

DUSSEHRA AND DIWALI GREETINGS!

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The Only English/Malayalam Monthly Magazine linking Mumbai Malayalees

SOCIAL CRUSADER



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Publisher, Printer, Managing Editor
P V Vijay Kumar

Executive Editor
K V Satyanath

Feature Editor
Lakshmi Venkatachalam

Feature Writers
K R Narayanan
V N Gopalakrishnan
Sriprakash Menon
Guru Vijay Shankar
Dr. Nalini Janardhanan
Dr. Sujatha Nair
K. Padmakumar
Vidhya Vasudevan

Marketing Manager
Ms Asha Soman
Mob: 9527195943, 8652030846

Office Administration
Neetu Thomas
Sneha Sashidharan

Bureau Chief -Thane Region
Rajan V Nair
Mob: 9004972655

Consulting Creative Director
Shankar S Bhogwekar

Designer
Sudhakaran K M

Photographer
Mangesh U Borade
Mob: 08691902124

Advertisement & Marketing
T R Raghunandan
(Kochi - 09847169725)

Production & Logistics
K V Prabhakaran

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Vibrant
Printing & Publishing Pvt Ltd

105 - B, Twin Arcade, Military Road, Marol,
Andheri (E), Mumbai - 400 059
Tel: +22 29209959 Telefax: 29202094

BOYCOTT THEM

Finally we did it! Nay, our jawans, officers and the government did it. Kudos to them!

The recent Pak sponsored attack on the military quarters in Uri on Sept 18 dawn, that left 18 Indian soldiers dead and several others injured (a couple of them died later), has turned the blood of all Indians boil with instant anger and left a feeling to avenge this treacherous massacre. Every political leader who could open their mouths deplored the attack and expressed their contempt and called for immediate retaliation. Some prominent leaders called for 'jaw for teeth' a new phrase replacing the old outdated adage 'teeth for teeth.'

The TV channels hungry for new topic for a heated debate, grabbed the opportunity and their debaters cried hoarse and demanded nothing but most aggressive steps to be taken against the sponsors of terrorism. They are supposed to represent the people's voice. Remember, they do not own any responsibility if the steps they suggested fail when implemented. The main opposition Party said what BJP said when the latter was in opposition.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) during its session running into several days became a platform for demanding global action against the perpetrators and their sponsors and supporters. Nawas Sheriff the Pak premier painted his country as a victim of terrorism and blamed India for human rights violations in Kashmir. Days later, India's minister for foreign affairs Sushma Swaraj rebutted all his claims of innocence and called their act as sponsored terrorism.

In all these accusations and rebuttals, use of one's head and wisdom, often put one in an inescapable jargons. When Empire State building in US was attacked, US called it an act of war and thus gave US the right to strike back and they did by killing Osama bin Laden hiding in Pakistan close to their military training centre. When 26/11 happened, Pakistan, incapable of shifting the onus called the terrorists non-state actors. By accepting this version, India gave Pak an iron clad alibi to escape the guilt of state sponsorship. When Uri happened, Pak dubbed them Kashmiri freedom fighters and India for all practical purposes could do nothing. An instant counter attack on the hide outs of the terrorist hide outs in POK by India could have favoured India as it could be described as instantaneous reaction. By declaring the counter at a time of 'our choosing' eliminated an option of self defence. While an "instant response" has certain justification, a strike 'at a time and place of our choosing' is totally a different connotation as far as world opinion is concerned.

Prime Minister Modi seems to have given freedom to our defence forces to act decisively and effectively and proving every sceptics wrong, our jawans proved their worth.

PM says that we shall not go to a war but isolate Pakistan politically, diplomatically and economically and influence other nations to unite against the Pak game of terrorism by isolating it globally. And he proved what he promised is what he did.

Now what we ordinary citizens have to do? Simply shouting patriotic slogans would not do. We have to match the valour and courage our jawans displayed in equal measure. We have to show them that we are not far behind them. Pakistan cannot be expected to disappear into thin air. It is certain sooner than later, they would come out with sinister plans. We have to be prepared.

Let sacrifice some of our luxuries and build our economy by saving for tomorrow. Let us not buy materials produced by nations that support directly or indirectly those nations who are inimical, however good or cheap they are. We have to be prepared to make what we need on our own soil. Until we gain that expertise, let us hold our needs for some time.

Hurt where it pains. That should be our response. That will be a true tribute to our Father of the Nation.

Malayalis And Maharashtra

Malayalis have lived in Maharashtra for the past one hundred years. Prior to the 1970's Gulf boom, Mumbai, Pune and Nasik were the dream lands for Malayalis. As everyone knows, Kerala had very high literacy levels because the kings encouraged Christian missionaries to establish schools and colleges, or they themselves started educational institutions. After 1956, the state government continued this approach as a strategy for development. But industrialisation did not take place due to many reasons which forced Malayalis to look for opportunities outside the state. Soon after matriculation, they would join typewriting institutes in their villages and after mastering in Kottalam Koralum (typewriting and shorthand), they would migrate to these cities for jobs. Since they were not picky about ethnicity, language, or religion and a tad different in these matters, they could easily adjust to the local conditions. They had the ability to adapt and soon Malayalis learned to handle three to five languages. Consequently, one of the largest Malayali diaspora lives in Maharashtra, and it is five generations old. This state is a second home to lakhs of Malayalis. At the same time, it is not true to state that there were no opportunities at all in the backyard, or scope for money making in the land of Parashurama and Mahabali. For many Malayalis, traveling was, and is, in their blood. Even people from well off families migrated to new horizons, and was not restricted to better careers or opportunities. Thousands have travelled and settled in many parts of Maharashtra. Malayalis became real

Malayalis only after they left Kerala. Amidst all drawbacks and adverse situations, Malayalis finished off their days, without seeing a single Malayali beggar, street child, or old couple muck around the streets, whereas such types could be seen each day in all the cities of Maharashtra and a sizable number of these are from the so called progressive & industrially developed states.

Biju Cherian
Vasai

Marthanda Varma Maharaja

The story on Shri. Marthanda Varma in Kerala in Mumbai (Onam Special) could have been a bit spicier if only some interesting incidents in his eventful life were included, such as:

(i) His cousins Raman Thampi and Pappu Thampi had always aimed at his life and spared no occasion to take his life. Once when Marthanda Varma went on a prayer visit to Padmanabha Swamy temple, they had planned to kill him even as he came out of the temple. Having been tipped off of this, when he was inside the temple, the Maharaja came out of the temple disguised as the temple priest, holding a palm leaf umbrella over his head and carrying a copper vessel on his right hand. He thus skilfully escaped from the murder attempt

(ii) When Ramayyan Dalawa was fighting a war with Cochin and was almost near victory, the Raja of Cochin surrendered directly before Marthanda Varma and pleaded to the Raja to stop the war and offered to cede the Parur and Alangadu Taluks - but leave his state free. Marthanda Varma acceded to his request and ordered stoppage of the war.

Later, the Raja visited Ramayyan

Dalawa when he was on his death bed and inquired of him if he had any regrets or disappointments in his life.

"Yes" came the reply. He told the Maharaja that he should not have called him back from the war field and stopped him on his mission to conquer and annex Cochin State to Travancore.

(iii) Finding that the Nairs were becoming financially powerful- a threat to the Raja's power- and his own State coffers getting dry, Marthanda Varma called Ramayyan Dalawa one day and gave him a puzzle: Ramayyan! There is a ripe pumpkin with lots of ripe seeds inside. Can you take out the seeds without breaking the pumpkin?" Rama Iyer got the clue and accepted the challenge. On his advice the Raja gave a royal proclamation throughout his kingdom of conferring royal titles to the subjects on graded payment of a donation to the Raja. Whoever donated to the Raja a gold lamp of 100 sovereigns will be conferred the title "Menon"; One who gave a gold plate of 80 sovereigns will be conferred the title "Pillai" with the title applicable also to the women members of the family; one who donated 50 sovereign of gold will be conferred "Poduwal"/Warrior with right to serve any temple.....and so on.

Much to the amusement of the Raja there was a rush of donors in the palace and within the next 15 days, the Raja's coffers were overflowing, with the Nairs not realizing that they have been robbed of their money powers without their knowledge and that their donations have made the Raja really very powerful.

Parur S.Ganesan
Chembur

Phone : (022)25253535

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.

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Editor: P V Vijaykumar

ADV PREMA MENON

THE WOMAN WHO FOUND
HERSELF TRANSPLANTED IN MUMBAI



It could be that exposure gained from parents and elderly people including teachers that helped her to adapt her to the social, cultural and charitable activities she is now engaged into.

Advocate Prema Menon was born in Kotappadi near Guruvayur. Like any other girl of that era, she also experienced the invisible chain around her restricting her freedom to move around. When boys of the same age were free to move around temple grounds, film theatres, festival grounds, such places were forbidden to girls. If any girl decides to break free that chain, she would immediately be branded rebel, recalcitrant or vagrant. The only opening they had to find their identity





Her father, Dr P Parakkal was a social activist and a reformer. He had travelled all over the world when he was in Merchant Navy and he had enough experience and wisdom such voyages provided. Her mother, Sreremathy Amma, now 84 years old, is fully into spiritual and charitable activities and is a model embodiment to others around her. It could be that exposure gained from parents and elderly people including teachers that helped her to adapt her to the social, cultural and charitable activities she is now engaged into. Her husband Dr Ramdas Menon also provides her adequate support to indulge in these activities.

However strong one's inherent talents are, in the absence of favourable atmosphere to nurture them, they would be nicked in the bud. Fortunately Prema Menon had favourable opportunities and they helped her to be the part of establishing an English medium school for the socially and economically backward classes in Thane in 1996. For this purpose the Malanad Educational and Welfare Association was registered as a charitable Trust. Vidyaniketan English School is an offshoot of this

Trust. She is now the General Secretary of the Trust. Her services confined earlier to Thane and subsequently spread to its suburban pockets too.

When Malayalam Mission of Kerala

state was started in Mumbai, Prema Menon became its Thane zonal coordinator and actively contributed for the promotion of Mother tongue. Under



Her migrant life starts from Dubai and later after a short stint in Chennai she is now in Mumbai for the last twenty two years being a resident of Thane.

was cultural and sports competitions in their educational institutions. In most of the Nair families, teen aged girls would be married off; from one prison to another harsher prison. Perhaps for some, it might be liberation from slavery. This was the scenario then.

Her migrant life starts from Dubai

and later after a short stint in Chennai she is now in Mumbai for the last twenty two years being a resident of Thane.

So she was a migrant for the last three decades but it was Mumbai that turned her to a true migrant. Her father,





her leadership Children camps were conducted every year. Later she also became General Secretary of Maharashtra State when All India Malayali Association (AIMA) was established. She was also appointed as its National Committee member. This helped her to spread her wings to other states also and she took a leading role in working for their social and mercy mission activities. Associating with Malappuram District Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Smart Wings Kozhikode, she organized exposure trip in various states for differently abled poor children. She also organized a co-living camp in Kerala for the poor children of Maharashtra. Being the active member of AIMA National Cultural Committee she took a key role in organizing AIMA Voice Music Talent hunt in 16 States and the National Grand finale at Kochi in May 2016. She had several opportunities to help the needy to make her life meaningful and she truly believes in the Sanskrit proverb '*Paropakarthamidam Shareeram*'. The migrant life in Mumbai helped her to acquire a post graduate degree in law and for this she is ever grateful to this city. She is always grateful to this city, especially

Malayalee community that enabled her to receive all the love and respect due to her. Since last 16 years she is a practicing Lawyer and runs a Law Firm at Court Naka, Thane in the name and

style "Max Juris,. She is a lover of art and has performed Bharatnatyam, Mohiniyattam and Kaikottikali in many stages. She is also indulged in literary works especially Malayalam poems and articles. Her two sons Niranj and Sreeranj are also contributing to the field of art . Niranj has played the role of Subhash in Asianet *Parasparam* Serial. Sreeranj being a vocalist is the active member of Triloka Band. "I'm lucky to be associated with majority of the Malayalee social organisations in their multifarious activities and really proud of this city," she says with all humility.

Though she received all love and respect from her male colleagues, she is not fully satisfied as most of the females in Mumbai do not get this kind of support from their male counterpart. They are a neglected lot. Major part of the female population in Mumbai is quite capable but they are not given adequate opportunities to showcase their talents and capabilities, she asserts. In most of the Malayalee organizations, female members are not given important positions and made to play only secondary roles. If we go through the records, we would be convinced that the women members are a



With husband Dr Ramdas Menon



Sons Sreeranj and Niranj



neglected lot. Most of the organisations have a women's wing and their job is confined to organize the cultural shows during Onam celebrations and to welcome special guests when they come to attend the events, by holding 'thalappoli.'

Many women can outdo men by their sheer capabilities and if opportunities are provided, they can put enormous effort to achieve positive results since they have more power of tolerance and determination. It is regrettable that Malayali associations treat women as secondary members. Treating women only as a commodity is an outdated view. It is high time the Associations change their mindset and provide ample opportunities for their progress and upliftment. They should be given freedom and favourable opportunities to work their way up. It is the responsibility of the Associations. Men should learn to understand the views of women and show broad mindedness to work with them side by side.

Adv. Prema Menon holds the view that she being a woman is not a punishment, Her personal spirit is asexual. Even men

treat nature as female. Without men, there is no women and viceversa. The Indian concept of 'Ardhanareeshwara' is great and beautiful. Prema Menon's path

Though she received all love and respect from her male colleagues, she is not fully satisfied as most of the females in Mumbai do not get this kind of support from their male counterpart. They are a neglected lot.

was never smooth but she just ignored the stones and thorns on her path while moving forward.

"Till the last beat of my soul,
All deeds shall ever surrendered"

These above are the last lines of one of her poems and they bear her commitment and philosophy. The core and timely changes in organizational activities are unavoidable. She hopes that the future would see more and more women in the leadership of organizations and the men folk would be ready to offer them opportunities. The society would progress only when both men and women work side by side and may the men have the big heart to allow women to discover new dimensions to social service. ■





Garba Dance

NAVRATRI

AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE



Damodaran Unny

India is a country of several festivals. Each one has a legendary and cultural background. Navratri is basically a festival dedicated to the worship of Durga and her different forms during nine nights culminating in Dasara, the most auspicious day. Ten forms of Devi/Shakthi are worshipped during the festival along with Dandiya, Garba and several pujas/homams etc. Each day is significant. Each Region is celebrating its own goddess for worship. The main forms of Devi in chronological order are as under:-

1 Durga



Vishnu and Maheshwara were subjected

She is the presiding deity of West Bengal. Durga Ma is the purest form of Shakthi who was instrumental in the destruction of Mahishasura. When Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara were subjected

to severe atrocities at the hands of the demon and even the combined powers of all the three could not stop the demon, Durga is said to have been born at this crucial juncture from the anger and helplessness of the three with a view to destroy the demon. Durga Pooja in West Bengal is therefore very significant as a thanksgiving gesture by the people.

2 Bhadrakali

This is an important form of Shakthi



are several interesting stories about her birth. However, the main story is that she

mainly worshipped in South India. Prima facie, she may appear to be very angry and furious, in fact she is very generous and helpful. There

arose from Shiva and eventually she has dark face like Shiva and has three eyes. The traditional Kalaripayattu i.e. martial arts) from Kerala is said to have been originated through her and she is protecting this Art form even today, it is believed.

3 Ma Amba



Ma Amba Ma
Amba Ma
Amba bol
ishwara satchith
anand bhol
Amba Amba
Ma jagdamba
akkhilandeswari
jay Jagdamba
Ma Amba Ma
Amba Ma

Amba bol thus goes a beautiful bhajan. She is considered to be universal mother and is mainly worshipped in Gujarat and some other western parts of Maharashtra. Amba is believed to have inspired and blessed Shivaji and presented him with a sword to fight the enemies and come out with flying colours in the battle. She was responsible for killing the demon Mahishasura according to the western region of the country.

4 Annapoorna Devi



As the very name reveals, she is the mother of earth and food grains and instrumental in feeding the children and keeping them healthy. She is

also known as the Goddess of nourishment. She has round face, red colour and has only four hands unlike other forms that have multiple hands. An incarnation of Parvathi, her birth date is said to be on Akshaya tritiya, the most auspicious day as believed by Hindus. Worshipped in Northern and Eastern Region, she is said to be very benevolent and her worship provides one with sufficient food prosperity.

5 Sarvamangala

One who blesses and prays for all. She is like a fragrant flower that spreads happiness all over. Primarily worshipped in South India, there are several temple dedicated to her



throughout India. Sathi who is another form of Parvathi is worshipped through her. In Bodhi Gaya in Bihar, there is an important temple by name "Sarvamangala

peeth" dedicated to her.

6 Bhairavi



Consort of Bhairava. Good to those who are kind and nice and furious and revengeful to those who invite her wrath. Fierce in appearance, her very presence in

the battlefield creates shiver in the minds of the enemies and she brings down their morale. Having drunk the blood of Chanda and Munda, the main asuras, she is also known as Chamundeshwari.

7 Chandika



The emotional form of Durga. Furious, passionate or destructive. Although known as Kartyayani, she is said to have been born out of the combined

fury of Gods and it was this ball of flame that resulted in female form of Chandika (one of the cosmic forms).

8 Tripurasundari



Also known as Lalitha. An epitome of beauty, foremost and purest form of Aadi Shakthi. A combination of three shakthis. Shodhashi, Lalitha and Rajarajeshwari, the

goddess which signifies youth, childhood and ruler respectively. She is most beautiful with a fragrant body. In

the Lalitha Sahashranamam, one can observe lovely description of these forms.

9 Bhavani



Ambe Bhavani Ma, Devi Bhavani Ma, Durga Bhavani Ma Lakshmi Bhavani ma. Thus goes a Bhajan. She is another form of Amba and is worshipped in Maharashtra. She was an inspiration for Maratha warriors and is believed to have vanquished the demon freeing people from his atrocities and tortures.

10 Mookambika



This is another name for Parvathi, the motherly aspect of Shakthi, gentle and caring. Kauruasura who lived in the Udipi District of Karnataka

terrified the people living there. It was predicted that the monster would be destroyed by a woman and free the people from the atrocities of the Asura. There is a beautiful temple constructed at Kollur (Karnataka) dedicated to this form of Devi. The temple is very significant for small kids also to learn their "Adyakshara" in the presence of the parents after a special pooja wherein the authorised priest writes on the tongue of the child. The famous South Indian Singer Yesudas makes it a point to visit the temple on each birthday to invoke her blessings and participates in musical concert singing the glory of Devi.

Adi Shankaracharya who was a sincere devotee of Devi is said to have personally met Devi and requested her to accompany him to Kerala with the objective of having a temple dedicated to her in Kerala. Devi agreed to fulfill his desire, but on one condition. He would walk and she would walk behind him and he should not look back. If he did that she would stop there and will not proceed further. Shankaracharya was very happy and was listening to the sound of her anklets thus assuring himself that she was actually following

him. On the way sound of anklets was missing and he was apprehensive whether she was coming at all and out of curiosity he looked back to ensure that she was actually following him. As he happened to break the promise in a moment of anxiety, she refused to proceed further. Nevertheless after witnessing the sincerity of her devotee, she advised Shankara to lit the lamp from the flame symbolizing her presence, take it to an auspicious place in Kerala and install an idol of her and light the lamp for the benefit of the devotees. The famous Chottanikara temple in Kerala where thousands of people take darshan believe that when they take morning darshan there, it is as good as having Darshan at Mookambika wherein Devi stood still in Kutajadri near Kollur, Karnataka. It is significant that when the sanctum sanctorum is closed in the morning at Mookambika, it is opened in Chottanikkara wherein thousands of devotees have Saraswathidarshan! Amme Narayana!

Mookambika, the sacred temple is situated on the banks of Souparnika and is surrounded by thickly wood hills and is picturesque and has a natural formation resembling Sri Chakra. Kollur is one of seven mukthi places created by Parasurama. Rishis have performed penance at this holy place. It is believed that Garuda (eagle) called Suparna attained salvation here and

hence the name Souparnika has the name very relevant. It is also believed that Souparnika River absorbs the ailments of 64 different medicinal plants and roots and cures all diseases of those who have bath there.

Kamasura was on the way to become very powerful and none could stop his atrocities. Lord Shiva was pleased with his penance and wanted to grant him the boon he wished. Apprehensive about the destructive tendencies of the demon, when Lord Shiva appeared before him, VAGDEVI the goddess of speech made him dumb eventually making it impossible for him to ask the boon. Thus Kamasura became Mookasura (mooka means dumb). Devi was thus named Mookambika and the demon got killed by her as predicted.

Let us now examine different weapons of Devi.

1. The conch in Durga's hand symbolizes the "Pranava" or the mystic word "OM"

2. Bow and arrow represent Energy

3. The thunderbolt signifies firmness

4. The Lotus in her hand is not fully bloomed. This is called Pankaja. Stands for continuous evolution of the spiritual quality of the devotees.

5. Sudarshana chakra around index finger signifies that the entire

world is at her command. She uses this weapon to destroy the evil and create an environment conducive to the growth of righteousness

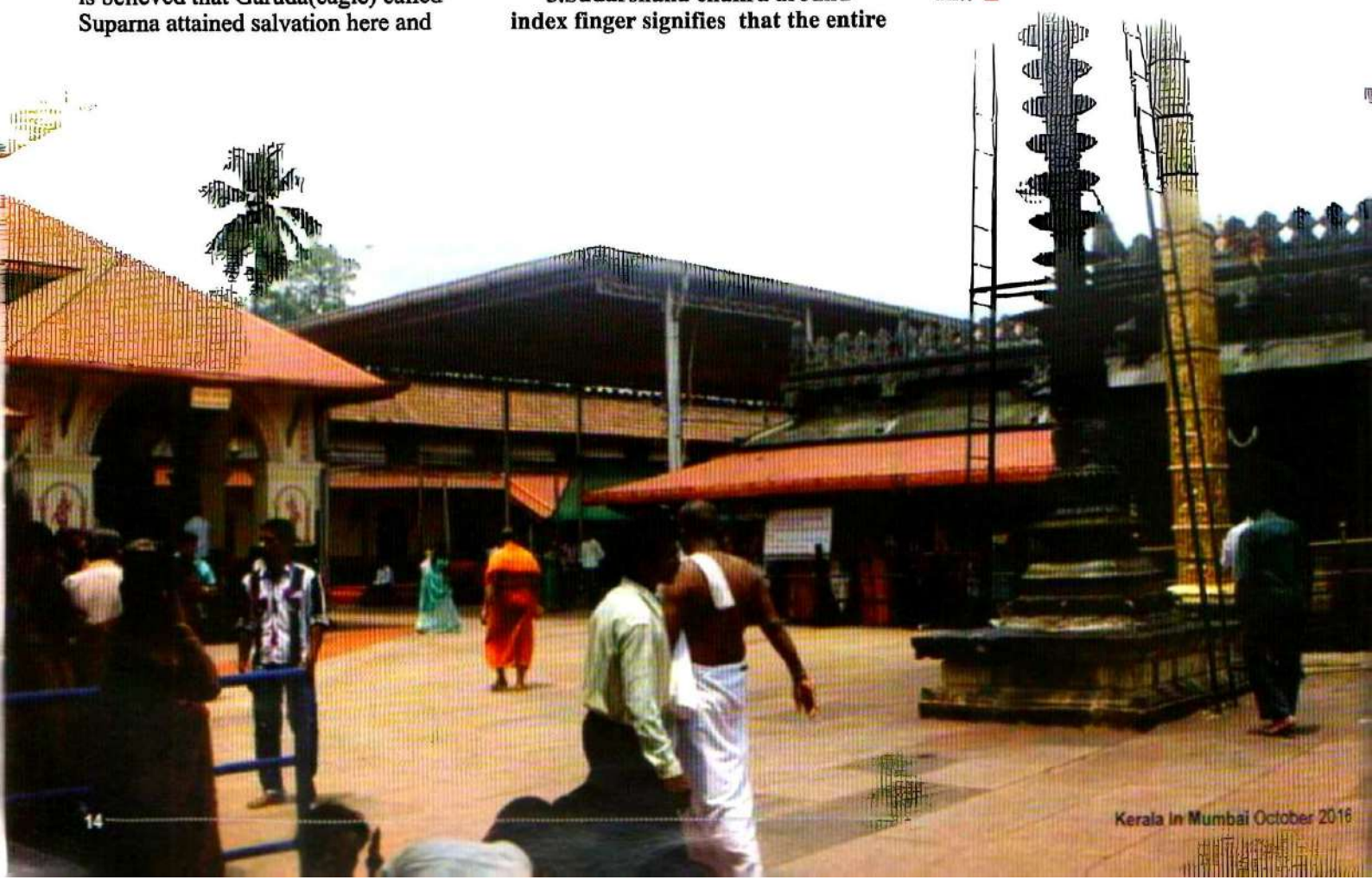
6. The sword signifies knowledge free from all doubts.

7. Trisul is a symbol of satwa, rajas and tamas, removal of all miseries physical, mental and spiritual.

She stands on a lion in a fearless pose of Abhaya Mudra "signifying assurance of freedom from fear as if she is telling his devotees "surrender all actions and duties on to me and I shall release thee from all fears ". Remember Gita's famous couplets

"Sarvadarmanparityajya Mam ekamsaranamvraja Ahamtuamsarvapape bhyo Mokshayisyami ma sucah"

Now coming to the order of worship during Navratri. First three days we have to worship Durga with a view to destroying all our vices, impurities and defects. Next 3 days, we have to invoke the blessings of Lakshmi (Goddess of beauty and prosperity) for our spiritual and material wealth. Last three days, we worship mother Saraswathi the goddess of wisdom/knowledge in the absence of which our material prosperity is of no use. Wisdom is therefore needed. In short, in order to have success in life, we need the blessings of all three aspects. Happy Navratri and Dasara to all! ■





NAVARAATRI



Rukmini Venugopal

■ No other country in the world celebrates so many and so colourful festivals as India does. The festival season is on now.

Having bidden

farewell to Ganapati Bappa and the benevolent Maveli and having enjoyed the feast of these festivals with special items such as Modak and Ada Pradhaman, we are now preparing to welcome and worship the Goddess associated with NAVARAATRI.

The word NAVARAATRI means nine nights in all the Indian languages.

As if to prove the often repeated term used by describing our country, i.e., UNITY IN DIVERSITY each festival is celebrated in different ways in different parts of India ascribing

different reasons but almost on the same day and with the same mythological background. For example, While Kerala celebrates ONAM, others parts of India celebrate VAAMANA JAYANTHI on the same day though in a subdued manner.

Navaraatri festival is no exception to this diverse way of celebration.

Navaraatri starts from the first day after New Moon in the month of Ashwin according to Indian Calendar, corresponding to the Malayalam month KANNI which is from mid September to mid October.

This new moon day is known as "Mahalaya Amavasya". Anybody can perform "Shraaddha" for one's forefathers on this day.

Navaraatri is celebrated in a grand manner in Shringeri Shri Sharada Peetham in Karnataka. This is the first Peetham established by AdiShankara nearly 1200 years ago.

The Shankaracharya of Shringeri dresses up like a Rajguru and gives darshan to devotees on all the nine days of Navaraatri. This practice is said to have started at the request of Vijaynagar kings during the term of the 12th Shankaracharya of



Shringeri. The Goddess Shrada Devi at the Peetam is also decorated lavishly and colourfully on these days. Devotees from all over the country throng to Shringeri during the Navaratri to have darshan of the Goddess and Shri Shankaracharya.

The tenth day is known as DASHAHARA, meaning tenth day celebration. This word has been twisted to Dassera by common

people. Also known as Vijaya Dashami, this day marks the victory of Shree Rama (the embodiment of Dharma) over Raavana, the evil force that spread adharma in the world during Treta Yuga. This victory is symbolically portrayed during the victory procession by the erstwhile Maharaja of Mysore on Vijay Dashami day.

In North India people express their joy of Shri Rama's victory by burning the effigies of Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Indrajit. This is known as Ramlila.

In Bengal, however, Navaratri is mainly centered on Goddess Durga. Known as Durga Puja, it is the biggest festival for Bengalis. Vijaya Dashami day is celebrated to mark the victory of Goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasur who had spread terror in the world. Similar to the immersion of Ganesh idols in Maharashtra, idols of Goddess Durga are worshipped for ten days and then immersed in water.

In Gujarat and many other places people observe and worship the Goddesses during Navaratri. Our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi was on fast even during his first official visit to the U.S.A. which happened during Navaratri in the year 2014.

The Garba and Dandia Ras dance of Gujarat during Navaratri is well known.

In the South, as in other parts of India, special pujas are performed in all the temples during Navaratri for all-round prosperity.

The special feature of Navaratri in Andhra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu is "GOLU", i.e., arrangement of dolls in a stair case- like decorated shelves. This is generally done in individual houses. Dolls depicting various themes like social, mythological, historical,



political etc. are exhibited here. It is also a great occasion to show-off one's artistic skills and creativity. Pujas are performed on all the nine days with different delicacies for naivedyam, the most common being "CHUNDAL", a sprouted-grain preparation. This is also an occasion for women to receive and visit relatives and friends. Being the most important festival of the year along with Deepavali, it is a great occasion to exhibit their new clothes and jewellery.

In the South including Kerala, Goddess Saraswathi is specially worshipped on the ninth day. As she is the Goddess for education and all arts,

things like books, musical instruments and all other professional implements are cleaned and worshipped.

The tenth day, Vijaya Dashami, is the most important day for all Indians as it is the second most auspicious day of the year (next only to Akshaya Trutiya) to start any new ventures such as Vidyaarambham for children, buying new houses, signing new business deals etc.

Let us hope, on this Vijaya Dashami day, our country becomes victorious in driving away evil forces surrounding us.

HAPPY DUSHAHARA TO ALL!



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SMARTHA VICHARAM

This trial was very sensational and turned out to be a milestone in the social history of Central Kerala, or more aptly, the story of the liberation of the women of Kerala. The protagonist in this socially and historically significant story was a widow - Kuriyedathu Savithri Antharjanam- more popular as *Thathrikutti*.



K R Narayanan

■ During the mid-sixties, *Mathrubhumi Aazhchapathippu*, a leading Malayalam Weekly of Kerala, then edited by Shri. M T Vasudevan Nair, came out with the serial instalments of a

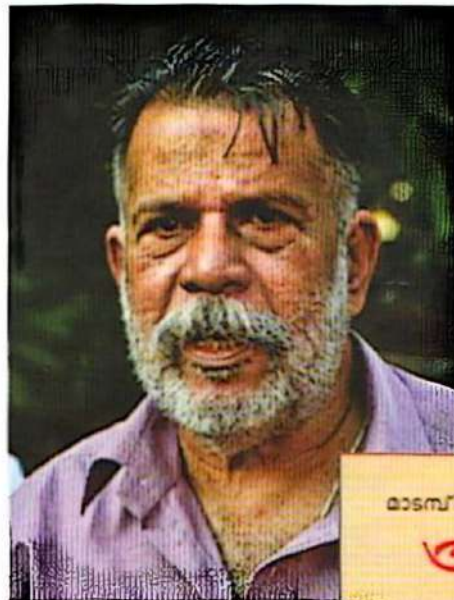
historical novel, concerning the trial of a Nampoothiri widow, by their community, for promiscuous relations with many men. This type of traditional trial, prevalent in the Kerala Brahmin community, during the 18th and early 19th centuries was referred to as *Smartha Vichaaram*. It was a great writer, Madampu Kunjikuttan, who wrote this novel under the title, "*Bhrashtu*" (Ostracization). Also, this story came out as a black and white movie in those days. Many years later, very recently, the very same theme came out again as yet another movie in Malayalam, under the title *Parinayam*.

This trial was very sensational and turned out to be a milestone in the social history of Central Kerala, or more aptly, the story of the liberation of the women of Kerala. The protagonist in this socially and historically significant story was a widow - Kuriyedathu Savithri Antharjanam- more popular as *Thathrikutti*. It was her trial for promiscuity and her sexual exploits with more than sixty-four men of high social stature-including the ruling monarch of the then Cochin principality and also the *Smarthan* (the judge who presided and conducted this trial). This infamous trial put an end to many unbelievable practices which were prevalent in the then society of Nampoothiri Brahmins of Kerala. The story of this *Smartha Vicharam*, may seem to be a fiction, but, in fact, it did hold a mirror to what was really happening in the Nampoothiri households about a century ago!!

Things have changed greatly though, as the superiority and the financial influence of the Nampoothiri Brahmins have waned out, due to socio-political changes in the Malayalee society, public awareness, social enlightenment and education and, side by side, the growth of the leftist philosophy in this part of the country.

The past socio-economic scenario

From about 1200 AD onwards, till the middle of the 20th century, the Nampoothiris had been on the top of the caste hierarchy in the Malayalam speaking regions. Kerala history considers that, often, the Nampoothiri, being socially superior, enjoyed better power and social respect than even the ruling monarchs of yore. The Brahmins of Kerala or simply the Malayalee Brahmins, claimed to be the descendants of the sage Parasurama's Aryan clan and



considered themselves to be superior to any other community. As it was believed and highlighted in, the "*Keralotpathi*", Parasurama recovered the present land of Kerala from the oceans and brought the Nampoothiris from Ahichithra, to own and rule this land on his behalf. They even considered the Tamil Brahmins and the Konkani/Tulu Brahmins, as inferior to them, and considered the latter only as *Paradeshi Brahmins* or Brahmins from outside the land of Parasurama.

Nampoothiris were wealthy landlords and most of the landed territories of the then Kerala were owned by them. Most of the non-brahmins were their tenants, who carried out agricultural activities on

their behalf. These brahmin landlords were committed mainly to learning Sanskrit and literature. They used to take up works relating to the sacred rituals and management of temple affairs and controlling the temple assets and trusts.

