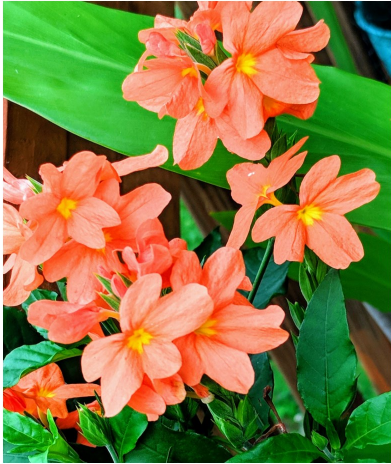




Gitanjali 2018

An Ohmkaram Publication



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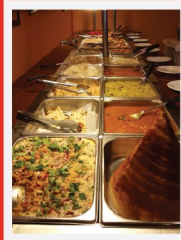
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From the desk of Gitanjali's Editorial team:

Hello Everyone!

Hope you all had a wonderful New Year!

Year 2018 has been busy for Ohmkaram starting from Anniversary moving to Kalakriti, Kerala Express, School Supplies Donation Drive, Kerala Flood Fundraising activities & more. 2018 has seen its share of joys & losses. While Kalakriti & Kerala Express were big successes for Ohmkaram, on the other hand we have seen terrible devastation in Kerala due to floods. Many people, rich & poor were equally impacted by it. Ohmkaram dedicated its Onam program to the victims of Kerala floods. The Onam Pookalam this year was a map of Kerala with its 14 districts clearly visible. Kudos to the Ohmakaram ladies especially Anajana Prayaga who helped achieve it.

This year too we have write-ups, poetries, recipes, crossword puzzle etc from adults. Young Ohmkaram talents have been extremely busy. We have short stories, sketches, paintings etc. by them. It goes to show that we have many talented artists among us.

It has been a wonderful experience for editors to work with the writings & creative art works. We are impressed by the creativity of the submissions, and we encourage our members to actively participate in the coming years of Gitanjali.

Being on the Editorial team we got to review articles that gave us some insight into the medical, biological and religious fields. We are sure readers of Gitanjali will be educated in these fields as well.

Our Advertisement team has diligently contacted several businesses in the St. Louis area to collect advertisements which is a source of revenue for our organization. Please continue to support our sponsors and encourage them to contribute without any reservation.

It has been a pleasure working on the magazine. We, the Editorial team would like to thank few of our contributors for giving us superb **Photo pages** – Angith Nair (Anniversary, Kalakriti, & Vishu), Pramod Nambudiri (Kerala Express, Vallomkalli), Anoop Kadungath (Picnic) & Dr. Suraj Alakkassery (Onam). These Photo pages highlight the events of year 2018, taking us through the memory lane.

We hope to continue to provide this platform for Ohmkaram members & their families, and hope this tradition of publishing Gitanjali continues into the future.

Lastly, we would like to congratulate Mrs. Anjana Prayaga, the first woman President of Ohmakram on the successful completion of her term. Also thanks to the Executive Committee for continuing to support us. Enjoy your this edition of Gitanjali!

The Editorial Team,

Vinay & Kavita Menon, Anjana Prayaga,
Rajagopalan Unni & Pramod Nambudiri

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Presidents Message



Dear Members of Ohmkaram,

It was an honor and a privilege to be the first woman president of Ohmkaram for the Year 2018. As the stated objective of Ohmkaram to promote Kerala Hindu culture & heritage, I hope we were able to give justice. I want to thank all members for their efforts and hard work to make 2018 another successful year for Ohmkaram. We always welcome new members who are interested in our activities and appreciate participation in our wide range of activities.

We started the year with 12th Anniversary celebration on January 13th with various activities including raffle for Ohmkaram kids to make a great memorable evening for our members. Our members endless hours of practice, dedication and planning for a successful 2018 Onam and Vishu are very much appreciated and thanks to cultural committee to make this happen. This year's sports committee was planned superb fun filled out door activity for the Picnic which were enjoyable to both adults and children. The 5th Annual Vallomkali and food sale was another successful event organized by sports committee. Thanks to food committee for organizing food for all these events and members for their generous contribution of delicious food. We formed an internal audit committee this year to oversee our finances.

Ohmkaram's Kalakriti, the painting competition and art exhibition, was a great platform to promote fine art and showcase talents of Saint Louis community. Malayalam School of Saint Louis is entering its 12th year and is a registered Kendra of Malayalam Mission, Kerala Government. We also conducted our regular satsung Gnandeepam and a spiritual lecture by Swami Udit Chaithanyaji.

As Ohmkaram's goal of promoting performing arts of Kerala, we are organizing a major performing arts event under the name MainStage Arts for last few years. This year's event was titled 'Kerala Express' on March 31st which showcased Theyyam, Kathakali, Bharathanatyam, Mohiniyattom, Chenda Melam, Sopanam and Panchavadhyam, the major classical performing arts from Kerala with performers from four different US cities. A team of volunteers worked very hard behind the scene for several months to make this program a grand successful event. Ohmkaram's various programs received grants from Missouri Arts Council (MAC) and Regional Arts Council (RAC) and thanks to Regional Arts Council and Missouri Arts Council for their support.

