For those who practice periodic relaxation, every day becomes a Sunday.

preparation to leave. "They are waiting," the chief of the natives explained to the explorer; "they cannot move further until their souls have caught up with their bodies."

I can think of no better illustration of our own plight today. Is there no way of letting our souls, so to say, catch up with our bodies? Man does not live by work alone. There is such a thing as a sacred leisure, the cultivation of which is now fearfully neglected. Leisure is the womb of all fruitful creativity. Aristotle said, "The aim of education is the wise use of leisure." A creative and positive use of leisure is a real test of culture, refinement and civilization. Only in an environment of affluence and leisure floats the intangible dust of creative ideas, the raw material for fashioning fine literary and artistic creations. A colony of busy ants or bees will never create a Parthenon or a Taj Mahal. Tennyson in one of his short poems celebrates the beauty of simple pleasures in life :

Home Joys are known in simple things
In friends that share a cup of tea

In books that waken old, old dreams
And songs that stir the memory

The Creative Power of Recreation

Recreation is a built-in tranquilizer. Use it frequently and creatively in your daily life. Recreation means enjoying certain periods of playfulness and fun. Recreation can bring a sense of fulfillment, joy, health, education and an enrichment of life. It can also create a salubrious climate of friendship and conviviality.

The true purpose of recreation should be not merely to amuse, not merely to entertain but to enhance our fitness, increase our usefulness, spur achievement. Any form of recreation that damages either our physical or mental efficiency does not recreate. America used to be owned by the Indian who hunted and fished so much that he didn't have time to work and worry. Then it was taken over by the superior white man who works and worries so much that he doesn't have time to hunt and fish.

The Healing Powers of a Good Rest

The value of rest is evident throughout nature. All of life exhibits the cycle of rest and activity. Waves rise and fall, day and night follow in succession, the eye lids blink, even plants rest in the night and continue the photosynthesis process in the daylight. Progress cannot continue indefinitely without rest. Exhaustion overtakes us if we try to force the body to continue functioning when it is tired.

It is obvious that sufficient rest is the basis of clarity of mind and alertness. Just as we walk on two feet, each foot alternately active and inactive, so progress in life has two phases, activity and rest. Profound rest gives rise to the most dynamic, creative activity.

A great conductor was rehearsing his orchestra. During the rehearsal he said, "Remember, the rests are as important as the notes" And so it seemed to be. For the rests in the symphonic piece gave a dramatic beauty the music would have lacked without them. In time of quiet, we gain a new perspective on all of life.

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, "Extreme busyness, whether at school or college, Kirk or marketplace, is a symptom of deficient vitality." His concern was that we cultivate time for quiet; to walk alone in the beauty of

These days in the age of movement, speed and connection, we feel as though we can make contact with almost anyone anywhere at any moment. But as far as geography is shrinking, the clock is exerting more and more tyranny over us. And the more we can contact others, the more, it sometimes seems, we lose contact with ourselves. Paradoxically in a global village we have more communication and less communion.

nature on a sunny day; to watch the drops of rain fall on a windowpane; to chat with friends; to play a game with the family; to read; to write a letter; to worship in the quiet of a sanctuary. Moments of rest and quietness add depth to our life, impart wisdom to our judgments and lend clarity to our vision of life. In short, creative relaxation ennobles our life and purifies our vision.

The Art of Relaxing

Periods of wholesome laziness, after days of energetic effort, will wonderfully tone up the mind and the body. It does not involve loss of time,

TAKE TIME

Take time to laugh....
It is the music of the soul.
Take time to play....
It is the secret of perpetual youth.
Take time to dream....
It is reaching for the stars.
Take time to read....
It is the fountain of wisdom.
Take time to be friendly....
It is the road to happiness.
Take time to give....
It is too short a day to be selfish.
Take time to pray....
It is the greatest power on earth.

- Anon

since after a day of complete rest and quietness you will return to your regular occupation with renewed interest and vigor. The beauty and value of a quiet, relaxed existence is exemplified in the life of Thoreau. Thoreau's solitary reflections around Walden Pond produced the insights that made him famous. It was also Thoreau who said, "The swiftest traveler is he that goes afoot" - a remark that might well be the creative pauser's motto.

When there is no time for quiet, there is no time for the soul to grow. The man who walks through a country side sees much more than the man who runs. When we walk through the country side leisurely, we begin to develop truer appreciation of essentials; the landscape ceases to be a blur and becomes a country side with detail, colour, dimension and depth. For those who practice periodic relaxation, every day becomes a Sunday.

The Wisdom of the Sabbath

The ancient prohibition against work and organized entertainment on Sunday was designed to create this atmosphere of spiritual harmony. When you practise the art of pausing, you are really scattering fragments of Sunday throughout the week. One is reminded of the insightful observation of Thoreau: The true harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as the tints of morning and evening. It is a little stardust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched.

Observing the Sabbath is an established tradition in the Judeo Christian culture. A weekly holiday refreshes and recharges our relationship with God and man. A Sabbath ensures that we will have something bright and purposeful to carry back into the other six days. The Sabbath recalls to us that, in the end, all our journeys have to bring us home. The place where we feel at home is the right place for Sabbath. The place that draws us most deeply are the ones we recognize like long lost friends; we come to them with a piercing sense of intimacy. "Some keep the Sabbath going to church" Emily Dickinson wrote, "I keep it, staying at home."

The need for an empty space and free time to pause, to ponder, to wonder is something we all have felt in our bones; it is the rest in a piece of music that gives it resonance and depth. It is often the moment of silence in a dramatic

scene enacted in a theatre that gives intensity to the emotion expressed. The one word for which the adjective "holy" is used in the Ten Commandments is Sabbath. Keeping the Sabbath doing nothing for a while is hard for many of us.

One day Mahatma Gandhi was said to have woken up and told those around him, "This is going to be a very busy day, I won't be able to meditate for an hour." His friends were surprised at this unusual break from his strict discipline. "I will have to meditate for two," he spelled out. Yes, it is precisely those who are busiest, who most need to give themselves a break. One has to recharge one's inner batteries. As you care for your body, so you have to care for your mind, heart and soul. One needs to bring more freshness and joy into one's work and play.

These days in the age of movement, speed and connection, we feel as though we can make contact with almost anyone anywhere at any moment. But as far as geography is shrinking, the clock is exerting more and more tyranny over us. And the more we can contact others, the more, it sometimes seems, we lose contact with ourselves. Paradoxically in a global village we have more communication and less communion.

This is what the principle of the Sabbath enshrines. It is, as Abraham Joshua Heschel, the great Jewish theologian of the last century, had it, "a cathedral in time rather than in space"; the one day a week we take off becomes a vast empty space through which we can wander, without agenda.

Some people can use a transatlantic flight as a "retreat in the sky" Pico Iyer the celebrated author speaks about such an incident: I found myself on such a flight, from Frankfurt to Los Angeles. The woman who came and sat next to me was young, very attractive and, as I would learn, from Germany. As she settled into her seat, she exchanged a few friendly words and then proceeded to sit in silence, doing nothing for the next twelve hours. She liked to use the flight over to begin to get all the stress out of her system. I was humbled. One can take a mini-Sabbath even in the skies. One can let his mind lie down like a dog on a wide, empty beach.

Many in Silicon Valley observe an "Internet Sabbath" every week, during which they turn off most of their devices from, say, Friday night to Monday morning, if only to retrieve the

One must learn to keep the cornucopia of technology at arm's length so that one can become aware of one's authentic self. Essentially we are snacking on superficial dissipations and missing out on the fundamental hunger for fulfillment.

sense of proportion and direction they will need for when they go back on line. It is a necessity for us in this technological age to be rooted in the natural world. One must learn to keep the cornucopia of technology at arm's length so that one can become aware of one's authentic self. Essentially we are snacking on superficial dissipations and missing out on the fundamental hunger for fulfillment.

If possible, go to a consecrated space a sanctuary. Spend a few days without any distraction. No mobiles, no television, no internet. Just sit comfortably, quietly, eyes open and alert. This period of rest, relaxation and awareness rejuvenates and refreshes you in a manner that you cannot imagine.

Slow Down to Pause, to Ponder and to Wonder

Take a breather. Your sigh of relief after rushing through the day and

If possible, go to a consecrated space a sanctuary. Spend a few days without any distraction. No mobiles, no television, no internet. Just sit comfortably, quietly, eyes open and alert. This period of rest, relaxation and awareness rejuvenates and refreshes you in a manner that you cannot imagine.

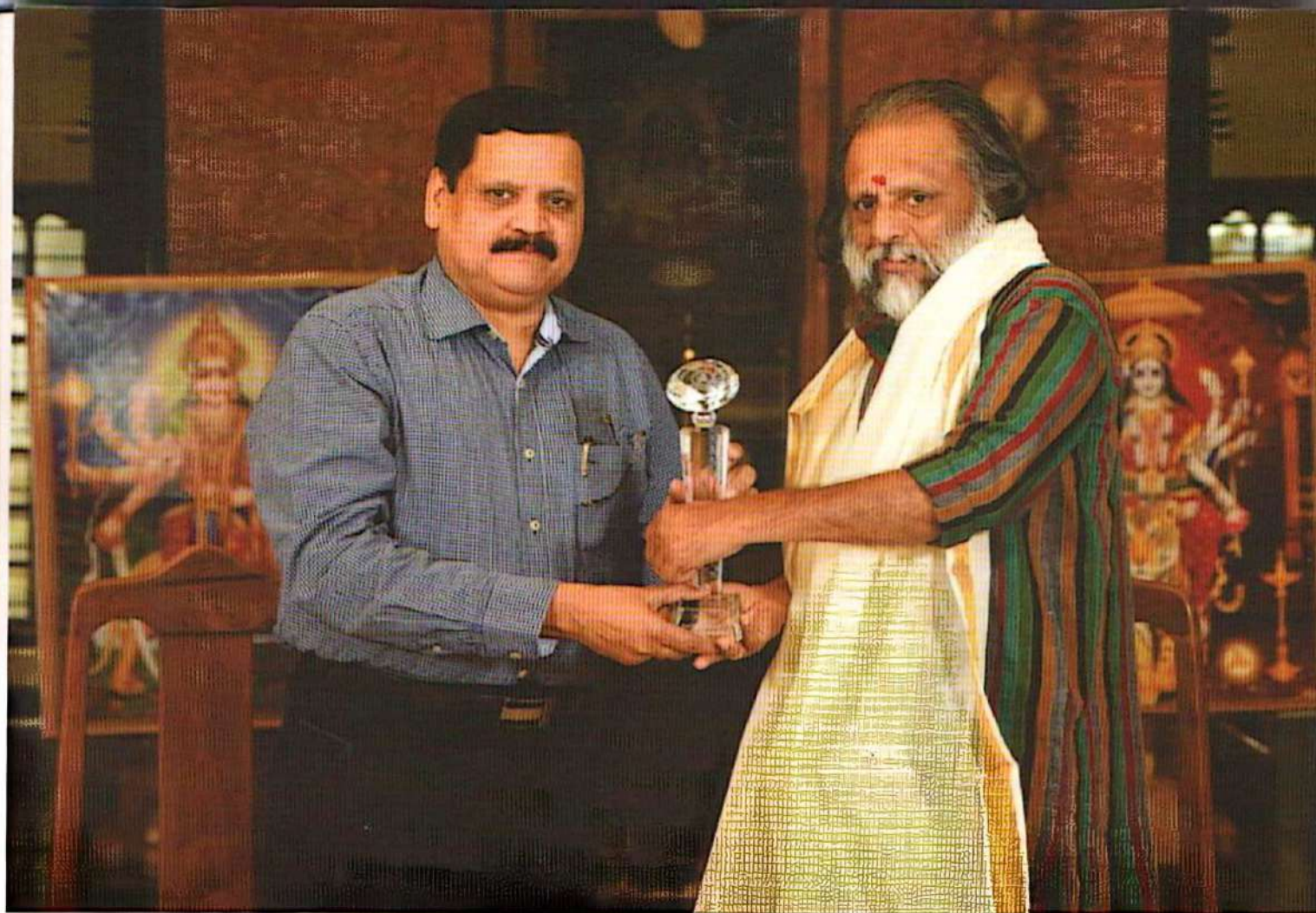
completing all the tasks at hand will turn into a gnawing feeling of hollowness and boredom, somewhere deep within, over a period of time. A joyful existence does not lie in haste and hurry. Happiness lies in the small moments of human fulfillment, not in the mad rush of things. Speed gives you excitement and entertainment, not fulfillment and enlightenment.

Bernadette Noll in her book *Slow Family Living* exhorts families to slowdown, to connect and enjoy a life together. Families need communication, connection and communion based on an enduring, loving relationship. Spend some time with the family even in the busy day-to-day life. Never miss an opportunity to have a meal with the family members. Make a conscious, deliberate effort to disconnect yourself from the office and focus on the nourishing, bonding experience of having a meal with the family members. Appreciate the flavours and textures of the various dishes served. The hectic pace has turned days into a blur, leaving the family members disconnected. Speed is the enemy of human bonding and connection.

Slowing down in family life does not mean doing everything at a snail's pace. It is inducing a sense of ease and comfort in family life. It is finding love and security within the shelter of one's home. It is taking an assertive stand against a culture of speed, rush and haste and making an effort to bond with your family members.

Children and teenagers need to work diligently, systematically and perseveringly to succeed in life, but that does not mean they should lose the joys of childhood or teenage. Give your kids leisure to rest, relax and savour the simple joys of childhood and teenage. Let there be space and time for fun and frolic. Parenting is not a project but an adventurous, slow, relaxed journey to the mountain peaks of togetherness, joy, love peace and stillness. ■





P V Vijaykumar presenting Kaithapram Damodaran Namboodiri the 12th Raagalaya Lifetime Achievement Award

CELEBRATIONS GALORE

Twelfth Raagalaya Lifetime Achievement Award, Raagalaya Music Competition and KIM Anniversary Nite



Pratap Nair felicitating K D Chandran



Satyanath felicitating V G Nair



Lakshmi Venkatachalam presenting bouquet to Udayatara Nayar



Pratap Nair felicitating K R Narayanan



Felicitations to: Dr Oommen David, late Uma Davi's Sons, Basant Master

The 12th Raagalaya Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to the most popular Malayalam lyricist and music director Kaithapram Damodharan Namboodiri in a glittering ceremony held at his residence in Calicut, Kerala on 3rd February. P V Vijaykumar, President of Raagalaya Academy of Music & Arts and also Managing Editor of Kerala in Mumbai Magazine presented the Raagalaya Lifetime Achievement Award and cash award of Rs 25,000 to him.

The annual Raagalaya Light music competition took place on February 7 at Aiswarya Hall in Marol Education Academy. The Competition was held for different age groups (totalling six) both male and female, from the age of 5 up to 60 years and above, (Group A, B, C, D, E and F) and first prize and second prize consisting each of cash prize, trophy and participation certificate were given to the contestants. The winners also got gift vouchers from Meenu Gems Fashion Jewellery. More than 100 amateur artistes participated in the competition which started at 8.30 am and continued till 6 pm. Noted Musician Ganesh Iyer, Guitarist Viswanathan and Keyboard artiste Venugopal were the Judges of the competition along with the tabla and keyboard artistes who accompanied the contestants' singing.

Kerala in Mumbai celebrated its sixth anniversary in the evening at the same

venue. A few eminent Mumbai Malayalis who have achieved excellence in their chosen field were felicitated with a memento, shawl and bouquet. They were senior businessman V G Nair, educationist and Principal of Holy Angels School Dr Oomen David, veteran actor K D Chandran, noted film journalist Udayatara Nayar, senior writer K R Narayanan and Music Director Basant Master. Senior Malayalam Drama actor, late Uma Devi who was one of the earliest female actors, was given the award posthumously. Her sons collected the Award on her behalf. Johnson and Alice Therattil, Pratap Nair, D.R. Nair, P.R. Krishnan, Balachandran Vellody, Harikumar Menon, KG Vallabhan, CP Krishnakumar, Adv Prema Menon, Suma Mukundan, Sashikumar Nair, and several eminent personalities attended the Anniversary celebrations. Kerala in Mumbai Writers and other staff were also felicitated during the function.

This was followed by a beautiful musical performance of Kaithapram's songs by Raagalaya's orchestra team that included talented Mumbai Malayali singers, veteran keyboard, guitar and other musical instruments artistes. Vijaykumar himself sang one or two Kaithapram's melodious compositions. Geetha Poduval and Ashish Abraham compered the competition and the Anniversary celebrations.



Sriprakash Menon



Dr Nalini Janardhanan



Shankar Bhogwekar with Harikumar Menon



K V Satyanath with Johnson Therattil



Lakshmi Venkatachalam with Alice Therattil



V N Gopalakrishnan with P V Vijaykumar



Felicitations to: K V Prabhakaran, Sudhakaran K M, Rajan V Nair, Vinod Kovilakath



P R Krishnan, D R Nair, Johnson and Alice Therattil, K G Vallabhan, Harikumar Menon, Sashikumar Nair



Devdas G Nair, Adv. Prema Menon, Shriraj Nair, Bijoy Oommen, Adv. Rajkumar, C P Krishnakumar, Viswanathan, Mangesh Borade



The team behind Kerala In Mumbai



The inauguration ceremony

Raagalaya Music Competition

During the Light Music Competition, it was heartening to hear most of the contestants singing in Malayalam since one of the main aims of Raagalaya and its President P V Vijaykumar is to seek, promote and encourage budding talents among Mumbai Malayalees and give them a platform to hone their singing skills.

There are thousands of unrecognized talented Malayalee singers in Mumbai seeking opportunities to enhance their musical skills and pursue a career in the music field. Raagalaya wishes to help them realize their dreams. Several noted young singers of today like Rajalakshmi Somarajan, Reshma Menon, Sandhya Pisharody, Anu Shyam, Jyotsna, Preeti Warriar and many more have had their first experience of participating in musical programmes on this stage. Similarly these annual music competitions have provided a platform for several professionals, housewives, and others who have a passion for music, to fulfill their desire for singing on stage. Needless to say a few of them have rediscovered their hidden musical talents through the Raagalaya competitions.

Raagalaya Academy of Music and Arts was established in 2004 by a group of music lovers of Mumbai Keralites, headed by P V Vijaykumar. Apart from the annual music competition Raagalaya honours with a Lifetime Achievement Award to an outstanding artiste from the music field. Gana Gandharvan Padmabhushan Dr K J Yesudas, Padmashri S P Balasubrahmanyam, P Jayachandran, late Dakshinamoorthy Swamy, late P Leela, S Janaki, late poet ONV Kurup, late M G Radhakrishnan, late Johnson Master, late Raveendran Master, Sreekumaran Thampy, Raghavan Master, M S Viswanathan, M K Arjunan and K Jayakumar have been honoured earlier by Raagalaya where the winning team of singers have got an opportunity to sing and share the stage with the seasoned awardees at a glittering ceremony on Raagalaya Musical Nite where they were honoured.



Group A Winners



Group B Winners



Group C Winners



Group E Winners



Group D Winners



Group F Winners



Section of audience



Section of audience



Singers and Orchestra team of Raagalaya

Sandhya R Pisharody

Talented Singer and Music Teacher

Sandhya Pisharody belongs to a family of singers and musically inclined members. So it comes as no surprise that she is one of Mumbai's current talented Malayalee singers and music teacher.

-Lakshmi

Sandhya R Pisharody teaches music and dance at VK Krishna Menon Academy at MHB Colony run by the Borivli Malayali Samajam. The School has started music and dance as a separate subject from the current academic year. Here she teaches her students light music and patriotic songs in Hindi and English and Gita Chanting as well. She teaches Carnatic Music at the Borivli Malayali Samajam Fine Arts School which was formally inaugurated during Vijayadasami in October 2015. She also takes private music classes for interested students in Mumbai and its suburbs.

Sandhya has performed solo Carnatic vocal recitals as well. She started learning music from the age of five. At first it was from her mother Kusumam, father and grandmothers who are good singers.

"In fact my ammamma (maternal grandmother), Kaumudi Pisharasyar was a thiruvathira teacher well in my native place," she says. "Both she and my achamma, Sarada Pisharasyar inspired me a lot and motivated me to learn music."

Sandhya learnt Carnatic music under Smt. Leelamani Sudarsan and Smt. Alli Namboodiri both in Angamaly and



Kummanam Sasikumar.

Apart from Carnatic Music, Sandhya is learning Hindustani music in Mumbai for the past two years under Smt Kumud Mhatre, disciple of Pandit Prabhakar Dharmadhikari of Gandharva Sangeeta Vidyalaya in Mumbai and has cleared the first two examinations, written the third praveshika poorna examination and awaiting its result. She will be next appearing for the fourth Madhyama Pratham examination now. Under the guidance of her teacher she is teaching Hindustani music classes as well.

Sandhya's father is Damodara Pisharody who retired as Manager from Co optex. He is also a knowledgeable person on music.

Performer

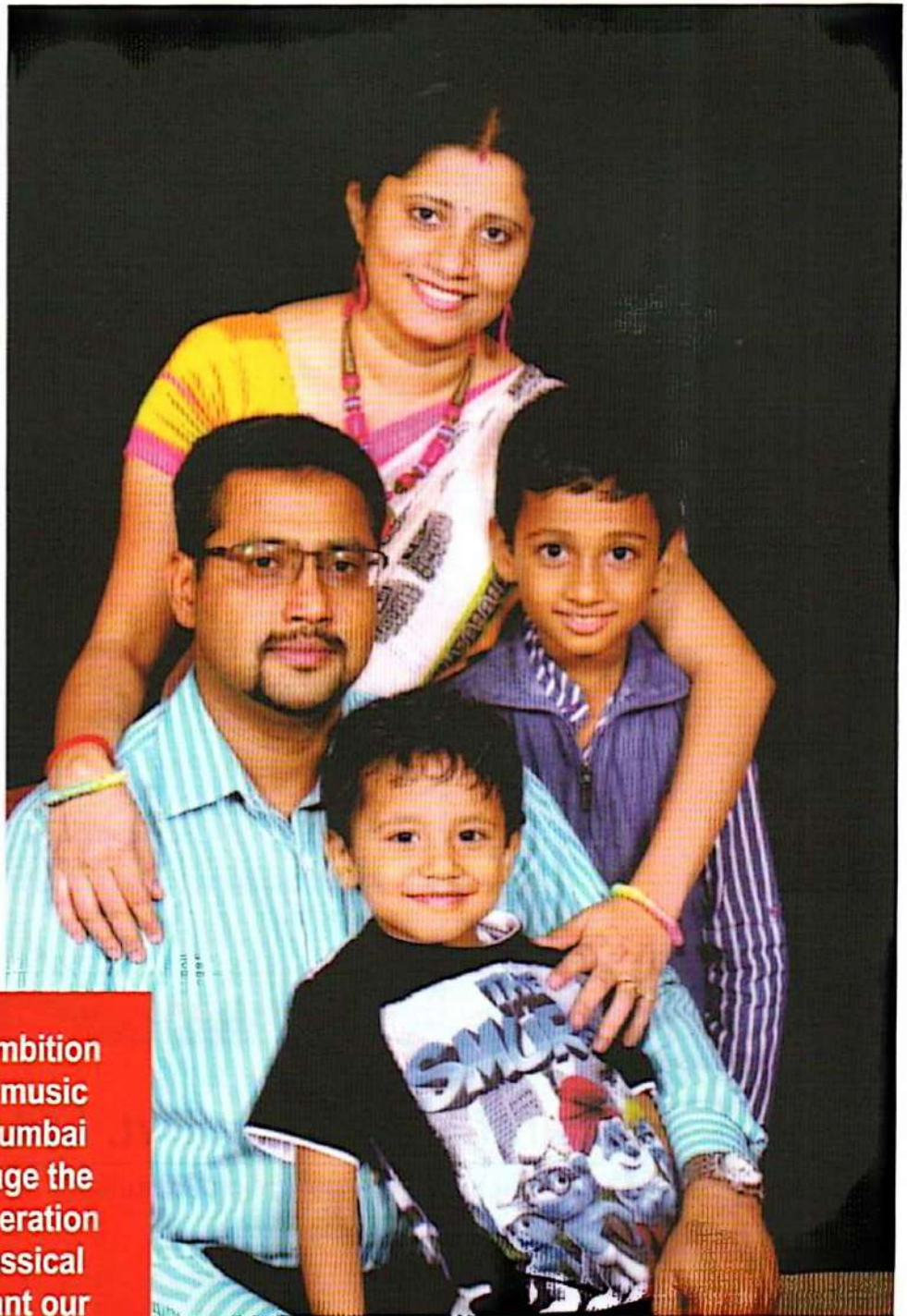
As a musician Sandhya has performed devotional music orchestra on several stages. She has performed for Raagalaya's programmes and won prizes in its Annual Music competitions. She has given Carnatic vocal recitals at Gorai Malayali Samajam and a few other organizations and temple festivals in Mumbai. At the age of thirteen she rendered her first Carnatic Recital.

She is also part of 'Nadopaasana' a musical troupe in Andheri led by Smt Shailaja Kumar that performs devotional music programmes during Onam, Makara Vilakku celebrations, etc.

Awards and Recognitions

Apart from Raagalaya's music awards for light music, Sandhya has won first/second prize at Malaylotsavam competitions, Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana competitions etc in Mumbai. As a student she has bagged prizes at Youth festivals and other competitions.

