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# Gitanjali 2010



An Ohmkaram Publication  
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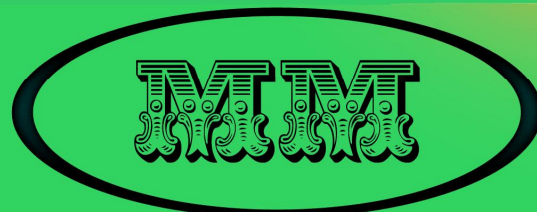
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**Cover page**

Our Gitanjali cover page this year was visually inspired by Vimal Nair and electronically created by Samir Unni.

It depicts the famed Saint Louis arch, an iconic image that also puts focus on Ohmkaram's presence in the region. The film strip on the side contains images of Kerala - Vezhambal (Kerala's state bird), Kanikkonna (state flower), Thrissur Pooram festival (with state animal, the elephant) and world renowned art form of Kathakali. In whole, the page represents Ohmkaram's continuous interest and promotion of all things - Kerala.



**With best wishes and  
compliments from the  
Natesan Manchira family.**



## From the Editorial Desk

*Namaskaram dear friends,*

It is with great pleasure that we bring you this third edition of Gitanjali, which is being published in conjunction with Ohmkaram's 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on January 8, 2011.

Besides acting as a journal and kaleidoscope of activities that had taken place in 2010, the main objective of this publication is to educate our younger generation about our cultural heritage. Therefore, this souvenir is created with a collection of articles enriched in Indian culture and Hindu religion. The Kid's Corner portion of this magazine encourages our children to showcase their artistic and cultural talents.

It was a lot of fun compiling, editing, and putting together this magazine. All through the course, we were very impressed with the literary and artistic talent within our community. We thank them for taking the time and effort to contribute towards this magazine. It was exciting to see the pages and the ensuing magazine fall into place as a whole. We hope that you will enjoy thumbing through these pages, just as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

This magazine is also made possible by the valuable sponsorship of area businesses and individuals. We are very, very grateful for their generosity, especially given the prevailing adverse economic condition. We thank them for their support and interest in our community and call on members to visit our advertisers for all their needs.

Finally, we would like to thank members who volunteered their time and effort in critiquing and offering suggestions in improving this edition. We also thank the Board of Directors and Executive Committee for their enthusiasm and support.



Happy reading !!

*Anjana Prayaga, Rajagopalan Unni & Vinod Menon*

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## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

My Dear Members,

It was an honor being the president of Ohmkaram this past year and a privilege to write this Gitanjali message. Looking back, I am happy that we survived the year with success and hope that I did justice to this position. Though we had a strong year, there were areas we could have done better, but as you know, family and job commitments take precedence in this part of the world.

Overall I am very happy with the way our committee functioned. Our organizing abilities improved with each event. After a casual and informal Anniversary celebration, we had a grand Vishu, picnic and Onam programs. Our Vishu program was even featured in US Malayalee media.

Having Swami Udit Chaithaniyaji visit St. Louis was a rare opportunity that allowed all that attended the chance to bathe in his divine bliss.

The movie Pazhassi Raja was well received by not just members of our organization, but all Malayalees in St. Louis.

The Malayalam school continues its exceptional service by teaching our language to all interested kids. I would like to request all parents to reap its benefits by enrolling their kids in the classes. I would like to thank all the volunteers for their dedication and commitment, without which, its existence would not be possible.

I trust all are aware of our scholarship program. It is primarily aimed at helping economically under privileged kids in Kerala to continue their higher education. It is our hope that all members will contribute to this fund, annually if possible, so that as a group, we can continue to support this good cause.

All the above achievements would not have been possible without the Executive Committee member's support. I thank them sincerely from the bottom of my heart, for the time and energy they spent for Ohmkaram.

I would also like to thank our Board of Directors for all their help and guidance in running the committee successfully.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank all our members for your continued support in successfully running our association.

I wish Ohmkaram good luck in continuing a successful journey into the future.

Regards,

Sudhir Kozhikal

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## How Ohmkaram Brought Kerala to Me

by Amit Prayaga

When I was growing up, I heard stories about Onam and Vishu from my parents and how they celebrated these festivals in Kerala. However, I never had a chance to go to Kerala and celebrate these functions with my family members. When Ohmkaram started celebrating events like Vishu and Onam as we do in Kerala, I got a chance to experience this as my parents described it.

While participating in Ohmkaram programs with my friends and families, I came to realize how it would be celebrated in Kerala. My participation in programs like *Kavadiyattam* and folk dances helped me to realize the different forms of cultural activities in Kerala. Also, I enjoyed doing *Duryodhana* skit and *Ente Bhaaritham* with my friends. This also helped me to learn our historical background. These programs helped me to learn Kerala's rich cultural history and celebrations.



Participating in Ohmkaram programs increased my friendship with others. We were able to see one another more often because of practices and we had lots of fun together. Also, seeing my friends at each Ohmkaram event made my experience more enjoyable.

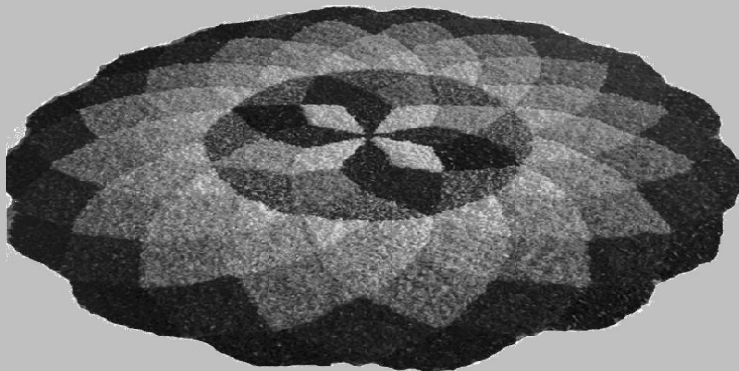


Another aspect is that I had a great opportunity to try a variety of traditional dishes for each event. All Indian dishes have a unique flavor to it and are enjoyable. At home, we always have Kerala style food. For each Ohmkaram event, I got a chance to try a variety of dishes from different parts of Kerala.

I always spoke Malayalam at home. A few years ago, I tried to learn how to read and write Malayalam with the help of my parents. However, going to Malayalam school improved my ability to read and write by interacting with others in Malayalam. Since I am fluent in Malayalam, I got the opportunity to volunteer as a Malayalam school teacher this year.

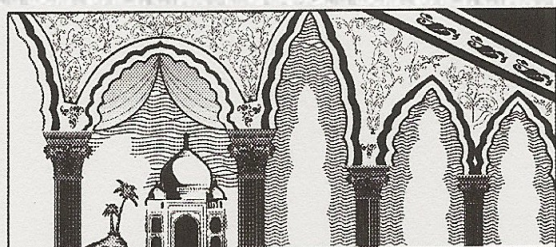
Nowadays I can understand what is going on in Malayalam movies, newspapers and television channels. When I go to Kerala, I can communicate in Malayalam with my extended family members. In addition, I felt very comfortable and closer when I talk to them in Malayalam.

Seeing all members actively participate and getting involved like a big family, makes me feel that Ohmkaram brought Kerala closer to me.



(Amit is a 10th Grader at West High School in O'Fallon and is one of our younger contributors).

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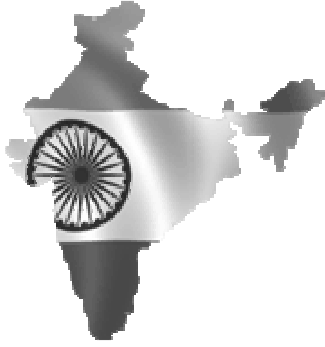
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## INDIA: A world of differences, embedded in one country

*by Lily Sugathan*



Unlike many of you, my mom did not feed me idiappams and dosa for breakfast. My mom instead made us puri-halwa and ghoogni-choora. My childhood is filled with fond memories of making gharondas during diwali and playing abir during Holi. I never made a phokalam for Onam. Nor did we place all educational materials before the goddess during Saraswati puja, we always did that for Chitragupta puja. That is because my family comes from the northern state of Bihar.

If you put a dozen Indians in a room from a dozen different states in India, chances are they all would have had different childhood experiences.

Crossing state borders sometimes feels like going into a different country.

Language, food, clothing, style of dance, music forms, traditions, everything can change. It would be unheard of for a North Indian bride to wear white at her wedding, yet it is the symbol of purity for a Kerala bride.

As a young college student at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale it was part of my duties as the Indian Student Association president to welcome new students to our campus. At one of these welcome meetings, I took a newly arrived student from Bangalore to meet a girl who had just arrived from Hyderabad. When we met at the dorms where she was staying we did not even think twice before we started talking to each other in English. An American man stood looking at us. After a few moments he hesitantly asked if we all were from India. We confirmed. He then said, "If you all come from the same country, why are you speaking English and not your local language?" We laughed when we explained that none of us spoke the same local language and in fact English was the common language we shared.

It was while in college that I had the wonderful opportunity to meet people from all over India. However, I always wondered why my friends from Gujarat wished me a Happy New Year at Diwali, whereas my friends from Bihar wished me a Happy New Year at Holi and my friends from Kerala would wish me a Happy New Year at Vishu. The Indian government must have been as intrigued by this as myself because in 1957 they setup the Indian Calendar Reform committee to research this issue and it was then that they found out that India has close to 30 different Hindu calendars. These calendars are mostly based on the astronomical practices of regional priests and calendar markers. With 30 different calendars, it is not surprising that we have several Happy New Years throughout the year.

Not all parts of India are drastically different from one another. I can understand a few words of Punjabi and Gujarati. Many times people confuse me to be from Allahabad because of my accent or from Bengal because we celebrate Durga Puja and not Dusshera.

Differences mainly arise in the extreme parts of the country. This can be seen by the journey of daal (yes I do mean lentils). Take a simple daal from North India, just lentils and a few spices. As this daal travels towards the middle of the country vegetables are added. The name changes, and it might even be called sidhi curry. Once the daal reaches South India the vegetables remain and the spices change. Suddenly this daal turns into sambhar.

Many people say these differences cause rifts amongst our people, yet I have always felt it is these diversities that make our culture so rich and provides for endless travel opportunities within our lovely country. As a woman travels across the country she can fill her suitcase with Ghagras from Gujrat, colorful lenghas from Rajasthan, Kanjeevarams from Chennai, and of course, our Kerala saris. Not to forget the culinary delights that range from the famous rasgula in Bengal, lassi in Punjab, bhel puri in Bombay, and so on and so forth.

The beauty of diversity can be seen endlessly in India, and as Indians we should all embrace it.

“The beauty of diversity can be seen endlessly in India, and as Indians we should all embrace it”.

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**Love Like No Other**  
*by Sheeja Manchira Natesan*



My Love,

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I love you ... though our paths have yet to cross.  
You are my fantasy. My desire. My deepest secret.

I've dreamt of you late nights, when the emptiness  
in my heart awakens me from my restless slumber.

I long for your touch.  
I know you could take away  
                    my sorrow,  
                    my fears,  
                    my loneliness.

You mesmerize me.

My dreams, day and night, are flooded with hopes  
of our life together.

The love we have, the mountains we would move ...

And not one compares to you.

For you are perfection.  
                    You are everything.  
                    You are God.

The only one I could give myself to.

The one who would love me in spite of my shortcomings,  
in spite of my sins ... in spite of me.

For You are patient ... You are kind.

You listen. You answer.

When I was sick, You healed.  
                    When weary ... encourage.  
                    When Lost ... found.

This is my testimony to You Lord.

For the love given, I am strengthened.  
For the blessings showered upon me, I am inspired.  
For Your Sacrifice ...

I am Yours.



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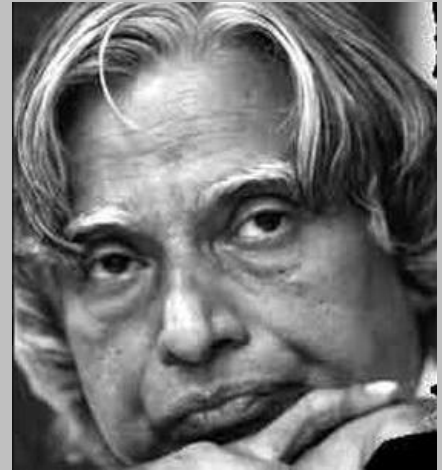
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**Best Management Lesson**  
*contributed by Madhu Madhavan*

**Abdul Kalam at Wharton India Economic forum,  
Philadelphia, USA, March 22, 2008**



'A Leader Should Know How to Manage Failure'

Question: Could you give an example, from your own experience, of how leaders should manage failure?

