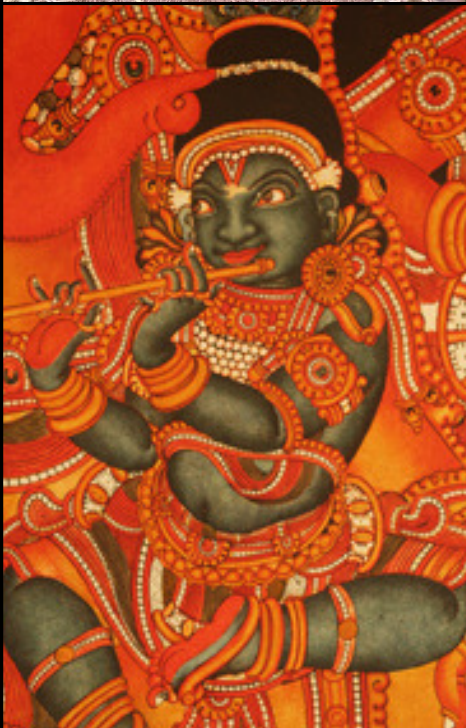


# GITANJALI 2011



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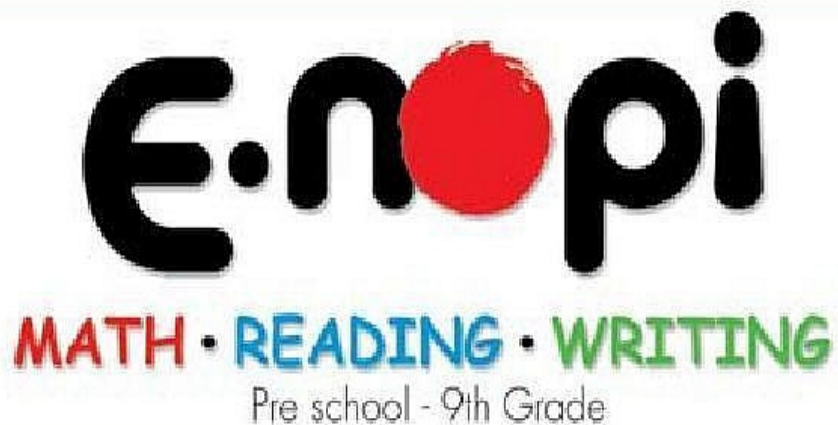
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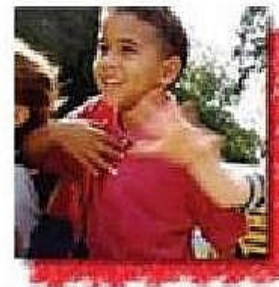
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We are very happy to bring you the fourth edition of Gitanjali, in commemoration of Ohmkarams' 6th Anniversary celebration on January 14th, 2012. We thank our sponsors for generously supporting this publication - with their help we have crossed yet another milestone, which is our very first edition in color. We thank everyone for their efforts and contribution in making this edition of Gitanjali a success.

#### Joint Editors

Anjana Prayaga  
Priya Nair  
Kavita Menon

**Gitanjali provides** a venue to express literary and artistic talents and to showcase Kerala art and culture to the new generation of kids growing up here. It is inspiring to see more and more kids submitting their articles and artwork.

Publishing Gitanjali involves soliciting advertisement, editing, proof reading, printing, etc. In the end, we feel satisfied when we see the out come of our efforts.



Anju

Thanks to the voluntary efforts of the Advertising Team, this souvenir is made possible by generous support of our advertisers. Please support them.

We hope this edition of Gitanjali is enjoyable and a reference source for much information. We hope this tradition of publishing Gitanjali continues in the future, and the quality is maintained or improved from prior editions.

#### Executive Committee Support

Rajagopalan Unni  
Vinod Menon



Priya

**In addition** to showcasing our community's talent Gitanjali also has articles which are educational to both adults and kids.

Brainstorming, editing and designing was a fun and exciting experience. We thank all members for their wonderful submissions. Having had an opportunity to peruse other souvenirs out there we are proud to say that ours is really a cut above the others.

The President of KHNA Mr. Anandan Niravel had kindly agreed to write a message for us and we appreciate the endorsement.

We would like to encourage our members to utilize the smorgasbord of services that our sponsors provide in the St Louis area. Do let them know how much we value their contributions to our community.

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Last but definitely not least, we would like to thank our Executive Committee and Board of Directors for their enthusiastic support and encouragement. It has been a wonderful journey creating this edition and we hope you enjoy reading it!

**It has been** a wonderful experience working on Gitanjali. Keeping in tradition with previous versions of the magazine, this year's issue is also varied in its content.

Gitanjali is an excellent medium to bring out the creative side in our members. It's amazing how each of the submissions and their authors are different from the other, yet are tied together by a common desire to be part of the Kerala Heritage and Culture.



Kavita

With every new edition, Gitanjali is evolving. But its development also depends upon the contributions of its members. Having said so, we, the current editors, look forward to more active participation from members. The more the involvement, the more the sense of being a part of the community.

# Flavor of India



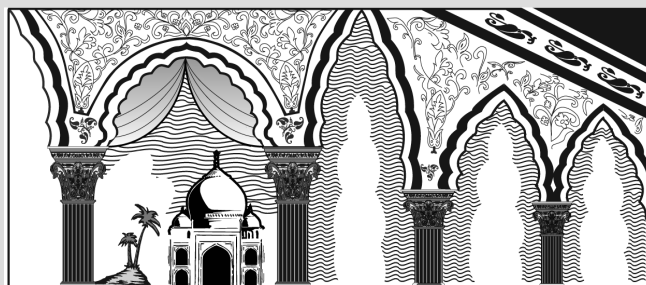
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## OUR FRONT COVER

A competition was held for the front page design, open to all members. A panel of three judges selected the winner from three entries (to which the Editors also gave the nod by consensus), basing their decision on originality, visual appeal, creativity, and theme suitability for *Gitanjali*. Our winners description, and honorable mention of the runners up (in no particular order), follows.

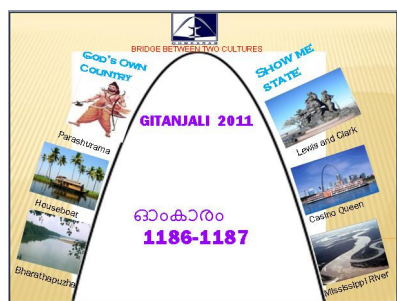
We attempted to show the rich history of Kerala art and culture from Neolithic age to present. Kerala could possibly have been inhabited by humans for over 10,000 years. Various archeological findings from throughout the state attest to these facts.

**Legend** (clock wise from top right): 1. **Theyyam:** Bhairavan, Kannangad Bhagavathy theyyam (present). Note the details of artwork on the face. Theyyams are a common part of temple festivals in the Malabar area or northern Kerala. Theyyam represent the God incarnate and people receive blessings during festivals. Legend has it, Parasuraman sanctioned these practices to people of Kerala. This dance form probably existed since neolith age in Kerala.

2. **Mural:** Mural painting of Krishna in Pundareekapuram temple (circa ~1500 CE, Medieval period). Mural paintings in Kerala have a long history. Murals are painted directly on the walls of temples and palaces and typically depicts stories from Hindu puranas and mythology. The oldest still in existence is from the Pallava period 6 – 8-century CE in some temples in central Kerala.

3. **Dolmen:** Porkkulam Muniyara (circa ~600 BC, Megalithic period). Dolmens are burial chambers decorated with stonehenges. Ancient burial chambers found throughout Kerala are variously known in Kerala as *Muniyara, Kodakkallu, Toppikallu, Nannangadi*, etc. due to their shape and form.

4. **Petroglyphs:** Stone carvings or cave art in Eddakkal caves, northern Kerala (circa 1000-2000 BC, Neolithic period). Similar petroglyphs are also found at Pandavanpara in Southern Kerala. There are many representations of male & female figures. There are many inscriptions that are not fully deciphered yet. Recent study indicates that these writings may be related or similar to Harappan writings.  
*by Sudhir Prayaga (Congratulations to our Winner!)*

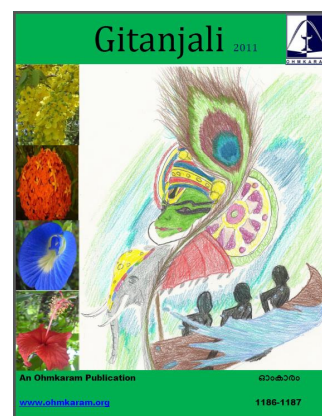


We have attempted to draw parallels between different themes. One side of the arch representing our native country and the other our adopted country. The parallel themes culminate in Ohmkaram at the top as a bridge between both the countries/cultures.

*from Priya, Shreya and Trisha Nair*

Whenever I make art to convey an idea, I try to combine many themes into the main design. Each aspect is related to the overarching theme. For example, the peacock feather represents India/Kerala, and all the themes of Kerala are coming out of the feather. I had the kathakalli, an elephant from a Thrissur Pooram, a boat with an umbrella from the boat races and pookalam. And behind everything I put a background made from the colors of a peacock feather. The template of the cover is very similar to the other years providing space for Ohmkaram title, and logo and other standard information. On the left side the various flowers are flowers of Kerala like Shanku pushpam (the blue flower), red-hibiscus, konna (the yellow one), and Chethy (the orange one). These are some of the many wonderful flowers found in Kerala. These various themes, I believe, bring out the true culture of Kerala.

*by Arjun Madhavan*





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# president's message

I am very much thankful to all members of Ohmkaram in bestowing the trust you have in me to be the President of Ohmkaram for 2011 and it was a great honor to serve you as the President. I am grateful to my fellow Executive Committee members in supporting me for various activities of the organization and members of the Board of Directors for providing valuable guidance throughout the course of the year.



We have reached an important milestone this year by starting a foundation account for the organization and investing \$5000 in it from the general fund. This fund is supposed to generate an interest of 2% to 3% every year which can be used to provide scholarship to the needy children. I would like to take this opportunity to let everyone know that our first Ohmkaram sponsored scholar, Krishnamol Madhu, has graduated with honors in Pharmacy. I leave it in the hands of future committees to produce more such scholars.

We have made some significant changes to the format of some of the activities of the organization. Kerala style community cooking was the format of food preparation for Vishu and Onam this year which was appreciated by our members. We tried to make some changes to the format of the Picnic which had to be cancelled due to some unavoidable circumstances.

As far as the entertainment part of the organization is concerned, we had started the year with a very good movie "Pranchiyettan and the Saint" which was well received by the St. Louis Malayalee community. Another movie brought by us was received with less enthusiasm by our community.

Although we had a great success in improving certain activities of the organization, I wish we could have done better. I am sure the lessons learned this year will be a leading light for the organization for years to come.