They followed the patriarchal system (contrary to the matriarchal practices, which prevailed throughout the rest of the land, at that time), with an intention that their property should always be in the possession of their own Brahmin progeny. Only the eldest son of a Nampoothiri family was allowed to marry from within the community, and only the progeny of such alliances had rights to the properties and assets of the ancestors. The younger Nampoothiris were not allowed to marry from within their own community to prevent them from begetting issues of their own community. Nevertheless, the younger men were allowed informal relations, mostly with Nair women. This system used to be referred to as *Sambandham* and the children born of such relations did not have any rights to their paternal assets or properties. Also, they were considered to be belonging to the mother's community only and not as Nampoothiris.

Another surprising fact was that the eldest son was allowed to marry as many brahmin women as he pleased. Hence, very often, most of the Nampoothiri women were confined to their Illams, destined to live as one of the many wives of the head of the Nampoothiri illam. Thus a Nampoothiri woman was destined to be one among many wives of a married man and, if not, live as a spinster.

Moreover, their life was more or less like prisoners in the Nampoothiri households. This perhaps earned them the title *Antharjanam*, which literally meant "those confined to the inside the house."

The entire Nampoothiri life was patterned to ensure the virginity and loyalty of the Antharjanam only to their husbands. Even their travels were limited to the temples or to the house of their immediate relatives, that too with the reliable maidservants of the household as



escort. She was not allowed to wear gold ornaments and nose rings. While travelling, she should take all precautions to keep off the sight of males, in order to ensure chastity. Cooking food, serving the husband and looking after the children were the essence of womanhood of an Antharjanam.

Remarriage of the widows was never allowed and was frowned upon as a major sin. Namboothiri men were allowed to take many wives, leaving many women to the sorrow of sharing in grief their undivided devotion to the husband. The evil practice that only the eldest son marries from the same community directly affected the Nampoothiri women. Many women, therefore, remained unmarried and died without experiencing the bliss of motherhood.

As the marriage of widows was forbidden, there were many young widows, who were objects of contempt in the community. The women were an absolutely neglected group in this community and, very often, the men treated them simply as creatures with very limited needs.

Smartha vicharam

Smartha vicharam was the trial that a Namboothiri woman (Antharjanam) had to go through, when her chastity was doubted. Her accused paramours (*Jarans*) were also tried and, if found guilty, were also excommunicated. This was a ritualistic trial and was conducted with the permission of the Maharaja of Cochin. There was absolutely no room for public



opinion or personal considerations.

Usually, there were many stages in the procedure of Smartha Vicharam, like: Interrogation of the maid of the accused woman (*Dasi vicharam*), Removal of the accused to isolation ('*Anchampurayilackal*'), Bringing these incidences to the royal notice and seeking permission to interrogate and punish ('*Swaroopam chollal*'), Appointment of a Judge (*Smarthan*), his assistants and onlookers by the king, Interrogation (where the accused was questioned by the *Smarthan*) and the final verdict and punishments (*Deha vichchedam*).

If the woman was found guilty, she and her adulterers (*Jarans*) were ostracized and she was evicted from her caste and her funeral rites were carried out, as if she was no more. All these would be followed by a '*Shuddha bhajanam*', a sumptuous feast in which the entire trial team participated. If the accused were found innocent, they also took part in this feast.

The interrogation stage might go on for days and even months. The woman was questioned till she accepted her misdeeds. She had to name all her *jaarans* (adulterers) and had to identify them with proof (mostly some mark on the body) and this was then verified by the *Smarthan*. Finally, a verdict was arrived at. Till then the woman was considered as a '*Sadhanam*' (an inanimate object). If proved guilty, the white covering cloth and umbrella were taken away from her and she was left to live on the open street.

Thathrikkutti's *Smartha vicharam* was in 1905 and that was reportedly the last trial then. However, records speak of another *Smartha vicharam* in 1918 but the 1905 trial was an important milestone for the women in Kerala. It also had several effects on the culture of the state then. Many artists who were condemned in the 1905 trial had to leave their professions and this affected the state's revenue to a large extent. The whole process was a major expense in itself and a great strain on the state exchequer and hence the Maharaja of Cochin decided not to hold trials any further.

A major issue that arises here is that Thathrikkutti never tried to justify herself. Hence, we are inclined to think that she used this method to strike against the unjust male superiority in the society. A woman of her standing, clearly identifying her adulterers and working her charm up to the King really deserves the attention of sociologists. It could be her revenge. We do not know if she was alone in this struggle against society or had any supporters in her crusade. ■



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○ RAJAGOPAL

NOMINATED FROM MADHYA PRADESH TO SERVE KERALA

-Satyanath

Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi after she was unseated by the Allahabad High Court was worse than the rule of Hitler in Germany prior to Second World War. Political parties apprehensive about Indira's rule were caught unaware and it made them to form a single unit to stand against Indian National Congress (I). In a way it was the insistence of Jayaprakash Narayan that made them come together but there were incompatible differences among them.

In an interim order, Justice Krishna Iyer allowed Indira to continue as Prime Minister but without voting rights until her case is settled by the regular court. On June 25, 1975 midnight emergency came into effect and all political leaders opposing her were arrested and placed behind bars. Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai, Vajpayee, L K Advani and hundreds of others were imprisoned. Offices of the parties and houses of leaders were raided and censorship in media was enforced.

That day the leaders of RSS and Jan Sangh were in Ernakulam and they discussed the ways and means to protest against emergency. Rajagopal was then President of Kerala unit of Jan Sangh while KG Marar and K Raman Pillai were secretaries. It was decided that Rajagopal and Marar should court arrest while Parameswaran and Raman Pillai should go underground and keep the fire burning.

Kerala was then ruled by a coalition government under C Achutha Menon with K Karunakaran as Home Minister. Other opposition parties were compelled to take Jan Sangh into their fold to oppose Indira though mentally they were not happy. Rajagopal returned to Palakkad and met his wife Dr Santha. She told him that on the previous day police searched their house. When the sun rose next morning, he led 37 supporters in a protest march from bus stand. All of them were immediately arrested. Rajagopal was arrested under MISA whereas others were charged under Defence of India Rules. He was moved to Thiruvananthapuram Central Jail. After a weeklong tension, he slept on a single mat in a cell. Soon he was shifted to B-class cell where he had EMS Namboothiripad, K M George, V S Achuthanandan, M P Manmadhan, K Sankaranarayanan, K Sivaramabharathi,



P B R Pillai, Thalavadi Oommen, R Balakrishna Pillai and later A K Gopalan. During these days Rajagopal decided to study the books written by well known authors. Thus he read The great Masters, Gospel of Ramakrishna, Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Foundation of Indian Culture etc.

Once R Balakrishna Pillai



Indira Gandhi

approached him for a pen and after some time he returned it. Next day Pillai was allowed to leave the prison. Rajagopal met him again after some time when Pillai visited the prison as Minister for Jails. When the news of death of Kamaraj came, Rajagopal suggested to Sankaranarayanan to apply for parole to attend his leader's funeral. Soon the state president of Congress (O) joined Congress (I) and later became their Minister for Finance.

Outside the prisons, agitations were regularly carried out by Lok Sangharsha Samiti whose major members were people of Jan Sangh. Of the 4,645 people arrested for participating in the agitations against emergency, about 3,500 belonged to Jan Sangh. Rajagopal had some wonderful experiences during his imprisonment. When he proposed to agitate more vigorously against emergency, EMS did not support as CPI (M) wanted to agitate for more bonus. However A K Gopalan was in favour of his proposal and agreed to lead as soon as he was out of prison. That never happened as AKG's health deteriorated and soon he died.

The high intensity agitation of Jan Sangh attracted the young generation and more and more youth started joining them. The erosion of soil from under the feet alarmed the CPI (M) leaders and to prevent this, they, Rajagopal alleges, resorted to physical violence against Sangh workers. The first martyr was Vadikkal Ramakrishnan and the attack continued.

Janata Experiment

When Indira Gandhi announced parliamentary elections withdrawing emergency, the population felt relieved. They wanted Jayaprakash Narayan to lead the elections and he agreed provided all parties barring Indira Congress to come together and fight the elections under a common symbol.



With PM Vajpayee and CM AK Anthony

Released from prison, Rajagopal and friends came to know that Jan Sangh had called a national executive meeting in Delhi and he and P Parameswaran were invited to attend. They immediately rushed to Delhi. The meeting decided to accept Jayaprakash's proposal like other parties Socialist Party, Congress (O), Bhartiya Lok Dal etc. Communist Parties also accepted the proposal but they would not fight under the same symbol but extend full support.

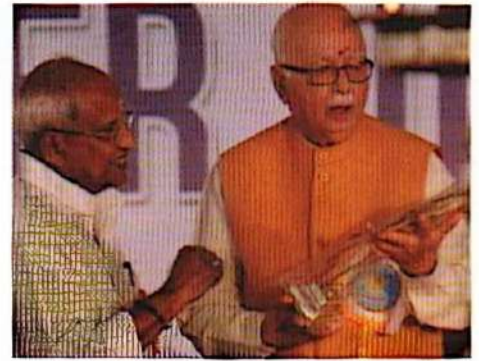
When the Election Commission officially announced the election schedule, Jayaprakash Narayan announced the formation of Janata Party and said that after elections all individual parties would dissolve to merge into the new Janata Party. Though individually no party agreed internally but outwardly they agreed, as they wanted to defeat Congress at any cost. The symbol of the party was a wheel and the plough. The new party won with a huge majority and Morarjee Desai became Prime Minister with

Vajpayee as minister for foreign affairs and L K Advani as minister for communication.

As decided earlier, a meeting of the National Council was called in Sports Complex near Rajghat but heavy rain and wind spoiled the meeting. Vajpayee then shifted the venue to Pragati Maidan but that was also spoilt due to heavy rain. However, before the meeting was adjourned, Vajpayee announced the dissolution of Bharatiya Jan Sangh to merge with the Janata Party. It was a bad omen.

Jan Sangh was a party built on nationalism and it was a sad day for the pracharaks to abandon that ideal and join a party that had divergent ideals.

Rajagopal was authorised to form the Janata Party in Kerala. He and Raman Pillai represented the erstwhile Jan Sangh in their first meeting held at Thiruvananthapuram. The first issue was who would be the state President. When Congress (O) proposed T O Bava, Jan Sangh and Socialist Party proposed K Chandrasekharan and he



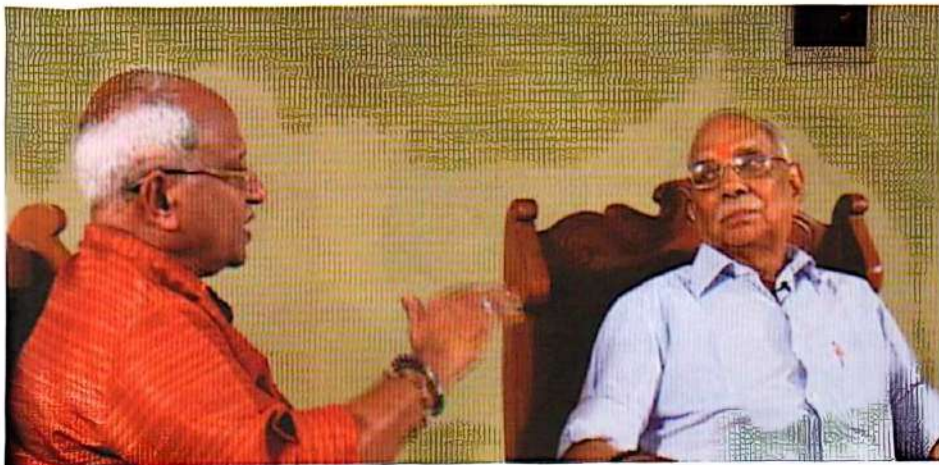
With L K Advani

was elected President. The working pattern was quite different from what Rajagopal experienced. While his party had an ideal, other parties had their own agenda and no ideal. The opinion of the leader was their ideal and there were groupism even among the new participating parties.

Gradually the old antagonism surfaced and they never trusted old Jan Sanghis completely. In the next election, Janata Party and CPI (M) had to work together. Janata Party was represented in the discussions by Arangil Sreedharan, K Gopalan and K Raman Pillai. They wanted Palakkad for Janata Party but Communist Party refused. Then Chathu Master talked to Rajagopal and offered a Raja Sabha seat at the next opportunity. Palakkad was denied to Janata Party and hopeless constituencies like Uduma, Ottapalam were offered in return. Result? When Janata Party swept North India, Congress led front in Kerala got all 20 seats to the parliament as well as a huge majority in the assembly elections. According to Rajagopal, two reasons could have contributed to this result. (1) Wrong policies of CPM(M), (2) misuse of police, (3) their agitation politics, (4) their trade unionism leading to unemployment and (5) peaceful and uninterrupted life during emergency. Congress alliance also could get votes of organised minorities.

Former members of Jan Sangh never felt at home in Janata Party. Jan Sangh had a system of having full time party workers and this was missing in Janata Party. This compelled their erstwhile full time workers, 30 in number, to seek a career elsewhere for their livelihood whereas the workers of Janata Party collected funds and spent it on themselves without any accountability. This led the Janata Party workers ever dependent on rich people. Further every leader covertly tried to convert the party as his personal property which was anathema to Jan Sangh.

RSS was like a mother to Jan Sangh



With Parameswarji



With wife Dr Santha



With Mata Amrutanandamayi

but the former was apolitical while the latter was an open political party. Further, as stated earlier, RSS had allowed its members to work for political parties if they so desired. But Janata Party did not allow this system and insisted that they leave RSS. When Janata Party met on Monte Thursday of 1980 to discuss this issue of dual membership, Rajagopal was a special invitee. After discussions it was put to voting and for a single vote the opposition's policy was approved. Vajpayee then walked out saying, "Our relation with you is only a few months old but our relation with RSS started since our childhood and therefore we would rather go with RSS instead of staying with you." On Easter Day (April 6, 1980) Bharateeya Janata Party was formed. Then Janata Party's majority of members were earlier Jan Sangh members and yet they did not attempt to capture the party but left it without any claims on its assets including bank accounts and office premises. Now they have to start the party from scratch. Vajpayee was the national president. Rajagopal was elected to the 32 member central committee. The responsibility of establishing the party in Kerala was also vested with him. Lotus was chosen as its symbol. Gandhiji's philosophy, JP's complete revolution and Deendayal's idealism were the guiding light of BJP. All members were entrusted with the five responsibilities such as democracy, secularism, Gandhian socialism, value based politics and world Hindu Meet. When Vajpayee came to Kondotty in Malapuram district for party work a few old Muslims stopped his cavalcade and thanked him for his positive approach of allowing Indian Muslims trapped in Pakistan during partition to return to their ancestral homes with dignity. While this helped BJP to swell in its

membership, CPI (M) indulged in violent attacks with BJP. In the 30 cases registered by police, 29 had CPI (M) workers as the accused. Yet the so called intelligentsia did not utter a word against CPM (I) because of their submissiveness to it.

When 45% of the population remained as a vote bank and the submissiveness of Hindus to Marxian philosophy made the leaders think and they decided to convene a World Hindu Conference. Swami Chinmayananda inaugurated this Vishwa Hindu Sammelan at Maharaja's College on April 4, 1982. It was Rajagopal who muted the idea of such a sammelan. In this meet, P Parameswaran brought a proposal whereby the Malayalam month of Karkitakam was to be treated as a month dedicated to Ramayana. Now the public took it upon themselves and the old 'panha' Karkitakam is now celebrated as 'Ramayana Masam' and Hindus started a new ritual of visiting 'four temples' (Naalambala darsanam) associated with Rama.

Around this time the Congress (A) of A K Antony withdrew from the Nayanar ministry and new election was declared. Now Congress (A) joined hands with Congress (I). Rajagopal contested from Palakkad but was defeated. The votes cast in his favour

were lower than what he got in the previous election. Normally the supporters of Jan Sangh were voting them to defeat the violent Communists but the collaboration during the Janata rule distanced them. More over their major strength of full time Pracharaks was absent during the Janata period. Even after leaving Janata Party, people were reluctant to vote for BJP. Rajagopal resents that the Janata Experiment cost them heavily. This pattern was reflected in North India where Jan Sangh was strong. Following the assassination of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi announced election and in the sympathy wave not only BJP but other parties also were decimated. In Parliament BJP could win only two seats. Congress won 415 out of 517.

During this period Rajagopal accepted *deeksha* from Mata Amrutanandamayi after a lot of contemplation.

In 1986 the national party decided to draw Rajagopal to the national scene. He moved up leaving the post of state president to K G Marar. He was also given additional charge of Tamilnadu and Karnataka besides Kerala. Though R S S and BJP have strong roots in Kerala, on account of bipolar politics, BJP was always kept out of power. The national leadership felt the need of some BJP



K.G.Marar



K Raman Pillai



P P Mukundan

leader from Kerala at the national scene and Rajagopal suggested P Parameswaran as Kerala's representative but the latter refused as he had decided only to be a worker and not a leader. After a few days, Rajagopal received a telegram from BJP President Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, "We have decided to send you to Rajya Sabha so get your name deleted from voters' list of Kerala immediately." That year Delhite Sikander Bhakt and Keralite Rajagopal were elected from Madhya Pradesh assembly to Rajya Sabha on June 18, 1992. As his mother expired on June 25, Rajagopal could not attend the scheduled oath taking ceremony. He was sworn in a few days later. Soon he was allotted a flat on V P

Coimbatore, Trichy, Nilgiri etc. L K Advani was scheduled to address meeting there and one meeting was scheduled at Coimbatore at 2.30 pm. Rajagopal was accompanying Advani everywhere in TN. Since Nagarkoil meeting took longer time, they could reach Coimbatore only at 3.10 pm. Soon news came that 13 bombs were exploded in 13 sites near the stage on which Advani was scheduled to speak at 3 pm and 58 people died and more than 100 got injured in the blast .

Since 1992, K R Narayanan and Rajagopal were in close touch as Malayalees in Rajya Sabha. As Vice President K R Narayanan was also Rajya Sabha Chairman. When President election approached, Rajagopal argued

support as Vajpayee refused to dismiss democratically elected TN government of DMK. Since Congress could not prove a majority, Vajpayee ministry continued as a caretaker government, though Lok Sabha was dissolved by the President. Pakistan used this time for an infiltration into Kargil and a war erupted between the two neighbours that lasted 74 days. Pakistan was thrown out and India recaptured the region occupied by the enemy. Pakistan was totally isolated following the war in the world community.

Into the union government

When election to the Parliament was conducted in 1999, BJP came back to power with a big margin and Vajpayee inducted him into the cabinet as minister of state. On October 13, 1999 he became minister of state for Law and justice under Ram Jethmalani. This appointment was based on his legal background. Using this position he took initiative to publish an official Malayalam translation of Indian Constitution. His next step was to get a bench of High Court in Thiruvananthapuram. Till then only two states did not have high court or its bench in state capital and they were Madhya Pradesh and Kerala. Soon MP got its bench of HC but Kerala did not. The reason of not having a bench in TVM was that the state government never asked for one. Once bench is sanctioned, the responsibility of providing infrastructure is on the state Government. Further there was a lobby in Kochi who opposed the bench in TVM. When Rajagopal's initiative in this matter was pointed out to CM E K Nayanar by journalists, CM sarcastically commented that Rajagopal should start one in his own state (Madhya Pradesh). Soon he was transferred to Parliamentary Affairs under Pramod Mahajan. Being a Rajya Sabha member, he had the responsibility of saving his party from the offence of veteran Congress leaders who had a majority there. He was there for four years. He admits that this ministry would overshoot the blood pressure and mental tension of the minister when Rajya Sabha was in session. Since he did not have much work when RS was not in session, he was given additional responsibility of Railways also on September 1, 2000.

Rajagopal was always fond of railways since childhood as he was staying with his uncle who was a railway employee. This new



Rajagopal with his family (File photo)

Road, close to Parliament House. Most of the Communist parliamentarians were staying in that building and Rajagopal could establish a good rapport with them soon.

During these days Islamic militants were attacking RSS establishments in Tamil Nadu and as BJP in charge of Tamil Nadu, Rajagopal went there to collect information. Tamil Nadu police then informed him that as soon as the militants created havoc, they used to escape to Kerala and police there were totally uncooperative. Therefore no case could be investigated or brought to justice.

In 1998 parliamentary election BJP had an electoral understanding with AIDMK and as the national Vice President of BJP, Rajagopal was instrumental for this coalition. BJP was fighting election from some constituencies i.e., Nagarkoil,

in favour of Narayanan and BJP entrusted him and V K Malhotra to know the mind of Narayanan. Once his consent was obtained, BJP supported his candidature. Later Rajagopal led a delegation to the President with a request that Nedumbasseri Airport be named after Adi Sankaracharya but Narayanan refused by saying that Adi Sankara never travelled in a plane and also that Sankara's Adwaita Theory was an imitation of Islam's One God doctrination. This denial was least expected from the President, a Keralite. Nedumbasseri was close to Kalady, Sankara's birth place.

In 1997 Rajagopal was re-elected to Rajya Sabha from Madhya Pradesh. In 1998 BJP became the largest party in Lok Sabha and with the support of Shiv Sena, Akali Dal, AIADMK, BJD etc Vajpayee formed the government. But after sometime AIADMK withdrew its

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opportunity prompted him to do something for Kerala. The first thing he did was to start an express train from Palakkad, his native place, to TVM the state capital. Till then there was no train from Palakkad to TVM. If the travelling time is kept during night this would save the time of the passenger too. An express train called 'Amruta' (after his guru's name) was soon commissioned. Other services he started are Maveli Express, Ananthapuri Express via Alappuzha, Janashatabdi, Gurudev Express linking the states of Sri Narayana Guru and Guru Rabindranath Tagore, Poorna Express, Kannur-Bengaluru Express. He also introduced the first MEMU (Mainline Electrical Multiple Unit) train from Palakkad to Erode, doubling of railway tracks, electrification of trains and sanctioned more than fifty over bridges. The development of Kochuveli station was also his initiative. In Malabar region the major obstacle was a large number of level crosses obstructing road traffic and he surmounted it by sanctioning a number of over bridges. Some of the initiatives were not completed during his 22 month old tenure but Lalu Prasad Yadav could take credit of them and

also boast about turning Railways into a profit making enterprise.

In 2002 July, Rajagopal was transferred from Railways to Urban Development. There were several projects for the eradication of poverty of the people but many states did not pay attention to them and Kerala was one of them. They did not take those schemes seriously and did not send clear projects and schemes on time thereby denying benefits to the poor. Kerala was then in the black list of HUDCO as it diverted the central funds to other state projects and also did not submit utilization certificate. Rajagopal discussed the matter with the then finance minister K Sankaranarayanan and wrote off all old debts. The blacklisting was withdrawn and sanctioned new loans. He also diverted the unspent funds of other states to Kerala under Valmiki-Ambedkar Awaz Yojna wherein the money granted for housing need not be returned and Kerala benefitted to the tune of Rs 1,660 crore.

He also sanctioned bus stands, waste management plants, loans to purchase 550 fast passenger and 350 mini buses to KSRTC. This is besides

Rs.118 lakh sanctioned for restructuring government press in Koratty. He also sanctioned 80% of the cost of creating a Habitat Centre in Kowdiar but when it was completed, he was not a minister.

As a minister of state for defence production, Rajagopal also helped KELTEC and KELTRON to get orders from government departments and thus to move towards profits.

Rajagopal has fought many electoral battles but except the last one from TVM, he lost all of them because he did not join a party that has all the capability to form a government nor he jumped from party to party in search of positions and power. He steadily remained with that party that was dedicated to its principles. He never sought positions of power from the party but executed all work entrusted to him. His only motto was

*Karmanyevadhikaraste
Ma Phaleshu Kadachana,
Ma Karmaphalaheturbhurma Te
Sangostvakarmani*

You have the right to work only but never to its fruits.

Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction. ■

SAKTHAN THAMPURAN A FAR-SIGHTED RULER OF KOCHI

Rama Varma Kunhijipilla Thampuran or Rama Varma IX, popularly known as Sakthan Thampuran was the ruler of the erstwhile Kingdom of Kochi. Historians consider the reign of Sakthan Thampuran as the golden era of the kingdom.



V N Gopalakrishnan

■ Sakthan Thampuran was a farsighted ruler, whose outstanding administrative skills and diplomacy resulted in admirable achievements in key areas of business,

culture and education. He was responsible for developing Thrissur City as the *Cultural Capital of Kerala*. Numerous institutions in Thrissur have been named after him. Besides a model administrator, he was also a crusader for the cause of the common man.

It was Sakthan Thampuran who introduced Thrissur Pooram considered as the "Mother of all Poorams". It is one of the most spectacular festivals in the world and is also the biggest and most colourful temple festival of Kerala. In terms of visual splendour, the grand assembly of caparisoned elephants, amazing pyrotechnic displays and spell-binding ensembles of percussion instruments, there is no match for Thrissur Pooram. It is one festival which does not differentiate on the basis of caste, creed or religion. In fact, it was Sakthan Thampuran who invited Syrian Christians and Brahmins to start their businesses in Thrissur.

Rama Varma was born on August 26, 1751 at Vellarapally Palace to Chennas Anujan Namboodiripad of the Chennamangalam Mana and Ambika Thampuratti of the Kochi Royal Family. His mother died when he was only three years old and the prince was brought up by his maternal aunt, Chittamma Thampuratti. At a very young age, Sakthan Thampuran demonstrated extraordinary intelligence and bravery. Rama Varma had his early education under Kallenkara Pisharody.

Rama Varma ascended the throne of Kochi in 1790. He ruled Kochi with an



iron hand, similar to Marthanda Varma, the King of Travancore. He punished the wrong-doers and was strict and mercileless with criminals. He crushed the power of the feudal chieftains and consolidated the royal power. Since he was a very powerful ruler, his subjects gave him the name of Sakthan Thampuran. During his time, the temples were controlled by Yogiathirippads of the Nambuthiri community, elected from different temples. He discarded the system of Yogiathirippads and took the control of the temples.

Sakthan Thampuran married first from the reputed Vadakke Kuruppath Nair family when he was 30 years old and had a daughter from her. However, this Nethyar Amma (consort of the Raja of Kochi) died soon after. Thampuran at the age of 52, married again Chummukutty Nethyar Amma of the Karimpatta family when she was 17

years old. She was a talented musician and an exponent of *Kaikottikali*. However, Thampuran died within 4 years of marriage without an issue. The widowed Nethyar Amma returned to her ancestral home without getting any special provisions from the State.

Sakthan Thampuran transferred his capital from Trippunithura to Thrissur and built a modern city, thanks to his love for his two wives. For building a modern city and organizing the Pooram, he cleared the 60-acre teak forests around the Vadakkunnathan Temple and developed the Thekkinkadu Maidan. He built a circular concrete road after clearing the teak forest which later on came to be known as the Swaraj Round.

Sakthan Thampuran unified all the ten temples surrounding the Vadakkunnathan Temple to celebrate the new festival. He made it clear to the people that during the Thrissur Pooram, every common man irrespective of their religions should be permitted to participate. Before the inception of Thrissur Pooram, the most popular festival in Kerala was the one-day Pooram organised at Arattupuzha. During this festival, many clashes and fights used to take place between the Naduvazhis of each temple. Once due to incessant rains, the temple representatives were late for the Arattupuzha Pooram and were denied access to the procession. Embarrassed by the denial of access to the procession, the temple representatives complained to Sakthan Thampuran. This incident prompted Sakthan Thampuran to plan for a new festival.

In 1798, Sakthan Thampuran invited all the temples to bring their deities to Thrissur and pay obeisance to Lord Shiva, the deity of the Vadakkunnathan Temple. Sakthan Thampuran classified the participants into Western and Eastern groups. The Western group consisted of

the Thiruvambadi, Kanimangalam, Laloor, Ayyanthole, and Nethilakkavu temples whereas the Eastern group consisted of Paramakkavu, Karamukku, Chembukavu, Choorakottukavu and Panamukkampilly temples. He unified all the temples situated around Vadakkunnathan Temple and organised Thrissur Pooram as a mass festival. He ordained the temples into two groups, namely "Paramakkavu side" and "Thiruvambady side" headed by the principal participants, Paramakkavu Bagavathi Temple at Thrissur Swaraj Round and Thiruvambadi Sri Krishna Temple at Shoranur road. The two temples are hardly 500 metres apart. The Vadakkunnathan Temple has now been declared a national monument by the Union Government under the Ancient Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains Act.

Thrissur Pooram is a seven day festival commencing with *Kodiyettam* or flag hoisting ceremony. This is followed, on the fourth day, by the sample *Vedikettu* or firecrackers ceremony. Many colourful firecrackers are displayed. All the details of the Pooram were meticulously planned by Sakthan Thampuran. Spectators from all over the country and abroad come and participate in the festival.

As a ruler, Sakthan Thampuran



Statue of Sakthan Thampuran in Thrissur

maintained cordial relations with European powers including the English and the rulers of Mysore and Travancore. As a prolific letter writer,

Sakthan Thampuran wrote several letters to the Dutch authorities, Jonathan Duncan, Governor of Bombay and Tippu Sultan. His political and diplomatic skills proved to be of significant value in inducing Tippu Sultan to maintain friendly relations with the kingdom. However, Tippu Sultan's persecution and atrocities in Malabar eventually convinced Sakthan Thampuran to seek an alliance with the English East India Company. It may be noted that since the appointment of Col. Macaulay as the first British Resident of Travancore and Kochi, Sakthan Thampuran's relationship with the British had deteriorated. He had assessed the amazing power of the British and had cautioned his would-be successors to not alienate the British.

Sakthan Thampuran Palace, originally known as Vadakkechira Kovilakam spread over six acres of land is one of the historic, cultural and architecturally significant palaces. It was the Palace in which Sakthan Thampuran resided. It is built in the Dutch and Kerala style of architecture and has now been converted into a heritage museum.

The Palace was recently renovated by the State Archaeology Department. There are many galleries inside the museum including Numismatics gallery, Megalithic gallery, Epigraphy gallery and a gallery for display of household utensils made of bronze and copper and a sculpture gallery.

There is a well maintained Botanical Garden near the Palace besides an indigenous and exotic collection of medicinal plants. The Palace also has an ancient *Sarpakaavu* or serpent grove, which is a place for worshipping the serpents, according to Hindu belief. There are many roads and bus stands in Thrissur which are named after the ruler. Sakthan Thampuran College of Mathematics & Arts stands out as a fitting monument to the great ruler.

Puthezhath Rama Menon in his book titled '*Sakthan Thampuran*', gives a vivid description of the ruler and his times. C. Achutha Menon in '*Cochin State Manual*' has given an authoritative account on the period in history. After his 55th birthday, Sakthan Thampuran fell ill and passed away on September 26, 1805. The great ruler of Kochi was laid to rest in the Sakthan Thampuran Palace itself. ■



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Humour and Laughter Lubricate the Creaky Wheels of our Daily Life



Prof. Dr. John Mathews Vazhappilly

■ The classic comedy scenario involves a man, preferably fat and pompous looking, walking down the street, stepping on a banana peel and falling on his well-padded bottom. A spectator would find this comic because the prosperous, self-satisfied air of the fallen one has been so easily, and so incongruously, deflated by so humble a piece of refuse as a discarded banana skin. The episode which sums up the old moral science lesson that pride goes before a fall - has about it an elegant symmetry.

What is Humour?

A sense of humour is the dancing of a happy stream, down a wooded mountain side, laughing around boulders, giggling gleefully in downward bounce, bubbling all the while it is cool, refreshing, soothing to the head, throat and feet.

Good humour is a philosophic state of mind; it seems to say to nature that we take her no more seriously than she takes us. A sense of humour is a sense of the ridiculous without any malice. Humour is the disparities and paradoxes of life amusingly reconciled and radiated in tranquility. At the height of humour in its sublime expression, life is flung into a Kaleidoscope of possibilities and positivities. A sense of humour is the hilarious declaration that life is worth living.

True humour is natural, spontaneous and has a child like quality about it. Mencius said, "The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart". A child's heart is full of fun and frolic, full of humour and laughter the child on swing, the child singing and dancing, the child making sand worlds on the beach. It is easy to differentiate real from fake laughter. British neuroscientist Sophie Scott explains that real laughs are involuntary, longer and higher in pitch.

This child like quality of fun, frolic and light-heartedness is disappearing from our society. Rarely do we hear spontaneous, uproarious laughter. We pay large amounts of money to get professional comics to make us laugh. We tumble over with laughter when they mimic our "sane" behaviour and in this way reveal our human follies. We love clowns in weird attire, they perform outrageous and hilarious antics to make us laugh, to help us see the simple truth about our human frailties, and fragilities. For a few minutes, their strange behaviours set us free from the straight jacket of conventions. They touch the deep desires within all of us to let go of inhibitions and get in touch with our spontaneous, natural self. Deep down, we are clowns, some of us more polished, sophisticated clowns, performing our strange antics in the theatre of this world.

From titters and giggles to guffaws, chuckles and cackles laughter is of all kinds. Bharata Muni classifies hasya or laughter as one of the eight rasas in Natyashastra. Hasya is further classified into six types smita or gentle smile hasita or smile; vihasita or gentle laughter; upahasita or laughter or derision; apahasita or vulgar laughter, and atihasisa or excessive laughter. It is further explained that person of superior status use smita and hasita; those of middle status use vihasita and upahasita, while those of inferior status use apahasita and atihasisa. The Indian understanding of humour is far more profound, subtler and more complex than that of the Greeks.

The Sense of Nonsense

Nonsense is very often loaded with a lot of sense. Aristotle, the great philosopher, said: "there is a foolish corner in the brain of the wisest man". Some degree of nonsense is relished by the best of men. One who dares to be a fool may be taking the first step in the direction of wisdom. An erudite, scholarly fool is a greater fool than an ignorant fool. The fool in Shakespeare's

King Lear is much wiser than the king himself. The foolish man who is happy and gay is superior to the cynical, bored intellectual. The sadness and inertia of the bored person may be educated, sophisticated and intellectual, but they cannot possibly be such good things in themselves as the great purpose, the high idealism, the starry enthusiasm and the imaginary delights and exploits of a Don Quixote. It is a far superior thing to have a firm anchor in nonsense than to sail in the troubled waters of thought, speculation and confusion.