Kalam: Let me tell you about my experience. In 1973 I became the project director of India's satellite launch vehicle program, commonly called the SLV-3. Our goal was to put India's "Rohini" satellite into orbit by 1980. I was given funds and human resources -- but was told clearly that by 1980 we had to launch the satellite into space. Thousands of people worked together in scientific and technical teams towards that goal.

By 1979 -- I think the month was August -- we thought we were ready. As the project director, I went to the control center for the launch. At four minutes before the satellite launch, the computer began to go through the checklist of items that needed to be checked.

One minute later, the computer program put the launch on hold; the display showed that some control components were not in order. My experts -- I had four or five of them with me -- told me not to worry; they had done their calculations and there was enough reserve fuel. So I bypassed the computer, switched to manual mode, and launched the rocket. In the first stage, everything worked fine. In the second stage, a problem developed. Instead of the satellite going into orbit, the whole rocket system plunged into the Bay of Bengal. It was a big failure.

That day, the chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization, Prof. Satish Dhawan, had called a press conference. The launch was at 7:00 am, and the press conference -- where journalists from around the world were present -- was at 7:45 am at ISRO's satellite launch range in Sriharikota [in Andhra Pradesh in southern India].

Prof. Dhawan, the leader of the organization, conducted the press conference himself. He took responsibility for the failure -- he said that the team had worked very hard, but that it needed more technological support. He assured the media that in another year, the team would definitely succeed. Now, I was the project director, and it was my failure, but instead, he took responsibility for the failure as chairman of the organization.



The next year, in July 1980, we tried again to launch the satellite -- and this time we succeeded. The whole nation was jubilant. Again, there was a press conference.

Prof. Dhawan called me aside and told me, "You conduct the press conference today".

I learned a very important lesson that day.

**When failure occurred, the leader of the organization owned that failure. When success came, he gave it to his team.**

The best management lesson I have learned did not come to me from reading a book; it came from that experience.

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## The Moon and Her New Dress

*From Aesop's Fable (contributed by Kavita Menon)*

For months the snow had lain, white and sparkling, on the hilltops, and the ponds had been covered with the ice. Then, all at once the thaw came. Spring danced down the side of the mountain, and brought out whole bouquets of primroses and violets in little corners that caught the early sun.

The evenings were calm and lovely, and clouds, as the flowers, clustered in the sky when the light died away. On one of these fair evenings up through the clouds climbed the little new moon, dressed in the pale silver frock that she had worn all the winter, and all last summer and autumn as well.

She looked down towards the earth, and saw that everything on it was clothed in a delicate new gown. The almond-trees shook their pink skirts gracefully, and the elms drew their scarves around their shoulders. So what should the little new moon do but start a-weeping where she hung in the clear evening sky, and asking the stars and the winds why she was not allowed a new frock like everybody else?

The stars and the winds did their best to comfort her, but without success. Then, hearing her little daughter's sobs, who should come floating up from the sea, but the mother of the moon herself!

What the mother of the moon was like nobody could describe to you, except the old people who told this story to their children more than two thousand years ago. She hurried to the side of the little new moon and asked what the matter was. And the little silver lady explained through her tears that she wanted a fashionable new dress. The mother of the moon promised to do her best for her daughter, and said that she would start making the dress immediately, and come the very night to try it on.

She went away, and the little new moon shone with all her might, dreaming about the grand new dress. She wondered if it would be made of pearly cloud-stuff, and most likely she hoped that it would be trimmed with stars.

At cock-crow she slipped silently home, but, the next evening, she climbed the sky in great excitement, and waited for her wonderful gown.

Then the mother of the moon came along with her daughter's frock, and slipped it over the new moon's head. But, behold, it would not fit! It was too small round the waist.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" wailed the little moon, "you have cut it all wrong!"

"Indeed, I have not," answered her mother angrily. "It is you who are to blame! You have grown bigger in the night!"

"Then take it home and loosen it!" snapped the little moon. And she pulled her pretty silver shoulders out of the frock, and pushed it away.

The mother of the moon shook her head. She took the frock away, and brought it back next evening loosened.

The new moon was waiting among the stars, and her kind mother again popped the frock over her daughter's bright hair. But a second time it would not meet round the waist.

"You have cut it out wrong again!" cried the little new moon in a temper. "It doesn't fit."



*... continued on page 19*

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"It is not likely to!" answered the mother, herself quite angry. "You're even bigger than you were yesterday!"

"Oh, please take it back home, dear mother, and try again!" wailed the new moon. So, a third time, her patient mother let out the frock, and added a big piece to the hem. Then, once more, she carried it up to the sky to see if it would fit.

The little new moon was silent and rather upset. AS she had climbed the sky she had suspected herself that her waist was even bigger than before. And, sure enough, when the frock was put over her head, the hooks and eyes were further apart than ever.

"Oh, take it away!" cried the new moon. "I'm not a baby now! I'm growing up as fast as I can! It's a pity I can't have a dress that fits."

She never even thanked her mother for her trouble, but looked down sulkily at her reflection in a lake below. However, the mother of the moon determined to try again. For a whole fortnight, she went on loosening the gown; but at the end of two weeks the new moon was a perfect ball round the middle, ever so many times bigger than she had been at first.

Then, to her mother's delight, she began all at once to grow smaller.

"Now I can fit her!" said her mother joyfully. And she got a fresh piece of stuff, and began all over again. But, this time, the frock hung on the moon like a sack. It was much too big.

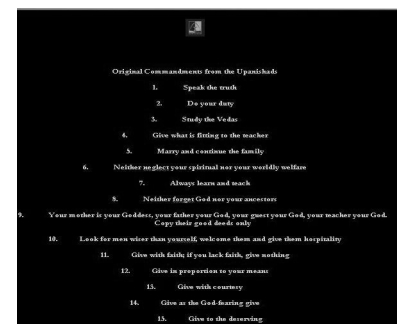
And so, for another week or two, the patient mother, instead of letting out the moon's frock, had to be taking it in! Until, at last, she gave up the struggle to fit the moon with a new gown. And that is the reason why, year in, year out, the moon never changes her silver color, though, as all of you know, she is for ever changing her size.

## Ohmkaram T-Shirt Initiative

In early 2010, we embarked on a fund raising drive for our scholarship program, aimed at helping school kids in Kerala. We designed and marketed a t-shirt towards this end. It was well received and many have commended its design.



The front depicts a striking, universal Aum symbol, encircled by the energy giving Surya flame. The back contains verses (in English) from the original Upanishad commandments. Both the design and text are in yellow, against a black cotton/poly blend t-shirt.



The t-shirt is available in varied sizes from Youth medium to Adult size L. Please inquire with any of our committee members on how to obtain your t-shirt!

# Life



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## ഓണം - സാംസ്കാരിക തനിമയുടെ ആഘോഷം

----- ബിജു കുര്യൻ

പുരാവൃത്തങ്ങൾ സ്വപ്നങ്ങളായി പെയ്യിരങ്ങുന്ന ദിവസങ്ങൾ ആണ് മലയാളിക്ക് ഓണക്കാലം! പ്രവാസജീവിതവും അതിനൊരു തടസ്സമാവുന്നില്ല എന്നത് രുചുമൂലമായിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു സാംസ്കാരികപൈതൃകത്തിന്റെ സവിശേഷതയായി കാണണം. ശർക്കരപുരട്ടിയുടെ തനതായ മധുരവും വിടർന്ന കണ്ണുകളോടെ പുഞ്ചിരി തൂകുന്ന തുമ്പപ്പൂക്കളും കാറ്റിൽ തലയാട്ടി കളിയിക്കുന്ന മുക്കുറ്റികളും ഒക്കെ ഓർമ്മകളിലെങ്കിലും ഘോഷയാത്ര നടത്തുന്നതായി ഓണക്കാലത്ത് ഓരോ മലയാളിയിലും അനുഭവപ്പെടുന്നതും അതുകൊണ്ട് തന്നെയായിരിക്കണം.

ഓർമ്മകൾക്ക് അവയുടെ മാത്രമായ ഒരു രീതിയുണ്ടെന്നാണ് തോന്നുന്നത്. അവ നമ്മെ കൈ പിടിച്ചു നടത്തുമ്പോൾ, നമുക്ക് ആ സന്തോഷം വാമൊഴിയായി പകരാൻ ആഗ്രഹം തോന്നാം; പറഞ്ഞു തുടങ്ങുമ്പോൾ, ഓർമ്മകൾ വീണ്ടും നമ്മെ കുറേക്കൂടി സൂക്ഷ്മാംശങ്ങളിലേക്കു കൂട്ടിക്കൊണ്ടു പോകും; കുറേക്കൂടി മനോഹരമായ വിശേഷങ്ങളിലേയ്ക്ക്! അങ്ങിനെ, ഓണം, ഓർമ്മകളാൽ മെന്യപ്പെടുന്ന മനോജ്ഞമായ ഒരു ശിൽപമാകുന്നു, നമ്മുടെ മനസ്സിൽ! എന്നാൽ, അതിന് ശ്രേഷ്ഠമായ ചില സാമൂഹ്യ അർത്ഥ തലങ്ങൾ കൂടി ഉണ്ട് എന്നാണ് എനിക്കു തോന്നുന്നത്! വൈരുദ്ധ്യാത്മകമായ, അതുകൊണ്ടു തന്നെ മഹത്തരവുമായ ചില തലങ്ങൾ!



അസൂര രാജാവായ മഹാബലി ആണ് ഓണത്തിന്റെ നായകൻ. ദേവനായ വാമനൻ ആകട്ടെ ഒരു പ്രതിനായക പരിവേഷമാണ് ഉള്ളത്! സാമാന്യ ധാരണകൾക്ക് വിരുദ്ധമായി, ഇവിടെ നമ്മുടെ നായകൻ ദേവഗണത്തിന് അനഭിമതനാകുന്നത് നന്മകൾ ചെയ്യുന്നത് മൂലമാണ്! (അതു പോലെ തന്നെ വൈരുദ്ധ്യാത്മകമാണ്, അസൂരഗുണങ്ങളാകേണ്ട അസൂയയും കുശുമ്പും ഇവിടെ ദേവഭാഗത്താണ് എന്നതും!) വരേണ്യ വർഗ്ഗത്തിന്റെ അപ്രീതി സമ്പാദിച്ച് കൊണ്ട് മഹാബലി ചെയ്യുന്ന നന്മകളുടെ പരിണിതഫലമാകട്ടെ, എല്ലാവരും, അതെ ഭേദങ്ങൾ ഏതുമില്ലാതെ എല്ലാവരും, സന്തോഷമായിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു രാഷ്ട്രവും! കേവലസങ്കല്പങ്ങൾക്കെതിരായിരിക്കേ, ഒരു യുട്ടോപിയൻ ആശയത്തിന്റെ ഏറ്റവും സമ്യക്കായ സാമൂഹ്യസാക്ഷാൽക്കാരമാണിത്. ഉദാത്തവും കാവ്യാത്മകവുമായ ഈ സാമൂഹ്യസാംസ്കാരിക-രാഷ്ട്രീയ രംഗപടം തന്നെയായിരിക്കണം, ഓണത്തിന്റെ തനിമ എന്നാണ് ഞാൻ വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നത്.