In addition to music she has learnt classical dance as well in her childhood and now choreographs cinematic and semi classical dances and along with her students, she gives performances on stage during social functions etc. She



Sandhya's ambition is to start a music school in Mumbai and encourage the younger generation to study classical music. "I want our youngsters to read and write Malayalam. Nowadays several of them do not even speak Malayalam at home.

has won prizes for dance competitions on various stages, both solo and group dance.

Sandhya's ambition is to start a music school in Mumbai and encourage the younger generation to study

classical music. "I want our youngsters to read and write Malayalam. Nowadays several of them do not even speak Malayalam at home. This is very sad," she says.

She teaches Malayalam under the Kerala Government's Malayalam Mission plan.

Sandhya got married to Ramesh Balakrishnan in 2005 and came to Mumbai. Ramesh, who did his education in Kochi and Mumbai, is now working with Emirates Airlines in Mumbai. He hails from Poothole in Thrissur and is an amateur singer who has given programmes along with Sandhya on a few occasions. His parents are Balakrishnan who retired as DGM from IDBI Bank and Sethulakshmi. His parents are also good singers and his maternal grandmother was a Carnatic Music teacher. Though Ramesh's parents were living in Mumbai, now they have settled in Kerala.

They have two children, Ankit who is



eight years old and is studying in Std II and is also learning keyboard, music and dance. The younger son, Archit is four years old. Both the boys are interested in music.

Sandhya did her schooling at Mahakavi G Memorial High School, Angamaly and BA Literature at Queen Mary's College in Aluva. She has passed Hindi Praveen examination under Dakshina Bharat Hindi Pracharak Sabha. She has also cleared Sanskrit Bharati examination under Amritha Bharathi Vidya Peedham, both the above, during her school days.

She has a sister Abhayambika Pisharody who is doing her Final year of graduation and is a trained classical dancer as well.

On the social front Sandhya is actively involved with the activities of Gorail Malayalee Samajam, Borivali Malayalam Samajam, Pisharody Samajam and a few other organizations of Mumbai.

"I am able to concentrate on my singing profession because of the encouragement from my husband, and support from my parents and inlaws," she says. ■

Sandhya receiving the prizes during Malayalotsavam 2015-16

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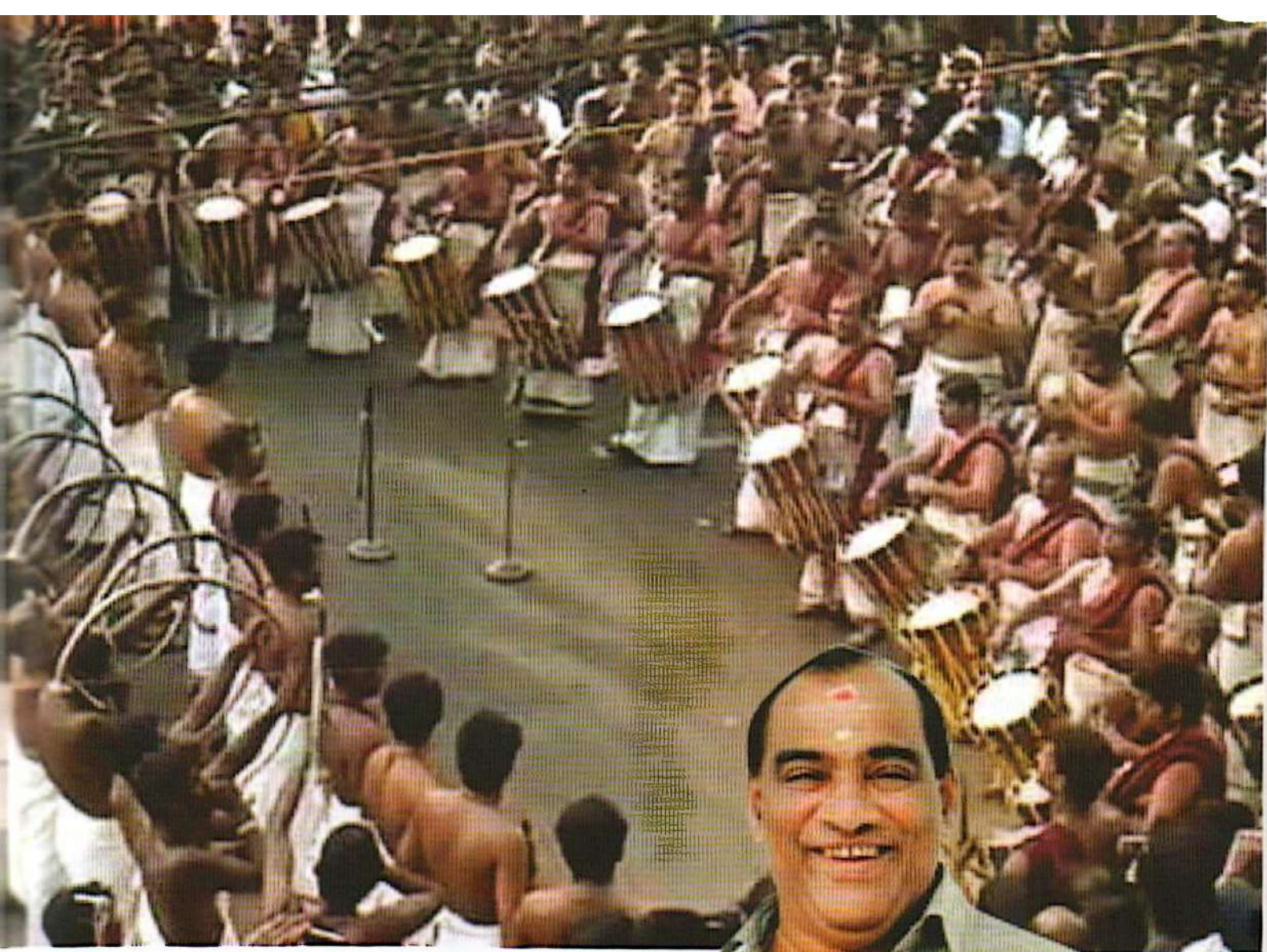
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PADMASHRI MATTANNUR SANKARANKUTTY MARAR

- Kunnam Vishnu

Rhythm is always considered to be only a percussion to Music and Dance across the world. Rhythm hardly could get the recognition as an art in itself independent from any other forms of art. But Kerala is definitely an exception to this rule. The symphonies like Melam varieties, Keli and solo performances like *Thayampaka* are a few examples of pure rhythm



Mattannur



Rhythmic ensemble

performances. Of the various rhythm instruments played in Kerala, Chenda is the most predominant one. Chenda, like any other drums has two sides one for treble (*edanthala*) and one for bass (*valanthala*). In all plays of Chenda, except in a few ritualistic performances, the treble end (*edanthala*) takes the lead the bass end (*valanthala*) are the supportive drums played along with cymbals (*elathalam*). The most sought after play of Chenda, particularly in Central Kerala, mainly in the districts of Palakkad, is the solo performance *Thayampaka*. When we speak of contemporary *Thayampaka*, the first name that comes to our mind undoubtedly is Padmashri Mattannur Sankarankutty Marar, who brought the

ritual temple art of Kerala to the global stage, with its mesmerizing impact.

Childhood

He was born in a family of Chenda artists. His father Mattannur Kunhikrishna Marar was basically a Bank Officer and his mother Karthiayani Amma was a homemaker. His family had the responsibility of the daily ritual of Mahadeva temple of Mattannur. He being the eldest of the siblings, had to help his father in the temple rituals. As is the social practice he was put in school at the tender age of 5. When he was studying in Mattannur Upper Primary School, he had to rush home to attend the temple in the evening. As soon as his father reached

from Office and settled down, he would start teaching the young boy the preliminary lessons of *Thayampaka* till supper. Morning again there is temple duties to perform and to assist his father. This went on till he completed his sixth standard. The main grievance of his young mind was that, when the other boys of his age had plenty of time till dusk to play around, Sankaran had duties to attend and complete his school lessons to attend the everyday *Thayampaka* class. But the great boon of the boy was his grasping capacity, in so far as any new numbers in the lesson explained or demonstrated by his father twice or thrice is always picked up by him without fail. Thus his father put acronym on him "The Bloating Paper", which can absorb any liquid in just one touch. It is that quality to absorb any lesson or imitable point and to use in appropriate time that made Mattannoor different from others, that took him up the ladders far more steps ahead. Thus he had his debut performance of *Thayampaka* at the very tender age of 8 at Mattannoor Mahadeva Temple, under the exclusive tutelage of his father.

Because of the routine chores and the paucity of time and chance for boyish plays and games, he was desperate and wanted to run away from home. It was then, specifically speaking when he had finished his 6th Standard in school, the god-send boon came in the form of his cousin Ramachandran. Sankarankutty's maternal uncles's son Ramachandran was a Maddalam student at the famous art school 'Peroor Gandhi Seva Sadanam'. He offered Sankarankutty an option for advanced study of Chenda for Kathakali. The boy was instantly ready, not for the zest of study, but for escaping from jail-like routines of home. Thus at the age of 10 he became a student of Sadanam. The added advantage of Sadanam was that he can pursue his School studies there. So he took admission in seventh standard and continued his academics.

Sadanam Days

Only after joining, he realized that his jump was from frying pan to fire. The daily routine for boys of Sadanam was much more military-type tasking and strict. The insistence of discipline had no loose ends. One has to get up at five minutes to 3.00 am at the wee hours of morning and start practicing at sharp 3.00 am which continued up to 6.00. After that a little class. Then he should finish the morning chores and breakfast



Mattannur with his disciple Jayaram

and proceed to school. He should leave the class by 3.15 pm so that he can attend to on-hand practice on Chenda in the Kathakali class, generally known as *Kalari*. This would continue from 3.30 to 6.00 pm. From evening 7.00 to 9.00, the two hour class in new points. From 9.00 pm onwards he can attend to his school class notes and studies, but has to have his supper before his sleep, which in unquestionably at 10.00 pm. Sooner than his head touched the pillow, he would be in deep slumber, strictly for five hours. Next morning wake-up call would snatch him out of the land of Nod.

The first year in Sadanam he was under the tutelage of the legendary Chenda player Chandra Mannadiar. Sankarankutty remembers the affectionate teaching of that great guru with great reverence. But to his

The three major application of Chenda is in Kathakali, Thayampaka and Melam. He has learned Thayampaka from his father and Kathakali Chenda from the institutional class at Sadanam. But he is still to master the art of various Melams. Melams are symphony and hence perfection to befit the others needs special training. Shri Sadanam Kumaran, the soul and power behind Sadanam and its Principal and Manager, advised him to meet the doyen of Melam, Pattarath Sankara Maraar. His recommendation letter only read "Sankarankutty is from North Malabar. He is a Maraar boy and further wants to learn Chenda". He was taken as disciple to learn Edaykka without any question.

Pattarath was then 70 years by age but mentally young enough. He would relax eyes closed in his usual easy-chair

temple for the annual *pooram* celebrations etc. On the Thrissur *pooram* day, he had to attend the morning melam to Brahmaswam Madhom, do the ritual of *paani*, take part in pre-noon *Panchavadyam* and then afternoon *melam*. He continued to take part in Thrissur *pooram* for 36 years now, out of which six years he is at the *pramaanam* (the lead player, controlling the melam symphony) of Thiruvambadi set.

Official and Professional Experiences

Since 1990, he worked as a High School Teacher, as the teacher of Chenda, in Vellinezhi High School. After 20 years of meritorious service he retired from service on superannuation. He is a contented and proud teacher who could earn to his credit a large treasure of efficient students who would keep his name high.

He started his professional career in right earnest. He is lucky enough to play with all the leading Chenda players, doyens, masters and all others. He was a sought after player for Melam, Thayampaka and Kathakali. As a Kathakali Chenda artist he was very popular not only for the play but also *melappadam*, a solo performance supported by *maddalam*, *chengila* and *elathalam*.

However, his name and fame was more for Thayampaka, where the talent and nuances on Chenda, can be tested and compared by connoisseur audience. He was so popular that there was big fanfare for him. He has not only played solo thayampakas but has played double, triple and quintuple thayampakas with almost all the best hands in the field. His combination with Aliparamb Shivrama Poduval is something worth a mention, which may perhaps one of the most popular pairs. Of late he has played a number of triple thayampakas along with his sons.

An Organiser & Performer

Most of the Chenda artists of Kerala are equally at hand with *Thimila*, another instrument prominent in *panchvadyam*. Sankarankutty decided to master *thimila* also. For this he started, with the help of his friends, an institution in Mattannur and named it as "Kannur Jilla Panchvadya Pariseelana Camp" initially for 3 months. He brought the best masters available in the field, such as Pallavoor Maniyan Maraar for *thimila* and Cherpulassery Sivan for



Kunnam Vishnu (ext. right) with Mattannur (centre) and others

misfortune, Chandra Mannadiar left Sadanam and joined Kerala Kalamandalam, the citadel of Kathakali. Even in those days, the senior-most student Vasudevan, (who later became famous as Sadanam Vasudevan) acted as the assistant teacher under Guru Chandra Mannadiar. When the great guru left the institution, Vasudevan took over as the Chenda teacher of the institution and Sankarankutty continued his studies under him. The course duration was four years. In the fourth year, Sankarankutty had his debut stage performance (*arangettam*). And it was in the same year he attended his matriculation examination.

The Amateur Days

As a teenager, Sankarankutty was quite self-confident about his proficiency on Chenda. But he knew that learning is a never ending process.

and Sankarankutty would play Chenda beside him. Even a minor mistake in playing melam, however minor it may be, will be noticed by the Guru and instantly corrected. But Sankarankutty, with his 'bloating paper mind' would learn any lesson in just one class. This was a daily routine. Like any 'gurukul' style of teaching, the class did not have any particular time or anytime the class could be held, except the ritual holidays like full-moon/no-moon days and the preceding days. It is the insistence of perfection of Pattarath that moulded the purist melam artist out of Sankarankutty.

Shri Pattarath Sankara Marar had the *adiyanthiram* rights (right to do the rituals of a temple) of Thiruvampadi temple, among others. Sankarankutty was regularly taken by Pattarath to assist him in temple. Slowly he was delegated for the *adiyanthiram* of that

maddalam and the like. The first batch, of which Sankarankutty was a lead member, had their debut performance at Mattannur Mahadeva Temple. The second performance was at Cherukunnu Annapoorneswari temple. During that performance, the institution was rechristened as "Mattannur Panchavadya Sangham". The institution still continues.

The first performance outside Kerala was in Gujarat. His close friend, Kalamandalam Balaraman was a teacher in Darpana at Ahmedabad. With his help, he performed at Gujarat, first at Ahmedabad and then Baroda and many other parts of Gujarat. For 13 years the Gujarat visit was regular. After Gujarat, today he has performed in almost all states of India on innumerable stages.

As far as my knowledge goes, Mattannur is the first to perform a *Thayampaka* outside India. Shri Mattannur has travelled widely across the world. It started in London, then France, Italy, Germany, Poland, (why, almost all countries of Europe), North America, South America, Africa, Gulf countries, far east. The only continent

he is yet to visit is Australia-New Zealand. No other *thayampaka* artist could achieve this.

He has also performed a number of jugal-bandi, a revolutionary concept of playing along untraditional combinations, that too with ultimate masters of such instruments, both South Indian and north Indian and even many global instruments and masters, where hardly any other Chenda player dared to venture. He has played fusion programmes with many great artists like Usthad Allah Rakha, Padmasree Karaikkudi Mani, Padmasree Umayalpuaram Sivaraman, L. Subrahmaniam, Usthad Zakkir Husain, Harisankar, V S Narasimhan, Sivamani, Hakkim Lodhi, Alappuzha Karunamurthi, Balabhaskar, Hilari Westlike (UK), Susheela Krishna Murthi, Nigel Watson, Nigel Johnson and the like. He has also conducted a number of lectures, lecture-demonstrations, seminars and such other informative and interactive sessions on Melam and Thayampaka.

He has also acted in a few Malayalam movies. The role in the Malayalam movie 'Vanaprastham' is really

memorable. He has also played Chenda for many movies in the background. The famous cine-actor, a superstar of high caliber and the most glamorous melam artist, Padmasree Jayaram, is disciple of Mattannur Sankarankutty Maraar.

Awards

So far over forty awards have come seeking him from many prestigious institutions. The award of Kendra Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, Kerala Kalamandalam are only a few from the list. He has been awarded 'Veerasinghala', considered to be the ultimate award to be won by any artist. Mattannur Sankarankutty Maraar is the first Chenda player to be honoured by the Government of India with the coveted 'Padmasree' award. Mattannur says that even with all those awards showered on him, the most touched on is the praise of his guru Pattarath Sankara Marar with utmost sincerity that "Sankarankutty is the best disciple and player I have seen". ■



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FIVE MAJOR MALAYALAM NOVELS FROM WRITERS OF RENAISSANCE



Dr T R Raghavan

Thakazhi, Kesava Dev, Basheer, S K Pottekkatt and Uroob are usually referred to as writers of the Renaissance in Malayalam. Their works of fiction differed as considerably from the familiar norms in content as well as in form and their reformist zeal was something never before associated with works of prose fiction. These writers were endowed with a new social awareness and their humanism turned them prophet in arms. Their impact on society was truly amazing. Therefore they can be titled as the makers of the modern age.

The Scavenger's son (Thottiyute Makan)

This is one of Thakazhi's major novels written in 1947. In Scavenger's Son the locale is the town of Alleppey on the borders of Kuttanad. The story deals with the lives of the scavengers in Alleppey, an overcrowded industrial town of Kerala.

It spans three generations, the middle one being held longest in focus and the vicissitudes of its representative

his co-workers, but lives away from their colony and does not mix with them. The others dissatisfied with the toddy union, try to organise a fresh one. The authorities use Chudalamuthu to smash the rival union. Pichandi, organiser of the other union is accused as the man responsible for several jewellery thefts in the neighbourhood. Pichandi flees from the place. Shunned by his co-workers, Chudalamuthu is not accepted in his neighbourhood also.

A son named Mohan is born to Chudalamuthu, who wants to educate him. A private school refuses admission. The boy joins a municipal school, but is cruelly teased there because of his father's occupation. He stops going to school and drifts into the companionship of street urchins. A cholera epidemic breaks out. Chudalamuthu at last gets his promotion and ceases to

be a scavenger. But very shortly he and his wife die of cholera. Years ran and Mohan grows up and becomes a scavenger.

Like his father, Mohan becomes a labour leader and organise his people. The end comes rather unexpectedly by allowing fate to interfere in the form of a bullet from the police.

This is our first novel depicting the labour movement in Kerala. Thakazhi gives us glimpses of the undercurrents of the working class movement, its strength and its weakness. Probably a more committed writer would have hesitated to hint at any weakness of a worker: but Thakazhi the artist is concerned only with the reality of life. It is also significant

that Thakazhi shows the awakening of the scavengers as an internal process and not as the result of any exhortation by sermonizing leaders.

Odayil Ninnu

An equally eminent name in contemporary fiction is P Kesava Dev. Essentially a realist who draws upon the live of common people for his incredibly wide range of themes he has that rare ability to invest even the crudest and commonest of his characters with an enrolling humanity. A good example would be Pappu, hero of his novel Odayil Ninnu (From the Gutter)

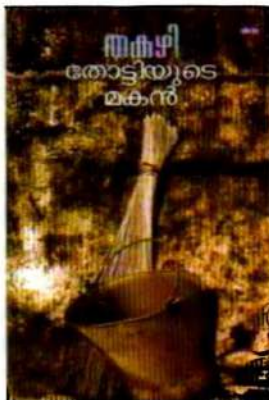
'From the Gutter' is an outstanding novel. Some hail it to be Dev's masterpiece. It can hardly be called a novel, because of its short length. At best it is a novelette. But that however is not an important matter. For the first time in Malayalam, a worker, a rickshaw puller was made the hero of the novel. And what a hero! A true hero in every sense of the word; and in every inch of his being a man of sterling, even of outrageous independence! Reluctant to serve under a master, he becomes his own master by becoming a rickshaw puller.

The hero, Pappu is portrayed as a born rebel unaccustomed to implicit obedience. The boy walks out of the



Thakazhi

furnishing most of the episodic substance. Old Isakkamuthu belongs to that generation in which the illiterate, unorganized scavengers were mercilessly exploited by petty officials of the municipality. When Isakkamuthu dies, his son Chudalamuthu got the job after promising the whole of the first month's pay to the overseer. The boy grows up with a burning hatred for his lot. He decides to organize a union on the model of unions of workers in the coir factories of Alleppey. But the Municipal officials are able to exploit his eagerness to better his condition. They tempt him with the promise of some better job. A toddy union comes up with the overseer as president and Chudalamuthu as the organizer. He avoids the toddy shop, becomes very thrifty, lends money at steep interest to



Kesavadev



classroom, faces life squarely and grows into a disciplined worker full of dignity and integrity. He picks up from the gutter an orphan girl on whom he showers all his love and affection. A sort of Jean Val Jean Cosette relationship develops between the two while he takes the girl's mother for his wife. He fulfils her every desire and brings her up as a gentlewoman. The girl however is ashamed to acknowledge among her classmates her real relationship with her foster father. But Gopinathan, a rich young man who becomes her lover corrects her ungrateful attitude.

Pappu does not fully approve of the affair but concedes her freedom to make the choice and marry him. But he does not attend even their marriage ceremony but leaves them and walks away into distance, a broken and sick man. When Pappu falls seriously ill, he suffers his pain with fortitude, shuns his relatives with stoicism and finally walks out into darkness and to his final exit.

As can be gathered from the above short summary of the story, there is an element of romanticism in the novel. It is present even in the delineation of the character of Pappu. For the rest it is a realistic novel. It is useless to analyse critically the structure of the novel and its other characteristics because its chief significance is truly epic character of Pappu himself within the canvas of a short novel.

It is evident from the contributions of these two novelists, Thakazhi and Dev that both were sensitive to the plights of the lower class man in the social set up which flourished on the exploitation of the have-nots by the haves. They saw man as the victim of environment. It is unjust society that turned man criminals and women prostitutes. Poverty, crime and sin were manmade. Dev concentrated his attention on the struggle of the individual to seek an identity of his own as to attain freedom from all manacles, political, social and economic.

The prose styles of Thakazhi and Dev were powerful and lucid, not at all ornate but telling. Both aimed at objectivity in representation and achieved it, they were primarily concerned with the social man and presented him with unerring accuracy.

Ntuppappakkoranendarnnu

This novel entitles Basheer to be remembered as an outstanding novelist in Malayalam. In this, Basheer appears



Basheer



as the master of a new idiom, an idiom characterised by wit and irony. Basheer's subjective realism is a queer mixture of fantasy and reality.

The bapas (fathers) and ummas (mothers) of his novels are engaging personalities, and the pen-pictures of domestic scenes strewn throughout make an abiding impression on the reader.

Basheer put forward through his mind, a lot of social criticism, but it gains the persuasive appeal and weight of self criticism not merely because his creative strategy in the novel lies in forcing a conservative Muslim family to confront a progressive one. The conservative Muslim family consists of Atima, his wife Tachumma and their daughter Kunjupathumma. Once very well off, they face poverty, when they lose their lands in a family litigation. Amusing conflicts arise when the orthodox Atima and his wife become neighbours of a progressive middle class family of young Nisar Ahmad and his parents.

In the days when Atima was well off, Kunjupathumma had to live an extremely dull life. She had no work; her over-fond mother compelled her to dress like a bride every day, she was not allowed to go out. Therefore, when Atima loses the litigation and the family has to move into a small hut. The simple, unsophisticated girl does not feel the tragedy. In fact, she now finds that she need not remain confined within the house. She has to do all the household work, but she can go out into the sunlight and air. Delicately and indirectly, but with great sensitiveness, she is shown as coming to know something of the ways of the world, by watching the little pond in their grounds. Once she enters the pond for a dip, but gets out immediately in fright as a water-leech clings to her leg and gorges itself with her blood. She detached it and throws it into the water. There are water snakes also in the pond

and they feed on the fish.

The title of the novel also is meaningful in respect of a similar evolution, this time from fantasy to reality. Tachumma is proud of the fact that she comes from a rich family. She is the daughter of 'Aana' (elephant) Makar, and is always telling her daughter, 'your grandpa had an elephant a huge tusker'. The dead elephant lives again in that household as a status symbol cherished in memory and gives rise to many fantasies. For instance, the

fond mother poses these intriguing questions before her cronies; why does her daughter, who is fair, have a black mole on her cheek? Then she triumphantly gives the answer; because her grandpa had an elephant and that animal, of course, is black. But the fantasies bred by the memory are not always delightful like this. Tachumma hugs the memory even more desperately in the phase of poverty and strain. She frequently flies into a temper and asks her daughter not to mix with Nizar Ahmed and his sister Ayesha since their grandfather had been a bullock-cart driver.

An episode in the concluding section of the novel manages the expulsion of fantasy by reality in an amusing yet subtle way. Tachumma is in the habit of chasing away the neighbourhood brats who trespass into their grounds, shouting all the while at them that they cannot take liberties with the daughter of 'Aana (Elephant) Makar'. But one little brat has the audacity to retort, 'It was a kuzhi-Aana (a small sand bug: the name literally means, 'elephant which burrows in the sand).

Basheer is a conscientious artist and he spares no pains in polishing up his writings to the highest degree of perfection.