■ The story goes that Newton was so fond of a cat he had that he cut a hole in one of the walls of his house to make it convenient for its entry and exit. One day he saw that she had kittens and in his usual philosophic absent-mindedness, cut out a neat little hole (a much smaller one) for the kittens!

■ When Charles Darwin was visiting the country house of a friend, the two boys of the family decided to play a joke on him. So they caught a butterfly, a grasshopper, a beetle and a centipede, and out of these creatures created a strange, composite insect by gluing the various parts carefully together. Then, with their new hybrid bug kept in a box, they knocked at Darwin's door. "We caught this bug in a field," they said. "Can you tell us what kind of bug it is, Sir?" Darwin looked at the bug and then at the boys, smiling ever slightly. "Did you notice whether it hummed when you caught it, boys?" "Yes," they promptly replied nudging one another. "Then," said Darwin, "It's a humbug."

Learn First to Laugh at Yourself

Be a joke unto yourself. Erupt into a gale of infectious laughter whenever possible. Like charity, humour begins at home. Before you laugh at any one else, first learn to laugh at yourself. Deflation of your ego is the first step in the ethics of humour. When you do this you learn not to laugh at the world but with the world.

Humour is laughing at yourself. Oscar Wilde said - "People are never so trivial as when they take themselves seriously" Life becomes marvelous when seen through the eyes of a child. Little children seem to find as much fun in the cardboard cartons that package their toys as they do in the toys themselves. Children laugh at almost anything-puppies and other animals, bugs, butterflies, sprinklers, merry-go-rounds, and their own faces in the mirror.

■ Sculptor Daniel Chester was commissioned to do a bust of philosopher Ralph W. Emerson. At one of the sittings, Emerson rose and walked over to where the sculptor was working. He looked long and hard at the bust and then drawled, 'The more it resembles, the worse it looks.'

■ Once the great Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, along with the celebrated photographer, Yusuf Karsh visited Pope John XXIII to have his photograph taken. Pope John said, "God knew from all eternity that I was destined to be Pope. He also knew that I would live for over eighty years. Having all eternity to work on, and also eighty years, wouldn't you think He would have made me better looking?"

Humour a Humanizing Force

Mix humour in whatever you do. By mixing humour and harsh reality in our behavior, we stay serene in our daily lives. Humour is a humanizing force that softens the hard and harsh edges of existence. Have friends in whose

company you feel relaxed. They keep you from going entirely to the dogs. From such friends you learn how to gather what few scraggly daisies you find along life's cindery path way. Humour is the jam on the toast of life. It adds sweetness to our daily life which is usually dull and boring. Humour often makes our life bearable. When we laugh together we bypass reason and logic, as the clown does. We speak a universal language. We feel closer to one another. Oscar Wilde, one of the wittiest men of all times, was acutely aware of the humanizing power of humor: A sense of humour is the pole that adds balance to our steps as we walk the tight rope of life. Laughter is not a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is the best ending for one.

Humour has a humane influence, softening with mirth and laughter, the ragged inequalities of existence, prompting a tolerant view of life, bridging over the space that separates the lofty from the lowly, the rich from the poor, and the great from the humble. One of the distinctive marks of a happy family is the sense of humour the members of a family have. The family that laughs together stays together. When a family is doing well, the members laugh a lot when they are together. And when a relationship turns sour, the very first thing that goes is laughter.

The humanizing power of humour is evident from its ability to ease tense situations. A good chuckle helps ease off pressure from stressful situations

hence perhaps the many jokes around marriage, death, sexual inadequacy and in laws. Here is a classic story about Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, the first Indian Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, who was popularly known as the "Royal Bengal Tiger" for his refusal to kowtow to the British. Sir Asutosh Mukherjee was once asleep in a first class compartment when an Englishman boarded the train at a way side station and occupied the next berth. The Sahib did not like the presence of the rotund "native" and to show his spite, picked up Sir Asutosh's sandals and threw them out of the running train. Sometime later Sir Asutosh woke up and found his sandals missing. Guessing what had happened, he picked up the jacket of the now snoring Sahib and threw it out. Next morning the Sahib asked Sir Asutosh if he had seen his jacket. "Your coat," Sir Asutosh replied, "has gone to fetch my slippers."

A Hearty, Hilarious Laughter the Best Medicine

A person who cannot laugh is like a bud that cannot blossom, which dries up on the stalk. A hearty, hilarious laughter is a tranquilizer nature has given to man. Dr. William Fry of Scotland University has reported that laughter aids digestion, stimulates the heart, strengthens muscles, activates the brain's creative function and keeps you alert. All this with a good guffaw.

Norman Cousins claims to have cured himself of a terminal illness with, among other things, the power of laughter. Good uproarious laughter of the roll - in -the - aisle type, causes all the vital organs to vibrate and jostle, much like what happens to us when we jog. So, if we are too lazy to jog, we can laugh our way to health! Throw out the aspirin and giggle away despair.

Good humor is a tonic for mind and body. It is the best antidote for anxiety and depression. It is a business asset. It attracts and keeps friends. It lightens human burdens. It is the direct route to serenity and contentment. The soldiers of the Second World War could not have endured the squalor of the trenches if it had not been for their fun. In the face of death they drove away fear by laughter.

Laughter induces a lightness of being in all of us. Laughter boosts blood flow to the heart. Watching a comedy has physical effects similar to doing flab - busting aerobics. Laughter is a chicken soup for the body, mind, heart and soul of man. So ask yourself: Have you had a



THE WELFARE ASSOCIATION (Regd.)

Nair Bhavan, 2-5, Royal Tower, Sreenagar, Sector-3, Thane - 400 604.
Tel: 25802695, E-mail: thanenwa@hotmail.com, thanenwa@rediffmail.com

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hearty, hilarious uproarious laugh today?

Richard Tench, the Archbishop of Dublin, in his old age was in constant fear of paralysis. At a dinner party one evening the lady whom he took in to dinner heard him mutter: It's come at last I knew it would I'm paralyzed! Seeing her astonishment he added: "I've been pinching my leg for the last five minutes and I can't feel a thing!" She relieved his mind at once by saying, "It's quite all right, Archbishop it is my leg you have been pinching all this time."

Laughter a Social Corrective

Many pass through life carrying their tongue and temper like a sharp sword. Wherever they go, people dread them. But there are some sweet-tempered, hilarious souls who fill the air with their presence and sweetness, as orchards in October days fill the air with the perfume of ripe, sweet fruits. Or to use a different metaphor, some men move through life as a band of exquisite music moves down the street, flinging out excitement and joy on every side, through the air, to one and all, far and near, to all who can listen, others fill the air with the sound and fury of their harsh noise.

With a good sense of humour you can turn a tense atmosphere into a cheerful one. Humour is contagious and sharing a good laugh binds people better than hours of serious discussion - laughter over a witty remark, some leg pulling or some good hearted teasing. We have all known experiences when a shared laugh has changed what were just a few moments before, a strained, anxious situation, into a warm, joyous, productive one. Laughter destroys evil without malice and affirms healthy fellowship and camaraderie without mawkishness.

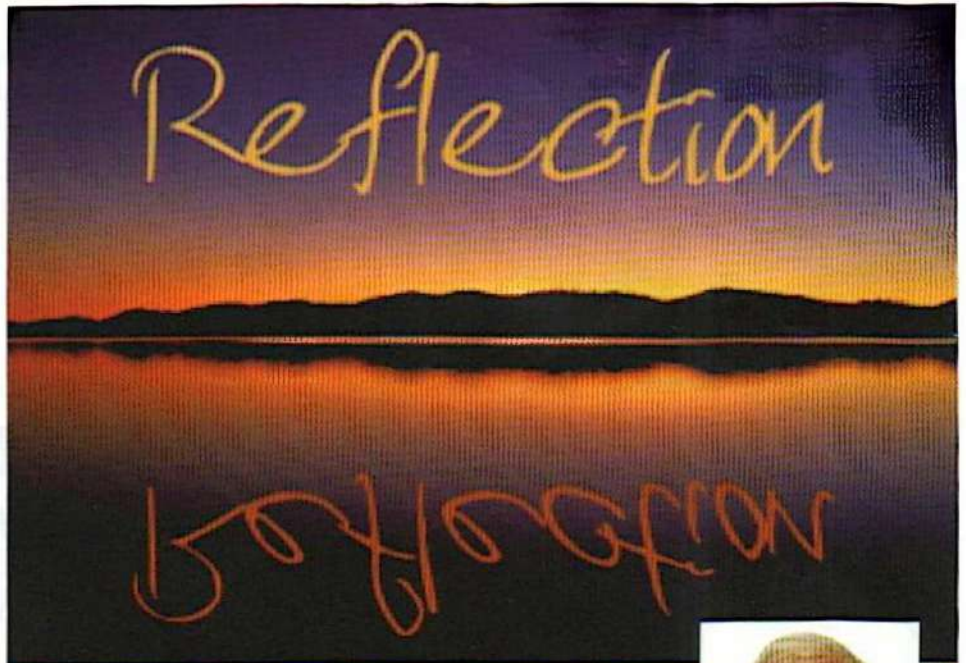
■ Once the distinguished aristocrat, Lord Birkenhead, was addressing a large body of undergraduate students in the University of Cambridge. He was giving one of the most eloquent and devastating speeches ever delivered in that university. At one point when he was in full spate there was a faint interruption from the back of the crowded benches opposite to him. The great man stopped short. The students were all terrified by the ominous silence which followed. "Stand up, Sir," ordered Lord Birkenhead, and at the back of the debating hall a small figure

rose in a tattered gown, looking as if he wished he could sink into the floor. There was another dreadful silence. Then Lord Birkenhead exploded. "Sit down, Sir, the insignificance of your appearance is sufficient answer to the impudence of your interruption". The anxious tension was broken; the whole house roared in delight.

■ Sometimes a social message can be beautifully conveyed through humour. The need for ladies to dress modestly was conveyed by the management of a factory by putting up a sign board inside the premises. Sign in Factory: Girls wearing long skirts beware of machines, and girls with

short skirts beware of machinists.

■ DESMOND TUTU, Bishop of Johannesburg, South Africa, and winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, leads the war against apartheid. His puckish wit and gentle manner captivate audiences worldwide. At an ecumenical service in New York City in November 1984 he demonstrated his deft use of humour. "When the missionaries first came to Africa," he said, "they had the Bible and we had the land. They said, Let us pray. We closed our eyes. When we opened them, the tables had been turned: we had the Bible and they had the land." ■



Dr P V Narayanan Nair

We divide and grasp
Twinkling of a star
Or the genetic code
In our search for truth.
Reduce to parts
By known paradigms
And not abide by holism
Of any apostles of Gaia.
True, the specialist at right
Would doubt the one on left
But stats and maths help out
To patch up the gaps.

On Earth, man's estate
Science gallops forth
Backed by pots of gold

Armed with a double-edged sword
To be winner all around
Of the breath-taking race.

But queries arise
Does he own the Earth to nip.
And forestall the multitudes
Of creatures past and present?
Milking draining the lifeblood
Into a perpetual oven
Of stratospheric depth
Oh! ordained by holy books?!



VINOD MANKARA

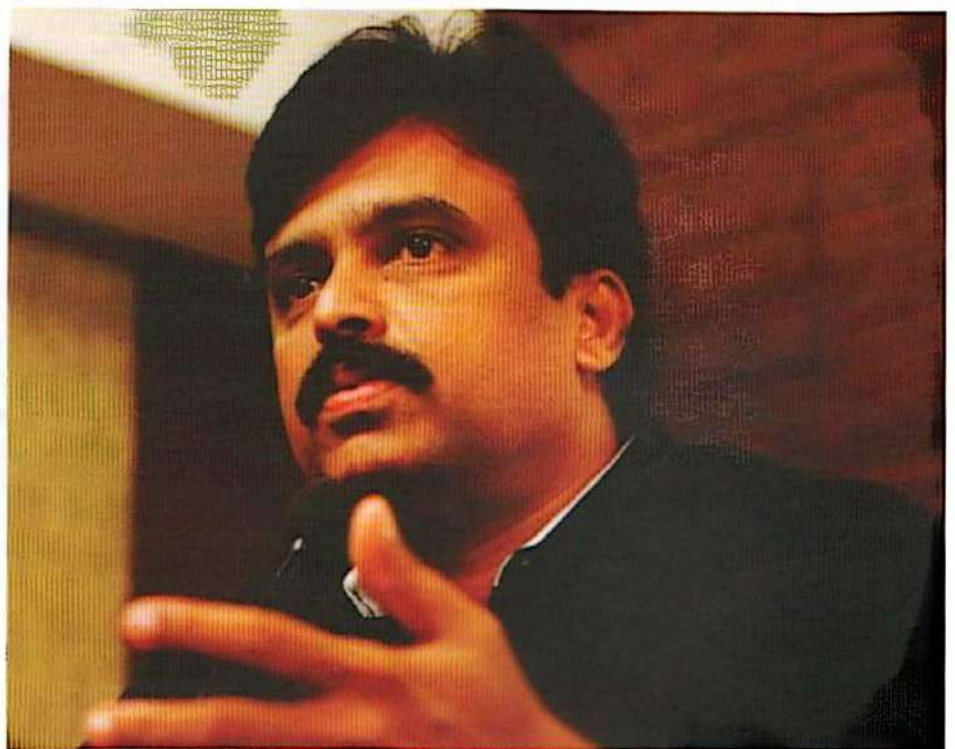
LITERARY SANSKRIT ROMANCE TO CULTURAL LOVE AFFAIR



Sriprakash Menon

Vinod Mankara award winning film maker from Kerala hit headlines after his first Sanskrit movie 'Priyamanasam' bagged the national award and got rave reviews. This is the third movie made in Sanskrit in the country after veteran film maker G V Iyer's earlier two films Adi Sankaracharya and Bhagavad Geeta.

Vinod Mankara has made two feature films earlier and has to his credit 666 documentaries which include works for National Geographic, BBC and Doordarshan. 'Priyamanasam' has bagged several awards and was widely shown in various cities in India especially among Sanskrit loving audience. He is currently busy with his latest Malayalam movie 'Kamboji'. Mankara talks about his works and



challenges of making films on classical subjects and in Sanskrit.

"As you know, Nacharitham is one of the best love stories written in Malayalam. The story has reached across the world through Kathakali performances. Nalacharitham has become very famous but nobody knows the real struggle of its noted author Unnayi Warriar. We have not hyped the author in fact we want to pay a tribute and remember his monumental work in Malayalam. That's how 'Priyamanasam' was born.

Mankara said "my approach to this film is more biographical in nature than recreating his Kathakali story. While writing this story, Unnayi have made this film as a biography of Unnayiwarriar than a Kathakali story of Unnayi Warriar. While writing Nalacharitham, Warriar went through terrible stress and challenges and that's the highpoint of 'Priyamanasam'. The film was very well appreciated by the audience and the critics".

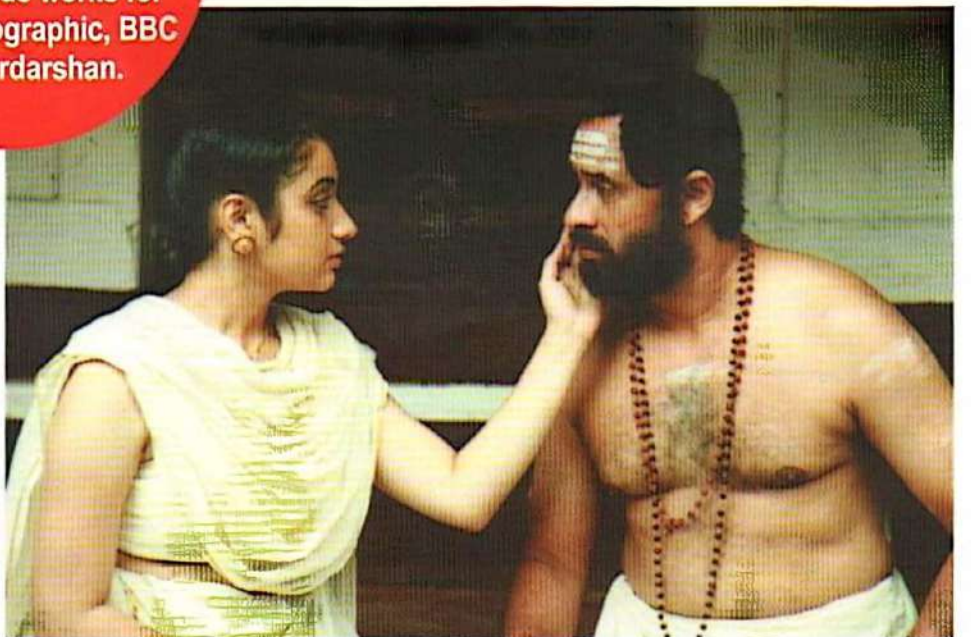
'Priyamanasam' was shown across the country to select audience, he recounted and said "the response was tremendous. People felt both Kathakali and Sanskrit are scary but my film has proved both language and classical art if blended in a popular format can reach out to the people. Even in areas where Sanskrit and Kathakali was not popular, the film evoked good reactions. While making 'Priyamanasam', I knew it was going to be an experimental venture."

'Priyamanasam' was the inaugural film at Indian Panorama section of International Film Festival of India (IFFI), last year in Goa, he recalled citing "the film was discussed and appreciated by both Indian and international delegates. Interestingly, 'Priyamanasam' evoked great interest with the delegates from Italy, France, Japan and U A E. Even media in Pakistan carried special feature on the film. The film was produced by Baby Mathew Somatheeram under the banner of Soma Creations. Music being one of the high point was done by Sreevalsan Menon and background score by Pandit Ram Narayan.

Making a film in Sanskrit, Mankara observed "is quite challenging, the diction of actors and dialogues need to



Vinod Mankara has made two feature films earlier and has to his credit 666 documentaries which include works for National Geographic, BBC and Doordarshan.



be simplified as well so as to reach to maximum people. So I have not used very high literature of Sanskrit and kept it in a communicative dialect which have a Malayalam touch as the author of the original story also had a Kerala backdrop. My objective was to tell people that Sanskrit like any other Indian language was not complex. In fact very few know that in our country, there are seven villages where people converse in Sanskrit every day."

"My latest movie 'Kamboji' is about music and dance. Produced by Mumbai based Prof. Lakshmi Padmanabhan. The story is based on a real life incident of the sixties in Killikurisimangalam village in Palakkad district where a Kathakali artist and a Mohiniattam artist fall in love. The story weaves interesting facets of art, culture and the social fabric of the 50's and the 60's. What begins as a romance ends up in a dramatic milestone," he explained.

'Kamboji' wades through a turbulent romance and he said "what makes it unique is its rich performing art in the form of Kathakali and its music is provided by noted M Jayachandran with soulful renderings by Yesudas, Chitra, Sreevalsan Menon

and Bombay Jayashree with her mellifluous number. Highpoint of melody is also Kottakkal Madhu's Kathakali padham in (Kamboji raagam) which is said to be the ultimate romantic verse in Kathakali which takes music and love to another level".

"I am particularly grateful and lucky to get ONV Kurup to pen the lyrics for me when he was in the hospital. He wrote my songs five days before his death. ONV was a good friend of mine and we had known each other for over 20 years. His dedication for music and cinema can be sensed in his works. You will realise that Kamboji has also made Kathakali more accessible to a wider audience", observed Mankara.

Vineeth though a dancer, he pointed out "got himself trained in Kathakali while Lakshmi Gopalswamy learned Mohiniattam. Both have given a



Vinod Mankara with ONV and M Jayachandran

professional dancer touch and have perfected the art forms for my film. The other cast include Shivaji Guruvayur, Harish, Rachana Narayanan Kutty and Sona Nair. By a strange coincidence six national award winners are associated with me in this film".

Mankara is of the firm opinion that "films should relate to our heritage and culture especially our classical arts and music. The whole world is craving to know and learn about it but we are finding difficult to showcase it or market it. Our traditional literature and art have immense possibilities to explore its richness and diversities".

"The challenge for Indian movie makers is to draw the audience to the cinema halls and through the digital medium towards serious and culturally sensitive subject. With wider distribution platforms, classical subjects are surely viable. It's unfortunate that in India, it took 22 years to make a film in Sanskrit after the first two movies", he quipped.

Mankara soon after releasing Khamboji in November is all set to make two Malayalam movies besides another one in Sanskrit. "It is a misconception that only films in Sanskrit can be mythology or historicals. My next Sanskrit film will tackle a subject in NASA kind of centre. It will be the first science fiction in Sanskrit and am sure it will interest viewers globally", he revealed. Among his future plans are to visit several European and Far East countries to show 'Priyamanasam'. Fifteen universities in Germany alone has invited him with his Sanskrit movie. Surely, 'Priyamanasam' has put Vinod Mankara in an exclusive global league. ■

KPOEM

MY GRANDPA

Foot steps trickled anxiously
across the space-free hallways
Where my snoring lethargic grandpa lays.
Cautiously I tip toed towards my final finish point
Divided between me and the bedroom point
Chuckling with fear and excitement
I lit the glinting gleam in my eyes, and stated,
"Look at that cushioned luxurious blanket
curled in comfort," I also related
Crouching unseen I leapt with curiosity
touching the cemented clotted tiles
A sudden movement tilted my heart with fright
as a pair of frustrated eyes flinched from miles.
Of course it was him, my well built strategy was an epic fail.
Crowded with anger I let a wide wail.
I tickled his toes, meddled his mustache,
crumpled his cheeks and eyed his eyes.
He waited for my apology with a faint frown I could not recognize.



Divya Panicker
(12 Years)

DEEPAWALI

THE PROSPERITY FESTIVAL



■ This festival of lights is by far the most popular festival that is celebrated across the length and breadth of India. It

symbolizes the victory of righteousness and the lifting of spiritual darkness. Diwali means rows of clay lamps, also called *diyas*. This festival commemorates Lord Rama's return to his kingdom Ayodhya after completing his 14-year exile. It is symbolic of the triumph of good over evil.

While the mythological aspect may have been lost over the years, it is the most colourful of all Indian festivals. Colourful lights, fancy coloured crackers, colourful clothes and overall gaiety marks the festival. Streets and homes are lit up days in advance, shops are lined with goods, be it clothes or sweets and you can generally feel the festive flavour in the air.

Deepawali is also a celebration of wealth and prosperity and goddess Laxmi (consort of Vishnu) being the symbol of wealth and prosperity, is worshipped on this day. In some parts of the country it's a 5 day

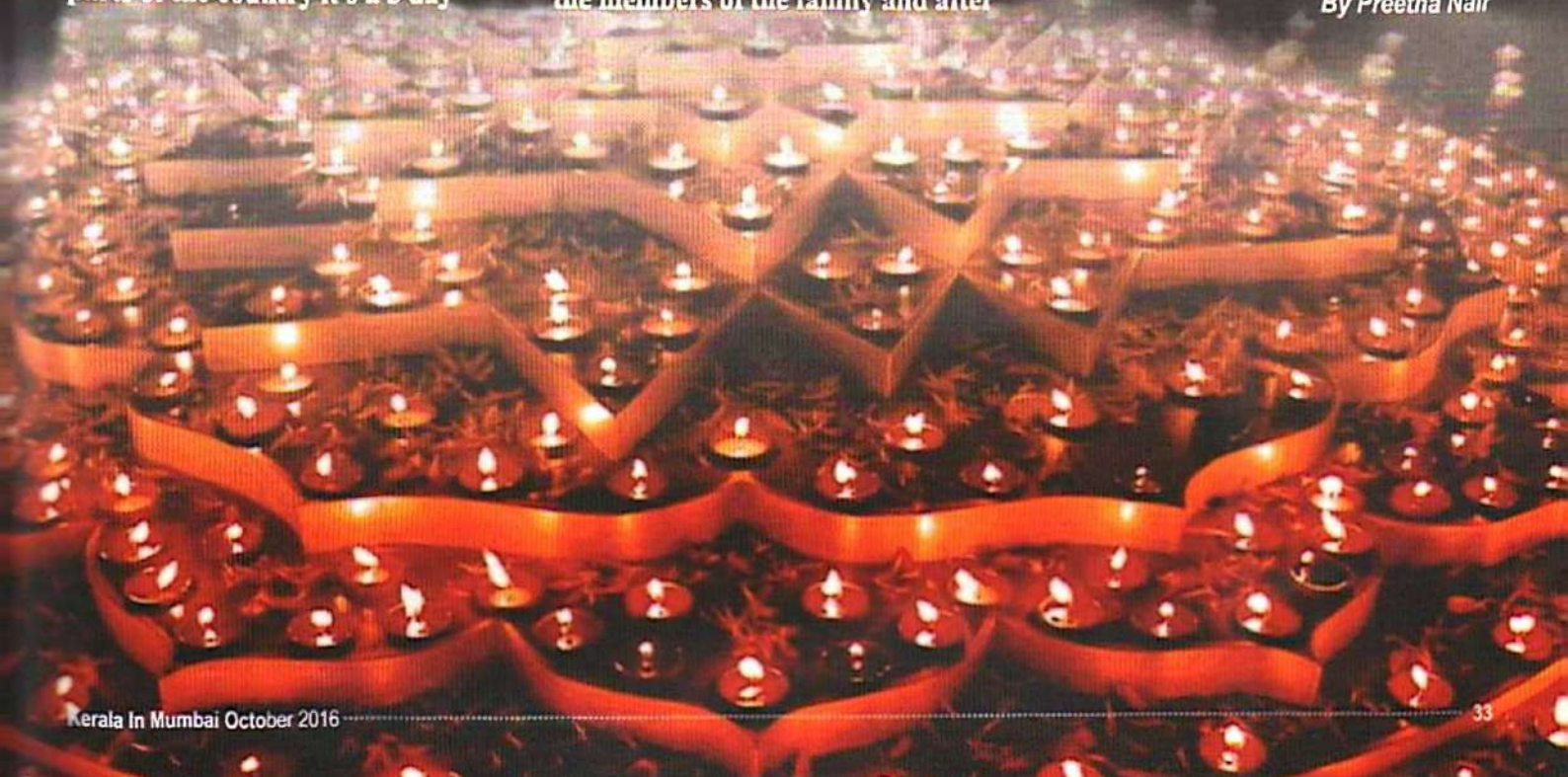
festival, each day having its own religious significance. It is an occasion for bonding and celebrating with family and friends. It is vacation time across the country. Schools, offices and businesses shut down from a couple of days to a week.

Southern India however, celebrates Deepawali (as against Diwali) in its own unique way. But the day is as auspicious as the rest of the country. In some parts it is to commemorate the conquering of Narakasura by Lord Krishna who subdues him and frees all prisoners. On the Naraka Chauthurdasi Thithi (day), the home oven is cleaned, washed and lime is applied, kumkum sprinkled, and is filled with water for the next day's oil bath. The house is washed and decorated with rangoli. Preparations are made for the next day pooja. Betel leaves, betel nuts, bananas, flowers, sandal paste, kumkum, gingelly oil, turmeric powder, scented powder are kept. Crackers and new dresses are placed in a plate after smearing a little kumkum or sandal paste. After an early morning oil bath by the members of the family and after

donning of new clothes, crackers are burst to symbolise the killing of the demon king Narakasur.

Elsewhere in Karnataka, legend has it that Lord Vishnu come down to earth in the form of a short Brahmin (Vamana Avatar), and presenting himself before the mighty Bali who had become all-powerful and a threat to the peace of the universe. He asked for some land to cover three of his footsteps. Since no king could refuse a Brahmin's appeal for charity, Bali readily granted what seemed to be a silly request. With the first two steps he covered heaven and earth. Bali realised his own delusion when he had to bow down and offered his own head to the Brahmin to place the third step. This victory is celebrated and observed on the day of the new moon (Amavasya). Diwali is celebrated by the lighting of lamps in every courtyard and the bursting of crackers. Sweets, new clothes and festive spirit rent the air as in other festivals. Crackers are a highlight of the festival and the hours of darkness either early morning or late night are best for witnessing their illuminating effect. ■

By Preetha Nair





AATHIRA GIRIDHARAN DANCING ON A PATH TO FAME

Choosing a career is not one decision as there are innumerable professions around us like doctor, engineers, teachers, accountants, lawyers, etc. Most of them just enjoy the journey.

Artistic Background

Aathira Giridharan, a devotee of Kathak who fell in love with this beautiful dance form back in her teens. Life tested her devotion, forcing her to wait for a few long years to embrace this enchanting art.

Aathira Giridharan was born on 3rd September, 1989 in Ollur, a town in Trichur district of Kerala. She grew up and completed her matriculation and intermediate in Kerala. After completing her 12th, she realized her love for Kathak and started learning it in Delhi in 2007.

From a young age she was a passionate and aspired to a career in dance. At the age of six, she learned

Bharatnatyam, Carnatic music for 2 years. She had a love for all art forms. Her parents were supportive of the decision but encouraged her to complete her education first so she attended



Dance in India has deep roots, evident in the sculpted figures on temple walls, verses in scriptures, and most importantly, the vitality of the genre in India today. It encompasses all art forms - poetry, music, drama, visual arts and movement. The Classical Dance shines as one of the oldest art forms and the most vibrant elements of culture in India. There are eight classical dance forms in India: Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri, Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi,

Sattriya, Kathakali and Mohini Attam.

Out of the eight classical dances recognized by the Sangeet Natak Academy; Kathak is the classical dance form that prevails in the North of India. The word Kathak is derived from katha meaning "storytelling". Let's take a closer look at one of our upcoming Kathak dancer "Aathira Giridharan".



choreographed by Guru Rajendra Gangani.

■ Performed at IIT Mumbai for a workshop conducted by Electron Microscope Society of India(2015)

■ Performed solo at Ahaana's (a cultural organisation) annual function(2015)

■ Performed solo at different temples in Kerala.

■ Performed solo at Vadakkunnatha temple Kerala for Shivaratri festival (2016)

She met the love of her life and got married to Sajith Shekharankutty on 15th Nov, 2015, who works as an Asst. Manager in Grant Hyaat at Santacruz. After her marriage she settled down in Mumbai. Aathira says that support of her husband and her in-laws has made her realize how crucial encouragement and support is to achieve one's goal.

She now took upon herself to spread the art across the world not just as a dancer but also as a choreographer for NCPA project. She is also taking classes majorly in Kathak for Kharghar Malayalee Samajam.

Her objective is to not only spread the knowledge she holds, but to spread the beauty of Indian culture through Kathak all over the world. But her main aim is to promote India's classical dance form "Kathak" through her dance recitals in India especially in Kerala (hometown) where her dream is to start a school and bring pure art form of Kathak giving an artistic flavor.

When asked about the

Success mantra to her, she said "Hard work and dedication always win out in the end. If you believe in yourself, never give up, and work until you see your dream become a reality. Go out into the world and make your own creative opportunities. You have the power to create your own career." ■



"Lady Shriya College" to pursue a bachelor degree in History.

After graduation, with the blessings of the Supreme Soul, her penance ended in 2010 as she was initiated to the art/basic training of Kathak dance from Mrs. Diksha Upreti, disciple of Guru Munna Shukla Ji. Later she received the professional training under the direct supervision of famous Kathak exponent Guru Pt. Jaikishan Maharaj, in Kathak Kendra, New Delhi.

With her hard work and love for Kathak within a short time, she became one of the best students in Kendra. She was a Sangeet Natak Academy's scholarship holder for four years in Kathak Kendra. Having completed 3 years Diploma Hons. Course and 2 years Post Diploma Course, from Kathak Kendra; she completed her training in May 2015, under the guidance and blessings of Pt. Jaikishan

Maharaj.

Every fibre of her body lives and breathes dance.

Performances

■ Performed in different choreographies of Guru Pt. Jaikishan Maharaj in Delhi and Dehradun as under:

■ Performed with Kathak Kendra's repertory in Delhi, Patna, Buxar, and Udaipur.

■ Performed in Vasantotsav Delhi (2014 & 2015)

■ Performed in Kathak Mahotsav Delhi (2014&2015)

■ Performed in Monsoon Festival Kerala (2014)

■ Performed in at Jaipur (2013),



MEENA SANTHOSH DANCE ALLOWS YOUR DREAMS TO SPEAK

the admiration of laymen and connoisseurs alike.

Dancing is her life and soul, her chosen profession. Meena's grit, determination along with her hard work marks her performances.

With precise Nritha and polished Nrithya, she is refining her abhinaya from Guru. Sudip Kumar Ghosh. After joining the workshop of guru SUDIP KUMAR GHOSH she felt a vibration with another dance form "Manipuri" and decided to learn and bring in more audiences for this form.

If Bharata Natyam is her passion, Manipuri is her expedition.

She is dedicated to her Guru and finds inspirations in them after attending all of his workshops. She has imbibed her Guru's distinctive style.

She has performed many shows in and around Mumbai and has performed

her first solo in Nrithyabharati travelling dance festival. The one and only travelling dance festival on 20th August 2016 at Ravindra Natya Mandir, Dadar, Mumbai.

She is now a versatile dancer with intricate knowledge of Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniattam, Manipuri and other traditional folk dances.

Her efforts are in the direction of understanding the graceful dance form of Manipuri and its practice. Her

intelligence, inspiration, dedication and determination, has won her several laurels not only in her home country but has also opened up opportunities abroad. Filled with Sparkling energy Meena Santosh makes Bharatha Natyam & Manipuri both a pleasure to watch and bring it to huge audiences in Mumbai. ■



Guru Sudip Kumar Ghosh

A distinctive approach that carries forward tradition without diluting its intrinsic values has won great acclaim for Bharatanatyam artist Meena Santosh just not in Indian but in global cultural context as well.

Bharatanatyam comes from the words Bhava (expression), Raga (music) and Natya (classic Indian Theatre).

Meena Santosh started learning dance at a very younger age and she has performed at various stages in India and abroad. She was initiated into the art of Bharatha Natyam under the tutelage of Guru Dr. Chitra Vishwanathan.

She has completed her Visharad and is currently pursuing her Masters. She is now an integral part of Abhinayaa Institute of Research and Fine Arts as a senior dancer and teacher.