O H M K A R A M

*Thank you, God Bless you, God Bless Ohmkaram.*

**Rajagopalan Unni**

*(President, Ohmkaram 2011).*

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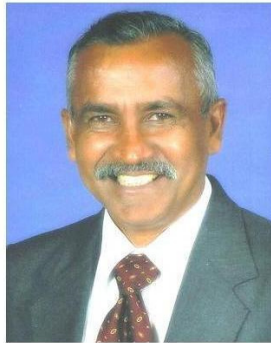
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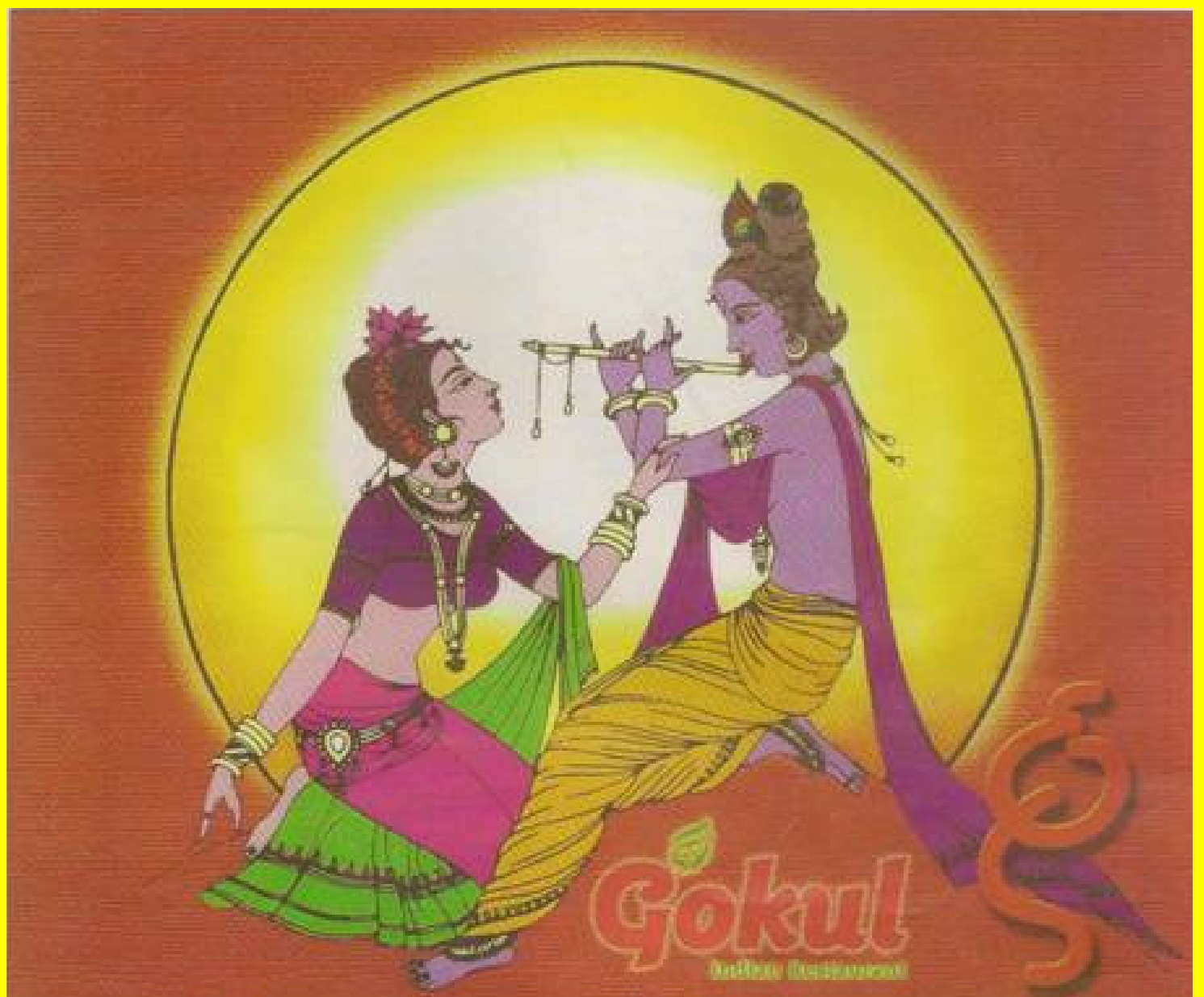
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**The greatness of Indian culture and way of life is a very cosmic subject. The traditional scientific name of Indian culture is SANATHANA DHARMA SASTHRAM. It is a very deep science and a great way of life. One should use only superlatives to explain any aspect related to this Dharma Sasthram. It is so extraordinary, distinguished, beautiful, soulful and inspiring.**

**Hinduism is a must for the very survival of the entire mankind. We alone can entreat LOKA SAMASTHA SUKHINO BHAVANTHU - let all be at peace. That is the real greatness of Hinduism and our way of life.**

**Anandan Niravel  
President  
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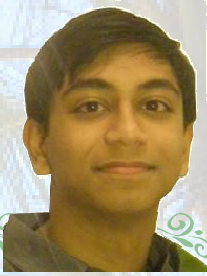
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## JOURNEY THROUGH GODS OWN COUNTRY

by Amit Prayaga



Trips to Kerala are always enjoyable. If you want to visit a family while in Kerala, you never make any phone calls to make sure that they are free. All you do is just jump in the car and drive over to meet them. If you go over and find out no one's home, then you always have another day to try again. The best thing about Kerala are the family gatherings. Whenever they start, they never seem to end. Some begin in the morning and go all the way until the evening. Families are always very close and bonded, no matter how far away they are.

Traveling is also very interesting. In an auto-rickshaw, if you get into a traffic jam, you can always count on your auto-rickshaw driver to snake through the traffic block and be one of the first to come out. Every now and then, you will see a 5-seater car with 8 to 9 people inside. In the monsoon seasons, you always carry an umbrella when going outside because rain can come unexpectedly and will continue raining for a few days.



Temples are also very different from here. When you got to the temples, you have to take off your shirt and other times, you may have to wear a *mundu* if you are a boy. When you need to see a doctor, you do not have to set up any appointment. Your family always has a neighbor or a relative doctor so you can go to them for an immediate check up.



Food in Kerala is also different. Food over there is more oily, but a lot tastier. There are even American foods like pizzas and burgers but they come with a little Kerala twist (like a chili chicken pizza or a maharaja burger). Going to see a Malayalam movie is another fun thing to do. At the movies, whenever a song comes up, they turn-up the volume so much that you cannot even hear the person next to you speak. It is almost like being part of the song.

In addition, the chairs at the movies recline and are puffy. During the intermission, the movie employees will even take orders for popcorn and drinks and bring it to you so you do not have to get up. Whatever you end up doing in Kerala, it is always an exciting day and always brings new memories.

*Amit is an eleventh grader at West High Middle School, O'Fallon, Missouri.*



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## SIGNIFICANCE OF OHM

by Mrs. Kamala Menon



It is good to know about 'Ohm' and 'Ohmkara' for everyone, especially for members of Ohmkaram.

God is identified with 'Ohm' or 'Ohmkara' sound. It is Nada Brahma. This sound has three different aspects, Shrushti, Stithi and Laya meaning creation, sustenance and destruction or dissolution which are functions of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. These three aspects are embedded in the sounds of letters A, U and M representing AKARA, UKARA and MAKARA. The combinations of these sounds make the word OHMKARA.

The sound 'A' arises at the throat, 'U' from the tongue and 'M' rises from the lips joining together become one sound 'OM'. It arises from Nabhi (Naval).

OHMKARA is as important to the world as is the engine to a train. The OHMKARA controls our very breath and is the sustenance of our life. The way we breathe every day determines the longevity of our life. We should start our day with chanting 'OHMKAR' at least 21 times and also end our day with 'OHMKAR'. This controls our way of breathing and helps to bring confidence and mental peace in us.

The importance of chanting 'OHMKAR' is illustrated in the following story of 'Jayadeva':

Once upon a time there lived a boy, Jayadeva, in a place called 'Krishnavartha'. He was very weak, feeble and unhealthy child. He was the only child for his parents and they did everything they could to improve his health without any result. Due to ill-health he could not concentrate or continue in his studies. Jayadeva grew up and was ten years old. He started going to school but remained absent for a long periods of time due to sickness.

One night, it was a full moon day known as 'Guru Purnima'. Jayadeva went to the river for a bath where he saw a saintly person sitting on the bank of the river. He was chanting 'AUM' very loudly. Jayadeva approached him and asked why he was chanting 'AUM' loudly. The saint replied – it was the Mantra Raja, the king of all Mantras; AUMKAR had many benefits when chanted. Jayadeva learned the correct method of chanting 'AUM' and began to chant it regularly. This helped him to improve his health slowly and steadily. It helped to improve his respiration as well as his blood circulation. It gave Jayadeva steadiness of mind too. Jayadeva could concentrate on his studies and also in sports. He became very healthy and a clever boy. He gradually completed his studies. He became a young man, still continued to chant 'AUM'. His life became very happy and full of success stories.

Jayadeva grew old. One day, the time came to cast off his body. Jayadeva sat up and chanted 'AUM' loudly. He slowly merged into 'AUM' from where he had come. Thus the chanting of 'AUM' gave Jayadeva not only worldly comforts, but also peace and liberation. You may have heard about the race of Rabbit and Tortoise. The Rabbit jumps and quickly reaches the place where intended whereas the tortoise starts slowly and reaches the destination. What is the consequence?

The Rabbit breathes very fast and ends its life very quickly whereas the Tortoise breathes slowly and steadily and has a very long healthy life. The Tortoise lives as long as 450 or 500 years or beyond. Can you imagine?

So now on, please try to chant 'AUM' everyday, both morning and evening, to have a successful and healthy life.

*Mrs. Kamala Menon originally hails from Tiruvilwamala, Trichur Dist., Kerala, India. She read for her BA and law degree at Calcutta University and had a working career in India. Following retirement, she has been conducting Sai Balvikas classes and community service for the last 16 years. She recently moved to live with her daughter in Newcastle upon Thyne, the United Kingdom.*



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Compiled by Anjana Prayaga

Freeze Aloe Vera in ice cube trays for soothing sunburn relief.

*For Alzheimer's and several types of cancer, sprinkle ¼ teaspoon of turmeric to rice, poultry, meat, or vegetable dish. Curcumin, an anti-inflammatory compound in turmeric is effective against a number of chronic diseases.*

Apply a drop of toothpaste to bug bite to stop the itching and decrease the swelling. When applied to sores or blisters it dries them up. Use it overnight.

*Make a paste of honey and cinnamon powder, apply on bread, instead of jelly and jam, and eat it regularly for breakfast. It reduces the cholesterol in the arteries and helps preventing heart attack.*

Take two tablespoons of cinnamon powder and one teaspoon of honey in a glass of lukewarm water and drink it. It destroys the germs in the bladder.

*For people with diabetes slit okra into two halves vertically and soak it in water overnight. The next morning, remove the okra and drink the liquid, before eating your breakfast.*

Feeling tired in the afternoon? Cucumber is rich in Vitamin B and carbohydrates that can provide quick energy that can last for hours.

*For sinus problems, take 1 teaspoon of horseradish twice daily (either on its own, or used as a sandwich or meat topping) until symptoms clear.*

Sprinkling a ¼-teaspoon of ground cloves on meals daily may help stabilize blood sugar, and

dampen production of artery-clogging cholesterol.

*One of the simple home remedy for blood pressure is Methi Seeds or Fenugreek Seeds. Take a pinch of raw Fenugreek Seeds, about 8-10 seeds. Swallow it with water before taking your breakfast, every morning.*

One cup of fresh pineapple daily can cut painful bloating within 72 hours. Pineapple is naturally packed with proteolytic enzymes, digestive aids that help speed the breakdown of pain-causing proteins in the stomach and small intestine.

*Eating 1 cup of blueberries daily, whether you opt for them fresh, frozen or in juice form, can cut your risk of a urinary tract infection (UTIs).*

Dab painful canker and cold sores with unpasteurized honey four times daily until your skin woes disappear.

*Ginger's potent compounds called gingerols, prevents the production of pain-triggering hormones. Add at least 1 teaspoon of dried ginger or 2 teaspoons of chopped ginger to meals daily.*

For joint and headache pain, eat 20 cherries (fresh, frozen or dried) until your pain disappears.



Obtained from multiple sources, including Internet, periodicals, magazines, scientific publications, etc.

Disclaimer: Home remedies may or may not have medicinal properties that treat or cure the disease or ailment in question, as they typically passed along by laypersons (which have been facilitated in recent years by the Internet). The FDA has not evaluated the information on this page. All information available here intended for informational purposes only. If you have, or suspect you have a health condition or problem, you should consult with your health care provider.



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## THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

by Arjun Madhavan

When a person dies, you would automatically think that they are gone forever. But this is not necessarily the case. When someone dies, their body ceases to exist, but their soul stays intact and goes to another body to repeat the cycle of life. Your soul can be born into anything; an animal, another human, a plant, or anything that is living. Imagine your body as a dress that you wear, and once it is worn out, you would go get a new dress. So the soul basically takes another "dress" to use.

Before you were born, there was another living organism that had your soul, and before them that soul was in a different body, and so on.

But how big is soul? People think that soul is a vast amount of spiritual energy that covers your whole body. Referring to the Bhagavad Gita, the soul is supposed to be the size of a thousandth of a tip of your hair.

Does soul ever die? No, the soul never dies. A specific text from the Bhagavad Gita, as told by Krishna to Arjuna, explains the idea of the soul being immortal.

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।  
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥



Translated in English this says, "Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to exist." This states that soul never ends. It would continue until the end of the Earth.

Swami Prabhupada, a highly revered Vaishnava saint, says that "soul is something that does not take birth, and the soul does not die...And because the soul has no birth, he therefore has no past, present or future. He is eternal, ever-existing and primeval – that is, there is no trace in history of his coming into being".

You might not believe this but sometimes one can remember fragments of their previous body's life. One child in India, Titu Singh was two and a half years old when he began to tell his family of his other life in Agra, a city in northern India. His memories were quite accurate. Titu said he had been the owner of a radio station, TV station, and a video shop, his name was Suresh Verma, he had a wife named Uma and two children.

