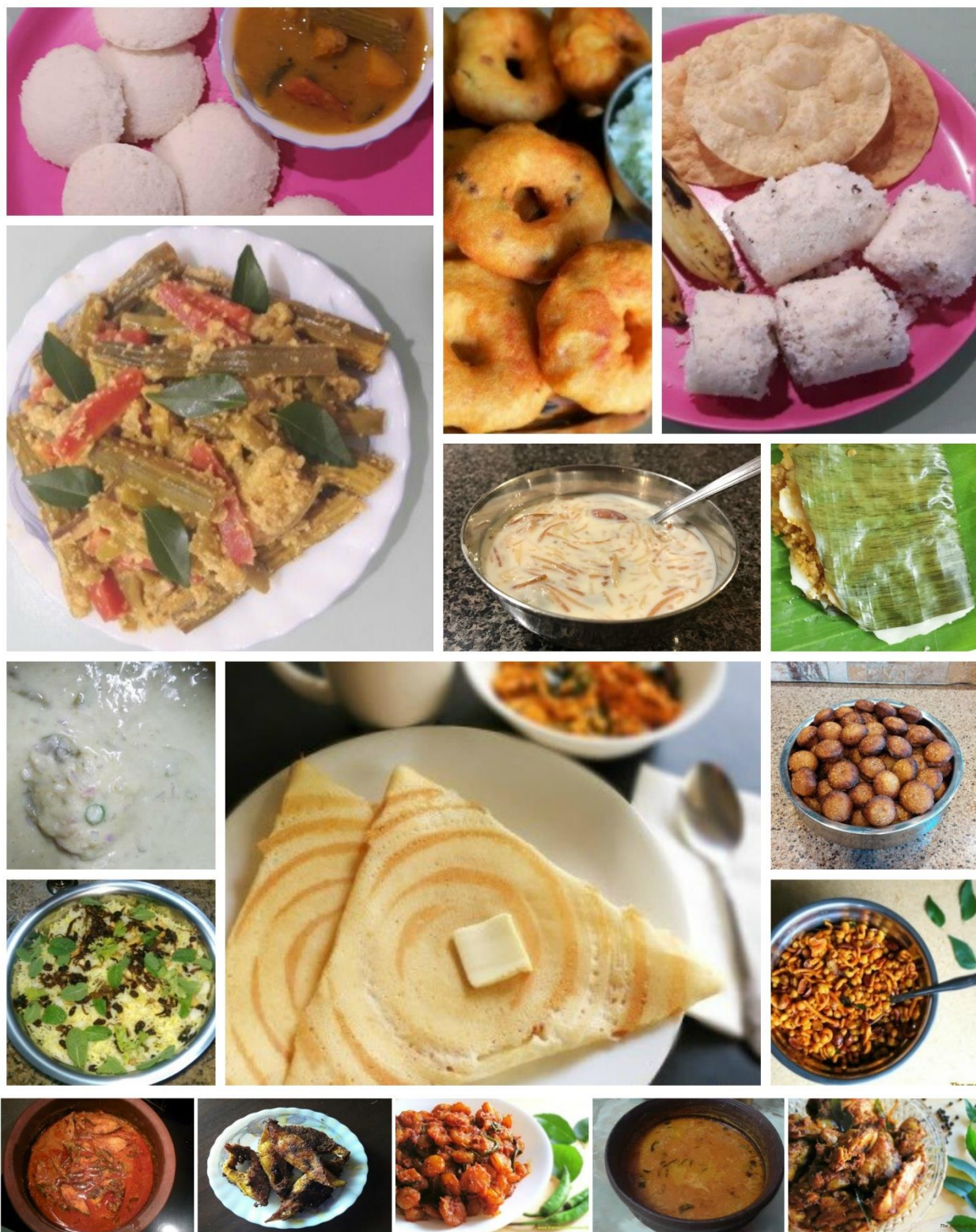




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Best Wishes



Madhavan Natesan Manchira
& Family



From the desk of Gitanjali's editorial team...

Hello Everyone,

Happy New Year! It is with great pleasure that we present to you our 9th edition of **Gitanjali**. Needless to say this edition would not have been possible without the contributions of the members of Ohmkaram including the little ones.

The Cover page of this edition showcases different varieties of tasty food from the great state of Kerala, all cooked at home by our very own Ohmkaram women. Big thanks to them for taking time from their busy schedules to cook, click pictures & write blurbs for the Front Cover feature. Find their thoughts about why they think the food they picked requires a special mention in the magazine.

Flip through the pages and you will notice that the articles, drawings, write-ups and other works depict the intellectual and artistic talents of our patrons. Reviewing the photo /activity pages allows us to reflect on the past while preparing us for the future. Contributions from kids are highly valuable tools that inspire other kids to follow in the same way. Encourage your kids to write / draw. It is highly rewarding to see your work exhibited in printed form.

Look for the story about a banana farm cultivated in Illinios by an enterprising couple. Others include misconceptions about Hinduism, daily prayers that you can recite & teach your kids, taking care of your health & more. Also there's an excerpt in Malayalam from a book written by one of our patron's dad in Kerala.

We appreciate our sponsors, who support us with their contributions year after year without any hesitation. We hope that our members respond to their advertisements for their needs.

Lastly, we would like to extend our thanks to the current President Madhu Madhavan & the Executive Committee for supporting us.

Enjoy the Souvenir!

The Editorial Team



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Dear Ohmkaram family,

I am honored to have served as the president of Ohmkaram for the year 2016. As the first treasurer and tenth president of the organization, it gives me great pleasure to see the organization's consistent growth. This would not have been possible without all of you, and I want to personally thank all the members for their continued participation. We now have an organization that is more visible to the community at large, with consistent representation in the community events.

I want to thank and congratulate the current Souvenir committee and all the past Souvenir committees for their tireless and dedicated work to bring the magazine out every year.

This year, we had a grand Anniversary celebration, during which we released a memento to commemorate the 10th Anniversary. Similarly, Vishu and Onam were both celebrated with a lot of joy and high spirit. The picnic was awesome and saw the biggest turnout yet. I strongly believe it was all possible thanks to the work done by all the previous committees in nurturing the process over a decade. Our program quality has consistently increased and I will take great pride in saying the foundational four events have been well-established. I am confident that future committees will uphold our brand and improve on what we have already accomplished, all while maintaining the foundational elements of these programs. I want to thank every one of you who worked hard for our organization to reach this point.

We are now a registered not-for-profit organization. We have the official support of the Missouri Arts Council and Regional Arts Council, and we are planning to work in this area to increase support from these and other organizations, which we want to cherish and cultivate in the coming years by bringing more cultural programs. By running the Malayalam school, providing scholarships to students in Kerala, supporting spiritual activities, promoting cultural programs and charity activities, Ohmkaram is on the path to grow in the decades to come and to provide a strong platform for our community.

I want to thank all the members who helped to make this year's activities memorable. I want to give special thanks to my executive committee team for providing me unconditional support throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Madhu Madhavan
President, 2016



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Our Cover Feature – Kerala Food:

Aviyal by Mythili Harish (picture Suma Menon)

The very mention of this thick, hearty stew makes my mouth water. To me Aviyal is the perfect representative for Kerala cuisine. Made with earthy, simple vegetables found in the kitchen gardens of traditional Keralite homes, this uncomplicated mélange hides layers and layers of complex flavor.

Some stories attribute the creation of Aviyal to Bhima, the Pandava. While it uses similar vegetables as the Gujarati 'Undhiyu', it is rather different in taste and texture. Even within the various regions and communities of Kerala, the preparation of Aviyal differs.

For me, Aviyal brings back memories of the elaborate Vishu and Onam sadhyas that my mother prepares. Her aromatic Aviyal, not too thick, yet not too runny; a bit sour, a bit sweet and with a hint of chilli is the perfect comfort food. Especially in these cold, winter months in the US, I miss her Aviyal a lot. Unfortunately for me, my husband is not very fond of Aviyal and so I rarely make it at home, but on every trip back home, I make sure I get my bowl of Aviyal.



Thalassery Biryani by Reshma Krishnan

One of India's most loved biryanis, it is both sweet and savory. The main ingredients are soft chicken, mild Malabar spices and a type of rice known as Khaima/Jeerakasala (also known as biriyani rice), lots of sautéed cashew nuts, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, sultana raisins and fennel seeds. The rice is cooked separately from the gravy and mixed only at the time of serving.

The main difference between Thalassery biryani and other biryanis is that it uses only Khaima/Jeerakasala rice—a short-grain. Biryani is an exotic dish of Mughal origin, but this variant is an indigenous recipe of Malabar. It is a symbol of the cultural amalgamation of Mughal and Malabari cuisines.

Neyyappam or Unniyappam by Latha Unni

Appam *thinnal randdindu karyam. Vayarum nirakkam thalayum minukkam.* This is literally true given the fact that this deep fried in ghee, mouthwatering sweet will make your fingers so oily that the easiest way to clean is by wiping your fingers on your hair.

Unniyappam or Neyyappam is a delicacy of Kerala and is often offered to God in various temples and served as prasadam. Offering of Unniyappam to Kottarakkara Shree Maha Ganapathy Temple is legendary. Also, it is believed that Ganesha enjoys watching Unniyappam being made and this too has become a tradition at the temple.

Neyyappam got international fame and made headlines in July... "It's not Neyyappam, Google announces new operating system Android Nougat."



Puttu - A Time - Honoured Dish of Kerala?? by Remya Rajarathnam (picture Saraswati Menon)

I still remember those good old days when I woke up to the smell of steaming Puttu wafting across my home. I breathe deeply, trying to hold it in. The earthiness and simplicity of this dish makes it the perfect comfort food with which to start the day.

If you are a Malayali, whichever part of the world you are in, a mention of the word 'Puttu' is sure to evoke nostalgia. Puttu has traveled to Sri Lanka and other Southeast Asian countries, becoming slightly altered in the process, but its soul is rooted in God's Own Country. However, in the city, the Puttu has come a long way from its original version, which was made using a clay pot and coconut shell in the days of yore. Known as the chiratta puttu, each piece of the dish used to resemble a half-cut coconut and was prepared using raw rice flour and coconut flakes. Times have changed and also cooking habits. The coconut shells have given way to bamboo stems and thus came about the cylindrical shaped puttu. But the accompanying dishes remained more or less the same, and till recently, the preferred

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options have been with brown garbanzo curry or a banana and poppadum on the side. The fiber in the unpolished rice flour, the small amount of fat from the coconut, and the protein from the beans keep hunger at bay. It is a matter-of-fact dish, eaten to nourish rather than please.

A while ago, Puttu began disappearing from breakfast plates from homes in Kerala. Snubbed for its commonness and edged out by its less nutritious cousins, it became a food memory for many. But the last couple of years have been critical in the arena of food as it saw a renaissance of traditional dishes making it to restaurant menus. At the forefront was puttu and many of the forgotten recipes were not only revived but jazzed up by fusing it with the exotic tastes of the Orient and Europe.