Being a firm believer in maintaining

the integrity of tradition, she loves to explore her creativity without compromising on the classicism of the dance form.

She performed more than 50+ shows for foreign delegates. As a part of the Arpana troupe, she has performed in innumerable shows which have garnered a lot of attention and praise from all quarters.

Her unique dance style is a sincere result of her undying passion, self-motivation and dedication towards dance. Her immaculate and graceful movements and her subtle yet communicative expressions have won



SWETHA WARRIER A PROMISING DANCER

Swetha Warriar, a dancer who has captured many hearts, has been learning Classical dance under the tutelage of her mother Ambika Warasiar since the age of 3. Swetha has won more than 30 national level awards and prizes in classical and folk dance. A few of these awards are even recognised by UNESCO's International Dance Council. Swetha Warriar is a dancer who has performed on more than 2500 stages and earned more than 25 national level awards. She was featured in the Wild Card entry of Bharat Ki Shaan and Let's Dance on DD1. She was also in the Top Ten of D 4 Dance Season 2, a dance reality show on Malayalam channel, Mazhavil Manorama. She also had the opportunity to dance with Bollywood stars like Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, Salman Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Sushmita Sen and Karina Kapoor in different films and shows.

Wishing you all a
Happy Diwali

Sabu Daniel
Chairman,
Navi Mumbai Municipal Transport
(NMMT)

ODIYANIC AND THERIANTHROPIC THOUGHTS

(God's own country has a rich folklore and one of the fascinating phenomena is the myth of Odiyan. Is the God of small things an Odiyan? Although a theoretically impossible construct, it had unique place in cultural anthropology of Kerala signifying an expression of perceived power over the oppressors in the nocturnal space. Velutha displays characteristic traits fitting into the framework of an odiyan.)



Dr A P Jayarman

■ SoBo Dog

I was on an evening stroll in a Sobo garden. There were not many people around. It was twilight time. In the continuum of grey shade between bright white and dark black, irrational thoughts lurking in childhood memory creep in. It was then that I saw a dog crossing my path briskly but I avoided an eye contact with it lest I should get into trouble. I have a full sized standard old fashioned dual use umbrella with the functionality of a sturdy walking stick. The tubular strong shaft with its butt end was a source of strength to me in potential encounters with hostile canines. My readings in sociobiology embolden me with the conjecture that the fight mode of a dog can be deflected into flight mode by an appropriate apparatus. The rapid action force of spring loaded dual umbrella is a source of self-satisfying strength to me.

Be that as it may. I encountered the dog in my second round. It again looked at me. So did I this time. Then I discovered to my utter dismay that it was a three legged creature. Front right leg is missing. Yet it runs with remarkable agility as if it is all on its fours. It stood still. I too stood in front of it motionless. Was it a dog? Or a nondog? Acyanthrope? My old fanciful memories of mythical Odiyan were set free.

A scientific mind can blissfully immerse in flights of fancy following thought experiments. I thought of the Maxwellian demon with the attribute of identifying otherwise indistinguishable atoms. Schroedinger's cat is dead and alive at the same time. Light is simultaneously particle and wave.

All improbable things are possible in the realm of mythology. There are words for those weird imaginary things. Therianthropy is the word for the presumed ability of humans to metamorphose into other animals by means of shape shifting or *Odividya*. This cross-species transmutation is purely a figment of fertile imagination and has no known or knowable biological basis. Darwinian evolution from lower species to higher ones by natural selection is axiomatic in evolutionary biology that brought the atom to Adam. Spontaneous reversible backward evolution does not fit into the paradigm of mainstream biology thoughts.

Therianthropes are of numerous kinds depending on the form humans are alleged to assume. Transformation into a dog goes by the name cyanthrope.

Foreign and Nadan Odiyans

Amazing Odiyans are described in old Native American legends with the ability to turn into any animal of their choice and fancy. Unlike Valluvanadan Odiyans, they could transform even into wild beasts such as tigers. They have to wear the pelt of the animal of their selection and lo and behold, they become that! The people of Banana area of Congo are said to change themselves by use of magic potions composed of human embryos and other ingredients. Descriptions of transmigration into inanimate objects like rock are also found. *Kadambaya Odiyanis* wicked and will appear as a bamboo wicket gate on constricted *edavazhi* making an inescapable physical encounter.

Back home Odiyans of my childhood hearsay are colorfully etched in my memory. I had a full exposure to

the vocabulary of odiyan in Chalavara where I had gone on a school vacation. This episode of *erie dog sounds* enabled me to explore the enchanted domain of Odiyan which is shrouded in mystery and occluded by occultism. With dogged determination and willing suspension of disbelief I listened to Kuttykrishnan uncle. Uncle was a deemed authority on occultism and was revered and feared for his superhuman powers of witchcraft. He gave a vivid interpretation of barking, baying, howling, yelping and whining sounds of a true dog and the pseudo dog of *Odiyan* in a coherent framework of apparent credibility. He did not fail to add his competence in and high powers of frustrating *Odiyans* and bringing them before him in cringing submission. Occultists claim their specialty powers of possessing the knowhow of antidotes to neutralize *odiyan* effect. The short simple prescription is a smart slap on the left ear or pouring water and dissolving the herbal mix. Deactivated the sorcerer stands stark naked like the proverbial emperor. The protective umbrella under which I was spending my week long vacation emboldened me against dark matters.

Nigerian Story

Odiyan does not kill for sport. He kills for handsome money as mercenary. They are contract killers engaged by people of higher social strata to settle scores in social transaction and to establish hegemony. Is the *Odividya* a smoke screen to get out of the long hand of law? An FIR cannot be filed against a therianthrope. There was one curious case reported in 2009 by police in Nigeria. A man appeared as a goat "on suspicion of attempted armed robbery, according to a Reuters report. The goat was taken to the police by people who

said it was really a human "armed robber who had used black magic to transform himself into a goat to escape arrest after trying to steal a Mazda 323. This therianthrope trick did not work. The robber in goat's clothing was promptly brought to book.

The Odiyans are variously described as deriving magical power by herbal formulations in solid or oily form. Those of Kavalappara locality are said to keep it behind their left earlobe. Why this leftism I have not explored. The components are believed to be bizarre and are said to include human fetus. Shelf life of the magical potion is very short and has to be concocted on demand. A less radical version posits that the person does not shapeshift but appears so to the observer creating hallucination.

The knowhow is the exclusive prerogative of the lower stratum of society like *Chaklians*, *Panans* and *Parayans*. No transfer of knowhow higher up is known but antidotes are known to them. No where do we come across a female odiyan or *odiyathi*.

Parayans are more credited with Odi cult. It was thought of as a brotherhood with members having apprentices and disciples. Legend has it that the novice being initiated into the witchcraft follows his master at midnight into a secluded place. He is inducted to the worship of Kalladikode Neeli.

Thurston Narration

Edgar Thurston in his book *Omens and Superstitions of Southern India* provides a graphic account of the preparation of an Odiyan. He describes the arrest of several people from Malabar for having gone with a Parayan to the house of a pregnant woman. The woman was beaten with a view to extracting her fetus. PillaThailam is the stuff of odividya and is made from aborted fetus of first pregnancy.

Thurston quotes extensively from Anantha Krishna Iyer and Govindan Nambiar to describe Odiyanic practice. The process begins like this. An eligible odiyan dresses in unwashed cloth and perform Pooja to his diety. Then he goes in quest of a *kotuvveli* plant

(*Plumbagozeylanica*). Thrice a day he does clockwise *pradikshanam* around the chosen plant and prostrates before it and propitiates his deity for ninety full days. On the last night, which must be a new moon night, at midnight, he performs puja to the plant, burning camphor and frank incense. He then thrusts three small candles on it, and advances twenty paces in front of it. With his mouth closed, he plucks the root and buries it in the ashes on the cremation ground, after which he pours the water of seven green coconuts on it.



He then goes round it twenty-one times, uttering certain cryptic *mantras*. He plunges himself in water, and stands erect until it extends to his mouth. He takes a mouthful of water which he empties on the spot, and takes the plant with the root which he believes has the irresistible power to attract a pregnant woman surmounting all impediments. Then the abominable feticide and processes of ebullition, distillation and filtration are described as if it is a handbook of knowhow. No nonsense has been described in such gory details. The Odiyan must be in penance for twenty-one days and live on a frugal diet of *chama kanji*.

The God of Small things

The best seller English novel, *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy uses the centrifugal force of this myth. *Velutha becomes the god of small things. He is the archetypal Parayan and appears to practice this evil art on Sophie Mol. She meets with her watery grave in the river Meenachil. If we read*

between the lines, there is an arguable case for hypothesizing that Sophie mol died due to Odiyan Vidya of Velutha. Imagination within imagination. The vanished myth and cultural canons and forms appear later in the form of art. In the case of Paraya community's *Odimarichil*, their present day Odiyan thullal, dance of Odiyan, is an artistic form of their culture and myth. One of the striking structures in the novel is the presentation of Velutha's characterization.

Roy asserts that the story is

Velutha's. He is "The God of Loss," who leaves no footprints in sand, no ripples in water, no image in mirrors." He is the bastion of the world of sacred, "untouchable" secrets, whispers, and overlooked pieces of reality. He held his mundu spread above his head to dry. The wind lifted it like a sail. He was walking swiftly now, towards the heart of Darkness as lonely as a wolf. Naked but his nail varnish. It reflects that Velutha's "naked body" with "varnished nails" and "lonely wolf like form" structures along with the "tentative" and "frightened" condition of Sophie Mol. All these fit snugly into the hypothesis of an Odiyan in Dracula format. That is for students of literature to delve deep.

Pleasantly wandering through the wild and meandering by lanes of those antic ethnic beliefs I returned to reality and resumed my stroll. I once again encountered the dog. It barked, bayed and howled. It was eating dog biscuits supplied by the gardener. Leaving my cyanthrope thoughts I walked away. ■

HAJI ALI DARGAH

VERDICT A BIG VICTORY FOR WOMEN



P.R. Krishnan

■ The landmark judgment delivered by the Bombay High Court in the Haji Ali Dargah case on August 26, 2016, is a milestone in the history of struggles conducted by womenfolk, not only of Muslim community, but, women of all communities for equality in India. By this judgment, the High Court has struck down the controversial ban on entry of women to the sanctum sanctorum of the Haji Ali Dargah. This is one of the popular Sufi Shrines of Muslims in western India. The judgment directed the Dargah Trust management that women be allowed entry into the sanctum sanctorum. This Dargah complex houses the tomb of Muslim saint Pir Haji Ali Shah Bukhari and a mosque. This monument in Mumbai is of the 15th century saint Haji Ali Shah's mausoleum. Amongst the Muslims, this is a famous shrine. It sits on a set of high rising rocks approximately 500 yards off the coast of Worli Mahalakshmi Road. Nearly 30,000 to 40,000 people are said to visit the shrine every day. They include people of all religions. The number goes up to 50,000 to 60,000 on Thursdays and Fridays. Amongst the visitors are a large number of women. Till about March 2012, women were allowed entry to the sanctum sanctorum or the Pir's Tomb. But ban came to be imposed and became operative since April 2012. Even then, women are allowed to come till a particular point which is away from the Tomb. Women can see the tomb and offer prayers only from that distant place. What the petitioners wanted from the High Court was equal right for women to go to the sanctum sanctorum like men and pray without any segregation.

The orthodox and people of feudal mindset in all communities have always opposed equality to women in social life and right to worship like men. Their stance in the present case was not different. In justification of the ban, the

Haji Ali Dargah Trust took shelter of article 25 and 26 of the constitution and asserted that judiciary cannot interfere and restrict freedom enjoyed by religious bodies. Here, article 25 relates to freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion. While article 26 deals with freedom to manage religious affairs. But as far back as in the year 1978, the Supreme Court in Maneka Gandhi case had decreed that all issues and questions relating to civil rights and gender justice have to be cumulatively considered and cannot be treated in isolation of articles 14 and 15. This is what exactly the High Court in the Haji Ali Dargah case has done. Article 14 says that "the State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India" and article 15 makes it clear that "the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds any of religion, race, sex, place of birth or any of them"

The verdict passed by the division bench comprised of Justice Vidyasagar Kanade and Justice Revati Mohite Dere. The bench in its judgment observed that the ban on entry of women into the sanctum sanctorum amounts to contravention of article 14 of the constitution which guarantees right to equality for all citizens. Women being citizens are not excluded from the purview of this article. The division bench further observed that the ban, if allowed to continue, will amount to negation of article 15 of the constitution mandated against prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion as well as article 25 which guarantees freedom to religion. Freedom to religion includes freedom to worship like men in the society. These articles embodied in the constitution are for protection of citizens who are victims of misuse and denial of equality guaranteed against perpetuation of discrimination and right to worship.

Surprisingly, unlike in many other Dargahs of the Muslim community in the country, there was no prohibition till about March 2012 for women's entry to

the sanctum sanctorum of Haji Ali Dargah in Mumbai. The trust which imposed the ban has no female member and comprises of powerful Kazies and Mullahs of the Muslim community. Not only this, but, no opinions from women community were sought before stopping the long standing practice of allowing women's entry. It was thus an arbitrary and anti women measure. The petitioners contended that the ban amounts to blatant discrimination on the grounds of gender equality. Hence the restriction is in contravention of articles 14, 15 and 25 of the constitution. The ban is therefore impermissible in law, stressed the petitioners. The verdict came in the public interest petition filed by civil rights activists Noor Jehan Nias and Zakia Soman of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan. They were represented by Advocate Raju Muray in the case.

The grounds further cited by the Dargah Trust for perpetuation of the ban were that the entry of women near around the grave of a male Muslim Saint is a grievous sin as per Islamic principles. Not only is this but menstruation period of women is an unclean period. Therefore the ban is justified. The further contention of the management was that the prohibition is in the interest of safety and security of women and therefore the court should not interfere in the affairs of the Trust which is a religious body. In so far as the contention that there was no ban till about March 2012, the Dargah Trust took the position that it was not aware of the provisions of Shariat earlier. Though late, they realized it now. It is in the light of this realization that they took the decision to segregate women. The restriction came to be enforced to save them from teasing and groping. They further contended that this decision was right and quoted even Supreme Court judgments in their defence. Having come to know the Shariat provisions, the Trust has taken corrective steps to fall in line with and follow the Islamic law. For that they said they have fundamental rights. In defence of these arguments the Trust cited article 26 of the constitution. They

stressed that separation of women was necessary to prevent them from sexual harassment. The Trust was represented by Advocate Shoaib Memon. He defended the ban by strongly stating that entry of women in close proximity to the Tomb of a male Saint was a sin under Islam and that menstruating women are considered unclean. He cited Quranic verses, sayings of prophet Mohamed and Hadiths in support of continuation of segregation. As against the above arguments and contentions of the Trust, the Maharashtra state government took the position that the religious affairs of the Trust should be in conformity with articles 14 and 15 of the constitution and should not be contrary to the mandatory provisions of those articles. These articles are of vital importance because they bestow equality to all citizens and guarantee protection from discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, cast, sex or place of berth. To reinforce these

directed that the state and the trust should ensure safety of all devotees without any discrimination, be it men or women. The judgment brought to light the fact that the islet off Worli on which the Dargah is situated was leased by the government to the trust by a deed on November 28, 1931. Its occupation is subject to conditions prescribed in the deed. According to those conditions, even trustees are to be appointed with the approval of state's advocate general. The state's control on the trust management originates from the fact that it is a public charitable trust.

Coming back again to Muslim religion, historically Islam does not seem to have resorted to and encouraged segregation of women from prayers. Media reports, surfaced immediately after the High Court verdict in Haji Ali Dargah matter, showed that women enjoyed rights on par with men at sacred spaces in the early phase of Islam. But

offered prayers in sanctum sanctorum following a similar verdict by Bombay High Court in April in this year. The entry of women to sanctum sanctorum of Shani Shingnapur temple was followed up by another event in Trumbakeswar temple at Nashik. In this famous Shiva Temple is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas. Here too, women's entry was in prohibition. But following Shani Shingnapur event, two civil rights groups got entry to Trumbakeswar temple. In that, one group was Bhumata Brigade led by Trupti Desai and the other one Swarajya Mahila Sanghata came to be led by Vanita Gutte. They made entry and offered prayers in the sanctum sanctorum on April 20, 2016. Media gave wide coverage to both these events.

This judgment is a big boost for the women's movement struggling for civil rights and equal status in the society. However the High Court has stayed the verdict for six weeks to enable the Trust to appeal in the Supreme Court against its judgment. Even though it is quite unlikely that the Supreme Court would grant a stay, this becomes clear because, the Apex Court itself has observed in the pending Sabarimala case in last April that Indian temples cannot bar women. That decade old case is still pending for final hearing and judgment. The demand in the Sabarimala case is for removal of restriction on the entry of women between ages 10 to 50. Looked from the facts and circumstances revealed in the Haji Ali Dargah judgment, the verdict that we are awaiting from the Sabarimala case cannot and will not be different one from what has been decreed in the present case. And that will put an end to manmade restrictions on the entry of women to holy places of worships. However a point needs mention here. In this temple case, the previous UDF government had taken a stand of protecting the traditional ban on women. It was expected that the LDF government which came to power will reverse this stand. The left, democratic, secular and progressive people including a vast majority of women from all communities had raised their voice against the ban in Sabarimala temple. But surprisingly when the matter came up recently in the Supreme Court, the LDF government took the same stance as that of UDF government. Nevertheless I am quite sure and confident that the Apex Court will come to the rescue of women and abolish the ban. Regardless of this fact, the present judgment in the Haji Ali case is a big victory for and a strong weapon in the hands of women engaged in the struggle for equality in society. ■

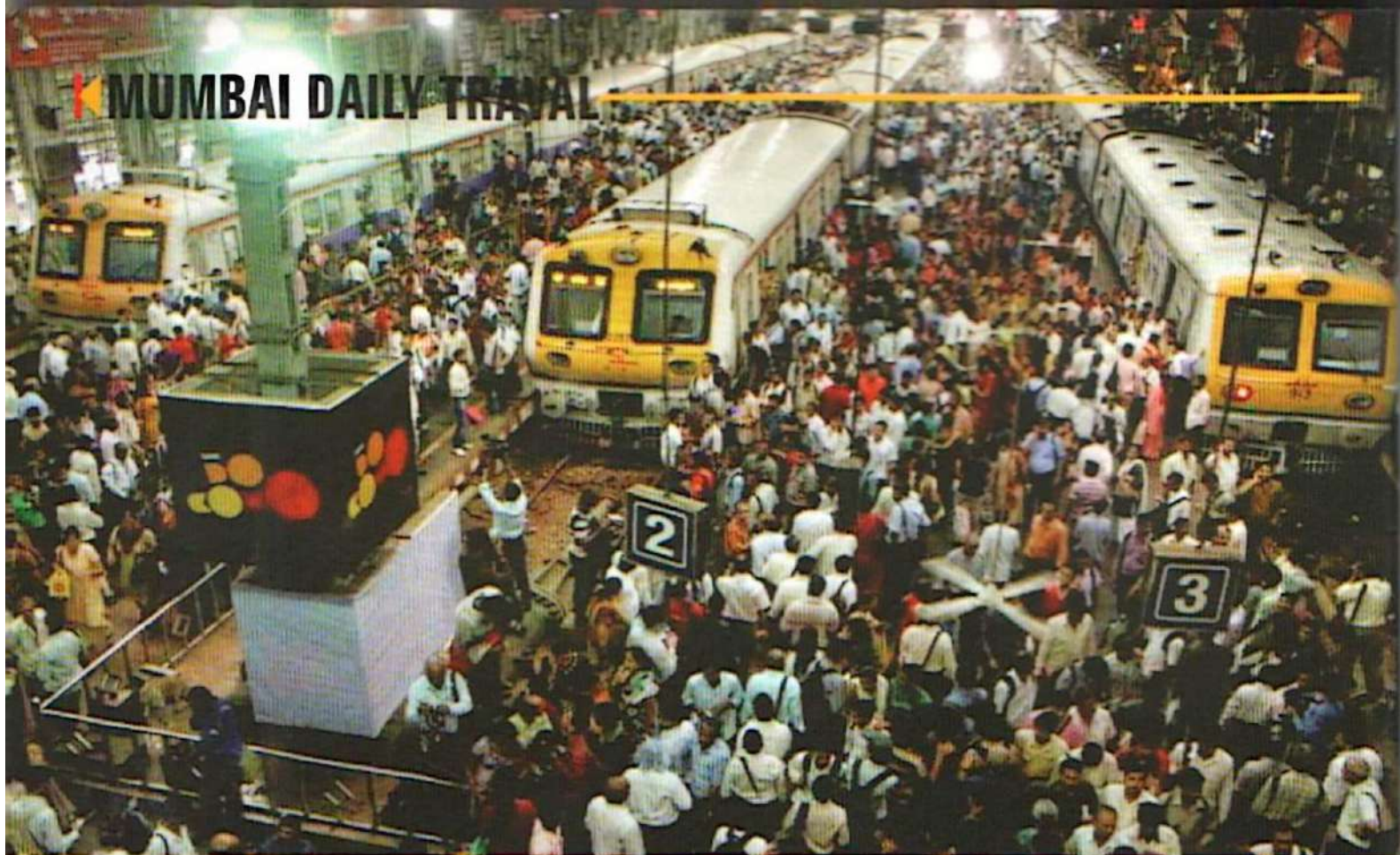


contentions the former advocate general of the state Shreehari Aney who appeared for the government cited the example of Taj Mahal which is a mausoleum of a king and queen where there is no prohibition for women's entry for prayers. Similar is the position at Fatehpur Shikri's Salim Chiste Dargah, Nagpur's Tajuddin Baba Dargah and at Ajmer Sharif as well. If in all these monumental places of worship both men and women can go to the sanctum sanctorum, why is the restriction in Haji Ali Dargah where there was no such prohibition for more than 147 years till about March 2012.? I may add here that I had the privilege of visiting this Dargah twice. First it was with Marxist philosopher P. Govinda Pillai and the second one was with T.K. Hansa, the PWD minister in E.K. Nayanar ministry. This was during 90s.

In the judgment the High Court has

as time passed men got upper hand in all matters; including religious performance and women came to be pushed back. Though this is globally the factual position so far as Muslim women are concerned, Haj, one of the five pillars of Islam, allows men and women circumambulate the holy Kaaba, the cube shaped Shrine in Mecca without any segregation.

It may here be recalled that in Maharashtra it was the assassinated rationalist Narendra Dabholkar who was the first to champion for the right of women to pray in sanctum sanctorum of temples. A women's group in the state, Bhumata Brigade then came forward and revived the demand and spearheaded a protest movement. It was led by Thrupti Desai. A group under her leadership succeeded in breaking a 400 year old custom and tradition prevailing in Shani Shingnapur temple at Ahmed Nagar and



TRAIN | PAIN | GAIN

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MUMBAIKAR..!

My calculative brain ordered to open my drowsy eyes, but my caring heart ordered to keep it closed. My brain eventually won; and I woke up to live another day in this city.



Vidhya Vasudevan

Here begins my day...

The Smartphone alarm struck at 7.30 am on Monday morning. It was the sound, the day and the time that I hated the most. My calculati

ve brain ordered to open my drowsy eyes, but my caring heart ordered to keep it closed. My brain eventually won; and I woke up to live another day in this city.

I went into the wash-room only to hear several other alarms blow off in adjacent flats. Ha! How nice that their sleep too is broken now. I was late and missed my breakfast as usual. I got dressed and I'm out of the door by 8.30

am. As soon as I step outside my building I'm greeted by narrow streets with two way traffic. I have to board a rickshaw to reach station but as usual none of them halted because it's already occupied with 6 people in a 3 seater vehicle (3 behind & 3 in front including the driver)

The typical Monday morning @Kalyan station starts with all hustle and bustle where every man is a rat in his own unique maze. The robotic yet melodious voice announces: "The train arriving on platform no.5 is 9 hours 18 mins fast local for Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus. This local will halt at

Dombivli, Thane, Ghatkopar, Kurla, Dadar and Byculla stations" and then translates it into 2 other native languages with same seriousness.

Every inch of the platform has been captured and protected amidst a gigantic ocean of people, you stand facing the direction from which the train would arrive. Leaning through the platform to get hint of the arriving train you have a highly frustrated sigh. No signs of any train.





manifest the hidden Spider-Man inside them and amusingly stick to the moving local. Gathering all your strength, you valiantly utilize 90% of your energy in an attempt to create space to accommodate your fragile body. The fat aunty ahead you won't budge an inch and the girl behind you won't stop pushing you further in. Before your feet settle, the train budes bouncing and our body danced with it, quickly gaining momentum.

I thought many people will alight at the next station - Dombivli. To my utter dismay, only 2 people alighted and 20 more crushed in. I felt sorry for this train; it has been receiving this leg massage for several decades now.

The giant steel monster honks, adding to the rising ache in your head tend to create a fish-market like atmosphere where no one understands anything.

In such a horrific condition, there would always be some typical creatures:

1. Main door maniac: Not just every train, but in every coach you will find them, for whom standing on the main door is a fetish. They plug on their earphones and go on their own journey by blocking passengers entering the train. "I am not going to let you get down before me!"

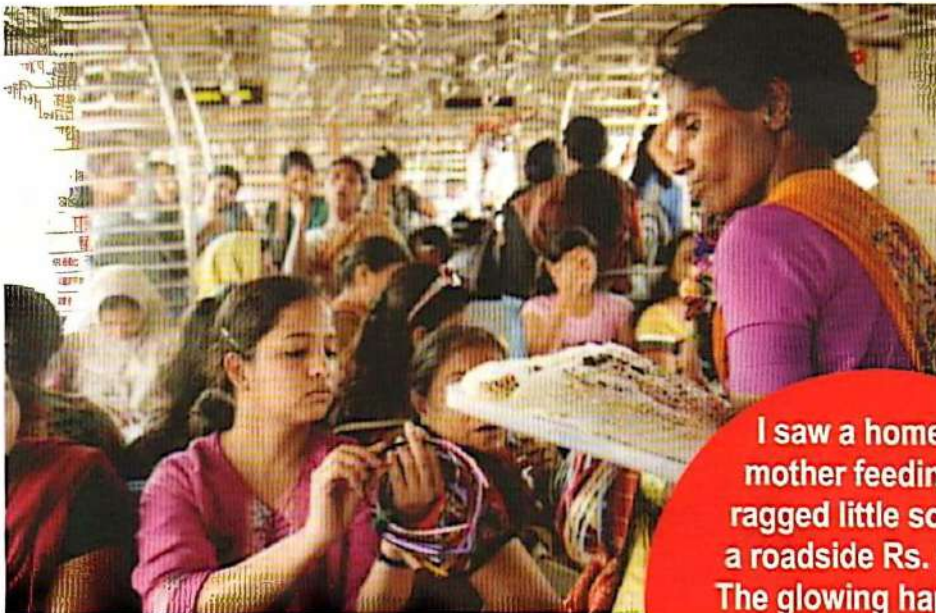
2. Seat grabbers: "I don't know where you (empty seat) are, I don't know how far you are, but I'll find you and I'll sit on you", is the motto of these seat-grabbers. No matter how far a vacant seat may lie, these people know it like back of their mind!

3. Pushers: No matter how much space you give them to adjust them in the already-packed coach, this set of people will always push other commuters from front and back. "Please shift na... one inch. Come on, there is space!"

4. Abusers and Fighter cocks: If you try to overhear their conversations, it is likely that you will hear them use an array of cuss words. This is quite normal: give them a glaring look and they will initiate a fight.

5. Bhajan Singers: There will always be a coach where a bunch of aunties/uncles sing bhajans. Not only do they sing songs, they also play musical instruments!

6. Chatter group: constantly abusing their son's spouse and the other in-laws or will bore you with the stories of



I saw a homeless mother feeding her ragged little son with a roadside Rs. 5 food. The glowing happiness in the eyes of that little boy, knowing that he was going to eat now, touched my heart.

Ugh! There is incessant continuous chat of some sufficiently bored uncles/aunties, who tag the locals as - constant antithetical irony: they are regularly irregular.

After about good 20 mins delay, frustrated faces of commuters start reflecting their restrained urge of organizing a riot against the Railway Ministry. Suddenly, the crowd hustles, albeit slowly, you lean again.... And there you see, the giant steel monster, fiercely marching towards you, packed terrifyingly with people inside it just as soldiers; before a battle which is about to commence. RED ALERT - Everybody tightens up. Bags in front, specs inside, hairs tied (if in case it's open), shoe lace tied firm and the mind set for the forthcoming holocaust!

Bolo
"OM
SHAANTI
OM"

I stood in the infinite crowd when the train chugged in. I never went in; but all the people took me in with them. I regained my senses inside the train only to lose it again.

"Zor Ka Jhatka Haye Zoron Se Laga"

With the slightest signs of reduction in the speed of the train, cruelly the enemy forces jump over your chests & heads, pushing you mercilessly to the far side of the platform. Don't act dumb standing still, grab the pole of the coach and rush in. There were people hanging onto each nut and bolt in the train. The professionally experienced warriors

husband's working hours and mother-in-law banter!

7. Minding own business: She's caught up in the mystery of her book. More importantly and pleasantly too engrossed in her book.

8. Candy Crush players: After hitting their heads on their Smartphone's' screen playing Angry Birds, Temple Run, and Subway Surfers; Candy Crush has come across as a boon to local train commuters.

9. Music and Movie watchers: glued to their digital screens to watch movies or "I have my music on and I don't care about the world!"

10. Choodi lo, clip lo, chippis lo: No matter how crowded the train is, she will come to you to sell earrings, chips, clips, rubber bands and what not! This one takes too much space to move around.

The ache in your head never subsides. You close your eyes; take a deep breath, for that's the local life. I alighted at my station. After settling down I checked the time & I discovered that Bingo!!! There is no watch on my wrist. I racked my brain, checked my bag in & out and then realized that I lost my wallet too. Maybe somebody must have snatched or stolen you never know when & how it happened anyways that's



how we get sandwiched in the crowd.

I entered the office an hour late and always win the CENTRE OF ATTRACTION title as everyone has already seated next to their workstation. My gatekeeper gave me looks as if I had committed a capital punishment sin. Next in line was my boss. I never made eye contact at all. I looked in the opposite direction and sped away. When I do a mistake, it's a mistake; when my boss does a mistake, its creativity! So pathetic was my condition that I had to

laugh at the most non-sensible of his jokes in order to please him. He thinks he is very humorous. Only we subordinates know the truth of why we always laugh at his jokes! I went out for the lunch. Was disappointed with no money in hand but luckily I noticed a 10 Rupees note in my jeans pocket, so I decided to buy a vada pav. I wondered how every person ranging from an office worker to a daily wage earner enjoyed a vada pav together. I realized that this city had remarkable powers to bring people from different strata of society together. I returned at night with severe fatigue. I didn't have money to pay for rickshaw, so I decided to walk. Along the never ending stretch of road, I saw a homeless mother feeding her ragged little son with a roadside Rs. 5 food. The glowing happiness in the eyes of that little boy, knowing that he was going to eat now, touched my heart.

My body was tired but my mind optimistic. I lay on my bed with unchanged clothes & Sweat still on rewinding my last 24 hours, I woke up late, missed my breakfast, hullabulla in the train, lost my wrist-watch & wallet and reached office late and walking all the way back home after getting down Kalyan station.

Why do I still love this city? Is it because of that little glimmer of happiness that I saw on that boy's face, or that little feeling of optimism that this city always offered us, or the lessons in life that this city teaches us in its countless ways? I never really knew. My eyes drifted off into sleep waiting unwantedly for that smartphone alarm to again blow off; a few little hours from now! ■

KPOEM

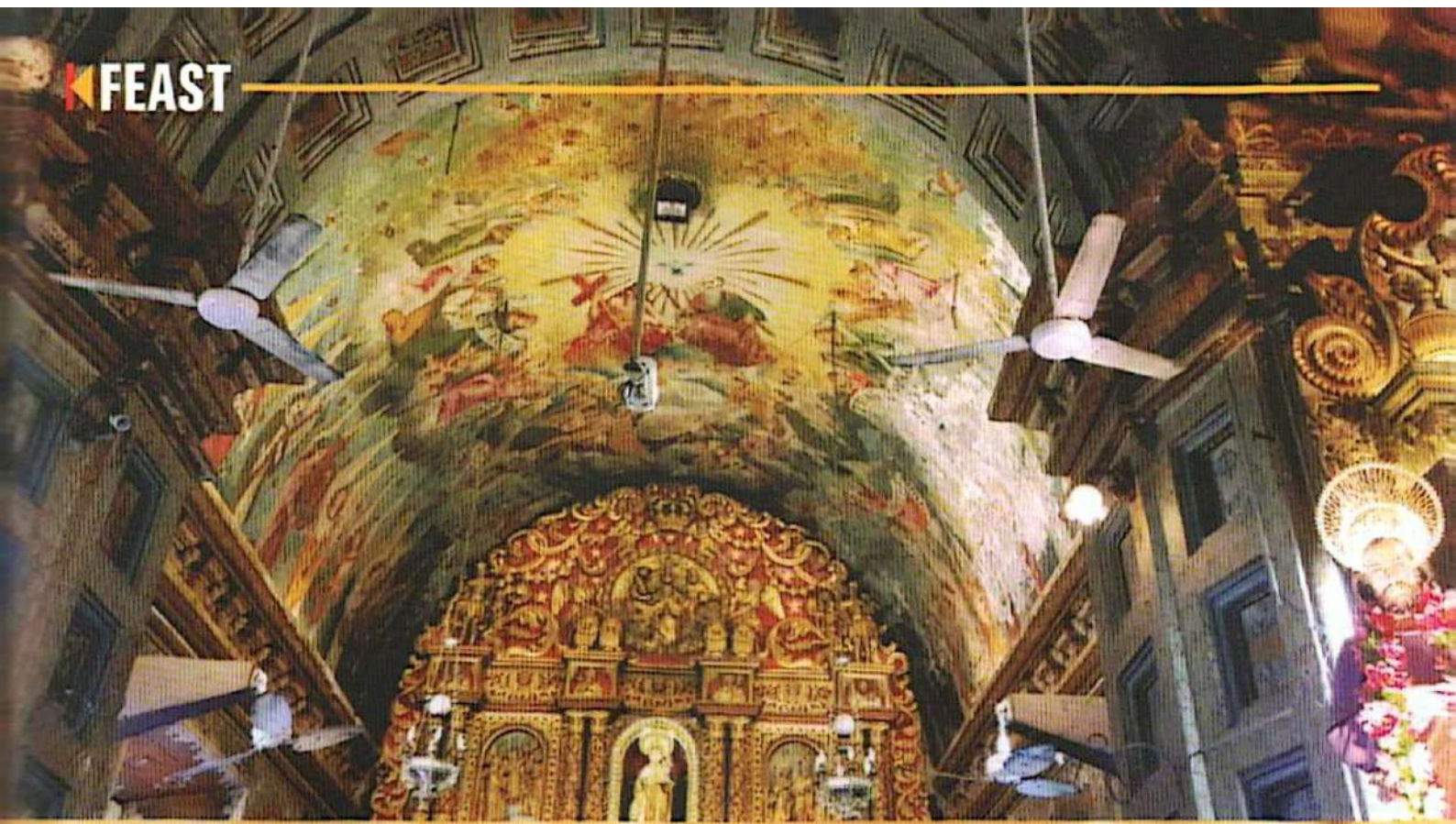
പിൻവിളി യോർത്ത്

ചിതറിയതാം ദർപ്പണ
മുഖത്തിലെൻ ചിന്നിച്ചിതറിയ

മനസ്സു കാണുന്നു.
മുറിവുകൾ ചോരാതെ
മാനം പൊതിഞ്ഞുവെച്ചിരുളിൽ
തന്നിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു.
അലിവാർന്ന നിൻ മിഴികളെന്തെവല
മാടി വിളിച്ചപ്പോൾ
അരുതെന്നു വിധിച്ചൊരി
മൺപാതകളിലൂടെ
അറിയാതെ ഞാനും നടന്നിടുന്നു.
ഇനിയും പിറക്കാത്ത കവിതയെ
കാലത്തിന്റെ മറവിൽ
അണയാതെ വെച്ചിടുന്നു.
ഒരുന്നാൾ ഞാൻ
ചിറകടിച്ചുയരുമ്പോൾ
പിൻവിളിയായിടുവാൻ
ബാക്കിവെക്കാമി കവിതയെങ്കിലും.