സാമാന്യ ചിന്തയിൽ വൈരുദ്ധ്യങ്ങൾ മാത്രമേ ഇതിൽ കാണാനാവൂ. നല്ലവനായ അസൂരൻ - കുശുമ്പു കാണിയിക്കുന്ന ദേവന്മാർ! അസൂരന്റെ ഭരണത്തിൽ അല്ലലേതുമില്ലാതെ ജീവിക്കുന്ന മനുഷ്യർ! ദേവനാൽ ചവിട്ടി താഴ്ത്തപ്പെട്ട തങ്ങളുടെ പ്രിയനേതാവിനു അഭിവാദ്യമർപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഒരു ജനതതി! (മലയാളി നെഞ്ചോടു ചേർത്ത് പിടിക്കുന്ന 'മാവേലി' എന്ന ഓമനപ്പേര് തന്നെ ഈ ജനപ്രീതി തെളിയിക്കുന്നു!) നന്മ തിരിച്ചറിയപ്പെട്ട് അത് പിൽതലമുറകൾക്ക് കൈമാറ്റം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുകയാണിവിടെ. ഈ സമൂഹം നന്മയോടൊപ്പമാണ്; നന്മ ചെയ്യുന്നവന്റെ ഒപ്പമാണ്. വരേണ്യവർഗ്ഗത്തിന്റെ കുത്സിതപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെ തിരിച്ചറിയുന്ന ഈ സമൂഹം വ്യക്തമായും തങ്ങൾ നന്മയുടെ പക്ഷത്താണെന്ന് ഉറക്കെ പറയുന്നു - പത്ത് ദിവസം നീണ്ട് നിൽക്കുന്ന ആഘോഷങ്ങളിലൂടെ; വർഷത്തിലൊരിക്കൽ മാത്രം എത്താൻ കഴിയുന്ന

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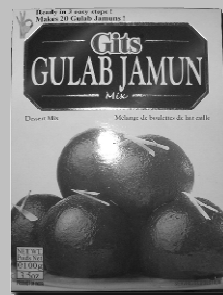
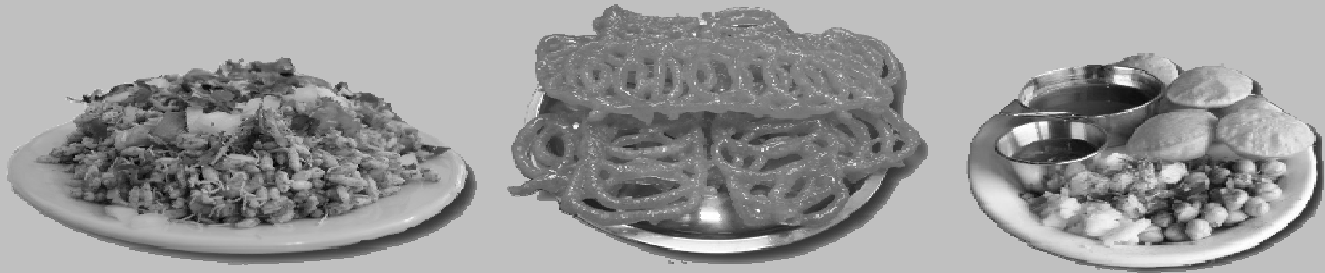


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ഓർക്കണം:- ഓണത്തിന്, കുറഞ്ഞത് എട്ടാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ കുലശേഖരപ്പെരുമാളിന്റെ ഭരണകാലത്തോളം എങ്കിലും പഴക്കം ഉണ്ട് എന്നാണ് ചരിത്രകാരന്മാർ പറയുന്നത്. അങ്ങിനെ നോക്കുമ്പോൾ, തീർച്ചയായും, ആ കാലം മുതൽക്കേ, നമ്മുടെ പൂർവ്വികരിൽ സഹജമായിരുന്ന മാനവികതയെ ആയിരിക്കണം ഇതു കാണിച്ച്ക്കുന്നത്. ഒരു പക്ഷേ, അന്ന് നിലനിന്നിരുന്ന വ്യവസ്ഥിതിയിൽ നിന്നുരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞ ഒരു കഥയാകാം ഇത്. എങ്കിലും, സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ സാമാന്യ ധാരണകൾക്ക് വിപരീതമായി, ഒരു അസൂര ചകരവർത്തിയെ പൊലും നന്മയുടെ പ്രതീകമാക്കുന്ന വിശാലത യാണ് ഇവിടെ കാണുന്നത്. അതോടൊപ്പം, എല്ലാ സഹജീവികൾക്കും എല്ലാ നന്മയും ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന സമഭാവനയും!

പലപ്പോഴും സാമാന്യ യുക്തിക്കും നീതിയ്ക്കും അപ്പുറം നിക്ഷിപ്ത താൽപര്യങ്ങൾക്കനുസരിച്ചാണ് സാമൂഹ്യ നിയമങ്ങൾ കാണപ്പെടാൻ; അഥവാ, സാമൂഹ്യ ചട്ടക്കൂടുകൾ നിർമ്മിക്കപ്പെടാൻ. ഇവിടെ, നമ്മുടെ പൂർവ്വികർ ആ നിയമങ്ങളെ കാറ്റിൽ പറത്തി. വരേണ്യ വർഗ്ഗത്തിന്റെ കരാളഹസ്തങ്ങളിൽനിന്നുള്ള ഒരു സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യപ്രഖ്യാപനം കൂടിയായിരിയ്ക്കണം ഇത്! ഒരുപക്ഷേ, പിൽക്കാലത്ത്, ഈ സമൂഹത്തിൽ നാം കണ്ട പല സാമൂഹ്യവിപ്ലവങ്ങളുടേയും ഒരു ചാലകശക്തി ഈ പാരമ്പര്യം ആണെന്ന് പറയുന്നതിൽ തെറ്റില്ലെന്നും എനിക്ക് തോന്നുന്നു.

ഓണം വിളവെടുപ്പിന്റെ ഉത്സവം കൂടിയാണ്. മനുഷ്യൻ അവന്റെ അധ്വാനഫലത്തിൽ ഹർഷപൂർവ്വകിതനാകുന്ന സമയം. ഒരു ജനതതി അതിനെ മാനവീയതയുടെ ഏറ്റവും ശ്രേഷ്ഠമായ ആഘോഷമാക്കി മാറ്റുന്നു എന്നത് ആ സംസ്കൃതിയുടെ ഔന്നത്യം തന്നെയാണ്. വൻ കരകളുടെ അതിർത്തികൾക്ക് ഇല്ലാതെയായാക്കാൻ സാധിക്കാത്ത ഒന്നാണ് ഈ പൈതൃകം. സിരകളിൽ ഒഴുകുന്ന രക്തത്തിൽ അലിഞ്ഞ് ചേർന്നത്. തലമുറകളിലേയ്ക്കൊഴുകിയെത്തുന്നത്! കാലാതീതമായി നിലനിൽക്കുന്ന ആ സാമൂഹ്യ ധീരതയുടെ, സ്ഥൈര്യത്തിന്റെ, മഹത്തായ മാനവീയതയുടെ, കണ്ണികളാകുക വഴി നാം ആ സാംസ്കാരിക തനിമയുടെ പ്രഘോഷകർ കൂടി ആയി മാറുകയാണ്.





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# പ്രകൃതി

----- എം.എൻ.മാഞ്ചിറ

ഒരായിരം സ്വപ്നങ്ങൾ സംഗമിച്ചിടുന്ന  
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വെമ്പുകയാണെൻ മനസ്സ്.  
ചിന്തിച്ചുപോകുന്നു ഞാൻ ഇന്നു വീണ്ടും  
എന്തിനീ അന്ത്യം കുറിക്കുന്ന ജന്മം?  
സ്വപ്നം വിടരുന്ന സ്വർഗ്ഗഭൂമി ഇതു....  
ജീവിതം സത്യമായ് മാറ്റുന്ന ഭൂമി!  
ആകാശമദ്ധ്യേ ജലിക്കുന്ന സൂര്യൻ  
പ്രകൃതിക്കു നൽകിയ ചാന്തുപൊട്ട്.  
എല്ലാം ഇവിടെ പ്രകാശ തലോടലിൽ  
ചാഞ്ചാട്ടം ആടി മദിച്ചിടുന്നു.  
സൗരയൂഥത്തിലെ വർണപ്പകിട്ടുകൾ  
വാരിവിതറിയ ഈ പൂക്കാവനം....  
ഇവിടെ വിടരുന്നു, കൊഴിയുന്നു...വീണ്ടും ..  
പുനർജനിക്കുന്നു തലമുറകൾ.  
ആ ദിവ്യദീപം തലോടും പ്രകൃതിയിൽ...  
സുന്ദര സ്വപ്നം വിടർന്നിടുന്നു.  
എത്ര അണച്ചാലും...ഊതിയാലും ...അതിൽ ..  
കത്തിജലിക്കും ഒരജ്ഞാത ശക്തി.  
താളം പിടിക്കുന്ന താലലയനങ്ങളാൽ  
രാവും പകലും വരക്കും പ്രകൃതി...  
കാലചക്രത്തിൻ കടിഞ്ഞാൺ പിടിച്ചു ...  
കറുങ്ങുന്നിവിടെ പ്രപഞ്ച സൃഷ്ടി .  
സയന്ധനത്തിലെ വെണ്മേഘപാളികൾക്കുള്ളിൽ..  
വിടരുന്നോരായിരം അനസ്വരപൂക്കൾ  
ചായപകിട്ടിൽ കുളിച്ചു പുളകം അണിഞ്ഞു..  
മിന്നിമിന്നി ജലിച്ചിടുന്നു.....!  
ആരാധകർക്കായി അണിയിച്ചൊരുക്കിയ...

ഒരു അതഭൂതം ആണീ സ്വപ്നഭൂമി.  
എത്രകണ്ടാലും, മടുക്കില്ല, വെറുക്കില്ല....  
ഈ ഭൂമുഖത്തിൻ മനോഹാരിത .  
ഒരായിരം ജന്മങ്ങൾ പോരെന്നിക്കീ ലോക.....  
സൃഷ്ടികൾ കണ്ടാസ്വദിച്ചിടുവാൻ.  
എത്ര പൂജിച്ചാലും, ആരാധിച്ചാലും  
നഷ്ടമാവില്ല ഈ പ്രകൃതിക്കു മുൻപിൽ.  
ജീവിതം സമ്പൂർണ്ണം ആകേണമെങ്കിൽ നാം...  
കണ്ടാസ്വദിക്കണം ഈ ധർമ്മ ഭൂമി.  
ഇവിടെമാണ് ഈശ്വരൻ മാനവർക്കേകിയ..  
സ്വർഗ്ഗ, നരക പ്രതിച്ചായകൾ.  
സുഖ, ദുഃഖ സംതൃപ്തമാണീ വഴിത്താര  
സുഷ്മമായ് തീർത്ഥാടനം.....തുടരൂ...  
കണ്ടെത്തീടുക കഴിയുമെങ്കിൽ നമ്മൾ  
ഈ പ്രകൃതിതൻ പ്രതിച്ചായകൾ.....  
ഇവിടെമാണെന്നും നമുക്കുള്ള സമ്പത്തും  
നമ്മുടെ എല്ലാം ഈ ഭൂമി തന്നെ!  
തമ്മിൽ കലഹിച്ചു തല്ലി തകർക്കാതെ  
കാത്തു സൂഷിക്കണം എന്നും എന്നും.  
എന്നും ഭാജിക്കലാണ്, എന്നും പ്രതീക്ഷിക്കലാണ്  
എന്നും...കിനാക്കൾ....കാണുന്നു ഞാൻ.  
ഇനി ഒരുജന്മം ഈ ഭൂമുഖത്തു ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ..  
മാനവനായി പിറന്നീടല്ലേ?.....  
ആകാശമദ്ധ്യേ പാറിപ്പറക്കുന്ന..ഒരു  
കൃഷ്ണ പക്ഷിയായ് ജനിച്ചീടണേ!  
ഈ സൃഷ്ടി കണ്ടാസ്വദിക്കുവാൻ....  
നമ്മൾക്ക് എന്തിനു മറ്റൊരു ജന്മം.



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# Year in Review

## Anniversary Celebration



## Vishu





## Vishu (... continued)



## Picnic



## Onam



## Onam (... continued)



## Swami Udit Chaitaniyaji talk at Hindu Temple



Selection  
and layout

YEAR IN  
REVIEW **2010**

by Anju Prayaga  
and Beena Neelam



## Malayalam School of St. Louis (An Ohmkaram affiliate)

by Anju Prayaga

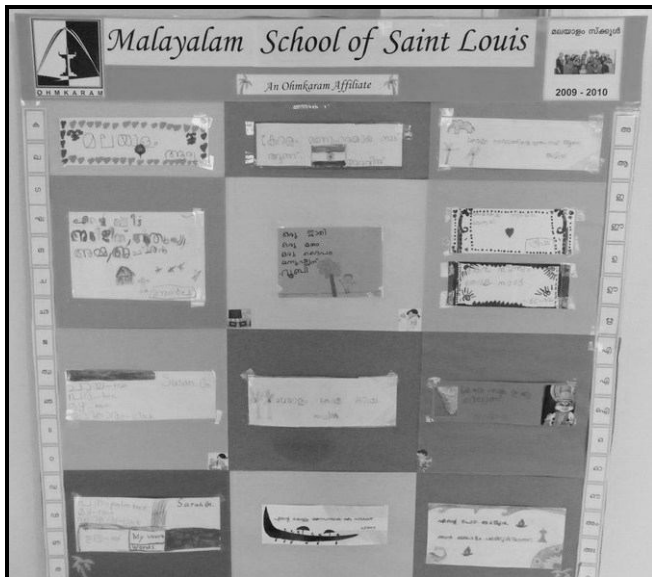
Malayalam School of St Louis is a voluntary organization run by Ohmkaram to teach and promote the Malayalam language to interested students in the St Louis area. 2010-11 is the fourth year of operation and we now have 22 students and 7 voluntary teachers. Our registration runs from July through September. The school meets alternate Saturdays from September to May, 2-4 PM.