An exclusive puttu hotel, puttu food festivals and even puttu as the latest health fad — Kerala's time-honoured dish is making a welcome comeback, albeit in redefined avatars. **Dhe Puttu** - an exclusive puttu restaurant, set up by actor Dileep and television personality Nadirshah, interprets the puttu in curious ways, mixing meat, fruit and even chocolate to the basic mix of ground rice and grated coconut. Served hot in stylish bamboo trays, accompanied by Sulaimani (sweet black coffee) steeped with herbs and spices, the experience is definitely deluxe. Some of the dishes have creative and quirky names, named after the films of the actor. Ezhu Sundara Rathrikal—"those seven beautiful nights"—is a combination of seafood, chicken, meat, vegetables, and fruits layered with rice, wheat, and red rice flour. It is an explosion of many flavors, but they surprisingly work well together.

Puttu scores a brownie point when it comes to health. Since it is steam cooked, it is safe for diabetics as well as those who have hypertension and high cholesterol.

Elai Adai or Ela Ada by Kavita Menon (picture Latha Unni)

This succulent delicious snack(yes, it is a snack!!) from Kerala is known for its delicate steamed rice shell filled with a yumilicious filling made of coconut, jaggery, cardamom, & sometimes jackfruit(when in season). It is steam cooked in a banana leaf which in turn further enhances its flavor. Apart from the taste factor, this dish can be a healthy snack when portion-controlled. The steamed layer of rice flour stuffed with coconut-jaggery mix contributes a healthy combination of fat, starch & iron. If you have not tried it, the next time you visit Kerala or a Malayalee friend, request them to make it for you. See for yourself if it stands up to your taste test!



Fish Curry by Binu Chakkamparambayil (picture Rugmini Arathil)



Fish curry has always been one of my favorite dishes. The aroma is just mouthwatering. The fresh fishes that we get in Kerala combined with the simple spices make an awesome combination for many meals. Most well-known ones are kappa-meen curry, appam-meen curry, puttu-meen curry etc. It can be eaten with anything - rice, chapathi, pathiri, porotta, and even bread or rolls. The delicious taste of meen curry is something which I always miss here. It is incomparable to any dish one can find here. Eating fish regularly also comes with its health benefits due to the omega fatty acids. It is one of the rare foods that tastes great and is also healthy!

Uppamanga Curry by Anju Prayaga

അവധി നാളുകളിൽ ഞാൻ അമ്മമ്മയുടെ അടുത്ത് പോയി നിൽക്കുമ്പോൾ ഉപ്പു മാങ്ങ ഉണ്ടാകുന്നത് നോക്കിയിരിക്കുമായിരുന്നു. വാട്ടിയ മാങ്ങ ഭരണികളിൽ ഉപ്പുവെള്ളത്തിൽ ഇട്ടു വെക്കും. ഒരുപാട് നാൾ ഇത് കേടുകൂടാതെയിരിക്കും. ഞാൻ നാട്ടിൽ പോകുമ്പോഴൊക്കെ എനിക്ക് വേണ്ടി അമ്മ മറക്കാതെ കുറച്ചു ഉപ്പുമാങ്ങ എടുത്തു വെച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടാകും ഉപ്പുമാങ്ങ കറി ഉണ്ടാക്കുവാൻ. ചോറിന്റെ കൂടെ കഴിക്കുവാൻ എനിക്ക് ഏറ്റവും ഇഷ്ടമുള്ള കറി.

അമ്മ ഉണ്ടാക്കിത്തന്ന ഭക്ഷണത്തിന്റെ രുചി അത് ഒന്ന് വേറെ തന്നെയാണ്. നമ്മൾ എത്ര വലുതായാലും നമ്മളുടെ ഓരോ ഇഷ്ടങ്ങളും അച്ഛനമ്മമാരുടെ മനസ്സിൽ എന്നും ഉണ്ടായിരിക്കുമെന്ന് മാത്രമല്ല ഏതു നടത്തി തരുവാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.



Other pics courtesy of: Anju Prayaga, Rugma Sujith, Latha Unni, Suma Menon, Sunita Pillai & Kavita Menon.



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- Gandhiji

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Daily Prayers

By Harish Natarajan

Daily prayers are a part of any child's life born and brought up in an Indian Hindu household. Each prayer is dedicated to a god or goddesses in the Hindu mythology. Any sacred function or pooja in an Indian Hindu household starts with a traditional Ganesh Vandana which is a prayer to Lord Ganesha to remove any obstacles in the activity which you have in your mind (That is why Lord Ganesha is also referred as "Vighneshwara" - a god who has the power to remove "Vighnaas" meaning "obstacles" in Sanskrit). Below are some of them from my memories when I was a kid.

Lord Ganesha

- Gajaananam Bhootha Ganaathi Sevitham,
Kabitha Jambu Palasaara Pakshitham,
Umasutham Shoka Vinaasha Kaaranam,
Namaami Vigneshwara Paadha Pankajam
- Gajaananam Chandrasamaana Varnam,
Swadhantha Paashaankhusa Laddukaani,
Hasthair Dhathaanam Kamalaasanastham,
Vigneshwaram Noumi Sadaaprasannam
- Ganaanaam Twam Ganapathi Gam Havaamahe,
Kavim Kaveenaam Upamasra Vastamam,
Jyeshta Raajam Brahmanaam Brahmanaspatha,
Aanashrunvanna Oothibhi Seedha Saadanam

Lord Vishnu

- Shuklaambara Dharam Vishnum,
Shashi Varnam Chatur Bhujam,
Prasanna Vadanam Dhyayet,
Sarva Vighna Upashaanthaye

Lord Krishna

- Krishnaya Vasudevaya,
Devaki Nandanaayacha,
Nandagopa Kumaaraaya,
Shree Govindaaya Namoh Namah
- Krishna Karodhu Kalyaanam,
Kamsa Kunjara Kesari,
Kaalindhee Lola Kallola,
Kolaahala Kuthoohari

Goddess Saraswathi

- Saraswathi Namasthubhyam,
Varadhe Kaamaroopini,
Vidyaarambham Karishyaami,
Siddhir Bhavathu Me Sadhaa

Lord Rama

- Raamaaya Ramabhadraaya, Ramachandraaya
Vedase, Raghunaathaaya Naathaaya,
Seethaaya Pathaye Namah

For your teacher – Guru Vandana:

In Hindu mythology, your teacher also referred as "Guru" in Sanskrit, is as important as gods because he/she is the provider of education and knowledge to the students.

- Gururbrahmma Gururvishnu,
Gururdevo Maheshwaraha,
Gurusaakshaath Parabrahmma,
Thasmai Shree Gurave Namaha

|| om namah shivaya ||

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Seven Common Misconceptions about Hinduism

By Dr. Sudhirdas Kumar Prayaga

Hinduism is the third-largest religion in the world with just over a billion practitioners currently, accounting for 14 percent of the world population. It is the oldest continuously practiced religion that may have existed for over 10,000 years. While many major cultures and the religions they followed such as Egyptian, Mesopotamian or Chinese, have come and gone during this time, the science and philosophy of Hinduism have survived the test of time and still holds valid during this technological era. Nonetheless, there are numerous misconceptions about Hinduism, which even many Hindus don't recognize. Many of these are myths associated with Hinduism, which are either propagated intentionally to discredit, or due to lack of understanding. Myths are legendary stories, without determinable basis of facts, which explains some practice, rite, ritual or phenomenon. In this article I will try to deconstruct seven major myths of misconceptions surrounding Hinduism, and lay out actual facts.

1. It is Called 'Hinduism'

Hindus called their religion Sanadhana Dharma. The terms "Hindu" and "Hinduism" are more modern than ancient, probably referenced within last few hundred years. None of the ancient Hindu scriptures refers to these terms. These terms probably are coined by Persians or Westerners, when referring to people of India and the faith they follow. This is similar to calling all South Indians as Madrasi(s) by North Indians, to all people living south of the Indus River as Hindus and the religion they follow collectively as Hinduism. Unlike other major religions, Hinduism has no one founder or a leader of the faith, and no specific date of origin. It was evolved over millennia by teachings by many rishis, gurus and scholars. Unlike other major religions, Hinduism was never an organized religion.

2. Hindus are Polytheistic

Polytheism is the belief in many gods, while monotheism is the belief that there is only one God. People in the west generally consider Hindus to be polytheistic since they see various images of God in different temples across India. It is generally said that Hindus have 33 crore gods. They interpret this from their concept of God, who is independent and separate from oneself. In reality, the Hindu concept of God is neither monotheistic nor polytheistic, but an 'Absolute Monism' or 'Advaitam'. According to Hindu philosophy the whole universe is or encompassed by a single supreme spirit or being, the Brahman (സർവ്വം ബ്രഹ്മ). This is a distinct concept than the Abrahamic Religions' Monotheistic God, who is distinct and separate from his creation; a god, who needs to be praised and worshipped (read my previous article about the concept of worship in Hinduism).

Here are two examples of quotes from Hindu texts:

isavasyam idam sarvam yatkinca jagatyam jagat - Isavasya Upanishad 1.1

Isavasya Upanishad says that God is omnipresent and envelops everything that is animate or inanimate in the universe.

Matha paratharam nyanidhu kinchidasthi dhananjaya - Bhagavat Gita 7.7

Bhagavat Gita says that there is nothing else in the universe other than God.

Thus, unlike the God of the western religions, Hindu God is not separate from himself or the universe. There is only one Supreme Being. The subject and object are the same.



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3. Hindus are Idol Worshipers

People, especially in the west, generally believe that Hindus worship idols because they see idols in Hindu temples. In reality, Hindus worship a reminder of God (actually in Hinduism the concept of worship itself is different than from Abrahamic religions). No Hindu will say he or she is worshipping an idol. Hindus consider everything in the universe as an expression of the God, thus may be revered. The rituals in Hinduism, especially with idols, are meant for self-realization. Hindu teachings say that we perceive the universe around us by our five sense organs. Perception of God is beyond these five sense organs and requires practice and knowledge. Hinduism allows the use of any image or idol as a representation of the supreme for the sake of practice to acquire knowledge; once understood by the practitioner it can be discarded. Anything in nature can be used as representation of God, so every Hindu creates a personal God according to his perception. Thus, Hindus are neither worshipping the idol nor doing worship itself in the sense of Abrahamic religion.

4. Bhagawat Gita is the Holy Book of Hindus

Although the Gita teaches many of the major tenets of Hinduism and is a major text on Hinduism, it itself is not the major or original text on Hinduism. It probably is the most well-known book on Hinduism. Sankaracharya espouses three major texts, Brahmasutra, Bhagavat Gita and Upanishads as Prasthanatraya's, or the three major sources on Hindu philosophy. Also, Upanishad is not a single text, but consists of hundreds of books. Hinduism was evolved over many millennia's with teaching and writings by many, and probably many concepts originated even before the written scripts. And thus, unlike other major religions of the world, there are very many religious texts in Hinduism. Vedas are the oldest, of which Rig Veda is the oldest written text in the world.