സുധാകരൻ കെ



SAINT RAPHAEL'S (THE ARCHANGEL) FEAST AT OLLUR CHURCH



Jose Chemmassery

■ The month of October is the most cherished month of the year for the catholic community in Ollur. It is on the 23rd and 24th of October every year. The famous feast of

St Raphael is celebrated as the most important festival of the parish. The tradition continues and it is the 179th festival this year, which coenced since 1837.

Ollur, a small village then, now a part of the Trichur Corporation is about 10km south from the cultural capital of Kerala. Though there is a small railway station at Ollur, only local/ passenger train once or twice a day halts there. Making of wooden packing cases, manufacturing of clay bricks, tiles etc are the main commercial activity. Freight wagons of goods trains are normally parked in the yard as these items are consigned to different parts of the country. Cement and steel are the main goods arriving at the station for use of local construction activities.

The church was built in 1718 in the



name of St Anthony of Paduva, the patron saint of the previous parish of the local Christians of Pazhuvil. Before establishing the church at Ollur, the local Christians had to depend on the Pazhuvil Church for their spiritual needs. As Pazhuvil was located at a distance, people used to walk a lot or go by boats or canoes to reach the church. Christians in Ollur were very keen to avoid their difficulties by finding a permanent solution.

The legend says that a lady of Kalliath family, wife of Chiramal Chakoru Palu arrived late at the church to attend the holy mass and was surprised to see the church already closed. She returned home; saddened at her experience, complained to her son in the matter. Her son decided to build a church at Ollur to pacify her grievances. With the support of only 25 families it was a difficult proposition. Using his influence with Kochi Raja and the earnest support and unity of these families construction of the church was a happy and successful event. Permission to build the church was obtained from the governor of Kodungallore Diocese and the required land was bought from the Maliekal



Karthas. Though there was opposition from the local conservatives, the persuasive presence of Dutch Army helped to resolve the issue.

The foundation stone was laid on 13 *Mithunam* 1717, the feast day of St Anthony, after the mass was celebrated in the temporary shed by Marothikal Poulouse Kathanar. The consecration of Ollur Church was held on 14 *Mithunam* 1722, the feast day of St Anthony. Mar Anthony Pimanthan Metropolitana conducted the ceremony in the presence of Arnos Pathiri, a famous Christian leader in Kerala history.

The Pazhuvil Church administrators were hostile and did not accede to the genuine rights of Ollur parishioners to construct their own church. When the Pazhuvil Church authorities became adamant, Ollur parishioners decided to wrest their rights by force.

Accordingly on the feast day of Pazhuvil Church Ollur parishioners reached Pazhuvil in a boat in the company of Chirammal Palu and Marothikal Kathanar. As the procession of the feast was passing through different areas, the team easily entered the church and deceptively grabbed the statue of St Anthony from the church. With the statue in their possession,

draped in a silk cloth the team returned and reached Ollur at midnight. The eagerly waiting parishioners welcomed the team and led them to the church with fanfare and music. The same statue can be seen in the main altar, with certain alterations to accommodate in the shorter niche (Roopakoodu) of the altar.

When the wife of Chirammal Chakoru Palu died in 1726, she was honoured by burying her corpse in the church and a tomb stone was placed in



her memory.

A great damage was inflicted on the church when the army of Tippu-Sultan raided the premises in 1790. The entire roof of the building was set on fire and gutted in the process. The roof was renovated and rebuilt artistically and skillfully by beams made in Cochin and ferried to the site.

The Ollur Forane church is one of

the best models of Christian architecture which can be compared with Sistine Chapel in Vatican. With every inch of space in the church being decorated with 5000 images of angels, paintings adorn the walls of the church. The roof walls of the church are full of murals and frescoes depicting biblical scenes in gothic style. A large number of exquisitely carved wooden images adorn the altars which are sculpted in the traditional style of Christian architecture.

One exquisitely carved more than 30 ft tall wooden rostrum or *pushpakoodu* of the church is a master piece which has sculptures of evangelists and saints. The *pushpakoodu* is based and springs from the mouth of a dragon. The vicar and priestly guests used to address and give sermons from this rostrum in those days when mike system and sound amplifiers werenot in vogue. Presently this

rostrum is only a decorative piece of architecture and genuinely admired by the visitors. There is a choir room in the balcony of the church facing the main altar which is rendered obsolete now as electronic musical instruments have replaced the old system. Small wonder Ollur was popularly called the Chinna Roma (Little Rome).

In 1883 the seven storey Bell Tower construction started. It took ten years to

complete the tower. This seven storeyed Belfry was the tallest structure in South India when it was completed. Three bells hang in the tower were imported from France and are considered to be the biggest tower bells in Kerala. These are replicas of Notre-dam Cathedral bells in Paris (vividly displayed in the movie Hunchback of Notre-dam). The bells have pictures of Jesus, St Mary, St Joseph, St Anthony, St Raphael and Tobias engraved there on. The sound of pealing the bells and echoes can cover more than two miles. It works as an alarm at 5'o clock in the morning to get ready to attend the early morning mass. This writer, as a teen ager had the opportunity to dare and climb the several steps inside the tower to reach the top. Viewing the village and the surroundings from the tower reaching about 200ft was a delightful experience. Train passengers from Trichur going towards south before crossing Ollur station can see the tall structure built in gothic style with statue of Jesus Christ, the redeemer on the top of the tower, standing with both hands stretched out, a gesture inviting the sinners and the burden laden to seek his blessings.

The court yard of the church is surrounded by a thick stone wall nicknamed as 'Elephant's Wall'. A rock cross located a little away from the façade of the church was constructed in 1874. This famous cross arrests the attention of the pilgrims to the church who lit candles as a mark of veneration to the holy cross.

As a result of some differences of opinion among the parishioners a small church was built in 1845 lying adjacent to the cemetery. On All Souls Day every year a mass is celebrated here in remembrance of the dead. This church was established in the name of the archangel Raphael. The imposing and elegant façade in granite stone at the entrance of the church was built in 1949. Climbing up the granite steps to reach the renovated main hall of the church invokes the spiritual essence attended to a holy place of worship. The police fired at the church in 1959 during the liberation struggle against the Communist Government. A memorial to mark the incident made in white marble plaque with black engravings, reading 'The Communist Government opened

fire here on 23-7-59' is scripted on the outside wall at the southern entrance to educate the visitors.

The Ollur Church is one of the wealthiest in the whole of Kerala. According to the statistics published (2002), there were 4090 families and 72 family units. The parishes in the Ollur Forane are 16 and the parish congregation is divided into 7 sectors. There are several religious houses and establishments under the parish i.e.; 5 convents, 1 children's home, 1 retreat centre, 1 film and recording studio, 5 schools, 1 English medium school and 1 hospital. These prayer houses and schools in the parish reflect the spiritual and intellectual heritage of the parishioners. Ollur parish has contributed several nuns and priests in the service of the faith. They are wide



spread all over India serving in different fields like health, education and community welfare activities including missionaries. Some of the priests and nuns are also deputed on overseas for spiritual and missionary activities.

Angels are messengers of God. The holy spirits of heaven can only be called angels when they deliver some message. Those who deliver messages of lesser importance are called angels; and those who proclaim messages of supreme importance are called archangels. Raphael means 'God's healing' or 'God the healer'. According to the Book of Enoch, the other angels named are

Uriel, Raguel, Sariel, Jerahmeel and include Gabriel and Michael.

St Raphael the Archangel is one of seven Archangels who stand before the Lord. According to Old Testament, St Raphael was sent by God to aid 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 a 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 narrates the obstacles encountered and miracles rendered by the angel during the journey to Media by young Tobiah in the company of Raphael. Through healing Tobit of his blindness and the saving waters at Bethseda, the Archangel's image as the healer becomes evident. He is also patron of the blind, of happy marriages, of nurses and of travelers.

The Feast of St Raphael or *Malakhayude Perunnal* held annually on October 23 and 24, is one of the most important Christian Festivals in Kerala. The festival starts with the hoisting of the ceremonial flag on October 15 to mark the beginning of the celebrations in the church. It is one of half a dozen Christian Festivals listed by Kerala Tourism as among the attractions of the state; it is the only pilgrim centre in India in the name of St Raphael. The festival is very popular and a large number of people from distant parts of the state and outside arrive for the celebrations, which is only next to the famous Trichur Pooram. Those Ollurans settled outside the state make it a point to visit Ollur during the festival.

There is a small crowd of merchants, traders, toys and trinkets vendors, sweet meat sellers, giant wheels operators and acrobats artists who participate as an added attraction to the festival. The atmosphere is throbbing and the ambience is noisy, cheerful and colourful. Walking through the church compound, peripheries and surrounding areas invokes moments of gaiety, glamour and gladness. The families of the parish get ready with exotic preparations to serve the friends, relatives and guests arriving from different parts of the state. Family

festival celebrations appear incomplete if guests are not present.

The significant attraction of the festival is the *Vāla* (Bangle) procession and was introduced by the North Bazar zone in 1960, which is now arriving from six zones of the Parish. During the procession the idol of St Raphael wearing a golden bangle mounted on a chariot like structure well decorated is slowly drawn to the accompaniment of band music, *vadhyams* and *melams*. The glittering chariot is followed by equally glittering colourful *muthukudas*-silk umbrellas with golden embroidery and hems covered with philigree works. The procession starts its journey late in the evening and concludes at the foot of the rock-cross of the church by midnight when the formal bangle is adorned to the idol. This is followed by one hour fireworks in the church grounds to the delight of the participants. A holy mass is celebrated thereafter.

The important part of the festival is the main procession carrying the statues of the four angels, Saint Raphael, Saint

Michael, Saint Gabriel and the Guardian Angel, in the *roopakoodu* (an intricately decorated support or surround). The historically famous opening of the *roopakoodu* takes place at about 3.00 p.m, the only time the statue of St Raphael is taken out for public veneration temporarily installing it in a *pandal* permanently made for the purpose in the north varanda of the church. The devotees assemble here to pay attention, obeisance and adoration seeking blessings of the saint. The pilgrims arriving from distant places are served food from specially prepared *pandal* in the school area and *nercha* packets are distributed to the pilgrims as a mark of participating in the festival.

From the crowd sometimes emerge a few possessed women in their frenzy starting their devotion in the form of *Thullal*. They swing and sway with their open hair let down in front of the idol and engage in jabbering gibberish, illegible words. They continue swaying their heads till they are exhausted. This process *Thullal* is dancing the demon out and the devotees believe the power

of the angel to tame and bind the demon as indicated in the Book of Tobit. In 1970 by the ecclesiastical order *Thullal* was banned and the pagan custom was abolished forever.

On 24th October in the evening there is a small procession when the angels in *roopakoodu* are taken for a street visit. At the return of the angels they are safely taken to their original niches positions which mark the end of the two day festival. The devotees continue to visit this pilgrimage centre till 31st October, the day of conclusion of the festival. Merchants and vendors pack their remaining goods in bundles returning to their destination. The fragrance of the festival lingers for a while and the activities emerged during the festival are faded into memories. For the parish community it is a long wait for the next year feast till the October month blooms out.

"Do not forget to show hospitality; in doing this, men have before now entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews Ch 13-2) ■

KPOEM

SLEEP

"It is no small art to sleep. To achieve it one must keep awake all day"

I ask, "What is the most essential thing in life?"

A mercurial boy in the front row responds: "Character"

A pretty girl nearer to him added, "Love"

A well dressed boy said, "Money" and waved a Thousand Rupee note.

Then there were innumerable voices all over:

Friendship, Education, Books and Happiness

Oxygen, carbon dioxide, Water and Milk

Salt, sugar, Potato chips and Tomato sauce

Cars, computer, TV and cell phone.

A half awakened, girl in the last row gave a delightful yawn,

"S...l...e...e...p", she stretched it in a sleepy voice and went back to sleep again.

Yes, sleep is the most essential thing

A good health arises with good sleep.

Experts say, "One hour's sleep before midnight is worth three after"

Yet others declare, "Six hours for a Man, Seven for a woman and eight for a fool"

But then, who sleeps well?

"One who is truthful and economical

One who eats wholesome food moderately

And one who has mastery over his senses"

This I am not saying

The great physician of the past, Charaka has said it.

But this I will say and recall even in sleep:

"He who sleeps well, lives well

He who lives well, loves well

He who loves well sleeps well

He who sleeps well... well, I have said it.

Now I feel sleepy and so I believe you should... Z.Z.Z..."



A POSTSCRIPT



V Balachandran

■ In this concluding part of my narrative on 'Mumbai of Balachandran', through a case study of my own carrier in the metropolis, I would like to touch upon certain political,

social as well as industrial developments that impacted on the life of Keralites in Mumbai. I have also something to convey to the younger generation of today. Success is something which is possible only if a person is willing to work hard. To the children of today I would like to say: Be kind to your elders and teachers and show them due respect. If you succeed in life by your intelligence and hard work, remember that you owe that success to your parents and elders also in the family.

I have learnt during my eventful career that if someone has a problem, it should be looked at positively and a solution found, if possible, a helpful hand may be extended. I came across quite a number of persons holding high positions in the administration and the judiciary and learnt that they became achievers due to their will and perseverance. Mumbai can give everything to a person if he is clear in his aims and firm in his will.

Troubled Times

The rise of the Shiv Sena in 1966 turned out to be a menacing phenomenon. Founded by the late Shri Bal Thackeray, who started his career as a cartoonist in a Malayalee-owned daily English newspaper, "The Free Press Journal", the Shiv Sena aimed at promoting the interests of Maharashtrians. It claimed priority in employment to the 'Sons of the Soil' in Government and private establishments. To this positive aspect of this self-styled parochial party, there was little opposition. But in pursuing this policy, the Shiv Sena adopted the negative approach of driving out all 'outsiders' from the metropolis, and this caused much righteous anger. They became victims of harassment and extortion, arson and loot, even violent



Balachandran the leader

manhandling and killing. The Keralites were not spared.

I have already referred to two incidents in which I was myself the target of attack. The Keralites, who in 1962 could get Shri V. K. Krishna Menon elected to the Lok Sabha from the North Mumbai constituency, could muster no such support for a second time in 1967. Employment in the Mumbai Municipal Corporation and other State Government agencies was almost barred to them from the seventies. Nameboards in Malayalam were erased. A virtual ban on Malayalee associations and screening of Malayalam films was imposed. Fear and insecurity gripped the minds of most of the Malayalee citizens of Mumbai and quite a number of them decided to leave the city. Even in the issue of licenses for trade and allotment of residential units under the public housing scheme (MHADA), the Keralites were discriminated against.

The Shiv Sena's attitude towards the Malayalees has changed considerably over the years. The persecution mania is not much in evidence. As one who could contribute substantially towards making Mumbai Beautiful (Sundar Mumbai), my efforts drew a little appreciation from the Sena. One newspaper, on September 25, 1985, carried an article entitled "Shiv Sena's

trusted Malayalee Ward Officer: Mr. Balachandran". Malayalees today go about their work without let or hindrance. But they are not as large in number now as they were before the 70s, in government, municipal or other public establishments.

The Keralites look upon Mumbai as their second home. Having come to it as job-seekers, and secured the means of livelihood, they invariably identify themselves completely with the interests of the city and seek to promote its progress and prosperity. The Shiv Sena chose to ignore this.

Trade Unionism

Industrial labour unrest in the form of *bandhs* and *hartals* in Mumbai is not very much in the news today; their place seems to have been taken by political activities, interparty conflicts (involving a lot of mudslinging), corruption in high places, crime of various kinds (rapes being prominent), traffic accidents (some of them very tragic), flooding of roads and rail tracks (during the monsoon), the goings-on in Bollywood and, not the least, the performance of players in cricket and other games. In the 70s and the 80s, the trade unions led by R. J. Mehta, Datta Samant and Sharad Rao, hit the headlines. Not a day passed without a labour strike, sometimes paralysing life in the city and

causing much misery to the common man. Thanks to Datta Samant in particular, thousands of textile mill workers were thrown out of employment. The Lower Parel area, where more than a dozen textile mills once roared, is now silent. The textile industry of the city, which was at one time the pride of Maharashtra, is now a matter of history. The ruined buildings are now the haunts of criminals.

Several other Industries were forced to close down. Prominent among them were the Premier Automobiles, the Kamani group of industries and the New Standard Engineering Ltd. Strikes and lockouts were common in those days.

Datta Samant was a practicing doctor-turned trade union leader. His wife, Smt. Vinita Samant, was a councillor from Ghatkopar. The havoc caused by Datta Samant's union was

shoots and the country seems to be set on the path to prosperity.

Underworld Dons

Another source of misery or fear to the people of Mumbai in the 70s and the 80s was the underworld dominated by the Rajan Nairs (Big and Small, bada and chhota), Varadaraja Mudaliar, and Abdul Kunju. They were a law unto themselves as they fleeced the citizens whenever the latter purchased a car or a flat and did not hesitate to plunder and kill. As an officer of the BMC, I came in contact with a few of them; my relationship with them was not friendly but I managed to be on speaking terms with them. Rajan Nair managed to celebrate the marriage of his brother-in-law on Government land at Tilak Nagar, Chembur, despite warnings. Not only this, he brought caparisoned elephants for the function in the typical Kerala

persons and organisations concerned. I received the Mayor's Cup for 1989-90 for the work done towards 'Green Mumbai, Clean Mumbai', the NC Puri rolling shield, the special awards instituted by the Greater Mumbai Vigilance Committee, the Society for Clean Cities and the Santacruz Lions Club.

The Nriyasinidhu, on behalf of the people of the city, arranged a special function in appreciation of my services.

I am happy to say that my efforts to develop Mumbai were noticed by the People Art Centre and it honoured me with the Life Time Achievement Award on the eve of the Birthday Celebration of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on 24th February 2013. Mahesh Kothare, Marathi film producer and director, presented me the Award.

"Kerala in Mumbai" awarded me a trophy and a memento in recognition of my contribution. I received them from the hands of Shri Jaya Kumar, Vice Chancellor of Ezhuthachhan University of Malayalam of Kerala State on 5th February 2015.

In my retirement, I am closely associated with the Shree Ayyappa Temple of Goregaon (W) as a Trustee. The little service I do in the temple gives me great peace of mind. There is no better place than a temple to meet fellowKeralites, talk about our beloved Land of Coconuts and exchange greetings and good wishes. As one advances in age, it is desirable to attune one's mind to the holy ambience of the temple. To Keralities Shree Ayyappa is the Supreme Reality.

Kerala in Mumbai

A word about 'Kerala in Mumbai'. No other journal gives me so much joy as I turn over the pages of each issue. The contents are rich with contributions by well known writers. The journal carries the flavour of Kerala and at the same time brings to focus Keralites who have distinguished themselves in Mumbai, Kerala and the world at large.

The list of celebrities so featured is a formidable one. The editor said in the issue of February, 2015, after referring to the 'achievers' among the Malayalees: "There are more and more Malayalees out there, where they are Mumbai's pride, and in due course 'Kerala in Mumbai' plans to recognise and felicitate each one of them. This is in full swing. The contribution of the Keralities towards the development of the city in every field needs to be recorded.



Demolition drive

enormous. Aggressive and violent activities, apart from inter-union rivalry, prevailed.

Sharad Rao controlled the municipal workers' 'Mumbai Mazdoor Union' of which 90% of the 1.3 lakh BMC employees were members. During the 70s, the 80s and the early 90s he was a major disruptive and distressing force. In the early 90s the then Municipal Commissioner, Shri S S Tinaikar, brought Sharad Rao to his heel. Later, the Mumbai High Court declared that "Bandhs" were illegal.

It needs to be added that some Malayalees were also associated with the labour unions, and shamefully contributed to the ruin of the textile industry and the misery of the workers. Today there are no bandhs or strikes, thanks to the policy of the Government. The economy is showing some green

style. One morning I received a telephone call. The caller introduced himself as Rajan Nair and spoke in Malayalam. I smelt trouble. Nair wanted my support to let him conduct the Ganeshotsav at the place he had chosen. I went with the local residents who didn't want the Rajan Nair's show to go on. But Nair had his own way, with the BMC men and the Tilak Nagar Police looking on.

Retirement

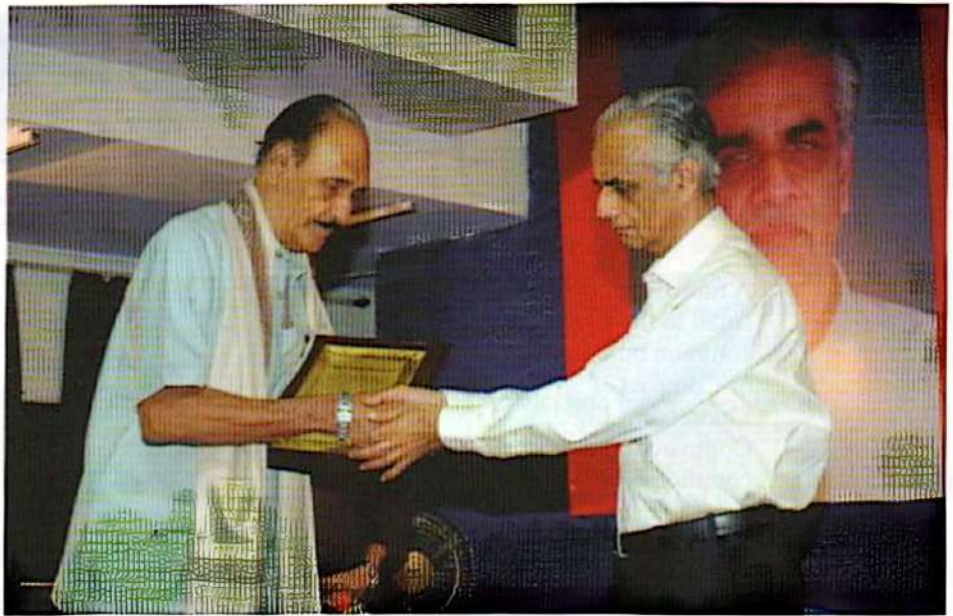
I formally retired from the service of the BMC on November 1, 1994, at 58. I have settled down to a quiet life in Mumbai and visit Kerala now and then. After 37 years of service, I have the satisfaction that I have done my bit for the welfare of the people of Mumbai.

Awards and recognitions came my way very often and I am thankful to the

I remember the pioneering efforts of the late Shri P K Ravindranath, one of the founders of the journal. Beautifully produced, the journal is in safe hands, and it is forging ahead like the winning 'Vallom' at Aranmula on the Nehru's Cup Day. My regards and respects to all brother Keralites.

Malayalee strength in Mumbai

Strength is Power. Like 'Hanuman', who had to be reminded of his strength before he leapt across the ocean in his Mission Sita, Keralites in Mumbai need to know their potential for good. Numerically, they account for 16.8% (about 2 million) of the population of Greater Mumbai (1911 census, recorded Malayalam as mother tongue) and today, their number may be around 2.5 million, taking into account those settled down in Mumbai and their progeny. Their contribution to several fields of activity education, religion culture, industry and commerce, tourism, trade and hospitality, health and hygiene, civic affairs and state governance are substantial. Though controversial they have strengthened the roots of the trade union movement.



Receiving Award from K Jayakumar

I still remember the terrorism of Shiv Sena towards Keralite during early seventies, when I was a victim while in the service, that I had to keep indoor for two weeks without reporting to duty, till sorted out on a political note. However, one can say categorically that such incidents will never be repeated.

Keralites in Mumbai should remain united and for this purpose, they should

use the Onam Festival to maximum advantage. You get at the heart of people through the stomach, in which unlike other festivals, we do have 18 dishes in the feast. Invite non-Keralites also to the feasts and forge unity with them. That they appreciate our dishes is already known. Let them participate in Onam in large numbers, like we have seen during this year. ■



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THE DARK SIDE OF THE BRIGHT CFL BULB



Sanjith Nambiar

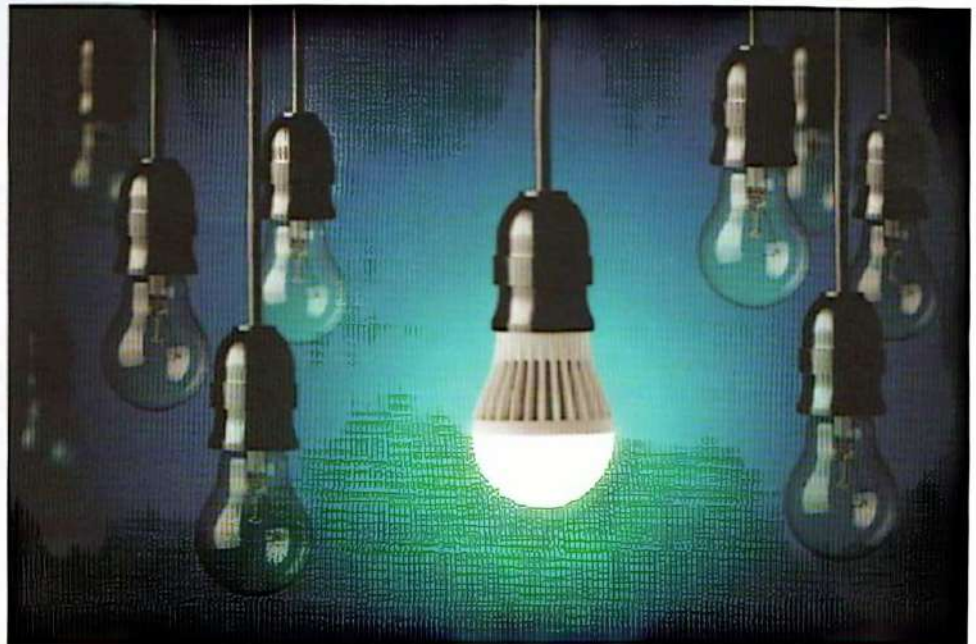
A tube light made small to the size of a common bulb is CFL or Compact Fluorescent Light. Compared to the common bulb which has a life span of 1,000 hours CFL

stands apart with 15,000 hours. Efficiency which yields energy saving has been the triumph of CFLs. The electrical energy used up by an ordinary bulb in one hour is sufficient to keep a CFL bulb going for three hours. Electricity bill on account of lighting will come down by nearly two thirds. They are promoted as lowering green house gas emissions which cause global warming and climate change.

Low energy consumption is an attractive leverage to manage the demand side of electricity supply chain. The mini version of tube light initiated a brave new era of CFL in India with subsidies and awareness campaigns as mega projects. Everyone is being urged, cajoled and guilt-tripped into purchasing the adorable CFL. Even Nonprofit organizations boarded the bandwagon. The Research Centre of a Peoples' Science Movement-Integrated Rural Technology Centre of Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishat- started production of CFLs and marketed it through its well-knit activists' network. China manufactured products swept the market and Kerala's project came to a halt.

Mercury in CFL

There is a dark patch in the bright white light emitted by CFLs. They contain mercury albeit in small amounts. Mercury is considered by World Health Organization as one of the top ten chemicals of major public health concern. It is a true poison-a neurotoxin- with well documented toxicity. The concentration of mercury per CFL bulb is about 5 milligrams. It is contained in the bulb. After the end of the useful life of 15000 hours or so, the mercury locked up in the bulb needs to be managed safely. The mercury has to be recovered so that it does not gain



entry into the environment. If the bulb breaks then there is need for decontamination.

CFL belongs to the category of electronic waste or Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) or e-Waste for short. It includes old, end-of-life or discarded appliances using electricity such as computers, consumer electronics, fridges etc. This waste contains both valuable and hazardous materials which require special handling and recycling methods. Owing to the presence of mercury, CFL is in the class of hazardous e-Waste.

Present estimate of e-waste generation in India is about 1.7 million tones with an annual growth rate of 5%. What percentage of this is contributed by CFLs is not known. Responding to the mounting public concern for e-Waste, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has updated e-Waste Management Rules, 2016 and released it recently in supersession of the e-waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2011. CFL has been added in Schedule 1 as there was not adequate regulation on it.

Broken Bulb

Direct exposure of consumers to mercury takes place when lamps are broken accidentally during shipping,

retail sales, consumer use, and recycling and release a portion of their mercury inventory as volatile mercury vapor. Children are more vulnerable and the recommended limit as safe continual exposure for them is two tenths of a microgram in one cubic meter of air. If one CFL bulb breaks in a room 10 meter long, 10 meter wide and 5 meter high, that is five hundred cubic meter volume, there will be two microgram per cubic meter of air. This is ten times the permissible value!

Unbroken Bulb

Leaving the story of the broken CFL bulb let us follow the fate of the unbroken bulb at the back end of its life cycle. Under the dilution and dispersal route it goes to earth trenches and landfills. There it interacts with water and soil and migrates to water bodies reporting in drinking water. The main route of human exposure to mercury is through environmental release. Once in the environment, it follows a path way of methylation by bacteria, accumulation in water food webs and finally to fish. Methyl mercury is listed by the International Program of Chemical Safety as one of the most dangerous chemicals in the environment. Presently 98% of CFLs are not recycled, and there is mounting concern about mercury



Team ExPower: Sanjith Nambiar and Harsh Shah

leaching from landfills.

A little forward step

Recognizing the impact of environmental mercury toxicity we looked at the CFL mercury management system in India. We contacted leading

CFL manufacturers to find out the system in position. Despite repeated efforts no information was forthcoming. Our expectation of an operational buy back for storage and recycling was not met with.

Project Ex-Power was set up to

address the complex problem of managing mercury in CFLs. At the very front end, general awareness has to be created with hard technical facts about the mercury problem latent in the visibly attractive advantages of CFLs. Every CFL lamp is a storehouse of 5 mg of toxic mercury is the fact that was sensitized. The general awareness so created has to be sustained and raised to the next level of actionable response. An appropriate participant friendly collection mechanism has to be positioned as the tendency to throw into the waste bin could be a reflex action. This was designed deployed and demonstrated delivering the first consignment at the Waste management Centre.

The team aims to achieve zero release of mercury from CFL bulbs and tubes into the environment as envisaged in the recently notified e-Waste Management Rules, 2016. We are exploring a mechanism to collaborate with manufacturers who are now brought under 'Extended Producers Responsibility' with targets. More details on the project and our team are available on website www.ex-power.weebly.com

We reached out to Mumbai Municipal Pollution Control Board which then directed us to the registered e-Waste disposal agencies. For CFL bulbs and tubes there is a disposal cost to be paid to centers unlike the regular e-Waste. We located an approved waste management center with facility for treatment of mercury in CFL bulbs. The Center, Mumbai Waste Management Ltd., Taloja, was responsive and supplied valuable guidelines and guidance for the delivery of CFL bulbs to them.

Collecting a segregated critical mass of CFL bulbs and providing safe interim storage was the next hurdle in testing the proof of concept and viability of our project. A 260 apartment residential complex provided the facility when an initial awareness program was organized and repeated. As a result 40 kg CFL waste was collected from the complex and enabled safe disposal at Mumbai Waste Management Ltd. This is a small project executed which is replicable and scalable in our endeavor to ensure zero release of mercury to the human environment. We plan to march on.

Sanjith Nambiar is an IBDP student at BD Somani International School, Mumbai and a Social Ambassador of the Indian Development Foundation, Mumbai

Do's

- CFL bulbs/tubes which are out of use should be placed in a separate safe storage area. Tell your neighbors and fellow residents to do the same.
- Seek the support of the Managing Committee of your society to ensure community ownership
- Set up a designated safe and isolated storage area for keeping used and broken bulbs/tubes. If broken, then immediately place the contents in a sealable plastic bag and then move it to storage area.
- Conduct awareness programs in the society.
- Seek the support of a local NGO, community workers, arrange for regular pickup of e-Waste/ CFL bulbs/tubes and tubes for disposal at government authorized centers.