This year, high school students who were previous graduates of the Malayalam School, were given the opportunity to be volunteers.

For more information about registration and volunteering opportunities, please contact Anju Prayaga at (636) 281-9778 or Savitha Krishnan at (636) 326-4414.

**Email:** malayalamschool@yahoo.com **Website:** <http://www.ohmkaram.org/MalayalamSchool.html>

### Poster board presentation during Ohmkaram Vishu celebration, April 2010



**Malayalam School Volunteers:** Amit Prayaga, Anjana Prayaga, Deepa George, Eldho John, Latha Madhu, Latha Unni and Savitha Krishnan

### Class of 2009-10 Year end Party and Graduation

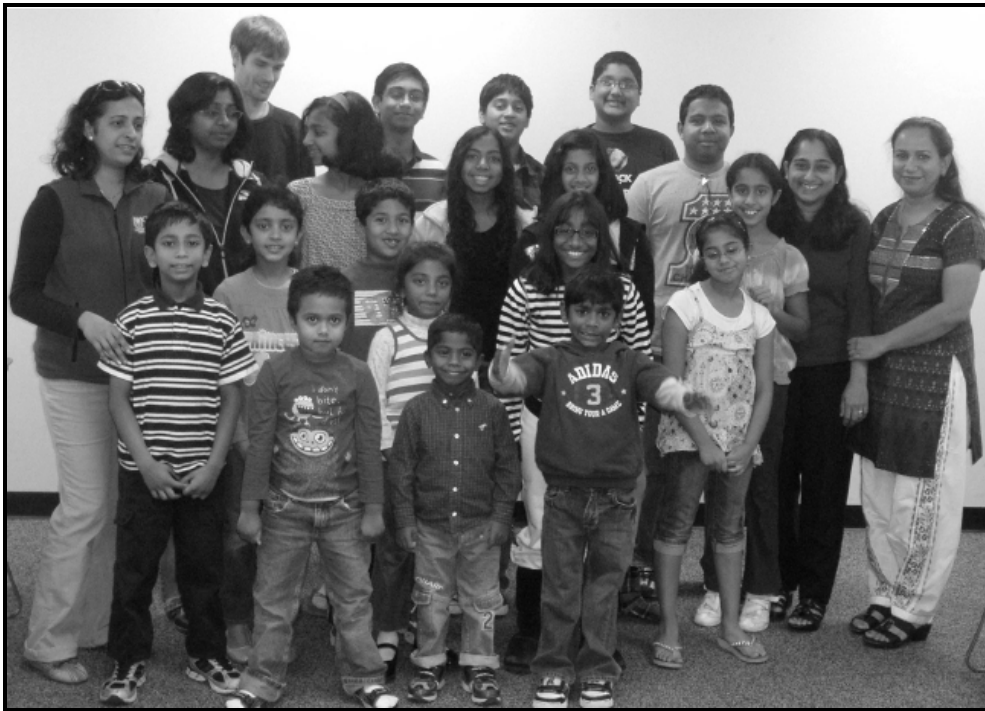
*First Row Left to Right:*  
Sarah, Ashwin, Annika,  
Zubin, Natasha, Susan,  
Hannah, Ruby

*Second Row Left to Right:* Savitha, Anju,  
Arjun, Amit, Sushanth,  
Nitya, Trisha, Deepa,  
Shreya, Eldho.

*Not in picture:* Aravind,  
Arya, Athulya, Pranav,  
Priya and Sangeeth



## Class of 2010-11



Sarah, Susan, Sangeeth



Left to Right: First row: Akshaj, Adam, Shyam  
 Second row: Ashwin, Alita, Zubin, Athulya, Shruthi, Natasha  
 Third row: Deepa, Anupama, Shreya, Nitya, Trisha, Eldho, Ruby, Savitha, Anju  
 Fourth row: Aaron, Amit, Arjun, Sushanth.  
 Not in picture: Latha U, Latha M, Roshini, Swetha

## Malayalam Word Search:

അ	ഭ	യ	ഉ	പൂ	വി	ഉം	കൊ
ഡ	ര	ല	ഥ	അ	ന്ന	ഖ	വി
ക	ണി	ളി	കി	ട	ക്ക്	ഷു	സ്
ഷു	വി	മ	ല	യാ	ഉം	അ	ശ്
ഭ	ഞ്ഞ	ക്ക്	വ്	ഉം	ഞ	മ്പ	ച
ശ്	ഭ	ണം	വി	ട്ട	ക്ക	ലം	ന്ദ
ല	സ്	ഓ	ഉ	കൊ	ന്ന	പൂ	നം
ന്ദ	മം	ഋ	ക്ക്	ലം	ന്ദ	വ്	ക്ക്

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----- വി. ആർ. പിള്ള

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ആരോടും യാത്രപറയാതെ  
പിരിഞ്ഞുപോയ കവി ഇനി നീറുന്ന ഓർമ്മ.  
ആത്മാവിന്റെ നീറ്റലുകളിൽ പിറന്ന  
പൊള്ളുന്ന കവിതകൾ പാമേയമാക്കി  
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തീപിടിച്ച മനസ്സുമായ്  
വഴിയമ്പലങ്ങളില്ലാതെ  
മാളമില്ലാത്ത പാമ്പുപോൽ  
ലഹരിയുടെ തീരങ്ങളിലൂടെ  
കനലുകൾ നിറഞ്ഞ വഴികൾ താണ്ടിയ  
നിത്യസഞ്ചാരി ഇനി ഓർമ്മ.  
അനന്തപുരിമേളകളിൽ ചിത്രങ്ങൾ കാണാതെ  
സംവാദങ്ങളുടെ ജാടകളിൽ നിന്നുകന്ന്  
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സൗഹൃദം പങ്കിട്ടും  
കവിത ചൊല്ലിയും  
'കൈരളി'യുടെ പടിക്കെട്ടുകളിൽ  
വെളിച്ചം വിതറിയ  
വെയിൽ തിന്നുന്ന പക്ഷി ഇനി ഓർമ്മ.  
പരിചിത നഗരവീഥിയോരത്ത്  
സൂര്യനെ സാക്ഷി നിർത്തി  
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മുഷിഞ്ഞ കുപ്പായക്കീശയിലിട്ട്  
ജീവിതവും കവിതയും വേർതിരിക്കാനാവാതെ  
യാത്ര നിർത്തിയ കവി ഇനി ഓർമ്മ.



(ഈയ്യുടെ അന്തരിച്ച കവി എ. അയ്യപ്പൻ ആദരാഞ്ജലി അർപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ടെഴുതിയ കവിത. തിരുവനന്തപുരത്ത് വർഷത്തിലൊരിക്കൽ അരങ്ങേറുന്ന രാജ്യാന്തര ചലച്ചിത്രമേളയിലെ നിറസാന്നിദ്ധ്യമായിരുന്നു അയ്യപ്പൻ.)

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## Kerala Corner

by Sudhir Kozhikal

This is Ohmkaram's entertainment portal. Through this Google group, Ohmkaram communicates with subscribers about cultural events, entertainments, etc. in and around the St. Louis area.

We would like to encourage all our members to join this group, so that eventually all emails pertaining to Ohmkaram's events will be sent through this group only. This group is open to all, so one does not have to be a member of Ohmkaram to subscribe to it. Anyone interested in receiving emails from Ohmkaram regarding its events may join. Another important point is that by maintaining a separate group (i.e., Kerala Corner) that is open to all, we can ensure the privacy of Ohmkaram's members' Yahoo group, which will eventually become members only.

If you have already registered, thank you very much! If not, please send an email to keralacorner@googlegroups.com to join.

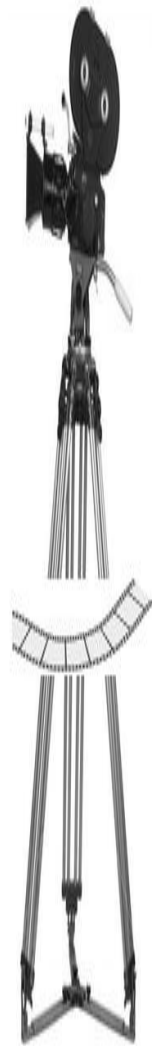
## 10 Malayalam Movies of 2010

by Vimal Nair

Punyam Aham (Prithiviraj, Samvruta)  
Bodyguard (Dileep, Nayanthara)  
Drona (Mamooty, Kanika)  
Nayakan (Indrajith, Dhanya)  
Thanthonni (Prithiviraj, Sheela)  
Pokkiri Raja (Mamooty, Prithiviraj, Shriya Saran)  
Kutty Srank (Mamooty, Padmapriya)  
Shikkar (Mohan Lal, Sneha, Ananya)  
Elsamma Enna Aankutty (Kunchacko Boban, Indrajith)  
Pranchiyettan and the Saints (Mamooty, Priyamani)

### In Memoriam Tribute - Notable Obituaries in Malayalam Film Industry

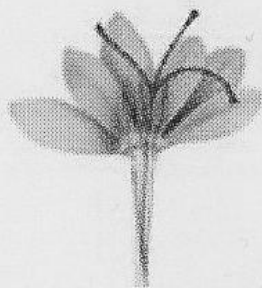
Cochin Haneefa (58)	Valtsalyam, Kireedam, Aniyathi Pravu, Punjabi House, Mahanadi
Girish Puthenchery (49)	Madampi, Thenmavin Kombath, Summer in Bethlahem
M.K. Kamalam (86)*	Balan, Shayanam <i>*(First talkie heroine)</i>
Sreenath (53)	Shalini Ente Kootukari, Oru CBI Diary Kurippu
P.G. Viswambharan (64)	Sphodanam, Sandhyakyu Virija Poovu
Adoor Pankajam (85)	Chemmeen, Aye Auto
M.G. Radhakrishnan (73)	Manichithrathazhu, Anandabhadram
Subair PP (48)	Nadiya Kollappetta Rathri, Lelam, Roudram
Venu Nagavally (61)	Yavanika, Sukhamo Devi, Lal Salam, Rakthasakshikal Sindabad
Swarnalatha (37)	Ravanaprabhu, Punjabi House
Kozhikode Santha Devi (85)	Moodupadam, Iruttunte Aatmavu
Mankada Ravi Varma (83)	Nokkukuthi, Mathilukal



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## The Treasure in the Orchard

*From Aesop's Fable (contributed by Kavita Menon)*

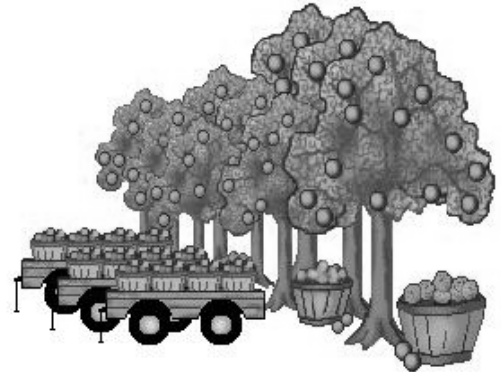
An old gardener who was dying sent for his two sons on his bedside, as he wished to speak to them. They came in answer to his request, and raising himself on his pillows, the old man pointed through the window towards his orchard.

"You see the orchard?" said he, feebly.

"Yes, Father, we see the orchard."

"For years it has given the best of fruits – golden oranges, amber apricots, and cherries bigger and brighter than rubies!"

"To be sure, Father. It has always been a good orchard!"



The old gardener nodded his head, time and time again.

He looked at his hands – they were worn with the spade that he used all his life. Then he looked at the hands of his sons, and saw that the nails were polished and the fingers white as those of any fine lady.

"You have never done a day's work in your lives, you two!" said he. "I doubt if you ever will! But I have hidden a treasure in my orchard for you to find. You will never possess it unless you dig it up. It lies mid-way between two of the trees, not too near, yet not too far from the trunks. It is yours for the trouble of digging!"

Then he sent them away, and soon afterwards he died. So the orchard became the property of his sons, and without any delay, they set to work to dig the treasure that had been promised them. They dug and they dug, day after day, and week after week, going down the long alleys of fruit trees, never too near yet never too far from the trunks. They dug up all the weeds, and picked out all the stones; not because they liked weeding and cleaning, but because it was all part of the hunt for the buried treasure. Winter passed and spring came, and never were there such blossoms as those which hung the orange and apricots and cherry trees with curtains of petals pale as pearls and soft as silk.