5. Hindus Follow a Discriminatory Caste System

The present form of caste system in India is rooted in culture rather than in religion. Because majority of people in India are Hindus, it was assigned on Hinduism as a religious practice in India. One can see such discriminatory practices in other world cultures as well, although it is not called as caste system. Probably a major reason for assigning this on Hinduism is the misinterpretation of a statement in Bhagavat Gita.

Chaturvarnyam maya srishtam gunakarma vibhagasaha – Gita 4.13

In Gita, Krishna says that I have created the four caste systems or 'Varnas' based on the type and or quality of work or 'gunakarma'. Gita did not say that it was based on birth or to which caste you are born. Unfortunately, over centuries birth caste based occupational segregation was developed into a rigid social hierarchy in India, probably to be taken advantage of by the upper class.

6. Hindus Worship Cows

This is a major misunderstanding about Hindus outside of India, especially in the western world. This is amplified by the images of free roaming cows in the busy streets of India, many of them often decorated. In reality, Hindus do not worship or pray to cows. It is true, however, that cows hold a special place in the Indian society since the dawn of known history. Cows were domesticated early on for their milk and dung. Thus it is considered a source of wealth. That's why they were honored, and people refrained from killing or eating beef. In olden days, the number of cows one owned was an indicator of his wealth. One can compare this to current status of dogs in western society, where they are often decorated by their owners, who do not kill or eat their dogs, but have special graves made for their beloved dogs when they die. Because of how venerated cows are in Hinduism and Indian society, it appears to outsiders that they are worshiped. But Hindus see it as honoring and respecting the animals instead.

7. Hindus are Vegetarians

About 35 percent of Hindus follow a vegetarian diet, but the majority is not. The Hindu vegetarians account for majority of vegetarians in the world, accounting for about 300 million. Hinduism does not mandate that its followers be vegetarian. None of the classical Hindu texts also mention a requirement for vegetarianism. Ahimsa is a cardinal principle expounded in Hinduism, which in layman terms means non-killing. Hindus believe that all animals are sentient beings, and so they do not eat meat.



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The Pain Pacemaker

Suresh Krishnan, MD

Wondering what is a pacemaker? Wondering what is a pain pacemaker? Most people are unaware what a pacemaker is, until they are in need for one. It is an electronic device that generates impulses to stimulate nerves to specific areas and organs to make the organ function in a better way so that it would improve the functionality of the person for whom it is being used.

For example when the heart beats are abnormal and not responding to medications or other forms of treatment, special wires are placed inside the heart, in the upper chamber (atrium) or the lower chambers (ventricle) and they stimulate the natural pacemaker of the heart and make it function so that the person can stay alive and lead an improved quality of life.

Similarly a pain pacemaker can improve the quality of life for a person who is in severe chronic pain. In technical terms the device is called a dorsal column stimulator. It was invented in the late 1970's to help patients who wanted an improved quality of life. This is based on the same technology as the cardiac pacemaker. This particular device has undergone great changes and improvements since it was first introduced. Nowadays we have stimulators which are safe, near a MRI or other strong magnetic devices which was one of the primary concerns when these devices are implanted in people who someday might need an MRI for diagnostic purposes.

The device works on a principle called the gate theory of pain control. Whenever someone feels pain, it is an unpleasant sensation. So another stimulus is introduced by the device so that the person would feel a pleasant or tolerable sensation and it takes the unpleasantness out of the equation. In simple terms it can be explained as follows. If someone has a mosquito bite and is suffering from a terrible itching sensation at the location of mosquito bite, he or she would automatically scratch the area. The scratching sensation is more pleasant and the person is able to forget the unpleasantness of the itch. The scratching is actually causing more physical damage to the skin and sometimes can cause worsening of the situation.

Pain, when it is chronic, intractable and debilitating, causes a lot of emotional and physical issues such as depression, loss of function, decreased quality of life and so on. Pain medications provide short term relief from the pain. As time passes people get used to these medications and they become less and less effective, leading to escalation of dose of the pain medication as well as taking multiple medications to achieve the same level of pain relief which was achieved before when the medication was initially started. This leads to problems of addiction, dependence and seeking devious ways to relieve the pain such as resorting to illicit street drugs.

So how would someone achieve this feat when it comes to controlling pain without the use of, or reduced doses of pain medication? Here is where the pain pacemaker or the dorsal column stimulator plays a role. The device has two wires or leads, which have electrodes built into them and these leads are connected to a battery. The wires are inserted into the spinal canal and placed on top/back of the spinal cord. The back of the spinal cord has a bundle of nerves called the dorsal column. The dorsal column is responsible for carrying sensations to the brain from other parts of the body. The device as a whole then sends impulses through the wires to the dorsal column of the spinal cord. As mentioned above the pain which is being transmitted to the brain is the unpleasant sensation and this is being replaced by the scratch, which is created by the stimulator. Hence the unpleasant pain sensation is replaced by tolerable or pleasant sensation.



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What does this mean in terms of pain care? People who have the dorsal column stimulator implanted in them permanently will be able to be more alert and oriented and have a better quality of life as well as be more mobile and functional. They will use minimal or no oral pain medications to control the pain. They will have less depression. The side effects of taking oral pain medications such as sleepiness or drowsiness, inability to function, toxic effects of the medication on the liver and other parts of your body, suppression of immunity, etc. can be avoided or will be reversed and make one feel healthier.

Are these techniques and devices without problems? No would be the right answer. These are not for everyone and people do need to go through a specific process to be eligible for the device to be used for them. They do have serious problems associated with their use but the technology has improved so much that these problems are at a minimum nowadays. Used in the appropriate way with proper precautions these methods to control your pain are 99% safe.

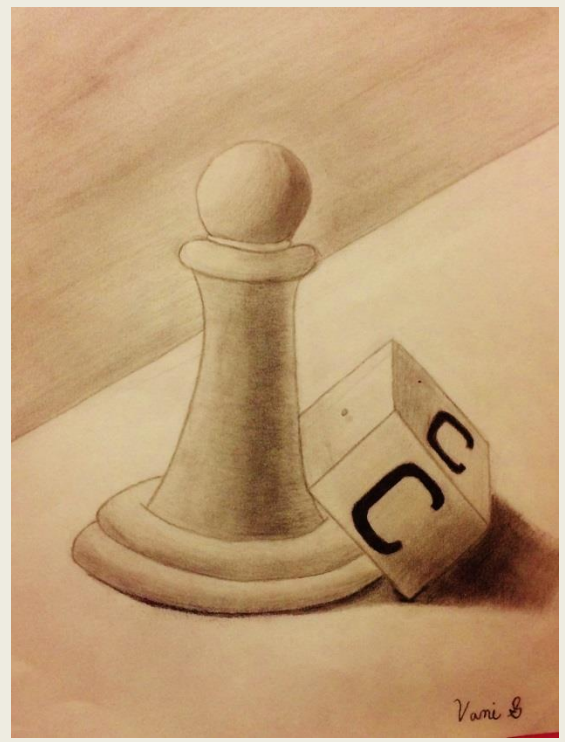
This is not the only way to control pain with minimal or no use of pain medications. There are other devices such as implantable pain medication infusion device which can control pain with micro doses of medication.

Usually, dorsal column stimulators and pain pumps are used as a last resort, after most attempts to control pain have failed.

With such advanced technology being available, we can customize a unique pain management plan that works best for you or your loved ones. For more information on this and other ways to control your pain without medications please contact me at drmk.suresh@gmail.com or visit my website www.info@ipaincare.com



Abstract Art by Vani Ganesh, high school



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Trinity of Carnatic Music

By Rugma Sujith



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The 'Classical Trinity of Carnatic Music' as they were known as, are Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Deekshithar, and Shyama Shastri. They were the three extraordinary composers – musicians in the 18th century who created a new era in the history of Carnatic Music. The quality and grandeur of their compositions remains unparalleled to this day. The main theme of composition for all of them was devotion. They all lived in Thanjavoor which is known as the Carnatic music capital. Muthuswami Deekshithar mainly composed in Sanskrit while the other two composed their songs in Telugu.

Thyagaraja:

Thyagaraja, who was highly influential in the development of Classical music, composed thousands of songs, most of them in praise of Lord Rama. His 'Pancharatna kritis' are known as the five finest gems of Carnatic music. 'Endharo mahanu bhavulu' is one among Pancharatna kritis. These kritis are often sung in programs in his honor.

Muthuswami Deekshithar:

Most of the kritis of Muthuswami Deekshithar captured the essence of the raga used for the composition. His mudra was the term 'Guruguha' which can be found in almost all his songs. He composed songs in all the 72 melakartha ragas and in the 7 basic 'thalaas'. 'Vathapi ganapathim bhajeham' is one of his best known compositions.

Shyama Shastri:

Shyama Shastri followed a style of pure and innocent devotion to goddess Kamakshi. He didn't compose as many kritis at the rate as the others, but his had a vast literary value. His compositions are a blend of supreme bhakthi with adequate manodharma bhavam. His Swarajathis in Bhairavi, Todi and Yadukula kamboji ragas are considered as his greatest work.

Some facts about Carnatic music:

- Carnatic music rests on 2 main elements – raaga, & taala.
- Nowadays this music is presented by musicians in concerts or recordings, either vocally or through instruments.
- It is usually performed by a small ensemble of musicians, consisting of a principal performer (usually a vocalist), a melodic accompaniment (usually a violin), a rhythm accompaniment (usually a mridangam), and a tambura, which acts as a drone throughout the performance.
- D. K. Pattammal, M. L. Vasanthakumari and M. S. Subbulakshmi, were referred to as the female trinity of Carnatic music.
- The 1930s - 1960s, referred to as the modern Golden era of Carnatic music, was a period in which a number of Carnatic vocalists of high calibre, great skill, and musical insight rose to fame.





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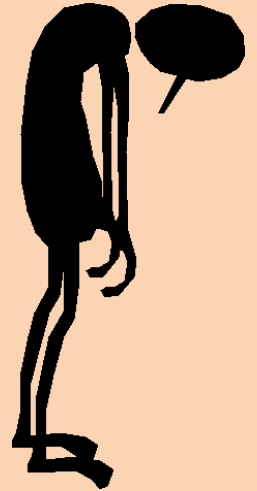
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The Great Depression

By **Ananya Pillai**, high school freshman



The Great Depression began after The Stock Market Crash of 1929. It is the most severe economic decline ever experienced in American history. People were spending much less and so production went down. The value of goods dropped from \$104 billion to \$55 billion over the course of ten years. People started losing their jobs, homes, crops, and much more because of all the debt that built up in the country. Unemployment rates were through the roof due to the decrease in consumer spending so loans were the only solution for people. This led to banks failing because the people, who borrowed money, could not pay it back. President Herbert Hoover tried to create relief for the country through government loans, but at the end of his term the nation's banking system was virtually destroyed. The recovery for the United States first began in the spring of 1933 when the flow of gold into America was at a high rate. The led to an increase in consumer spending so production started to increase to meet the new demand. The GDP stating rising at about 9 percent each year after 1933. Even though the country began to pick up the pieces, it was still a very long road before the United States would reach the point it had been at before the stock market crash.