Visha Kanyaka

S K Pottekkatt's first serious novel was *Vishakanyaka* (The Poison Damsel). He is remembered as much for his short stories as for his novels. Though primarily a realist, his tales reveals, occasionally at least the strong views of a romantic imagination.

S K Pottekkatt wrote '*Vishakanyaka*' in the fifties. In is no doubt an unusual novel featuring man's fight against unrelenting nature. It is the study of a great exodus, the large scale migration of hard working Christians from Central Travancore to the virgin forest-lands of Malabar was a significant event in the

social life of Kerala. Today the colonisation of Wayanad and other regions of the hilly malarial interior of Malabar have triumphed out the initial hurdles. But it was an epic struggle that the first settlers had to fight and the novel is the first and only homage to this memory.

The novel opens with a description of many Christian families from Travancore the period of the story is the early forties migrating to the hill tracts of Malabar to become settlers and cultivators. A whole social world with its frictions and harmonies becomes transplanted in the new milieu. The poor immigrant families are charged heavily by the bus owners for transport. Some of the landlords in Malabar are kind people and are willing to give land at reasonable rates. But very soon middle men from among the immigrants themselves form an unholy alliance with the managers of the landlords, steps up extensive tracts and the poor families becoming their tenants. The new comers wean away local labour from the old estates by promising higher wages, but in the end they pay only the old rates. This creates tension between native immigrant land owners, leading to rowdiness on the part of the latter and their unpopularity. The church also gets established in the new milieu and there is a contrasted picture of the luxurious living of the priests and the misery of the majority of the immigrants.

The journeys which the immigrants undertake, their collective life and communal pleasures and their many woes and anxieties are sketched with such faithfulness and understanding that one is often reminded of Pearl Buck's Good Earth that classic on China's peasant life. Pottekkat is more interested in the fortunes of the community than in individuals, and while he is all admiration for its noble traits like far-sightedness, perseverance and a solid indifference towards setbacks, he is not blind to its weakness like too much fondness of liquor.

The novelist has dovetailed a romance into this story of the soil. Madhavi, the heroine is a symbolic figure. She is the part of the luscious landscape, and also a vivacious Sylph-like figure. She too is an enchantress like the earth. With a mischievous sense of humour, the novelist tells us how Antony the very picture of puritanic celibacy is drawn towards the fatal charms. She does to



S K Pottekkat

him exactly what the soil does to her lovers. The earth is the poison damsel and she is evoked in all her ambivalent power of attraction and repulsion by the superb craftsmanship of the writer. Of all the writers of Malayalam fiction, Pottekkat has the most poetic style.

Ummachu

Ummachu was first published in book form in 1954. It became extremely popular when it first came out serially in the Mathrubhumi Weekly. It was retained its popularity to this day. No doubt it has helped to change the taste of the reading public by offering a new conception of the nature and function of literature in social life.

The novel derives its title from the name of its main character Ummachu. But it is not the story of just one person, nor is the whole train of events perceived through her eyes only. Equal to her in importance are the three playmates of her childhood. Beeran, Mayan and Chappunni, with Ummachu herself at the centre! She exercises a

terrible fascination on each of them and despite the joyous innocence of her childhood and the nearly super human will of her adult life, she draws each of them irresistibly into the vortex of her own tragic fate. Mayan falls in love with her and she reciprocates his love, but before they can do anything about it, it is Beeran, who also is in love with her, that manages to marry her with the help of her parents and with the timely intervention of Ahammedunni, the



Uroob



custodian and distributor of legends of local origin. Ummachu does not like it at all, but being a well brought up girl in a Muslim family, she surrenders to the wishes of her father and mother and legend vendor Ahammedunni. The news of Ummachu's marriage with Beeran pains and shocks Mayan, who in a fit of rage attacked Ahammedunni. Fearing that the old man is severely affected of his heavy blows, Mayan leaves the place, worried and frightened and reaches at Wined,

where by hard labour and shrewd saving he amasses a small fortune. Mayan learns from the son of Ahammedunni, that his father did not actually succumb to his blows, but died on account of some other illness.

Mayan is now free from the fear of pursuit by the police and goes on a visit to his home village. He has a causal meeting with Ummachu who is now the mother of a boy named Abdu and from her he learns that she is still devoted to him. Passion revives. He assassinates Beeran and runs away. Only Ummachu had seen him when he broke into the house in the night, but she does not disclose his identity to the police. She certainly did not connive at Beeran's death. As for Mayan's guilt, she cannot forget that it was his passionate love for her that drove him to the crime, understandably she seeks further refuge



in the rationalisation that all is according to Allah's will. So when the tumult has settled and Mayan returns and proposes to her, she marries him. In course of time she has two sons by him, Marakar and Hydros.

But tensions continue to build up in the family,

for Abdu the son of Beeran has an infantile memory of the night of murder which stays with him, grows through the years and explodes in a direct accusation of Mayan. With a sick heart Mayan leaves for the forest of Wayanad, but finding no peace of mind even on the hills and unable to resolve his moral dilemma he hangs himself. The story continues to unfold further ending with Abdu bringing into the house a Nair girl as his bride. ■

KERALA BUDGET

SPRAYING ROSY PROMISES



P.R. Krishnan

■ Though the inaugural address of Governor P. Sadasivam in Kerala assembly on 5th February expectedly turned out to be high lighting of achievements of the 5 year rule of the Congress led United Democratic Front (UDF) government, the budget presented by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on 12th February for the year 2016-17 predictably became reeling out tall promises for the people of the state. The Governor's address can thus be termed as the best performance achievement award to the United Democratic Front (UDF) government for its 5 year rule. The budget proposals from Oommen Chandy give full expression of the UDF desire to come back to power in the election to the state assembly scheduled in April-May this year along with 4 other states. Implicit in the budgetary promises was not only a message to the electorate in Kerala but to the voters in other four states like Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, West Bengal and Assam where elections are due. The message was that similar performance will take place if Congress is voted to power in those states. As expected, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) led by CPI (M) boycotted both the governor's address as well as the budget presentation in the state assembly.

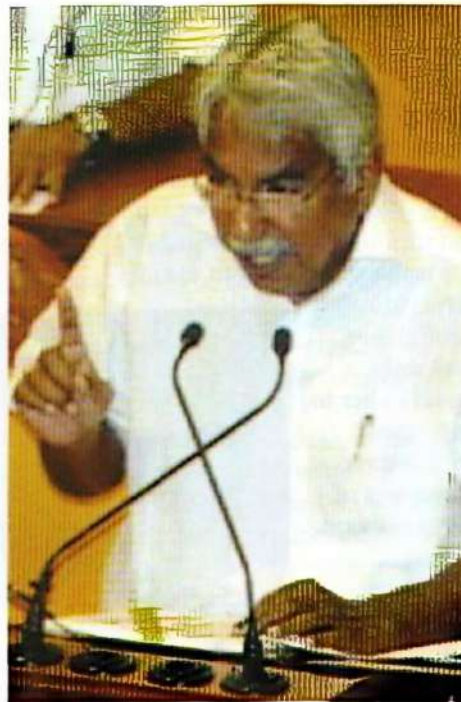
Praise from Governor

Amongst the series of major achievements for Kerala noted by Justice Sadasivam in his 2 hour and 36 minutes long speech in the assembly are Kochi Metro Rail, Kannur Air Port, the first phase of Smart City, incubating 405 Start-Ups, increase in exports earnings from Rs. 3000 crore in 2011 to Rs. 18000 crore, starting of Vizhinjam harbour, growth rate of 12.3 for the state as against national average of 10.50 % and closing down of 730 liquor bars, the United Nations recognition for the Jana Sambark programme of chief minister, the national and international awards for finance management, education, agriculture, local self government sectors, package

relief and permanency to 17000 teachers, increase in welfare pensions and zero landless scheme etc. Sadasivam further went on reeling out a series of welfare measures which the Oommen Chandy government was proposing to implement. He further said that the IT export will reach to Rs. 18000 crore in the coming years. This was Rs. 3000 crore when the present government took over in 2011 from LDF. In short, what Governor Sadasivam said in the assembly was that the UDF government period was a golden period in the history of Kerala.

Glimpses to Budget

It is in the background of such and several other announcements made in the



governor's address that Chief minister Oommen Chandy has presented his budget on 12th February. What is special and peculiar in the budget is that, there are no new levies or increase in taxes imposed in the proposals. The budget expects a revenue income of Rs. 84,092.61 crores and estimates Rs. 93,990.06 crore as expenditure. Thus the deficit shown is Rs. 9,897.45 crore. This was Rs. 12000 crore for the previous year and is likely to reach Rs. 14000 crore. But

the government has spent only 61% of the annual plan amount set out in the previous budget. There was thus lapse in collecting Rs.14000/- crore. There is no explanation why it happened so and where the remaining 40 % amounting to 14000/- crore has gone. The conclusion therefore is clear, unwillingness on the part of the government to implement what it professes. Despite this position, the budget has made a provision of Rs. 330.45 as concession on several items. It expects an increase of Rs. 112 crore in revenue. The provision made for annual plan is Rs. 2400 crore. The plan estimate made by Finance Minister K M Mani for the previous year was Rs. 1931 crore. The amount specially set out for self government bodies is Rs. 5000/-. Not surprisingly, the budget forecasts likely difficulties that the state may confront with on account of occurrence of global financial crises in future.

Amongst the major announcements made in the budget by the Chief Minister are rice free of charge for 36 lakh families below poverty line, 17 important basic infrastructure schemes including a light metro, petrochemical park and suburban rail corridor. It is envisaged in the budget a plan preparation for a Trivandrum Kasargode super fast rail track. Contained in the budget is a novel plan for a national water way from Kasargod in the north to Kovalam in the south together with an elevated super fast bridge. The budget has set out Rs.100 crore for a new Mullapperiyar Dam. For the purpose of concession in the repayment of educational loans an amount of Rs. 200 crore has been made. While Rs. 500 crore has been provided for rubber stability fund. Companies engaged in buying and selling of agricultural products have been exempted from payment of agricultural income tax. Similarly cardamom has been exempted from payment of tax. The total of such concessions is to the extend of Rs. 40 crore. For senior citizens above age of 75, pension has been increased from Rs. 1000/- to Rs.1500 per month. A separate provision of Rs 100 crore has been made for the purpose of take over of the Periyaram Medical College and hospitals. In addition several other concessions and facilities have been

announced in the budget.

At present there are 30 lakh people in Kerala receiving welfare pension. For them, there contains an assurance of free insurance. This is in addition to total health insurance to all pensioners. The government will establish three agricultural colleges. Among them, one in Ambalavayal, second in Kumarakam and the third one in Chittoor. Named as centre of excellence, the government will set up 10 colleges in different parts of the state to impart excellence for the benefit of the youth. The government will launch 1000 start ups with Rs. 25 crore in Pala. There is going to be an Info park city as well. There is a pleasant item for Marunadan Malayalees. Announced in that connection are three reference libraries, one in Mumbai, second in Chennai and the third one at Ahmadabad. In addition, Rs. 18 crore has been provided for Norka. A provision of Rs. 12 crore has been made for rehabilitation of NRI returnees. Another amount of Rs. 5 crore is shown for other relief to pravasis, totaling to Rs. 35 crore. Thus goes the provisions and announcements made in the budget. For want of space only a few are mentioned here.

Needless to say, the Chief Minister visualises that the people will appreciate these assurances particularly when the state is heading for assembly poll. But the question is where the money will come from to fulfill these promises. The past experience is unpardonable non-compliance. The problem is that the UDF government has proved its inefficiency in honoring its own assurances. This is apart from the fact that the chief minister himself and four of his cabinet colleagues are deeply involved in corruption charges and prosecution proceedings are going on in different courts as well as before an enquiry commission. Along with the ministers are several leaders of UDF constituents implicated in corruption charges. One of the cabinet ministers K. M. Mani of Kerala Congress has already resigned from the ministry on corruption charges. However the UDF government is certainly clever in passing on implementation of these schemes to the new government.

An important factor deserving to be noted here is that during the LDF rule, the average revenue income was round about 74.12 % whereas it went down to 72.76 % during UDF period. The resource mobilization and growth rate at the time of UDF rule was 15.66 % while it was 17.2 % during LDF regime. The general income and expenditure during the rule

period of LDF and UDF has to be noted for the purpose of seeing the threatening increase in the matter of revenue deficit. The collection of revenue was 79.13 % during LDF period which came down to 75.76 % while the UDF was in power. However during the period of both the LDF and UDF the revenue expenditure was almost the same at or above 90 percent. This shows that the amount set out for the purpose of generation of new assets for the purpose of capital expenditure was round about 10 % of the revenue by both the fronts. Another example is the increase in revenue expenditure. This was almost 13.52 % during LDF time which rose to 18.95 % while the UDF period. Here again the

Amongst the major announcements made in the budget by the Chief Minister are rice free of charge for 36 lakh families below poverty line, 17 important basic infrastructure schemes including a light metro, petrochemical park and suburban rail corridor.

growth rate in the capital expenditure during the five year period of LDF was 33.15% which went down to 13.12% while the UDF ruled the state. Another aspect to be noted here is that during the period 2011-12 to 2015-16 the government was required to collect a total of Rs. 1.91 lakh crore revenue. But it collected Rs. 1.61 lakh crore only, thus leaving out Rs. 30,000 crore. This remained uncollected only to help the big business lobby. This disproves the claim of the UDF that the development growth rate was high during the time of their regime. This is not to underestimate the development scored during their period.

An alarming situation which has developed in Kerala is the increase in the debt rate. This has registered a very high rate during the last 10 year period of LDF and UDF rule. This makes no difference whether the LDF or UDF is in power. When Chief Minister Oommen Chandy

presented the budget, the debt rate in the state has reached to the extent of Rs. 1, 08,130 crore. What is deplorable is the fact that it is the common people who have to bear the burden by way of rising interest on these loans and debts. The main reason for this increase in the debt rate is the laxity on the part of the ruling fronts in collecting taxes. The UDF distances itself from imposing additional taxes on the rich and wealthy or increasing their tax. As far back as in the year 2003, the state had undertaken the responsibility of total elimination of revenue deficit by 2014-15. The 14th finance commission had extended this period to 2016-17 with a grant of Rs.9650 crore to cover up the deficit. But, because of the non-mobilizations of resources from within the state, this could not be achieved and the deficit and debt burden goes on increasing.

Loss of Rs. 1,500 crore and Rs. 63,980.31 crore in arrears

It is relevant in this context to refer to and see to the findings recorded by the Controller and Audit General. In his detailed report submitted before the state legislated assembly on 24th February, the CAG has observed that due to the failure of the government machinery in regularizing and collecting taxes and levies, the state has lost approximately Rs. 1500 crore in last financial year. Apart from this, the businessmen and commercial establishments are in arrears of Rs 63,980.31 crore for the year 2014-15. Obviously this is due to the partisan attitude of the state government. This is not an allegation from the opposition but an authentic report of the controller and auditor general. Is it necessary to have any more corroboration to show the inefficiency of the state government.

Under such circumstances people are forced to believe whether the promises made in the budget could be fulfilled by the UDF government even if that front is voted back to power in the coming assembly election. In the meantime a survey report came stating the UDF would loose in the election and the LDF would come back to power. Irrespective of the survey result, the UDF and its Chief minister Oommen Chandi knew this more than anybody else. That may perhaps be the main reason and worry with which he chose to present such an attractive budget as it could catch the imagination of the electorate. But whichever be the front that may come to power, the burden is cast on them to implement the proposal though it may take a long route. ■

DO YOU BELIEVE IN ANGELS ?

Some consider them as denizens of other planets; some see them in their dreams; some face them in reality; some trust and believe in their assistance. That is what an angel means to many. The question remains do you believe in angels? The answer is contained in the following article.



Jose Chemmassery

■ A news item that recently appeared in an English daily made me curious. It transported me to the realms of heavenly bodies, spirits and angels. 'Supernatural Child Angel Dolls

Craze' Sweeping Thailand' goes the heading and adds that *'the adults who own them affirm that child angel dolls will bring you good-luck, especially if you treat them like your own living progeny, taking them on trips, treating them to meals and praying together at the temple.'*

No doubt, despite living in a scientific and technologically advanced world, there are people chasing good luck and fortune through mediums, spirits, Godmen, spiritual healers, and fraudsters pretending to be miracle workers and agents of divine or devilish forces. Desperate trying circumstances and acute situations in life goad even rational men in their moments of miserable uncertainty boding ill luck to seek deceptive solutions appearing as possible and genuine remedy. They may remain so, blinded by their belief under the shadow of fraudulent influences imposed by charlatans and false prophets, making money out of superstition and ignorance.

When unbearable adversity and torments seize life, one may be tempted to go to extremes to find solace from unpredictable and undesirable sources. As the capacity to tolerate the impact of adverse circumstances erodes, he/she forgets the wisdom in the saying, 'A man

is tested/judged in his adversity'. When the will power to bear the sufferings is atrophied, the mind is scattered and confused and searches ways to circumvent the reality encountering him/her. He is thereby reduced to be inhuman and subjected to an irrational and immoral behavior interrogating his fate and destiny. He is the creation of circumstances pliable to forgo reason and is susceptible to embrace queer and out of this world experience.

Regarding Angels

Angels are messengers of God. The word angel is derived from the Greek word 'angelos' meaning messenger and spiritual representative of God. According to Jalaluddin Rumi, the mystical Persian poet of the thirteenth century there are three kinds of creatures. In a version of his commentary the position is illustrated thus. "There are three kinds of creatures. First are the angels who are pure intelligence. It is their nature to be constantly mindful of

There are three kinds of creatures. First are the angels who are pure intelligence. It is their nature to be constantly mindful of God, to worship and obey him. This is what sustains them. It is both their food and means of life.

God, to worship and obey him. This is what sustains them. It is both their food and means of life. In this they are like fish who live in waters whose life comes from the water and whose bed and pillow are water. Angels are under no obligation to do what they do. They are pure light and free from lust, so they do not have to struggle with sensual passions. Their obedience to God is not regarded as obedience, for it is their nature and they cannot be otherwise.

"The second kind are beasts, who are pure lust and lacking in intelligence. They are like an animal grown fat from eating, who sees nothing but their stable and its fodder. They too are under no obligation to do what they do.

"The third kind are human beings, the descendants of Adam, who are a combination of intelligence and lust. They are half angel, half ass, half serpent and half fish. Their half-ass draws them towards water, their serpent half draws them towards earth. Angels and beasts are free of conflict and struggle- the angels because of their knowledge, beasts because of their ignorance- and between the two lies the human being whose lot is to endure a constant tug of war. He whose intellect overcomes his lust is higher than angels; he whose lust overcomes his intellect is lower than beasts".

God speaks through visions and dreams to the prophets and the righteous. Angels interpret and provides the meaning of the visions to the prophets who convey the contents to the people. They are obliged to obey the command and lead a virtuous life to attain salvation and eternal life.

The holy spirits of heaven are called angels when they deliver some message. Those who deliver messages of lesser importance are called angels; and those who proclaim messages of importance are called Archangels.

The annunciation, Mary, to be the virgin mother of Jesus Christ was conveyed to her directly by Gabriel, the Archangel. Several instances of Archangels appearing to the righteous and devout are recorded in the Holy Bible. According to Book of Enoch, the names of angels are Uriel, Raguel, Sariel, Jerahmeel and include Gabriel, Michel and Raphael. According to Islamic Scriptures Saint Raphael, the Archangel along with Michael and Gabriel is believed to have accompanied Muhammad to Mecca.

St. Raphael, the Archangel is one of the seven Archangels who stand before the Lord. According to Old Testament St. Raphael was sent by God to help Tobit, Tobiah and Sarah. Tobit was blind and Sarah Tobiah's betrothed, had already suffered the deaths of seven bridegrooms the night of their weddings (at the hands of demon serial killer named Asmodeus). Disguised as a man named Azariah, Raphael accompanied Tobiah to Media and through difficulties taught him how to safely enter marriage with Sarah (Book of Tobit). The Roman Catholic Church assigns the feast of St. Raphael on October 24. The feast, Malakayude Perunnal is an annual festival held in Ollur, near Thrissur, Kerala since 1839. Attended by thousands of people from distant places, it is considered to be one of the ten important festival by the Kerala Tourism Department. Many believe in the miraculous powers of St. Raphael of Ollur Church.

This writer had an unique experience of receiving guidance from the angel. As an unemployed and jobless youth, I used to wander and loiter in the streets of Fort, Mumbai (Bombay) during the late sixties. One day when I was near Horniman Circle, pursuing my jobless routine a stranger, young man in his twenties approached me asking the way to Lion's Gate. I was eager and happy to help the stranger when he spoke to me in Malayalam. I told him the directions to reach the place; but he did not follow the directions immediately. He might have realised my jobless condition when he told me that application for recruitment of clerical staff is being distributed at SBI Head Office, then located at Horniman Circle. He accompanied me to the office and I collected the form which I filled in and posted. After the written

കവിത



ബാബുരാജ്

അമ്മയ്ക്കായ്

കരയറ്റൊരാസ്നേഹക്കടലിന്റെയാഴമൊ-

ന്നറിയാനെന്നു മിത്രം പകർത്തിയോരാച്ചിത്രം
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Angels are guardians, counsellors and protectors appearing in our lives as a friend, stranger or a sage enlightening us on intricate issues confronting us. Their divine intervention and mediation transcend us to sublime heights of achievement.

examination, followed by personal interview I received the letter to join as a clerk at their Byculla Branch. I continued my career with State Bank till I attained superannuation. That was the one and only job I secured through the divine intervention of the angel a stranger. What I am today is the result of the angelic message and guidance I got at the crucial time of my formative years. Though I have tried on many occasions, I could not recollect the face or remember the name

of my strange benefactor. I consider and affirm that was the divine intervention by Archangel Raphael.

In everyman's life there is a guardian angel who leads him into the light of righteous path eschewing darkness pervading all around. Angels are guardians, counselors and protectors appearing in our lives as a friend, stranger or a sage enlightening us on intricate issues confronting us. Their divine intervention and mediation transcend us to sublime heights of achievement. Failure to heed their advice may falter us in our endeavours leading to failure and disaster. A wise man always listens to the angelic voice; but fools rush where angels fear to tread.

Do not forget to show hospitality ; in doing this, men have entertained angels unawares. (Hebrews. Ch.13.2).

(Do you have an experience where you believe an angel came to your assistance? Write your comments and responses to keralainmumbai@gmail.com.)

Cinema celebrates heroism of Malayalee businessman in "Airlift"



Sriprakash Menon

■ When the country was witnessing multi pronged debate on "free speech", "anti nationals" and "patriotism" through

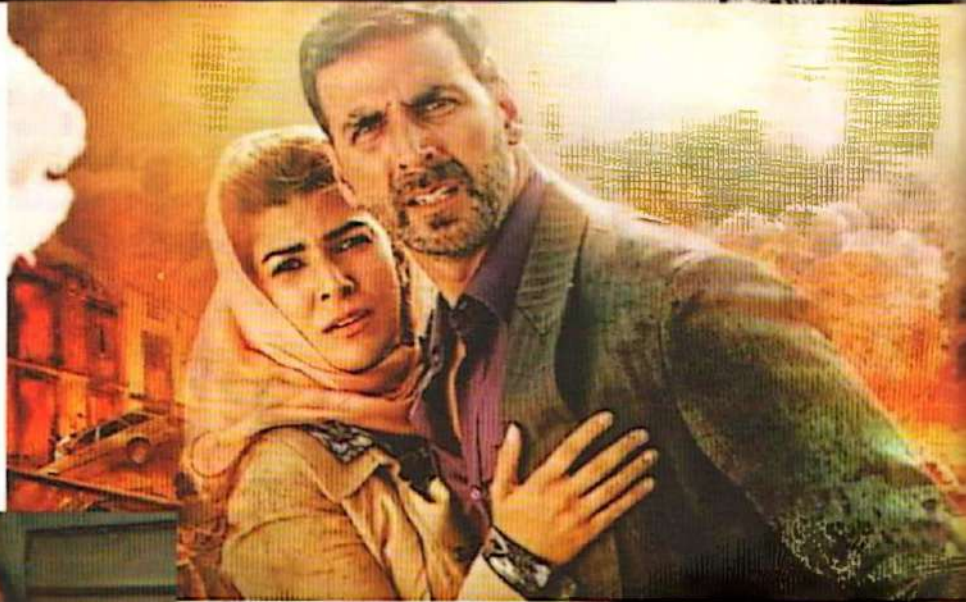
various media, Kerala was moving towards becoming a "digital society" society. That's really modern and hope will change the mindset of Malayalees who are otherwise bogged down by "intellectual arguments" and endless discussions when the state needs to move ahead of times especially to engage the large number of younger population who are "jobless and to a great extent directionless." For any society howsoever it is advanced, the "love and respect for one's own country" should be paramount this should be beyond political leanings.

Amid the uproar and chaos at the JNU, a young Mumbai based film maker Raja Krishna Menon was celebrating the heroic deed of an NRI Mathunny Mathews who was instrumental in the greatest evacuations of our times of Indians from Kuwait after Iraq invaded it, in his latest Hindi film Airlift. The story of such a dedicated and selfless Indian was known too well even in Kerala. Airlift directed by Raja is a great story to be reminded especially when lakhs of NRIs work still in various countries across the globe. It is a film which every Malayalee needs to watch. The story written by Raja alongwith Suresh Nair, Rahul Nangia and Ritesh Shah is produced by Nikhil Advani and others.