We organized a charity event School Supply Donation collection for low income families in association with Little bit Foundation. Thanks to members and UST global friends for their generous donations of essential school supplies. Ohmkaram started several fundraising events to help the flood victims in Kerala due to unusually high rainfall during this year's monsoon season calamity of nature. All profits from 2018 Vallomkali and food sale donated to Kerala flood relief. We conducted a special event Ohmkaram for Keralam for Onam 2018 to promote awareness and collect donation for Kerala flood relief. Thanks to everyone who donated funds to help flood victims.

Ohmkaram actively involved in many local community events in the past years. Our members sponsored Ayyappa pooja at Hindu temple in January. As a president of Ohmkaram I was invited to meet with Minister of State for Tourism India Mr. Alphons Kannanthanam and Indian Consular General of Chicago Ms. Neeta Bhushan and other local community leaders to discuss issues of Indian diaspora here. Dr. Sudhirdas Prayaga represented ohmkaram for felicitating Mr. Ashwin Patel as the Business Owner of the Year by AACC.

When look back the past 12 years of Ohmkaram's activities we can proudly say we achieved many of our stated goals such as promoting our culture and heritage, and pass it on to our next generation. I want to thank all souvenir committee members for their voluntarism and hard work. I want to thank again all members who volunteered this year for the success of Ohmkaram.

Sincerely Yours,

Anjana Prayaga
President 2018



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- Gandhiji

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Cover Feature – Flowers of Kerala:

Konna Poovu:

This beautiful yellow flower is the state flower of Kerala. The flower blossoms in bunches during the harvest season, hardly making the leaves visible. It's a pretty sight especially when the wind blows. This tree is called Golden Rain tree.

Vishu, celebrated during the harvest season, is the New Year of Kerala. Vishu Kani (the first thing to see early in the morning) consists of fruits, flowers, new clothes, vegetables and grains offered to Lord Krishna and Konna Poovu is an essential part of Vishu Kani which symbolizes Prosperity. The flowers are also used to make herbal medicines.

- Reshma Krishnan

Shankapushpam:

Shankupushpam is a plant found in India and other tropical countries. It is a climbing vine which produces beautiful blue and white flowers. Its widely used in Ayurveda due to its many medicinal values. The leaves, dried roots and the juice from the flowers have been used to make the herbal tonic which enhances memory, reduces stress, decreases swelling and aids in digestion and has many other beneficial effects.

It is called Shankupushpam in Malayalam due to the flowers resembling a conch (Shankh) + flower (Pushpam) and is used for pooja in the temples. It is also known by other names - like Vishadoshagni in Sanskrit, Aparajit in Hindi, Gokarna in Marathi (due to the shape of the flowers resembling cow's ears), and Butterfly pea in English etc.

It is a perennial plant in India, but in the US, it cannot tolerate the cold season and would have to be kept indoors during the winter. The seeds from the pod can also be used to grow new plants every season.

- Binu Chakkamparambayil

Thechi – Mandaram:

Thechi poovu, (also called as chetti or vettchi poovu) is one of the flowers that instantly come to mind when one talks about flowers that are celebrated in Malayali culture. However, these flowers, usually orange, but sometimes also pink, yellow or white, are, like the Malayalis, world travelers, blooming proudly in warm climates. It is the national flower of the country of Suriname, called faya lobi or fiery love in the local tongue.

In Kerala, these flowers find a pride of place in the annual Onam pookkalam. They are also widely used for worship, and their scientific name *Ixora*, is said to be derived from the Sanskrit word, Ishwara. In the Kadampuzha Bhagavathy

temple, these flowers have a special significance, as only wild thechi flowers, cleaned and devoid of unopened buds or other impurities as used for the widely renowned Poomoodal offering (which has bookings already up to the year 2050!). The legend goes that during the fight between Arjuna (the hero from the Mahabharata) and Lord Shiva, who was dressed as a hunter, the Bhagavathy turned all of Arjuna's arrows into thechi flowers, which showered the Lord. It is believed that Poomoodal, in which 12 kudanna of thechi are used (1 kudanna equals the quantity of flowers that can be held within the bowl formed by one's palms held together), is therefore pleasing to the Goddess.

The thechi is also used in many ayurvedic preparations, as it has healing powers to combat everything from skin diseases to allergies and bronchitis.