Damaging Effects of the Great Depression:

The Great Depression was certainly not the best time for farmers. This time period of tremendous struggle and dejection brought many hardships for the American farmers. The agricultural depression was a major factor in the Great Depression. The period of drought and dust storms that ravaged a swath of land stretching over 50 million acres from western Kansas to eastern Nevada lives in the American memory as the *Dust Bowl*. Throughout the 1930's, the *Dust Bowl* affected millions of acres of land, which caused thousands of farmers to lose their property and give up their home and move to urban areas, seeking work. This increased the issue of unemployment and created more social pressure in numerous U.S. urban areas. In major urban communities, numerous unemployed held up bread lines that extended for miles, and the destitute lived in small homes called Hoovervilles. In certain cases, people could keep their homes but they would need to accomplish more with less. To get away from the drudgery of the Depression, numerous people swung to modest and simple types of diversion, for example, going to the movies or listening to the radio. Musical comedies and theatrical presentations gave a way for individuals to quickly overlook their inconveniences. Numerous scholars and specialists, rather than looking to get away from the Depression, tended to it specifically through their inventive work. The noticeable writing of this period, for example, Dorothea Lange's narrative photography and John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath," were frequently immediate in their social feedback and concentrated on subjects like hopelessness and poverty. In conclusion, the Great Depression affected everybody who survived it. It was a transformative time in U.S. history, as the liveness and good faith of the 1920s blurred into a period of instability and dread for what was to come. Numerous Americans were left with no confidence or sense of pride as they attempted to survive.

The Economy and the Stock Market Crash of 1929

The Stock Market crash signaled the beginning of the Great Depression. The stock market crash reduced American aggregate demand substantially. The American economy entered a normal recession amid the mid-year of 1929, as consumer spending dropped and unsold merchandise started to heap up, slowing down production. In the meantime, stock costs kept on rising, and by the fall of that year had achieved levels that couldn't be legitimized by foreseen future income. On October 24, 1929, the stock market bubble at long last burst, as investors started dumping offers all at once. A record 12.9 million shares were exchanged that day, known as "*Black Thursday*". After five days, on "*Black Tuesday*" approximately 16 million shares were

Continued on page 30...

ANNIVERSARY

The collage features a variety of scenes from the event:

- Top Left:** A group of children and adults gathered around a table with a cake that reads "OHM KARAM 10th Anniversary".
- Top Center:** A decorative table setup featuring a Ganesha idol, bananas, and colorful flower arrangements.
- Top Right:** A man in a blue jacket presenting a certificate to a woman in a green sari.
- Middle Left:** A man in a grey suit presenting a certificate to a woman in a pink and gold sari.
- Middle Center:** A large group photo of the organizing committee and guests standing on a checkered floor.
- Middle Right:** A man in a red kurta speaking into a microphone.
- Bottom Left:** A woman in a black top singing into a microphone.
- Bottom Center:** A group of women in colorful saris performing a dance on a patterned rug.
- Bottom Right:** A large group photo of all the attendees, including men, women, and children, posing for a formal group picture.



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The Great Depression (...contd from page 25)

exchanged. A large number of shares wound up useless, and those speculators who had purchased stocks "on edge" were wiped out totally. As consumer spending vanished in the wake of the stock market crash, the downturn in spending drove processing plants and different organizations to back off production and development and start firing their workers. For the individuals who were fortunate enough to stay employed, wages fell and purchasing power diminished. A social worker who was a child at the time remembers how the crash came to his family: "I knew the depression had really hit when the electric lights went out. My parents could no longer pay the \$1 electric bill. The kerosene lamps went up in the home. And in the business." The psychological results of the Great Crash of 1929 were very critical. Individuals became scared of spending. The vast majority did not possess stocks; however the impacts of the crash were not constrained to stockholders. Across the nation, factories shut and banks failed. Men and ladies lost their occupations or saw their salaries slashed. Before long, homelessness and yearning stalked the land.

Finally in the spring of 1933, the U.S. recovery from the depression began. But by then the Great Depression had reached its nadir. Around 13 to 15 million Americans were unemployed and nearly half of the country's banks had failed. Though the relief and reform measures put into place by President Franklin D. Roosevelt helped lessen the worst effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s, the economy did not fully turn around until after 1939, when because of World War II the American industry went into high gear.

നാട്ടുവെളിച്ചം

കല്ലഴി ശിവദാസൻ

നാട്ടുവെളിച്ചം ഒരു തറവാടിന്റെ, പരമ്പരയുടെ, മനുഷ്യകുലത്തിന്റെയാകെ കഥാചരിതമാണ്. ലാഘവമുള്ള നിളയുടെ കരയിൽ പ്രൗഢഗംഭീരമായ ഒരു തറവാടിന്റെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ നാട്ടുവെളിച്ചത്തിന്റെ കഥാവെണ്മ പരക്കുന്നു. ഇതിലെ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങൾക്കെല്ലാം ചരിത്രമുണ്ട്. അഥവാ ജീവനുള്ള രക്തമജ്ജയുള്ള പാത്രസൃഷ്ടി ഈ നോവലിനെ വേറിട്ടുനിർത്തുന്നു. കേരളത്തിന്റെ പോയകാലത്തെ മണവും മമതയും ബന്ധങ്ങളുടെ തീവ്രതയും നാട്ടുവാമൊഴി വഴക്കങ്ങളും ഇതിലുണ്ട്. കഥയുടെ തെളിഞ്ഞ നിലാവ് ഈ നോവലിനെ ഭാസുരമാക്കുന്നു. വായനയെ വർണാഭമാക്കുന്ന നോവൽ.

ഈ നോവലിലെ ഒരുദ്ധ്യായത്തിലെ ചില വരികൾ താഴെചേർക്കുന്നു:

“അച്ഛൻ നാട്ടിലുള്ള ദിവസങ്ങൾ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് വളരെ രസപ്രദമായിരുന്നു. പുതിയ പുതിയ ഉടുപ്പുകൾ വാങ്ങി സന്തോഷിപ്പിച്ച് ശീലിച്ച മക്കളുടെ സംതൃപ്തിയായിരുന്നില്ല ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് അച്ഛൻ തന്നെ. സ്നേഹം തരുന്ന സുരക്ഷിതത്വം. മക്കളെ സ്വന്തം ആത്മാവിനെക്കാൾ കൂടുതൽ സ്നേഹിച്ചിരുന്നു. സ്നേഹിതന്മാരെ പോലെ ഒപ്പം ഇരുന്നുള്ള വർത്തമാനം. തന്റെ ചുമതലകൾ ഏറ്റെടുക്കേണ്ട മക്കൾ പ്രാണനല്ലെങ്കിൽ പിന്നെ ആരാണ്. ഇരട്ടകളെപ്പോലെ എന്നും പുളച്ചും കളിച്ചും കഴിഞ്ഞിരുന്ന എന്നെയും ചെറിയേട്ടനെയും നല്ല വാത്സല്യത്തോടെ താലോലിച്ചിരുന്നു. ഞങ്ങൾ നല്ല മാർക്ക് വാങ്ങുന്നുണ്ടെന്നറിഞ്ഞപ്പോൾ ഒരിക്കൽ പറഞ്ഞിരുന്നു.

‘അച്ഛൻ കഴിയാത്തത് നിങ്ങൾ രണ്ടു പേരും ചെയ്ത് അച്ഛന്റെ മാനം വീണ്ടെടുക്കുക’ ഉടനെ കെട്ടിപ്പിടിച്ച് കവിളിൽ അമർത്തി കടിക്കും. ചുരുട്ട് വലിച്ചിരുന്നതുകൊണ്ട് അപ്പോൾ ചുരുട്ടിന്റെ മണം ചുറ്റുപാടും പരക്കും.

‘അയ്യോ, എന്തിനാണീ കുട്ടേട്ടന്റെ കവിളിൽ കടിക്കുണ്ട്. ഊന്തക്കവിളന്മാരാകും.’

അമ്മയുടെ വിലക്ക് കാര്യമല്ല.

അച്ഛന്റെ വീട്ടിലേക്ക് ഇടയ്ക്കിടയ്ക്ക് സവാരിയുണ്ട്. മിക്കവാറും ഞാനും ചെറിയേട്ടനുമാണ് കൂടെ. രണ്ടു പേരും പാടത്ത് കൂടെ കളിച്ച് തിമിർത്ത് എത്രയോ ദൂരം എത്തിയിരിക്കും. അച്ഛൻ ചിന്തയിലാണ് സ്ഥലകാലബോധമില്ലാതെ നടന്നിരുന്നത്.

‘രാവും പകലും ഈ മക്കളെപ്പറ്റിയും അവരുടെ ഭാവിയെപ്പറ്റിയും ചിന്തിച്ചിട്ട് കാര്യംണ്ടോ. ഒക്കെ ആ ദേവിക്ക് വിട്ട് കൊടുക്കുക’

അച്ഛനെ ഈ ദൂരയാത്രകളിൽ നിന്ന് തിരികെ കൊണ്ടുവരാൻ അമ്മ ഇടയ്ക്കിടയ്ക്ക് പറയുന്നതാണ്. അത് അച്ഛൻ ചിന്താമഗ്നനായി കാണുമ്പോഴെല്ലാം ഓർമ്മവരും. ദേവിക്ക് വിട്ടുകൊടുക്കുക. അത് സാധ്യമാണോ. ആവോ. അമ്മയ്ക്കു തന്നെ അതിന് കഴിയുന്നുണ്ടോ.

ഞങ്ങൾ അച്ഛന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ എത്തി ഒരു മണിക്കൂറോളം കഴിഞ്ഞെ അച്ഛൻ അവിടെ എത്താറുള്ളൂ. എത്തിയതും ചോദിക്കും.

‘പിള്ളരെത്തിയോ’

‘എത്തലും ഇവിടത്തെ കാർക്കോടകന്മാരുടെ കൂടെ കുത്തുപറമ്പിൽ കളിക്കാൻ പോയതും അറിഞ്ഞില്ല. വല്ലവര്യം കിട്ടാൻ കാത്തിരിക്കൂല്ലേ കുത്തുമറിയാൻ’

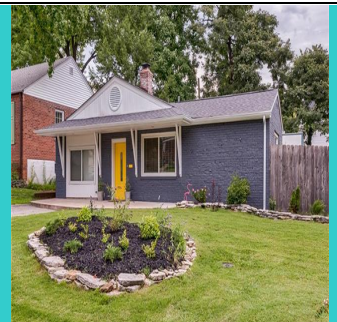
അച്ഛമ്മമാരിലൊരാൾ പറഞ്ഞു കാണണം.

അന്നു രാത്രി അച്ഛമ്മമാരുടെ വിരുന്നു കഴിഞ്ഞ് പിറ്റേന്ന് രാവിലെ തന്നെ തിരിച്ച് വരും. കുത്തു കാലത്ത് ഒരു ദിവസം കൂടി നിന്നാലായി. വേനലവധി കാലങ്ങളിൽ നാലഞ്ചു ദിവസം ഒരുസ്വപ്നം പോലെ.