Airlift highlights what 'self pride and patriotism' can do to people during worst time in a war zone. Akshay

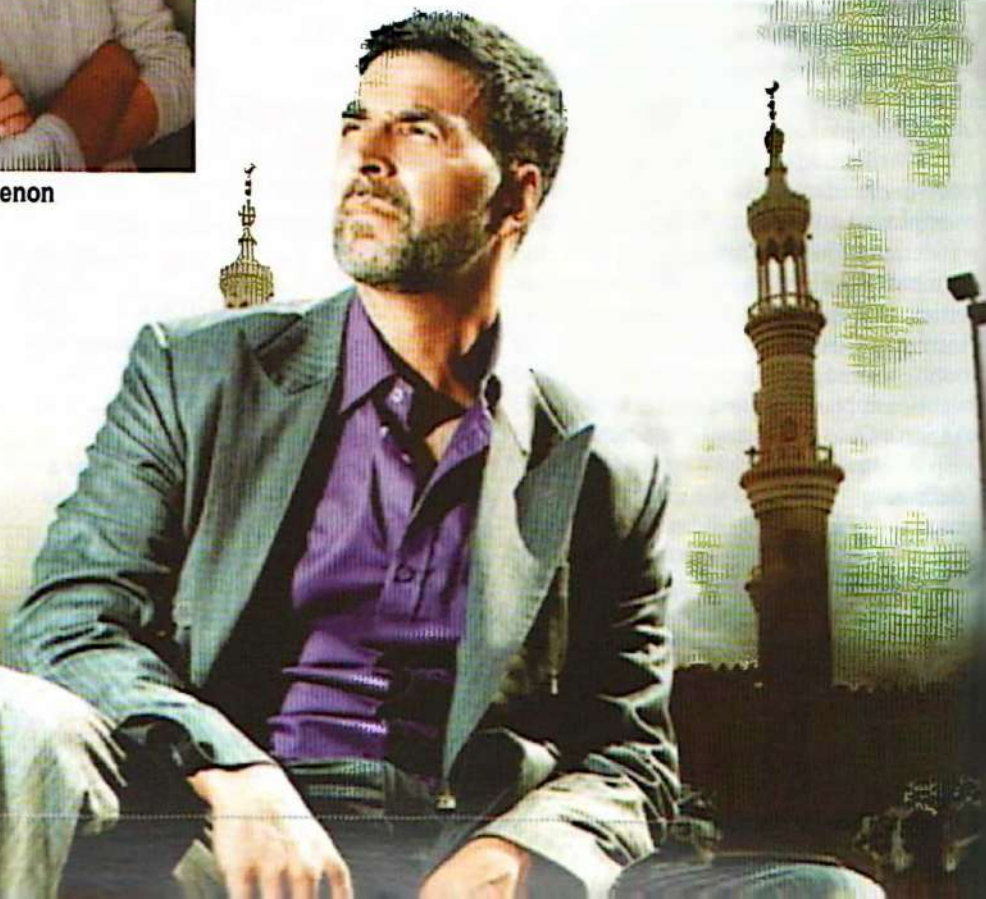


Raja Krishna Menon



Kumar as Ranjit Katyal (Mathunny Sunny Mathews) has excelled his leadership role in this war torn saga in the middle east.

Nimrat Kaur as his wife and Inaamulhaq as Iraqi Major Khalaf bin Zayd, Prakash Belawadi as George Kutty and Deepti Jayarajan as Lena give power packed performances during this dramatic crisis. Though the film is based on real life





wide scale of a war zone within limited resources". The film was released on 70 screens in middle east while over 2000 screens in India.

The film produced by Nikhil Advani and others did get flak from the

personnels of external affairs ministry for depicting Indian government in "a not so efficient light". "The fact that I decided to make a film on



this subject was to show the world 'India's unmatched heroism through the film. My main focus was the people centric effort of Indians coming together. Airlift is a celebration of India's historic evacuation process in which about 1.70 lakh people were evacuated from the war zone in 488 flights", Raja observed with a sense of pride.

Ram Madhavani directed Neerja is another film which talks about selfless

model cum air hostess Neerja Bhanot who sacrificed her life defending the passengers on board from the terrorists in a PanAm flight heading to the US in 1986. Based on a real life story, the film captures the high drama when passengers were held hostages after the plane landed in Karachi. It's young Neerja's gutsy and brave action which saved over 300 passengers on flight.

Both Airlift and Neerja captured the heroic deeds of Indians with great positivism on the screen while within the country, we are endlessly and mindlessly debating caste politics, free speech and reservation demands. India must be the only country in the world where people are not aspiring to develop skills or get empowered by knowledge but would like to depend upon caste based reservations. It's high time we learned from real life heroes like Sunny Mathews and Neerja who made their country proud by their heroic acts.

Students in educational campus should be oriented to serve the country selflessly instead of instigating and motivating them to divisive ideologies under the garb of "freedom of speech" and "constitutional right". Self respect and patriotism are essential elements for any society for the development and progress of a nation. At home we should touch our parents feet for blessings while at educational campus we should salute our national flag every day. Such small traditions will surely create many more national heroes in the years to come. ■

events, the film has interestingly weaved tension ridden drama in its narratives

Cine buffs may compare Airlift with Ben Affleck starrer Argo (2012) but this film with its true story is quite different. The film is tax free in UP, Bihar and Maharashtra and surprisingly did very well at the box office in Kerala. Now plans are afoot to make this movie in Tamil. Raja must be a very thrilled person now with his Rs 30 crore movie collecting over Rs 200 crore across the globe and still counting. More than the money it generated critics have hailed it as a great cinema for depicting the "

MUMMY, I SAW GOD



Damodaran Unny

■ A little boy wanted to meet God in person. He was so enthusiastic that he decided to leave his house one Sunday morning oblivious to the hard task. He was happy that he had no tuition on that day and he also decided to skip his Sunday cricket. He knew it was a long trip. He packed his bag and did not forget to carry some sandwiches, potato chips cakes and cola. His parents thought he had become crazy. Nevertheless, they did not prevent him because they did not want to interfere with his noble thought, notwithstanding the impossible task involved. They were sure that he would come back when he became exhausted. After walking about one hour, the boy reached a park and sat on one of the benches. He took out some chips and sandwiches and was about to eat when he noticed an old tired woman sitting on the grass. The boy knew that she was very hungry; sat near her and offered some chips and sandwiches to her. She accepted them with a thankful smile. Her smile was so spontaneous, he wanted to see the smile again. He

opened the cola bottle and offered her a drink. This time she smiled again and the boy was delighted. Both of them sat together all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never conversed.

As twilight approached, the boy realised how tired he was. He got up to leave, but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old lady and gave her a quick hug. This time her smile was sweeter.

The boy rushed home and knocked at the door. His mother opened the door. She saw a new glow in her son's face. He was extremely happy. "What did you do today to make yourself so happy?" Mother enquired.

"Mummy, Today I had lunch with God. You know she has a beautiful smile," the boy replied "This was undoubtedly my special day," the boy clarified.

In the meantime, the old lady also went home. Her daughter opened the door. She was stunned to see an unprecedented 'smile' on her mother's face.

"What made you so happy that you are going on smiling.?" the daughter enquired. "I had chips, sandwiches and cola with God

today. He is much younger than I expected," she clarified.

We often do not value the importance of a loving touch, an enchanting smile, a kind word, a listening ear or a compliment from the bottom of our heart. These wonderful gestures can go a long way in improving our relationships not only with our dear ones but others as well. All these gestures have the potential to turn a life around people who come into our life for a reason. We are too busy in our life, we forget these small things eventually, we regret our actions later. By the time one wants to make amends, it is too late.

Moral of the story is very clear. Service to humanity is service to God! No wonder God has said, 'Do not search for me in temple, church, mosque or gurudwara. If you can help somebody in distress, you can see me on his enchanting smile !'

Let us all resolve to do something in whatever way we can with a view to making our life more meaningful.

■
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Dignitaries on stage

Salam Mumbai

■ World Malayalee Council, Mumbai Province conducted a mega stage show titled 'SALAM MUMBAI' in association with Kairali Channel on Saturday the 13th February 2016 at Vashi CIDCO Exhibition Ground, Navi Mumbai. Mega Star Mammooty was scheduled to be a part of the show. But due to a sudden health issue, he could not attend the event. Though the crowd was little dejected due to the absence of Mammooty, the show was well attended by other well known dignitaries from Malayalam TV/ Cinema Industry. The programme began with a condolence note about the sad demise of the noted Malayalam poet O.N.V. Kurup. Kerala MP Sreemathi Teacher was present during the event.

John Brittas, M.D. of Kairali TV, K.K. Nambiar, Chairman of World Malayalee Council, Mumbai Province, M.K. Navas, Programme Convenor etc were the main people behind the event. Popular Bollywood actress Vidya Balan, Malayalam actress Nadia Moidu, Malayalam Music Director M.



Vidya Balan receiving Pride of Kerala Award from John Brittas. Sreemathi Teacher MP on the left.

Jayachandran, Krishnamachari Bose, Riyas Komu, Parvathy Omanakuttan and others participated in the programme. After the formal felicitation programme there was a musical evening led by the Malayalam Music director M. Jayachandran in which play back singers Vijay Yesudas, Rimi Tomy etc. rendered Malayalam songs. There was also a comedy skit by Pashanam Shaji. The show was anchored by Ranjini Haridas. World Malayalee Mumbai

Province Secretary Paul Parapilly presented the report.

During the function, Vidya Balan received the Pride of Kerala Award, instituted by Kairali TV. John Brittas presented the award to her. Vidya is currently busy with her preparations to play Kamala Das, the noted Malayalam authoress. Former actress Nadia Moidu was also presented an award by the Channel. Having born into a Malayalee family and brought up in Mumbai



Nadia Moidu and Parvathy Omanakuttan receiving the awards

helped her to be part of two cultures, Nadia remarked. It was a matter of pride to be born in a state that had great souls like ONV Kurup, said Parvathy Omanakuttan, another recipient of

Award.

Other recipients were M Jayachandran who completed twenty years in the musical world, painter Bose Krishnamachari, Riaz Komu, Bijoy

Nambiar and Rajakrishnan Menon. Navya Nair and Ramya Nambissan presented a few dance items.

Inauguration Of JK Women Hospital

■ JK Women, a unique multispecialty women hospital was inaugurated on February 14 at Dombivli. Present at the ceremony were Dr Shrikant Shinde , MP, Dr Heena Gavit, MP, Ravindra Chavan, MLA and E Ravindran , Commissioner KDMC.

JK Women hospital has been set up by Dr S Krishnakumar who is a senior gynaecologist practising since last 30 years and his team, with an idea of catering to all the specific health needs of women from puberty to menopause and beyond. Dr Krishnakumar emphasised that women in general neglect their health, and if proper precautions like



Inauguration of the Hospital

regular screening tests are done, many women cancers like Cancer of breast and

uterus can be detected and treated early with good cure rates. He further informed that most of the women diseases can be treated without surgery and where surgery is required the same can be done with endoscopic procedures with either less than a day hospital stay or 24 hours only. Dr S Krishnakumar announced that his centre is the first in India which has 3-D laparoscopic surgery facility with OR 1 integrated recording and relay system for better surgical results and at the same time, facilities which will help relay them to any part of the world. Speaking at the inauguration all the dignitaries lauded the efforts and services provided at JK Women hospital which they said will be a boon for all women in general in Kalyan Dombivli area and also hope that the hospital will also provide all the existing facilities for women of lower economic status.





Minister Adoor Prakash addressing the audience

Gurudevagiri Theerthadanam Concluding Event

■ The concluding ceremony of Gurudevagiri Theerthadanam Pilgrimage was held on February 14. The celebrations had started from February 9. Members from the 28 SNMS Units of Mumbai and Navi Mumbai and devotees from Nashik, Pune, Ahmadabad, Pen and from Kerala wearing yellow dress and carrying yellow umbrellas participated in the procession on the concluding day. Navi Mumbai Chairman Mayor Sudhakar Sonawane inaugurated the programme. SNMS Office bearers, Swami Guruprasad, Swami Sankarananda, Minister Adoor Prakash, joined the procession that carried Sree Narayana Guru's photo in a floral chariot accompanied by banners and various folk arts forms like chenda melam, nadaswaram, kavadi, singari melam etc.



The procession

The procession started from Shivaji Chowk at Nerul and culminated at

Gurudevagiri followed by Gurupuja lunch and a general meeting.

Silver Jubilee celebrations

■ Sree Narayana Mandira Samiti Dombivali Thakurli Diva Unit celebrated its 25th anniversary at Thunchan Smaraka Hall Dombivali. Income Tax Dy Commissioner Jyothish Mohan presided over the event, NK Bhupesh Babu, Dr Oommen David were guests of honour. Managing Committee office bearers N Sasidharan, N S Salim Kumar, O K Prasad, M G Raghavan, Womens Wing Convener Maya Sahajan, Anandan, Madhusudhanan, E P Vasu attended the function. Unit Secretary D N Surendran welcomed the gathering and Preethi Umesh proposed a vote of thanks. A variety entertainment programme by the Unit's Dance School students and distribution of merit certificates followed.



Income tax Dy Commissioner Jyothish Mohan lighting the inaugural lamp. K Natarajan, N Sasidharan, N K Bhupesh Babu, D N Surendran also seen.

Natyaniketan Annual Function

■ Natyaniketan's 14th Annual function was celebrated at Tarapur Anuvikas Welfare Centre. Adv. Padma Divakar inaugurated the function. Tarapur Malayali Samajam President, S K Nair, SNMS Unit secretary, T S Thankachan, E M Salgunan attended the event. More than 200 students took part in various cultural items, including classical dance and music. The Academy certificates, state and national achievements certificates and trophies were distributed to the students of the Academy by the dignitaries. The Academy's founder directors A K Jayasuryan and Smt. Rashmi Jayasuryan also performed on the stage. They organised their Gurus' 80th birthday and gurupooja during the Annual day function.

A K Jayasuryan (SangeetVisharad(Pune), SangeetBhushan(Orissa), Kalavaibhav (Utharakhand), Kalajyot (Mumbai), Brijmathuri(UP) is a Music Teacher of classical Carnatic and Hindustani Music, Light Music, and Instrumental



Annual function being inaugurated by Adv. Padma Divakar, Tarapur Malayali Samajam President S.K.Nair , E M Salgunan, SNMS unit Secretary T S Thankachan

Music. He is a well-known singer, as well as a State/National level Judge, in north and eastern region of India. He is the founder Director of Natyaniketan Dance & Music Academy, Tarapur, Maharashtra, a Government undertaking institute, giving recognized certified courses in both classical Music and

Bharatnatyam. He has won state and national awards from various organizations. His wife Rashmi Jayasuran is a dance teacher with Visharad certificate in Bharatanatyam. Natya Niketan's students have won prizes at national and international levels.



Shalika Jayasuryan and group performing classical dance



A.K.Jayasuryan and Mrs. Rashmi Jayasuryan with their Gurus. They felicitated their guru's 80th birthday 'Sahasra Chandra darshar



Academy's senior students music fusion



Lighting the inaugural lamp



C G Warriar addressing the gathering

Tru Indian Annual Day

■ Film director Lenin Rajendran inaugurated the 6th Annual Day of Tru Indian Information and Guidance Society at Holy Angels School Complex of Dombivli East. Prakash Padikkal and Fr John Puduva received Samaj Sevak Awards for social service. While Sukumari Memorial Award, Nadaprabha Award and National Dancing Flair Award were presented to Uttara Unni, Madhu Nambiar and Shruti Nambiar (Baroda) respectively, Suma Mukundan and Lakshmi Kurup were felicitated. Adv Padma Divakaran presided and Writer Anand Neelakantan was the Chief Guest. C G Warriar delivered the keynote address. Urmila Unni, Rajan V Nair, Vijay Kumar of Host Group, Roy J Kottaram, K Upendra Menon, C K



Fr John Puduva receiving the Award

Ramesh, Sasi Nair (Sanpada), Premlal, T N Surendran, C P Sajivan, Rajan Panicker, E Harindranath, Wilson

Dombivli, Bindu Manoj, Rakhi Sunil, Reshma Menon, Uma S Nair et al participated.



Madhu Nambiar, Uttara Unni and Prakash Padikkal receiving Award from Lenin Rajendran

Volley ball Tournament in Nerul

■ New Bombay Keraleeya Samaj, Nerul, organised Jimmy George Memorial Volley Ball Tournament (NBKS Volley 2016) under the aegis of Thane District Volleyball Association and Navi Mumbai Amateur Volleyball Association on 20th & 21st February 2016 at Yeshwantarao Chavan Ground, Nerul. Hon. M.L.A. Smt.Mandatai Mhatre inaugurated the Volley Ball Tournament by lighting the lamp. Smt.Sangeeta Alphonse, Sr.Inspector of Police, Nerul, introduced the teams namely Century Rayon, RCF, GRP (Govt.Railway Police), Pillai College, Jack n Jill Pre school, New Bombay Keraleeya Samaj, Nerul, Thakur College (7 colours), Thane and Mumbai Police.

Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation Mayor Sudhakar Sonawane,(Chief Guest) Ex.Mayor Sagar Naik, NMMC Standing Committee Chairperson Netra Shirke, NMMT Chairman Sabu Daniel, Corporators Sunil Patil, Saroj Rohit



The winning team with the trophy.

Patil, Saluja Sutar, Ravindra Ithappe, Former Corporator Santosh Shetty and Ex.NMMT Chairman Sasi Damodharan were Guests of Honour.

Thakur College (7 colours) Thane won Trophy and Cash Prize of Rs.50,000/-

beating Mumbai Police on 24-21, 24-23, 24-23.

Samajam President K.T Nair presided over the function while Gen.Secretary Prakash Kattakkada proposed a Vote of thanks.

Aksharashlokam Malsaram



Aksharasasloka Sadassu in session

■ Bombay Keraleeya Samaj Matunga conducted its annual aksharashlokam contest on February 28 at Kerala Bhavanam Matunga. From 10 am to 1 pm there was aksharasasloka sadassu and ekasharamalsaram from 2 pm to 4

pm. The participants and audience observed two minutes silence to pay homage to the late Poet ONV Kurup before starting the competition. Unnikrishnan, Smt Sushma Krishnan and Suma Ramachandran bagged the

first, second and thirds prize respectively. Samaj Secretary Devdas G Nair and Jt Secretary Vijayakumar spoke on the occasion.

Tapasya Kalavedi's 24th Anniversary

■ Tapasya Kalavedi conducted its 24th anniversary celebrations on February 14 at Prarthana Mandapam, Ayyappa temple in Vasai. The cultural programme was inaugurated by Prof Shibu Nair by lighting the traditional lamp. PVK Nambiar, Vidyanand Pattath, and others attended the event. Vidyanand released the Kalavedi Souvenir, Aravindakshan gave the welcome speech and Chandrasekhar proposed a vote of thanks. This was followed by variety entertainment programme. Kalavedi paid homage to the brave jawans who recently lost their lives in Siachen and the noted poet and lyricist late ONV Kurup. The programme concluded with Sangeetha Sandhya, a musical programme headed by Yogeeshha Sarma.



Release of Tapasya Kalavedi Souvenir

SIES Alumini Fundraising Event

■ The Past Students Association of the SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Sion organized a get together to raise funds for upgrading and modernizing the infrastructures for the visually challenged (Blind) students and also to conduct medical check up for them and for staff of the college. There are 36 visually challenged students studying in various courses and many have secured ranks in the various university exams. There were also Bharatanatyam, Mohiniattam, light music and street plays to entertain guests.



Visually challenged students singing *Hum Ko Manki Shakthi Dena*.

TPP Nair Felicitated



TPP Nair being felicitated

■ Bombay Keraleeya Samiti Malad organised a function to felicitate TPP Nair, for receiving Dhyana Chand Award for 2015 from the President of India for his illustrious contributions to sports in India. He was a member of the team that won the Bronze medal for Volley Ball in the third Asian Games held in Tokyo in 1958. Following this, he was the captain of the Indian Volley ball team, that won Silver Medal in Volley Ball in the 1962 Jakarta Asian Games. Despite his illustrious achievements, recognition came rather late to him in the form of this award at the age of 82.

Members from other samajams also participated in this function that was presided over by Samiti President Adv Padma Divakar. K S Nair, VJayan Nair from Malad Nair Samajam, Muralidharan from SNMS Kurar, Balan Nair, Krishnankutty, Murali Nair from Charkop Ayyappa Seva Sangham, Achuthan Nair, Kunjumon from Dahisar Ketkipada, noted writers Girijavallabhan, Govindanunny spoke on the occasion. TPP Nair was accompanied by his wife and son. V Mukundan welcomed the gathering and P Balakrishnan proposed a vote of thanks. E Chandran coordinated the event.

Cultural Events during Craft Bazaar 2016

■ N N Sivaprasad's *Shrutilaya Fine Arts* is hosting a series of cultural events during the Craft Bazaar exhibition, showcasing exclusive and rich handicraft products of India at CIDCO Urban Hatt near Railway Station CBD Belapur, New Mumbai from Feb 25th to March 6th, 2016. Ramesh N Denge Additional Chief Planner And Convener Of Urban Haat CIDCO inaugurated the function.



During the inaugural function



Nayika - a dance production by Mandira Manish and group at Craft Bazaar.

Nritya Therapy

Preranadham and Nritya Prerana Pune is conducting a unique three month course on dance therapy that was evolved using Indian Classical Dance- Bharatanatyam. The Course starts on 19th February 2016 and ends on 30th April 2016. This course is open for medical practitioners, dancers and psychologists who will use this therapy in their field of work. Those who complete this certificate course will also be permitted to start Nritya Therapy - Nritya for body and soul at their centers. For more details, mail to suchitraadate@gmail.com , nrityapreranapune@gmail.com

Annual Day Celebrations

Sri Hari Kanakasabha Kalakshetra Dance Academy in Mira Road headed by Guru Haridas K Raghavan

celebrated its annual day at St Joseph Church Hall in Mira Road (East.) PRC Nair, Prof Chetana Saraiyya, Dr Chitra Viswanath, Joseph Sebastian, Gracy Augustine, Sukanya Bhatt, Farooq

Alathur and Jayant Nair attended the event. Several students of the Academy performed their arangettam during the function.



Students of Dance Academy



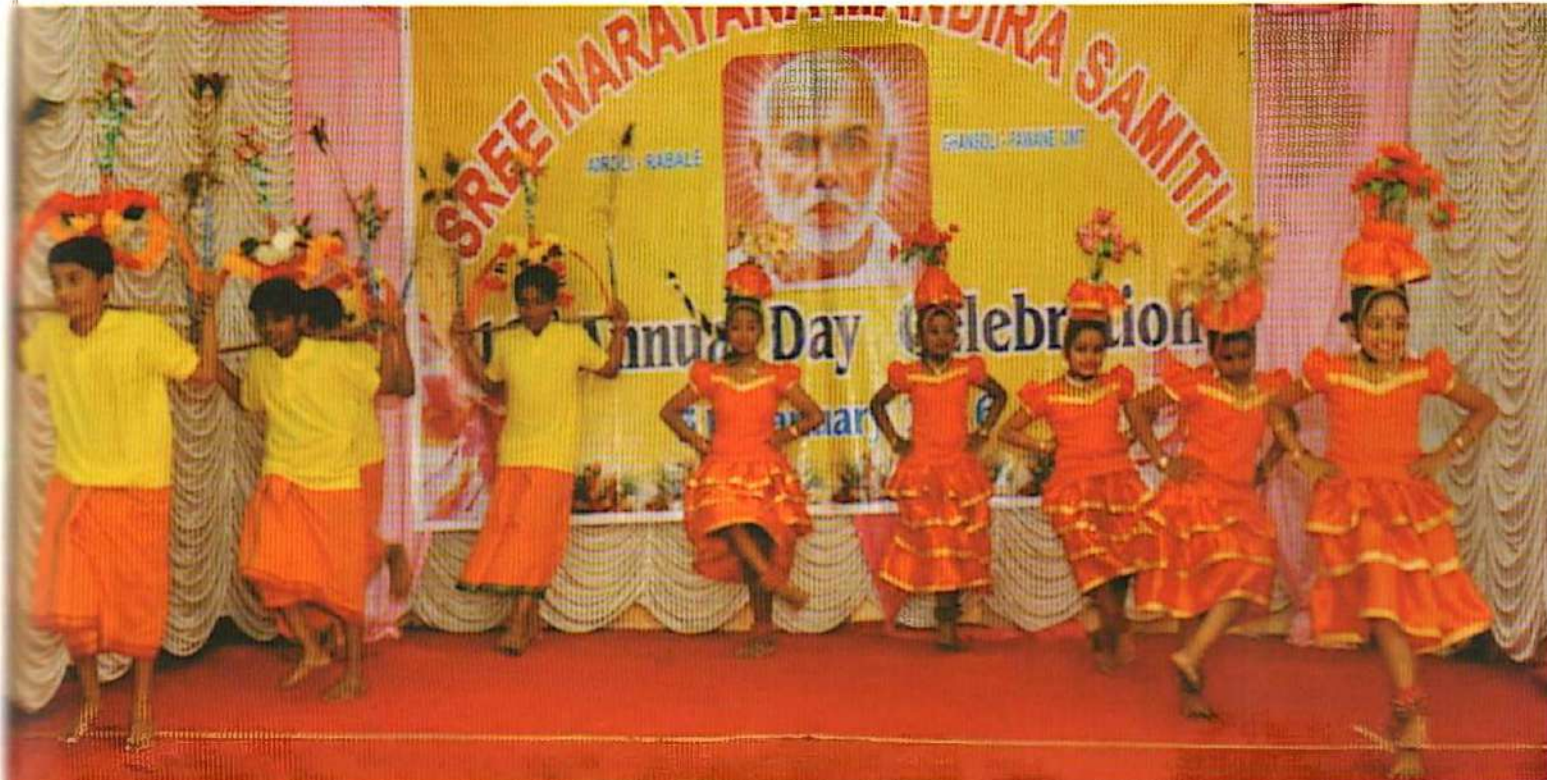
Hoisting of temple flag by Tantri K P Krishnan Bhattathiripad, preceding the consecration day festival at Vasai Sabarigiri Ayyappa Temple.