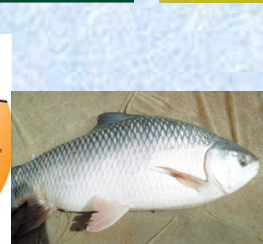
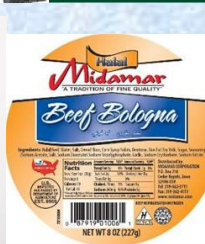


He also said that he had been shot, and then cremated, and his ashes had been thrown in the river. His parents didn't take him seriously at first, but his behavior puzzled them - he often behaved as if he wasn't a part of their family. Repeatedly Titu would tell his parents that he was homesick, and he wanted to go back to Agra. Titu's older brother decided to travel to Agra and find this woman named Uma. He found a radio station called Suresh Radio. And he met Uma. Titu's older brother told Uma about his younger brother, she was stunned. Uma visited Titu, and when they met, he told her some facts that only she shared with her husband Suresh.



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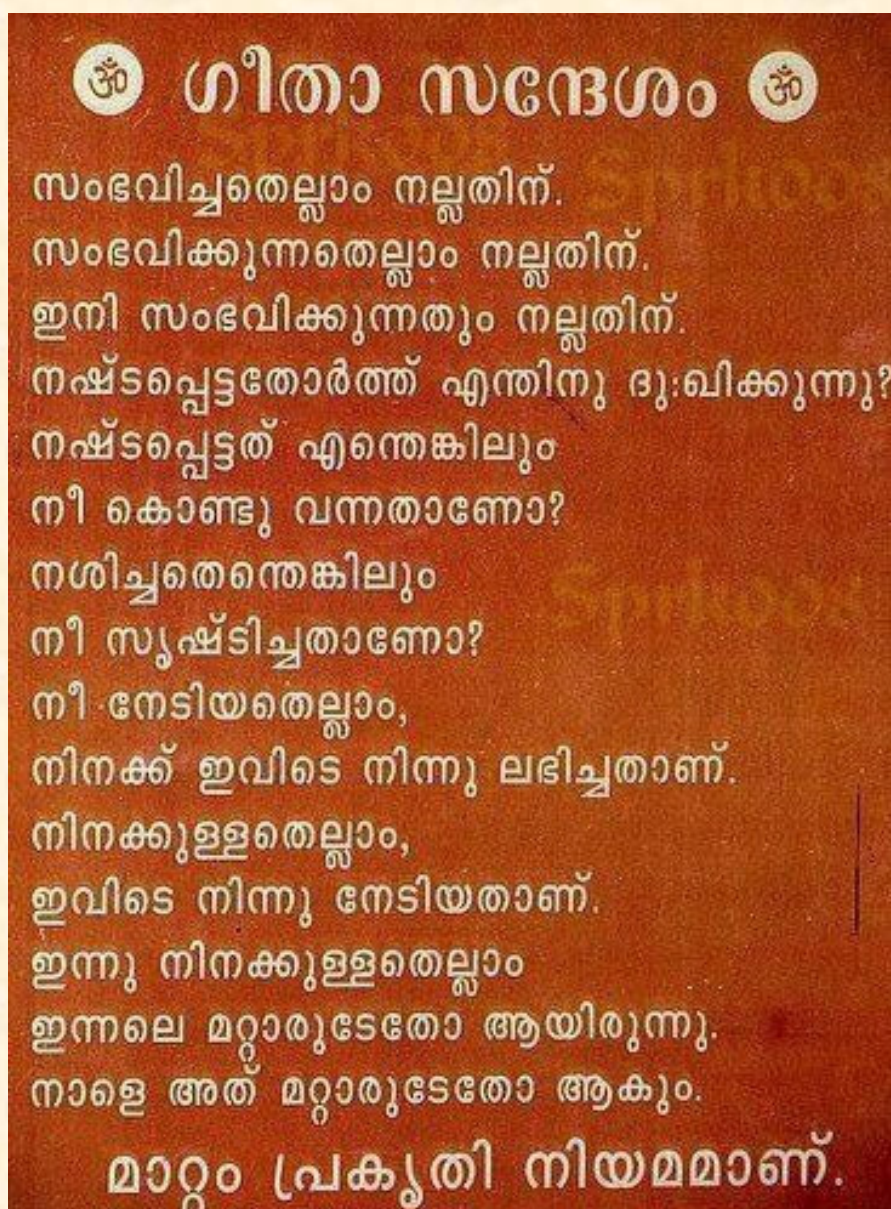
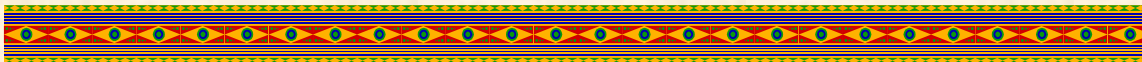


Sometimes the soul does not want to get a new body, so it would merge with the Supreme Being, and achieve the state of Moksha, the release from reincarnation. The soul does this since it does not want to feel pain, suffering, and death.

Soul is something we would never be able to trace, something that will elude mankind for a great time. Who knows, some of us could be famous kings, an animal, or even a plant.

Reference: Bhagavad Gita As It Is by Swami Prabhupada

Arjun Madhavan is an eighth grader at Selvidge Middle School Ballwin, Missouri. He goes to Bal Vihar Sunday School, where he learns about what Gita truly means in our life and he decided to apply what he learned in this article. He loves to read, draw, and write.





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## Hinduism the Scientific Religion

by Dr. Sudhirdas Kumar Prayaga

Hinduism, originally called '*Sanadhana Dharma*', is probably the oldest religion that is being practiced until now. The origin of Hinduism goes back to antiquity where no written records are available. Hinduism was not created by any one person or at any one particular time in history, but has evolved over many millennia by incorporating panoply of thoughts and philosophies, rituals and customs and even practices from everyday life. Unlike most other religions, Hinduism accepted and incorporated knowledge from mathematics, astrology, medicine, art, architecture, justice, etc. into its rituals, customs and practices. In this article, I'd like to introduce readers to the scientific strength of Hinduism with three examples, that how Hinduism is in full agreement with our current understanding of scientific materialism and perception of reality. Extraordinary parallels can be found between our current understanding of physics, biology, and mathematics with ancient Hindu scripts.

### The God equation - mathematics

India was the cradle of mathematics, which is echoed very well in its many Hindu texts. To name a few, it has developed the decimal number system now known as the Arabic numerals, introduced '0', and established Pythagoras theorem probably 500 years before Pythagoras! The knowledge of infinity probably existed for over two millennia in India. An excellent example is from *Isavasya Upanishad*, written over 2000 years ago, about God and the universe to explain some of the basic concepts of Hinduism and the nature of reality.

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम पूर्णत पुरनम उदच्यते  
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पुरनम एवावासिष्यते

ഓം പൂർണ്ണമദഃ പൂർണ്ണമിദം പൂർണ്ണത പൂർണ്ണമുദച്യതേ  
പൂർണ്ണസ്യ പൂർണ്ണമാദായ പൂർണ്ണമേവാവശിഷ്യതേ

om purnamadah purnamidam purnat purnamudacyate  
purnasya purnamaadaya purnameva vasisyate



'*Purnam*' in Sanskrit (and Malayalam) has the meanings of complete or infinite. Thus, it says God is complete and infinite. The universe is also complete and infinite. The complete and infinite universe was created or arose from the complete and infinite God. When you take infinity out of infinity, what remains is infinity. The last line uses a mathematic equation to establish a concept, which I call 'the God equation'.

### The God particle - physics

The modern cosmological understanding about the universe and the nature of reality seems to be in line with the ancient Hindu philosophical ideas on the origin of the universe and reality. It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond to those of the modern scientific cosmology. Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, which is 8.64 billion years long. Many eminent scientists and thinkers like Albert Einstein, Max Planck, Henry Shrodinger, Niels Bohr, Julius Oppenheimer, Carl Sagan, etc. have made comparisons in awe about these close similarities.

Our scientific understanding of the physical universe underwent a revolutionary change after the publication of Einstein's special theory of relativity (1905) and general theory of relativity (1915). The concepts of absolute space and absolute time had to be discarded in favor of a mind boggling space-time fabric along with other concepts such as quantum mechanics, light is both a particle and a wave, energy and mass are interchangeable, matter bends space - leading to the conclusion that reality is probabilistic and not deterministic. It's says in Mahabharata that 'time is the seed of the universe'. Hindus believe that nature is *Maya* (illusion) or *midhya* (unreal), as the great sage Adi Sankaracharya (788-820 AD) succinctly put it in his famous verse '*Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya*'.



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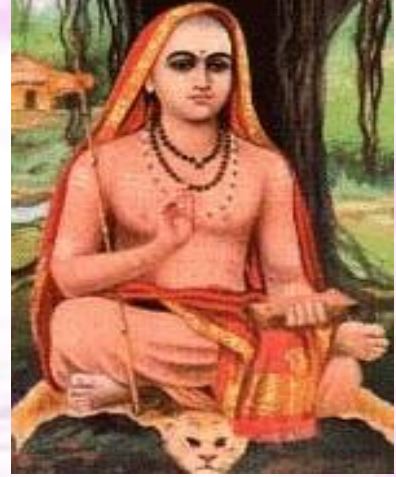


ब्रह्मा सत्यम् जगत् मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव न अपरह

(ബ്രഹ്മ സത്യം ജഗത് മിത്യ ജീവോ ബ്രഹ്മൈവ നാ അപരഹ്)

brahma satyam jagat mithya jeevo brahmaiva na aparah

Thus, it says that *Brahman* or God alone is real; the universe is illusory or unreal. *Jeeva* or self is identical with *Brahman*.



Physicists now believe that the whole universe is pervaded or enveloped by what is called the Higgs field. Higgs field is carried by particles called Higgs Bosons (named after physicist Peter Higgs and Indian physicist Satyendra Nath Bose), the so-called 'God particles'. It is believed to provide mass to all other subatomic particles and thus crucial to the formation of the physical universe that we know. The allegory 'God particle' says it all, that there is no existence without these particles pervading the whole universe. A quote from *Isavasya Upanishad* again will put this idea in perspective, which is the very fundamental tenet of Hinduism that God is present everywhere.

इसवास्यम् इदं सर्वं यात्किंचा जगत्यां जगत्

ഈശാ വാശ്യമിതം സർവ്വം യത് കിൻച്ച ജഗത്യാം ജഗത

isavasyam idam sarvam yatkinca jagatyam jagat

Thus, it says that God is omnipresent and envelops everything that is animate or inanimate in the universe. This concept is also made very famous by the Beatles song 'within you and without you', written by George Harrison.

### The God evolution – biology

Evolution is the process of gradual or progressive change over time. Biological evolution is any change that occurs across successive generations. Our current scientific understanding is that all life on earth originated by chemical synthesis and diverged over time. Charles Darwin, in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, put forward his evolution theory to explain a basis for generation of diversity of life on earth in his eminent work 'The Origin of Species'. Hinduism is not only in line with such concepts, but provides examples to support such evolutionary processes in its many texts. One good example is the '*Desavathram*' of the Hindu God *Vishnu*. Each incarnation or *avatar* of *Vishnu* is evolved or progressed from the previous *avatar*. Thus the first *avatar* '*Matsya*' or fish is more primitive than the next *avatar* '*Kurma*' or turtle which is a reptile. The 3<sup>rd</sup> *avatar* '*Varaham*' or pig is a mammal, and so on with successive evolution.

Another example is the evolution of universe and time, described in *Surya Sidhanta* and *Vishnu Purana*, that universe is eternal or perpetual, that there is no beginning or end. With each cycle of *Brahma* the universe is created and destroyed, a concept illustrated in the cosmic dance figures of *Shiva*, with a drum in the left hand indicating the sound of creation (the *Ohm* or big bang) and right hand with an arc of fire (of destruction).

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5. Nature, Reality and the Sacred by Langdon Gilkey
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\*The author's blog can be found at - [prayagaprinciples.blogspot.com](http://prayagaprinciples.blogspot.com), for more articles.





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## HAIKU POEM of LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD by Trisha Nair

*(Haiku is a Japanese poetic form that combines form, content and language in a meaningful, yet compact way. The most common form for Haiku is three short lines, containing five, seven and five syllables respectively. Haiku doesn't rhyme and must "paint" a mental image in the reader's mind).*

I'm Red Riding Hood  
My grandma is really sick  
I am seeing her.

How do I get their  
I think we cross the forest  
Maybe I should try.

I am getting scared  
This place seems quiet and dark  
Why is it so cold?

I should turn back now  
But what if I was correct  
I'll just keep going.

That was really fast  
We are almost to her house  
Hope her food is warm.

Hello grandmother  
I have a surprise for you  
These are your favorite.