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വീട്ടിലെ അന്തരീക്ഷത്തിൽ നിന്ന് എത്ര വ്യത്യസ്തം. കുട്ടികളെല്ലാവരും എത്ര ധൈര്യമായും ആത്മാഭിമാനത്തോടെയും ഇഷ്ടമുള്ളതെല്ലാവരോടും പറയുന്നു. ഇടപഴകുന്നു. മേലഴിയിൽ, പ്രത്യേകിച്ച് ചെറിയ അടുക്കളയിൽ അങ്ങനെയല്ലല്ലോ. മുത്തച്ഛൻ പുറത്തു പോകുന്നതു വരെ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് മൗനവ്രതമാണ്. അച്ഛൻ ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അച്ഛനെ ചുറ്റിപ്പറ്റി ഞങ്ങൾ സന്തോഷത്തോടെ ഇരുന്നിരുന്നു എങ്കിലും മനസ്സിന്റെ ഉള്ളിൽ മുത്തച്ഛൻ ഒരു പേടിസ്വപ്നംപോലെ പാർക്കുകയാണ്.

എന്തിനാണീ അച്ഛൻ ഈ വിധത്തിലുള്ള ഒരു ജീവിതത്തിന് മാറ്റം വരുത്താതെ വന്നപോലെ തിരിച്ചുപോകുന്നത്. വീട്ടിലേക്ക് തിരിച്ചുപോകുമ്പോൾ മുത്തച്ഛന്റെ മുഖം മനസ്സിൽ തെളിഞ്ഞു വന്നാൽ ആകപ്പാടെ ഒരു വിറയൽപോലെയായിരുന്നു. ഞരമ്പുകളിൽ ആരോ പിടിച്ചുമുറക്കുന്നതും പിന്നെ തളരുന്നതും പോലെ. ഇത്രയധികം ഭയം ഉണ്ടാക്കാൻ ഒരു വ്യക്തിക്ക് കഴിയുക. എന്തിനിങ്ങനെ കഴിയണം. അച്ഛൻ കൂടെയുള്ളപ്പോൾ എന്തിന് വേറൊരാളെ പേടിക്കണം. ക്ഷോഭം ചിലപ്പോൾ കണ്ണുനീരായി മാറി. എന്തിന് ക്ഷമിക്കണം. ആരാണ് കുറ്റവാളികൾ. മുടികെട്ടലിൽനിന്നും ഒഴിഞ്ഞു മാറാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു എപ്പോഴും. ആകെ അതിന് സഹായമായത് ഒരിക്കലും മറക്കാൻ പറ്റാത്ത അച്ഛന്റെ കൂടെയുള്ള കുറേ ദിവസങ്ങൾ നീണ്ടുനിന്ന ജീവിതമായിരുന്നു. അവധി ദിവസങ്ങളിൽ വെയിൽ മൂക്കുന്നതിന് മുമ്പ് എണ്ണതേച്ച് പുഴയിലേക്ക് അച്ഛന്റെ കൂടെ കുളിക്കാൻ ചെല്ലുക. ഒഴുക്കിൽ നീന്തി മറിയുക. ഓരോ ദിവസം നമ്മളുടേതാക്കി മാറ്റുക. അച്ഛനെ കാണുമ്പോൾ തന്നെ എന്തൊരാശ്വാസം. മച്ചിലെ ദേവി തരുന്ന ആത്മധൈര്യം. അച്ഛനെ തൊടുക. അച്ഛൻ തോളിൽ കൈ വയ്ക്കുക.

അച്ഛൻ കുറച്ചു ദിവസങ്ങൾ കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ തിരിച്ച് ജോലിക്ക് പോകുമെന്ന് തീർച്ചയുള്ളതുകൊണ്ട് അച്ഛന്റെ കൂടെ ജീവിച്ച് മതിയായില്ലെന്നുള്ള വിഷമം. അച്ഛൻ ലീവിലുള്ളപ്പോൾ മുത്തച്ഛന്റെ കയ്യേറ്റം ഉണ്ടാവില്ലെന്നുറപ്പ്. ആ രക്ഷ ഇനി കുറച്ച് ദിവസങ്ങളേ ഉള്ളൂ. അതോർക്കുമ്പോൾ ധൈര്യം സംഭരിച്ച് വെട്ടി തുറന്ന് പൊട്ടിക്കരയണമെന്ന് തോന്നി. അരുത്. ആൺകുട്ടികൾ കരയരുത്. എന്തെല്ലാം വിലക്കുകളാണ്. വലിയേട്ടനാണ് പറഞ്ഞത്.

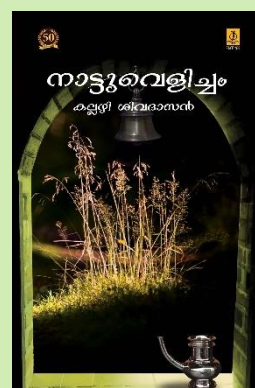
‘വേണ്ടടാ. കരയണ്ടടാ. അച്ഛനോടൊന്നിച്ച് പഠത്തിപ്പോൾ അച്ഛൻ വിഷമിക്കണ്ട. നമ്മൾ ആൺകുട്ടികൾ ധൈര്യത്തോടെ ഇരിക്കണം. കരഞ്ഞു ശീലിക്കരുത്. അതെ. ധൈര്യം വേണം.’

‘വേണ്ടടാ. കരയണ്ടടാ. അച്ഛനോടൊന്നിച്ച് പഠത്തിപ്പോൾ അച്ഛൻ വിഷമിക്കണ്ട. നമ്മൾ ആൺകുട്ടികൾ ധൈര്യത്തോടെ ഇരിക്കണം. കരഞ്ഞു ശീലിക്കരുത്. അതെ. ധൈര്യം വേണം.’

അതെ. ധൈര്യം വേണം. ക്ഷമിച്ച് ക്ഷമിച്ച് ഒന്നിനും കൊള്ളാത്തവരാകുക. അച്ഛനും ക്രമേണ അങ്ങനെയായി വരികയല്ലെ. മുത്തച്ഛനുമായി ഒരു സംഘട്ടനം ഒഴിവാക്കാൻ വേണ്ടി ഒഴിഞ്ഞ് ഒഴിഞ്ഞ് നടക്കുക. കുട്ടികളുടെ എല്ലാ സുഖത്തിനും അമ്മ പരിശ്രമിക്കുമെന്നും എല്ലാ ദുഃഖത്തിനും അച്ഛൻ നിവൃത്തി കാണുമെന്നുമല്ലേ കേട്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്. എന്നിട്ട് അച്ഛൻ എന്തിനിങ്ങനെ ഒതുങ്ങി ഒതുങ്ങി നടക്കുന്നു.

ഞങ്ങളുടെ കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ ഓരോ ദിവസം കഴിയും തോറും മുത്തച്ഛന്റെ പിടിമുറുകി വരികയാണ്.”

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Roe and Rover (Owner and dog)

By Lakshita Senthil, fifth grade



Hi, I am Rover, Roe's dog. I have been waiting for over an hour for my food. Right now I am thinking of seeing what is up with him. After climbing up the stairs, I see him sitting on the floor pouring my food in the wrong place. Not in a dish, not in a plate, but on the brown, wooden floor. His eyes were moving all over the place. I couldn't see what in the world was going on. I barked at him again and again and again. I was starting to get extremely worried. I ran down to the floor and barked at his grandma and grandpa to come with me. They followed me to where he was. They were just as worried as I was.

After giving me food, they called the doctor and asked what was going on inside his body. From watching many days and explaining everything, the doctor came to a very reasonable, but devastating thought. He said that Roe had a problem with his corpus callosum (a part inside the brain) and suggested to come and take some x- rays. So after getting ready and helping Roe dress up, we headed to the hospital. There we went to the x-ray room and checked on his brain. The doctor was correct. His theory turned out to be right. He gave Roe a medicine to take for a few months called anti-seizure medications. After a few weeks, we kept watch to see if anything would happen, but it didn't. The medicines helped Roe very little.

When we updated the doctor, there was complete silence for a second. But then he said to do a procedure called *corpus callosotomy*. It is a surgical procedure for the treatment of seizures. The doctor said in a very pleasant tone, "Don't worry about money or anything. We will take care of all of that." So the very next day, we all were sitting outside of the surgical room waiting anxiously for the results. In my heart I thought of all the exciting and happy moments I had with Roe. He was the best owner a dog could ever have, so I was hoping for a healthy good Roe to come back to me.



After a few depressing hours of complete sadness, the doctor came out of the room and said that the surgery was a success! We all burst into joyful tears while our hearts became happy and normal again.

* * *

It has been a few months since the surgery now. They kept Roe in the hospital for two - four days after the surgery, but it wasn't too long after that we got back to our good memories. Roe still needs a little help from us. He still gets headaches, has to take anti-seizure medications, doesn't remember as well as before, and has trouble with speech, but he is "pretty fine".

The Great Exploration

By **Arshya Pillai**, fourth grade

There once was an alien who was a star. She lived on the planet Zora. She had moon hands, oval eyes, bunny ears, and a green body. Her name was Cola. She wanted to see the ancient ruins of Coliasa.



She first told all her friends and family. Then she packed food and supplies in her pack. After that she went to find it. When she found it, she saw it had many lionas guarding the ancient ruins. Lionas are lion robots that can be controlled by aliens. She had a liona petting glove in her pack! Once she finished petting all of them, they let her go through. Then she had to face Sicrus, a poisonous plant. She put sicrus lotion all over her so she couldn't get poisoned. Next, she noticed something, and she noticed they could move! Once she finished going through them, she went to the next challenge.

Cola then climbed dozens of cuala webs. They were spiders with fox ears. After that she found the lost treasure of Galas. It was an emerald earring that had magical powers. Then she had to pick a path. She choose the right path and the path had laser beams. She crossed them and went back home.

Then she went to the museum to give them the treasure. When she came to her family's hours, on the TV the alien news was on. They were talking about her exploration! Her family greeted her and said great job to her. Cola lived happily with her family after that.



The Joke

By **Hrithika Malugu**, third grade

Chapter 1:

In a village in India there was a girl named Harshitha. One day Harshitha woke up to the sound of a humming bird. But Harshitha was NOT fond of humming birds. She ran downstairs to the kitchen so fast she forgot to brush her teeth! The creaky stairs which she walked on meant that her house was OLD! She sat down sadly.

Chapter 2:

She could not find her sweet mom, so she yelled "MOMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM". Her mom ran emotionless upstairs to where Harshitha was! "What is wrong Harshi? Here is your To-Do list".

"To-Do- List? What To-Do List?!"

"Today is going to be a busy day. REMEMBER!!!!!"

"Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" She looked at the wrinkly paper.



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- It said:
1. Pack Bags
 2. Take Bath
 3. Put NEW clothes on
 4. Get in the Car P.S. FAST

"Time to pack bags," she thought. First went in shoes, shirts, pants, markers, and paper. Then, she took a bath peacefully with cooling water.

Then, she got her new clothes out of her closet- a shirt that said FAMOUS GIRL COMING. MOVE OUT THE WAY! Pants that were glittery pink and finally cute, pink boots.