Then summer threw sunshine over the orchard, and sometimes the clouds bathed it in cool, delicious rain. At last the time of the fruit harvest came. But the two brothers had not yet found the treasure that was hidden among the roots of the trees.

They sent for a merchant from the nearest town to buy the fruit. It hung in great bunches - golden oranges, amber apricots, and cherries bigger and brighter than rubies. The merchant looked at them in open admiration.

"This is the finest crop I have yet seen," said he. "I will give you twenty bags of money for it!"

Twenty bags of money were more than the two brothers had ever owned in their life. They struck the bargain in great delight, and took the money-bags into the house, while the merchant made arrangements to carry away the fruit.

"I will come again next year," said he. "I am always glad to buy a crop like this. How you must have dug and weeded and worked to get it!"

He went away, and the brothers sat eyeing each other over the tops of the money-bags. Their hands were rough and toil-worn just as the old gardener's had been when he died.

"Golden orchards and amber apples and cherries bigger and brighter than rubies," said one of them, softly. "I believe that that is the treasure we have been digging for all year, the very treasure that our father meant!"

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II. Terms & Conditions are available at  
<http://Raffle.AyyappaTempleStLouis.org>

III. For any questions – contact Manager, The Hindu Temple of Saint Louis or email to [contact@AyyappaTempleStLouis.org](mailto:contact@AyyappaTempleStLouis.org)

IV. The drawing shall take place at 6-00 PM on May 28th 2011 in the The Hindu Temple Of St Louis Premises.

## Sri Ayyappan Of Sabarimala



In Hindu temples, the *moola vigraham* (deities) can be found sitting, standing or lying down. Most are in a standing position, rarely seated or reclining.

The idol of Ayyappa in Sabarimala is in a peculiar *Yogapatta* seated posture. This position is also known as **Arddhasana** or **Yogapadasana** or **Yogarudha Siddhasana**. This posture reveals the lord's ascetic mood *Tapobhavam* (voluntary, austere self-discipline).

One might wonder why the legs of Ayyappa are wrapped with a *patta* (cloth) around the knees. This is not seen in other deities. It is mainly to support the legs and spine while seated in this yoga position for a prolonged time, especially when one is in a transcendental state (*Samadhi*).

A Yogi who is in *Tapovrutti* (ascetic calmness) will never stretch his legs. Accordingly, for ordinary human beings, crossing our legs to the right or left carries some "body language" connotation as well.

Similarly, when a god (small "g") is seated with his left leg crossed, he expects his lady to sit on his lap. The right lap, is for his child.

Since Ayyappa is considered to be a *Naishtika Bramachari* (avowed celibate for life, therefore without consort or child), he is depicted crouching on his toes, with the ankles slightly raised, indicating that no one is to be seated on his lap.

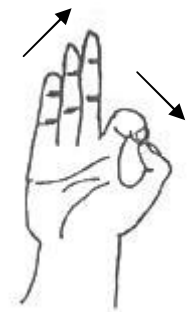
The Ayyappa idol is squatting on a *pitha* (footstool), which again confirms his disciplined ascetic mood or *dhyana* (deep meditative state; zen-like). Moreover, the idol's eyes are always half opened/half closed (not fully opened as regularly depicted in Ayyappa pictures).

*(It is said that half open/closed eyes is a meditative state of consciousness; looking inward with a pure, or holy mind set, while at the same time outwardly observing worldly surroundings with love – Editors).*

### **Cinmudra** (sign or insignia of wisdom)

We often use hand gestures to express ideas or imagination. Similarly, in order to express the features of Atma (soul) and Iswara (God), there are hand gestures called *Mudras*. These *Mudras* are common in pujas, especially in Kerala temples.

*Jnanamudra* or *Cinmudra* is one such gesture, and the right hand of Ayyappa is adorned in this *mudra*. Using the palm, the first (pinky), second and third fingers respectively, are held upright (unbent); the tips of the fourth finger and thumb are touching, closed in a loop.



The three unbent fingers represent *Sat* (truth), *Cit* (consciousness), and *Ananda* (bliss) - the features of **Atma**. Observe the palm and notice that from the little finger to the middle, each is longer than the other. Similarly, the fourth finger and the thumb appear reduced in length since it is curled.

In our world, to a certain extent, all things that are on an upward trend, eventually declines. Whether it is happiness, luck or financial gains, nature teaches this principle through the gesture of the **Cinmudra**.

Sri Ayyappa squatting on the **pitha** with his right hand in **Cinmudra** declares "I am the Sat Cit and Ananda. I am the soul embodied. I immerse myself in spiritual blissfulness. I am free from the three blemishes (tridosha\*) of the three worlds\*\*. Whoever confronts me, I am revealed as *nandaswarupa* (person who reveals joy, happiness). I will emancipate him/her from all the worldly sufferings. I will provide him/her the blessing of *Atmajana* (self-realization) and mental power, and he/she will enjoy all the pleasures and calmness, from the past, in the present and in the future".

\* *Balance of air, fire and water elements*

\*\* *Physical universe, the sub astral or mental plane, and the spiritual universe - Editors.*

It is proclaimed that Sri Ayyappa who is holding the Cinmudra and Yogapatta and keeping the status of *Brahmajani* (self realized soul) is a *Mahaswarupa* (mighty form). Therefore, a devotee who wants to see Ayyappa, should take a vow and voluntarily experience *Brahmacharya-nishtha* (absolute celibacy and without any desires or attachment, including to the family) and **Atmajana** for at least for a Mandala (41 days).

### Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa !!

*This article is adapted from Naa Chinni Manikanta & Enchanting Kerala - Editors*



### Why do we light a lamp?



In almost every Indian home a lamp is lit daily before the altar of the Lord. In some houses it is lit at dawn, in some, twice a day – at dawn and dusk – and in a few it is maintained continuously - Akhanda Deepa. All auspicious functions begin with the lighting of the lamp, which is often maintained right through the occasion.

Light symbolizes knowledge, and darkness - ignorance. The Lord is the "Knowledge Principle" (Chaitanya) who is the source, the enlivener and the illuminator of all knowledge. Hence light is worshiped as the Lord himself.

Knowledge removes ignorance just as light removes darkness. Also, knowledge is a lasting inner wealth by which all outer achievement can be accomplished. Hence we light the lamp to bow down to knowledge as the greatest of all forms of wealth.

Why not light a bulb or tube light? That too would remove darkness. But the traditional oil lamp has additional spiritual significance. The oil or ghee in the lamp symbolizes our vaasanas or negative tendencies and the wick, the ego. When lit by spiritual knowledge, the vaasanas get slowly exhausted and the ego too finally perishes. The flame of a lamp always burns upwards. Similarly we should acquire such knowledge as to take us towards higher ideals.

Whilst lighting the lamp we thus pray:

*Deepajyothi parabrahma  
Deepa sarva tamopahaha  
Deepena saadhyate saram  
Sandhyaa deepo namostute*

I prostrate to the dawn/dusk lamp; whose light is the Knowledge Principle (the Supreme Lord), which removes the darkness of ignorance and by which all can be achieved in life.



## Inspirational Words of Wisdom

compiled by Raj Unni

"Evenness of mind and dexterity in action is Yoga"

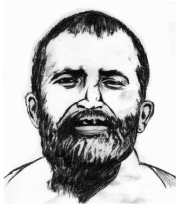
*Bhagavad Gita*

"Just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise"

*Holy Bible*

"God has no mercy on one who has no mercy for others"

*Holy Quran*



Money can fetch you comforts alone. Do not consider it as your sole end and aim of life"

*Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*

"This life is short; the vanities of the world are transient; but they alone live who live for others; the rest are more dead than alive"

*Swami Vivekananda*



"Whatever is composed must necessarily dissolve. That is the inviolable law of the universe. But working out one's destiny is a duty that one must never abandon or take lightly"

*Gowtama Buddha*

"Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well"

*Mahatma Gandhi*



"Serve God. Serve humanity. Only service to humanity shall serve for us a place in heaven"

*Guru Nanak*

"Every little thing counts in a crisis"

*Jawaharlal Nehru*



---

### The Right Balance

Own money, but do not allow the money to own you.

Eat food, but do not allow the food to eat you.

Drink if you wish, but do not allow the drink to gulp you.

Angry you can be, but let not be anger burn you.

## Meditation - It is not what you think

by Dr. Sudhirdas Kumar Prayaga

You may have seen this familiar phrase on some Internet sites or T-shirts. It carries more than its literal meaning. The obvious inference is that meditation is different from what you may think it is. Another meaning, for people who are not familiar with meditation (*dhyanam*), is that it is not just thinking or repeating a word or mantra. In reality, meditation has a broader meaning. We use our faculties of thinking and concentration initially to achieve a meditative state, where we are neither thinking nor concentrating.

Initially, I was introduced into meditative practice when I was an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student at St Thomas College in Thrissur, Kerala. At that time, we were very surprised to have a group of Caucasians from France, disciples of Sri Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, initiating us in the practice of Transcendental Meditation (*adindrya dhyana*). Since then, I have learned about other forms of meditation as well.

Meditation practice comes in different forms, but the ultimate aim of all forms is the same - to attain an inner peace and good health. The main idea is to use one or more of your five senses (*pancha indriyam*) to bring attention to your consciousness. Transcendental Meditation, for example, practices repeating a word, or a mantra, to bring your thinking and concentration into focus. While Pranayama, or breath yoga, focuses attention on movement of air in and out of lungs. In some traditions, the practitioner uses a beaded chain using the sense of touch to focus attention.

Prayer and *Bhajan*'s are also forms of meditation using our sense of hearing. In temples, *prasadam* is used to stimulate your sense of taste and incense sticks are lit to stimulate the sense of smell. For some, images of Krishna or Ayyappa are used to focus their attention, using the sense of vision. Ideally, I believe, one should choose a meditation practice best suited for them.



Many scientific studies have demonstrated unequivocally the health benefits of Meditation. Meditation helps both the physical and mental well-being of the individual. Some measurable physiological changes associated with Meditation are lowering of heart rate, slowing of breath, and reducing blood pressure. These physio-chemical changes are controlled by autonomous nervous system.

Parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system forms the two opposing but complementary arms autonomous or involuntary nervous system. As the name suggest, involuntary nervous system is controlled by our brain independent of our volition and act upon our body to regulate all our bodily functions. Meditation seems to have a direct effect on this regulation of involuntary nervous system, specifically stimulating the parasympathetic arm. Sympathetic and parasympathetic activities need to be in balance for good health.

Sympathetic nervous system controls the so-called 'fight-or-flight' response, which keeps you on the alert of any danger. Evolutionarily, sympathetic nervous system evolved to help us cope with impending danger from predators. When in danger of an attack by a predator we do not have time to think to respond. Sympathetic nervous system takes over with the 'fight-or-flight' response instantaneously.

It appears, in modern times, we are constantly on the alert with elevated sympathetic activity. An increase in metabolic diseases, such as diabetes, obesity, blood pressure, and stroke, seen all over the world, especially in developed countries, are linked to such chronic elevated sympathetic activity. Meditation has been scientifically shown to balance the effect of sympathetic activity by stimulating parasympathetic system.

“ It is a common misconception that the practice of meditation is time consuming and difficult ...

... The yoga and meditation techniques are major contributions of India to the world”

It is a common misconception that the practice of meditation is time consuming and difficult. Of course, it is advisable to be initiated into the practice by a guru or a practitioner. Unless you are planning to get to 'nirvana' quickly, reaping the health benefits of meditation should not take significant time from ones daily routine. One can quickly learn to take ones own pulse reading as a measure of effect of meditation on your body.

The word Meditation was introduced into English as a translation of word *Dhyana* from India, the Sanskrit root meaning to meditate. *Dhyanam* is the 7<sup>th</sup> of 8 stages of yoga according to *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali (2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE). According to the Hindu philosophical thought, one can attain enlightenment (or *bodhi*) by one of the four yogas namely *Karma yoga*, *Bhakti yoga*, *Jnana yoga* or *Raja yoga*. Meditation forms part of *Raja yoga*.

The yoga and meditation techniques are major contributions of India to the world.