Thanks to the song Thechi, mandaram, thulasi, the mandaram poovu comes a close second in our imagination. The flower (scientific name: *Bauhinia acuminata*) known as snowy orchid-tree in English and kachnar in Hindi, is widely used for worship. As the leaves are shaped like a camel's foot, it is also known as the camel-foot plant. For Hindus, the trifoliate arrangement of the leaves represents the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

The mandara is said to be one of the objects that arose from the ocean of milk when the gods and demons were churning it in order to get the amrita. It was taken to heaven by Indra and thus became one of the five trees that grow in heaven. Stolen by Lord Krishna, it was brought to Earth, where his wives Satyabhama and Rukmini are said to have fought for its beautiful white flowers. Eventually, as Satyabhama had already claimed the Parijata tree for herself, the Mandara, becomes Rukmini's. The flower also finds a mention in the Shiva Panchkshara stotram.

Thus, both the thechi and the mandaram are special. Not only are these beautiful flowers a delight to all the senses, but they also have a spiritual significance, that delight the heart and soul!

- Vijaylakshmi Harish

Nishagandhi:

Nishagandhi or Night Blooming Cereus or *Epiphyllum oxypetalum* is a cactus found in tropical areas and deserts but can also be grown indoors in pots, with exposure to direct sunlight during the summer months. The plant is thin stemmed and can grow up to 8-10 ft tall, with buds appearing from lateral veins in the leaves. Propagation is achieved through stem cutting and plant can reach maturity in 2 years. Healthy

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plants can have 2-3 blooming cycles during the warmest summer periods, with multiple blooms during each event. The total duration from the appearance of bud to bloom is around 19-21 days. The blooming starts couple of hours after sunset and lasts for about 3-4 hours. Flowers are almost white, very large and fragrant. The bloom is about 6-8" in diameter and starts to wilt by dawn. Nishagandhi is also known as "Queen of the night" and "Princess of the night" due to the breathtaking beauty Nature at its best!

Lotus:

Lotus or "Water Lily" is also known as "Nelumbo Nucifera" is the national flower of India & Vietnam. This flower is an aquatic perennial flower that grows on the surface of shallow water murky or muddy ponds. It is special as it keeps its beauty while it lives in the mud.

Lotus blooms from March to end of August. They are found in different colours - white, pink, red, blue, purple & yellow. Its leaves are smooth and bright and float above water. This flower can grow really tall – up to 49 inches height & can spread up to 10 feet horizontally. This flower is considered to be very sacred in Hinduism and is used for worship. Goddesses Laxmi & Saraswati are associated with this flower. Puranic texts state that Brahma, the creator, emerged from a lotus that evolved from the naval of Lord Vishnu, who is often referred to as the "lotus eyed". Goddess Laxmi is usually portrayed as being seated on top of a fully opened lotus flower.

Lotus is sacred - it represents eternity, divinity, purity and stands as a symbol of life, fertility and ever renewing youth. The Buddhists also consider this flower sacred as it represents purity of body, mind and spirit.

Lotus can survive thousands of years & can revive after a long period of dormancy. This flower is edible right from its stem to its roots. It has medicinal values - the juice of this plant is used for upset stomachs, while the leaves are used to cure skin diseases. Traditional Asian herbal medicines also use it. Dried stamens of lotus are used to prepare aromatic teas.

In the olden times, kings used this flower as a dye to keep their hair black. The ruling party in India has lotus as its symbol on its flag. Countries like China, Korea & Japan celebrate Lotus festival to celebrate the beauty of this pretty flower.

- Rajalakshmi Menon

Rose:

A rose by any other name is just as sweet, but പനീനീർപ്പൂ sounds a bit sweeter. The rose's appearance has given it the title "The Queen of Flowers," due to its prevalence all over the world. In Kerala, the rose is more than a pretty flower. Roses are also used in the preparation of rose water and rose

vinegar. Relaxing therapies with rose smells are used in candles, lotion, bath oils and perfumes.

- Savitha Krishan

Mulla:

Mulla Poompodi Ettu Kidakkum Kallinumundam Oru Sourabhyam... The stone near the Jasmine will bear its fragrance too. Mulla (Jasmine- *Jasminum grandiflorum*): Jasmine needs no introduction. It is undoubtedly one of the most sweet smelling flowers ever. Those pearly white flowers and buds are so heavenly.

Women of almost all cultures in India wear a tiny garland of jasmine flowers in their hair. Hindu brides wear jasmine garlands in such a way to cover the long hair. It is based on ayurvedic practice. Jasmine's fragrance reduces nervousness and also keeps the brain in calmness.

Jasmine tea can help prevent against a variety of severe illnesses including heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Jasmine tea can also help promote beautiful, healthy skin and boost your immune system. Jasmine tea is made from a combination of true tea leaves and jasmine blossoms.

- Remya Prashob

Thulasi or Tulsi:

Tulsi or Holy basil (*Ocimum sanctum*) is a sacred plant in Hindu belief. The plant is believed to be an earthly manifestation of the goddess Tulsi who was a great worshipper of the Lord Vishnu. Tulsi Vivah is an important pooja, where the Tulsi plant is married to a Shaligram that represents Lord MahaVishnu.

Holy Basil is a fabulous aromatic herb with a wide range of medicinal uses. It is a wonder herb that can fight against chemical stress due to pollution. It is cultivated for religious and medicinal purposes, for its essential oil, along with other benefits.