Chapter 3:

Next, she got into her BIG maroon van which was VERY clean!!! Put her bags into the trunk of the van. Finally her mom came out of her house and into the van! Suddenly her mom said, "HAPPY APRIL FOOL'S DAY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"



Crows in a Kingdom

By **Meenakshi Kossery**, third grade

There lived a King named Krishnadeva Raya who ruled the kingdom of Vijayanagar. He had a personal advisor named Thenali Raman who was also a comedian and known for his wisdom.

One day, Raman was walking with the King in the garden. The King thought he might ask Raman a tough question. He asked, "Raman, I want to ask you a question. I want to know how many crows are there in the kingdom".

Raman quickly gave his answer, "The number of crows in the kingdom is the same as the number of hair on your beard".

The King was not satisfied with this answer. He said, "I want the exact number of crows in the kingdom". Raman thought for a moment and said, "There are 54,000 crows in the kingdom". To this, the King said, "If you don't get the answer correct, you are going to Jail".

Raman was brave, so he said, "If there is more than this number, the crows in other kingdom must have come over to visit crows in this kingdom. If there is less, crows in this kingdom must have gone to other kingdoms to meet their family".

The King was impressed with Raman's wisdom and gave him lot of gifts.

Note: *Thenali Raman* or *Tenali Rama* was a great personality in the court of the Indian King Krishnadeva Raya. He impressed the King with his humor and smart thinking. There is a story on how Tenali who was a less than average boy, turned into a renowned scholar after being blessed by Goddess Kali. You can read on more interesting tales of Tenali, which are popular even today.



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Daisy Gets Lost

By Dhruv Menon, fourth Grade



It was Sunday. Joe's mom said to him "Why don't you take Daisy out for a stroll? She is looking a little sluggish today". The next thing Joe knew, he and his dog, Daisy were walking in the park. Joe saw a hotdog vender and felt hungry. So he went to get a hot dog. But before he went, he tied Daisy's leash to a bench. When he came back Daisy was gone. Her leash was still tied to the bench but it had bite marks on it. Joe looked around for Daisy but couldn't find her. He was sad. He went home crying. When he reached home his mom asked "What happened honey?" Joe told his mom what had happened in between tears. His mom said "Don't worry Joe, nothing is going to happen to Daisy. Let's tell Dad".

When Joe's dad came home that day, Joe told him what had happened. His dad said "Let's tell the police". They called the police. When the policeman came they asked Joe "Are you sure you did not see the person who stole Daisy?" Joe replied "He was positive that he didn't see anyone near where Daisy was tied to the tree". The policemen said "Thank you for telling me this important information; if you remember anything else please call me".

After the police left, Joe's mom said "You better go to bed because tomorrow is school". So Joe went to sleep. It was Monday, a school day and Joe did not want to go to school. So he acted sick. He said "Mom, I'm not feeling good. I don't think I should go to school today". He knew his mom was going to get the thermometer! When she did, he cleverly dipped it in hot water so that, when she put the thermometer on his tongue it showed that Joe's temperature was above hundred. It was a hundred and five degrees! Mom said "Joe, did you do something to it? Joe told his mom "I don't want to go to school. I want to stay home and look for Daisy." His mom said "Fine, but only today." Joe kept thinking who could have taken Daisy. He decided to go to the park and search for clues. When he reached there he found footprints exactly like Daisy's. He followed them, and it led to the dump and back to his house. He thought what could happened to Daisy. Joe had a tree house in the backyard. He went up the tree house and looked but he could not find her in there. So he just gave up, and decided to go inside his house. He knew that Daisy knew the way home.

Joe thought he should make some posters and went into the den. Joe's little brother, Billy who was also in the den, started to cry "WWWWWAAAAAAAHHHHHHH". Hearing the cry Joe's mom came rushing in and asked "You okay, Billy?" But Billy kept crying. So Joe went to his room, started the computer to make the poster. It read 'Missing dog' on the top of the sheet and had a picture of Daisy in the middle. Finally he printed it out. He took some tape from his house



and put the posters up on the intersections. Joe was getting miserable without Daisy and it was the evening. Time had passed quickly and soon it was dinner. The next morning Joe's mom asked him "Do you want to go to school today?" He said "yes". So he dressed up, ate his breakfast, and waited at the bus stop for the bus. When he reached school he went to his home room teacher whose name was Mrs. Gills. She said class... Joe didn't hear the rest of her words as he fainted.

He could hear someone calling his name "Joe, Joe, can you hear me? Space to Joe". His eyes opened. He was in the nurse's office with his mom and his dad, and his baby brother who was screaming (which was not helping). He asked "What happened?" The Nurse explained that he had fainted. Then she asked "Are you feeling better now? If you aren't feeling woozy anymore, you can go home with your parents". When he went home he thought "Did I just faint?" He thought to himself "I'll never find Daisy" and went to take a nap.

Dad was waking Joe up. He was saying "Get up Joe, we found her! She was in the tree house, and look what she has with her?" They went up to the tree house and Daisy had 2 baby dogs with her. Joe said "No wonder she was looking sluggish. She was in the pain of birth and wanted to be without anybody else when she was giving birth to her babies. No wonder I couldn't find Daisy!!" Joe asked "So, where did you find her?" His parents

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answered "Under that bed that is in the treehouse when you want to sleep in there." Joe said "I looked there but she was not there". Mom said "You probably did not look that well". Joe said "I will have more than one Daisy now", and he could tell Daisy was as excited as him! Then there was silence. And Billy started to cry "WWWWWWWW AAAAAHHHHHHH!!!"

That certainly broke the silence. Joe's mom said "what do we do with the puppies? We could sell them". "No, let's keep them" said Joe. They did keep Daisy and her little pups.

The Mughal Empire

By **Omkaar Alakkassery**, fifth grade

The Mughal Empire was one of the greatest empires of all time in India. Its vast kingdom controlled almost all of India. It started with Babur in 1526 and ended with Aurangzeb in 1707. Babur started the huge empire by taking Ibrahim Lodi the last of the Afghan Lodi Sultans at the First Battle of Panipat, it was a fierce battle and Babur won. Babur also took over lots of other kingdoms. He started the mighty Mughal Empire. After Babur died in 1530 Humayun became king or emperor of the Mughal Empire Humayun was a pretty good but didn't have many big battles in his rule over the Mughal Empire. After Humayun died in 1556 Akbar became king of the empire he was one the greatest rulers of all time and took out many enemies thus took many kingdoms expanding the Mughal Empire. He was the ruler that made the big difference and made the Mughal Empire what it was at its end (yes it does fall). After he died Jahangir became ruler of the empire Jahangir was a pretty good but didn't have many big battles in his rule over the Mughal Empire. After Jahangir died Shah Jahan became the ruler he was easygoing but fought well and also made one of the 7 wonders of the world the Taj Mahal which was [and is] a tomb for his wife. He died and Aurangzeb became the ruler he was fierce and broke the code of the Mughal Empire so he brought along the fall of the Mughal Empire!



Indian Wedding

By **Shalika Menon**

Shalika is a student of grade eight. She loves to draw & paint as a hobby. Shalika's art teacher entered her for the Kshitj Kalashri Art contest where she earned a gold medal and two certificates of merit for her talent. This is one of her paintings that was entered in the contest.



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Baked Zucchini - 20 mins on 375°

By Master Akash Pillai, third grade

Akash likes to cook and he is his mom's helper in the kitchen.

Important: Get help from mom or dad to chop the ingredients and to operate the oven.

Ingredients:

1. 2 small zucchinis, each cut in to 4 vertical slices
2. Chopped onion
3. Chopped tomatoes
4. Chopped coriander leaves
5. Onion powder(optional)
6. Melted garlic butter
7. Chopped garlic
8. Sliced Cheese
9. Salt & Pepper

Cooking Instructions:

1. Arrange zucchini in a baking pan.
2. Spread melted butter on zucchini slices, and add chopped onion, chopped tomatoes, chopped garlic and chopped coriander.
3. Add sliced Cheese on top. You can use your favorite cheese. I found Swiss Cheese in the refrigerator!
4. Sprinkle salt and black pepper on top.
5. Bake the zucchini in the preheated oven on 375° for 20 mins.



Enjoy your **Baked Zucchini.**
Yummy!!!....



Pumpkin Art

By Devang Krishnan, third grade

This is character **Po** from movie **KungFu Panda**.

Devang named it as '**Pumpkin Po**'

Here's **Pumpkin Po** with a message from **Master Oogway** -

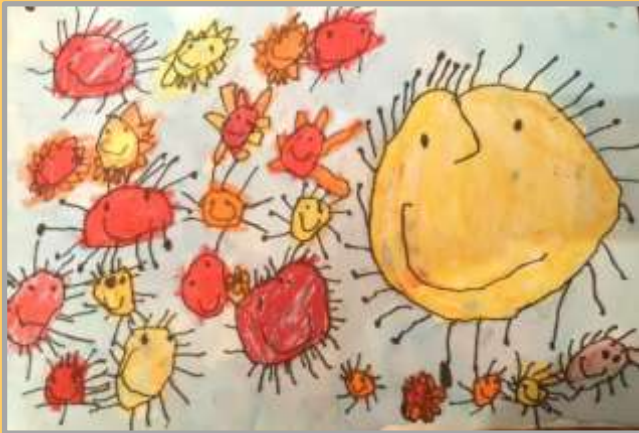
"Don't be concerned with what was and what will be.

Yesterday is history, tomorrow is mystery,

but today is a gift.

*That's why it's called **Present**"*

Art by Ohmkaram Kids



Rama Alakkassery, jr. kindergarten



Devika Rajan, kindergarten



Meenakshi Kossery, third grade



Lakshmi Kossery, preschool



Anvika Malugu, pre-kindergarten



Sameera Sankar, seventh grade



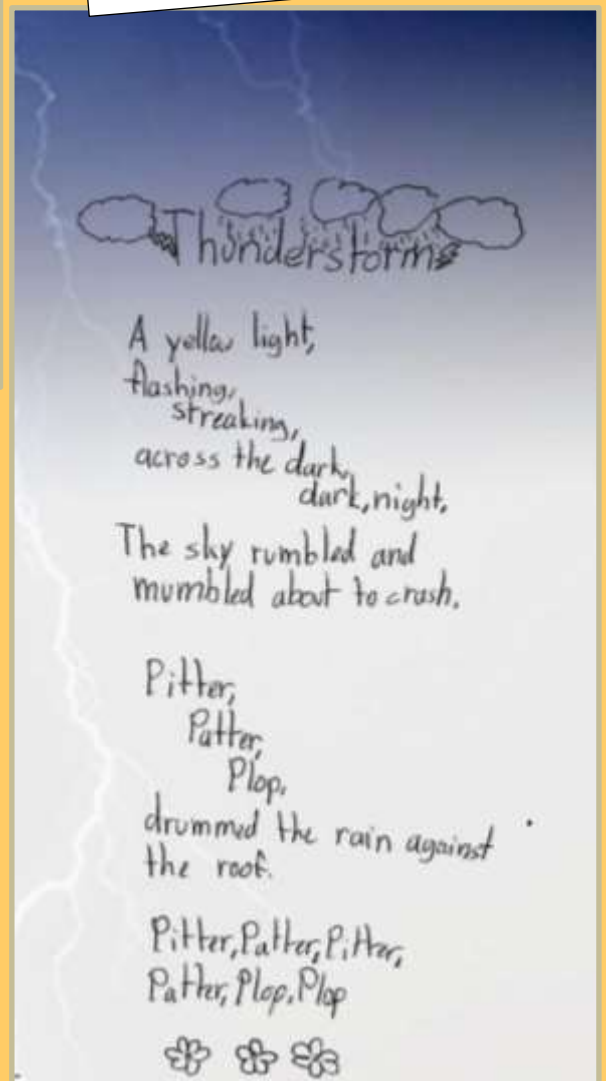
Ankita Nair, fourth grade



Nyomi Sankar, fifth grade



Hrithika Malugu, third grade



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Nelsons Gone Bananas!