Ashtabandhanavikarana punaprathishta rituals at Gurudevagiri Nerul.

ONV Remembered

■ Bombay Keraleeya Samiti Malad organised a memorial meeting for the late ONV Kurup presided over by its President Adv Padma Divakar. V Mukundan, P Nambiar, T Madhavan, Rajendran Padiyur, Gopalakrishnan, Vatsala, Edward George spoke on the occasion and mentioned that the late poet's works were immemorial.

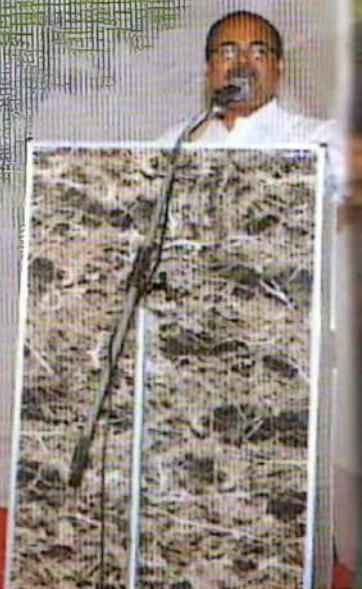


Cultural programme during SNMS Airoli Guru Centre's 12th Annual day celebration

SAHAR MALAYALI SAMAJAM (2001)
40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS
DR SURESH NAIR 14TH FEB. 2016
AT PATEL GROUND C.P. ROAD NO. 2, SAHAR, MUMBAI - 400009
DR. SURESH NAIR



Dr Suresh Nair speaking at the function



Malayalam Drama Festival



■ Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademy West Zone Malayalam drama festival was held on February 28 at Vashi Cidco Exhibition Centre. In all there were three dramas. The first one was 'Van Gogh-Asanthiyude Chitrakaran' by Chembur Kalanjali Theatres followed by 'Ee Punyabhumi' presented by Malad Keraleeya Samiti and 'Madhyadharanyazhi Chuvakkunnath' by Kharghar Keraleeya Samajam. As a tribute to the late Poet Shri. O.N.V. Kurup few of his selected drama songs were presented by the Mumbai singers Baburaj Menon, Sebastian, Saumya and others during the interval period. KSNA's Kalashri awardees V.V. Achuthan and Udyogamandalam Vikraman Pillai were also felicitated during the



programme. K.D. Chandran, C.K.K. Poduval, Harikumar Menon, P.V. Vijay Kumar (Kerala in Mumbai), Dr. Venugopal and many others attended the event.

Sahar Malayali Samajam

■ Sahar Malayali Samajam celebrated its 40th annual day programme at Gujarathi Patel Grounds. Vivek College Principal, Dr Suresh Nair inaugurated the function. After paying homage to the late poet and lyricist ONV Kurup and the brave jawans who recently lost their lives in Siachen, there was variety entertainment programme. The celebrations included kaikottikali, margam kali, oppanapattu, Bharatatyam and cinematic dance by members and their children, felicitation of meritorious students, honouring senior members and distribution of ID cards to new members.



K & K New Year Function

■ Kashmir to Kerala Social Foundation celebrated its fifth New Year Award function at Hiranandani Garden, Powai. Several dignitaries and VIPs from Kashmir to Kerala attended the function.

Dr. Farooq Abdulla appreciated Prince Vaidyan for coordinating Kashmir to Kerala together on one stage. Noted violonist Sandeep Thakur rendered a recital with other musicians and Dr Abdulla sang a song with them.

About a 1000 special invitees attended. Dr. P R Krishnan, Mrs. Menon (Jehangir Art Gallery), Dr. Bijoy Kutty, , Business man and Social Activist S R Pillai were felicitated.

Condolence MEET

■ Mulund Kerala Samajam organised a condolence meeting on February 25 in memory of the late ONV Kurup, noted poet and Jnanpith Award winner, writer Akbar Kakkattil, film cameraman Anandakuttan, TV producer and editor in chief of Asianet News T N Gopakumar, Film music composer Rajamani and film actress Kalpana, all of whom, passed away recently. President K Gopalan presided over the condolence meeting that took place at the Samajam office. Samajam office bearers CK Lakshmi Narayanan, oommen Michael, CKK Poduval E Ramachandran participated in the meeting.

Kerala In Mumbai March 2016

ONV Musical Nite by Raagalaya

■ Raagalaya Academy of Music and Arts in association with "Kerala in Mumbai" is organising a Malayalam Musical evening as a tribute to the memory of departed Poet Prof . O.N.V. Kurup on April 10, 2016 at the auditorium of Marol Education Academy, Andheri (E) from 6 PM onwards.

Well known artists will take part in the event. Selected songs penned by ONV will be rendered on the occasion. The entry is restricted to pass holders. For further details contact Raagalaya / Kerala in Mumbai office on 022-29209959/ 29205641 or Mob No. 9820110509.



Raagalaya President P.V. Vijay Kumar receiving Shri. O.N.V. Kurup and wife at Mumbai Airport during the year 2005 when he arrived from Kerala to receive the lifetime achievement award of Raagalaya. P.R. Krishnan and Singer Kallara Gopan also seen in the picture.



Sidharth Jadhav, Rajapur, Smt. Seeta R. Shetty, V.N. Gopalakrishnan, recipients of the Principal M.P. Pillai Adarsh Shikshak Puraskars and Adarsh Patrakar Puraskar, S.R. Pillai and and teachers of Powai English High School.

V N Gopalakrishnan receives Adarsh Patrakar Puraskar

■ V.N. Gopalakrishnan, regular Feature writer for Kerala in Mumbai, (Makers of Modern Kerala,) senior Journalist and Social Activist, received the M.P. Pillai Adarsh Patrakar Puraskar (Journalism Award), organized by Principal M.P. Pillai Charitable Trust during the seventh Memorable Day of late M.P. Pillai, Principal, Powai English High School on February 21, 2016. Shri. Pillai was the Founder Chairman of the Mahatma Education Society under which 48 educational institutions are now functioning. The Current Chairman and CEO of the Mahatma Education Society is Dr. K.M. Vasudevan Pillai. Shri M.P. Pillai Adarsh Shikshak Puraskars (Best Teacher Awards) were presented to Sidharth Jadhav, Art Teacher, Saraswati Vidya Mandir, Pachel, Rajapur, Ratnagiri District and Smt. Seeta R. Shetty, Head Mistress, Indian Education Society's Secondary School, Charkop, Mumbai. S.R. Pillai, President of the Principal M.P. Pillai Charitable Trust presented the Awards. There was a variety entertainment programme by the students and prizes were given to the participants on the occasion.

Powai English High School has bagged the Best School Award from the 'S Ward' for the seventh consecutive year. Teachers and well-wishers of late M.P. Pillai created a Library to pay homage to him. Municipal Corporation has named the road in front of the School as M.P. Pillai Marg in the past. Shri. Chandan Sharma, Corporator, Smt. Beena Sharma, Head Mistress, Secondary Section, Smt. Asha Rao, Head Mistress, Primary Section, Subhash Lad, Gopalakrishna Pillai, representatives of various socio-cultural associations of Powai, students and parents participated in the function.



V.N. Gopalakrishnan, feature writer of Kerala In Mumbai receiving M.P. Pillai Adarsh Patrakar Puraskar (Journalism Award) from S.R. Pillai. Subhash Lad and Gopalakrishna Pillai are also seen in the picture.

AIMA VOICE 2016

■ All India Malayalee Association in organising a National Level music competition in March April: AIMA voice 2016 for young boys and girls. The preliminary competitions will be held at Chennai, Bangalore, Delhi, Kolkotta, Mumabi Raipur, Bhuvanewar, Vijayawada, Bhopal, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Ludhiana in March and April. The final competition will be held by the end of April in Kochi. The competition is open to both boys and girls in two categories: in the age group between 10 15 years and 16 25. The First prize carries a Cash Award of Rs 1,00,000/ and the second prize Rs 50,000/ and third Prize Rs 25,00/. For further details contact Adv Prema Menon at 9892180858 or visit website : www.myaima.org/aimavoice/html.

Kalashri Nambisan's New Art Creations

Lalitha Kalalayam Kalashri Parameswaran Nambisan is a senior and well known percussion artiste living in Mumbai. For the past 45 years he has performed in the Mumbai Art field and it was his great desire to create a new Art Manifestation and dedicate it to the Mumbai Art Industry. As a result he has created three Dance and Musical Jugalbandhi, two of which have been staged several times with the help of Ministry of Culture, New Delhi. It was successfully staged recently at the Mumbai Kala Ghoda Festival, Onam Festival of Kerala Sangeet Nataka Akademi at Kanakakunnu Palace, Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur in Kerala by Kerala Tourism Development and Ministry of culture New Delhi. These unusual Jugalbandhis are Vadya Vrinda Pravaham, Souparnikamrutham and Kshetra Kala Vadya Manjari.

Vadya Vrinda Pravaham is a musical jugalbandhi where Kalashri Nambisan plays on edakka, mridangam, maddalam, thavil, ganjira, chenda and ghatam accompanied with drum set, violin, table, konnakol vocal. Souparnikamrutham 2016 is another musical jugalbandhi he has composed. Kshetra Kala Vadya Manjari, a temple visual art manifestation is his artistic creation of using ten traditional temple



Kalashri Nambisan receiving Jwala Award 2015

musical instruments namely chenda, maddalam, edakka, thimila, base chenda, kombu, kuzhala, thalam, chengala, shanku. This rhythmic composition starts on a low tempo from one instrument to another in reducing steps and finally all instruments rise together in a rocking climax. Nambisan has created this visual art manifestation after a lot of research on Kerala traditional temple art forms namely keli, panchavadyam and thayambaka with some alterations from keli kottu, triputa from panchavadyam and irukita from thayambaka.

Kalashri Nambisan is an All India Radio B Grade Artiste, Bollywood cine A grade artiste and UNESCO member. He has been bestowed 'Kalashri' title ' by Kerala Sangeet Nataka Akademy 'Kala Vipanchika' from Kerala, 'Kala Darpan' from Mumbai Jwala Award 2015, 'Rashtra Gaurav Puraskar' from Pune, 'The Best Citizen of India' from New Delhi. He has performed on more than 20 stages across India. Nambisan's another new creation is Thayambaka on Edakka which is ready for presentation on stage.

BKS Athletic Meet & Walking Race

■ Bomay Keraleeya Samaj conducted its annual athletic Meet on February 21 at Guru Nanak Khalsa College Grounds from 8 am onwards. Students from various schools, colleges clubs participated and there were certificates and cash prizes for winners. The events included 100 Mtrs runs for different age groups and men and women, shot put and tug of war.

Bombay Keraleeya Samajam organized its 52nd annual **Walking Race** on February 7 at Shivaji Park Grounds, Dadar.

The walking races were also for different age groups and men and women. The trophies included Lt P Nagappan Nair Challenge Cup for 10 KM walking race (Men), The Bombay Keraleeya Samaj Trophy 10 KM Walking race, (Women), The Bombay

Keraleeya Samaj Cup (10 KM walking race for boys under 15 years), The Bombay Keraleeya Samaj Mannoor George John Trophy (10 KM walking race Girls under 15 years), The Bombay Keraleeya Samaj Trophy (10 KM Walking Race for Veteran Men & Women between 40 -50 years), The Bombay Keraleeya Samaj Trophy (10 KM Walking Race for Veteran Men & Women between 50 -65 years,) The Bombay Keraleeya Samaj Trophy (5 KM Walking Race for Veteran Men & Women above 65 years.

Samaj Jt Secretary Vijay Kumar Nair, Sunil Kumar Nair, Member in charge Sports, K Padmasundaran, Chairman Sports Sub Committee and Satheesan, Secretary Sports Sub Committee organized the Athletic Meet and Walking Race.

Obituary



PV Vasudevan, specialist in injection mould die manufacturer, passed away on January 30, 2016.

He is the father of Subhita Murali, Founder/Director of Saraswathy Kala Kendra & Research Centre, Mira Road.

ONV Kurup passed away

Ottapalakkal Neelakantan Velu Kurup, popularly known as ONV Kurup or simply ONV died on February 13 evening at KIMS Hospital Thiruvanthapuram following a heart attack. He was 84.

ONV was a professor of Malayalam in government service and worked in Maharajas College, Ernakulam (1957), Government College of Arts and Science Calicut, Govt Brennen College Thalasseri and Govt Women's College Thiruvananthapuram. After retirement in 1986 he served Calicut University as visiting professor. He was Chairman of Kerala Kalamandalam, member of Kerala Sahitya Akademi and National President of Indian Progressive Writers. From 1982 to 1987, he was a member of Kendra Sahitya Akademi. He won Jnanpith Award also. Union government honoured him by bestowing on him Padmashri and later Padma Vibhushan. He won twice the national award for literature, national award for best lyricist in India, state award for best lyricists 13 times, Soviet Land Nehru Award, Vayalar Award, Ezhuthachan Award and almost all literary awards



instituted in Kerala.

ONV created his own niche in literature in modern Malayalam. He has written several poems and compiled them into more than 30 books, wrote lyrics for stage plays as well as Malayalam films running to more than 3000. Among his literary works,

'Kavithayile prathisandhikal' (Crisis in poetry), 'Kavithayile samanthara rekhakal,' (The parallel lines in poetry), Ezhuthachan A Study, Aksharam, Uppu, Bhoomikkoru Charamageetham, Shargkapakshikal, ujjaini are his prominent works.

Poems of ONV were known for their reflections of his superior knowledge of world literature especially ancient Indian poetry. Well versed in the grammar of poetry, his poems seldom succumbed to inert phrases and words.

ONV was born to O N Krishna Kurup of Kollam and K Lakshmi Kutty Amma, on May 27, 1931. While he was a college student, he was attracted to the Marxian philosophy and joined the theatre group of O Madhavan, Thoppil Bhasi, G Dvarajan and others. The group was known as Kerala Peoples Arts Club (KPAC). Though he was not assigned the job of writing lyrics for their first play, 'Ente Makananu Shari', their second play Ningalenne Communistakki onwards till he parted ways with KPAC, he wrote the lyrics of all their plays.

Malayalam author Akbar Kakkattil passes away

Famous novelist and short story writer Akbar Kakkattil (62) passed away in the early hours of February 17. Kakkattil was undergoing treatment for cancer. His mortal was kept at Town hall in Kozhikode for public to pay homage. He was laid to rest at Kandoth Kuni Juma Masjid in Kakkattil same day evening.

Akbar Kakkattil, who was born to P Abdullah and C K Kunjhamina on July 7, 1954, at Kakkattil near Nadapuram, served as a teacher in his career spanning several years. He adopted a colloquial style of writing and marked his place among the writers through his short stories.

Being a teacher, his stories based on schools and teaching experience won many hearts. After Karoor Neelakanda Pillai, it was through Akbar's works, the life of teachers and students grabbed attention again.

Kakkattil completed his MA from



Thrissur Kerala Varma College and BEd from Thalassery training college and he served as teacher in National HSS, Vattoli till his retirement. A popular figure among the students, Kakkattil's

informal style in story telling won him many friends across the state. As a student, he had won the state government's merit scholarship for Sanskrit. He also served as the governing council member of union government's South zone cultural centre and also Kerala Sahitya Akademi. He was also a recipient of several honours, including the Ankanam literary Award for 'Shameelafahmi', Kerala Sahitya Akademi Awards for 'School Diary' and 'Vadaku Ninnoru Kutumbavrihantham', S K Pottekkatt Award for 'Mrithuyogam', Joseph Mundasseri Award for 'Sthrainam', Abudhabi Sakthi Award for 'Vadaku Ninnoru Kutumbavrihantham', Indian Government Fellowship for Literature, Rajiv Gandhi Peace Foundation Award for 'Selected Stories', Gramadeepam Award and T V Kochubava Award.

He is survived by wife V Jameela and daughters Sithara and Suhana.

Music composer Rajamani passed away

Popular music composer Rajamani, who predominantly worked in Malayalam film industry, passed away due to cardiac arrest.

"He suffered a sudden cardiac arrest and passed away on February 14," according to a source close to his family.

Born into a family of Carnatic musicians, Rajamani's first tryst with music happened when he accompanied his father BA Chidambaranath (who gave us "Karayunno puzha chirikkunno, Pakalkinaavin sundaramakum) on a devotional album *Gangayaru Pirakkunnu*. He was just 13 years old.

Besides learning Carnatic music, Rajamani also dabbled in Western and Hindustani music. His first independent venture was 1983 Tamil



film *Gramathu Kiligal*, followed by *Kalloori Kanavugal* in the same year. He went on to score music for

successful Malayalam films like *Ekalavyan*, *Commissioner*, *The King*, *Aram Thampuran* and *Narasimham*.

He composed music for nearly 70 films and rendered background score for over 700 films. His last film as a composer was in 2012 Malayalam romantic-drama *Hide n' Seek*.

Rajamani had composed songs for more than 70 Malayalam movies in his over three-decade long career. He made his Malayalam debut with the film *Nullinovikkathe* in 1985.

He composed the background score for blockbusters including *Narasimham* (2000), *Aaraam Thampuran* (1997), for which he won Kerala state film award, and *Ravanaprabhu* (2001).

He is survived by his wife and son, Achu Rajamani, who too is a music composer.

Ace Cinematographer Anandakuttan passed away

Ace cameraman V R Anandakuttan passed away on Feb 14. He was ailing for a while and died after a cardiac arrest at a private hospital in Kochi. His body was cremated at Ravipuram next day morning.

He was 61 and is survived by his wife Geethamani, son Sreekumar and daughters Neelima and Karthika.

His Friends recalled him as a man obsessed with the camera and between his first film 'Manassoru mayil' in 1977 and 'Doctor Innocentaanu' in 2012, he wielded the camera for around 300 films, considered a record by film industry insiders.

He was born at Vazhappilli, near Changanassery, in 1954 and started his career as a camera assistant in Chennai and went on to work with famous cameraman K Ramachandra Babu. As Malayalam film industry's leading camera man, he created a



record of sorts in 1990s by wielding the camera for 12 films in a calendar year. Though film-lovers in Kerala associate him with his works with film-maker Fazil, Anandakuttan has worked with all the directors and lead

players in the industry. He also worked in the Tamil and Telugu film industry. He was behind the camera for films such as 'His Highness Abdullah,' 'Bharatham,' 'Kamaladalam,' 'Sadayam,' and 'Chronic Bachelor.'

He began his career in photography by taking a shot of the funeral procession of Mannathu Padmanabhan with a Click III camera. The picture was so good that a local studio enlarged and kept it on display at its lobby for a long while. At that time he was studying in Class VIII. He went on to seek formal training in photography after his pre-degree studies and one of his brothers-in-law was instrumental in getting him to Chennai.

The body was kept at his residence at Ambelippadam, near Vyttila. Film directors Sibi Malayail and Siddque were among those who reached his home to pay their last respects.

Director Rajesh Pillai dies at 41

Rajesh Pillai, director of hit Malayalam film *Traffic* passed away on February 27 at PVS hospital in Kochi.

He was admitted to the hospital on February 25 and immediately put on to the ventilator.

The director who is known for path-breaking Malayalam films such as "Traffic" and "Mili" was suffering from liver cirrhosis.

Several actors who worked in his movies rushed to the hospital on hearing news about his demise. The film maker had contracted pneumonia during the post production of his latest film "Vettah" and it worsened his health condition.

His death comes a day after "Vettah", starring Manju Warrier and

Kunjacko Bobban, hit theatres. The film was completed while he was undergoing treatment.

Bollywood actor Manoj Bajpayee, who starred in the yet-to-be released Hindi remake of "Traffic",

condoled Pillai's death on Twitter.

The director's latest Malayalam movie, "Vettah", released on Friday the 26th February and has been garnering positive response from critics and



audience alike. The movie, starring Manju Warrier, Kunjacko Boban and Indrajith Sukumaran, is a psychological thriller that revolves around the lives of three people.

The success of his film *Traffic* opened a series of Malayalam films, considered by the discerned and encouraged young producers to be different, not only in Kerala but in other states.

They were all remade in other languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Kannada and Hindi as well.

Kerala temple stops pujas for two days to mourn Muslim beaten to death

Following Shabeer's death, the temple has also decided to abandon the "annadanam" and the traditional procession for the 10-day festival starting February 9.

It's a rare tribute that is drawing as much attention as the tragedy that led to it. A temple in Kerala stopped offering pujas for two days to mourn a 23-year-old Muslim man who was beaten to death in an incident that was captured by an eyewitness in a video clip that went viral.

M V Shabeer, 23, was a member of the executive committee that organises the annual festival at a Shiva temple at Puthennada near Attingal in Thiruvananthapuram district. According to police, he was beaten to death on Sunday afternoon by four men following a dispute over an elephant running amok during the festival last year.

On Monday and Tuesday, the Shiva temple's office-bearers decided not to blow the conch or ring the bell as a mark of respect for Shabeer. The temple, which holds five pujas a day, did not offer them on those two days after the morning

"darshan".

"It was a friendship beyond religion, We never considered Shabeer as a Muslim in the temple committee," said N Unni, another member of the executive committee for the temple festival.

"Shabeer was the most active member in our committee. This time, I had gone out only for a day to collect provisions from houses for the annadanam (offering of food). But Shabeer was out collecting rice and coconuts for a whole week," said Unni.

Following Shabeer's death, the temple has also decided to abandon the

"annadanam" and the traditional procession for the 10-day festival starting February 9.

"Shabeer was a religious Muslim who loved our activities and took part in them sincerely. We always considered him as one among us and included him in the festival committee two years ago," said C Gouri Chandra, convenor of the committee.

"Since the priest wanted the temple to be opened, we did so on Monday and



Tuesday but suspended the pujas. There was no blowing of the conch or the ringing of bells in those days. In the evenings too, the temple opened but did not offer any puja," added Chandra.

According to local residents, Shabeer had been struggling to provide for his family a mother and two younger brothers, both students after his father abandoned them years ago. He even abandoned his degree course to work as a construction worker.

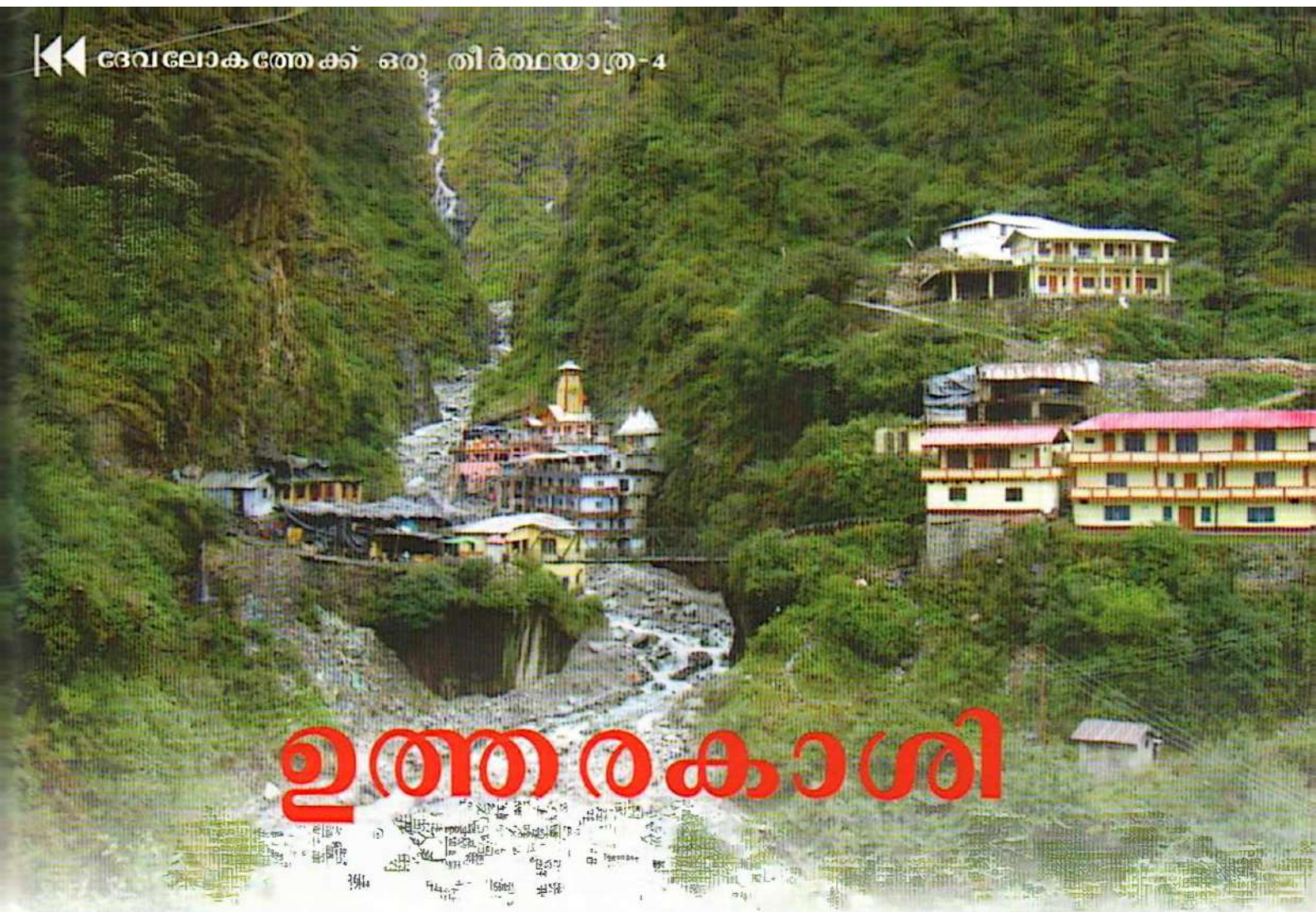
Panchayat member M Lalija, who represents the temple area, said Shabeer did not face any problem at his mosque for being associated with the festival.