The Tulsi with green leaves is called Shri-Tulsi or "fortunate Tulsi". Shri is also a synonym for Lakshmi, Vishnu's consort. This variety is also known as Rama-Tulsi, the "bright Tulsi". The Tulsi with dark green or purple leaves and purple stem is called Shyama-Tulsi or Krishna-Tulsi or "dark Tulsi". This variety is considered especially sacred to Krishna, as its purple color is similar to Krishna's dark complexion. Rama & Krishna are prominent avatars of Vishnu. A Tulsi plant will always hold an important place in any Hindu household or any kind of religious ceremony.

- Kavita Menon

Kanakambaram:

Kanakambaram or *Crossandra infundibuliformis*, also known as "firecracker flower" in the western world, is an ornamental flowering plant, native to southern India. Propagation is by seeds or cutting and the plant can be grown indoors in pots, with exposure to direct sunlight during the summer months.

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Flowers grow from four sided stalked spikes, somewhat similar to White Ginger Lily, also known as Sugandhi due to its perfume like smell. Even though Kanakambaram has no distinct odor, the vibrant colors ranging from yellow to orange to saffron to red and even pink and violet hybrid varieties, used to be popular for making God's garlands and also as gajra for hair but over the years lost importance among horticulturists due to its stubby stem and lacy thin petals making packaging difficult, in addition to the lack of odour when compared to rose or jasmine. However, if unplucked, Kanakambaram blooms sustain from wilting for several days and is a beautiful addition to any garden.

- Latha Unni



Our Cover - Onam Pookalam:

Severe floods affected Kerala in August 2018 due to unusually high rainfall in the monsoon season. Indian government declared it a Level 3 Calamity. Thirty-five out of the fifty-four dams within the state were opened, for the first time in history. Many people were affected by it & more than 3,200 relief camps were set up for the victims. All 14 districts of the state were placed on red alert.

Ohmakaram decided to dedicate its Onam program as a tribute to the flood victims. The Pookalam created by President Anjana Prayaga & Latha Unni with help from other ladies was remarkable. It was painstaking work to get the Pookalam mapped to the state of Kerala with clearly defined districts. Pookalam was the size of a long table, and was made with different varieties of flowers. Thulasi leaves were used for borders. **This was one of a kind Pookalam!**

The Biology of Idol Worship in Hinduism

By Dr. Sudhirdas Kumar Prayaga

I have discussed the difficulty of translating the meaning of many Sanskrit words to English and how many of the words connected to Hinduism are misunderstood and misappropriated. In the context of this article, the words 'idol' and 'worship' used to explain Hindu religion are grossly inappropriate and do not do justice to the original word meanings in Sanskrit (please refer to my previous article on 'the philosophy of idol worship in Hinduism'). This article is my attempt to give a scientific basis of idol worship.

The biology of human spirituality

Man, since the dawn of civilization, has been curious about the supreme & the nature of reality. All cultures or groups of people around the world have developed their own rituals and practices for God realization and spirituality. We can find archeological evidence of these all across the globe, from simple burials to great pyramids. Most of them did not survive the test of time, belief, intellect or science. In addition, during the medieval and modern times, western organized religions called them pagan and uncivilized to show their superiority and led to the destruction most of these native or indigenous cultures, customs, rituals and practices from around the world.

Dean Hamer in his book '*The God Gene: How Faith is Hardwired in Our Genes*', gives scientific and genetic evidence for human religiosity. He proposes the *God gene hypothesis*, where he reasons that human spirituality is hard wired into our genes and is heritable. Humans by nature are gregarious and the sense of optimism are the advantages provided by the natural selection (evolutionary advantage) of spirituality. The psychosomatic changes brought out by the God gene product at the effector level is found to be a protein which causes the release of feel good neuro-chemicals such as serotonin, and dopamine by the pineal gland in our brain. Pineal gland is associated with the *ajna chakra* or the so called third eye of the *shiva*. Mystic experiences, feeling of connected to the nature and the universe, and God realizations are examples of these.

Psychologist Claude Robert Cloninger, author of '*Feeling Good: The Science of Well-Being*', developed methods to quantify human spirituality and concluded that spirituality is an innate human behavior. While specific religious beliefs, such as belief in a particular God, has no genetic connection and is cultural. One of the qualities he measures is 'self-forgetfulness', the tendency to become totally absorbed in some activity, such as meditation. This is similar to that described in Gita as '*apohanam*', (Gita 15:15).

The arrival of communism in late 19th century and establishment of communist governments in many counties in 20th century led to the thinking that belief in God is not required and human religiosity is ephemeral. But communism turned out to be worse than other organized religion (I am comparing it to other western religions because of its inherent structure and principles are like that of other organized religions). In less than 100 years communism and communist governments are almost non-existent around the world. Probably one of the major reasons for its demise is its active suppression of religious practices. This is the most physical evidence for the requirement of religiosity for human existence at population level.