### Gayathri Manthram Lyrics

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय  
tat savitur varanyam  
bhargho devasya dhīmahi  
dhiyo yō nah prachodayat

#### Translation

Oh God! You are the Giver of Life,  
Remover of pain and sorrow,  
The Bestower of happiness,  
Oh! Creator of the Universe,  
May we receive your supreme illumination,  
May You guide our minds on the right path

## Recipe Corner: Snacks and Sweets

### **Diamond cuts:**

*By Mrs. Anjana Prayaga*

Ingredients:

1. All Purpose flour - 1 cup
2. Water – 6 to 7 tbsp  
(enough to make a smooth dough)
3. Salt – 1 pinch
4. Oil – 1½ tsp
5. Cardamom powder - ¼ tsp
6. Oil for deep-frying

For Sugar coating:

1. Sugar – ½ cup
2. Water - 3 tbsp

Method: Mix all ingredients and make a smooth dough. Knead very well to incorporate all the ingredients. Cover the dough with a damp cloth and set aside for about 15 minutes. Divide the dough into 4 equal parts and make small balls. Dust the pastry board with a small amount of flour. Flatten the dough ball into a thin rectangle shape using a rolling pin and cut the sheet into 1 inch vertical strands using a Pizza cutter. Cut the sheet diagonally again to get diamond shape. Repeat for rest of dough. Heat enough oil for deep-frying and fry few cuts at a time. The cuts will puff up and ends will start browning. Drain well and keep aside. For sugar coating: Heat water and sugar in a big vessel on a medium heat. When you get a thread like consistency add the fried cuts and mix well until all pieces are coated with sugar syrup. Transfer to a cookie sheet. Cool completely and store in an airtight container.



### **Elayada/Banana Leaf**

#### **Appam:**

*By Mrs. Savitha Krishnan*

Ingredients:

1. Idiyappam powder or roasted rice flour - 1 cup
2. Grated Coconut – 2 cups
3. Jaggery Powder - 1 cup
4. Oil – 1 tsp
5. Water - 1 cup
6. Cardamom Powder - 1 tsp
7. Banana leaves

Method: Mix grated coconut, cardamom powder, and powdered jaggery very well and set aside. Boil 1 cup of water. In a vessel, add rice flour, salt and oil. Pour boiling water into rice flour and mix very well using a wooden spoon until it forms into a smooth, thick, chapathi-like dough. Form small dough balls. Place one ball on a small piece (15cm x 15cm) of banana leaf, press lightly, and spread the dough all over the leaf using your hand until it becomes a thin layer, and the layer of dough covers the entire leaf. Spoon the grated coconut mixture on to this layer and fold it in a half. Prepare more elayada using the remaining dough balls. Steam and cook all elayadas in a vessel for 10 minutes. (You can use an idli plate for steaming). Serve hot.



### **Fish Cutlet:**

*By Mrs. Shyni Biju*

1. Tuna (in water) - 1 can
2. Potato – 1
3. Green chillies – 2
4. Garlic (Chopped) - 1 tsp
5. Ginger (Chopped) - 1 tsp
6. Curry Leaves – 1
7. Pepper powder - 1 tsp
8. Meat masala - ¼ tsp
9. Tomato – 1
10. Egg – 2
11. Bread crumbs - 2 cup
12. Salt to taste
13. Oil
14. Onion - 1

Method: Drain water from the tuna. Boil the potato until well cooked. Remove the skin and mash it. Chop the onions, garlic, ginger, green chillies and curry leaves finely into tiny pieces. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a pan and sauté onions until translucent. Add garlic, ginger, green chillies, and tomato, sauté for a few more minutes. Add meat masala, pepper powder. Stir for about a minute to mix well.

Add tuna (and salt) into the mixture. Mix everything well and cook for about 6-8 minutes. Add mash potato and mix well [Don't add water to it. Cook till it gets to a semi-dry paste] Allow the mixture to cool. Make patties of about 1/2 inch thick (in round or oval shape). Beat the egg with a pinch of salt. Keep a plate with bread crumbs ready. Dip the patties in the beaten egg and then roll in crumbs. Deep-fry the patties in oil.





### **Khaman Dhokla:**

*By Mrs. Anupama Punnachalil*

For Batter:

1. Besan – 250 gms (1½ cup)
2. Baking soda – ½ tsp
3. Yogurt – ½ cup (not very sour)
4. Water – ½ cup

For seasoning to be mixed to the batter  
(to be added just before cooking)

1. Oil – 1 tbsp
2. Sugar – 2 tsp (or as per taste)
3. Turmeric - a pinch
4. Salt – ½ tsp
5. Green chili paste – 1 to 2 tsp
6. Eno – 1¼ tsp
7. Citric Acid – ½ tsp

For tempering: Mustard seeds, Curry leaves, Grated coconut, Coriander leaves, Water – 3 tsp, Oil – 1 tsp

Method: Mix ½ cup of yogurt with ½ cup of water. Add besan and mix well to get a lump less batter. Then add baking soda and set aside to rise for 1 hour. Mix in citric acid, oil, salt, sugar, green chili paste, and turmeric to the besan batter. Add 1 tsp eno to the batter and mix well. Then pour the batter to a plate sprinkled with ¼ tsp eno and immediately steam cook for 5-7 minutes or until tooth pick inserted comes out clean. Remain on flame for 1 min, then switch off and allow it to rest for 5 minutes. In a bowl, mix 3 tsp of water along with a tsp of oil. Remove the plate from the pan, pour the water, and oil mix over the top. For seasoning, heat a pan with oil, add curry leaves, sesame seeds, mustard seeds and finely chopped green chilies. When mustard starts popping, remove and pour over the dhokla. Crumble or gently cut into shapes.



### **Easy Coconut Laddu:**

*By Mrs. Lily Sugathan*

Ingredients:

1. Sweetened condensed milk - 1 can
2. Powder milk - ½ cup
3. Shredded coconut - 2½ cups
4. Cardamom powder – 2 tsp

Method: In a dry pan, roast the coconut on a low flame. Once brown, put in a plate and set aside. In a nonstick pan heat the condense milk, powder milk and cardamom powder on low. Once warm, add 2 cups of the coconut and cook. Once the mixture starts to leave the side of the pan, turn the heat off. Take a small quantity of the mixture and make small balls (laddu form). Roll them in the rest of the coconut.



### **Muruku:**

*By Mrs. Prathibha Sudhir*

Ingredients:

1. Roasted gram dal powder - ½ cup
2. Rice flour – 1 cup
3. Melted unsalted butter - ¼ cup
4. Ajwain seeds (omam) - ½ tsp
5. Jeera - ¼ tsp
6. Sesame seeds - ¼ tsp
7. Chili powder - as needed
8. Salt to taste
9. Water
10. Oil

Method: Mix all the above ingredients with water to make smooth dough. Using a muruku maker make the dough into 3-4 concentric circles and deep-fry. Nice crispy muruku is ready.

Variation: Instead of ½ cup roasted gram dal use ¼ cup roasted gram dal powder and ¼ cup roasted urad dal powder.



**Mysore Pak:***By Mrs. Latha Unni***Ingredients:**

1. Besan (gram flour or garbanzo flour) - 1 cup
2. Ghee (clarified butter) - 2 cups
3. Sugar - 3 cups
4. Water - 1 cup



Continue stirring for 1-2 minutes. Add ¼ cup ghee, stir constantly, and when the flour mixture appears to have absorbed all the ghee, repeat with the remaining ghee in ¼ cup increments, stirring constantly to prevent the mix from sticking to the pan. Continue stirring until the mixture starts frothing and separates from the sides of the pan. Immediately transfer mixture to a 5" X 8" pan, well greased with ghee. Allow to cool for 3-4 min and then cut to desired size/shape. Remove when completely cooled.

Method: Toast besan on medium heat until very lightly browned. Allow to cool, then sieve to remove lumps. In a heavy bottomed pan/wok, mix sugar with water and cook until the syrup thickens to "1 string" consistency. Continue heating at medium-high, add besan, and stir constantly, to avoid lumps.

**Rava Balls:***By Mrs. Rashmi Pillai***Ingredients:****Crust:**

1. Sooji/Rava - 1 cup
2. Milk - 1 cup
3. Sugar - 3 tbsp

**Filling:**

1. Grated dried coconut - 4 tbsp
2. Sugar - 4 tbsp
3. Chopped cashew nut - 3 tbsp
4. Raisins - 3 tbsp
5. Cardamom powdered - 10 pods
6. Butter - 1 tsp
7. Milk - 2 tbsp

**Method:**

Filling: Melt butter in a pan and add coconut, cashew nuts and raisins and fry till light brown. Then add sugar and milk, cook until dry. Then add the powdered cardamom.

Crust: Boil milk, then add sugar and Rava cook until dry or until a dough consistency, cool off. Wet hands and soften the dough by kneading. Divide the dough and filling in to ten equal parts. Take the dough and shape in to a small round with wet hands. Stuff with the filling and shape it back in to a ball. Deep-fry until they are golden brown.

**Sabudana Kichdi:***By Mrs. Veena Manoj***Ingredients:**

1. Sabudana - 2 Cups
2. Peanuts - ½ cup  
(Add more if you love peanuts)
3. Potato - one medium,  
diced into ½ inch pieces
4. Onion - one small, diced
5. Jeera seeds (cumin) - 1 tsp
6. Green chilies - 2 to 3
7. Oil as needed
8. Salt as per taste
9. Cilantro/Coriander leaves  
for garnish



Method: Wash the sabudana couple of times and soak overnight in water. Be sure that the level of the water is only up-to the level of the sabudana. Anymore and it will become a mushy mess. Meanwhile roast the peanuts (I normally do it in the microwave for around 3 minutes, mixing up the peanuts every minute). Allow to cool and then crush it into a coarse powder. You could use the traditional mortal & pestle or a couple of pulses in the blender should do the trick. Heat some oil in a saucepan and when hot, add jeera. When the jeera seeds crackle, add the diced onions. Sauté for a while until translucent. Now add the diced potato and salt (only the amount needed for the potatoes) mix well. Lower the heat to Low medium, cover tight, and let the potato cook in its own water. Do not add any water. Once the potatoes are done, increase the heat, add the soaked sabudana, and keep mixing well. Keep doing that until the sabudana turns translucent. Season with salt if necessary. Now add the crushed peanuts, mix well, and turn off the heat. Add cilantro as a garnish.

### **Stuffed Banana Pepper Bhajji:**

*By Mrs. Priya Nair*

For the batter:

1. 2 cups of gram flour
2. Water – for a smooth thick paste
3. Chili powder – ½ tsp
4. Cumin seeds – ½ tsp
5. Ajwain (carom) – ¼ tsp
6. Baking powder – ¼ tsp
7. Salt to taste

For the filling:

1. Potato – One (boiled and mashed)
2. Chaat masala – 2 tsp
3. Chili powder – ½ tsp
4. Salt to taste
5. Lemon juice

Method: Make the batter by mixing all the ingredients into a thick paste that coats the chili well when dipped in it. Deseed the banana peppers and fill it with the filling.

Make sure that the stem of the pepper is still intact. Do not over stuff the chili. Then dip the stuffed pepper in the batter and deep-fry it in oil. Drain on paper towels.



### **Turkey Cutlet:**

*By Mrs. Beena Neelam*

Ingredients:

1. Turkey mince - 2 lb
2. Potatoes cooked - 4 medium sized
3. Frozen green peas, steamed in microwave for 2 minutes - 2 cups
4. Onions - 2 medium sized, chopped
5. Coriander powder - 3 tsp
6. Cumin powder - 2 tsp
7. Chili powder - 1 to 2 tsp
8. Turmeric - ½ tsp
9. Spice mix (cinnamon, cloves and cardamom ground) - 1 tsp
10. Cilantro - 1 small bunch
11. Hot green chilies chopped - 5 (adjust to taste)
12. Ginger garlic paste - 2 tsp
13. Bread crumbs – 2" thick on a plate
14. Egg – 2 fork-whisked
15. Oil for shallow frying

Method: In a sauté pan, fry onions in 2 tbsp oil until golden brown. Add ginger-garlic paste and fry until light brown. Add all the ground dry spices and fry for few minutes. Add the turkey mince and fry until very light brown and let all the liquid evaporate. Switch off the heat. Add the steamed green peas, green chilies and chopped cilantro. Crush the cooked potatoes into the mix. Add salt and fold the mixture until evenly mixed. Consistency should be that of bread dough. Make balls out of the mixture; pat it flat on your hands. Dip in a plate of whisked egg and coat with bread crumbs. Shallow fry each side until golden brown, do not turn repeatedly while frying. Place on a paper towel to drain. Serve hot with ketchup.