Don'ts

- Do not allow the CFL bulbs/ tubes to be part of the regular household waste
- Do not allow the CFL bulbs/tubes to reach local kabariwalas who may not be authorized to handle e-Waste

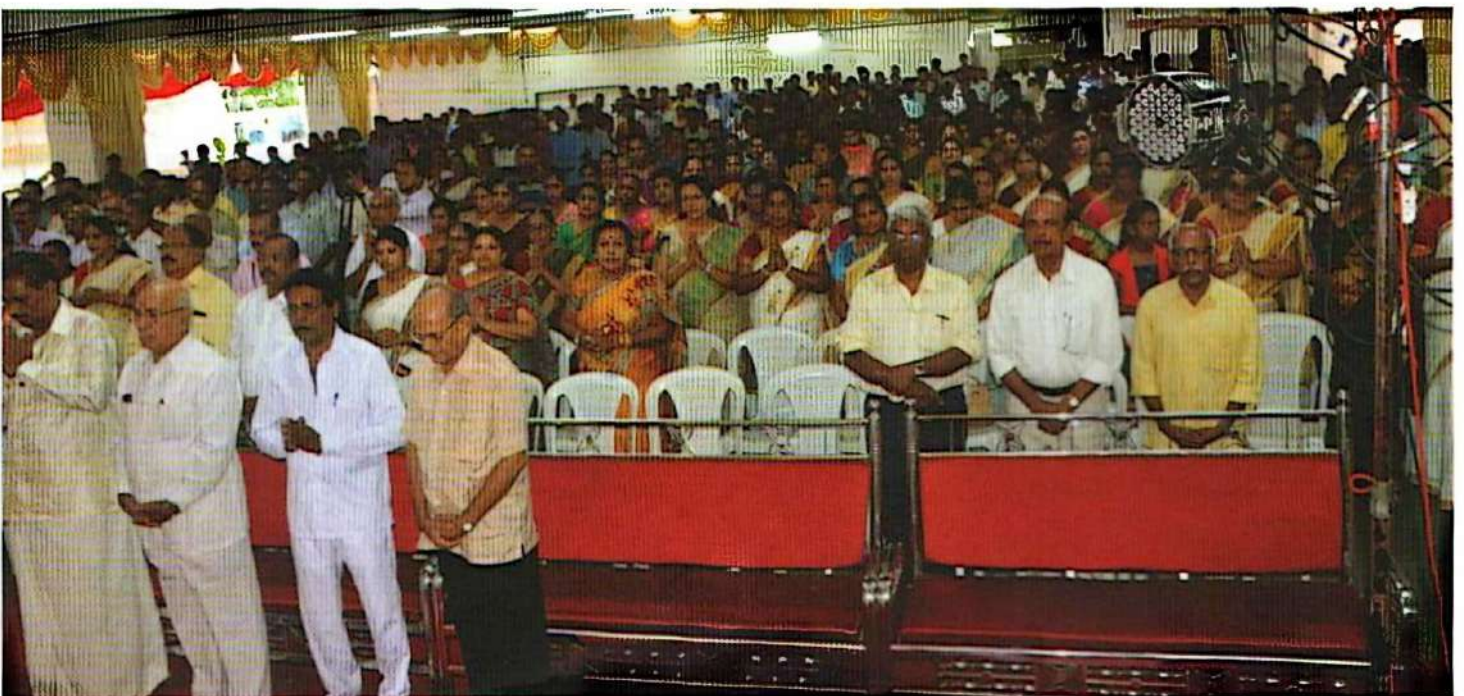
SNMS celebrates the 162nd birthday of Sree Narayanaguru



■ Sree Narayana Guru Mandira Samiti celebrated the 162nd birthday of Sree Narayana Guru at its complex in Chembur. People from its 29 units thronged the venue in large numbers. The celebrations started with Guru Pooja at 8.30 am. In the meeting presided by the President N Sasidharan, Chairman M I Damodaran welcomed the guests and General Secretary N S Salimkumar introduced them. In his

address, Chief Guest Rev Fr George Thadathil exhorted the audience to read the Guru's works especially Atmopadesha Satakam and Darsana Mala to understand the philosophy of the Guru. Only a godly person could create such philosophy and in that sense he was God himself, he asserted. Kerala was always in the midst of controversies and the latest controversy was whether Guru was God, remarked Dy

Commissioner Jyothis Mohan IRS, Guest of Honour. In India every citizen had the right to consider Guru as God, he asserted. No one could prevent if anyone wanted to worship Guru as God, as Godly persons never claimed to be god, he said. After the general meeting, the members of the units presented various cultural programmes and participated in various cultural contests.



A Section of the audience

All Thane Malayalee Asssocation(ATMA)

■ Thane Malayalees celebrated Onam on a traditional way. All Thane Malayalee Association (ATMA) prepared a 110 square feet pookalam (Rangoli with flower petals) under the guidance of team captain Thilakan. It took almost seven hours to complete it. The site was Thane Railway station. It was a pleasant surprise for the commuters at Thane Railway station and all were happy to click a picture with the pookalam. The occasion was graced by Thane city MLA Sanjay Kelkar, Federal Bank chief Managers Mrs. Madhuri Sajnekar (Andheri Branch) and Padmanabhan Iyer (Thane Branch). Star Health Insurance was represented by senior Manager Manoj Nair. As part of the celebration they distributed 500 cups of Payasam, salt and sweet banana chips to all onlookers, visitors and passengers, present at the Venue. ATMA Volunteers conducted a signature campaign on this occasion to roll back surcharges



Pookkalam at Thane Railway Platform

implemented recently by Railways on selected trains. Within three hours they collected more than 1000 signatures to be

forwarded to Railway Ministry, once one lakh signatures are obtained.

Ganeshotsavam with Community Ganapati Homam

■ Hill Garden Ayyappa Bhakta Sangham in association with Surya Vinayaka Seva Mandal organised a Community Ganapati Homam to commemorate Ganeshotsavam, on Sept 4. It was held at hill Garden Complex in Thane West. Hundreds of devotees thronged the venue early morning with Ashtadravya Naivedyam to be dedicated to the Homakund. Chief Tantri Sooryan Jayasooryan Bhattathiripad of Surya Kaladi supervised the deliberations. Swami Krishnanda Saraswati of Badlapur Ramagiri Ashram and city MLA Sanjay Kelkar were present. People who became role models in their chosen fields were felicitated. Poor people were given money to meet their medical needs, as a part of social commitment of the devotees. Similar functions will be held in future also, according to Sasikumar Nair, Convenor of the organising committee.

Chief Tantri Sooryan Jayasooryan Bhattathiripad during the ritual



N T Pillai accepts the appointment as Vice President of Shiv Sena South Cell Navi Mumbai.



Hiranandani Keralite Association, Powai

■ Hiranandani Keralite Association, Powai celebrated Onam on a grand scale on 11 th September 2016 evening at Mini Punjab Auditorium, Powai. The event began by lighting the lamp by all the committee members of the association followed by Chendamelam by Chitali Achutha Marar and Team. The highlight of the evening was Kaikottikali and other dance events presented by the youth and ladies wing of the association. There was a formal meeting at 8.30 pm. The Chairman S.R.Pillai welcomed the audience. Former Chief Minister of Kerala Oommen Chandy was the chief guest. In his address to the gathering he spoke on various subjects relating to the issues of Malayalees in general. Dr.P.J.Aprain (President), A.N.Shaji (General Secretary) and Malbin Victor (Treasurer) also spoke on the occasion.



Former Chief Minister of Kerala Oommen Chandy lighting the lamp.



Oommen Chandy on and off the stage



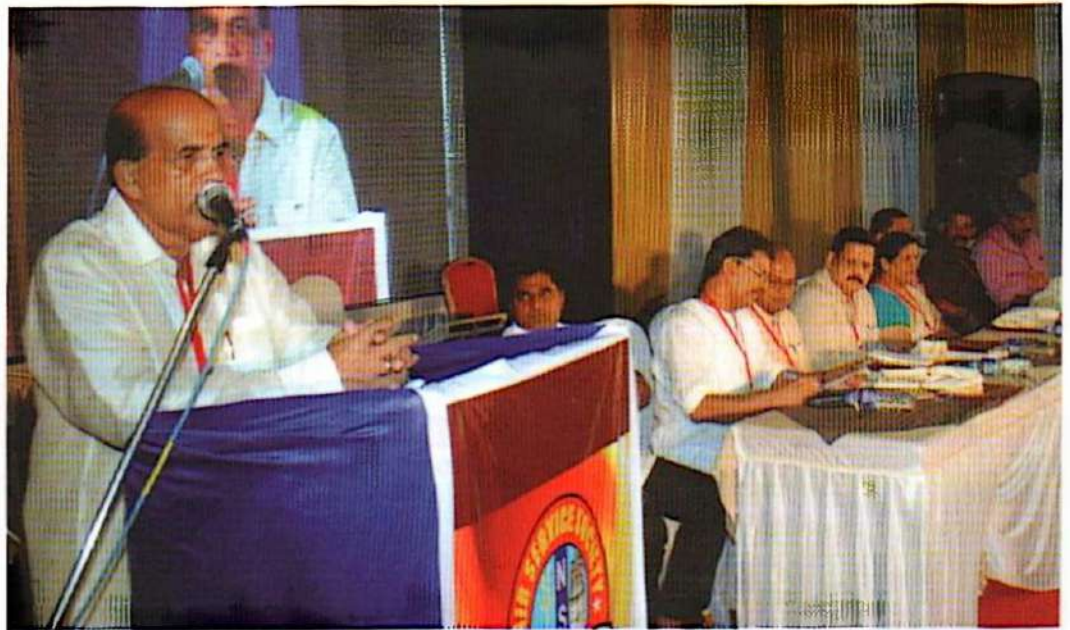
Vallamkali

Nair Service Society, Ulhasnagar

■ Nair Service Society, Ulhasnagar celebrated their silver jubilee and Onaghosham (Aavani Mahotsavam - 2016) on a grand scale on 18 th September 2016 at Town Hall, Ulhasnagar. The programme began with a Dashavataram ballet in which more than 30 children of the members participated. It was followed by a dance item by the youth wing of NSS and *Kaikottikali* by the lady members of the association. During the event P V Vijaykumar of Kerala in Mumbai Magazine was the Chief Guest. S.R.Pillai Chairman of KNSS, Harikumar Menon Secretary of KNSS, Valsala Nair (wife of V.G.Nair of VGN Jewellers) et al were the other guests of the evening. Mr.Vishwanathan Nair - President of NSS, Ulhasnagar welcomed the gathering. Many senior members of the association were felicitated on the occasion. Meritorious students of SSC/HSC belonging to the members of the association were also felicitated. Prasad Shornur was the anchor for the evening. Public meeting was followed by an orchestra program by Dr.Arun Gopan of Idea Star Singer Fame.



S R Pillai lights the lamp



Viswanathan Nair addressing the gathering



A section of the audience



Kaikottikali

Borivili Malayalee Samajam

■ The Borivli Malayali Samajam Onam Celebrations were held on 18th Sep 2016 at V.K.Krishna Menon Academy & Junior college, Borivili . There was special programme by children, youth and senior members of Samajam. The event "Cultural Extravaganza of Dance, Music & Skit of Special Feature of Malayalam Cinema 1928 -2016" was organised by Vanitha Vedi Team. The Chief Guest who graced the occasion was Malayalam film star Mr. Indrans and Guest of Honour was Mr George Sebastian (Senior Manager of marketing Mathrubhumi). Hon



Actor Indrans lights the lamp



Members enthral the audience

Member of Parliament - Shri. Gopal Shetty was also part of the programme. Programme started with Onam pattu...followed by welcoming Mahabali and later the lighting of the lamp by Chief Guest, Hon.President Shriraj Nair , Vice President Anup, Hon. Gen Secretary Baburaj, along with Jt. Secretary, Treasurer, Art secretary & Vanitha Vedi secretary Mrs Simi Nair. . The samajam felicitated four stalwarts N. Gangadharan, M.P. Gangadharan, C.R. Nayar, and Gopalakrishnan for their outstanding contribution for the Samajam, Scholarship prizes were given to Member's Children who scored highest marks in their academics in SSC and HSC for the year 2015 -16. Members who celebrated their 70th birthday in 2015-16 were also honoured. The celebrations ended with a Traditional Onam sadhya. More than 800 people enjoyed the Onam programme and feast.

SNDP Yogam - Guru Jayanthi Celebrations

■ SNDP Yogam Mumbai - Thane Union celebrated 162 nd Jayanthi of Sree Narayana Guru in a grand scale on 11 th September 2016 at Agri Kohli Samskirti Hall, Nerul (W). SNDP Yogam General Secretary Vellappally Nateshan was the Chief Guest, Preeti Nateshan (S N Trust Member), Ravindra Chavan (Minister of Maharashtra for Civil Supplies), Devan (Malayalam Movie Actor), Manda Tai Matre (MLA), N.K.Bhupesh Babu et al participated in the event.

A procession with the portrait of Gurudevan was taken out from Nerul (W) railway station premises. Public meeting under the presidency of Union President S.Gopalakrishnan which was inaugurated by the Yogam General Secretary followed by Chadaya Sadya. A cultural program presented by the winners of western zone, central zone and Navi Mumbai zone was also held. Meritorious students of SSC and HSC were also be felicitated.

Goregaon Malayalee Samaj

■ Goregaon Malayalee Samaj celebrated Onam on a grand scale on 25th September 2016 at Vivek Education Society, Siddharth Nagar, Goregaon (W). The cultural programme started at 9.30 am by lighting the traditional lamp by the Chief Guest P V Vijaykumar of Kerala in Mumbai, along with the committee members, followed by cultural programmes and Onasadya.



Inauguration ceremony



Maveli arrives



Kaikottikkali



A section of audience



In memory of Joseph Vennoor

■ Bombay Keraleeya Samithi held a meeting to condole the death of Joseph Vennoor who died recently. President Adv Padma Divakaran presided over the meeting. Suresh Nair of Vivek Vidyalaya, Madhusoodanan Nair of Jogeshwari Welfare Association, Achuthan Nair, Unnikrishnan Nair et al besides the committee members and office bearers attended the meeting. Rajendran Padiyoor, Rajan Thekkummala, George Edward, Madhavan T, K G Pillai, Mohanan Nair, Prabhakaran Nambiar, Varghese and Hari spoke on the occasion. V Mukundan proposed a vote of thanks.

Migration history of Mumbai Malayalees on the anvil

■ Keraleeya Kendra Sanghatana has taken initiative to prepare the history of migration of Malayalees to Mumbai. It is estimated that about 25 lakh Malayalees are living in Mumbai and its suburbs. The first migration is assumed to have taken place more than one hundred years ago. Yet its history or their cultural activities in Mumbai have not been properly recorded. The available details are through the two books Naagarayanam and Nagaravana sagaram of K S Menon and some books of P R Krishnan. These details too have not been authenticated. It is in this backdrop that KKS has

initiated the move.

Prof K P Jayashankar, Head of Media and Cultural Studies in Tata Institute of Social Sciences has been entrusted with this task. As a first step a website will be launched for this purpose. P R Krishnan, Dr A P Jayaraman, Dr P V N Nair, C P Krishnakumar, Dr Harikumar, Narayanankutty, G Viswanathan, Surendrababu, Dr Venugopal et al are assisting KKS in this effort. Individuals interested to be associated with this effort may contact General Secretary of KKS, Dr Mathew Thomas on +9193224 00282 or +9191674 49349.

'Paattodu Paatu'

■ The adhoc committee of the West Zone of Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademi is organizing a musical day on October 23 at Dombivli and proposes to include all kinds of music the world over. The songs could be Indian or foreign, classical or folk, light music or film songs in any language. Anyone who wants to participate has to register his or her name by e-mail to ksnawestzone@gmail.com or on cell numbers 98330 74099, 98207 24613 or 99209 02275.

Vilappil Vision resumes its theatre activities

■ Vilappil Vision, founded by Vilappil Madhu who died last year, is reinventing itself under the leadership of his wife Usha Madhu. On his first death anniversary Usha herself revealed this.

Usha in a statement said that Madhu introduced her and their children to theatre and she decided to part with it on his sudden demise. When the activists of Alibagh Malayali Samajam asked her about returning to theatre, she was under pressure and revoked her earlier decision. Her earlier colleagues were also for the revival. So the troupe is planning to stage their popular play 'Pathom Onnu: Pravasi' on October 2 when Alibagh Samajam is celebrating

ONAM. This will be followed by other plays 'Vazhakkula' and 'Kathapatrangalum Pangeduthavarum' on Oct 13 at Nerul and on Oct 30 at Thane. During the last year's Onam celebrations of Alibagh Malayali Samajam, the play 'Oru Pravasiyude Matakayathra' (Return Journey of a Pravasi) was presented by Madhu, his last act on stage. He died when he was working on another play for a drama competition sponsored by Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademi. Usha now wants to complete that play also. Vilappil Vision is the only troupe that possesses all equipments needed for a play to be staged, in Mumbai.

SNMS organises Personality Development programme for children

■ Sree Narayana Mandira Samiti is organising a personality Development programme for children between 8 and 20 years. It is aiming to develop moral values and social commitment among the new generation. the camp will be held from Nov 7 to Nov 11 at Nerul Gurudevagiri. Parents of interested children should contact the office on 27718280, 27718283 or 9324222313. Admission forms will be available from all unit secretaries and council members. The camp is open to all communities. Registration will be on November 6 from 5 pm onwards. The camp will be held under Director of One World School of Vedanta Swami Mukthananda Yati.

Mulund Kerala Samajam

■ Mulund Kerala Samajam has celebrated Onam on a grand scale at Bhakta Sangham Hall, Mulund (W) on Sunday the 25th September 2016. Samajam President C.K.K. Poduval inaugurated the cultural programmes immediately after the Pookalamalsaram followed by dance programmes by Samajam member's children, Kaikottikali, Orchestra etc. Principal of Vani Vidyalaya Jr. College Mulund Dr. Dolly Henry who won the best teacher national award was felicitated during the occasion. Another teacher Shanti Lakshmi Narayan who was a recipient of Dronacharya Award for the best teacher was also felicitated. Meritorious students of SSC/ HSC and Malayalam mission Suryakanti examination winning students were felicitated. E Ramachandran welcomed the audience and Santha Vasudevan gave a vote of thanks.



President CKK Poduval inaugurates the event



A section of the audience and some cultural events



Ghobdunder Road Area Malayali Association (GRAMAM), Thane

■ Ghobdunder Road Area Malayali Association, Thane celebrated their 5th Onaghosham at Blossom Hotel, Ghobdunder Road Thane on Sunday the 25th September 2016. Noted social activist Dayabai was the Chief Guest and Intense Communication Head Director Vivek Shetty was the special guest. Dr. John Mathew of Charms Group, Sashikumar Nair of ATMA et al were the other guests on the occasion.



During the Onam celebration

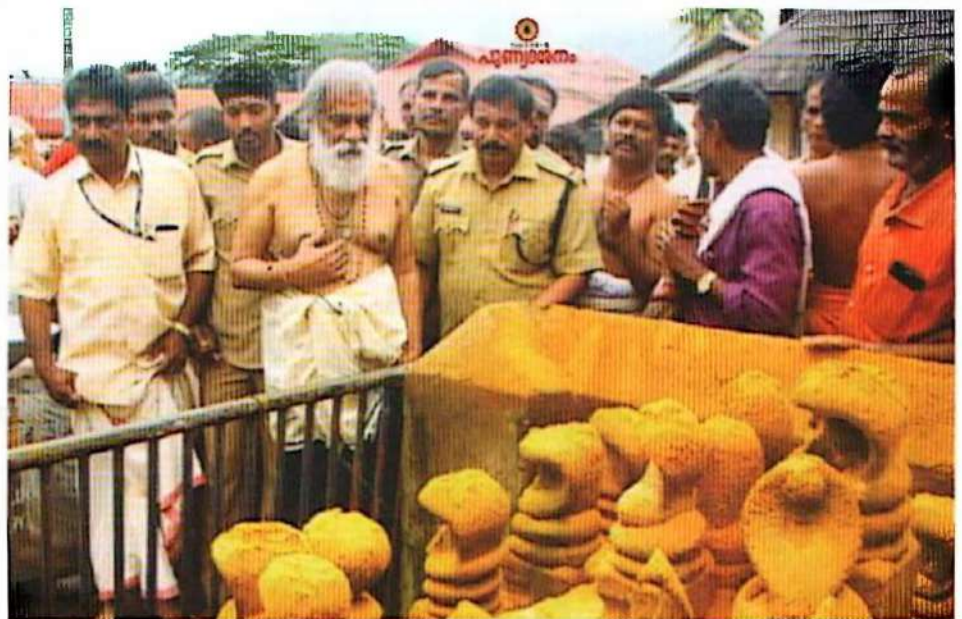


Sasikumar Nair felicitates Dayabai



NORKA activities to be made efficient

■ NORKA's activities in Mumbai would be made efficient and the problems faced by pravasis would be solved soon, said K V Abdul Khader MLA. He represents Guruvayur constituency and is currently president of Pravasi Welfare Department. He was speaking in a meeting held in Kerala House, Vashi. The state government is planning to expand the welfare schemes with the help of the central government, he said. He also assured that the state government would increase the funds for welfare activities. Bhupesh Babu presided over the meeting. P R Krishnan, K A Kurup, Hariharan, Nawaz, Adv S N Pillai, Adv G A K Nair, E S Sajeevan, Devan Therappil, Murali, Velayudhan, Sunilkumar and Shrikant Nair spoke during the event.



Popular playback singer K.J. Yesudas made a visit to Sabarimala and spent a whole day there with prayers. He was accompanied with his friends and returned only on the next morning.



Disciples of Smt. Sushama Gopinath from Chembur fine arts performed Mohiniattam on the occasion of Teachers day on 9th September 2016.

SNMS Ulhasnagar celebrates tenth anniversary

■ Sree Narayana Mandira Samiti celebrates its tenth anniversary on Oct 16. The programme starts at 7 am with Guru Pooja and ends at 6 pm with a meeting at Lal Chakki Sarvajanic Mitra Mandal Hall. SNMS President N Sasidharan will preside over the event. Ambernath MLA Dr Balaji Kirnikar will be the Chief Guest while Suresh Jadhav and Vijay Tayde, corporators will be Guests of Honour. Central Committee office bearers M I Damodaran, N Mohandas, N S Salimkumar, O K Prasad and M G Raghavan will also address the audience. Shweta Warriar of Tru Indian Dance Academy and her troupe will present classical fusion dance and Tara Preman and her group will present Pinnal Thiruvathira. Meritorious students of SSC and HSC will also be felicitated. People interested to present cultural programmes may contact on 7798049567.

Mulund Bhakta Sangham

■ Mulund Bhakta Sangham celebrated Pooruthassi in Mulund Guruvayurappan Temple from Sept 17 and would continue till Oct 15. Bhajan, Namasankeerthanam and Dolotsavam are being held here on all these days at different timings. For more details contact on +912225615 346.

Malayalam Literary Competition

■ As a part of the 5 th Malayalotsavam, Malayala Bhasha Pracharana Sangham is conducting an All Maharashtra Based Malayalam Literary Competition. The competition will be held in short stories, poem and essay. The last date for receiving the entries will be 1 st November 2016. The winners of this camp will be felicitated during the 5 th Malayalotsavam scheduled to be held at Vasai on 29 th January 2017. A copy of the entry form can be mailed or send via courier. For more details contact on +919869559579 or mumbaimalayalam@gmail.com.



Aalpanakkavu Temple conducted a Ashta /dravya Maha Ganapati Havan with 1008 coconuts during Sept 5 to 15 to observe Ganeshotsavam 2016.

Mumbai Kala Bhavan (MKB World Events)

■ Mumbai Kala Bhavan conducted a musical concert by the popular Singer Vaikom Vijaylakshmi at Chembur Fine Arts Auditorium on Sunday the 25th September 2016. Popular business man of Mumbai Prince Vaidyan, A.S. Madhavan of Warriar Foundation and P.V. Vijaykumar of Kerala in Mumbai were the guests of the evening.



Vaikom Vijaylakshmi performs

Thiruvathira with 10000 participants

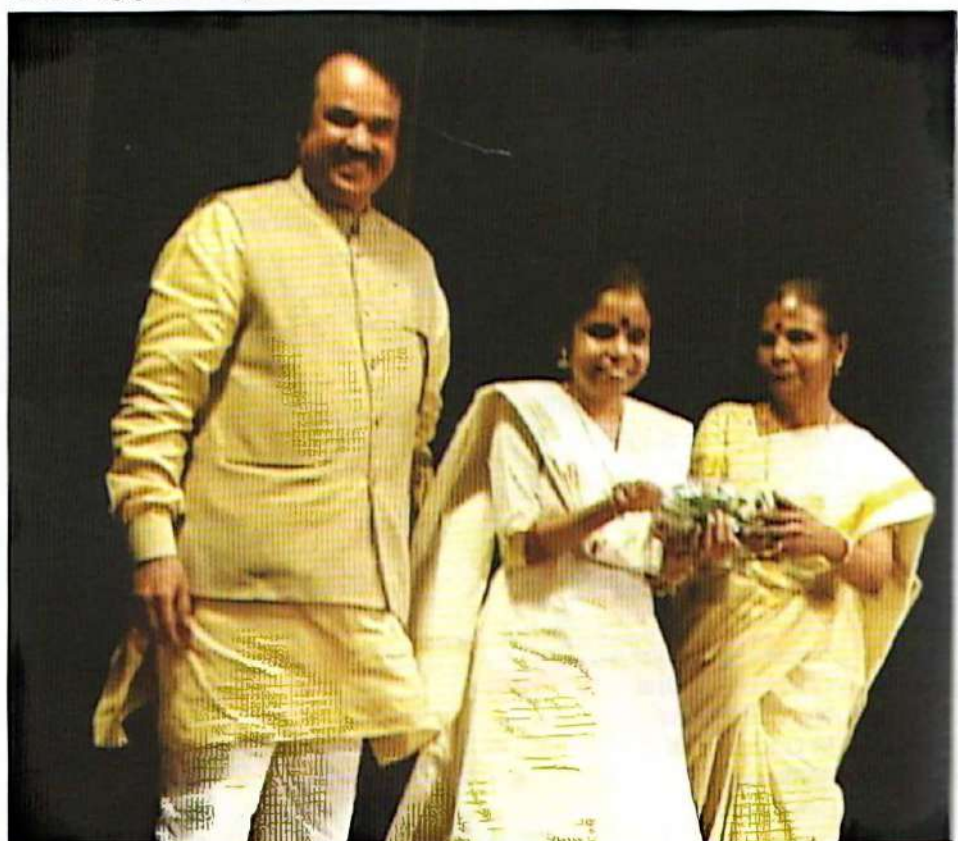
■ Parvanendu Thiruvathira School of Ernakulam is organising Thiruvathira with 10,000 participants with the objective of popularising this dance form under the title 'Athirotsavam 2017' in April 2017. They have invited applications from interested females above 12 years. Well known kaikottikkali artiste Mrs MalathiG Menon will supervise the training. Tru Indian Dance Academy provides the necessary support to all interested parties from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa and Chhatisgarh. For details contact on 9447155950 or 8424939874.

Vidyarambham at Gurudevagiri on Oct 11

■ Gurudevagiri in Nerul has made arrangements for Vidyarambham on Oct 11 with Sri Vidya Pooja. Vidyarambham will be held on the special Saraswati Mandapam in International Study Centre on Vijaydashami Day. The event will commence at 7 am. For details contact 27718280 or 27724095.

National Award for Mumbai Malayalee Teacher

■ Mumbai based Malayalee Teacher Beena R. Lobo has been selected for the National Award for best teacher. She is the Principal of Karthika High School and Junior College of Bharat Education Society, Kurla (W). She is a native of Pala, Kottayam District, Kerala. She received the award by the President of India Shri. Pranab Mukherjee in a glittering function held at New Delhi on 5 th September 2016.



Vaikom Vijaylakshmi being felicitated by Prince Vaidyan

Ahmedabad Kerala Samajam, Onaghosham

■ Ahmedabad Kerala Samajam is celebrating Onam in a grand scale which will be extended upto two months. The inauguration of the celebration was held on 4 th September 2016 with "Onachamayam" program. The celebrations are to be held in fifteen different wards. There was *pookalamalasaram* on September 8 th at Sree Narayana Guru Vidyalaya, Satellite Road, Ahmedabad along with Tug of War, Sports/ Cultural competitions. The celebrations continued in Vastrapur, Ghati Lodia on 11 th September in Bhopal, Taltej, Noble Nagar, Mani Nagar and Nirnaya Nagar on 25 th

September. It will be held at Odav Sabarmati on 2 nd October and in Krishna Nagar, Vejalpur on 16 th October. Thousands of people participated in all these events. Arrangements for Onasadya will be for more than 18,000 people. The Ahmedabad Kerala Samajam is 71 year old association. The celebrations are being conducted in association with Malayalam Mission A.K.S. School, Youth Wing, Ladies Wing, Akshaya Academy and A.K.S. Co-operative Society according to a press release issued by President K.M.Ramachandram and Gen.Secretary C.V. Narayanan.

SNMS Units observe Guru Samadhi

■ Sree Narayana Mandira Samiti observed the 89th Samadhi anniversary by resorting to fast, special poojas, community prayer, Samadhi pooja, distribution of prasadam, and discourses since early morning on Samadhi day. All units of SNMS joined in the rituals especially at their Chembur, Dadar headquarters, Gurudevagiri and Guru Centres.

Airoli Guru Centre had Guru pooja, pushpanjali, at 6.15 am and from 8.15 am onwards and followed up with recitation of Guru Bhagavatham, group prayer, etc. The afternoon saw rendition of Samadhi songs, Samadhi pooja etc followed by *kanji veezhthal*.

Since 7.30 am Guru pooja, recitation of Guru Bhagavatham, Samadhi pooja etc and Prasad distribution at **Ambarnath** Guru Centre were done.

Special pooja, prayer, bhajan, recitation of Guru's kirtans etc started since morning in **Bhandup**. Akhandanamam started at 1 pm followed by Samadhi pooja, Samadhi songs, dedication etc. **CBD** Guru Centre started their rituals from 8.30 am and continued upto 3.30 pm with events like recitation of Guru Bhagavatham, Samadhi pooja etc and Prasad distribution.

In **Guru Mandiram of Chembur complex**, the rituals started at 10 am with chanting, collective prayer, pushpanjali, recitation of keertan by Guru, Jyoti Darshan etc.

Dadar office started their programme from 2.20 pm till 3.30 pm.

Dombivli Guru Centre had group prayer for two hours from 2 pm followed by recitation of Guru Bhagavatham, Samadhi pooja, kanji veezhthal etc.

Goregaon Unit conducted Guru Pooja at 8 am and Akhandanamam japam at 11 am. Samadhi Pooja was held at 3.20 pm followed by Samadhi Pooja, community Prayer and *Kanji Veezhthal*.

At **Gurudevagiri**, the programme started at 9 am by the Ladies Wing, with Group prayer, Akhandanamam, pushpabhishekam, Samadhi pooja and *kanji veezhthal*.

The programme at **Guru Centre of Kalamboli** consisted of Guru pooja, recitation of Guru Bhagavatham etc since 3 pm and Samadhi pooja and Prasad distribution from 3 pm onwards. At **Kalyan** Centre Guru Pooja started at 8 am followed by recitation of Gurubhagavatam and bhajan. After 3.20

pm Samadhi pooja, Poomoodal and *kanji veezhthal* followed.

Kharghar Guru Centre witnessed recitation of Guru Bhagavatham, Samadhi pooja etc and Prasad distribution since morning 7 am onwards.

At **Kurar**, Mahaganapati Homam was held at 6.30 am followed by community prayer, discourse, recitation of Guru's works etc. Samadhi Pooja was held at 3.20 pm. The event was held under the auspices of **Malad** unit.

At **Mira Road** Guru Centre, Shanti Havanam commenced early morning, and recitation of Gurubhagavatam started at 8 am followed by Akhandanamajapam and community prayer. Samadhi Pooja started at 3.15 pm followed by Poomoodal and Kanji Veezhthal.

Powai Guru Centre observed the day with Guru Pooja at 8.30 am, followed by recitation of Bhagawat Gita and Keertans created by Guru, Samadhi Pooja and distribution of Prasadam.

Sakinaka Guru Sree Maheshwara Temple had Santhi Havan, Mahaguru pooja, recitation of Guru Bhagavatham, akhandanamam, discourse, Samadhi pooja etc since 5.30 am and afternoon session had Mahasamadhi pooja, group prayer, deeparadhana, Mangalarathi etc

since 3 pm.

In **Atmashakti Nagar of Tarapore** Unit, the rituals started at 7 pm with Pooja, distribution of prasadam followed by *Kanji Veezhthal*.

Thane Centre saw Guru Pooja, Community prayer etc from 9 am. Samadhi Pooja started at 3.15 pm followed by recitation of Gurubhagavatam and *Kanji Veezhthal*. In **Ulhasnagar**, recitation of Gurubhagavatam started at 9 am followed by community prayer. Samadhi pooja and *kanji veezhthal* started from 3.15 pm.

At **Vashi** Guru Centre, the programme started with Guru pooja followed by Akhandanamam and in the afternoon Samadhi pooja, Maha arti, and ended with *kanji veezhthal*.

At **Vasai** Centre, Guru Pooja started at 8.30 am followed by fasting, Namajapam, recitation of Gita and other works of Guru. Afternoon programme started with Gurubhagavatam at 2 pm followed by Community prayer, Samadhi Pooja, Guru pooja, community prayer, discourse and distribution of prasadam.

Virar Centre saw Guru Pooja at 7 am followed by recitation of Guru's works and community prayer. Samadhi Pooja started at 3.15 pm followed by *Kanji Veezhthal*.