Although I am driving the point that biologically religiosity is an innate human behavior, it does not mean every person is religious or spiritual at individual level. In fact, religiosity varies from individual to individual based on their genetic makeup (nature) and epigenetic modification (nurture). In Hinduism God realization is personal and varies from person to person, unlike that is claimed by western religions, and is one of the major differences which sets Hinduism apart. That is why at the practical level Hindus have very many Gods to suit individual needs. Our modern scientific understanding of spirituality also supports this view of variance.

The biology and psychology of idol worship in Hinduism

Hinduism is evolved over several millennia inculcating various ideas and practices to accommodate different ways for God realization. The six major *darshanas* (or ways) of Hinduism are *Samkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyaya*, *Vyashikam*, *Poorva Mimamsa* and *Uttara Mimamsa*. The essence of *yoga darshanam* is that self-realization is God realization. Self-realization requires turning inwards by controlling the mind or *chittavritti nirodhanam*. Ancient Hindu *rishis* have recognized the connection between body (comprising of 5 sense organs or *jnanindriyas*) to breath (*prana*),

breath to mind (*cit*), mind to intellect (*buddhi*) and intellect to soul or spirit (*atman*). *Yogasutra* written by *Pathanjali maharishi* is a detailed treatise on *Yoga darshanam*.

Human beings are endowed with five sense organs (*jnanaindriyas*), to perceive the universe around us and five organs (*karmaindriyas*) to interact with it. But these sense organs often work independently until we put our mind (*cit*) to it to focus. Similarly, our mind also wanders until we put our intellect (*buddhi*) to focus. With proper practice one can bring all *jnanaindriyas*, *cit* and *buddhi* to focus for self-realization. In Gita Krishna says that controlling mind is very difficult (*Gita 6:34*), and requires rigorous practice or yoga (*Gita 12.9*). Our ancient *rishis* have recognized this fact and developed many techniques, including *vigraha upasana* or idol 'worship' as a means to focus our mind.

Kathopanishad gives a good analogy, it compares our body to a chariot (*ratham*), our 5 sense organs or *jnanaindriyas* as the five horses which pull the chariot, the mind or *cit* as the strings which control the horses, intellect or *buddhi* as the charioteer (the driver) and *atman* as the owner of the chariot (*Kathopanishad 3 - 4, 5*). An intelligent person controls the senses with mind and mind with intellect, if not body will follow the senses for physical and material wealth like the untamed horses.

Just like human abilities vary from individual to individual, so does humans' abilities for self-realization varies from individual to individual. Few people can strive for self-realization and God realization without any physical material or properties, this is called *nirguna-upasana*. While majority requires some additional help to satisfy their biologic and sense perception, because we are all limited by our sense organs to know everything about us (*Gita 12.5*). In *saguna-upasana* the idol helps one to focus our senses, mind and intellect.

During idol worship or *vigraha-upasana*, the idol and the decorations like flowers help our visual sense. *Bhajans*, *japa* or ringing of bells during puja helps our hearing sense. Burning incense helps our smell sense. *Prasadam* or *nivedyam* helps with the taste sense. And finally, the physical posture and beads used during *japa* helps with touch of sense. All these work together to bring your mind into a single focus. Our ancient *rishis* have clearly understood the psychology of the mind. They have devised many techniques and rituals to achieve this. For example, *bhajans* (singing songs), is the most out-word and simplest form. Then comes *japa*, (chanting a mantra like *Aum*, loud, quiet or in the mind) or other levels like yoga and meditation. Fasting for example, helps to control the physical desire and interests (scientifically it is also shown to increase life expectancy).

In his book '*59 Seconds*' Richard Wiseman reports on a study concluding that in a relationship if images or materials connecting with your loved ones are around you the relationship will last long and strong. For example, we place pictures of our loved ones in our office or wallet, but the picture itself is not our loved ones but a representation of the person we love. Similarly, if you are trying to have a relationship with God you need to have images or materials that identify God's presence with you. An idol or *vigraha* is a good example for a good imagery. Of course, we do not know how God looks like, and definitely God does not look like what is depicted in an idol.

Lots of scientific studies have shown the benefits of *yoga* and meditation on human health. I am sure many such health benefits can also be found in persons performing regular *vigraha-upasana* too. Majority of the changes we see in practitioners are probably due to epigenetic changes and not genetic. Epigenetics probably were the effects of emotions, hormones and such directly affect an individual.

There is no Blind Faith and Miracles in Hinduism

Finally, I would like to emphasize that Hinduism is not based on beliefs, blind faith and miracles. This could sound confusing or illogical as it is our general understanding that religion means beliefs and miracles due to the influence of western religions, because blind faith and miracles are an integral part of western religions. Unfortunately, due to aggressive marketing of western religions for conversion, many think that such unscientific principles are part of all religions, including Hinduism. The gullible are taught that if you believe in their religion God will grant your wish by a miracle. According to Hinduism, one should be called a *bhakta* and not a believer. Blind faith or belief is not *bhakti* but fear someone has instilled in you.