### **Unniappam:**

*By Mrs. Latha Madhu*

Ingredients:

1. Rice flour (sieved) - 1 cup
2. Maida/All purpose flour - 1 tbsp
3. Banana (mashed) - ½ cup
4. Coconut bits (coconut slices cut into small pieces) - 2 tbsp
5. Jaggery - ½ cup
6. Baking soda - a pinch
7. Cardamom - ¼ tsp (optional)
8. Oil for frying

Method: Mix rice flour and maida and keep aside. Melt jaggery by adding water and boiling it on the stove until it gets to a one-thread consistency. Once it reaches that consistency mix with flour to a nice thick batter. Now add rest of the ingredients. Heat oil in unniappam skillet (special skillet for this purpose). Once the oil is hot, spoon batter into the skillet. Turn the appam once in the skillet. Remove from oil and drain them when they are nice and brown.









## St. Louis Area South Asian Grocery Stores

*compiled by Lily Sugathan*

Many of these wonderful stores are full fledged Indo-Pak outlets, while others are multi ethnic ones with aisles dedicated to Indian needs.

We thank them all for their enterprise and presence in our community ... a number of them were kind enough to sponsor us this year.

Akshar Food	12419 Saint Charles Rock Road Bridgeton, Missouri 63044 (314) 291-6666
<b><i>Ambica Foods</i></b> 	<b>12262 St. Charles Rock Road Bridgeton, Missouri 63044 (314) 344-1999</b> <i>Please see our ad on page 38</i>
Asian Spices	1928 McKelvey Road Maryland Heights, Missouri 63043 (314) 439-9600
<b><i>Global Foods Market LLC</i></b> 	<b>421 N Kirkwood Rd Kirkwood, Missouri 63122 (314) 835-1112</b> <i>Please see our ad on page 12</i>
<b><i>Harsha Indian Groceries</i></b> 	<b>14033 Manchester Road Ballwin, Missouri 63011 (636) 484-2671</b> <i>Please see our ad on page 40</i>
<b><i>India Bazar</i></b> 	<b>10755 Page Avenue St. Louis, Missouri 63132 (314) 423-5900</b> <i>Please see our ad on page 14</i>
India Market	1395 Triad Center Drive St. Peters, Missouri 63376 (636)-794-6196
Jay International	3172 S Grand Blvd St. Louis, Missouri 63118 (314) 772-2552

<b><i>Mideast Market</i></b> 	2429 Highway K O'Fallon, Missouri 63368 (636) 980-1322  <i>Please see our ad on page 2</i>
<b><i>Mideast Market</i></b> 	14345 Manchester Road Ballwin, Missouri 63011-4048 (636) 230-7018  <i>Please see our ad on page 22</i>
<b><i>Seema Enterprises</i></b> 	10635 Page Avenue St. Louis, Missouri 63132 (314) 423-9990  <i>Please see our ad on page 6</i>  14238 Manchester Road Manchester, Missouri 63011 (636) 391-5914
Spice Bazaar	3449 Pheasant Meadow Drive, #106 O'Fallon, Missouri 63366 636-294-3716
Spices & More	13007 Olive Blvd Creve Coeur, Missouri 63141 (314) 439-5599
<b><i>Spices N Grains</i></b> 	2157 Bluestone Dr St. Charles, Missouri 63303 (636) 486-4660  <i>Please see our ad on page 26</i>



## St. Louis Area (Indian and *Indian-like*) Restaurants

by Vinod Menon

Foodies rejoice! St. Louis region is fortunate to experience a boom of sorts in culinary delights of diverse origins over the years. South Asian cuisine is no exception; some may say we are spoilt for choice when it comes to tummy yummys.

The banner "Indian Restaurants" may be a misnomer, as several establishments listed below are of Afghan, Pakistani, Middle Eastern, African, Caribbean, even Turkish origin/ownership. However, significant "Indian" influence is definitely evident in their respective menus and method of preparation (no disrespect intended to our international friends). So, in the spirit of globalization of the Indian diaspora, such gastronomical outlets are included in the list below.



For the die-hard connoisseurs of Indian cuisine, "authentic" Indian restaurants are easily identifiable. Nonetheless, it must bring great cheer that Indian spices are distinctly evident in the vast arc that covers Southeast Asia, South Asia, Middle East, Mediterranean, North Africa and Caribbean regions. Savor some massaman curry, qabelli palau, kabob, shawarma, wat, berbere, musakka, jerk – and you'll readily agree!

We thank numerous sources\* in culling this list – not least of which are referrals and recommendations from the community as well (including the adventurous sort who ventured beyond most people's comfort zone).

Yenjoi!

\*(Urbanspoon, Sauce, Google, Yahoo, Chowhound, Yellow/White pages, Myilaaka, Namaskardesi, Yelp, River Front Times, MetroMix, Stl Today, Sortuv, Menupix, AllMenus, iDine, CitySearch. We've tried to make this list as accurate as possible – nevertheless, please call ahead before you visit these establishments!)

(Sorted in no particular order, by neighborhood).

### **Ballwin/Valley Park**

#### *Cafe Lazeez*

· (636) 527-5900  
14248H Manchester  
Manchester, MO 63011

#### *China in Bombay*

· (636) 386-8320  
14626 Manchester Rd.  
Manchester, MO 63011

#### *Hot Punjabi Kitchen*

· (502) 472-2007  
127 Steamboat Ln  
Ballwin, MO 63011

#### *India's Kitchen*

· (636) 394-2911  
14222 Manchester Rd  
Manchester, MO 63011

#### *Kabob Palace*

· (636) 230-8800  
14424 Manchester Rd  
Manchester, MO 63011

#### *Lal Qila*

· (636) 527-4717  
15222 Manchester Road  
Ballwin, MO 63011

*please see our ad on page 38*

#### *Mideast Restaurant*

· (636) 230-7018  
14345 Manchester Rd  
Manchester, MO 63011

*please see our ad on page 22*

### **Bridgeton**

#### *India Palace*

· (314) 731-3333  
4534 N Lindbergh Blvd  
Bridgeton, MO 63044

### **Central West End**

#### *Central Cafe and Bakery*

· (314) 875-0657  
331 N. Euclid Avenue  
St Louis, MO 63108

#### *India's Rasoi*

· (314) 361-6911  
25 N Euclid Ave  
St Louis, MO 63108

#### *St. Louis Coffee Oasis & Mediterranean Café*

· (314) 361-6666  
8 S Euclid Ave  
St Louis, MO 63108

### **Chesterfield**

#### *Hot & Sour*

· (314) 439-5756  
45 Forum Shopping Ctr  
Chesterfield, MO 63017

#### *Taj Palace*

· (636) 728-1000  
92 THF Boulevard  
Chesterfield, MO 63005  
*please see our ad on page 16*

#### *The Mediterranean Grill*

· (636) 536-2101  
703 Long Road Crossing  
Chesterfield, MO 63005

### **Creve Coeur**

#### *Flavor of India*

· (314) 997-4224  
11939 Olive Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63141

*please see our ad on page 10*

#### *Mayuri Indian Restaurant*

· (314) 576-7272  
12513 Olive Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63141

### Creve Coeur ... con't

#### *Pita Plus*

· (314) 453-9558  
13005 Olive Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63141

### Delmar

#### *Nubia Cafe*

· (314) 367-8200  
5860 Delmar Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63112

### Des Peres

#### *Saffron*

· (314) 965-3822  
2137 Barrett Station Rd  
St Louis, MO 63131

*please see our ad on page 40*

### Downtown

#### *Mr Curry's India Restaurant*

· (314) 241-2877  
612 Olive St  
St Louis, MO 63101

#### *Pita King*

· (314) 588-9177  
1820 Market St  
St Louis, MO 63103

### Kirkwood

#### *Graham's Grill & Bayou Bar*

· (314) 965-2003  
612 W Woodbine Ave  
Kirkwood, MO 63122

### Maryland Heights

#### *Priyaa*

· (314) 542-6148  
1910 McKelvey Rd  
Maryland Heights,  
MO 63043

### *Raj's Rasoi Authentic Indian*

· (314) 576-6666  
2286 McKelvey Rd  
Maryland Heights,  
MO 63043

### Metro East

#### *Mr Currys Gourmet Indian*

· (618) 692-3892  
7403 Marine Rd  
Edwardsville, IL 62025

#### *India's Oven*

· (618) 277-5555  
2625 Illinois Street  
Swansea, IL 62226

### Midtown

#### *Govinda's Vegetarian*

· (314) 535-0441  
3926 Lindell Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63108

### O'Fallon

#### *Anis Indian Hyderabadi Restaurant*

· (636) 489-2647  
20 Crossroads Plaza  
O'Fallon, MO 63368

*please see our ad on page 2*

#### *Kamala Cuisine of India*

· (636) 272-3070  
2900 HWY K  
O'Fallon, MO 63368

#### *India's Piara Tandoori King*

· (636) 379-9990  
1617 Bryan Road  
O'Fallon, MO 63368

*please see our ad on page 24*

### South Grand

#### *Al Waha Restaurant and Hookah Lounge*

· (314) 664-3940  
3191 S Grand Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63118

#### *Café Natasha's Kabab International*

· (314) 771-3411  
3200 S Grand Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63118

#### *Grand Mediterranean Kabob Café*

· (314) 752-5539  
4101 S Grand Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63118

#### *Meskerem*

· (314) 772-4442  
3210 S Grand Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63118

#### *South Grand Gyro Express*

· (314) 481-1033  
5622 S Grand Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63111

#### *The Village Too Deli*

· (314) 353-9600  
4164 S Grand  
St Louis, MO 63118

#### *The Vine Mediterranean Café and Market*

· (314) 776-0991  
3171 S Grand  
St Louis, MO 63118

### St Louis Hills

#### *Aya Sofia*

· (314) 645-9919  
6671 Chippewa St  
St Louis, MO 63109

#### *Kabob House*

· (314) 832-2977  
4940 Christy Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63116

### *Taste of India*

· (314) 646-8488  
3279 Hampton Ave  
St Louis, MO 63139

### Tower Grove

#### *Everest Cafe & Bar*

· (314) 531-4800  
4145 Manchester Ave  
St Louis, MO 63110

### University City

#### *Caribbean Sun*

· (314) 725-3335  
6665 Olive Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63130