According to police, the dispute that led to the lethal assault arose last year after the four youths were arrested for provoking the elephant by pricking its tail with a needle as it led the procession past another temple nearby they were linked to.

Shabeer witnessed the incident and deposited against the four, police said.

The "grudge" led to a few fights between the two sides with Shabeer's name being linked to a petty criminal case, they said.

The Puthennada temple, which is owned by ten families and managed by a trust, was consecrated by the early 20th-century social reformer Sree Narayana Guru, who preached the concept of one caste, one religion and one god.



ഉത്തരകാശി



കുനം വിഷ്ണു

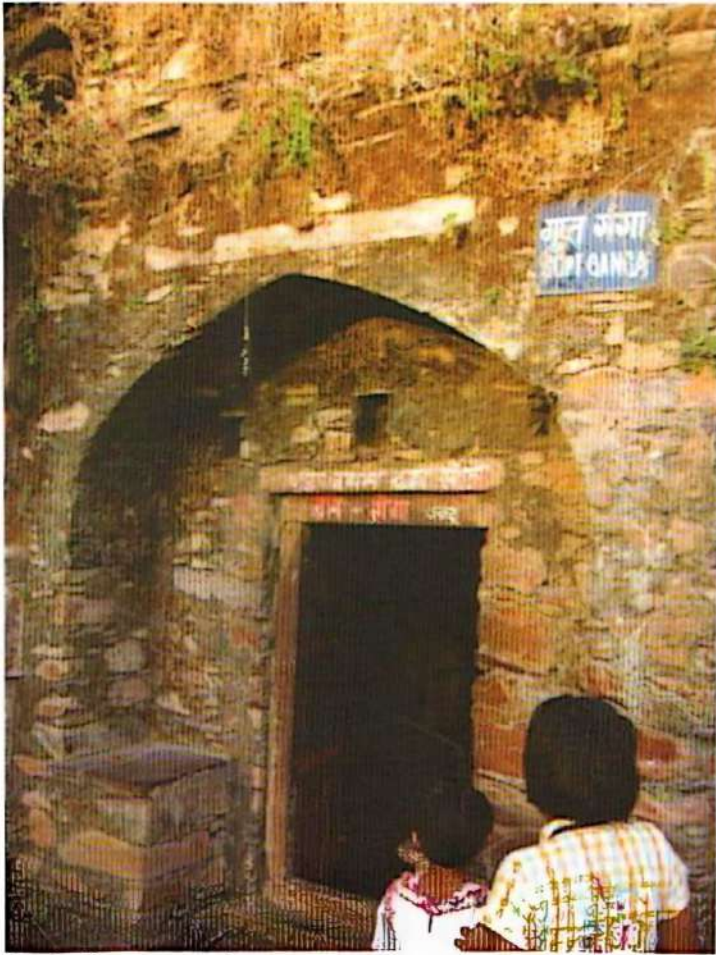
യമുനോത്രിയിൽനിന്ന് ഇറങ്ങി ജാനകീചട്ടി എത്തിയപ്പോഴേക്കും നേരം വൈകിയിരുന്നു. ജീപ്പിൽ കയറാനുള്ള സ്ഥലത്ത് എത്തിയപ്പോഴാണ് ഒരു കാര്യം ഞങ്ങളുടെ ശ്രദ്ധയിൽ പെട്ടത്. സംഘത്തിലെ മൂന്നുപേർ ഒപ്പമില്ല. ക്ഷീണിതരായ അവർ അല്പം പിന്നിലായിരുന്നു. ഒരേപോലെ തോന്നുന്ന ഗല്ലികളാകയാൽ അവർക്ക് വഴി തെറ്റിയതാവണം. ഞങ്ങൾ അവരെ തിരയാൻ തുടങ്ങി. ചിലർ അല്പം പരിഭ്രമിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. അതു കണ്ട് ചില തദ്ദേശീയരും ഉടനെ സഹായത്തിനെത്തി. മൊബൈലൊന്നും ഫലിക്കുന്നുമില്ല. തണുപ്പുകാരണം മുടിപ്പുതച്ചു മുഖാമാത്രം പ്രദർശിപ്പിച്ചു നടക്കുന്ന എല്ലാവരും അടുത്തു കാണുവരെ ഒരേപോലെയാണ് തോന്നിച്ചിരുന്നത്. തിരച്ചിൽ ഊർജ്ജിതമാക്കി. അഞ്ചു മിനുട്ടിനുള്ളിൽ, പരിഭ്രമിച്ചു ഞങ്ങളെ പരതി നടന്നിരുന്ന അവരെ കണ്ടുമുട്ടി. ഒട്ടും സമയം കളയാതെ, ഉടൻതന്നെ ജീപ്പിൽ കയറി, തിരികെ ഹനുമാൻ ചട്ടിയിലേക്ക്. നേരം വല്ലാതെ വൈകിയിരുന്നു. അധികം വൈകാതെ സന്ധ്യയാകും. ഇരുട്ടിയാൽ അപകടം പതിയിരിക്കുന്ന ആ വഴിയിലൂടെ ബസ്സോടിക്കാൻ കഴിയില്ലെന്ന് ഡ്രൈവർ പറഞ്ഞിരുന്നുവല്ലോ. അമ്പതു കിലോമീറ്റർ അകലെയാണ് രാത്രി കൂടേണ്ട സ്ഥലം. അവിടെ എത്തേണ്ട? ഡ്രൈവർ ദേഷ്യത്തിലായിരുന്നു, ഇത്രയധികം വൈകിച്ചതിന്. പലർക്കും ഹനുമാൻചട്ടിയിലെത്തി ഓരോ ചായ കുടിക്കണം എന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ആ ആഗ്രഹത്തിനു കടിഞ്ഞാണിട്ട്, വൈകിയതിൽ ഖേദം പ്രകടിപ്പിച്ച് ഞങ്ങൾ ബസ്സിൽ കയറി. ഇരുട്ടുന്നതിനുമുമ്പ് ബാർകോട്ടിൽ എത്തി.

ഒരു ചെറിയ ഗ്രാമത്തിലെ, നല്ല വൃത്തിയും വെടിപ്പുമുള്ള ഒരു കൊച്ചു ഹോട്ടൽ. നല്ലവണ്ണം ഇരുട്ടിക്കഴിഞ്ഞതിനാൽ സമീപ പ്രദേശങ്ങളൊന്നുംതന്നെ കാണാനില്ല. അടുത്തെവിടെയോ

തുടർച്ചയായി വീഴുന്ന വെള്ളത്തിന്റെ ശബ്ദമൊഴിച്ചാൽ (ഹോട്ടലിനു പിന്നിൽ ഒരു വെള്ളച്ചാട്ടമുണ്ടത്രെ!) പരിപൂർണ്ണ നിശ്ശബ്ദം. ദിവസം മുഴുവനും ഉള്ള നടത്തം ഞങ്ങളെ തീർത്തും ക്ഷീണിതരാക്കിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. കാലിലെ പേശികൾ വേഗം കിടക്കാൻ വിളിച്ചു പറയുന്നുണ്ട്. ഒരു മണിക്കൂറിനുള്ളിൽ ഗണേശൻ ഉണ്ണാൻ വിളിച്ചു. ചുടോടെ ചോറും സാമ്പാറും, രസവും മറ്റും. വയറും മനസ്സും നിറഞ്ഞ് എല്ലാവരും അവനവന്റെ മുറികളിലേക്ക് വലിഞ്ഞു. കനത്ത ഇരുട്ട്, സമൃദ്ധമായ പ്രാണവായു. നിതാന്തനിശ്ശബ്ദതയിൽ മധുരം ചേർക്കാൻ വെള്ളച്ചാട്ടത്തിന്റെ താരാട്ട്. ഇനിയെന്തു വേണം? സ്വപ്നംകാണാൻ പോലും മറന്ന് ഞങ്ങൾ ഉറങ്ങി.

കാലത്ത് ഒമ്പതു മണിയ്ക്കേ പുറപ്പെടുകയുള്ളൂ എന്ന് ഡ്രൈവർ പറഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. അതിനാൽ ആരുംതന്നെ നേരത്തെ ഉണരാൻ മുതിർന്നില്ല. പക്ഷെ ആരുമണിക്കു തന്നെ വെയിൽ ഞങ്ങളെ ഉണർത്താൻ കടന്നുവന്നു. ഉറക്കെയുറക്കെ പരസ്പരം സംസാരിക്കുന്ന കിളികളുടെ ശബ്ദം ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് നവോന്മേഷം പകർന്നു. ആദ്യം എഴുന്നേറ്റയാൾ ചായ കൊണ്ടുവരാൻ ഏർപ്പാട് ചെയ്തു. ചുടുവെള്ളം കിട്ടാതെ പല്ലുതേപ്പുകൂടി വയ്ക്കൂ. ആവശ്യത്തിനു ചുടുവെള്ളം കിട്ടുകയൊക്കെ ചെയ്യും. പക്ഷെ ഓരോ ബക്കറ്റു ചുടുവെള്ളത്തിനും കാശുകൊടുക്കണമെന്നു മാത്രം. അതാണ് അന്നാട്ടിലെ പൊതുരീതി. കൂളിച്ച് പ്രാതൽ കഴിച്ച് ഞങ്ങൾ തൊട്ടടുത്തുള്ള വെള്ളച്ചാട്ടം കാണാൻ പോയി.

ഗ്രാമം ഉണർന്നുവരുന്നതേയുള്ളൂ. അങ്ങാടിയിൽ ഏതാനും കടകൾ മാത്രം തുറന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. അങ്ങാടിയിൽക്കപ്പുറത്താണ് ശബ്ദത്തിന്റെ ഉറവിടം. ഒരു ചെറിയ അരുവി. യമുനയിൽ ചേരാനുള്ള തിടുക്കത്തിൽ ആട്ടിൻകുട്ടിയെപ്പോലെ പാറകളിൽ തുള്ളിച്ചാടി കിഴ്പ്പോട്ട് ഒഴുകുകയാണ്. തെളിഞ്ഞ വെള്ളം. ഞങ്ങളും ഒരു ഓത്തുമല്ലാതെ അവിടെ മറ്റൊരു ജീവിയല്ല. കുറച്ചുനേരം അവിടെയെല്ലാം ചുറ്റി പ്രകൃതിഭംഗിയെ



Gupta Ganga

കുമാരയിൽ പകർത്തി ഞങ്ങൾ ഹോട്ടലിലേക്ക് മടങ്ങി. കിട്ടിയ ഒരു ഹിന്ദിപേപ്പറുമായി അല്പനേരം മല്ലിട്ട് എട്ടേമുക്കാലിന് ബസ്സിൽ കയറി. അന്നാട്ടിൽ ദിനപ്പത്രങ്ങൾ തുലോം കുറവാണ്. ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് പത്രങ്ങൾ ഇല്ലതന്നെ. ഓ, മറന്നു, ദേവലോകത്തല്ലേ? ദിവ്യജ്ഞാനികളായ ദേവകൾക്ക് വാർത്തകൾ അറിയാൻ പത്രങ്ങളെന്തിന്?

ഗുപ്തഗംഗ

കുറെ ചെന്നപ്പോൾ ഒരിടത്ത് ബസ് നിർത്തി. പുറത്തേക്ക് നോക്കിയപ്പോൾ രണ്ടുമൂന്നു കടകൾമാത്രം തുറന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. വേറെ യാതൊന്നും കാണാനില്ല. ഒന്നുരണ്ടു കാരുകൾ പാർക്ക് ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. മുന്നിൽ വളരെ ചെറിയ ഒരു അരുവി കുണുങ്ങി കുണുങ്ങി പോകുന്നു. ഉച്ചയായിട്ടില്ല. അപ്പോൾ ഊണിനല്ല നിർത്തിയിട്ടുള്ളത് എന്നു തീർച്ചയായി. ചോദിച്ചപ്പോൾ കാര്യം വിശദീകരിച്ചുതന്നു. അവിടെയാണ് പ്രസിദ്ധമായ ശിവഗുഹയും ഗുപ്തഗംഗയും ഉള്ളത്. എല്ലാവരും ബസ്സിൽനിന്ന് ഇറങ്ങി. ഇടതുവശത്ത് സാധാരണപോലെ അഗാധമായ കൊക്ക. വലതുവശത്ത് ഹിന്ദിയിൽ ഒരു ബോർഡ്, 'പ്രകൃതേശ്വർ പഞ്ചാനൻ മഹാദേവ്.' ബോർഡിനടിയിലൂടെ മുകളിലേക്കു കയറാൻ 100-150 പടികൾ. മുകളിൽ എവിടെയോ ഒരു അമ്പലമണി മുഴങ്ങുന്നുണ്ട്. ഇത്ര കുത്തനെയുള്ള ഏറെ പടികൾ കണ്ടപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങളിൽ ചിലർ കയറണമോ എന്നു സംശയിച്ചു. അപ്പോൾ, ഞങ്ങളിൽ വിജ്ഞാനിയായ ഗണേശനാണ് പറഞ്ഞത്, ഗുപ്തഗംഗ തൊഴാതെ പോയാൽ ഗംഗോത്രി പോയതിനു ഫലമില്ല എന്നും ഗംഗാദേവിയെ ആദ്യം ദർശിക്കേണ്ടത് ഇവിടെയാണ് എന്നും. ഹിമാലയത്തിലെ അത്ഭുതങ്ങൾ കാണാനല്ലേ മിനക്കിട്ട് ഇങ്ങോട്ടു വന്നത്, എല്ലാം കാണാതെ മടങ്ങുന്നതെങ്ങനെ? ഞങ്ങളിൽ ചിലർ കയറാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ചു. അപ്പോൾ മറ്റുള്ളവരും പിന്തുടർന്നു. പടികൾക്കിടയിലുള്ള ദുരം സാമാന്യം കൂടുതലാണ്. അതിനാൽ കയറ്റം ക്ലേശകരമെന്നെ. മുകളിൽ ശ്രീകോവിലൊന്നുമില്ല. സാമാന്യം വലിയൊരു പാറ.

പാറയുടെ ഒരു വശത്ത് ഒരാൾ പൊക്കത്തിൽ ഒരു ഗുഹാമുഖം. അതിലൂടെ ഉള്ളിൽ കടന്നു. ഇരുട്ട് ഘനീഭവിച്ചു കിടക്കുന്നു. വെയിലത്തുനിന്നല്ലേ കയറിവന്നത്? ഒന്നും കാണാനില്ല. ഉള്ളിൽ ചെല്ലുന്നതൊരും തട്ടുയരം കുറയുന്നു. മെല്ലെ മെല്ലെ കണ്ണുകൾക്ക് കാഴ്ച കിട്ടിത്തുടങ്ങി. അപ്പോൾ ഗുഹയുടെ അറ്റത്ത് ഒരു കുഴി കാണായി. ഗുഹയുടെ ഉള്ളിൽനിന്ന് ഒരു ശബ്ദം. "ആയിയേ, ആയിയേ, നീച്ചെ ആയിയേ. സീഡി ഹേ. കപ്പടാ സംഭാലിയേ. നീച്ചെ പാനി ഹേ. സംഭാൽക്കെ ഉത്തരി യേ." (വരു, വരു, കിഴെവരു. പടികൾ ഉണ്ട്. വസ്ത്രം സൂക്ഷി ചോളു, താഴെവെള്ളമുണ്ട്. ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചിറങ്ങൂ.). ശബ്ദത്തിന്റെ ഉടമയെ കാണാനില്ല. കുട്ടിക്കാലത്ത് അച്ഛനമ്മമാർ പഠിപ്പിച്ച ഒരു പാഠമുണ്ട്. പരിചയമില്ലാത്ത വെള്ളത്തിലോ ഇരുട്ടിലോ നിവൃത്തിയുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ഇറങ്ങരുത്. ഇറങ്ങുകയാണെങ്കിൽ അത്യന്തം ശ്രദ്ധിക്കണം. ഞാൻ മുകളിൽനിന്നു വിളിച്ചു പറഞ്ഞു. "കുട്ട് റീ ദിലായി നഹി പഡ്താ." (ഒന്നും കാണാനില്ലല്ലോ). രണ്ടു നിമിഷം കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ ഒരു ടോർച്ചിന്റെ മങ്ങിയ വെളിച്ചം. താഴേക്ക് ഒരു ഇരുമ്പു കോണി. ശ്രദ്ധിച്ച് പടികൾ ഇറങ്ങി. എട്ടുപത്ത് പടികൾ ഇറങ്ങിക്കാണും, കാലടികൾ വെള്ളത്തിൽ മുട്ടി. ഹൊ, എന്തൊരു തണുപ്പ്! രണ്ടുവട്ടം കുടി മുക്കിയപ്പോൾ സഹിക്കാമെന്നായി. അപ്പോൾ മുഴുവനായി ഇറങ്ങി. മുട്ടോളം വെള്ളം. എല്ലാവരും ഇറങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ പുജാരി ടോർച്ചിച്ച് എല്ലാം കാണിച്ചുതന്നു.

20-25 ചതുരശ്ര അടികാണും കുഴിയുടെ അടിഭാഗത്ത്. രൂപഭദ്രത ഇല്ലാത്ത ഒരു കുഴി. കിണറെന്നു പറയാൻ കഴിയില്ല, മുകൾഭാഗം തുറന്നിട്ടില്ലല്ലോ. മുട്ടിനൊപ്പം വരുന്ന വെള്ളത്തിന് നല്ല തണുപ്പ്. ഗുഹ ഉള്ളിലേക്ക് നീളുന്നു. ഉള്ളിലെവിടെയോ വെള്ളം ചാടുന്ന ശബ്ദം കേൾക്കാനുണ്ട്. പുജാരി ടോർച്ചിന്റെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ എല്ലാം കാണിച്ച് വിശദീകരിച്ചുതന്നു. മുകൾത്തട്ട് പലയിടത്തും നാലടിതൊട്ട് പന്ത്രണ്ടടിവരെ പല ഉയരങ്ങളിലും ആകൃതിയിലുമാണ്. മുന്നിൽ കാണുന്ന രൂപം ഒരു ശിവലിംഗമാണത്രെ. മുകളിൽ തൂങ്ങി നിൽക്കുന്ന ചില രൂപങ്ങളെ കാട്ടി അദ്ദേഹം പറഞ്ഞു, "ഇത് ഗണപതി, ഇത് ത്രിശൂലം, ഇത് ശിവന്റെ ജട, ഇത് താമര, ഇത് മുഷികൻ." അദ്ദേഹം പറഞ്ഞത് സീകരിക്കാൻ ഭാവനാശക്തി അമിതമായിത്തന്നെ വേണം. ഗുഹയുടെ ഉള്ളിലേക്ക് പോകുന്ന ഭാഗത്തേക്കും വെളിച്ചം കാണിച്ചുതന്നു. ഒന്നും കാണാൻ മാത്രമില്ല. ഉള്ളിൽ കേൾക്കുന്ന ശബ്ദം ഗുപ്തഗംഗയുടെ താണത്രെ. പിന്നെ ഞങ്ങൾ ഓരോരുത്തരായി പുറത്തേക്ക് കയറി. അവിടെ ഒരു ആൽത്തറയുണ്ട്. അവിടെ അഞ്ചു മിനുട്ട് വിശ്രമിച്ചശേഷം ഞങ്ങൾ ഇറങ്ങാനാരംഭിച്ചു. ഒരു കാര്യം തീർച്ചയായി, കയറുന്നതിനേക്കാൾ വിഷമമാണ് ഇറങ്ങുന്നതെന്ന്.

ഒരു അവധുതൻ

ബസ് വീണ്ടും പുറപ്പെട്ടു. പൊട്ടിപ്പൊളിഞ്ഞ പാതയല്ലെങ്കിലും ദുർഘടമായ വഴി. പുറത്ത് നല്ല വെയിൽ. തണുപ്പിന്റെ ശക്തി കാര്യമായി ക്ഷയിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. സുഖകരമായ കാലാവസ്ഥ. കുറെ ചെന്നപ്പോഴേക്കും ഉദരത്തിൽ ചുണ്ടെലി കാർന്നു തിന്നാൻ തുടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നു. അപ്പോൾ കാതിന് തേനായ, ഗണേശന്റെ വാക്ക്, "ശാപ്പിടലോമാ?"

സമയം ഒന്നര. ഒരു നല്ല കയറ്റം കയറിക്കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ ഒരു വലിയ തണൽമരത്തിനു താഴെബസ് നിർത്തി. പത്തടി മുന്നിൽ ഒരു അരുവി. ഗണേശന്റെ സഹായി അതിൽ കിണ്ണങ്ങൾ കഴുകി; ഞങ്ങൾ കൈകാലുകളും. ഗണേശന്റെ കൈപ്പുണ്യം റൊട്ടിയും രാജ്മാ കറിയും തൈർശാതവുമായി ഞങ്ങളുടെ മുന്നിൽ പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെട്ടു. ഊണ് തുടങ്ങിയില്ല, അതിനുമുമ്പ് കുറച്ചുപുറത്ത് മരത്തണലിൽ വിശ്രമിക്കുകയായിരുന്ന ഒരു തീർത്ഥാടകനെ കണ്ടു. ഞാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ അരികിൽ പോയി ഭവ്യതയോടെ "അല്പം ഭക്ഷണം തരട്ടെ?" എന്നു ചോദിച്ചു. "നിങ്ങൾ കഴിച്ചോളൂ, എന്നെപ്പറ്റി വിഷമിക്കേണ്ട" എന്നായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ മറുപടി. "ഞങ്ങളുടെ ഒരു സന്തോഷത്തിനു

അല്ലെങ്കിൽ കേൾക്കുക” എന്നായി ഞാൻ. അദ്ദേഹം ചിരിച്ചു. “എന്നാൽ ആയിക്കോട്ടെ. രണ്ടേരണ്ടു റൊട്ടി മാത്രം.”

ക്ഷേമം കഴിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കേ ഞാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തോട് വിവരങ്ങൾ ചോദിച്ചു മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചു. സ്വന്തം ജീവിതം തുറന്നു കാണിക്കാൻ ആദ്യമാദ്യം വിസ്തൃതം കാണിച്ച അദ്ദേഹം പിന്നെ തന്റെ പൂർവ്വാശ്രമം ഞങ്ങൾക്കായി വിശദീകരിച്ചു. ഗുജറാത്തിലെ മെഹ്സാന നഗരത്തിലെ പണക്കാരനായ ഒരു കച്ചവടക്കാരനാണ് അദ്ദേഹം. നാലു വലിയ കടകളും ഒരു മില്ലും ഒരു പണമിടപാടു സ്ഥാപനവും സ്വന്തമായുള്ള ഒരു ധനികൻ. മക്കളെല്ലാം വലുതായപ്പോൾ അവരെയെല്ലാം മെല്ലെ മെല്ലെ ബിസിനസ്സിലേക്കിറക്കി ഓരോ സ്ഥാപനവും ഓരോരുത്തരെ ഏല്പിച്ച് ഏറെക്കറെ സമാധാനജീവിതം നയിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സഹധർമ്മിണി അദ്ദേഹത്തെ തനിച്ചാക്കി ഇഹലോകം വെടിയുന്നത്. താൻ ഒറ്റപ്പെട്ടു എന്നതോന്നൽ വന്നപ്പോൾ ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക കാര്യങ്ങളിലേക്ക് തിരിയുകയാണുണ്ടായത്.