The purpose of religion is to know the reality, and not asking God for favors and benefits. To know reality means to know the cosmos, to know the creator and to know ourselves or our role here. The Hindu temples are a place for *darshan*, to help solidify an image in our mind and not for worship as in the western religious sense. In fact, the general concept of praying, asking God to give money, health, or cure a disease, etc. are not really a part of Hindu concept of religiosity. There are no miracles in Hinduism, because miracle means breaking the natural law. Hinduism is founded on logic and reason with scientific validity, even God has to follow the rules he made.



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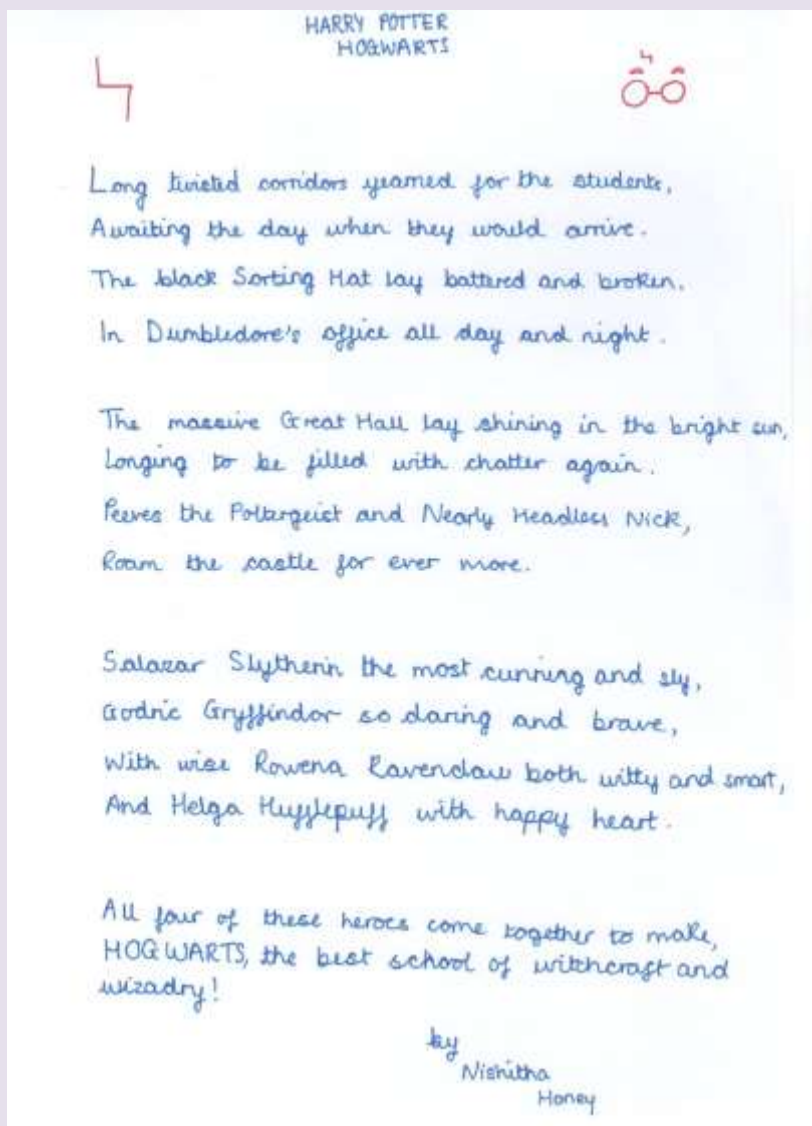
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Unlike in Hinduism, the western religions are as set of belief systems formulated by someone. Religions should not be about belief system, but about knowing the reality. If you believe something, that means you are not using your intelligence but following blindly some rules or laws made by someone. If you look around the world you will realize that most of the conflicts around the world are due to one belief system against another. When you believe in one belief system you are against the other; there is no logic, reason, use of intelligence or an attempt at realization of the facts. You cannot question the rules of such a belief system, if you cannot comprehend the logic of the belief. Hinduism takes a different approach to religion and requires one to use intelligence and experience. Human mind wants logic, reason and facts to experience reality. That is why Hinduism has no conversion because it is not based on a set of belief systems but on realization. It is based on logic, and reason and experience by each individual.

Nishitha Honey is 11 years old. She loves to draw & paint.



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Save the Earth

Arshya Pillai, 6th grade



Every single one of us should contribute to helping Earth be a better and safer place for us to live. You can support this cause by doing your part in recycling. If we all recycle every day, our world will become a more pleasant place. If you recycle, you will help save the environment. Many neglected plastic products litter can end up piling on streets, parks, beaches, oceans and nearly any other place you can imagine. Many land and ocean creatures are impacted by plastic litter

and it can disturb the balance of their habitat. Birds can get themselves trapped in plastic rings and that could possibly damage their wings while trying to escape from it. In the ocean, sea creatures such as sea turtles can easily mistake these troublesome plastic products for food. Thinking it is a new snack, the turtles will consume it and will eventually die.