Grandma is that you?  
Oh what large teeth you have got  
Yes sweetie it's me.

What's wrong with your voice?  
My! Oh my! Your voice is rough.  
It is a bit hoarse.

Bring that basket here.  
Yes grandma. Are you hungry?  
Oh, YES! I'm starving!

Come closer sweetie.  
Will you feed me the first bite?  
Yes! It's my pleasure.

OUCH! You bit me hard.  
You thought I was your grandma!  
Where is my grandma?

What is going on?  
She's where you're going sweetie  
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Not on my watch wolf  
Put the innocent girl down  
I'm the wood cutter.

I'm your worst nightmare  
Today wolf, I will kill you.  
Please don't worry girl.

Please don't cry either  
I will get your grandmother  
You just wait and see.

Chop, chop cut, cut, cut  
Grandmother, are you okay  
Did the wolf hurt you?

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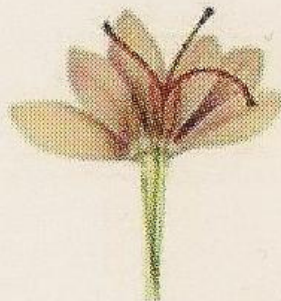


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I'm alright sweetie  
Did that big, mean wolf hurt you?  
It was a close one.

Thank god you came in  
Can I ever repay you?  
A brave man you are.

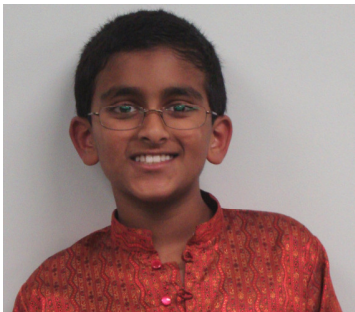
No, no it's okay  
There's no need to repay me  
Just be more careful.

Come back and visit.  
I'll be on my way grandma  
See you tomorrow.

I'll be going now,  
That wood won't cut by itself!  
Have a nice day. Bye!

Alright, thanks a lot.  
Do come back soon ya' hear me?  
Bye Red Riding Hood.

*Trisha is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader. She loves singing, dancing and recently took part in a flash mob at the local mall in Mount Vernon, Illinois.*



## **VISHU: KERALA'S NEW YEAR** *by Bharat Sreekrishnavilas*

Vishu is the Malayalam New Year, which is on April 14<sup>th</sup>. It is celebrated with joy and happiness - the people of Kerala wear *Kodivastram* (new clothes), sing, dance and have fun. Also, to mark the New Year day, people set off *Padakkam* or firecrackers. And to every great festival there must be a great feast! On Vishu, people eat great foods such as *Mampazhapachadi*, *Aviyal* and *Thoren* to celebrate the New Year.

If you were in Kerala on Vishu day, the eldest person in your household would blindfold anyone younger than them and take them to see the *Vishukani*. After a hearty breakfast the family would head down to the nearest temple, pray to God, greet others a Happy Vishu. They would exchange *Vishukaineettam*. Then they would go back to their home to see their family members, their cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. They would all eat *Sadhya* together.

*Bharat is 11 years old and is in 5th grade. He loves to read and play Lego's.*





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## VOLUNTEER BURNOUT AND WAYS TO PREVENT IT

*compiled by Priya Nair from various online sources*



**B**urnout is a psychological term often used to describe long term exhaustion and increased apathy. As with anything, prevention is better than cure. For most volunteer dependent organizations the responsibility for managing volunteers rests with the board or committee chairperson. Volunteer burnout is a serious issue for many organizations. The best volunteers are usually the most prone for burnout. That's because they are so dedicated that they often fail to take breaks or ask for help.

Some reasons for burnout are

- Organization is lacking in clear goals and direction.
- People think they have to work selflessly and they see it as a measure of their worth.
- There are few rewards or recognition for a job well done.
- Too few people are involved.
- Volunteers don't believe in the organization a hundred percent.



### Some ways to prevent it

- 👉 Repeatedly praising and appreciating their efforts and telling them how their contribution is making a difference.
- 👉 Set realistic goals for the organization and volunteers.
- 👉 Reminding them that the quality of the work is more important than quantity.

Generally, volunteer burnout is reduced when volunteer satisfaction is high. As volunteers we have to remind ourselves that we have to perform our duties, but should not get attached to the outcome.

In conclusion dear fellow volunteers, let's keep the above loosely paraphrased quote from the Bhagavad Gita in mind and continue performing our duties without expecting any rewards in return.

### What Ohmkaram means to me ...

When I first heard of this organization I was overjoyed. I had been living in a small town in Illinois where English and Hindi were the only main languages I hear. At our first visit, we were just lapping up all the Malayalam we heard. It was truly music to our ears. I'm glad to be a part of this wonderful organization.

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# Scholarship Program

Compiled by Anjana Prayaga & Vinod Menon

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ഞാൻ കൃഷ്ണമോൾ ...

ഇന്ന് D. Pharm നു ശേഷം ആലുവ Anwar Hospital ൽ pharmacist ആയി ജോലി ചെയ്യുന്നു. എന്റെ +2 പഠനത്തിനു ശേഷം തുടർ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസമായ (D. Pharm) ന് പഠിക്കുവാനും first class ൽ പാസാകുവാനും എന്നെ സാമ്പത്തികമായി സഹായിക്കുകയും പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത ഓങ്കാരം സംഘടനക്കും അതിനു എന്നെ

സഹായിച്ച രവി അങ്കിളിനും അംബികാമ്മിനും എന്റെ ആത്മാർത്ഥമായ നന്ദി ഞാൻ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. ഭാവിയിൽ B. Pharm ന് ചേർന്ന് പഠനം തുടരണമെന്നാണ് ആഗ്രഹം. അതിനായി ഏവരുടെയും അനുഗ്രഹവും ആശംസകളും ഞാൻ അഭ്യർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു.

എന്ന് സ്നേഹത്തോടെ  
കൃഷ്ണമോൾ

*Krishna*

I came to know of Krishnamol's family as a youngster, not only because they lived on the other side of a small creek across my home, but also because I could escape the boredom of my childhood by observing the "going ons" at their household, amply soaking my childhood curiosity, 12/7 and beyond (*intended to reflect daylight hours from 24/7 cliché – Editors*).

They were and are truly "Manninde Makkal" (those eking a living out of elements) - from dawn to dusk and beyond, everyone in the household, including women, children and even animals (oxen), constantly toiled without a frown on the face or use of foul language. Their endeavors included raising cattle, poultry, cultivating vegetable, fishing, trapping, toddy tapping, weaving and animal husbandry, rescue and voluntary services for the neighbors, and so on. But in spite of these back breaking labor, at least for the last 60 years, their lot has not improved much and no one in the family had more than basic education, until Krishnamol broke out of the mold.

As far as I am concerned she is The Hope for the family's future. Ohmkaram can be proud in helping Krishnamol, by awarding the first Scholarship to such a motivated student. Further, it's quite heartening to note that though she is now working as a Pharmacy Tech, her aspiration is to obtain a degree in that subject soon. I hope Ohmkaram can help her and thus enhance the future of the entire extended family, by offering her another scholarship, for the degree course.

- Ambika Ravindranathan

**Date of Birth:** Nov. 18, 1990  
(North Paravur)

**Father's name:** Madhu

**Mother's name:** Prasanna

**Qualification:** DPharm

**Occupation:** Pharmacist at  
Anwar Hospital, Aluva (Kochi)

**My strength :** God and my  
family

**Hopes:** To continue studies  
(BPharm)

**Ambition:** To become a Clinical  
Pharmacist

**Hobbies:** Cooking, crafts

**View about life:** Provide  
maximum help to others

Vembupadam, Kizhakkepuram,  
North Paravur, Ernakulam

## Scholarship Efforts

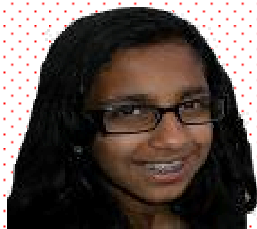
*This year, Ohmkaram set aside a portion of its proceeds towards a Foundations Account with Country Financial, with the idea of utilizing interest gained towards scholarship and charitable pursuits.*

*Our retailing of Aum T-Shirts benefiting the scholarship fund is also ongoing. It contains verses in English from the original Upanishad commandments.*



*Together with other fund raising events, Ohmkaram hopes to make this award an annual affair.*

*Please support us in this effort.*



## MAN EATER OF THE SUNDERBANS

by Shreya Nair

**My great grandfather was Jim Corbett. He was a famous British hunter and naturalist. He has slayed many man eating tigers and leopards in India.**

I am Jade Corbett and my father is Jake Corbett. We are about to move to a place in West Bengal called the Sunderbans. This literally means beautiful forest in Bengali. This is the only place in the world man eating tigers are left. The tigers here are huge and are called Royal Bengal Tigers.

Some reasons naturalists think that tigers started eating men are ...

- Humans are easier prey and tigers with handicaps like broken teeth, wounded paws find it easier to capture humans.
- The Sunderbans is a marshy area with forests and salt water. Usually tigers drink fresh water but since there is none here they drink salt water. This has caused them to acquire a taste for human flesh because we are salty and their normal prey is not, thus leading them to be more aggressive.
- The high tides in the area destroy their scat and urine; this is how they mark their territories, so they think the only way is to physically dominate everything.

Dad is a conservationist and a big game hunter. He's been to Kenya and Siberia for hunting trips. He only hunted animals that were causing problems to the local people.

We're going to the Sunderbans because the locals were being killed by a man eating tiger at the rate of 1 person a month for the past two years.

We got off a plane in Calcutta, West Bengal, India. We travelled for 5 hours in a cab till we reached the Tiger Reserve in the Sunderbans. It was magnificent. The trees had special adaptations to live in salt water. My Dad said we had to take a boat to our hut because the village and our hut were in the middle of the mangrove on a mud flat island.

Once we got on the boat they gave us masks with human faces on it and told us to put it facing backwards. I asked why and the villager said that they believe that man eaters attack from the back so they put a face behind their head to fool the tigers. I thought it was weird but did it anyway.



*Tigers roam the famed Sunderban*

As soon as we reached the hut I almost collapsed from hunger. Our hut had no toilet. If I had to use the bathroom I had to dig outside and then cover it up, it was not my favorite part of the trip but I was an explorer myself and did not want to whine. There were no beds either so we slept on the floor.

Next day we entered the forest. It was hot and humid. I was excited and nervous/scared.

We walked around the forest for about an hour and then sat down to have a drink and some lunch. Dad asked me if I was doing alright but suddenly he dropped his lunch and stood up, he asked me to stand as well but be perfectly still. The hair on my neck was standing up. I heard a growl and realized there was a tiger nearby.





*Edward James "Jim" Corbett (25 July 1875 in Nainital, India – 19 April 1955 in Nyeri, Kenya) was a British hunter, conservationist, author and naturalist, famous for slaying a large number of man-eating tigers and leopards in India.*

*Corbett held the rank of colonel in the British Indian Army and was frequently called upon by the government of the United Provinces, now the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, to slay man-eating tigers and leopards that had killed people in the villages of the Garhwal and Kumaon region. His success in slaying the man-eaters earned him much respect and fame amongst the people residing in the villages of Kumaon, many of whom considered him a sadhu (saint).*

*Corbett was an avid photographer and after his retirement, authored the Man-Eaters of Kumaon, Jungle Lore and other books recounting his hunts and experiences, which enjoyed much critical acclaim and commercial success. Corbett spoke out for the need to protect India's wildlife from extermination. The Jim Corbett National Park in Kumaon was named in his honour in 1957.*

**Source - Wikipedia**

We walked to where we heard the growl and my Dad looked at the spoor of the tiger. It was a male and its paws were injured, my Dad told me. Then he told me to run as fast as I could to the village.

My dad was running right behind me. It seemed we were running forever, but I saw the village ahead. I could hear the tigers' growl all the time behind us but it was obvious that he was wounded. No way could we have outrun him otherwise.

Next day we recovered enough to go to the forest again. This time, however we were going to set a trap for the tiger. We took a live cow and tied it to a tree next to where we found the tigers spoor. Poor cow was going to be bait. We climbed up a nearby tree and my father with the help of villagers built a platform so he and I could wait for the tiger to come. We did not want to kill the tiger, so we set up a net to try and catch it.

We climbed up and waited patiently. It was turning dusk; the sunlight would be gone in another hour or so. If the tiger did not come soon we'd have to call it a day and try tomorrow. We were not disappointed. We heard a soft growl. The cow started mooing and going crazy. I heard some monkeys and Sāmbhar deer make scared noises. All this alerted us to the fact that the tiger was approaching.