By Marie Hargis

John (Bo) and Marcia Nelson of Columbia, Illinois live on their own southern plantation shaded by a forest of vibrant green banana trees. They have been growing these statuesque, tropical beauties for the past eight years.

It all began when a friend of the Nelsons gave them a few starter trees which they planted throughout their yard. Before they knew it those trees began to multiply, with baby trees popping up under the towering parent tree.

Within a couple of years, they were planting dozens of banana trees in the spring, and then digging up three times what they planted, before the first frost. They became experts at banana tree removal and winterization. By the way, this is not an easy job!

Throughout the years they have continued to replant these trees that are dug up every fall and kept dormant in their basement, all winter long. They have also spread joy to others by giving these plants away to family and friends and sometimes to strangers. Latha Unni has been the recipient of a few of these plants. Although the Nelsons don't know Latha personally, they do understand how these beautiful plants bring her joy and fond memories of home.



In the summer of 2015 the Nelson's witnessed the unimaginable when a couple of their banana trees produced fruit. Yes, they produced real BANANAS! How are bananas growing in Columbia, Illinois? Bananas are typically grown in warmer, more southerly climates. But not these bananas! In 2015 those banana trees produced 2 bunches of bananas and this summer these trees produced even more; 2 bunches in September, 2 more bunches in October and the final bunch was harvested in November.

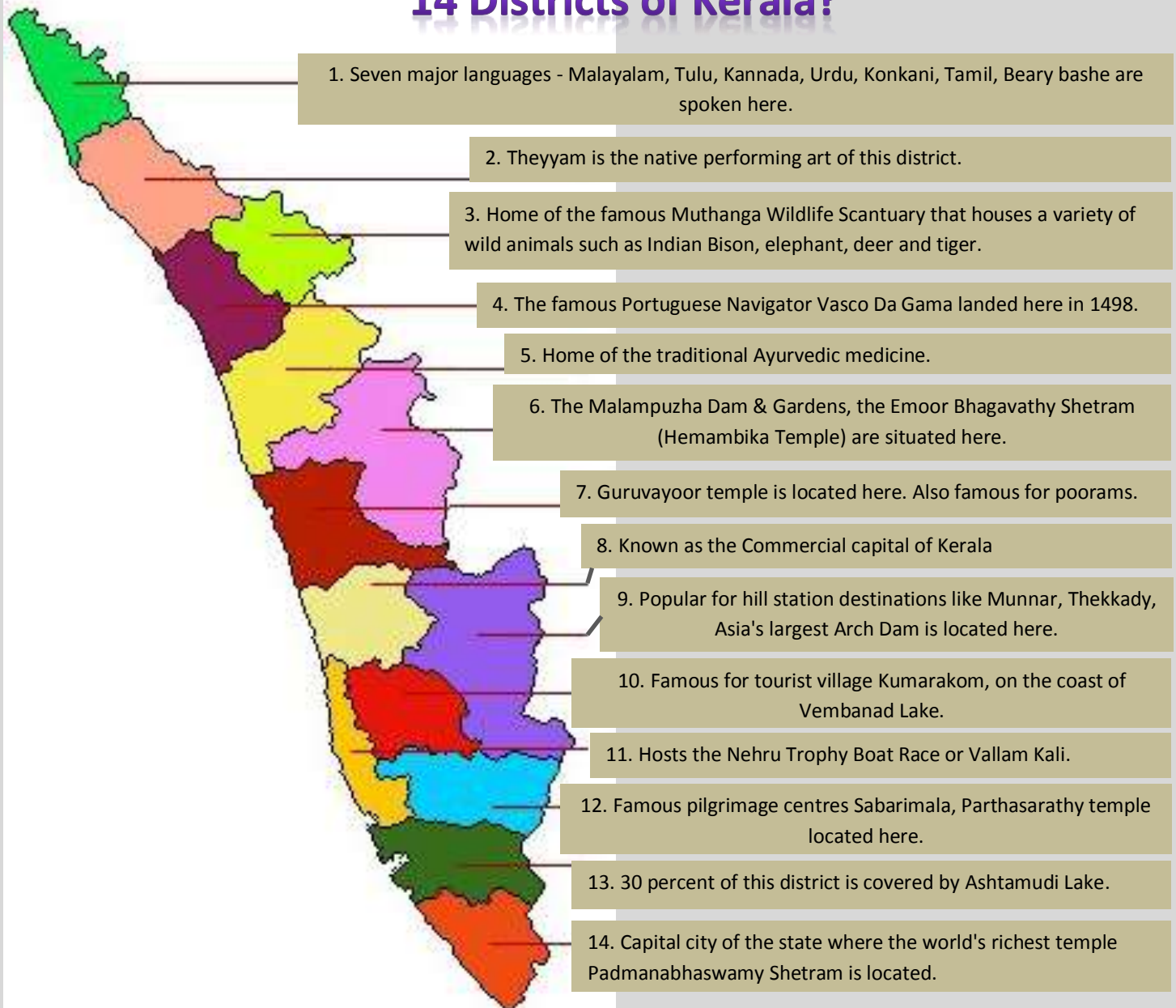
Once again on November 6th 2016, the Nelsons removed the banana tree forest and put some of them away until next spring. After planting a couple dozen trees in the spring, they removed approximately 100 plants.

Let's see what next year brings.... hopefully more bananas and maybe some monkeys?



Note: This article is written by Marie Hargis for her neighbors, the Nelsons.

Can you match the Names to descriptions of the 14 Districts of Kerala?



Idukki

Thrissur

Alappuzha

Kollam

Ernakulam

Pathanamthitta

Kannur

Kozhikode

Palakkad

Kasargod

Kottayam

Thiruvananthapuram

Malappuram

Wayanad

14. Thiruvananthapuram
1. Kasargod 2. Kannur 3. Wayanad 4. Kozhikode 5. Malappuram 6. Palakkad 7. Thrissur
8. Ernakulam 9. Idukki 10. Kottayam 11. Alappuzha 12. Pathanamthitta 13. Kollam

Answers:



In Memoriam

This page is dedicated to the Malayali celebrities & prominent personalities lost this year

	Name	Occupation	Famous work(s)
1.	Rajesh Pillai, age 41	Film Director	Vettah(2016), Traffic
2.	Mohan Roop, age 53	Director	Vetta(1984), Excuse Me Ethu Collegila
3.	ONV Kurup, age 84	Poet	Madanolsavam, Midhunam, Pranayam
4.	Kalabhavan Mani, age 45	Actor / Comedian	Rakshasa Rajavu, Bhoothakkannadi, Anandabhadram
5.	Kalpana, age 50	Actress / Comedian	Bangalore Days, ABCD: American-Born Confused Desi
6.	Rajamani, age 60	Music Composer	Aram Thamburam
7.	Shan Johnson, age 29	Singer, Composer	Vettah(2016), Manpatta
8.	Kollam G Pillai, age 82	Actor	Chula, My Dear Kuttichathan, Mucheettu Kalikkarente Makal
9.	Akbar Kakkattil, age 62	Writer - Novels, Short Stories	Kannichuvatukal, Ippol Undakunnath, Akbar Kakkattilinte Naalu Novelukal
10.	Saji Paravoor, age 48	Director	Mazha, Makante Achan, Sethurama Iyer CBI
11.	VR Gopalakrishnan, age 60	Writer	Vandanam(1989), Ee Parakkum Thalika, Kouthuka Varthakal
12.	Sudhakaran, age 73	Actor / Producer – Movies, Stage	Phantom(2002), Ain
13.	V D Rajappan, age 67	Actor	Itha Innu Muthal, Thalamelam
14.	Jishnu Raghavan, age 35	Actor	Ordinary, Ustad Hotel, Players
15.	Sasi Shanker, age 59	Director	Kunjikoonan, Sarkar Dada
16.	Sagar Shiyas, age 50	Actor	Manjadikuru, Bangalore Days
17.	Manoj Krishnan, age 45	Singer	Sopaanam, Manthrikkochamma, Kalivaakku
18.	Kavalam Narayan Panicker, age 88	Dramatist, Theatre Director, Poet	Madhyamavyayogam, Karnabharam
19.	T A Rassakh, age 58	Writer	Perumazhakkalam, Sukhamayirikkatte
20.	Rekha Mohan, age 45	Actress	Udyanapalakan, Yathramozhi
21.	Anandakuttan, age 61	Cameraman	His Highness Abdullah, Manichitrathazu



The 'Un'-Social Media

By Prashanth Sivadasan

Once an avid advocate of 'Social Media' and an active participant myself, I slowly became more passive and eventually restricted my participation to a few likes and comments on the posts and photos, and wishes on birthdays and anniversaries. Although, I always did enjoy the posts, especially the funny, interesting and often informative ones, on life, culture, art, movies and just general news that used to trickle in, and in fact I still do.

However off late, I've become so very hesitant to even take a peek into my account, since I feel that these social networking sites have increasingly become a battleground for politics and ideologies. It is as if we've 'got to' have something to say on almost everything that is in the news these days, and we often base our arguments on half-baked news and quite often on conspiracy theories and rhetorical arguments doing the rounds. Without doing a fact check people often react with their own preconceived notions or beliefs, and go on to share, retweet or comment on it.

The arguments we used to have with our friends on these sociopolitical issues, in our house over a cup of coffee, or perhaps in a bar when we're down two pegs, are now out in the open. And since we're more sensitive when we're being challenged in front of many, it often ends up in an 'online brawl' of words. We no longer seem to be able to 'agree to disagree'. We don't seem to understand that there could be multiple points of views. We keep broadcasting our thoughts in the smartest of words thinking that it would be enough to change the opinion of others, or at least to give a nice jab to those who aren't on your side of the argument. The loudest one, or the most persistent one at it, seems to always come on top. While you may not be the kind who'd say a lot of things to people when meeting them in person, you end up saying a lot more on the web, where you don't see and don't care who's on the other side.