തീർത്ഥാടനങ്ങൾ നടത്തുന്നതിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി ഒരിക്കൽ ചാർഡാം യാത്രയിൽ ഇവിടെ എത്തിയതു മുതൽ എല്ലാകൊല്ലവും ഈ സീസണായാൽ ആത്മസമർപ്പണത്തിന്റെ പുണ്യദൃമിയായ, സമാധാനത്തിന്റെ ദേവഭൂമിയായ, ഹിമാലയത്തിലേക്ക് പോരും. ഋഷികേശം മുതൽ കാൽനടയായി അറുനൂറു കിലോമീറ്റർ സഞ്ചരിച്ച് യമുനോത്രി, ഗംഗോത്രി, കേദാർനാഥ്, ബദരിനാഥ് തുടങ്ങിയ ഇടങ്ങൾ ദർശിച്ച്, വഴിയിലുള്ള കൊച്ചു ക്ഷേത്രങ്ങളും പുണ്യപ്രദേശങ്ങളും സന്ദർശിച്ച് ഹരിദാറിൽ വന്ന് ഗംഗാസ്നാനം നടത്തി ആരതി തൊഴുത് ദർഹിക്കു വരും. വഴിയിൽ ക്ഷേണവും വിശ്രമസ്ഥലവും ഒരുക്കിക്കൊടുക്കുന്ന സത്രങ്ങളിൽ രാത്രി കഴിച്ചുകൂട്ടും. സത്രമൊന്നും ഒത്തു കിട്ടിയില്ലെങ്കിൽ പൊതുവെ ഏതു ഗ്രാമത്തിലും അവിടെത്തെ ഗ്രാമവാസികൾ ആ തിമുര്യോദയിൽ അവിശ്വസിനീയാം വണ്ണം വ്യപൃതരാണെന്നും അദ്ദേഹം പറഞ്ഞു. ഒരു കൊല്ലം ഋഷികേശ് മുതൽ ഹരിദാർ വരെയൊന്നെങ്കിൽ, അടുത്ത കൊല്ലം ഹരിദാർ, ബദരി, കേദാർ, ഗംഗോത്രി, യമുനോത്രി വഴി ഋഷികേശിലേക്കായിരിക്കും. അങ്ങനെ മാറി മാറി എല്ലാ കൊല്ലവും. ഇത് ഏഴാമത്തെ കൊല്ലമാണത്രെ. ലൗകികസുഖങ്ങളോടും മോഹങ്ങളോടും വിട പറഞ്ഞ് മനസ്സിന്റെയും ആത്മാവിന്റെയും സുഖവും സമാധാനവും തേടുന്ന അവധൂതന്മാർക്ക് എന്തു ധനികൻ, എന്തു ദരിദ്രൻ! ശരിയായ ഒരു സന്യാസിയാവാൻ, അവധൂതനാവാൻ, കാവിയോ ജടയോ ജാടകളോ അല്ല, ആത്മസമർപ്പണമാണ് പ്രധാനം എന്നു സജീവിതംകൊണ്ടു തെളിയിച്ച ഒരു ധന്യാത്മാവിനെ കണ്ടുമുട്ടാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞതിൽ ഞങ്ങളും ധന്യരായി. കാമ, ക്രോമ, ലോഭ, മദ, മോഹ, മാത്സര്യങ്ങളിൽനിന്ന് മുക്തി നേടിയവന് ജീവിതാന്ത്യത്തിനു ശേഷം പരലോകത്തല്ല, ജീവിക്കുമ്പോഴേക്കുതന്നെ, ഇഹലോകത്താണ് മോക്ഷപ്രാപ്തി എന്നതിന്റെ ഉത്തമദൃഷ്ടാന്തമാണ് ഞങ്ങളുടെ മുമ്പിൽ ഇരിക്കുന്നത്. മനസ്സിനും ആത്മാവിനും അനന്തമായ ശാന്തിയും സമാധാനവും തന്നെയല്ലെ ശരിയായ മോക്ഷം അഥവാ നിർവാണം?

ഉത്തരകാശി

ഈണു കഴിഞ്ഞ് ബസ്സിൽ കയറി ഒന്നു മയങ്ങിയാലോ എന്ന് സംശയിക്കാതിരിയുന്നില്ല. പക്ഷെ വാചകവും പാട്ടുമായി ഉറക്കം പിടിക്കുന്നതിനു മുമ്പായി ഞങ്ങളുടെ ബസ് ഒരു സ്ഥലത്തു നിന്നു. അത്യാവശ്യം ചൂടുണ്ട്. ഒരു കാര്യം ഞാൻ ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചിരുന്നു. ഇന്നു കാലത്തുമുതൽ ബസ് ഏറെക്കറെ ഇറങ്ങുകയായിരുന്നു. കയറ്റങ്ങൾ കുറവും ഇറക്കങ്ങൾ കൂടുതലും. ഞങ്ങൾ എത്തിപ്പെട്ടത് ഉത്തരകാശിക്കടുത്തുള്ള നതാലി എന്ന ഗ്രാമത്തിലാണ്. മുൻകൂർ തീരുമാനപ്രകാരം അന്നും പിറ്റേന്നും രാത്രി അവിടെയുള്ള ഗംഗാപുത്ര എന്ന ഹോട്ടലിലാണ് കഴിച്ചുകൂട്ടേണ്ടത്. അവിടെനിന്ന് ഗംഗോത്രിയിൽ പോയി വരാൻ ഒരു പകൽ മുഴുവൻ വേണം. തിരിച്ചുവന്ന്



Trishul of Shakti Temple

ഉത്തരകാശിയിൽനിന്നുള്ള വേറെ ഒരു വഴിക്കുവേണം അടുത്ത പോയന്റായ കേദാർനാഥിലേക്ക് പോകാൻ. അതുകൊണ്ടാണ് അന്നും പിറ്റേന്നും അവിടെ ക്യാമ്പ്.

സമുദ്രനിരപ്പിൽനിന്ന് 4436 അടി ഉയരത്തിൽ കിടക്കുന്ന ഒരു കൊച്ചുനഗരമാണ് ഉത്തരകാശി. ഗംഗയും യമുനയും ഒഴുകുന്ന, അപൂർവ്വ ഭാഗ്യശാലിയായ ഉത്തരകാശി ജില്ലയുടെ തലസ്ഥാനം. ഭാഗീരഥിനദിയുടെ കരയിൽ കിടക്കുന്ന ശാന്തമായ സ്ഥലം. ഭാഗീരഥിനദിയിൽ പിന്നെയും കുറെ നദികൾ വന്നു ചേരുമ്പോഴാണ് അത് ഗംഗയായി തീരുന്നത് എന്ന് അറിയാമോ? ഇരുപതിനായിരത്തിൽ താഴെ ആൾക്കാർമാത്രം താമസിക്കുന്ന, ഹിമാലയത്തിന്റെ മടിത്തട്ടുപോലുള്ള ഒരു താഴ്വാരത്തിൽ കിടക്കുന്ന, ഒരു ഉറക്കത്തുണ്ടി പട്ടണം. അവരിൽ 78% ആൾക്കാരും വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവന്മാരാണെന്ന കാര്യം അത്ഭുതമല്ലേ? അവിടെയാണ് നെഹ്റു ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഓഫ് മൗണ്ടന്റീറിംഗ് എന്ന പർവ്വതാരോഹക പരിശീലകകേന്ദ്രം ഉള്ളത്.

ഞങ്ങൾ ഹോട്ടലിൽ ചെക്കിൻ ചെയ്തശേഷം നഗരം കാണാനിറങ്ങി. നദിയുടെ മറുകരയിലാണ് ഉത്തരകാശി. നദിക്ക് നല്ല ഒരു പാലമുണ്ട്. ആദ്യം പോയത് വിശ്വനാഥ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലേക്കാണ്. ഗംഗയുടെ കരയിൽ നിൽക്കുന്ന സാക്ഷാൽ കാശി (ബനാറസ് അഥവാ വാരാണസി) വിശ്വനാഥ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ ദർശനം നടത്തുന്ന അതേ ഫലം തന്നെയാണത്രെ ഉത്തരകാശിയിലെ വിശ്വനാഥ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ ദർശനം നടത്തിയാലും. വാരാണസിയിലെ ക്ഷേത്രം തിരക്കുകൊണ്ടും വൃത്തിഹീനതകൊണ്ടും അറപ്പും വെറുപ്പും ഉളവാക്കുന്ന ഒന്നാണെങ്കിൽ, ഇവിടെ എല്ലാം ശാന്തമാണ്. കേ്തിമയമായ അന്തരീക്ഷം. ഞങ്ങളുടെ സംഘത്തിലെ ഒരു വ്യക്തി ചോദിച്ചത്, ‘വിശ്വനാഥൻ കാശി ഉപേക്ഷിച്ച് എന്നേ ഓടിക്കളഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു. അപ്പോൾ അദ്ദേഹം വന്നത് ഇവിടെയ്ക്കാണല്ലോ?’ എന്നാണ്. വലിയ മോടിയും ജാടയും ഒന്നുമില്ലാത്ത ദേവാലയം. അതിനാൽത്തന്നെ ആയിരിക്കണം അതിന് സൗമ്യകാശി എന്നും പേരു വരാൻ കാരണം. മനം

നിറഞ്ഞ എല്ലാവരും പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചു.

മഹാദേവ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിന്റെ തേരെ മുമ്പിലാണ് ശക്തി ക്ഷേത്രം. അതാണുതാനും സ്വാഭാവികം, കാരണം ശിവന്റെ അർദ്ധാംഗിനിയാണല്ലോ ശക്തി. ആ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ പ്രധാന ആകർഷണം അവിടെയുള്ള ഒരു വലിയ തൃശ്ശൂലമാണ്. ഞങ്ങളെ കണ്ടപ്പോൾ പാണ്ഡ (പുജാരി) അതിനെക്കുറിച്ച് വിശദീകരിക്കണോ എന്ന് ആരാഞ്ഞു. ഏതായാലും ദക്ഷിണ വാങ്ങും, അതിനാൽ വിവരണം കേട്ടിട്ടു മതി തോന്നി. ദേവാസുരയുദ്ധത്തിൽ അതിശക്തരായ അസുരരെ തോല്പിക്കാൻ ദേവകൾക്കു കഴിഞ്ഞില്ല. അസുരന്മാർ ദേവലോകം പിടിച്ചടക്കും എന്നു തോന്നിയപ്പോൾ, ഭയപ്പെട്ട ദേവകൾ അതിനൊരു പരിഹാരം കാണാൻ ഒരിടത്ത് ഒന്നിച്ച് കൂടി. അവർ അവരുടെ ശക്തി



Yamunotri-Janki Chatti

ഏകോപിപ്പിച്ച് പരാശക്തിയെ ഉണ്ടാക്കി, ത്രിമൂർത്തികൾ അവരുടെ ശക്തികൾ ഏകോപിപ്പിച്ച് തൃശ്ശൂലം ഉണ്ടാക്കി ദേവിക്കു നൽകി. അനിഷേധ്യ ശക്തിശാലിയായിത്തീർന്ന പരാശക്തി ദുഷ്ടരായ അസുരരെ നിഷ്പ്രയാസം തോല്പിച്ചു. അസുരവധം കഴിഞ്ഞ് കോപം ശമിക്കാതെ ദേവി തൃശ്ശൂലം നിലത്ത് ശക്തിയായി കുത്തി. തൃശ്ശൂലം കുത്തി നിർത്തിയത് കാളിയന്റെ പടത്തിലായിരുന്നത്രെ. അങ്ങനെ തൃശ്ശൂലത്തിന്റെ മറുതല പാതാളത്തിലെത്തിപോലും, ഏതാനും വർഷങ്ങൾക്കു മുമ്പ് ക്ഷേത്രകമ്മറ്റിക്കാർ ക്ഷേത്രപുനരുദ്ധാരണസമയത്ത് തൃശ്ശൂലം മാറ്റി പ്രതിഷ്ഠിക്കുവാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ചുവത്രെ. തൃശ്ശൂലത്തിനു ചുറ്റും കുഴിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങി. അറുപതടി കുഴിച്ചിട്ടും തൃശ്ശൂലത്തിന്റെ അറ്റം കണ്ടെത്താൻ അവർക്ക് കഴിയാതെ പുനഃപ്രതിഷ്ഠ വേണ്ടെന്നു വെച്ചത്രെ. ഈ സംഭവം വിശ്വാസികളുടെ വിശ്വാസത്തെ ശക്തിപ്പെടുത്തിയത്രെ. തൃശ്ശൂലത്തിന്റെ ലോഹമോ ലോഹക്കൂട്ടോ ഇതുവരെ ലോഹശ്ലാസ്ത്ര വിദഗ്ദ്ധർക്ക് കണ്ടെത്താൻ കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടില്ലത്രെ. എത്രയോ താഴ്ചയിൽ കുഴിച്ചിട്ട പന്ത്രണ്ടടി ഉയരമുള്ള ആ തൃശ്ശൂലത്തെ നല്ല വിശ്വാസികൾക്ക് ഒരു വിരൽകൊണ്ട് ഇളക്കാൻ കഴിയുമത്രെ. വിശ്വാസം വരാത്ത ഞങ്ങളെ സ്വന്തം അവകാശവാദം തെളിയിക്കാനായി പണ്ഡ തന്റെ തള്ളവിരൽ കൊണ്ട് ഇളക്കി കാണിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.

ക്ഷേത്രത്തിനു മുമ്പിൽ ഭാഗീരഥിയിൽ ഒരു സ്നാനഘട്ടമുണ്ട്. പ്രഭാതത്തിൽ അവിടെ സ്നാനം ചെയ്ത് ഈറനോടെ പിതൃതർപ്പണം ചെയ്താൽ പിതൃക്കൾ സംതൃപ്തരായി അനുഗ്രഹം ചൊരിയുമെന്നാണ് വിശ്വാസം. പ്രഭാതത്തിൽ

ഞങ്ങൾക്കു വരാൻ കഴിയില്ല എന്നതിനാൽ ഞങ്ങൾ സ്നാനഘട്ടിലിറങ്ങി ആ തീർത്ഥാടകലംകൊണ്ട് കയ്യും കാലും കഴുകി തർപ്പണം ചെയ്ത് കാശി വിശ്വനാഥനെ വണങ്ങി യാത്രയായി. സാക്ഷാൽ കാശിയിൽ പോയില്ലെങ്കിലും ഉത്തരകാശിയിലെങ്കിലും പോയല്ലോ. ഉപ്പോളം പോരില്ലെങ്കിലും ഉപ്പുമാങ്ങയെങ്കിലും ആകട്ടെ.

സന്ധ്യയായിട്ടില്ല. സമയം കൊല്ലാനായി ഞങ്ങൾ മാർക്കറ്റിലെല്ലാം ഒന്നു കറങ്ങി വരാമെന്നു കരുതി തോട്ടത്തിൽനിന്നു ഇപ്പോൾ പഠിച്ചുകൊണ്ടുവന്ന പോലെ പ്രമോദി ഇരിക്കുന്ന പച്ചക്കറികൾ, കൊതിപ്പിക്കുന്ന പലവിധ പഴവർഗ്ഗങ്ങൾ എല്ലാം ധാരാളമായി നിരത്തി വെച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ചില കച്ചവടക്കാർ ഷോപ്പുകളുമുണ്ട്. ഞങ്ങൾ കാര്യമായി ഒന്നും വാങ്ങിയില്ല. അരമുക്കാൽ മണിക്കൂറിനകം മാർക്കറ്റും കണ്ടുകഴിഞ്ഞു. ഇനിയോ? തിരിച്ച് പുഴക്കരയിലേക്ക് വന്നു സ്നാനഘട്ടിനു കുറെ താഴെയായി ശാന്ത മായൊരിടത്ത് പുഴയിലിറങ്ങാൻ ഞങ്ങൾ തീരുമാനിച്ചു. പകൽ മുഴുവൻ വെയിൽ കാഞ്ഞു വൈകുന്നേരമായി എന്നതിനാലാണോ അതോ അത്രയധികം ഉഴരങ്ങളിൽ അല്ലാത്തതിനാലാണോ, അറിയില്ല സഹിക്കാവുന്ന തണുപ്പേ വെള്ളത്തിനുള്ളു വലിയ ഒഴുക്കോ കൂണ്ടോ ഒന്നുമില്ല. നദിക്ക് അത്രയധികം വീതിയുമില്ല. മുങ്ങിക്കുളിക്കാനുള്ള വെള്ളവുമുണ്ട്. മാറാൻ വേഷങ്ങളോ തോർത്തുമുണ്ടോ ഇല്ലാത്തതിനാൽ കുളിക്കാൻ എന്ന മോഹം ഉപേക്ഷിച്ചു. വെള്ളത്തിനടിയിൽ നല്ല മിനുസമുള്ള സാളഗ്രാമം പോലുള്ള വിവിധ നിറത്തിലുള്ള ഉരുളൻ കല്ലുകൾ. അത്യുത്തമമായ വില്ലേ സാളഗ്രാമങ്ങൾ? ഞാൻ സംശയിച്ചു ഞങ്ങൾ ഏതാനും കല്ലുകൾ പെറുക്കി. ഇന്നും അതെല്ലാം നീധിപോലെ സൂക്ഷിച്ചു വെച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

നദിയിലെ ചില പാറകൾക്കു മുകളിൽ തണുത്ത വെള്ളത്തിൽ കാലുകൾ തൂക്കിയിട്ട് നിർവൃതി കൊള്ളുമ്പോൾ, തൊട്ടപ്പുറത്ത് ചില ഗ്രാമീണ ബാലികമാർ ഞങ്ങളെ കണ്ട് എന്തെല്ലാമോ പറഞ്ഞ് ചിരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. അവർക്ക് ഒരു വാക്കുപോലും ദഹിക്കാത്ത മലയാളം കേട്ടിട്ടാവാം ചിരി വരുന്നത്. അവരോട് ഹിന്ദിയിൽ കൂശലം പറയാൻ ഞാനൊരു ശ്രമം നടത്തി. എന്റെ ഹിന്ദി അവർക്കോ അവരുടെ ഗഡ്‌വാളി എനിക്കോ മനസ്സിലായില്ല. പക്ഷെ വേണമെന്നു വെച്ചാൽ ഭാഷ ഒരിക്കലും ഒരു പ്രശ്നമാവില്ലല്ലോ. ഞങ്ങൾ അവരോട് സൗഹൃദം കൂടി. ചില ഫോട്ടോകൾ എടുത്തു. അത് പന്ത്രണ്ടുളിൽ വരും എന്നു പറഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ വളരെ സന്തോഷത്തോടെയാണ് അവർ ഞങ്ങളോട് യാത്ര പറഞ്ഞത്.

തിരിച്ചു കയറിയ ശേഷമാണ് പ്രകൃതിഭംഗി ശരിക്കും ആസ്വദിക്കുന്നത്. അസ്തമയസൂര്യന്റെ പൊൻകിരണങ്ങളിൽ ഉത്തരകാശി അതിസുന്ദരി ആയിത്തോന്നി. ശരിക്കും പ്രകൃതിയുടെ മടിത്തട്ടിലാണ്. നാലുഭാഗത്തും മലകളാൽ ചുറ്റപ്പെട്ട ഒരു താഴ്വര. വടക്കു ഭാഗത്തെ കൊടുമുടികളിൽ മഞ്ഞ് മുടിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു. നേരം ഇരുട്ടിത്തുടങ്ങി. പരിചയമില്ലാത്ത പ്രദേശമല്ലേ? ഒപ്പം സ്ത്രീകളുമുണ്ടല്ലോ. ഞങ്ങൾ ഹോട്ടലിലേക്ക് മടങ്ങി.

ഒരു കാര്യംകൂടി പറയാതെ വിടുന്നത് ശരിയല്ല. 1991 ഒക്ടോബർ 20-ന് ഉത്തരകാശിയിൽ ഒരു ഭൂമികുലുക്കം ഉണ്ടായി. റച്ചർ സ്കെയിലിൽ 6.6 കാണിച്ച അതിശക്തമായ ഭൂമികുലുക്കം. എണ്ണുറോളം പേരുടെ ജീവനാണ് പൊലിഞ്ഞത്. കോടിക്കണക്കിനു രൂപയുടെ നാശനഷ്ടവും ഉണ്ടായി. പ്രകൃതിയുടെ വികൃതികളെ കുറിച്ച് എന്തു പറയാൻ! ■



HONEY IN BEAUTY CARE

The sweet honey is a magical product given to us by Nature, which is beneficial both for health and beauty care. Let us see how honey can be used in care of skin and hair.



Dr. (Major) Nalini Janardhanan

■ Raw honey (unprocessed honey) has antiseptic, anti microbial and anti inflammatory properties. Its PH level 4.5 is close to the natural PH level of skin. It is useful in

minor cuts, abrasions and minor burns. Honey is said to be useful in lightening skin tone and scars as well as reducing age spots. A good moisturiser, gentle cleanser and exfoliator, honey helps in healing pimples, sunburns and some long standing skin conditions. Honey has antioxidants, enzymes and nutrients which help in delaying ageing of skin.

Honey in Skin Care

Moisturiser: Honey is a natural moisturiser and helps to hydrate skin.

Apply 1 teaspoon honey on clean and dry skin. Keep it for 10-15 minutes and rinse off with water. You may mix milk cream with honey during winter and wash off with warm water.

Cleanser: Honey is a good cleanser. It cleanses the pores on our skin. Mix 1 tablespoon honey with 2 tsp coconut oil. Apply it to dry, clear skin. Massage softly in a circular motion. Wash it off with water to leave your skin soft and blemish free.

Gentle exfoliator: Honey can be used as a gentle exfoliator along with other ingredients. Mix 1 tsp of finely ground almonds,

1 tbsp honey, 2 tbsp dry oatmeal and 1 teaspoon lemon juice. Massage this gently on your face for 5 minutes and rinse it off with water.

Face Wash: Pour a little honey on your wet hands. Mix well and massage on your facial skin like a face wash. Rinse well with water.

Facial Masks: Honey is hydrating, soothing and moisturising. It can be used as such or along with other facial masks.

■ Cleanse your face and simply put a layer of honey on your face. Keep it for 10-15 minutes and then wash off.

■ 2 teaspoon milk can be mixed with 2 tablespoon honey. Apply it on face and keep it for 10 minutes. Wash off with water.

■ Mix tomato paste with honey. Apply on skin keep it for 15-20 minutes and wash off to get a clear skin.

■ Mix 3 teaspoon Rose water with ¼ cup honey and apply on face. Keep it for 15 minutes and wash off. This is good for getting soft skin.

■ Mix mashed Papaya with honey to make a face mask for a fair and glowing skin.

Tanned Skin: Honey, almond oil, milk powder and lemon juice can be mixed and used as a face mask to treat tanned skin.

For Sunburns: Honey, being a good moisturiser, helps to restore hydration to the sun burnt skin. Mix 1 part of raw honey with 2 parts of Aloe vera gel. Apply it to sun burnt skin.

Or you may mix 1 part honey to 2 parts of your moisturiser and apply on sun burnt skin.

Anti ageing effect: Honey is rich in antioxidants. You can delay ageing by using honey in your diet daily. It is also

useful in preventing wrinkles and delaying ageing of skin. Honey can be mixed with milk or curds and applied to reduce fine lines and wrinkles as well as to lighten the skin of the face. Wash off with lukewarm water. Regular use of honey is also useful in reducing long term scars.

Dark Circles under eye: Take 1 teaspoon honey or a mixture of equal parts of honey and sweet Almond oil. Apply on dark circles under your eyes. Rinse off after 10-15 minutes.

For Skin Conditions: A special type of honey (Manuka honey)



is said to be useful in fungal infections of skin and long standing skin conditions like Eczema, Dermatitis, Psoriasis and Rosacea. Honey may be applied and washed off after 15-20 minutes.

For Acne: A good cleanser with anti bacterial properties, honey is said to be useful for treatment of pimples by applying and washing off after 10-15 minutes. It also helps to soothe blemishes and irritation on skin.

Lip Balm: Apply honey to your dry and chapped lips. Due to its moisturising property, lip becomes soft.

Lip Scrub: For soft and smooth lips, mix 1 teaspoon honey with 1 tsp brown sugar and a few drops of lemon juice. Apply on lips and gently scrub. After 5 minutes wash off with water.

Nail Conditioner: Honey is useful in strengthening nails and softening



cuticles. Mix 1 tsp raw honey with 1 tsp Apple Cider Vinegar. Apply to your nails and cuticles. Rinse after 10 minutes.

Cuticle moisturiser: Mix 1 tsp honey with 1 tsp Apple Cider vinegar and 1 tsp coconut oil. Rub over cuticles. Keep it for 5-10 minutes and then rinse.

Honey and Hair Care

Hair Conditioner: Honey is a good moisturiser for hair too. It also strengthens hair follicles leading to good growth of hair. Mix 1 tablespoon honey with 2 tsp coconut oil. Apply this to damp hair starting at the ends and working up. Keep it for 20 minutes and then rinse well with water. You may mix honey with your shampoo. Pure honey can be applied on hair for conditioning. Mix 1 teaspoon honey with 4 cups of warm water and use this as a last rinse on your shampooed hair for a healthy shine. Honey is suitable for all skin types. Best in the purest form (unprocessed) as raw honey, it is a magical skincare product. That is the reason for including it as an ingredient in skin and beauty care products by various companies. Skin remains soft and supple after using honey. ■

The Royal Temple Theater of Krishnattam

Krishnattam, a unique ritualistic dance theater of Kerala (presenting Lord Krishna's life in eight plays-Avataram, Kaliyamardanam, Rasakrida, Kamsavadham, Svayamvaram, Banayuddham, Vividavadham and Svargarohanam to the accompaniment of vocal (in Sanskrit) and instrumental music chengila, ilattalam, shuddhamaddalam, toppimaddalam and itakka), is based on Krishnagiti, a Sanskrit poem composed by the Zamorin King Manaveda in 1654 (M.E.829).