My Dad and I got ready with the net. Light was almost gone so we could barely see, however my dad said tigers had good nocturnal vision. The tiger moved gracefully and stealthily to the cow and was about to pounce when he looked up and saw us but too late! We threw the net. We gingerly climbed down, tranquilized the tiger with a gun. The villagers carried it to the truck and we took it to the Tiger Reserve. There they took out the porcupine quills in its paws.

They were going to try and rehabilitate it, but if that did not work they would have to put him down.

We went back to the Reserve two months later and found out that his paw had healed and maybe in a year he could be re-introduced to the wild.

So it was a happy ending for everyone. My Dad got an award for being courageous, I got to write this wonderful story and we saved a tiger and a whole village!

Oops! I forgot to mention that my Dad and I have been called to track down a white rhinoceros that had gone rogue in the Serengeti plains.

***Shreya is a 7th grader. She was inspired to write this last year after visiting her grandfather in Thrissur. His interest in Jim Corbett was passed on to his grand daughter. She is a vegetarian, an animal lover and has an adventurous spirit.***

## യാത്ര

----- എം. എൻ. മഞ്ചിറ



സ്വപ്നം വിടരുന്ന് സ്വർഗ്ഗമാണീ ഭൂമി .....

സമ്പൽ സമൃദ്ധയാണീ പുണ്യ ഭൂമി .

ഈ പ്രപഞ്ചത്തിൻ സൗന്ദര്യം നുകരുവാൻ .....

ഇനി എത്ര ജന്മം എനിക്ക് വേണം?

പോകുവാൻ മടിയുണ്ട് ഇവിടുന്ന്, എനിക്കല്ല .....

എന്നെ ഞാനായി നയിക്കുമെൻ ജീവന് .....

പക്ഷെ .....പോകാതിരിക്കാൻ കഴിയുമോ?

അതാണീ പ്രപഞ്ച കല്പന!

ഭയവിഹ്വലരായ് നാം .....മുറിയിൽ കയറി .....

കതകടച്ചു, നിശയിൽ ഒളിച്ചിരുന്ന് .....

ഭക്തിഗാനങ്ങൾ, മന്ത്രങ്ങൾ ജപിച്ചിട്ടു .....എന്ത് നേട്ടം?

പ്രകൃതി പ്രകൃിയ തിരുത്താൻ കഴിയുമോ?

സത്യം ...സത്യം ...ആണത് ...തിരുത്താൻ ....

കഴിയാത്തൊരു ധർമ്മം ആണത് .....

അധർമ്മം അല്ലെന്നു അറിയാം .....നാം....

എന്തിനു വ്യാകുലരായി കഴിഞ്ഞിടേണം?

പണ്ടൊരു മുത്തശ്ശി പാടിയ കടങ്കഥ .....

ഇന്നു എന്നേ മാറോടു വാരി പുണർന്നിടുന്നു.

ശാശ്വതം ആണത്, സത്യമാണ് ....

കണ്ടില്ലെന്നു നടിച്ചിട്ടു കാര്യമുണ്ടോ?.....ജീവിതം സഫലമാകുമോ?

എന്നുള്ളിൽ നാംവിട്ടു ...ഒരായിരം ചിത്രങ്ങൾ ....

വർണ്ണപ്പകിട്ടിലെ ചായക്കൂട്ടിൽ രചിച്ചു ഞാൻ .....

സംഗ്രഹി, സർവ്വവും.....തട്ടി തകർത്താൽ....

അന്ത്യം ഇല്ലാതാകുമോ!.....

സത്യത്തെ ഭയക്കുന്നു...അന്ത്യത്തെ ഭയക്കുന്നു .....

സർവ്വ ചരാചര സൃഷ്ടികളും .....

നശിക്കാത്തതായ് ഒന്നുമില്ലയീ പ്രപഞ്ചത്തിൽ .....

ഈ നിബന്ധന, തുടർച്ച .....തിരുത്താൻ കഴിയുമോ?

സ്വർഗ്ഗ കവാടം തുറന്നു തന്നാലും നാം.....



സംശയിച്ചിട്ടേ കടന്നുചെല്ലൂ.....  
കൂരിരുട്ടിൽ കുരുങ്ങി കിടക്കുമീ ....സംശയം ....  
നമ്മിൽ നിന്ന് പിഴുതു എറിയാൻ ....കഴിയുമോ?

ഇന്നലെ പങ്കുവെച്ചതും, പിന്നിട്ടതും .....ഇന്ന്  
നയിക്കുന്ന ഈ യാത്രവീഡിയും, നശ്വരം അല്ലെന്നറിയാം...  
പക്ഷെ, ഒരാൾക്കു ..എൻ മലർവാടിയിൽ .....മോട്ടിടുന്നു ....  
നാളെ എന്താകും? എന്തായിരിക്കാം .....!

വിപ്രാന്തി പരത്തുമീ പാതവക്കിൽ...ഞാൻ...  
നീറി പുകഞ്ഞു, തളർന്ന മനസ്സുമായ് .....  
നഷ്ട ബോധത്തിൻ രഥത്തിൽ കയറി"  
യാത്ര തിരിച്ചിട്ടു കാര്യമുണ്ടോ?

സയന്ധനങ്ങളിൽ അറബിക്കടലിനെ ..താലോലിച്ച് ഓടിയണയുന്ന  
മന്ദമാരുതൻ കരവലയത്തിൽ ഞാൻ .....  
താരാപതത്തിൻ സൗന്ദര്യം നുകരുമ്പോൾ .....  
രോമാഞ്ചം എന്നേ പുണർന്നിടുന്നു .....

അങ്ങ് പടിഞ്ഞാറേ ചക്രവാളത്തിൽ .....  
സൂര്യദീപം വിതറിയ ചന്ദനച്ചാർത്തിൽ .....  
ഒരായിരം അനശ്വര ചിത്രം വിടരവേ .....  
ആനന്ദം എന്നുള്ളിൽ ആറാടുന്നു.

തീർത്തയാത്ര തുടരുകയാണ് നാം .....  
ജീവിതം എന്നാ രഥത്തിൽ .....  
നഷ്ടബോധത്തോടെ നിൽക്കുന്നു നാം .....  
ഈ പ്രപഞ്ചം വിട്ടു പോകാൻ!



എം .എൻ . മഞ്ചിറയുടെ ചെറുകഥകളും ലേഖനങ്ങളും കവിതകളും പല മലയാള വാരികകളിലും മാസപതിപ്പിലും മറ്റും പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചു വന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. 1960-ൽ സ്കൂൾ വിദ്യാർത്ഥിയായിരുന്നപ്പോൾ സ്കൂൾ മാസപതിപ്പുകളിലും ഒൻപതാം ക്ലാസ്സിൽ പഠിക്കുമ്പോള് മലയാള മനോരമ വാരികയിലും എന്റെ ചെറുകഥകൾ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചു വന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. എന്റെ 'നക്ഷത്രങ്ങളെ കാവൽ' എന്ന നോവൽ കുംകമം വാരികയിലും, 1970-ൽ സാഹിതി പബ്ലിക്േഷൻ തിരുവനന്തപുരം 'ഓളങ്ങൾ' എന്ന നോവലും, ജന്മഭൂമി 'പൂനിലാവും കറുത്ത മേഘങ്ങളും' പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

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

by Anju Prayaga

Malayalam School of St Louis is a voluntary organization that teaches and promotes Malayalam language to interested students in the St Louis area.

This is the fifth year of Malayalam School with thirty students enrolled for the year. The school runs efficiently because of the help from volunteers who assist with various activities of the school, including a high school volunteer who was a previous student of Malayalam School. Malayalam School meets for sixteen classes on alternate Saturdays for two hours, from September through May, every school year. Classes are conducted at three levels.

Malayalam School has provided Malayalam language interpreter to the local community. It also provides opportunity for youngsters in volunteerism.

**Teachers and Volunteers:** Anjana Prayaga, Ashitha Komath, Deepa George, Latha Madhu, Latha Unni, Milu George, Reshmi Variath, Savitha Krishnan and Vimal Nair

**Student Volunteer:** Amit Prayaga

**News and Media:** Sudhir Prayaga

**Contact Name:** Anjana Prayaga

**Email:** malayalamschool@yahoo.com

**Phone:** 636 281 9778

**Website:** [www.ohmkaram.org/MalayalamSchool.html](http://www.ohmkaram.org/MalayalamSchool.html)

### Malayalam School 2011-2012



From left to right: First row: Adam, Vaibhav, Alexander, Aishani, Nyomi, Sameera, Parthiv. Second Row: Ashwin, Diya, Siddharth, Pranav, Akshaj, Aldrin, Shyam. Third row: Shruti, Alita, Rubina, Natasha, Pranav, Bindu, Deepa, Anjana. Fourth row: Shreya, Amit, Trisha, Sushanth, Arjun, Anupama, Gigy, Latha. Not in the picture: Omkaar



## കഥ പറയാമോ?

എം .എൻ . മഞ്ചിറ.

കഥകളിക്കാര, കഥകളിക്കാര ....

കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ.....ഈ.....കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ ?.....

കദനം വിടരുന്ന മനസ്സുള്ളവർക്കു മുൻപിൽ.....

കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ.....കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ.....

അന്ത്യമില്ലാത്തതോരി ആകാശസീമയിൽ.....

ചായം വിതറുമ്പോൾ.....വർണ്ണ ചിത്രം രചിക്കുമ്പോൾ .....

കിനാവൻ നൂയമ്പിൽ കയറിയിരുന്നു .....കളിയോടും തുഴയുറപ്പോൾ .....

കഥ അറിയത്തോരി മനവർക്കായി ....ആ കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ .....

(കഥകളിക്കാര .....

കാഹള ധ്വനിനാദം വിടരും പുഴയുടെ മധുരിമ നുകരുമ്പോൾ .....

ആത്മാനം എന്നുള്ളിൽ വിടരുന്ന സ്വപ്നത്തിൻ...

കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ .....സ്വർഗ്ഗീയ .....

കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ .....

(കഥകളിക്കാര .....

എവിടെ നടന്നാലും, എന്ത് വീക്ഷിച്ചാലും

തുടിക്കുമീ ജീവിത വഴിത്താരയിൽ

മുഖച്ചായ വരയ്ക്കുന്ന, വിഭിന്നമാം ചിത്രത്തിന് ..

കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ....മനസ്സിന്റെ....കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ.....

(കഥകളിക്കാര.....)

ഭൂദേവി തൻ പാദ കടകമായ് തിരമാല.....

ഉയർന്നു വീണുടയുറപ്പോൾ .....

ചിതറുന്ന പവിത്രമാം ജലതരംഗത്തിന്റെ .....

കഥയൊന്നു ആടാമോ.....ഈ കദനത്തിന് കഥ പാടാമോ .....

(കഥകളിക്കാര .....



## **SUGAR DADDY**

*by Balasubramanian Mani*



**Charles tilted his laptop towards Gita. "That's a classic case of a Sugar daddy." He touched a point on the graph displayed on the screen. "This is where, his credit utilization starts getting whacky".**

"The guy is maxing out all of his credit lines, and there is a new account, virtually every quarter in the last year". Charles and Gita were credit analysts of a regional bank. They came in to the picture when the statistical models in the bank's computers, could not decide, whether to approve or decline a loan. And now, they were reviewing a car loan application. "Look at these 2 graphs," Charles leaned on the table, "the red one is that of a documented sugar daddy who defaulted two years back, and see this one." Gita saw that the correlation between the two graphs was striking. She had no doubt any more.

"Let me take one last look and then, we can decline" Gita said as she drifted across the application on her screen. It was the words "101 Mississippi River LN" that caught her eyes. The applicant name was grayed out. That was standard. But she knew the name. Maanichayan!

Achayan owned the gas station at the street corner, and lived in the corner house in her subdivision. She herself moved to that place recently, but had met his wife a couple of times. The first time, she was out jogging, and was drawn by the incessant bark of the old lady's Pomeranian, and she saw the lady flat on the ground, both her hands around the leg of the mailbox, trying to get back on her feet, and the dog running around her, barking and barking. She still remembered the way the old lady looked at her, took small sips from Gita's Gatorade, and touched her face. The next time she saw her; two paramedics were carrying the lady on a stretcher to a 911 truck on the curb of her home. She labored to turn her head, towards Gita and, smiled. Gita felt a spark of gratitude in the otherwise pale and wrinkled eyes.

It was hard to believe that the old man was cheating the sweet old lady. But the statistical risk models seldom lie. She went through the application once more, and stopped at the place where it asked about the primary user of the car. It was written- Fiancé. What nerve? She thought. Such open deception.