#### *De Palm Tree*

· (314) 432-5171  
8631 Olive Blvd  
University City, MO 63132

#### *Flaco's Cocina*

· (314) 395-4343  
8400 Delmar Blvd  
University City, MO 63124

#### *House of India*

· (314) 567-6850  
8501 Delmar Blvd  
St Louis, MO 63124

### West St. Louis

#### *Baba's Restaurant*

· (314) 427-8500  
10282 Page Ave.  
Overland, MO 63132

#### *Gokul 100% Vegetarian*

· (314) 428-8888  
10633 Page Ave  
St Louis, MO 63132

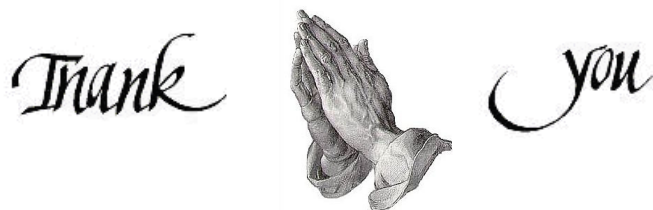
#### *Haveli*

· (314) 423-7300  
9720 Page Ave  
St Louis, MO 63132

*please see our ad on page 14*



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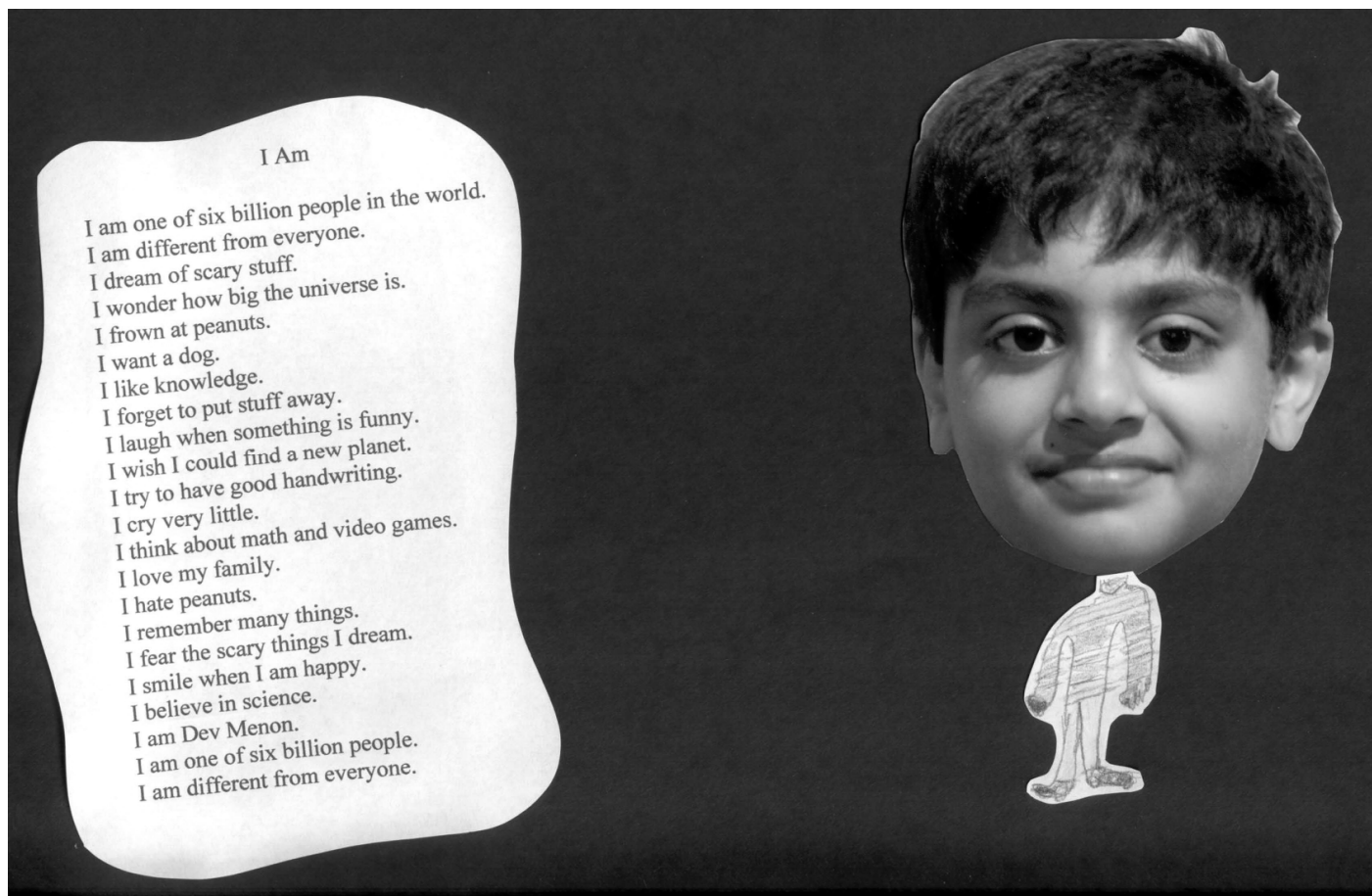


# KIDS'S CORNER

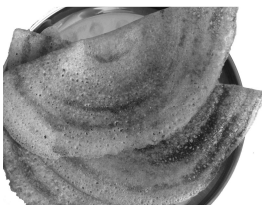
... showcasing our vibrant young talents.

I Am

by Dev Menon



(Dev is in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and definitely knows who he is).



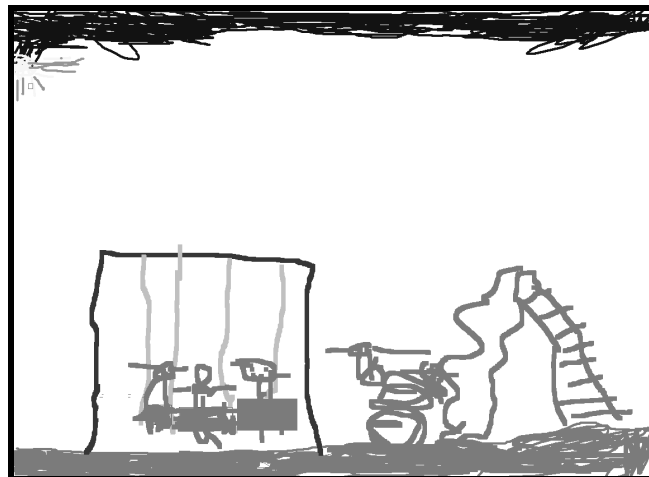
Teacher: Name the liquid which changes to solid when heated



: Dosa !



I was Six Years Old and Sarah came over to my house and I was so happy



She was playing with me. She brought her bicycle and we went to the park.



We went boating and we went fishing.  
We got a fish.



Then we went to home.

*(Athulya is in the 1st Grade and is a multi talented young lady. Besides drawing, she loves to read, dance, and listen to music).*

## WHY!?

If swimming is a good exercise to stay fit, then WHY are WHALES fat?  
WHY does everyone want to go to HEAVEN but nobody wants to die?  
In our Country, we have freedom of SPEECH, then WHY have telephone bills?  
If MONEY doesn't grow on trees then WHY do BANKS have branches?  
WHY does a round PIZZA come in a SQUARE box?  
WHY doesn't GLUE stick to its bottle?  
WHY do you still call it a BUILDING when it's already BUILT?  
If you aren't supposed to DRINK AND DRIVE, then WHY do BARS have parking lots?  
WHY do we park on DRIVEWAY and drive on PARKWAY?



My mom puts some flour and water in a bowl.  
Then she rolls out the dough until she has a flat round circle of dough.  
She puts the flat dough in a pizza pan.

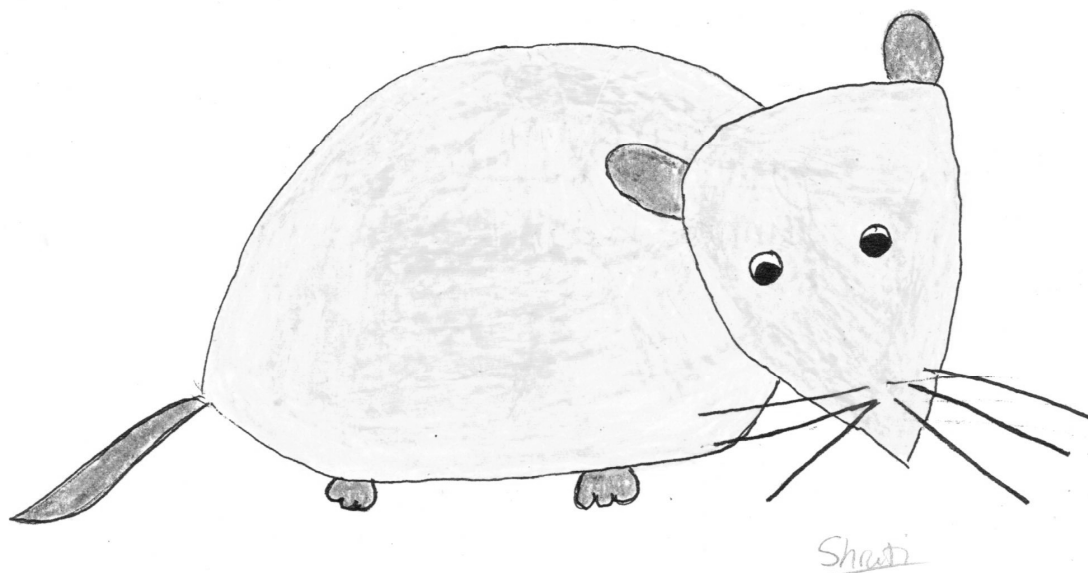


Then she makes a sauce:  
First she takes the skin of six tomatoes.  
She smashes the tomatoes in a bowl and then puts them over the dough.  
Then my mom shreds white cheese and sprinkles the cheese over the sauce.  
Then my mom adds black olives and pineapple chunks on the pizza.  
She puts on mushrooms too.  
Then my mom puts the pizza in the oven for 20 seconds.  
When the pizza is done she puts on her oven mittens and takes out the pizza.  
Then she cuts the pizza into slices and we eat it for dinner.

It is YUMMY!

*(Nandita wrote this masterpiece when she was in Kindergarten; she is now in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade)*

## The Good mouse



*Shruti*

*(Shruti is 9 years old and she is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. She likes Indian classical dance, swimming, painting & reading. She helps her mom in cooking too!)*



Two birds built a nest on top of our front door porch light. She laid 3 blue eggs. Two eggs hatched, one did not. The parents bought food for the chicks. After 2 weeks, the chicks flew away.



Two baby birds



Dad bringing food



Mom on the watch



Unhatched blue egg

(Ashwin is 8 years old and is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Grader at Twin Chimneys Elementary School in O'Fallon).



## What is a Book?

by Vinod Menon

It's coming. Like it or not. Unfortunately. The possible demise of the book.

Earlier this year, the lone independent book store in my town, closed its doors. Permanently. After 18 years in business.

Aptly named Piece of Mind Books, its proprietor told our local newspaper The Intelligencer, that the "book business" was a "tough place to be" in the eBook rage age.

I had visited the charming little place a few times, and recall meeting the resident tubby, Index, an oversized, white furred cat who found a permanent spot by the window sill.

It had been in existence long before the retail giants like Wal Mart and Target made their way to our metro east suburb, complete with their mini book aisles.

Then along came Borders.

The book store survived. But now the owner is retiring, and no one wants to buy a book store.

Our cozy community also lays claim to a wonderful public library with great architecture in a park like setting. It's well stocked, quiet, and has a book-ish atmosphere that enthusiasts love. But its membership, evidently, is down – by a lot.

I found myself there just a few short weeks ago when the Internet was out at home. I was immediately reminded of my youth days when the public library in my hometown was a favorite hangout.

It was there that I discovered Tintin, Asterix, Enid Blython, Anthony Buckeridge – and so many, many others.

Of course my selection slowly progressed to more mature reading as the years passed, but I always loved being lost in one fantasy adventure after another – along with the nostalgic smell of the pages.

Since college, I do vast majority of my reading online these days. I haven't quite grasped eBooks, but I suspect I will at some point.

Just a few months ago, I presented my two-year old niece with a VReader – a sort of kiddie Kindle. She embraced it quite comfortably, like most kids these days.

A few days ago, I read an Associated Press news report (online, at the public library) that said nearly half of US independent book stores have closed the past decade.

Then, some 2,700 independent book store companies with more than 3,200 locations were members of the American Booksellers Association. Membership is now down to about 1,400 companies with 1,700 stores.

The big boxes are in trouble too, evidently. Borders has been struggling the past two years with falling revenue, layoffs, consolidating of stores, and now with their third CEO in a year at the helm.

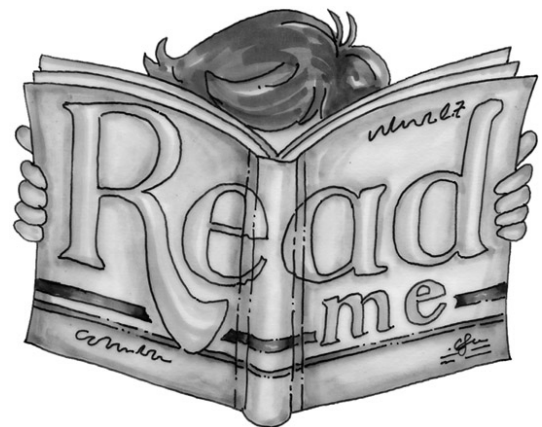
Ironically, rivals Amazon and Barnes & Noble appear to be doing well in a highly competitive market. But this is due largely to sale of its eBook readers, Kindle and Nook, respectively.

So it seems that the bricks and mortar establishment may soon be a thing of the past. It's a sign of the times, I suppose.

Should we embrace it? By the time my niece grows up, books may disappear altogether, found only perhaps, in the Smithsonian.

I hope the day will not come when the younger generation is forced to ask "err ... book? What is it?".

But then if even people like me do not support local merchants and demonstrate a will to enjoy the bookstore experience, then what hope does the future hold for books?



## Martial Arts in Kerala

Kerala is renowned for its martial arts, and amongst the many forms are:

### Kalaripayattu

The fighting art of Kalari is one of the oldest martial arts in the world and by far the most famous in Kerala. Legend has it that in 350 A.D. Kalaripayattu was taken across the Himalayas by the Buddhist monk, Bodhi Dharma, giving rise to Chinese Kung Fu.

It involves schooling in physical agility, weapons handling, hand to hand combat, with knowledge of yoga and Ayurveda healing techniques. There are seven levels of advancement before one becomes a Gurukal, or master.



### Parisa Kali and Velakanni

Two other forms of martial arts originated in North Malabar and Travancore, respectively. Velakanni represents the battle between Pandavas and Kauravas at Kurukshetra. It is played out during the temple festival at Cherthala and Ambalapuzha.

**Valeru** - This form of martial art involves sword throwing.

**Kunderu and Njaninmel Kali** - tightrope walking performed in temple festivals.



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