However, this tragedy can be reduced to a large extent if you recycle. When you recycle, things can be reused. Some plastic bottles can be recycled and made into other plastic items. Plastic bottles can also be recycled into clothes such as t-shirts, sweaters and jackets. Milk jugs and other plastic containers can become plastic lumber. Plastic lumber can be used for playground equipment, lawn furniture and picnic tables. Also, if we recycle, we won't need more space for landfills. If items that can be recycled end up in landfills, then these extra items can cause an overflow in landfills. Right now, the United States has been producing the most amount of waste. If we don't rise to action soon, it will lead to an even bigger impact to the world.

By recycling, you won't waste non-renewable resources. There's plenty of sand in the world to produce glass. However, oil for plastic is running low. Coal for electricity is also steadily decreasing. We should recycle plastic because it can be made into plastic again after it is used. So if you recycle, we don't need to drill more oil out of the ground. As you can see, there are many reasons you should recycle. If you recycle, you can create a bigger and better difference in the world. You won't harm the environment that way. Together, we can all support and change this disaster if we work together. So, please remember to recycle and know that you are helping the Earth in your own way.

In the Attic of Mystery

Hrithika Malugu, 5th grade

In a small house they lived a girl named Ivy and a boy named Ben. They were the best of siblings. When they had something, they shared it. Their house had an attic that no one has been to in years. This house has been carried on from their great, great grandfather. One day, they decided to explore the remains of the attic. Their parents said not to when Ben asked. But as you know, Ivy was right beside him, standing up for him. They finally convinced their parents to go on a little scavenger hunt to find and keep anything they wanted to.

Once they got to the attic, the light was not on. They kept searching for a light switch. Ivy fell in this little hole while still trying to look for the light. They had found something! Maybe it was an heirloom or just something creepy. Ben picked it up.





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To his surprise, it was a journal by..... he couldn't find who it was by so he gave it to Ivy. She scanned it with her blue eyes, noticing a fine print that said, Mr. Abraham Lincoln, lined with brown leather. Ben tried to look over to see what it was. He also saw this writing. It must have been President Lincoln's journal. Since they couldn't see much more in the dark, they found the ladder to get back downstairs. They sat on the couch thinking about how they should treat it and show respect to Abraham Lincoln. They felt the need for help. They screamed for their mom. A petite maid came instead.

"Son of Mr. Abraham Lincoln. Daughter of Mrs. Mary Todd. Welcome back from the journey. I see you have got your father's journal right there!" She said. While snatching it from Ben.

"What! We are the children of Rebecca and Michael Smith. How are we in this timeline of the President Lincoln," Ivy exclaimed.

"Don't be silly. Your parents are waiting for you in the dining room to talk to you about some silly war we are going to have. I don't care about that kind of stuff! Oh! Sorry, my name is Nia," The maid replied.

Ben and Ivy walked behind the maid wondering where they were going.

"Follow me, Ben. We need to get back home", said Ivy while tugging Ben.

"Where are you going children? The dining hall is right this way," Nia noticed.

The rest of the way, they were worried that they would get hurt because they knew that the Civil War would be coming up soon. Once they entered the dining hall, they realized that Abraham Lincoln was not sitting at the table. No one was sitting at the table. They looked at the maid again realizing that this was their friend, not the maid. They laughed. The maid had questioned why they were laughing and then her wig fell off. Ivy told Ben that this was not possible and this was a big prank. Their whole family came in from the kitchen and started laughing because they were watching them all along.

"Hey!" Ivy and Ben said.

"Happy Birthday!" They all said.

They all had the best day ever.

Goldy's Adventure

Meenakshi Kossery, 5th grade

Once upon a time there was a goldfish named Goldy. One day he decided to make a BFF necklace for his best friend Sunny. To make that necklace extra special, Goldy would have to go to the Glittering Gold Cave to find the silver seaweed and sparkling seashells. But first he has to ask his parents for their permission. Goldy's mother was fine with it and gave him a basket woven from kelp to put the seaweed and the shells in.



Goldy began his hunt for Glittering Gold Cave. He went through the Sea Kelp Forest and collected a pearl from an Oyster. At the deepest part of the ocean, he found the Glittering Gold Cave!