She left a couple of hours early from work, and stayed a moment longer at the stop sign near the Achayan's. It was not as if she had to rush home, and fish out the stinking socks of her husband from under the bed, or his cheap Wal-Mart underwear from the bathroom. "Not any more" she said softly as she turned the wheel towards the Achayans'. At the door she paused. She was not the superwoman kind who jumped at the scene of injustice. Was she going to confront the old man? What if they start an all out fight before her? "You are going to live alone and die alone if you don't learn to shut your nasty mouth. Its trouble for you, its trouble for others" the words of her Ex haunted her. May be she should take the lady out for a lunch and pass the information delicately. May be she will call Mrs. Achayan on phone first. She was about to turn back to her car when the door opened, and a tall man of late years appeared.



"Mary is out," the man said. "Can I take a message?"

Gita's mind was all of sudden, blank. She mumbled something.

"Wait, you are the one who helped Mary the other day, aren't you?" He asked.

Gita nodded, still not finding words.

"Come on in, she will be back by the time you finish your coffee".

Gita was looking at the black and white picture of a group of children on the living room wall when Achayan entered with coffee.

"That's our class photo from school days.

I met her when we were this small" He motioned with his hand. "We were not friends though, but quite the opposite. We didn't even trust each other".

"Do you trust each other now Achaya?"

He looked at her for a long moment.

"With my life. See this picture here," he pointed to a picture of them standing in front of a fortress like gate of Universal Studios. "It feels like last year but it was really the one before. I was in Orlando and had my first heart attack there. If not for her I wouldn't be talking to you now"

And yet you can barely wait to get on bed with your new girl, she wanted to say but instead said "It's the least expected of all, who helps," she paused and looked straight in his eyes "and it's the least expected who cheats."

"I was there for a dealer conference for my gas station. Mary was working for the oil company. It had been years since we parted at school in Palakkad, and yet she remembered me, remembered my name." There was a faint smile on his lips. "On the last day we were taken to this theme park. May be it was the heat that got me. Every one left the next day, even my business partner. She stayed with me the next few days until I recovered".

"Wait, are you telling me that you met and married last year"?

"That's when we met". He corrected her. "Later she got intestinal cancer and they fired her. I couldn't just stand and watch, you know. She's the only friend I got. I was not talking to my wife for years. So I keep telling Mary that we can marry." He paused to look at her. "Tell me Gita, wouldn't you do at least that, for the only person who gives meaning to whatever is left of your life?"

Gita struggled for words, yes perhaps if she is lucky enough to find someone like that, she thought. "It will help with the treatment expenses and the insurance if we marry" he continued. "But she doesn't want to. She thinks that will be cheating my wife". He paused "I think, it is the conscience thing that comes when your days are near".

Gita didn't know what to say. She stood up "I am sorry Achayan I need to go now" and started towards the door, hiding her face from his eyes.

"You forgot your bag" he called out from behind.



*This story was inspired by an application to Capital One where the author works as a Principal Analyst, in Richmond, VA. Having once lived in the St. Louis area, he used to be an active member of Ohmkaram and made contributions to Gitanjali as a co-editor. Author is also a brand new dad.*

## Sticky Memories

*contributed by Kavita Menon*

It was a warm summer day and my kids were driving me crazy. They were licking popsicles while traipsing back and forth between the patio and our family room. With each trip, they left behind a sticky display of fingerprints on our large, sliding glass door.

"Watch what you are doing! Keep your fingers off the glass!" I yelled at them.



Granted, our sliding door was a real bear. The track had warped from the weight of the heavy glass.

The only way to get your door open was to grab the handle with one hand, prop your foot against the foot for leverage, and pull with all your might. At three years old, my daughter Kelly had very little might. She tried to open the door by running her fingers across the glass. Perhaps, she thought she had magic powers, who knows?

Her older brother Derrick, was a bit stronger, but even he soon tired of the effort. When he wanted to be let back in, he would pound on the door with his fists. My mother was visiting on this one particular day, and noted my temper flaring.

"Don't be so hard on them," she admonished. "Some day you will miss those little fingerprints on the glass."

"Oh right," I replied, as I headed for the closet where I kept the window cleaner.

"Well, your grandmother sure was fond of *your* fingerprints on her French door windows," my mom said, as she opened the door for her granddaughter.

"What are you talking about? Grandmother was a fastidious housekeeper. She wouldn't even let us play in her living room. We were relegated to the guest room or the attic!" Not that my sister and I minded our restrictions. The attic was filled with trunks full of treasures – long evening gowns for dress up, and old teddy bears and wooden soldiers. Best of all, we could spy on unsuspecting adults by peering through the attic fan's grating.

We only saw my mother's family for a few months each summer. They lived in Arkansas and we called California our home. Those summers were a magical time of picnicking at the lake and chasing lightning bugs with our cousins.

Now, as hard as I tried, I could not dredge up a single memory related to fingerprints on my grandmother's French doors. I remembered the doors well. They stood in the formal dining room and after supper we exited through them to join our friends at play.

"I would offer to clean the windows," my mother continued. "But Mother wouldn't let me. Those little fingerprints are all I have to remind me of the girls when they leave," she would say.

If there were tears at the time of our departure, we never saw them. It was only after hearing my mother's story that I realized the intensity of my grandmother's love. Only now, as a mother, could I comprehend her longing to hold on to a little piece of us.



It's been years since that summer day when I fumed over my children's fingerprints. Derrick and Kelly are grown now. French doors that open easily to the touch have replaced the troublesome sliding door.

"Nana, come outside and watch me shoot baskets," Aaron yells from the patio as he pounds on the doors to get my attention.

On the other side of the French doors, Trevor toddles on chubby legs. As he presses his face against the glass to get a better glimpse of his big brother, I swoop him into my arms. Noting the tiny fingerprints left behind, I try not to weep.

... I have fingerprints to cherish.

My son and his wife have decided to trade their California residency for Colorado. They are packing up their house across town, and in two weeks they will be gone. I know the boys will love their new Rocky Mountain home – so many lakes to picnic by and lots of cousins to join in the chase for fireflies.

We will keep in touch, of course. They will come back to visit. And until then, I have fingerprints to cherish.

By Mary Ann Cook  
*Chicken Soup for the Soul Celebrates Grandmothers*

From the book *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Like Mother, Like Daughter*  
By Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen & Lori Brystan



## **SMOKING AND BACK PAIN**

*by Suresh Krishnan MD DLO ABA ABPM*

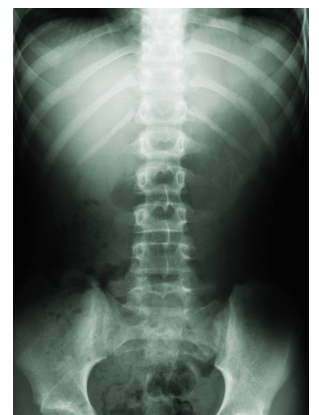
Back pain is one of the most common causes of pain in the world. It is also the most frequent cause of absenteeism from work. At least 80 % of the population has suffered back pain once in their lifetime. Of these people, about 30 to 40% go into a state of chronic pain.

One of the most common causes of back pain is smoking. Surprising isn't it. Yes I did say that it is one of the most common causes of back pain. It is interesting to know that it does not cause the problem right away. The whole thing is a slow process. That is why most people are not very aware of the fact that smoking could cause back pain.

The most feasible theory about this is that smoking causes increase in the thickness of blood due to increase in the concentration of blood cells. This happens because of the decrease in blood oxygen content. As a result of this there is decrease in the nutrition to intervertebral discs. Hence, the discs undergo faster degeneration and deterioration. This makes the discs prone to bulging herniation and tears. These processes cause back pain.

Another fact I would like to state is that stopping the smoking after an injury has occurred, does not reverse the damage already caused by the smoking. It may help prevent further progression of the problem.

In addition to being the cause of back pain, smoking also causes other problems. In a nutshell, I would like to say do not start smoking and if at all you start, stop the habit as soon as you can.



*Anesthesiologist and Pain Management Specialist, Interventional Pain Care*









★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Aishwarya is 14 years old and lives in Thrissur, India. Her Mother is lucky to have this poem dedicated to her. Aishwarya participated in several Ohmkaram programs during her stay here in St. Louis.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### ***Motherly love***

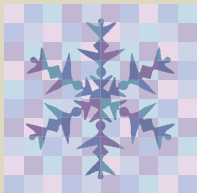
*Love of a mother cannot be compared,  
To the beauty of a rose or,  
The fragrance of jasmine.*

*Love of a mother cannot be compared,  
To the height of a mountain or,  
The depth of a sea.*

*Love of a mother cannot be compared,  
To the speed of a cheetah or,  
The strength of a lion.*

*Love of a mother cannot be compared,  
To anything in the universe,  
As nothing is as strong or pure,  
As mother's love.*

- P.M. Aishwarya



*by Shruti Punnachalil*



*Shruti is a 4<sup>th</sup> grader. She enjoys reading books, drawing, painting, playing Wii games with her younger brother. She also loves to beat her dad in a game of chess.*

Don't you love the Snow.  
And the way it glows.

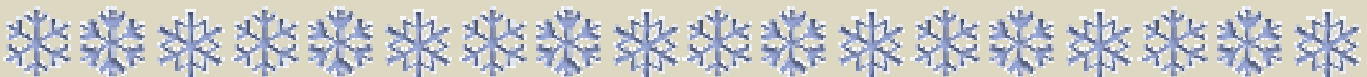
The way it tickles your toes.  
Don't you love the snow.

Don't you love the snow.  
There is white here and there.

Yes, I love the snow.  
And the way it glows.

I like the way it tickles my toes.  
How I love the snow.

And the color of white here and there.

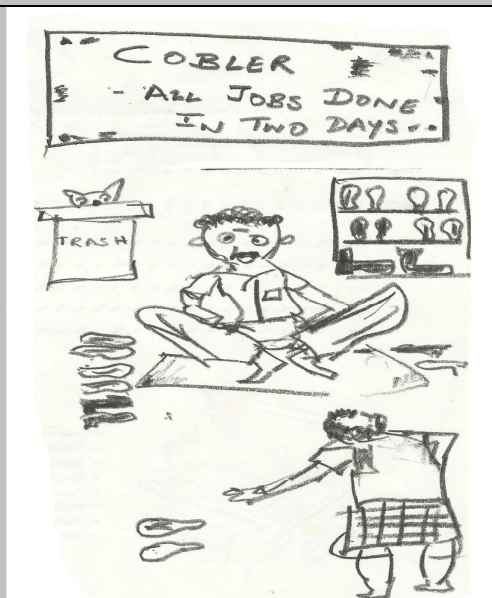
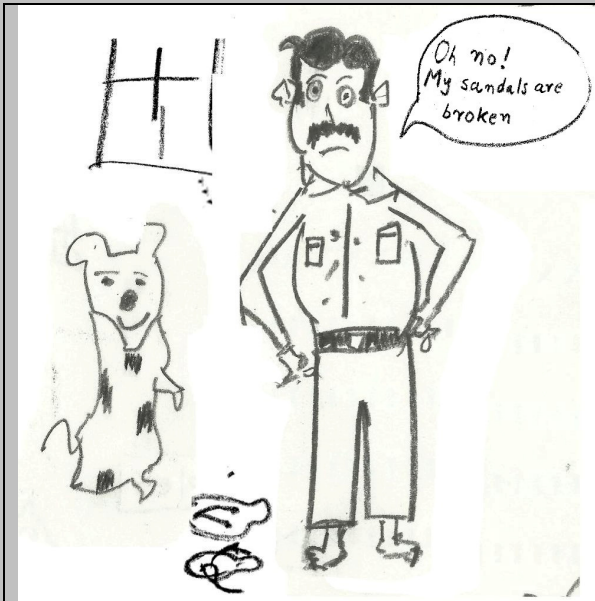


## TWO DAYS ????

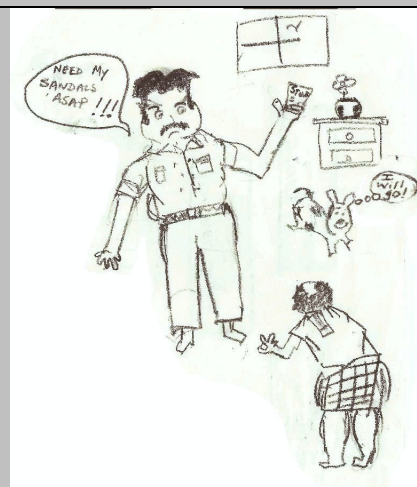
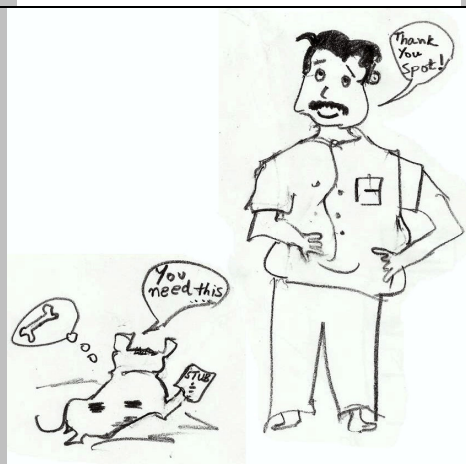
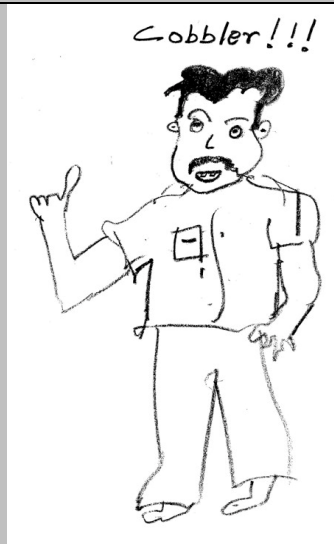
*illustrated by Vinay Menon*

This is an attempt to cartoonify a joke that I came across on the Internet.