Obituary



Smt KRISHNA GANAPATHY (1915 - 2016)

Smt. KRISHNA GANAPATHY, (101), wife of Late Sri V. Ganapathy Iyer, Advocate, Trivandrum breathed her last peacefully at Alak CHS, Sector-19A, Nerul, Navi Mumbai on September 18, 2016. Deeply mourned by her sons and their spouses Ramakrishnan-Janaki, Natarajan-Mohana and daughters and their spouses Janaki-Narayanan, Lakshmi who is feature editor of Kerala in Mumbai -Venkatachalam, and grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Discussion on Little Magazines and Parallel Publications



FOMA President U N Gopi Nair address the gathering

■ Forum Of Media Associates with the support of various periodicals from Mumbai conducted a discussion on the “Significance of the little Magazines and Parallel publications “. UN Gopi Nair, President of FOMA and editor of Jwala Magazine mentioned the scope and objectives of the discussion.

Nooranad Mohan (Editor, Unma Monthly) and C R Das (novelist) who wrote many children's fictions along with writer Kanakkoor Sureshkumar were special guests. Novelist C P Krishnakumar was the moderator, who gave example of the poem “Kurukshethram” to point out the significance of the little magazines.

KV Satyanath, Editor of 'Kerala in Mumbai' presented the subject. The history of many mainstream publication and little magazines was explained in context of the socio- economic and

cultural changes in the society. He went on to analyse the viability of the publications, its responsibilities and scope to become the torch bearers of just future.

Nooranad Mohan, narrated the story of his little magazine's 30 years continuing struggle to survive in the environment, which suit more for the big publishing houses with money and political patronage. Little magazines undertake the task of talking the ultimate truth with no fear and favour. It may not suit many potential advertisers. May not be convenient to social groups, political establishments etc, with vested interests. Hence, even physical survival was challenged many times.

CR Das talked about the little magazines for children. In Kerala more and more children are opting for English medium schools. Hence, in addition to

the Malayalam story books, they now provide English translations .

PV Vijayakumar, Managing editor of 'Kerala in Mumbai', narrated the interesting story of the inception of his Magazine, and the ripple effect on the mainstream media to focus on the subjects dealt by Kerala in Mumbai. Noted journalist VN Gopalakrishnan shared his experience in the Middle East, which gave another dimension to the subject. Dr.P.Harikumar mentioned the importance of such interactions in context of the neglect met by “pravasi writers” from the mainstream media.

Writers Govindan Unni, Kochukunji Pillai, Sureshkumar Kottarakkara, Devan Tharappil, Suresh Nair, Rajan Thekkummala et al actively participated in the discussion. TP Vasudevan welcomed the guests and audience. NT Pillai proposed a vote of thanks.



Speakers: Satyanath, Govindan Unni, Dr Harikumar, V N Gopalakrishnan, Mohan, C R Das and Krishnakumar



BMS at Mathrubhumi Kalolotsavam

■ The Mathrubhumi Kalolotsavam held on September 24 and 25 at Adarsh Vidyalaya, Chembur brought accolades for the Borivli Malayali Samajam. BMS emerged winners of Zone 3 in the two day extravaganza. Borivli Malayali Samajam had

represented in solo and group events like light music, Nadan Pattu, poetry recitation and Dance (solo Bharathanatyam, Mohini Attam, Oppana and Margamkali). Led by Mrs Simi Nair and Rejitha Nair of Vanita Vedi of the Samajam and

Guru and dedicated teachers of BMS, the Team work and the efforts of the children, parents, teachers showed the result at the Mathrubhumi competition. BMS came out as the Champions of Western Zone 3 at the end of the 2 day mega event.

Certificate distribution of Sree Narayana Guru College

■ Sree Narayana Guru College distributed the certificates to the students who completed the foundation course of the three year long dual degree course conducted in association with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Those who completed two years received their domain certificate. The college started this course of National University Students Skill Development in 2013. When these students complete their entire course, they will receive the degree from the Mumbai University along with the certificates issued by the TISS. These students could easily obtain jobs because of the dual qualifications. During the course, the students will receive hands on

experience from reputed organizations. The distribution was carried out at the hands of V P Nandakumar, Chairman of Manappuram Finance Ltd. He handed over the TISS certificates to 263 students. He told the recipients how a humble business effort could be converted to a successful venture, citing his own experience. He exhorted the students to make use of the facilities offered by the state and central governments to start one's own business ventures. He also offered them direct recruitment from their campus. President of SNMS, N Sasidharan congratulated the students for their efforts. He said that if a child of three years joins the educational institutes of SNMS, they could achieve post graduation as well as expert training to

appear for the Civil Service Examination, before leaving it. Theirs is the first institute to distribute this certificate and about 100 institutions of Andhra Pradesh were inspired by this achievement, said NUSSD Program Director Nikhil Tawle. The growing unemployment and economic recession are the biggest challenges faced by the present generation and this NUSSD program prepares them to successfully face it, said Dr Bino Paul, Dean of TISS. Those who complete this entirely free course can not only enter a career but also go for higher qualifications, he remarked. Raghavan, N Thampan et al participated in the event.



ബദരീനാഥം



കുനം വിഷ്ണു

■ ഞങ്ങൾ ഗൗരീകുണ്ഡിൽനിന്ന് പുറപ്പെട്ടു നോൾ നേരം സന്ധ്യയോട് അടുത്തിരുന്നു. അസ്തമയസൂര്യന്റെ തങ്കകിരണങ്ങൾ വനത്തിലെല്ലാം ഒളിച്ചു നടക്കുന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഓരോ തിരിവു കഴിയുമ്പോഴും (അതാണെങ്കിൽ എപ്പോഴും തിരിയാനുണ്ടുതാനും) 'കനലിൽ ചൂട്ടെടുത്തൊരു കനകച്ചേങ്ങിലപോലെ' യുള്ള ദിനകരംബിംബം പ്രത്യക്ഷമാവുകയും അപ്രത്യക്ഷമാവുകയും, അങ്ങകലെ തങ്കം പുശിയ

വെള്ളിക്കൊടുമുടികളും, അതിൽതട്ടി പ്രതിഫലിക്കുന്ന മാസ്മരികശോകേളും, ചക്രവാളത്തിൽ വാതിവിതറിയ എണ്ണിയാലൊടുങ്ങാത്ത വർണ്ണങ്ങളും - എന്റെ പ്രിയപ്പെട്ട വായനക്കാരോ, ഇതൊന്നും വർണ്ണിക്കാനുള്ള വാക്സാമർത്ഥ്യം എനിക്കില്ല. ജീവിതത്തിരക്കിനിടയിൽ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കാൻ പറ്റാതെ പോയ മഹാഭാഗ്യങ്ങളാണോ, ദേവലോകത്തിന്റെ മാസ്മരിക മായാജാലകങ്ങളാണോ അറിയില്ല, ഞങ്ങൾ ഞങ്ങളെത്തന്നെ മറന്ന നിമിഷങ്ങൾ! ഒന്നുമാത്രം പറയാം, സങ്കല്പലോകത്തിലെങ്കിലും സ്വർഗം എന്നൊന്നുണ്ട് എങ്കിൽ അതിന്റെ പ്രവേശകവാടം, ഇതാ, ഈ ദേവഭൂമിയിലാണ്, തീർച്ച.

കുറച്ചു പോയപ്പോൾ ഡ്രൈവർ വണ്ടി പാതയുടെ ഓരത്താക്കി നിർത്തി. ഞങ്ങൾ ആ മോഹവലയത്തിൽനിന്ന് യാഥാർത്ഥ്യത്തിന്റെ വിരസതയിലേക്ക് വീണു. അപ്പോഴേക്കും നല്ലപോലെ ഇരുട്ടായി. ഡ്രൈവർ പറഞ്ഞു, "നമുക്ക് രാത്രി പിപ്പൽകോട്ട് എന്ന സ്ഥലത്താണ് സൗകര്യമൊരുക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. പക്ഷെ പിപ്പൽകോട്ട് വളരെ ദൂരെയാണ്. ഈ ഇരുട്ടത്ത്, ഈ രാത്രി അതുവരെ വണ്ടിയോടിക്കുക എന്നാൽ ആത്മഹത്യ ചെയ്യുക എന്നാണ് അർത്ഥം. രണ്ടു കിലോമീറ്റർ കൂടി പോയാലോ, സീതാപ്പുരത്തും. അതായത് ഇന്നലെ താമസിച്ച ഹോട്ടലുള്ള സ്ഥലം. നമുക്ക് അവിടെയാണ് ശ്രമിച്ചാലോ?" വിനയപൂർവ്വമുള്ള നിർദ്ദേശം. പക്ഷെ അതിന്റെ അർത്ഥം, അതല്ലാതെ വഴിയൊന്നും ഇല്ല എന്ന അലംഘനീയമായ വിളംബരം തന്നെയാണ്. ഇതിൽ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് രണ്ടു നഷ്ടങ്ങളുണ്ട് എന്ന് അറിയാവുന്നതിനാലാവാം ഈ ഭവ്യത. ഒന്ന് പിപ്പൽകോട്ടിൽ മുൻകൂർ കൊടുത്ത പണം നഷ്ടം. ഇവിടെ പണം കൊടുക്കുകയും വേണം. രണ്ട്, പിപ്പൽകോട്ടിലെ നല്ല ഹോട്ടലിനു പകരം സീതാപ്പുരിലെ പരുങ്ങലായ ലോഡ്ജിൽ കൂടുകയും വേണം. ഞങ്ങൾ സീതാപ്പുരിൽ കൂടാൻ

ഐകകണ്ഠ്യേന തീരുമാനിച്ചു. ജീവനേക്കാൾ വലുതല്ലല്ലോ ധനനഷ്ടം!

ഹോട്ടലുകാരുടെ സഹകരണവും ആതിഥ്യമര്യാദകളും പ്രശംസനീയംതന്നെ. സമയം ഏഴര കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടേയുള്ളൂ. പക്ഷെ വിജനമായ ഒരു സ്ഥലത്ത്, ഒറ്റപ്പെട്ട ഈ ഹോട്ടലിന്റെ ചുറ്റുവട്ടത്തിലെ ഇരുട്ടും നിശ്ശബ്ദതയും കാരണം പാതിരാത്രിയായ പ്രതീതി. ഞങ്ങൾ സാമാനങ്ങളെല്ലാം ഇറക്കി 'ചെക്കിൻ' ചെയ്തു, ഗണേശൻ സാധനങ്ങളുമായി അടുക്കള പിടിച്ചടക്കി. അര മണിക്കൂറിനുള്ളിൽ ഓരോ ചൂടുചായ കിട്ടി. ചൂടുവെള്ളം കാലത്തേ കിട്ടുള്ളുവത്രെ. അതിനാൽ കുളി ലാഭം. ഗണേശൻവഴി കിട്ടിയ അല്പം ചൂടുവെള്ളംകൊണ്ട് ഫ്രഷായി. ഒന്നര മണിക്കൂർ കഴിഞ്ഞപ്പോഴേക്കും കാതിനു തേനായ ഗണേശന്റെ വിളി. ചൂടുചോറും ആവി പറക്കുന്ന രസവും പപ്പടവും. നല്ല വിശപ്പ്. മനസ്സും വയറും നിറഞ്ഞ് ഞങ്ങൾ ബ്ലാങ്കറ്റിനുള്ളിലേക്ക് വലിഞ്ഞു. ദിവസം മുഴുവൻ നടന്ന ക്ഷീണമല്ലേ, സ്വപ്നം കാണാൻപോലും മറന്ന് ഉറങ്ങി.

കാലത്ത് അലാറത്തിന്റെ തുയിലുണർത്ത് കേട്ടാണ് ഉണർന്നത്. പ്രഭാതം പൊട്ടി വിരിയുന്നതേയുള്ളൂ. സാധാരണ നിലയ്ക്ക് ഇത്ര നേർത്തെ എവിടേയും ചൂടുവെള്ളമൊന്നും കിട്ടില്ല. പക്ഷെ പറഞ്ഞല്ലോ, ഹോട്ടലിലെ പയ്യന്മാർ നല്ല സഹകരണമാണ്



Badrinath Temple



നൽകിയത്. അവർ ആവശ്യത്തിനുള്ള ചൂടുവെള്ളം കൊണ്ടു വന്നുതന്നു. പ്രിയൊന്നുമല്ലാട്ടോ. ഞങ്ങൾ പ്രഭാതകൃത്യങ്ങൾ കഴിച്ച് കൂട്ടിച്ചു തയ്യാറായി. ഓരോ ചൂടുചായ കുടിക്കുമ്പോഴേക്ക് ലഗ്നേജ് കയറ്റി കഴിഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. ആദിത്യ ഭഗവാൻ കിഴക്കുനിന്ന് പുറപ്പെട്ടപ്പോഴേക്കും ഞങ്ങളും പുറപ്പെട്ടു.

ഹിമാലയത്തിന്റെ ഭൂമിശാസ്ത്രമറിയാവുന്ന ഡ്രൈവർ ഇന്നലെ പറഞ്ഞതത്രെ ശരി! അളകനന്ദാതിരത്തുകൂടിയുള്ള പാതയാണ് ഒരുപക്ഷെ ചാർഡായാത്രയിലെ ഏറ്റവും അപകടം പിടിച്ച വഴി. വീതി നന്നെ കുറവ്; എതിരെ ഒരു വാഹനം വന്നാൽ വഴി നൽകാൻ മിക്കയിടത്തും സാധിക്കില്ല. മുല്ലമയ്ക്കി കിടക്കുന്ന മണ്ണാകയാൽ മണ്ണിടിച്ചിൽ സാധാരണമാണ്. ഡ്രൈവറുടെ തൊട്ടു മുന്മുള്ള യാത്രയിൽ, മുന്നിലൊരു മണ്ണിടിച്ചിൽ ഉണ്ടായതിനാൽ, വാഹനങ്ങൾ വഴിയിൽ കുടുങ്ങിയത്രെ. പട്ടാളക്കാർ വന്നു മണ്ണും കല്ലും നീക്കുന്നതുവരെ മുപ്പത്തൊരു മണിക്കൂർവരെ ഭക്ഷണവും വെള്ളവും ഇല്ലാതെ വഴിയിൽ പെട്ടുപോയത്രെ. ആദ്യം പറഞ്ഞിരുന്നത് ഗംഗോത്രിയിലേക്കുള്ള യാത്രയാണ് ദുഷ്കരം എന്നാണല്ലോ. ബദരിയിലേക്കുള്ള യാത്ര അതിലുമധികം വിഷമം നിറഞ്ഞതാണെന്നു ഇപ്പോൾ ബോധ്യപ്പെട്ടു. ഇത്തരം യാത്രകളിൽ നമുക്കൊന്നും ചെയ്യാനില്ല. യേമുള്ളവർക്ക് പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കാം; ഇല്ലാത്തവർക്ക് എല്ലാം ദൈവഹിതം എന്നു കരുതി സമാധാനിക്കാം. ഏതായാലും ഞങ്ങളുടെ യാത്ര ഉദ്ദേശമേതുമായി രുന്നുവെങ്കിലും സുരക്ഷിതമായിത്തന്നെ കലാശിച്ചു.

ഹിമാലയത്തിലെ ഏറ്റവും പുണ്യം നിറഞ്ഞ തീർത്ഥാടന കേന്ദ്രമാണ് ബദരിനാഥം. ഏറ്റവും ഉയരത്തിൽ കിടക്കുന്ന വൈഷ്ണവക്ഷേത്രവും ഇതുതന്നെ. ഉത്തരാഖണ്ഡ് സംസ്ഥാനത്തിലെ പമോലി ജില്ലയിലാണ് ബദരി. സമുദ്രനിരപ്പിൽനിന്ന് 3133 മീ. അഥവാ പതിനായിരം അടിയോളം ഉയരത്തിലാണ് അളകനന്ദ നദിയുടെ തീരത്ത്, നീലകണ്ഠപർവ്വതത്തിന്റെ ചെരുവിൽ കിടക്കുന്ന ഈ കൊച്ചുഗ്രാമം. നരൻ, നാരായണൻ എന്ന രണ്ടു പർവ്വതങ്ങൾ ഇരുപാർശ്വങ്ങളിലും കാവൽ നിൽക്കുന്നു. അളകനന്ദ നദിയുടെ ഉത്ഭവസ്ഥാനം ബദരിക്ക് സമീപമാണ്.

സംസ്കൃതത്തിൽ ബദരി എന്നാൽ ഇലന്തപ്പഴമാണ്. ക്ഷേത്രയോഗ്യമായ ഇലന്തപ്പഴം നിറഞ്ഞ ബദരീവനത്തെ പഠിപ്പുരാണങ്ങളിലും വേദങ്ങളിൽപ്പോലും പരാമർശമുണ്ട്. ഇപ്പോൾ ഒരു ഇലന്തമരംപോലും അവിടെയില്ല എന്നു പറയാതിരിക്കാനാവില്ല. ഭഗവാൻ മഹാദേവനാണത്രെ തപസ്സ് അനുഷ്ഠിക്കാനായി അവിടെ സ്വയം നാരായണപ്രതിഷ്ഠ നടത്തിയത്. മഹാവിഷ്ണു തപസ്സു ചെയ്യാനും തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്ത സ്ഥലം ഇവിടെ ആയിരുന്നുവത്രെ. ഹിന്ദുമതം ക്ഷയിച്ചുനിന്ന കാലത്ത് ബദരിനാഥ് ഒരു ബുദ്ധവിഹാരമായിരുന്നു എന്നും ശ്രീ ശങ്കരാചാര്യരാണ് അവിടം ഒരു തീർത്ഥാടനകേന്ദ്രമായി തിരികെ പിടിച്ചത് എന്നു പറയുന്ന ചരിത്രകാരന്മാരുണ്ട്. ആ ഗ്രാമത്തിലെ ഏക ആകർഷണം അവിടത്തെ ക്ഷേത്രമാണ്.

ബദരിയിൽ ആദ്യമായി എന്നാണ് ക്ഷേത്രം ഉണ്ടായതെന്ന്

ആർക്കും അറിയില്ല. വേദേതിഹാസങ്ങളിലെ പരാമർശങ്ങൾ കാരണം 3500 കൊല്ലമെങ്കിലും (അതോ 7000 കൊല്ലമോ?) പഴക്കം പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കുന്നവരുണ്ട്. പിൻക്കാലത്ത് ബുദ്ധവിഹാരമായി തീർന്ന ബദരി ശങ്കരാചാര്യർ ആണ് തിരിച്ചു പിടിച്ചതെന്ന് കരുതിയാൽ ക്രിസ്തബ്ദം ഒമ്പതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ ആരംഭത്തിലാവാം. പിന്നീട് പല തവണ പ്രകൃതിക്ഷോഭങ്ങളിൽ നശിക്കുകയും പുനരുദ്ധരിക്കപ്പെടുകയുമുണ്ടായി. പതിനാറാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിൽ ഗവർവർ രാജാവ് ഇവിടെ ക്ഷേത്രനിർമ്മാണം നടത്തുകയുണ്ടായി. പിന്നീടും ഹിമനിപാതത്താലും ഭൂമികുലുക്കത്താലും ക്ഷേത്രം നശിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്, കേടുപാടുകൾ തീർക്കുകയും ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഇന്നു കാണുന്ന ബദരിനാരായണ ക്ഷേത്രം ജയ്പൂർ രാജാവാണ് തിരിച്ചെടുത്ത്. അതിനു നൂറുകൊല്ലത്തോളമേ പഴക്കമുള്ളൂ.

വാഹനഗതാഗതം അസാധ്യമായിരുന്ന കാലത്ത് സർവ്വസംഗ പരിത്യാഗികളായിരുന്ന മുനിശ്രേഷ്ഠർ മാത്രമായിരുന്നിരിക്കണം ബദരി തീർത്ഥാടനത്തിനു മുതിർന്നിരുന്നത്. ഇന്ന് ക്ഷേത്രത്തിന്റെ അടുത്തുവരെ വാഹനത്തിൽ എത്താം. ക്ഷേത്രം പുഴക്കരയിലാണെന്നു പറഞ്ഞല്ലോ. മറുകരയിൽ അര കിലോമീറ്റർ അകലത്തിലാണ് പാർക്കിംഗ് ഗ്രൗണ്ട്. അവിടെ വണ്ടി നിർത്തി ഞങ്ങൾ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലേക്ക് നടന്നു. ഇറങ്ങിപ്പോകുന്ന വീതി കുറഞ്ഞ വഴി. ഇരുവശത്തും തീർത്ഥാടകരേയും സന്ദർശകരേയും ലക്ഷ്യമിട്ടുള്ള കടകളാണ്. ക്ഷേത്രത്തിനു മുന്നിൽ പുഴയ്ക്ക് ഒരു പാലമുണ്ട്. ഫുഴ എന്നതിനേക്കാൾ അരുവി എന്നു പറയുന്നതായിരിക്കും ശരി. വീരൻ വച്ചാൽ മുറിയും എന്ന തോതിലുള്ള ശക്തിയാണ് ഒഴുക്കിന്. പാലം മുറിച്ചു കടക്കുന്നത് ക്ഷേത്രത്തിന് മുന്നിലേയ്ക്കാണ്.

ശൈത്യകാലത്ത് ആറുമാസം ക്ഷേത്രം അടച്ചിടും. അതുകഴിഞ്ഞ് തുറക്കുന്ന ദിവസമാണ് ഞങ്ങൾ അവിടെ എത്തിപ്പെടുന്നത്. ആദ്യദിവസമായിട്ടും സാമാന്യം തിരക്ക് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. വലിയ തിരക്കെല്ലാം വരാൻ പോകുന്നേയുള്ളൂ എന്നാണ് ഡ്രൈവറും ഗണേശനും പറഞ്ഞത്. വർഷാവർഷം, അതായത് ആറുമാസത്തിനുള്ളിൽ, പത്തു ലക്ഷത്തിനും പതിനഞ്ചു ലക്ഷത്തിനുമിടയ്ക്ക് കേന്ദ്രമാർ അവിടെ ദർശനത്തിനായി എത്തുന്നുണ്ട്. വൈഷ്ണവരെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം അവരുടെ പരമപവിത്രമായ തീർത്ഥാടനകേന്ദ്രമാണ് ബദരി, തുറിയെട്ട് ദിവ്യദേശങ്ങളിൽ മുഖ്യസ്ഥാനത്തു നിൽക്കുന്ന, അവരുടെ പുണ്യക്ഷേത്രം. ഭാഗവതം, മഹാഭാരതം, വിഷ്ണുപുരാണം, സ്കന്ദപുരാണം, പത്മപുരാണം എന്നീ ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളിലും തമിഴ് ആഴ്വാർമാർ എഴുതിയ ദിവ്യപ്രബന്ധത്തിലും ബദരിമാഹാത്മ്യം വിശദീകരിക്കപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ട്. ഭാരതത്തിന്റെ വടക്കേ അറ്റത്തു കിടക്കുന്ന ബദരിയിലെ മുഖ്യപുജാരി അഥവാ മേൽശാന്തി എക്കാലവും തെക്കേ അറ്റത്തുള്ള നമ്പൂതിരിമാരാണ്. അവരെ അവിടെ റാവൽ എന്നാണ് വിളിക്കുന്നത്. ഇപ്പോഴത്തെ റാവൽ പയ്യന്നൂരുകാരനായ ബദരീപ്രസാദ് നമ്പൂതിരിയാണ്.

പാലം കടന്ന് ചെന്നെത്തിയത് വിശാലമായ ഒരു മുറ്റത്താണ്. ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ പ്രവേശിക്കാൻ നീണ്ട ക്യൂ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ഞങ്ങളും



Badrinath Highway



അതിൽ ചേർന്നു. മൂന്നിൽ കുറെ പടികൾ. പടികൾ കയറിച്ചെല്ലുന്നത് വർണ്ണാഭമായ ഉത്തരേന്ത്യൻ രീതിയിലുള്ള ഒരു ഗോപുരത്തിലേക്കാണ്. കമാനാകൃതിയിലുള്ള ഒരു പ്രവേശനദാറം കടന്നു ചെന്നാൽ ഒരു സഭാമണ്ഡപം. കരിങ്കല്ലിൽ പണിത മണ്ഡപത്തിൽ ഭംഗിയുള്ള കൊത്തുപണികളുണ്ട്. അതിനുമുന്നിൽ മുഖമണ്ഡപം. അതിനുമുന്നിൽ ശ്രീകോവിലിൽ. ശംഖാകൃതിയിലുള്ള ശ്രീകോവിലിനു പതിനഞ്ചു മീറ്ററോളം ഉയരമുണ്ട്. മുകളിലെ താഴികകൾ സംവർണ്ണ പൂശിയതാണ്. ഭക്തർക്ക് മുഖമണ്ഡപംവരെ മാത്രമേ പ്രവേശനമുള്ളൂ. കേരളത്തിലെപ്പോലെ, ശ്രീകോവിലിൽ പുജാരികൾക്കുമാത്രമേ പ്രവേശനമുള്ളൂ. സാമഗ്രാമശിലയിൽ തീർത്ത വലിയ വിഗ്രഹം. പത്മാസനസ്ഥനും ചതുർബാഹുവുമായ വിഷ്ണുവിന്റെ ഉയർത്തിപ്പിടിച്ച കൈകളിൽ ശംഖും ചക്രവും. മറ്റു കൈകൾ യോഗമുദ്രയിൽ പിടിച്ചിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ശ്രീകോവിലിൽ ധനാധിപനായ കുബേരന്റേയും, മഹാമുനിമാരായ നാരദൻ, ഉദ്ധവൻ, നരൻ, നാരായണൻ എന്നിവരുടെ ഉപപ്രതിഷ്ഠകളുണ്ട്. ശ്രീകോവിലിനു പുറത്ത് ലക്ഷ്മി, ഗരുഡൻ, നവദൂർഗ്ഗ എന്നീ ദേവതകളുടെയും ആദിശങ്കരൻ, വേദാന്തദേശികൻ, രാമാനുജാ ചാര്യർ എന്നിവരുടെയും പ്രതിഷ്ഠകളുണ്ട്. ക്ഷേത്രത്തിനു ചേർന്ന് അടുത്തടുത്തായി രണ്ടു തപ്തകുണ്ഡങ്ങളുണ്ട്; സൂര്യ കുണ്ഡവും നാരദ കുണ്ഡവും. ഭാരതീയ സംസ്കാരമനുസരിച്ച് ഒന്നു പുരുഷന്മാർക്കും മറ്റേത് സ്ത്രീകൾക്കും. പുറത്ത് അതിശക്തമായ ശൈത്യം നില നിൽക്കുമ്പോഴും 60 ഡിഗ്രിക്കുമേലുള്ള ചൂടുവെള്ളമാണ് കുണ്ഡിലുള്ളത്. ആദ്യദിവസമാകയാൽ ഞങ്ങൾ അവിടെ എത്തുമ്പോൾ തപ്തകുണ്ഡങ്ങൾ കഴുകി വൃത്തിയാക്കി വയ്ക്കുകയായിരുന്നു. വിസ്തരിച്ചുള്ള പ്രക്ഷാളനത്തിനുശേഷം അതിൽ വെള്ളം നിറച്ചു. പർവ്വതത്തിൽനിന്ന് ഉത്ഭവിക്കുന്ന ഉറവകളാണ് ചൂടുവെള്ളത്തിന്റെ സ്രോതസ്സ്. ഗന്ധകസാന്നിദ്ധ്യമാണ് വെള്ളം ചൂടാവാൻ കാരണം എന്നാണ് ആധുനികശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ നിഗമനം. മുന്മാരികൾ പറഞ്ഞപോലെ, തൊടാൻ പോലും സാധിയ്ക്കാത്തത്ര ചൂടുള്ള ആ വെള്ളത്തിൽ കുറേക്കാലം കുറേക്കാലമായി ഞങ്ങൾ പ്രവേശിച്ചു, മുങ്ങി കുളിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.

നിയന്ത്രിതമായ തിരക്കേ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല എന്നതിനാൽ മനസ്സു നിറഞ്ഞു തൊഴുതു. വഴിപാടുകൾക്കായി തിരുനടയിൽ കാണിയ്ക്കവെച്ചു തൊഴുതു മാറുമ്പോൾ പുജാരി തീർത്ഥപ്രസാദം തന്നു. ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ മറ്റു ദേവതമാരെ വണങ്ങി, പ്രദക്ഷിണം നടത്തി. ഭക്തനായ ഒരു ഹിന്ദുവിന്റെ തീർത്ഥയാത്രകൾ ബദരീനാഥനെ ദർശിക്കാതെ പൂർണ്ണമാവില്ല എന്നാണല്ലോ വിശ്വാസം. പക്ഷെ അല്പം ചില ഭാഗ്യവാന്മാർക്കു മാത്രം ലഭിക്കുന്ന ഒരു അനുഗ്രഹമാണ് ബദരീദർശനം. ഞങ്ങളും ആ അനുഗ്രഹീതരുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിൽ പെട്ടതിൽ എന്തെന്നില്ലാത്ത ചാരിതാർത്ഥ്യവും സംതൃപ്തിയും തോന്നി.

തപസ്സിൽനിന്നുണർന്ന ബദരീനാഥൻ വിജയീഭാവത്തോടെ

പ്രസന്നവദനനായിട്ടാണ് ദർശനം നൽകുന്നത് എന്നും ശൈത്യകാലത്ത് ജോഷിമന്തിലേക്ക് എഴുന്നള്ളുന്ന ദേവൻ ആറുമാസം തപസ്വിയായിട്ടാണ് അവിടെ വിരാജിക്കുന്നത് എന്നുമാണ് സങ്കല്പം. ബദരിയിലെ ക്ഷേത്രഗോപുരം അടച്ചുപൂട്ടുന്നത് മൂന്നു താക്കോലുകൾ ഉപയോഗിച്ചാണ്. ഒന്ന് പ്രധാനിയായ റാവലിന്റെ പക്കലും, മറ്റൊന്ന് ഗവർവാൾ രാജാവിന്റെ പക്കലും മൂന്നാമത്തേത് ക്ഷേത്രട്രസ്റ്റിയുടെ പക്കലുമാണ് സൂക്ഷിക്കുക. ക്ഷേത്രം അടയ്ക്കുമ്പോൾ എട്ടടങ്ങഴി എണ്ണ കൊള്ളുന്ന ഒരു ദീപം ശ്രീകോവിലിൽ കത്തിച്ചുവയ്ക്കും. അതിനുള്ള തിരി ഏറ്റവും അടുത്തുള്ള ഗ്രാമമായ മനാഗ്രാമത്തിലെ നിവാസികൾ ചില പ്രത്യേക പച്ചമരുന്നുകൾ ചേർത്ത് തിരച്ചുവയ്ക്കും. ആ ഗ്രാമമുഖ്യനാണ് ക്ഷേത്രം അടയ്ക്കുന്ന ദിവസം അതു കൊണ്ടുവരിക. അടയ്ക്കുന്ന ദിവസം കത്തിച്ച ദീപം തുറക്കുമ്പോഴും കത്തിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുമത്രെ. ക്ഷേത്രം തുറക്കുന്ന ദിവസം റാവലിനു മാത്രമേ ആദ്യപ്രവേശനത്തിനുള്ള അനുവാദമുള്ളൂ. കാരണം, ശൈത്യകാലത്ത് ദിവ്യന്മാരായ ദേവന്മാർ, യക്ഷന്മാർ, കിന്നരന്മാർ, ഗന്ധർവ്വന്മാർ തുടങ്ങിയവർ വന്ന് അവിടെ പുജ നടത്തുമെന്നാണ് വിശ്വാസം. നിത്യബ്രഹ്മചാരിയും പുറപ്പെടാശാന്തിയുമായ റാവൽ അകത്തു കണ്ടതൊന്നും പുറത്തു പറയില്ല എന്ന പ്രതിജ്ഞ ചെയ്തിട്ടാണ് പുജാരിയായി സ്ഥാനമേൽക്കുന്നത് എന്ന കാര്യം പ്രത്യേകം പ്രസ്താവ്യമാണ്. ഭക്തർക്ക് പിറേന്നു മുതൽക്കേ പ്രവേശനമുള്ളൂ.

ക്ഷേത്രദർശനം കഴിഞ്ഞിറങ്ങിയ ഞങ്ങൾ (ഞങ്ങളും നമ്പൂതിരിമാരകയാൽ) റാവലിനെ കാണാനും പരിചയപ്പെടാനും ഒരു ശ്രമം നടത്തുകയുണ്ടായി. ആദ്യദിവസമാകയാൽ അദ്ദേഹം അന്ന് തിരക്കിലായിരുന്നു. തന്മൂലം ശ്രമം വിജയിച്ചില്ല. പിന്നെ അളകനന്ദ ആസ്ഥിതിക്കാരൻ ഞങ്ങൾ നദിക്കരയിലേക്ക് പോയി. ബദരിയ്ക്കടുത്തുള്ള അളകാപുരി എന്ന ഹിമാനിപർവ്വതത്തിൽ നിന്നാണ് അളകനന്ദ ഉത്ഭവിക്കുന്നത്. അളകനന്ദയ്ക്കുമുണ്ട് ഒരു ഐതിഹ്യം. ഗംഗോത്രിയുടെ ഉത്ഭവകഥ പറയുമ്പോൾ, സുരലോകത്തുനിന്ന് നിപതിക്കുന്ന ഗംഗയെ പരമശിവൻ തന്റെ ജടയിൽ പിടിച്ചു എന്നു പറയുകയുണ്ടായല്ലോ. ഗംഗയെ ഒതുക്കിക്കെട്ടാനായി ശിവൻ ജടയൊന്നു കൂടത്തപ്പോൾ, പന്ത്രണ്ടു തുള്ളികൾ തെറിച്ചു വീണെന്നും അവ പന്ത്രണ്ട് പുണ്യനദികൾക്ക് ജന്മം കൊടുത്തു എന്നും വിശ്വസിക്കപ്പെടുന്നു. അതിലൊന്നത്രെ അളകനന്ദ. ഉത്ഭവസ്ഥലത്തു തന്നെ തൊട്ടുകിടക്കുന്നതിനാൽ കണ്ണീരുപോലെ തെളിഞ്ഞ ജലമല്ലേ നാം പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടത്? എന്നാൽ തെറ്റി. വെണ്ണീരു കലക്കിയപോലെ, ചാരനിറത്തിലുള്ള വെള്ളം. അണക്കെട്ടു തുറന്നതുപോലെയുള്ള വേഗത.