I concede that this is a far lesser evil than some of the bigger issues that the younger generation of today faces in the form of cyber bullying, stalking and exploitation. But it nevertheless is a phenomenon that has seeped through to the majority of those active on the social media. We indulge in trolling, disparaging and ridiculing individuals on the basis of frivolous arguments, or a one-time incident, without being sensitive to the situation or person(s) being impacted. We seem to have become so judgmental, and so intolerant that we vindictively tweet/post/comment out a potent jibe, just to counter another person's view point. Many are drawn into a slug fest often inadvertently.

Clearly this behavior is the same across the globe, at least wherever there is a freedom of speech and expression. In fact in a recent BBC article, that came out during the heat of the US Presidential elections, that itself has exposed the deep rooted prejudices lying dormant inside the psyche of the average American, the reporter observed how people are 'un-friending' friends who're supporting a candidate they don't support or like, and indulging in nasty arguments on the social media. We've seen smutty tweets by prominent celebrities and politicians that have incited violence and fragmented the society further. And while we keep complaining about the news media being biased and irresponsible, the new age Social media often treads the same path and even more dangerously. In today's polarized world of extreme right and left, the line that divides one from being politically aggressive versus racially or religiously caustic is very thin, and you never know when you cross that line. It is this vulnerability that many radical elements misuse to exploit the weak and spread hatred.



So what can be done? I am not sure if something can be or should be done. This, I believe, is a cultural change that would take its own course correction perhaps. But we could do our bit and be the change we want to see; that is for those who do agree that there needs to be a change in the first place. As a starter, we can be sensitive and respectful of others around, just as we would be in a social gathering. Let us air our opinions, with the awareness that it is public, and the recipients might be from all walks of life. We could probably do some more research on what you read in these forums for its authenticity and accuracy before reacting to it. Let us not make Social media the only source of your daily news. Editorials and op-eds by our friends and relatives in a post may be great, but need not be as enlightening as one that we get to read on genuine news sites. Poking for fun is great, but let us not stretch it to trolling and harassment, even if it is about the people you don't know or care about. We could try to listen and appreciate others' viewpoints even if it is contradictory to our own fundamentals. Let us try and refrain from judging discriminating or "unfriending" people on the basis of a stand they take, at least as far as possible. These are just a few that come to my mind, and hey, I am no erudite pundit myself to lay out the 'Ten Commandments' of social networking. But let us do our part in spreading more positive

energy, and communicate more peacefully, albeit acknowledging and countering the vices that prevail in our World as responsibly as we can.

Let me clarify. We definitely should express our thoughts, generate awareness among the people, and trigger a revolution if need be, through this powerful means that unites people across the globe. We should no doubt oppose and appreciate the Governments, celebrities and our own circle of acquaintances. We must be vocal, and critique wherever necessary. But let us do so by adhering to the same moral principles that would otherwise bind us in any other social communion. Our society as a whole is becoming more and more digital. So why not extend all of the codes of conduct and etiquettes that apply to us in the real world, to our virtual world as well?



Well, all of this may sound negative or preachy. Nevertheless, I also wanted this to be a food for thought for all of us, and the generation we're bringing up. Each new phenomenon, invention or discovery brings along with it both good and bad. The onus lies with us to be prudent enough to pick and choose what to discard and denounce, and what to harbor and savor.



**Q: How does a tree get on
Facebook?**

A: it 'logs' on

**Q: WHAT DO YOU CALL A
fish without an eye?**

A: a fsh!!!



Basics of High Blood Pressure

Rajesh Rajan, MD

High blood pressures or hypertension is a disease condition affecting majority of Americans. Interestingly, many people are not aware that they have high blood pressure. Patients are often asymptomatic when the blood pressures are high and therefore it is important to check blood pressures routinely. This is even more important if there is any family history of heart disease or high blood pressure. High blood pressure is considered a silent killer because you can suffer from it without knowing it for several years. It is a major risk factor for heart attacks, strokes and kidney disease.

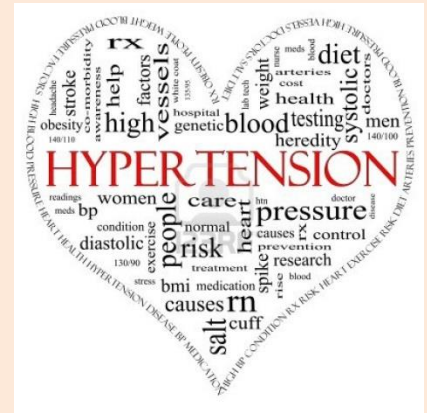
Blood pressure is usually measured with the blood pressure cuff around the upper arm. Air is pumped through the cuff and slowly released while listening for the sound of the pulse. There are several types of blood pressure machines available that can be purchased at the drugstore, some which includes measuring around the wrist. The top number in the reading is called the systolic pressure while the bottom number is called the diastolic pressure.

Hypertension occurs when the force of blood impacting the artery walls increase leading to damage. A single high reading may not be sufficient to diagnose hypertension but should always be followed up on subsequent readings, as well as a visit with your doctor. Normal blood pressure in the adult population is below 120/80. Hypertension is defined as systolic pressure greater than or equal to 140, diastolic blood pressure is greater than or equal to 90. Patients with systolic pressures between 120 -139 and diastolic pressures between 80-89 are considered to be pre-hypertensive. These patients are usually at higher risk of developing worsening hypertension. There are different target blood pressure ranges for different populations, which is usually designated by your physicians. For example, patients who have diabetes or chronic kidney disease would have target blood pressures of 130/80 or less.

There are several risk factors which places a person at high risk of developing high blood pressure. Some significant risk factors for high blood pressure includes a strong family history of hypertension, diagnoses of chronic kidney disease or diabetes, being overweight or minimally active, increased use of salt, use of birth control pills, and excessive alcohol consumption. Males are often at higher risk of developing her blood pressure until the age of 45. High blood pressure that is not treated can lead to damage of your heart, kidneys, eyes and brain. Patients with uncontrolled hypertension are at higher risk of suffering strokes, heart attacks, and kidney failure. With regards to kidney disease, certain disease processes in the kidneys can cause elevated blood pressures. Long-standing high blood pressure can alternatively lead to chronic kidney disease. Doctors can check an estimated glomerular filtration rate from blood tests to evaluate how your kidneys are functioning. A serum creatinine is usually checked which is used to calculate your glomerular filtration rate. Doctors also check for protein loss in the urine which is a marker for kidney damage.

Majority of the patients are asymptomatic with high blood pressure. They are usually diagnosed with the routine office visits. Occasionally, patients can experience repeated headaches and changes in vision with severely elevated blood pressures.

The treatment of high blood pressure is guided by your physician. Oftentimes, patient is asked to make several lifestyle changes which include weight loss, increased activity level, salt restriction, alcohol restriction, smoking cessation and increasing the calcium and potassium intake. It is very important to follow with the lifestyle recommendations prescribed by your doctor. If these changes do not meet the target goal for blood pressure, the physician may prescribe medications which will help in controlling blood pressure. Better blood pressure control will be protective against end organ damage of heart, brain and kidneys.



In summary, high blood pressure is often considered a silent killer that leads to heart disease, kidney disease and strokes. It is important to have your blood pressures checked on a routine basis. If blood pressures are high, you will need to work with your doctor to get it under better control. Please consult with your physician regarding any questions regarding hypertension.

Quote us ~ Courage:



*Be bold...
and fear not...*

*“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak;
courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen”*

~ Winston Churchill

*“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the
assessment that something else is more important than fear”*

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Scholarship Program 2016

Ohmkaram supports many voluntary and charitable activities. In addition to supporting its own members Ohmkaram strives to help the needy who struggle with meeting the cost of an academic education. Ohmkaram scholarship fund was established to help poor and deserving bright students with financial need in Kerala.

There are two types of Scholarships - donor sponsored Scholarship & scholarship provided by the general fund. In donor sponsored scholarship, fund is fully generated or provided by the donor. So the donor can select a candidate for Scholarship and decide on the amount of award. Fund for the other type of scholarship is collected by fund raising or by member contribution. Selection of the scholar and the amount of the award are decided by the Scholarship committee.

You can be a part of this activity by volunteering to run the program or donating some money to the fund. For more information please check the scholarship tab in Ohmkaram.org

Eligibility for awarding the scholarship:

1. Student should be domiciled in Kerala.
2. Student should attend a professional course of any year.
3. Student should be enrolled in any institute in Kerala.
4. Scholarship will be awarded to a student only once in life time.

This year's scholarship was awarded to Ms. Kavya Vinod from Thalassery in Kerala. She is currently studying at the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Technology, Kottayam. Below is her thank you letter to Ohmkaram.



"I came across the Ohmkaram group web page through one of my friends. I am so thankful to my friend. The way that your foundation provided for me is unforgettable.

Today, I have joined one of the best colleges of Kerala for a post-graduation degree for the year of 2016 - 2018. A lot of doubts at each & every stage of the application were cleared by the most respectful person Mr. Rajagopalan Unni.

The day that I came to know that my name was selected to attain the scholarship, I couldn't believe it. But now I am completely blessed, because I have great financial support from Ohmkaram.

In my opinion, Ohmkaram has opened a door of knowledge to me. I will always keep in mind to achieve my extreme goals and while upholding the name of the foundation. Also the esteemed members in charge of Ohmkaram 'Scholarship' will always be there in mine & my parents' day-to-day prayers.

Thank you!"

Malayalam School of Saint Louis entering 10th Year of Service to Community

Malayalam School of Saint Louis is entering its 10th year of service to the community. The Malayalam School is a voluntary organization open to public and is free to attend. It is an affiliate program sponsored by Ohmkaram, a nonprofit voluntary organization of Malayalees in St Louis, Missouri, USA. Malayalam School was started with the perception for the need to educate our next generation of Malayalees growing up in St Louis. But we also have some adults taking Malayalam classes.



The School meets twice a month for 2 hours each and runs from September through May every year. This year we have 30 students enrolled in Malayalam School. All classes are run by dedicated volunteer teachers. Course structure is developed into four levels, from entry level to proficient. Graduates of Malayalam School are proficient in reading, writing, and speaking in Malayalam.

Picture taken on **Malayalam School Annual Day** held in May 2016:



More information about the school is available on its **website** <http://www.ohmkaram.org/MalayalamSchool.html>

Email: malayalamschool@yahoo.com or **call** Anjana Prayaga at [636-293-1174](tel:636-293-1174)



OHMKARAM

...a nonprofit voluntary organization of Malayali Hindus in the Greater St.Louis area.

Ohmkaram is created with a **vision** to encourage active participation in the **Hindu culture**, foster **cooperation** and **unity** among **Kerala Hindus** throughout St. Louis and adjoining cities. In the midst of a collage of cultures, it is easy to forget and even lose track of many subtleties of our tradition that give a meaning to our identity. The **mission** of this organization will be to **rejuvenate** and **reinforce** the Kerala Hindu **traditions**. Participation and **Involvement** of our **youth** will be facilitated enabling them to appreciate our **cultural roots**. This Organization will also serve as a platform for effective **networking** of Hindus from Kerala or anyone interested in Kerala Hindu culture. This association will try to provide **Hindu cultural resources** not available through other sources in the Greater St. Louis area.

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~ Rajagopalan Unni

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