Any resemblance is a pure mystery.







## HOW TO MAKE A YARN PUMPKIN

by Ashwin Prayaga

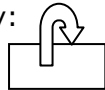


### Items needed:

Orange yarn, googly eyes, red pom pom, hot glue gun, foam shapes sticky or non-sticky for feet and hands, scissors and composition notebook.

### Step1:

Get one point of the yarn and wrap around the composition notebook 50 times. One person holds the yarn and the other person wraps the yarn around the composition notebook. This way:



### Step2:

Grasp sides stiffly, take out very carefully, and make sure not to mess up the yarn. Take a small piece of yarn (not from the yarn pumpkin) and tie the strand in the middle very tightly.

### Step 3:

Cut the two sides of the yarn where it does have a U- shape. Give it a cut so the strands are equal. Hot glue googly eyes, red pom pom for nose, foam hands and feet.

### Step 4: There is your pumpkin, Have fun!

*Ashwin is a fourth grader at Twin Chimneys Elementary, O' Fallon, Missouri.*



## Pasta

by Sushanth Krishnan

### Ingredients:

- 1lb of spaghetti
- 1 cup of spaghetti sauce
- 1 cup of Alfredo sauce
- 1 small onion, minced (optional)
- 10 cups of water



### Directions:

1. In a large pot, boil 10 cups of water.
2. Put all the spaghetti in the boiling water, add 1 teaspoon of oil in the water.
3. Let the spaghetti cook thoroughly.
4. After cooking, drain the spaghetti.
5. On low heat, mix together the sauces and onions until fully mixed.
6. Then add the cooked spaghetti to sauce mix and turn off the heat.
7. Serve when you get hungry.

*Sushanth is a Ninth grader at St. Dominic High School in O'Fallon, Missouri.*



# LENTIL SOUP

by Vimal Nair



## Ingredients:

Lentil (thoor dal)	2 Cups
Red Chili	3-4
Green Chili	6-8
Black Pepper	One tsp or more (crushed or powdered)
Salt	To taste
Red Onions	1 (the big ones that you get in your regular grocery store, yellow is fine too!)
Water	5 cups
Chopped Coriander leaves (few)	

## Method:

1. In a pressure cooker, add lentil, washed red chili, and some salt. Add 5 cups of water. Pressure cook the lentil for one whistle and then turn the cooker off. Let it remain in the stove for one more whistle. Set it aside.
2. Wait for the cooker to cool and the steam to escape. Ensure all the steam has been released and slowly release all the pressure. *(If you're not sure how to check the pressure, you can try the hard way of trying to open the cooker and it will splatter everywhere and may even hurt you, else you can slowly raise the whistle).* If the whistle can be raised easily, it means the pressure is released and it is safe to open.
3. Meanwhile, cut the red onion into two halves. One half, cut it into very small pieces and set it aside. (We do not need the other half).
4. Cut the green chili into small pieces too.
5. It is very important to make sure the lentil is cooled properly first. Then, blend  $\frac{1}{2}$  (half) of the lentil from the cooker in a food processor or blender. Depending on the blender, you may not be able to blend the whole portion. Divide accordingly and blend in batches.
6. Pour the blended dal and mix in the rest of the content. Add the green chili, onion, and some more salt. Mix it well and cook over a low flame. Finally, add the pepper powder, stir, and add some green coriander leaves.
7. Serve hot.

Most lentil soup recipes call for chicken broth. This one does not, and is completely vegetarian. You can add celery sticks or other vegetables if you like in Step 1 when you pressure cook the lentils. You can add croutons too if you like.

*Caution: Please have somebody else taste it before you eat it yourself. Wait for their feedback. If they don't like it, fry some small red onions, add cooked carrot or eggplant or potato, put some sambar powder and have it as Sambar*

Preparation time: 30 minutes, Serves: 4 Adults

Comments and feedback: [vimal\\_nair@yahoo.com](mailto:vimal_nair@yahoo.com)

## SPICY CHICKEN AND ONION UTTAPAM

by Pradeep and Devika Thampy

### Ingredients:

12 curry leaves  
Mustard seeds -1 teaspoon for seasoning  
Cumin seeds - ½ teaspoon for seasoning  
2 medium sized onions- thinly sliced  
1 tomato- thinly sliced  
Butter- 1 tablespoon  
5 medium sized green chilies- chopped  
Chili powder- 2 teaspoons  
Coriander powder - ½ teaspoon  
Black pepper powder - ¼ teaspoon  
Garam masala powder - ¾ teaspoon  
Turmeric powder- ¼ teaspoon  
Cumin seeds- ½ teaspoon  
Finely sliced ginger - ½ teaspoon  
Thinly sliced garlic- ¼ teaspoon  
½ lb boneless skinless chicken breast cut into small cubes  
Dosa batter- 2 cups  
Oil- as required      Salt to taste  
Coriander leaves- few, cleaned, and chopped



### Procedure:

#### To prepare topping for uttappam:

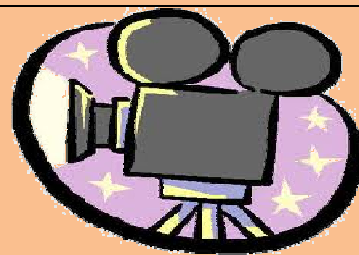
- In a deep, thick bottomed pan, on medium flame,
1. Heat 3 teaspoons of cooking oil.
  2. Once oil is hot, add mustard seeds, cumin seeds, 2 teaspoons chopped green chilies, ginger, and garlic. Allow mustard seeds to crackle.
  3. Once crackling has slowed down, add curry leaves, followed by 1 thinly sliced onion.
  4. Sauté until onions are golden brown.
  5. Add chicken breast, 2 teaspoons chili powder, ½ teaspoon coriander powder, ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder, ¼teaspoon black pepper powder, ¾ teaspoon garam masala powder.
  6. Mix well. Add one tablespoon of butter.
  7. Mix well. Add salt to taste and cover pan with lid until chicken is well done.
  8. Remove lid and stir occasionally until chicken is done and the mix is dry.
  9. Remove and set aside.

#### To make uttappam:

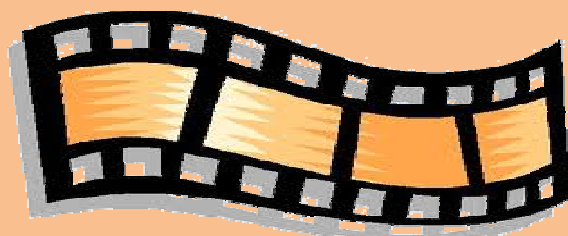
1. Mix dosa batter well and add salt to taste.
2. Grease a flat non-stick pan and heat on medium setting until pan is ready to make dosas.
3. Spread batter evenly on the pan to make dosa.
4. Sprinkle with green chilies and onions.
5. Sprinkle the chicken mix on the uttappam with a teaspoon or fork.
6. Cover with lid and allow to cook for 3-5 minutes on low flame.
7. Remove lid, add oil to the pan as desired.
8. Slowly move dosa on the pan and fry until crisp.
9. Remove and place uttappam carefully on to a serving dish.
10. Garnish with coriander leaves and freshly cut tomato pieces.
11. Serve warm with ketchup or hot sauce.
12. Serve with nice hot Indian tea.



# Popular Movies of 2011



Movie	Cast
<b>Krishnanum Radhayum</b>	Santhosh Pandit, Souparnika, Rupa Jith, Devika
<b>Indian Rupee</b>	Prithviraj , Rima Kallingal
<b>Snehavedu</b>	Mohanlal, Padmapriya, Biju Menon, Sheela
<b>Sevenes</b>	Kunchacko Boban, Bhama, Asif Ali, Rima Kallingal, Nadia Moidu
<b>Pranayam</b>	Mohanlal, Jayaprada, Anupam Kher
<b>Teja Bhai &amp; Family</b>	Prithviraj, Akhila Sasidharan
<b>Chaappa Kurish</b>	Vineeth Sreenivasan, Fahad Fazil, Roma, Remya Nambeesan, Nivetha Thomas
<b>Salt N' Pepper</b>	Lal, Shwetha Menon, Mythili, Asif Ali
<b>Violin</b>	Asif Ali, Nithya Menon
<b>Adaminte Makan Abu</b>	Salim Kumar, Zarina Wahab
<b>Rathinirvedam</b>	Swetha Menon, Sreejith
<b>The Train</b>	Mammooty, Jayasurya, Sheena Chohan, Sabitha Jayaraj
<b>Seniors</b>	Jayaram, Kunchako Boban, Biju Menon, Manoj K. Jayan, Padmapriya, Meera Nandan
<b>Urumi</b>	Prithviraj, Genelia D'Souza, Prabhu Deva, Nithya Menon, Arya, Tabu, Vidya Balan
<b>Traffic</b>	Sreenivasan, Rahman, Kunchako Boban, Asif Ali, Anoop Menon, Vineeth Sreenivasan, Sandhya, Roma, Remya Nambeesan

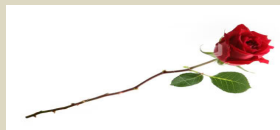


## IN MEMORIAM

*Notable deaths in Malayalam Film industry during the year 2011*

Name	Age	Notable Movies
Paravoor Ramachandran	64	Superman, Swapna Lokathe Balabhaskaran, Thooval Kottaram, Yakshiyum Njanum
Kalavoor Balan	63	<i>Achammakkuttiyude Achayan</i>
P. K. Sarangapani	86	Kadathanadan Ambadi, Thacholi Othenan, Unniyarcha, Palattu Koman, Aromalunni, Kannappanunni, Thumbolarcha
Machan Varghese	50	Kabooliwala, Mannar Mathai Speaking, Hitler, Thenkasipattanam, Thilakkam, Pappy Appacha
Vipindas	75	Manimuzhakkam, Oru CBI Diary Kurippu, Irupatham Noottandu, Prathidhvani
Aranmula Ponnammamma	96	Sasidharan, Viruthan Shanku, Kandan Bacha Kotte, Oppol, Kathapurushan, Janathipathyam
Ahwan Sebastian	77	Kalopasana (director), Love Marriage (music director), Karutha Pennu (music director)
Sujatha	58	Jalolsavam, Ernakulam Junction, Chandrolsavam, Aval Oru Thodar Kathai
P. Venu Menon	77	C.I.D. Nazeer, Viruthan Shanku, Prethangalude Tazhvara, Parassala Pachan Payyannur Paramu
Chintha Ravi	65	Ore Thooval Pakshikal, Iniyum Marichittillatha Nammal
M. M. Nesan (Younger brother of actor Satyan)	94	Chekkuthante Kotta, Colonelum Collectorum , Akkarappacha, Velliyazhcha
Johnson	58	Namukku Parkkan Munthiri Thoppukal , Oru Minnaminunginte Nurunguvettam, Vadakkunokkiyantram, Perumthachan, Amaram, Chamayam, Chinthavishtayaya Shyamala, Njan Gandharvan, Yathrakarude Sradhakku, Nadakame Ulakam
Mullanezhi	63	Sanmanassullavarkku Samadhanam, Narendran Makan Jayakanthan Vaka, Indian Rupee, Neelathamara
Mohan Raghavan	47	T. D. Dasan Std. VI B, Kanmashi, Nammal Thammil

The year 2011 also lost Dev Anand and Shammi Kapoor.