നേരം ഉച്ച തിരിഞ്ഞു. വിശപ്പ് ആമാശയഭിത്തികളെ കാർന്നുതുടങ്ങിയിരുന്നു. ബസ്സിൽ ക്ഷേണവുമായി ഗണേശനും സഹായിയും കാത്തിരിക്കുകയാവും. ഞങ്ങൾ മടങ്ങാൻ നിശ്ചയിച്ചു. ■



Shivaling at Badrinath

ACCESSORIES TO ENHANCE PERSONALITY



Some ladies project a well groomed look and marvelous personality. This is because They give painstaking attention to every detail of their appearance.



Dr. (Major) Nalini Janardhanan

■ Women of all ages irrespective of their status, class or age, would always love to project themselves as attractive and beautiful. Choosing accessories for each ensemble is an art. Let us see about some of the accessories.

Hand bags

Your handbag should suit your taste and meet your requirements. A bag of medium size which can hold bare necessities is ideal. Don't stuff your bag with unwanted things and distort its shape. Don't buy cheap bags with glossy exterior. Leather bags are the best buy and look classy. Handbag reflects the personality of the user. Obese women can go for clutch or purse instead of sling bags. Short women should avoid big bulky bags. Bags should be hung in a cupboard after use.



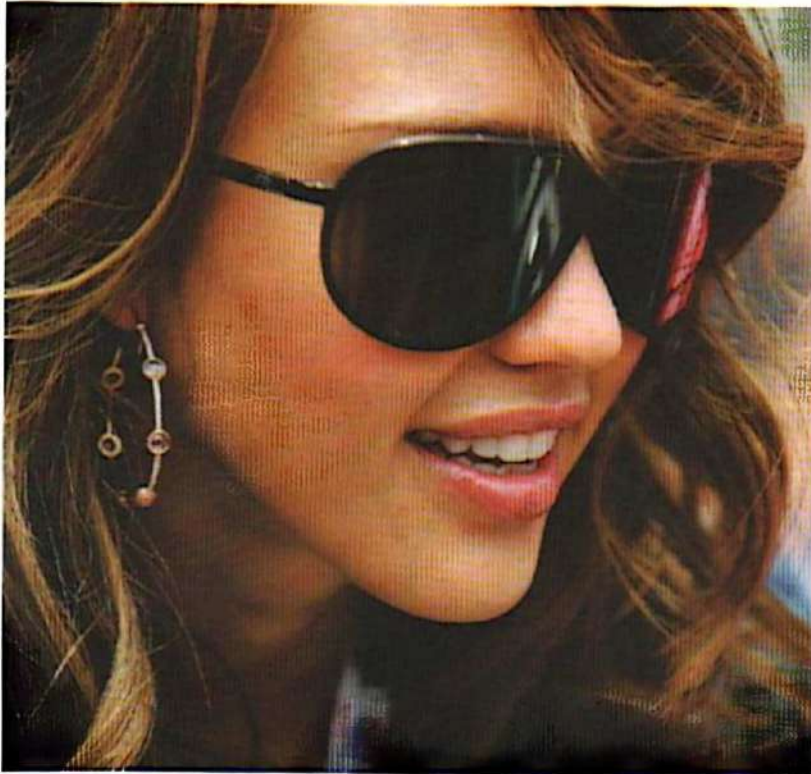
bought taking into consideration their durability, comfort and external appearance. Light shoes act like cushions for feet. Tight shoes cause discomfort and 'shoe bite' or ulcers on

feet. They should be avoided. High heeled shoes and sandals should not be used for daily use. They may lead to twisted ankles and backache. Wear them only on special occasions for a short

Sandals and Shoes

Foot wear is used for parties, office, at home and in sports. They are the part and parcel of our outfit and should be selected with care. Shoes and sandals should be





Jewellery

Jewellery is a fashion accessory which enhance your beauty. Most of the women are fond of jewellery. Jewellery is used for ears, nose, neck, hands, feet, head and waist. Light jewellery is suitable for informal parties and get together as well as for office. Pearls and precious stones can be worn for weddings and formal parties. Diamonds suit everyone. Wearing too much of gold jewellery at home may lead to loss of shine of the ornaments with daily use. Fat ladies should avoid wearing jewellery around their waists. A long chain will suit women with short neck. They should avoid small chains and

time. The color of the shoes should go with your dress. Footweares made of cloth and canvas can be washed with soap and water. But leather shoes should not be washed. They can be polished before use and packed in a box when not in use. Requirement of footwear changes according to season. Light shoes or open sandals are best for summer. Closed shoes may be used for winter. Avoid leather shoes in rainy season.

Sunglasses

Goggles or sunglasses are part of the outfit for fashionable women. They protect your eyes from sunlight and add glamor to the face. The frame, color and design of the glasses should complement the structure of your face.

Frames of sunglasses or spectacles can be either square, oval or round. Your eye brows should be in line with the glasses, not above or below them. Glasses should not be tight as they may leave marks on your face. If you have round face, buy square frames. Glasses with broad frame suit oval faces. If your hair is brown, wear light brown or golden framed glasses. If you have black hair, dark coloured glasses like black or red will suit you. If your hair is light brown then buy dark brown frames. If you have coloured your hair with henna, buy off white or ivory coloured glasses. Glasses with chains look good on elderly people. After use, keep your sunglasses in their case after wiping them with a soft cotton cloth.

necklaces. Jewellery can be selected according to your dress. Along with silk, gem studded jewellers look best. Heavy jewellery can be worn with a sari which has light embroidery. If you are wearing a heavy lehenga- choli or lachcha, wear light jewellery. Heavy jewellery will not suit western outfits. You may wear a pearl or gold or diamond necklace along with strapless dresses. Remember to wear jewellery according to your age and occasion.

Watches

Watch is a necessity as well as a fashion statement. They are now considered as a part of jewellery. Golden watches and watches studded with diamonds substitute for bracelets. Designer watches with trendy straps and colourful dials are also available nowadays. Watches also reflect the personality of the person who wears them. Some use expensive watches whereas some go for traditional or fashionable watches. If you are overweight don't wear a watch with small dial. Women should not go for big 'manly' type of watches! Keep your watch (which you use for parties) in a safe place when not in use, to avoid scratches.

Beauty accessories are used to enhance our looks and not to look comical. So selection of accessories is very important. ■



CARE OF EYES

Dr (Major) Nalini Janardhanan



Around the world about 223.4 million people are blind or have vision impairment. About 517 million people are vision impaired due to uncorrected presbyopia. Vision is very important in our life. A blind person finds himself handicapped and may develop inferiority complex. There are conditions which can lead to poor vision or even loss of vision. Carelessness and neglect about eyes, lack of proper treatment of eye diseases and injuries, Vitamin A deficiency and ignorance- all these mostly lead to blindness. So we must take care of our eyes.

The second Thursday in October is being observed all over the world as "World Sight Day" to create awareness among people about blindness and vision impairment. This year World Sight Day falls on 13 October.

Care of eyes in children

Newborn babies may rarely get blindness due to Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) like Gonorrhoea in parents and Vitamin A deficiency in

pregnant women. So pregnant ladies should include green leafy vegetables in their diet. They must eat a balanced diet and take Iron and Folic acid tablets during pregnancy. They should get a checkup for STDs.

In small children lack of Vitamin A (Vit A deficiency) may lead to blindness. The eyes become dry, loses shine and gray patches along with wrinkles may develop. Later the children will complain of night blindness if Vitamin A deficiency is not corrected. Small infants and children should be breastfed upto 2 years of age. After 6 months, in addition to breast milk, start giving them foods rich in Vitamin A like boiled green leafy vegetables, carrots, fruits like papaya etc (in a mashed form for easy digestion). After 1 to 2 years they can gradually be

given food items which adults take.

Most of the causes of blindness especially in children (and in adults also) are diseases, Vitamin A deficiency and injuries to eyes (due to low branches of trees, fire crackers, chemicals, injury during games with sticks, bows and arrows).

Eye checkups for children should be started soon after birth and regularly after that. Preschool children should be tested for refractive errors, squints, loss of vision and night blindness. School going children should also have regular eye checkups. Refractive errors, if untreated, can lead to pain and strain in eyes, headache and even partial loss of sight in one eye.

Children should be encouraged to read and write in upright posture keeping books about 1 ½ feet away from eyes. There should be adequate light in the room coming preferably from the left and behind the child, to avoid shadows on the book. TV should be viewed from a minimum distance of 6 feet and a room light should be left on during that time. Discourage continuous viewing of TV, reading and excessive use of computers and mobiles. Children should also have a balanced diet including Vitamin A and proteins.



Care of eyes in adults

The suggestions given above for writing, reading, watching TV, doing work on computers and using mobiles are applicable to adults also. Above 40-45 years most of the people may experience difficulty in reading fine print. This is called "Long Sightedness" or "Presbyopia". It gradually increases with age but it can be corrected with reading glasses.

Complete eye tests should be done regularly especially after 40 years of age to detect eye problems like cataract, glaucoma, refractive errors and retinal diseases. Certain eye conditions are hereditary. So if a person has a family history of eye disease, more frequent eye checkups should be done.

Systemic diseases like Diabetes, Hyper tension and certain types of Arthritis can affect vision and may lead to blindness if left untreated. So patients with these diseases should take treatment for their diseases and get their eyes checked up regularly.



Some Do's and Don'ts

- Eye should be kept clean washing with clean water. Don't touch your eyes with dirty hands. Wash your hands well with soap and water before touching eyes.
- Remove your eye makeup and face makeup. Wash your face and eyes before going to bed. Wipe with clean towels.
- Avoid reading moving vehicles

like trains or buses.

■ Avoid reading while lying down. Avoid reading in rooms with dim or flickering light.

■ Avoid reading books with very fine print and poor quality paper.

■ Eye drops should be used only under medical supervision. Avoid self-medication. Don't use eye drops containing steroids for a long time. While putting eye drops, take care not to touch your eyes with the tip of the bottle or your hands. Don't keep long nails as there are chances of getting injury to eyes. Don't use opened bottle of eye drops (kept for a long time unused) as it may turn harmful to eyes.

■ Kajal and surma can be applied to eyes only if it is prepared fresh at home or if the product is sealed and from a reliable company.

■ Avoid application of old cosmetics to eyes. Don't share eye brushes with others.

■ Eyes should get rest in between reading, near works like stitching or computer work. Close your eyes and rest for a few minutes and blink rapidly. You may cover your eyes with your palms.

■ Don't expose your eyes to dust and bright sunlight. Use sunglasses while going out in sun.

■ When some particles fall inside your eyes, don't rub them as it may lead to injuries. Wash your eyes well with water and consult a doctor if the particle is inside your eyes. If you get injuries to eyes, consult a doctor immediately.

■ Take a balanced diet including vegetables, green leafy vegetables and fruits.

■ Eye exercises (e.g. rolling eye balls sideways, downwards and upwards, looking near and far etc.) are good for eyes.

Remember that 80% blindness is avoidable or treatable. So take care of your eyes! ■

POEM

ബോംബെ



നമ്മളിലെ നീയും ഞാനുമെത്തിയൊരുനാൾ മഹാനഗരത്തിൽ
കട്ടുമുടിച്ച് വിദേശി വിക്ടോറിയാറാണിയുടെ മടിത്തട്ടിൽ: ജ്യോതിഷ് പ്രസാദ്
കൂടെയുണ്ടാകുന്ന ബന്ധു, ബോംബെക്കാരൻ ബാലേട്ടൻ.

തിരിച്ചവരുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അക്കരക്കെത്തിയവരുമധികം; താനും
തങ്ങളും തങ്ങിയിനഗരത്തിലൊരിടത്ത് തുടങ്ങി നിലനില്പിൻ യാത്ര:
രുചിച്ചുതൻ പുതുരക്തം തെരുവിലെ ചാൽമുറിയിലെ ചെറുമുട്ടുകൾ!

തിങ്ങി നിറഞ്ഞു പായുന്നു എണ്ണിനുകൾ തുരുതരാ-തുരുതുരാ
അതിശയോക്തം അതിശക്തം അതിമനോഹരമാ ചരിത്രമാളികകൾ:
പുതുപാർപ്പിടങ്ങൾ ചില്ലുമേടുകൾ മ രിച്ചു കുതിച്ചവർ മാനംമുട്ടെ!

പാതകൾ അതിനുമേൽ പാതകൾ ചക്രങ്ങളുരുളുന്നു, തിങ്ങിപ്പിടിക്കാതെ
കുതിക്കുന്നു കുളിർകാറ്റു വീശി കൊച്ചെണ്ണിനുകളിനുമുകളിൽ:
എവിടെയും ജനങ്ങൾ നഗരവാസികളുറവിൻകൂട്ടം, കുതിരകളായ്!

മഹാനഗരത്തിലുണ്ടാരു മഹാലക്ഷ്മി വരമുളി മാലോകർക്കു മധുരം
ജീവിതം പല തട്ടിൽ പലവിധം പരിശ്രമവിജയികളാണു പലരുമിവിടെ:
മറക്കില്ല നമ്മളാരും ആ ചെറിയൊറ്റ മുറിയിലെ വലിയ പഴയ ജീവിതം!

ചേല മാറി, യിന്നിവിടെ ജീവിതം എത്തിയാലെത്തിയെന്നമട്ടേവർക്കും
സുരക്ഷയില്ലാസുഖമിന്നീ മർത്യനു വർണ്ണപകിട്ടാർന്ന സമുച്ചയങ്ങൾ:
പെരുകുന്നു വിദേശപഠനപശ്ചാത്തലങ്ങൾ കളി മറന്ന കുട്ടികൾക്കായ്!

രക്ഷയില്ലാതെ രക്ഷാകർത്താവ് രക്ഷയോടൊന്നു രാപക, ലീനഗരത്തിൽ
തൻമനം കൊതിച്ചു സഖികൂടെതൻ മക്കളും സാല്യനേരം സല്ലാപം:
പകയില്ല, തങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്രശംസ ബാക്കി! ബാലേട്ടന്റെ നഗരമിന്നമ്മുടെ സന്തോ||

MARIJUANA



Dr Sujatha Nair

■ **“It is only a herb”**
“It is all natural”” It
 is not addictive” “ It
 is being legalized
 across the world
 now” “Even Lord
 Shiva is said to have
 used it always”

These are some of the justifications I hear from people who use or are addicted to using the products of the innocuous plant Cannabis also called, pot ,hash weed, marijuana etc.

“I have an emotional connect with pot , Charlie(cocaine) I can do without, but not pot“ said one of our clients . This clearly indicates how it had him in its grip .

People who wish to justify its use like to compare its effects with the harmful effects of alcohol and other drugs.

The effects of marijuana are multifarious . It is a psychoactive drug, currently illegal in India .

It is seen that a lot of teens from the age of even as low as 13 start using them, many well into their adulthood . Weed is said to be a gateway drug to other drugs as it is seen to enhance the effects of some of the other drugs especially opioids . Using one drug also enhances the curiosity and willingness to try other drugs.

Methods of consumption - as rolled up joints , in blunts (in emptied cigars) , dabbing (Pure THC in wax form called budded, dab where it is placed on a cool and heated by a butane

lighter and inhale the fumes)

The effects of marijuana are more psychological than physical.

Out of the over 400 chemicals in weed the most potent is delta-9 THC. Which is psychoactive . More the content of THC as in skunk, the more the damage and addictive potential.

In teens whose brains are still being developed weed usage causes impairment in recall, listing things, short term memory, long term cognitive impairment. One in 6 people who try weed get addicted to it. Possibilities of addiction to it are higher when usage is begun in the teen adolescent years. It is also seen to reduce the IQ by an average of 8 points when used in adolescence.

We had a client who smoked so many joints a day that he had stopped going to college, had lost all interest in anything , including personal hygiene, upkeep, was apathetic to his surroundings and and severe mood swings as a consequence.

Immediately after use it increases the heart rate . Some people experience a sense of calm . however, depending on the extent of use and strength of weed some users experience anxiety, fear, distrust, or panic.

In initial stages of limited usage it reduces anxiety . As duration and extent of usage increases it creates anxiety, it causes paranoia, at times hyper acuity of sounds which can be mistaken for auditory hallucinations, hallucinations etc.

The effect of marijuana usually lasts from 1-3 hours . if consumed in the

form of cookies its effects last for several more hours.

THC can be detected in the urine for even 6 weeks after stoppage of use.

Short term memory is affected.

There is an apathy that develops to everything .

Amotivational syndrome surfaces wherein the person loses motivation to do anything constructive . This usually happens when weed is smoked in a substantial quantity for a substantial duration of time ...

Cannabis psychosis -heavy use of cannabis over a long period of time can result in psychoses.

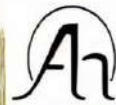
Driving after using cannabis has been seen to cause more fatal car crashes than alcohol as it impairs judgment, motor coordination and reaction time .

On discontinuing weed there can be withdrawals - Common symptoms include:

Anxiety,Depression ,Changes in mood, Irritability, Stomach pains, Loss of appetite, Nausea,Headaches, Sweating, Chills, Cravings,Restlessness

Treatment involves Counseling , behavioral therapy and with us at AH meditation too that enables one to develop interest in and grow a life that is enjoyable and fun away from the substance.

For any clarifications contact
 Dr Sujatha Nair on 09820330439



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



ഒരു ചെമ്പനിർപുവിരുത്തു...

Film: Sthithi (2003)
Lyrics: Prabha Varma
Music: Unni Menon
Singer: Unni Menon
Raagam: Sreeragam



ഒരു ചെമ്പനിർ പുവിരുത്തു ഞാനോമലേ
ഒരുവേള നിൻനേർക്കു നീട്ടിയില്ല (ഒരു ചെമ്പനിർ...)
എങ്കിലും എങ്ങനെ നീയറിഞ്ഞു... എന്റെ
ചെമ്പനിർ പുകുന്നതായ് നിനക്കായ്
സുഗന്ധം പരത്തുന്നതായ് നിനക്കായ്
പറയു നീ പറയു പറയു നീ പറയു (ഒരു ചെമ്പനിർ...)

അകമേ നിറഞ്ഞ സ്നേഹമാം മാധുര്യം
ഒരു വാക്കിനാൽ തൊട്ടു ഞാൻ നൽകിയില്ല
നിറ നീലരാവിലെ ഏകാന്തതയിൽ
നിൻമിഴിയിലെ നനവൊപ്പി മാച്ച്ച്ചിട്ടില്ല
എങ്കിലും നീയറിഞ്ഞു
എൻ നിനവെന്നും നിൻ നിനവറിയുന്നതായ്
നിന്നെ തഴുകുന്നതായ്... (ഒരു ചെമ്പനിർ...)

തനിയെ തെളിഞ്ഞ ഭാവമാം ശ്രീരാഗം
ഒരു മാത്ര നീയൊത്തു ഞാൻ മുളിയില്ലാ
പുലർമഞ്ഞു പെയ്യുന്ന യാമത്തിലും
നിൻ മൃദുമേനിയൊന്നു തലോടിയില്ല...
എങ്കിലും നീയറിഞ്ഞു
എൻ മനമെന്നും നിൻ മനമറിയുന്നതായ്
നിന്നെ പുണരുന്നതായ്... (ഒരു ചെമ്പനിർ...)

Oru Chembaneer Pooviruthu njanomale
Oru velha nin nercku neettiyilla
Enkilum engane nee arhinju
Ente chembaneer pookkunnathaay ninakkaay
Sungandam parathunnathaay ninakkaay
Parayoo nee parayoo parayoo nee parayoo
(oru chembaneer)

Akame nirhanja snehamaam maadhuryam
Oru vaakkinaal thottu njaan nalkiyilla
Nirha neela raavile ekaanthathayil
Nin mizhiyile nanavoppi maaychathilla
Enkilum neeyarhinju en ninavennum
Nin ninavarhiyunnathaay
Ninne thazhukunnathaay (oru chembaneer)

Thaniye thelinja raagamay sreeraagam
Oru maathra neeyothu njaan mooliyilla
Pular manju peyyunna yaamathilum
Nin mrudhumeni onnu punarnnathilla
Engilum neeyarinju en manamennum
Nin manamariyunnathaay
Ninne punarunnathaay (oru chembaneer)



Prabha Varma

Produced by abdul Rahiman for Sakha Films, Sthithi had three songs, two of them were written by Prabha Varma and composed by Unni Menon. The third was written by Priya Viswanath and composed by Sunny Viswanath. The singers were Unni Menon, Sujata Mohan, Gayathri Asokan and Maya Kartha. R Sharat wrote its story, screenplay and Dialogue besides directing it. Actors are Unni menon, N K Gopalakrishnan, C K Babu, Jayaraj Warriar, P K R Nair, Nandini Goswal, Mallika Sukumaran, Sandhya Rajendran, Sreelatha, Ramya Nambissan, Leena Nair, Anjana.



Unni Menon

TOVINO THOMAS

SOFTWARE ENGINEER TO AN ACTOR

In his dreams and wishes he always wanted to be an actor. Nevertheless, for a person born and brought up in an ordinary family wherein the parents did not know anything about films, could not express himself except simply wait for the right moment. Finally the moment came and Tovino Thomas the software engineer became an actor.

Q: How many people did you approach for a chance?

A: A number of them. Even today. Will you include me in your next film? I put forward this question only to those whom I respect and admire, the directors and writers. Earlier it was not like this. I used to go to any set and repeat my request. Once I approached Jijoy, the actor and instructor, and I got my first opportunity in his 'Prabhuvinte Makkal.' Then I was assistant director of 'Theevram', a Dulkhara Salman film. Then ABCD, Krutara, Eu tu Brutus,...

and so on followed. But the real turning point was '..Ennu ninte Moideen.'

Q: Earlier an actor used to get 10-15 films a year. During one Onam season, five Mammooty films were released. Now an actor does not even doing five films a year.

A: Those days a film would take about 15 days to shoot. Then it became 30 days. Now it takes on an average 50 to 65 days. That is the real reason. It is not because they do not want to do the film but they do not have the required

time.

Q: Is there a shortage of good writers and directors?

A: No. There are always good writers and directors. There is never a shortage. They may be getting recognition a little later. That is all. Then many successful films were made as per those times. If they were released today, they would not have been successful. Similarly, some of the films failed then, would have been a successful today. The life style and standard of appreciation are changing

continuously.

Q: You were assistant director for 'Theevram'. Do you have plans to be a director?

A: Direction is a responsible job. It needs special capability. If I say I want to become a director, then I may be crossing the limit. Please treat it only as my dream. It would be treated as an ambition if I say I want to become a director.

Q: Now technology has expanded and anyone could become a director.

A: Yes, anyone can but not necessarily be successful. Even if I get an opportunity, I have to ponder many times over before I decide.

Q: What is the yardstick to choose a film?

A: When we read the script, we should feel excited. I should feel like going to the theatre to see the film. Script should be sensible. I see all kinds of films, Tamil, Hindi, English, ... I see all language films. Since I study the film deeply, I must read the script in a serious manner.

Q: Did the film 'Guppy' achieve the success you expected?

A: No. Those who saw it praised it but many did not go to the theatre to see it. Many had a premonition that it was an award film. We needed good marketing strategy to change that perception but we did not. As far as I am concerned, I am satisfied with the film. At the same time I am disheartened that people did not go to the theatre to see the movie. Now people will buy its DVD when it is released and then praise it. But then the film cannot be said to be a successful one.

Q: Your opinion about the censoring controversies....

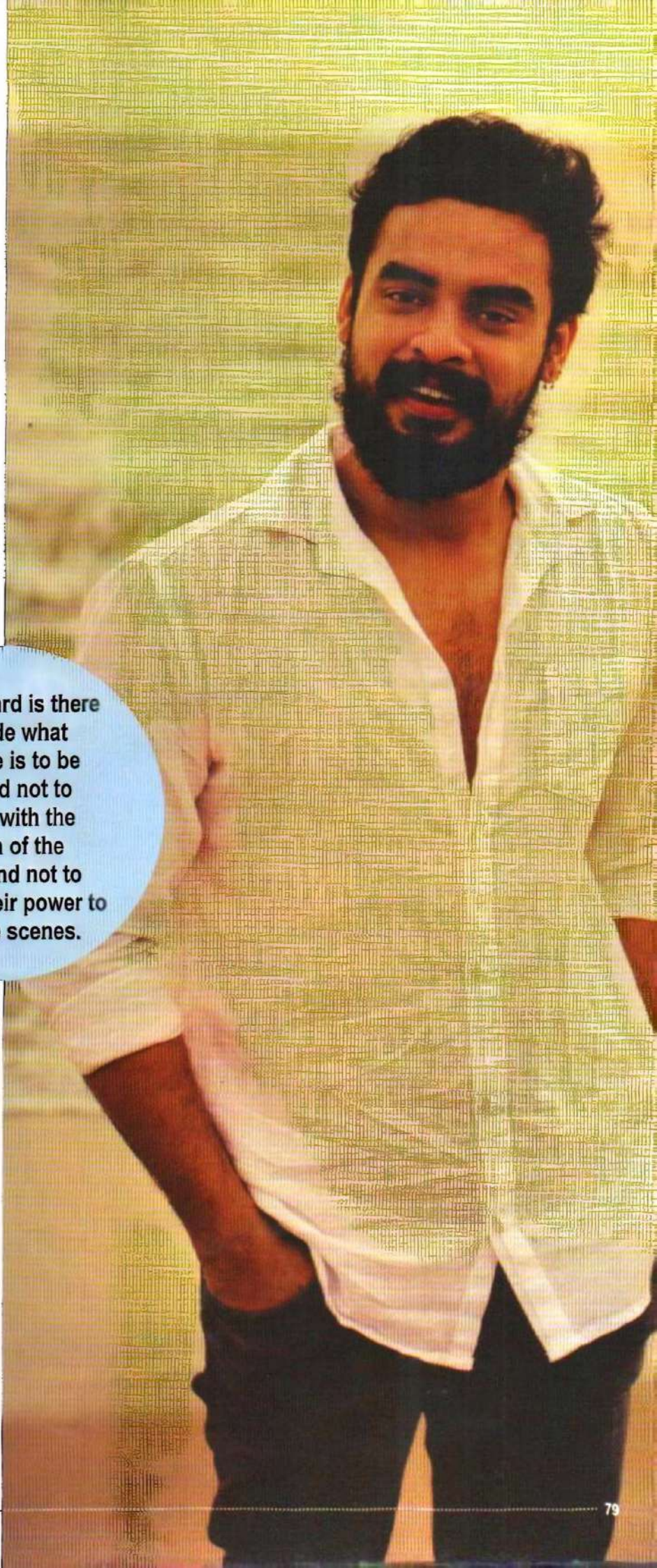
A: People in the censor board should have some sense. What is the sense in awarding an 'A' certificate after deleting all important scenes? Censor Board is there to decide what certificate is to be given and not to interfere with the freedom of the artistes and not to exercise their power to delete the scenes. I am not questioning the relevance of Censor Board but wish the members to be sensible.

Q: New films?

A: 'Godda' shooting is going on. I have the role of a 'Gatta' wrestler.

It is a good time for the young actors now. They also get opportunities in Tamil and Telugu films one after the other. The software engineer Tovino is now busy to learn the intricacies of the wrestling.

Censor Board is there to decide what certificate is to be given and not to interfere with the freedom of the artistes and not to exercise their power to delete the scenes.



PULIMURUKAN

■ The costliest Malayalam film so far made is coming to theatres this October. Pulimurukan is made at a cost of Rs 25 crore. It is produced by Tomichan for Mulagupadam films and directed by Vaisakh. Udaykrishnan wrote the screenplay.

The shooting was done over 150 days and another 200 days for post production work. A fight between Mohanlal and a Leopard needed detailed computer graphics and hence the long post production work. It is done by Firefly who did a similar job for Bahubali. The fifteen minutes long fight was supervised by Peter Hyne. Mohanlal is appearing as the savior of the village under attack from a leopard.

The film was shot in Vietnam, Thailand, Pooyamkutti, Kuttampuzha, Malayattoor etc. Kamalini Mukherjee is the heroine. Jagapathy Raju, the well known villain of Telugu films is also in the film. Other actors are Tamil actor Kishore, Lal, Siddique, Bala, Suraj Venjaramoodu, Makarant Deshpande, Sudhir Karamana, Nandu, Kalinga Sasi, Sethulakshmi, Kannan Pattambi et al. Gopi Sunder composed the music and Murugan Kattakkada and Rafiq Ahmed wrote the lyrics.



POOMARAM

■ Kalidasan, son of Jayaram and Parvathy, is making his debut as hero in Poomaram. Earlier he had two films each in Malayalam and Tamil. But he was then billed as Child actor. He also won award for child artist for his film 'Ente Veedu Appoontem'.

Poomaram is a campus film directed by Ebrid Shine who also wrote its story and screenplay. Kalidasan was chosen after an elaborate audition.



PAREED PANDARI

■ Kalabhavan Shajohn who stole the show through his role of a police constable in Drushyam is now turning to be a hero. The story of Pareed Pandari is written by its director Gafoor Illias himself. Shajohn's role Pareed is a sixty year old father of three daughters and he is a cook. Sajitha Mathathil is his wife. Ansiba Hassan, Rashmi Sathish and Kabani are his daughters. Other actors are Joy Mathew, Tini Tom, Jaffer Idukki, Sunil Sukhada, Anil Murali, Sathar, Priyanka, Santhakumari, Deepika, Junaida, Roshni and Pauli. Shybin and T Velliraj produce this film for Chennai Film Factory. Rafiq Ahmed and Babu Velliparambu write the lyrics and music is provided by James Vasanthan.



JANAKI CALLS IT A DAY

■ Well known female playback singer S Janaki calls it a day as far as her music career is concerned. Though off late, Janaki Amma, as she is lovingly addressed, was not recording of songs or appearing on musical shows, she is still command love, respect and admiration from lakhs of music lovers.

She entered the film music world in 1957 and spread her wings into the entire South Indian Music World.

Her last song to be recorded is for the Anoop Menon-Meera Jasmin film '10 Kalpanakal'. It is a lullaby 'Ammappoovinu....' composed by Mithun Eashwar. She stated that she would not only record any song but also not appear on musical shows to perform. During the last sixty years, she has recorded more than 48,000 songs in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi etc. Her first film for which she sang was 'Vidhiyin Vilayaattu'. She became the most sought after female singer after her song 'Chingaravelane Devaa..' of 'Konchum Chilankai' became a super hit. This song came to her as the scheduled singer P Leela was not well for some time, as in the case of P Suseela who also got her break after Leela could not be present at the recording. The film was 'Kanavane Kan Kanda Deivam.'

Janaki is now 78 years old and she realized that the time to retire had come. She chose Malayalam to be her last song as she loved lullabies.

Janaki received four national awards and 32 state awards from the four states of South India. She was chosen for Padmabhushan in 2013 but she declined saying that it was much late to come.



SMASHING ROYALS

■ After Celebrity Cricket, now comes Celebrity Badminton (CBL). Besides Kerala Royals of Malayalam stars, there are Chennai Rockers of Tamil stars, Kannada Alps of Kannada Stars and Tollywood Tuskers of Telugu Stars. After first rounds in Kadavantra Indoor Stadium, Kochi, the teams will move to Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru for other matches and final will be held in Malaysia. Jayaram is leading the Kerala team while Naren is Vice Captain. The team has in it Kunchacko Boban, Arjun Nandakumar, Saiju Kurup, Rajiv Pillai, Rony David, Ranjini Haridas, Parvathy Nambiar and Rosin Jolly. The entire team is undergoing intensive training. Other stars are also present to cheer them.



DOUBLE HORSE LAUNCH NEW BANANA CHIPS

Manjilas Food, the producer of the popular brand 'Double Horse' has introduced Double Horse Banana Chips. The new product was launched by the popular actress Padmashree Miss Shobhana the brand ambassador of Double Horse recently. Manjilas, Double Horse has been enriching lives of keralites with superior quality and tasty food products for the last 60 years.

Now the trusted brand has introduced Banana Chips, The Kerala's very own snack. These chips are 50% less oily and 100% tasty.

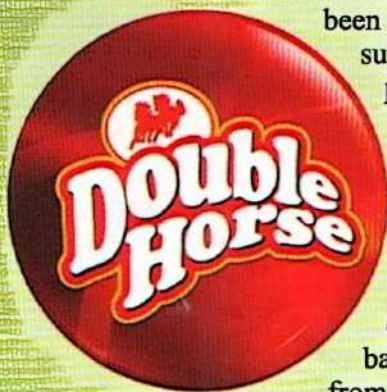
The new chips are made using only fresh Kerala Bananas. Raw bananas are collected directly from farms, cleaned well, thinly and equally sliced and very hygienically fried in pure vegetable oil. No artificial flavours or preservatives are added. Excess oil is removed and a pinch of salt is added for enhancing that incredible taste before packing in flavor-lock packs. So every golden disc remains crunchier and delicious but less oily than any other normal banana

chips. And Double Horse brings this all-time favourite of Keralites with a touch of traditional goodness.

Pure raw materials, high quality processing and flavor-lock packaging ensure excitingly good taste every time. Also, Double Horse gives utmost importance to the health of its valued customers and ensures maximum purity and quality in its food products. The 50% less oily banana chips is a good example of this great endeavour. Whether it is a festive season, special occasion or a regular day; Double Horse Banana Chips can add more flavour to any of them.

Double Horse Banana Chips is priced at Rs. 25 for a 30gm pack. The product will be available at all leading supermarkets and hypermarkets across Kerala.

This marks the beginning of Double Horse's entry in to the snacking space as well. They intends to come out with a number of other snacking options so that Keralite taste can be offered to the customers the world over. Apart from Domestic market, the brand is being exported to around 30 countries across the world.





Kerala in Mumbai

LINKING MUMBAI MALAYALEES

Email: keralainmumbai@gmail.com

Website: keralaimumbai.com

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