Over the centuries, Krishnattam survived under the royal protection of Zamorins, receiving adoration from small audiences. After India's independence, Zamorin lost his kingdom and Krishnattam wavered on the edge of extinction. In 1958, Zamorin officially handed over the Krishnattam troupe to Krishna Temple, Guruvayur. Currently Krishnattam thrives under the management of Guruvayur Devasvam at the Temple, together with ample outside performances as a devotional motive offering to Guruvayurappan.

It was purely by chance that Dr. Martha Ashton Sikora witnessed Krishnattam for the first time on 6th May 1970 during the Arattupuzha Temple festival. She watched the Krishnattam play Avataram along

with her Yakshagana teacher Hiriadka Gopala Rao and the Krishnattam troupe manager A C G Raja. She was visiting Kerala after completing her research work (Yakshagana Badagattitu Baylata: A South Indian Dance Drama, Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1972). On that night, she fell in love with Krishnattam. On her own, she began her research work on this classical art form, which is the forerunner of Kathakali.



Along with Sanjeev Prasad, a cinematographer in New Delhi, Dr. Martha started working on a documentary on Krishnattam in 1980. She visited Guruvayur, watched the Krishnattam plays, met the artists and collected lots of information. The project did not come through for lack of financial support. (In 1981, Adoor Gopalakrishnan made a short documentary film on Krishnattam for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The documentary was released in 1983).

However, Dr. Martha continued her research on Krishnattam to prepare a monograph. She visited Guruvayur during 1982-83 and 1985, watched Krishnattam performances and collected data. In 1985, she toured USA with the Krishnattam troupe as a lecturer and stage manager as a part of Festival of India-USA.

The information collected during these years of association with Krishnattam was compiled and published as a book, Krishnattam, in 1993 by Dr. Martha Ashton Sikora and Robert Sikora. The book takes the reader to experience Krishnattam with the rituals and preparations as the performers in colourful costumes dance and mime the story of Lord Krishna's life. The first edition went out of print by 2000.

A fully revised and enlarged edition of the book Krishnattam is now published (2016) under the name "The Royal Temple Theater of Krishnattam" (published by D.K. Printworld, New Delhi).

<http://dkprintworld.com/product-detail.php?pid=1280858182>). The co-authors, Robert Sikora, A. Purushothaman (Mumbai) and A. Harindranath (Kolkata) greatly enhance this edition with their new research, translations and photographs.

THOUGHTS OF WOMEN'S LIFE ON WOMENS DAY

08 March is being celebrated as International Women's Day all over the world. The first day dedicated to women was on 19 March 1911 when Women's Day was observed for the first time in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. Two years later, the day was officially changed to 08 March and celebrated globally ever since. Women's Day is recognized by UN since 1975 and it is an official holiday in 27 countries.



Dr. Nalini Janardhanan

We know very well that "Women is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacity" (in the words of Gandhiji). The role of women as mother, wife, daughter and home maker, is important in our life. Nancy Pelosi remarked "Women are leaders everywhere you look from the CEO who runs a Fortune 500 company to the housewife who raises her children and heads her household. Our country was built by strong women and we all continue to break down walls and defy stereo types" These words are applicable to women all over the world who face hardships with their inner strength managing house as well as work!

Woman takes care of the health of her family but she tends to neglect her own health and well being. So let us see some tips for women to lead a beautiful and healthy life:-

1) Make your daily routine a habit. Woman has to do her chores in her house, whether working woman or housewife. So why not do your duties with a smile? After all your family's health and happiness are your responsibility.

2) Take a 10-30 minutes walk daily. Walking is a good exercise for the body. Enjoying the beauty of nature and with a song in your heart, walking can be refreshing to mind also.

3) Eat a well balanced diet daily. Include more fruits, fibre vegetables and green leafy vegetables in your diet. Use healthy oil for cooking.

4) Personal hygiene is very important. Take bath daily. Don't forget to wash your hands well with soap and water before and after cooking food, before serving food and after going to toilet.

5) Have plenty of water to drink. Take care about the cleanliness of water. Also remember to keep your cooked food items closed with lids, to avoid flies and other insects.

6) Calcium is required for women of all ages. The requirement of calcium increases during adolescence, pregnancy, breast feeding and after menopause. Walking out in sun during early morning and evening is beneficial since the sunrays helps in making Vitamin D in our body which in turn is required for calcium absorption. You may take tablets of Calcium with Vitamin D as per doctor's instruction.

7) Reduce Caffeine (Coffee and Cola type of drinks) Instead of that, drink green tea, lime juice, homemade fruit juices or butter milk which are more healthy.

8) Avoid fried food items, junk foods and fast foods to maintain a healthy body weight. Being overweight may also be due to sedentary lifestyle and lack of exercise.

9) "Eat breakfast like a King, lunch like a Prince and dinner like a beggar"- as the saying goes, we should not overeat at night as it may cause increase in body weight.

10) Don't smoke, drink or use narcotic drugs.

11) Sleep well and get up early with a fresh mind to start your day.

12) Every day is a gift from God. So make it worth remembering!

13) Early to bed and early to rise | This is the 'mantra' for a successful day.

14) Don't waste your time in gossip. Instead of that, invest your time in learning new subjects or hobbies.

15) Don't dwell in your past, as it is not a place to stay on. Move ahead towards your new goals in future.

16) Don't compare yourself to others. You are different from others and you have your own personality and beauty.

17) Don't hate others. Forgive them. Hatred, jealousy, anger, revenge these are all negative emotions which may increase your mental stress.

18) Do relaxation exercises, meditation, Pranayama or Yoga for a stress free life.

19) Remember that nothing lasts forever. Just like happiness, grief or bad times also don't last forever. So try to be happy and get out of your sad mood.

20) Don't worry about the losses of your dear ones. Time heals everything.

21) Help others. Bring a smile on other's face.

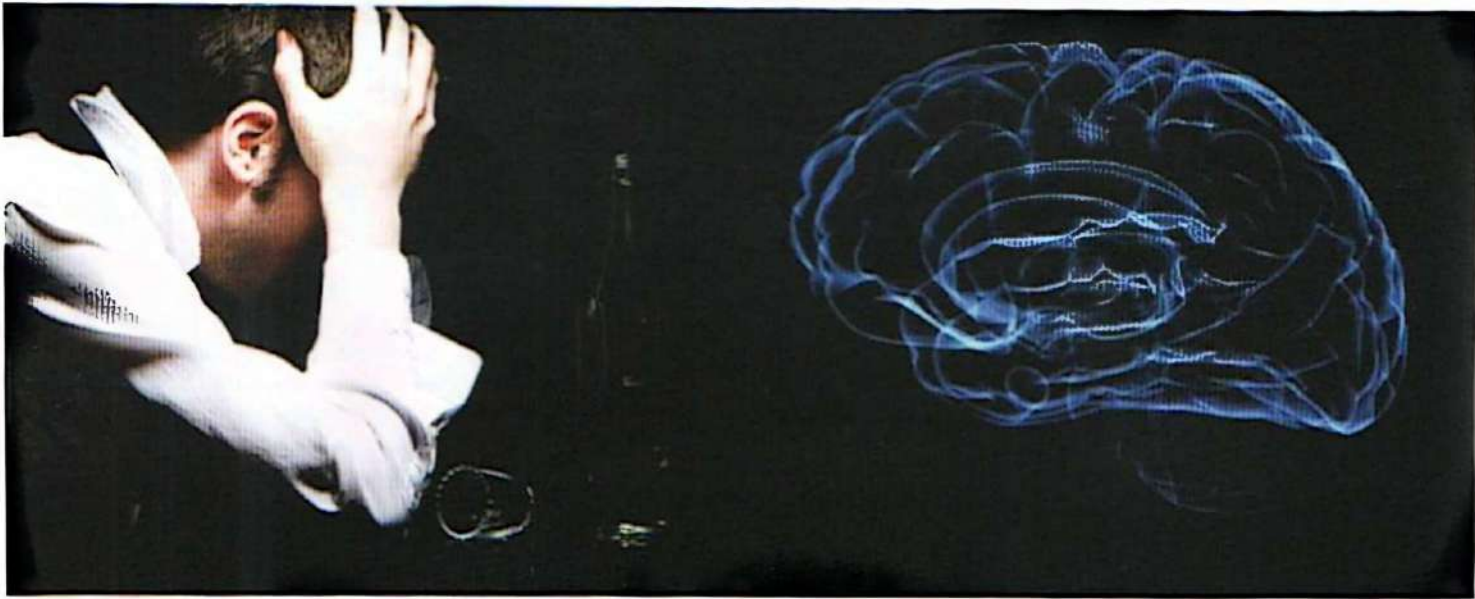
22) Make good friends. They will help and support you during hard times.

23) Share happy times with your family. Try to eat at least one meal with your family daily, however busy you may be.

Lastly, count your blessings and be thankful to God. Each night before sleep, thank God for your beautiful day. Smile and walk your way to health.

"A Charming woman does not follow the crowd. She is herself!" So be happy and charming woman!

HAPPY WOMEN'S DAY!



ALCOHOLISM AND THE BRAIN



Dr Sujatha Nair

■ At a party, the waiter is serving alcohol all around, you have taken a few drinks, you feel less inhibited, your tongue loosens, a few more drinks later -your gait becomes imbalanced, the talk gets louder, speech slurs, you start getting drowsy, you crash on your bed, the next day your head hurts and you have lapses in your memory regarding how you behaved the night before.

All of the above display how extensively alcohol affects your brain. Long term /alcoholic usage has short and long standing and at times fatal damages to the brain.

The brain is a complex supercomputer made up of trillions of cells called neurons that send messages to each other via chemicals called neurotransmitters. Alcohol disrupts this intricate mechanism.

Alcohol increases dopamine, serotonin and endorphin secretion resulting in the "feel good" feeling however in addiction to alcohol the levels fall below normal soon enough and do not recover giving way to depression. The brain tries to compensate and adapt which results in increased tolerance, alcohol dependence, changes in the personality and alcohol withdrawal symptoms that can include tremors and seizures.

It affects the areas of the brain regulating reason and judgement [frontal cortex or the fore brain] causing the reduction i inhibitions and altered reasoning.

Blackouts- Consumption of large quantities in a limited time span results in blackouts. Here the areas of the brain storing episodic memories are damaged while the areas regulating habitual actions are intact. Hence the person who has a blackout will have no memory of what incidents happened the night he drank but has gone through the motions of talking walking eating driving without any memory of the same the next day. Eg. The movie Hangover.

In adolescents- addicted to alcohol the brain has not developed fully, the ability to understand, memorise and retain is damaged. The ability to process and deal with emotions is also impaired.

Fetal Alcohol syndrome- happens in children born to mothers who drink during their pregnancy. Their brains are smaller in size and have lesser brain cells leading to long term learning and behavioural problems.

In chronic alcoholism, the brain shrinks in size due to the destruction of brain cells affecting thinking and retention processes. This also causes problems in balance and understanding.

Damage to the cerebellum- imbalanced gait which can be

irreversible. Fine motor functions are affected resulting in tremors. Also affects cognition and areas that are responsible for emotional responses ie the limbic system resulting in magnified unnatural swing of emotions.

Excessive alcohol consumption can result in impairment of the respiratory center in the brain resulting in respiratory arrest that can be fatal.

Alcoholism results in thiamine and vitamin B6 deficiency that causes confabulations, confusions, hallucinations, paranoia and even psychosis the condition being called Wernicke-Korsakoff's psychosis.

The inability of the liver to break down alcohol in those afflicted with alcohol addiction results in increase of blood ammonia levels that reach the brain and result in hepatic encephalopathy that can cause coma.

Long term abstinence from alcohol does give rise to renewed cell generation in the brain and improves the structural, functional and biochemistry in the first year of staying away from alcohol.

We at AH work with an expert understanding of the long term effects of alcohol in each of our clients and design the alcohol rehabilitation accordingly.

For any clarifications contact
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ബലികൂടീരങ്ങളേ!



Lyrics: Vayalar RamaVarma, Composer: G Devarajan
Singers: K S George, Devarajan, Chorus

Karthika



Vayalar Rama Varma

ബലികൂടീരങ്ങളേ! ബലികൂടീരങ്ങളേ!
സ്ഥരണകളിരമ്പും രണസ്ഥാരകങ്ങളേ!
ഇവിടെ ജനകോടികൾ ചാർത്തുന്നു നിങ്ങളിൽ
സമരപുളകങ്ങൾതൻ സിന്ദുരമാലകൾ (ബലികൂടീരങ്ങളേ!)

ഹിമശിരിമുടികൾ കൊടികളുയർത്തി;(2)
കടലുകൾ പടഹമുയർത്തി;(2)
യുഗങ്ങൾ നീന്തിനടക്കും ഗംഗയിൽ(2)
വിരിഞ്ഞു താമരമുകുളങ്ങൾ!(2)
ഭൂപടങ്ങളിലൊരിന്ത്യ നിവർന്നു
ജീവിതങ്ങൾ തുടലുരിയെറിഞ്ഞു
ചുണ്ടിൽ ഗാഥകൾ കരങ്ങളിലിപ്പു-
ച്ചെണ്ടുകൾ; പുതിയ പൌരനുണർന്നു! (ബലികൂടീരങ്ങളേ!)



G. Devarajan

തുടിപ്പു നിങ്ങളിൽ നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകളുടെ(2)
ചരിത്രമെഴുതിയ ഹൃദയങ്ങൾ!(2)
കൊളുത്തി നിങ്ങൾ തലമുറതോറും (2)
കെടാത്ത കൈത്തിരിനാളങ്ങൾ! (2)
നിങ്ങൾ നിന്ന സമരാജ്ഞാഭൂവിൽ-
നിന്നണിഞ്ഞ കവചങ്ങളുമായി
വന്നു ഞങ്ങൾ മലനാട്ടിലെ മണ്ണിൽ
നിന്നിതാ പുതിയ ചെങ്കൊടി നേടി! (ബലികൂടീരങ്ങളേ!)

ബലികൂടീരങ്ങളേ! ആ...
ബലികൂടീരങ്ങളേ!ആ...
ആ...ആ...ആ...ആ...



K S George

This is the first song of Vayalar-Devarajan team. This song does not belong to any particular play but used to energise the audience before they witness the play. It was originally sung by K S George, Devarajan and chorus. Later many singers including P Jayachandran, G Venugopal et al rendered for various albums.

When KPAC staged the play, 'Visarikku Kaattu Venta' (Fan does not need breeze), written by Ponkunnam Varkey, it felt before the play began, a high pitched revolutionary group song should be presented not only to indicate the start of the play but to enthuse the audience. This song was written to meet that purpose and the positive response it obtained from the audience made KPAC to use it before all their later plays. In a way, this song attracted many a youth to Communism.



SHAHJOHN A VILLAIN TURNS HERO

There are characters who receive beatings from the hero, while some beats others along with the hero and some other gives first and later takes from the hero in the climax scenes.

Padmakumar

In all these situations, it is always the hero who gets the applause from the audience. Since time immemorial, this was what happened in Malayalam films until police constable Sahadevan came on the scene. Through the movie, Sahadevan beats up Georgekutty black and blue and kicks too. He also gives to the wife and children of the hero yet the hero is not even attempting return the complements, nay not even throwing an angry look to the constable. Who is the helpless hero? Not any ordinary hero but the original Mohanlal. When Shahjohn learned the scenario, he was confused. He discussed with many friends. Some said, "Do it, it will be a break. Now your time has come." Others said, "You will be finished now." Finally he decided to go ahead. There was no fight master. Director Jithu Joseph did not want a film style stunt but a real one, like the beating that the constables employs inside the cells to extract truth from the culprits. Finally the responsibility of composing



"Do it, it will be a break. Now your time has come." Others said, "You will be finished now."

the fight fell on the hero himself. Shahjohn started trembling while facing the idol of millions and the puzzle of how to land his fists on his body was clearly visible on his face. Then Mohanlal himself said, "My son, it is only shooting. You should kick me here and hit me here. The man standing before you is Georgekutty and not Mohanlal." Reassured Shahjohn hit him, kicked him with all his force. When Drushyam hit the screen, what he did not receive from the hero, he received from wife and daughter, hard core fans of Mohanlal. Then came a phone call from Mohanlal, "For a few days you do not go near my fans."

Since then Shahjohn's career was divided into two spans: the first before Drushyam and the second, after Drushyam.

A few years earlier, Shahjohn was visible in 'My Dear Karadi' as a dupe for Kalabhavan Mani, as a bear. Since he was a bear none recognised him. The screen play writers of that film, Udaykrishna and Siby K Thomas always kept a role for him in all their future films. From those small steps now he

has quantum jump to the role of hero and none can blame him if he is thrilled.

Q: 'Pareed Pandari' is your first title role, right?

A: Yes. After Drishyam, many people approached me for their films in the lead roles. Their stories were however all similar. Some comedy and some sentiments. All were in similar tracks. I heard the story of this film two years ago. Its director Gafoor is very serious about it. A lot of his efforts have gone behind this film. I put all my faith in the director of this film.

Q: What's there to attract you...?

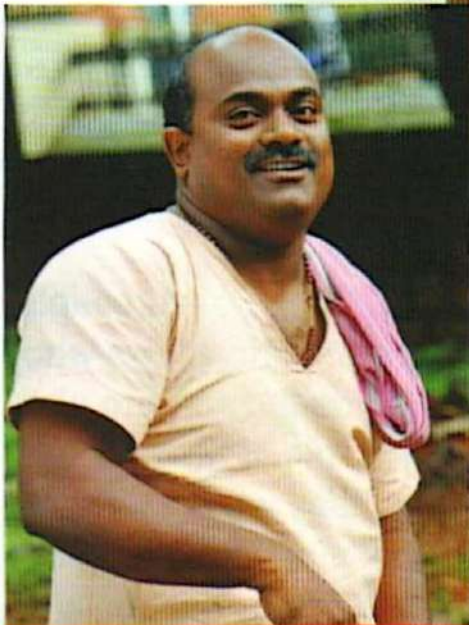
A: There are a number of factors. If it becomes a hit with theatres is not important for me but it has to be a different and distinct movie. One may guess from its title that it might be an award material. That is not true. It has all commercial ingredients to entertain the audience. It has a Muslim background. A very common story is retold in a highly humourous manner. As said earlier, it involves the hard work of several young people. Now I am also a part of it.

Q: What is the background story?

A: There are two sections in the life of Pareed Pandari. In his 30s and then between 60-65 years. He is a cook preparing Biryani for weddings. His wife attends local deliveries. The couple has three daughters. All with dark complexion and quite unattractive! To marry them off, he started this chef business. His wife does the baby care and dreams of looking after her own grandchildren. However, what awaits them is tragedy.

Q: When you were offered the role of hero, what was the response of your friends?

A: I haven't told many of them. I



After Drishyam, many people approached me for their films in the lead



just hinted to some of them, that's all.

Q: Was there a dull period after Drushti? Or was it deliberate?


A: It was deliberate. I became a bit selective. I was not desperate to accept all offers. Even if it is two scenes, fine but it should have substance.

Good Malayalam films have still a dedicated

audience. They might not have collected money from the theatres but the audience still keep the scenes of such movies for a long time. Gafoor Illias, the young director, creates this film keeping every Malayalee in mind. When Shahjohn was approached to lead the cast, he agreed. Now Pareed Pandari is being shot in Ernakulam and surroundings.

The story revolves round the miseries of Biryani Chef, who is around 60 years. The director himself wrote the screenplay and the actors who support Shahjohn are Joy Mathew, Tinitom, Jaffer Idukki, Sunil Sukhada, Ansiba and Sajitha Mathathil.

Shybin and T Belliraj produce this film for Chennai Film Factory. ■



WAITING FOR BETTER CHARACTERS: ANSIBA HASSAN

Ansiba Hassan started her career as a model and then moved to silver screen through 'Drishyam', as daughter of Mohanlal. Recently she talked to Kerala in Mumbai.

Q: 'Pareed pandari' is a film with a new theme and newer presentation. It has aroused the interest of the spectators.

A: Certainly. When Director narrated the story, I was ever willing to give my own interpretation to the role of 'Faseena'. Probably this is the first important role that came on my way after 'Drishyam', and I have to do a lot with that character.

Q: How do you evaluate that character?

A: I am the youngest of the three daughters of Kalabhavan Shahjohn in the film. My sisters in the film are singer Rashmi Satish and theatre artist Kabani.

It is the job of screenplay writers and actors who decide the actor to play each role. If the role suits me, they would certainly call me. I believe good characters will come in search of me.

The family is surrounded by poverty. Faseena is talkative girl unlike her elder sisters. Her friends are the small children of the neighbourhood.

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is a problem that she faces. The entire movie is how the entire family handles her problem.

Q: Did you feel anything amiss in selecting the leading actors?

A: Let me be frank with you. I never felt like doing only heroine in my movies. Some of my films that had me in the heroine's role failed in box office. The success of a film does not depend on a single factor. It is always a collective effort. I'm only a small part of it. Drishyam was a huge film that came from a big banner. Though I acted some more films, people talk to me only about my role in Drishyam. To wipe me from their hearts, I have to have a better film.

Q: Do you feel like being ignored from the main stream films?

A: No, never. It is the job of screenplay writers and actors who decide the actor to play each role. If the role suits me, they would certainly call me. I believe good characters will come in search of me. Then I too have certain short comings. I'm a bit lazy. I am not trying enough is also a factor.

Q: If you were not in the movies...

A: I am sure I would have roamed here and there only to finally reach here. I left my entrance coaching in the middle and drifted to modelling and films. I always liked movies and acting. There are hardly any movies that I missed during my times. Malayalam, Tamil, Hindi and English! All included and I remember them till now.

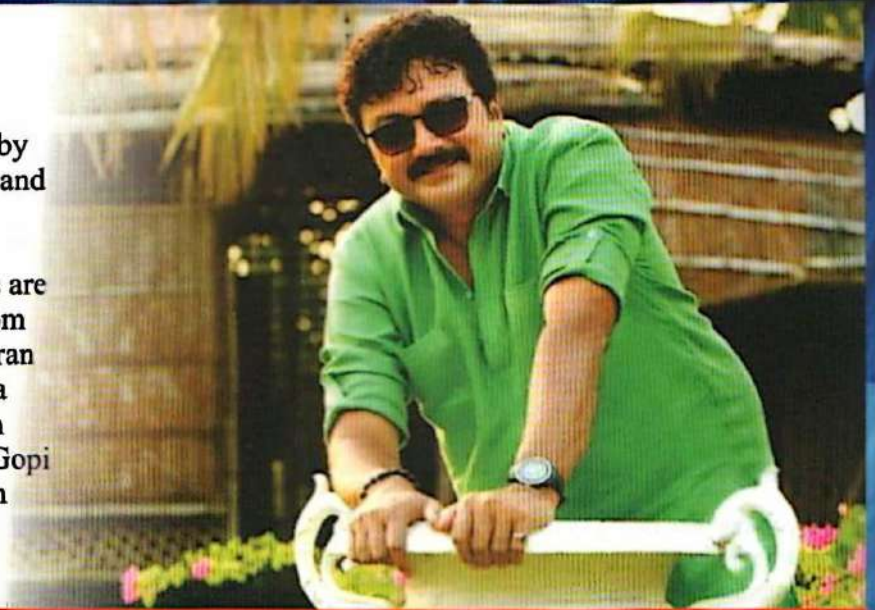
Q: Drishyam came in many languages. Have you seen them? Which one is better?

A: Yes, all of them. Undoubtedly Malayalam. Other versions could not reach the level of Malayalam. Niveda did my role in Tamil. She regretted that she could not make it till now to Mumbai. She wanted us to tell Mumbaikars how much she respect and love them. She moved towards the camera after transforming herself to Faseena from Ansiba. ■



SATYA

■ Jayaram is the hero of Satya, produced by Firoz Sahid for Shehnaz Movie Creations and directed by Deepan. He portrays Satyasubramahnam a bank officer. Nikhida is in the female lead. Other actors are Rahul Dev from Bollywood and Nazar from Kollywood, Sudhir Karamana, Balachandran Chullikkad, Manu, Shobha Mohan, Manka Mahesh, and Vinodkumar, directors Sohan Sinulal, M A Nishad and Ranjit Shankar. Gopi Sundar composes the music and A K Sajan writes the screenplay.



AVARUTE RAAVUKAL

■ Shanil Muhammed directs Avarute Raavukal based on his own screenplay. Ajay Krishna produces this film for Ajay Entertainments. Asif Ali, Unni Mukundan, Vinay Fort and Aju Varghese are in stellar roles. Mukush and Nedumudi Venu are also in this movie. Among the female actors are Honey Rose, and Lena. Hari Narayanan, Anu Elizabeth Jose and Siby Padiyara write the lyrics to be composed by Shankar Sharma.



MANOJ K JAYAN IN DOUBLE ROLE IN SAHAPATHI 1975

■ A real story is now coming as a film titled Sahapathi 1975. The story revolves round a police officer Narikkode Narayanan appears before a court of law as an ascetic and reveals the truth. Manoj K Jayan enacts both roles of police officer and the ascetic. Other actors are Vijayaraghavan, Madhupal, Saikumar, Saiju Kurup, Vineeth Kumar, Biyon, Kollam Thulasi, Manraj, Sudhi Koppa, Jayan Rajan, Meera Vasudev and Ambika Mohan. John Ditto P R writes the screenplay for the story of Rajaram and M Balan produces it for Hemavision. Rajaram and Rashmi Narayanan write the lyrics and T S Radhakrishnaji set them to music.



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