## Indian Restaurants in St. Louis Area

*Compiled by Anjana Prayaga*



Addie's Thai House  
13441 Olive Blvd  
Chesterfield MO 63017  
314-469-1660

Anis Restaurant  
2900 Cross Roads Pl  
O' Fallon, MO 63368  
636-489-2647

Baba's Restaurant  
10282 Page Ave  
Overland MO 63132  
314-427-8500

Bombay Grill  
20 Cross Roads Plaza  
O' Fallon, MO 63368  
636-272-3070

Cafe Lazeez  
14248 H Manchester Rd.  
Manchester MO 63021  
636-527-5900

China in Bombay  
14626 Manchester Road  
Ballwin, MO 63011  
636-386-8320

Flavor of India  
11939 Olive Blvd.  
Creve Coeur MO 63141  
314-997-4224

Gokul Snacks & Sweets  
10633-B Page  
St Louis MO 63132  
314-428-8888

Govinda's Vegetarian Restaurant  
3926 Lindell Blvd.  
St. Louis MO  
(314)535-8085

Haveli Indian Restaurant  
9720 Page Ave  
St. Louis MO 63132  
314-423-7300

Hot 'n' Sour  
45 Forum Center  
Chesterfield MO 63017  
314-439-5756

Hot Punjabi Kitchen  
127 Steam Boat Ln.  
Ballwin MO 63011  
502-472-2007

House of India  
8501 Delmar Blvd  
St. Louis MO 63124  
314-567-6850

India Palace  
4534 N Lindbergh Blvd  
Bridgeton MO 63044  
314-731-3333

Lal Qila Indian Pakistani  
15222 Manchester Road  
MO 63021  
636-527-4717

Mr. Curry's Indian Restaurant  
7403 Marine Rd  
Edwardsville, IL 62025  
618 692 3892

Mayuri India Restaurant  
12513 Olive Blvd  
Saint Louis MO 63141  
314-576-7272

Mideast Chaat House  
14345 Manchester Road  
Manchester MO 63021  
636-230-7018

Priya Indian Cuisine  
1910 McKelvey Rd.  
Maryland Heights MO 63043  
1-314-542-6148

Raj's Rasoi  
2286 McKelvey Rd.  
Maryland Heights MO 63043  
314-576-6666

Saffron Indian Cuisine  
2137 Barrett Station Road  
St. Louis, MO 63131  
314-965-3822

Sameem Afghan Restaurant  
3191 South Grand  
Saint Louis MO 63118  
314-664-3940

Taj Palace  
92 THF Blvd.  
Chesterfield MO 63005  
636-728-1000

Tandoori King  
1617 Bryan Road  
O' Fallon MO 63368  
636-379-9990

## South Asian Grocery Stores in St. Louis

*Compiled by Kavita Menon*



Akshar Food	12419 St. Charles Rock Road, Bridgeton, Missouri 63044	(314) 291-6666
Ambica Foods	2262 St. Charles Rock Road, Bridgeton, Missouri 63044	(314) 344-1999
Asian Spices	1928 McKelvey Road, Maryland Heights, Missouri 63043	(314) 439-9600
Global Foods Market LLC	421 N Kirkwood Rd, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122	(314) 835-1112
Harsha Indian Groceries	14033 Manchester Road, Ballwin, Missouri 63011	(636) 484-2671



India Bazaar 10755 Page Avenue, (314) 423-5900  
St. Louis,  
Missouri 63132

India Market 1395 Triad Center Drive, (636)-794-6196  
St. Peters,  
Missouri 63376

Jay International 3172 S Grand Blvd, (314) 772-2552  
St. Louis,  
Missouri 63118

Mideast Market 2429 Highway K, (636) 980-1322  
O'Fallon,  
Missouri 63368

Mideast Market 14345 Manchester Road, (636) 230-7018  
Ballwin,  
Missouri 63011

Seema Enterprises 10635 Page Avenue, (314) 423-9990  
St. Louis,  
Missouri 63132

Seema Enterprises 14238 Manchester Road, (636) 391-5914  
Manchester,  
Missouri 63011

Spice Bazaar 3449 Pheasant Mdw. Dr. #106, 636-294-3716  
O'Fallon,  
Missouri 63366

Spices & More 13007 Olive Blvd, (314) 439-5599  
Creve Coeur,  
Missouri 63141

Spices N Grains 2157 Bluestone Dr, (636) 486-4660  
St. Charles,  
Missouri 63303



Dr. A. G. Alias and Dr. Susy Alias  
Subash Alias and Kathy Alias





# 2011 Office Bearers

BOARD of DIRECTORS	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Madhu Madhavan (Chairman)	Rajagopalan Unni (President)
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Savitha Krishnan	Vimal Nair (Secretary)
Beena Neelam	Biju Kurian (Joint Secretary)
Dr. Sudhirdas Prayaga	Vinod Menon (Treasurer)



... is a nonprofit voluntary organization in Greater St. Louis, Missouri, USA.

This organization is created with a vision to encourage active participation in the Kerala culture, foster cooperation and unity among Kerala Hindus throughout St. Louis and adjoining cities. Participation and involvement of our youth will be facilitated, thus enabling them to appreciate our cultural roots. This organization will serve as a platform for the effective networking of Hindus from Kerala or anyone interested in Kerala culture.

Join Ohmkaram and enjoy a fun-filled year of free entry to all regular events ... including Anniversary, Vishu, Onam (with authentic Kerala Sadhya) and Picnic.

Membership has many benefits !  
50% off Malayalam School  
Discounted movie tickets & special events  
Free Gitanjali (souvenir magazine)

**[www.OHMKARAM.org](http://www.OHMKARAM.org)**  
**[info@ohmkaram.org](mailto:info@ohmkaram.org)**



# Thank You



**... to all our sponsors for your support and best wishes**

**A M B I C A  
F O O D S**

Fresh, Prepared and Frozen Foods (page 38)

**Asian Spices**

Fresh 'n Friendly Always (page 22)



Alias Family (page 62)



Don't Take The Law Into Your Own Hands (page 38)



(Nick Huniak, agent)  
Achieve Financial Security, No Matter Where You're Starting From (page 30)

*Des Peres*  
Family Dentistry

Dr. Yamuna Mathew DDS,  
St Louis Magazine "Top Dentist" (page 8)

**E.nopi**  
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An Authentic Indian Cuisine (page 6)



100% Vegetarian (page 12)

**INTERVENTIONAL  
PAIN CARE L.L.C**

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Specializing in historic neighborhoods of St. Louis (page 16)



Come Taste The Difference (page 30)

**MIDEAST  
MARKET**

Largest Indian, Pakistani and Bangladesh store in the Midwest (page 20)

*Natesan Manchira*  
Family

Best Wishes (page 18)



(G.Sniechota, agent)  
The future can be intimidating, you don't have to go it alone (page 26)



Great Food, Exceptional Service (page 24)



Service is our promise. Quality is our guarantee (page 28)



Proud to be part of the community for over 25 years (page 4)



Spice up your kitchen (page 28)



Lowest rates in home equity line of credit (page 14)



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ACTIVITY SHEET FOR OUR SPECIAL OHMKARAM KIDS

Art for a rainy day . . .

What do you do on those days when it's cold and freezing outside and when the kids have watched enough television or played more than enough of the computer games to last a lifetime? The answer is, do a project with them, of course! Here are some ideas for do-it-yourself projects at home with kids.

Glimmer Paints

Add food coloring to a simple mixture of flour, salt, and water, and you get puffy, glossy paints that sparkle with salt crystals when dry.

Total Time Needed : 1 Hour

Materials : ½ cup salt, ½ cup all-purpose flour , ½ cup water, Food coloring(any color of choice)

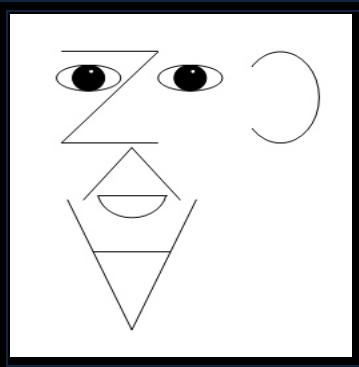
Instructions :

- 1. Mix together the salt, flour, and water; the mixture should be about the consistency of pudding.
- 2. Add food coloring until the desired shade is reached, then use a funnel to transfer the paint to a squeeze bottle. You can also transfer the paints to a ziplock bag, then snip off one tiny corner of the bag for a make-it-yourself applicator.

Tips: Use on finger-paint paper or other heavy paper and allow your paint to dry overnight. Have fun !!!



DaVinci Puzzle : See if you can figure it out . . .



Cleaning the Car ???

Man to his Wife: The car looks dirty. I am going to clean it up a bit.

Wife: But it's raining now.

Man: Don't worry, I'll take an umbrella.



Pazhanchollukkal (Proverbs)

Aana vaya yil ambhazhanga

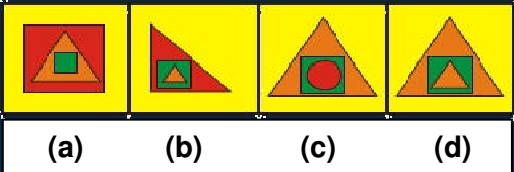
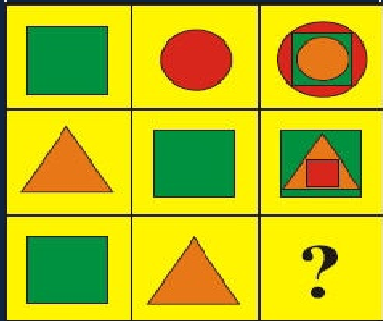
Literal: A small fruit in an elephants' mouth.

Translation: Too small an amount for a very large need.

Rough English equivalent: It's a drop in the ocean.

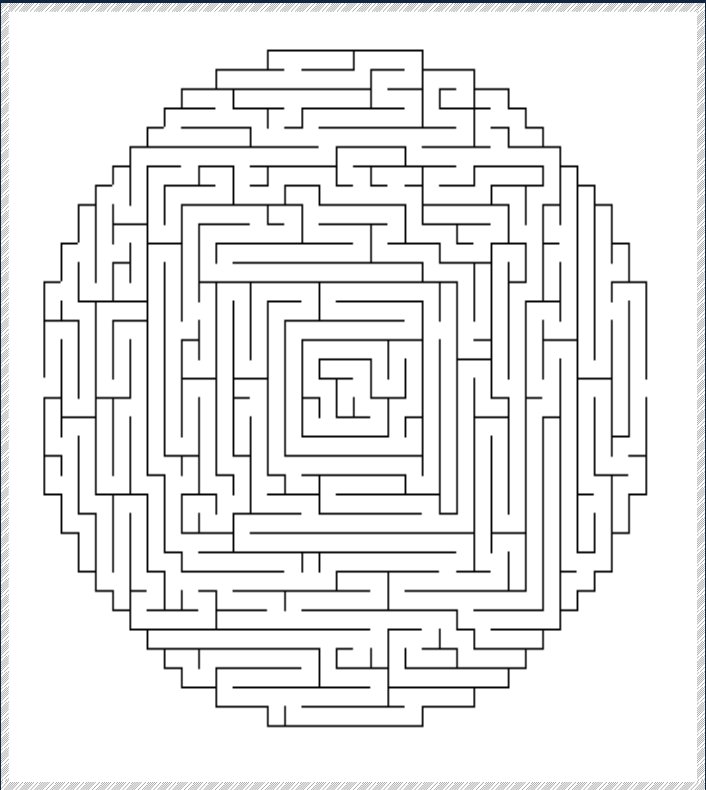


Solve this Puzzle :



(b) : uopni06

Can you figure out this Maze :



Why does the dog watch me eat ?

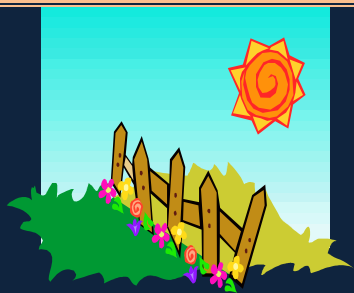


A guest in at a Bread & Breakfast asks his host -

Guest: "Why does your dog sit there and watch me eat?"

Host: "I can't imagine, unless it's because you have the plate he usually eats from."

Some more Pazhanchollukkal (Proverbs)



Ikkare Nikumbol Akkare Pachha

Literal: Standing on this side of the river bank the other side looks greener.

Translation: Whatever someone else has always looks better than what we ourselves have.

Rough English Translation: The grass is greener the other side of the fence.