The outside of the cave was decorated with dazzling seashells and it was so shiny that he could barely look at them. Goldy went and found out that the cave entrance was guarded by a mean and tough looking shark. May I go through please? Goldy asked nervously. What do you want? asked shark in a rough voice. I am here to get some sparkling seashells and silver seaweed to make a necklace for my best friend. Shark let Goldy in unhappily. By the way, where is your friend now? asked shark. "Sunny is up on the surface of the ocean in Sealand" said Goldy as he swam into the well-

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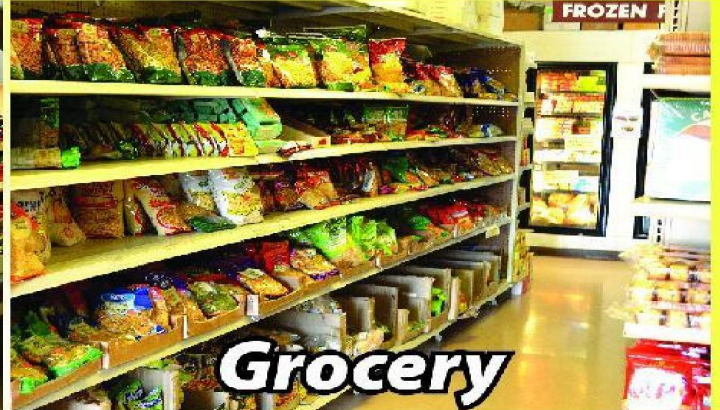
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decorated cave. The seashells and seaweed sparkled as he went deeper and deeper. He collected lots of blue seashells because blue was Sunny's favorite color. He swam out of the cave and headed to his house as his basket became full.

When he got home he made a beautiful necklace with the pearl in the middle. After that he went to Sunny's house to give the necklace. Goldy knocked on the door. "Come in" said a grumpy voice. Goldy opened the door to find Sunny trembling with fear. He looked over to see the same shark that he had met earlier by the cave. "I am Brutus", said shark. Brutus squeezed Sunny tightly. Goldy bit him as hard as he could so that he would let Sunny go. Suddenly the door bust open. It was the big blue whale! Now the fight was between Brutus and whale. At last Brutus gave up. He got hurt on his face and on his fins. He swam away as fast as he could.

It was calm and peaceful after an aggressive brawl. Goldy took out the necklace and gave it to Sunny. She looked delighted. Goldy went home in a hurry because it was almost dinner time. When he got home, he told his mom all about his adventurous day and the discovery of the Glittering Gold Cave.

Once There Was a boy
Named Jason Who loved
CHRISTMAS. IT WAS
CHRISTMAS and he Was
sleeping in his bed suddenly.
He heard a sound. He Woke up
and Walked quietly and
slowly. He opened the door.
Guess what he saw?
SANTA CLAUS! "SANTA!"
he Called, "did you see the
COOKIES?" "Oh I Was
about to eat them. do you
want some?" he asked?

Jason meets Santa

Lakshmi Kossery, 1st grade



Jason said, "No you
can have them. Thank
you for the presents
Santa, Bye." He Went
to his bedroom. In
the morning he Woke
up and Kept meeting
Santa a secret.



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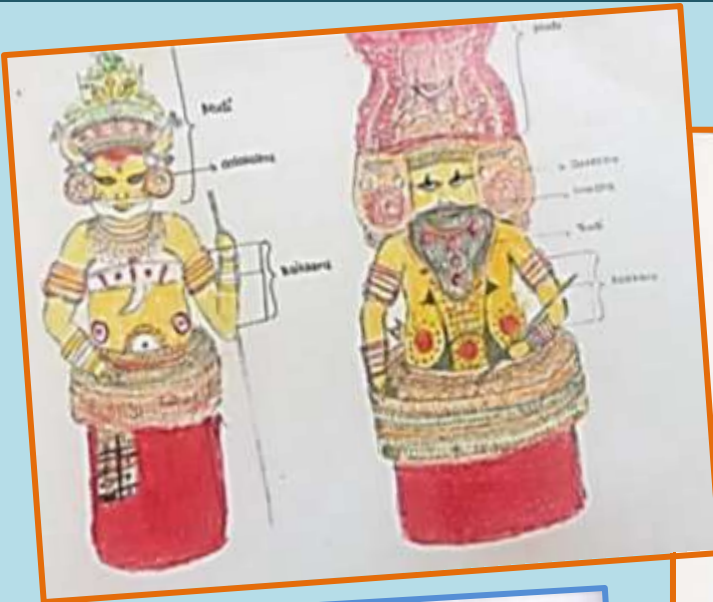
About Lisa

Lisa Morgan, AVP of Business Services, brings over 30 years of experience in financial services and has been with the Credit Union for more than 20 years. Lisa has a very diverse background in branch operations, consumer loans, residential mortgages, and joined the Business Services team in 2004. Lisa is committed to excellent service by educating her members on all Credit Union products and services to help them meet their business and personal financial needs. **Contact Lisa today at 314.657.4754 or visit her at 423 Lynch Street in St. Louis, MO**



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Kid's Thoughts . . .



"ശ്രീ മുത്തപ്പാ ശരണം"

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മുത്തപ്പൻ. ഹിന്ദിന് ആദ്യമായി ചോറൂണ്
തന്നത് മുത്തപ്പനാണ്. മുത്തപ്പൻ ഹിന്ദിന്
വേണ്ടി പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ച വഴിപാടായ
മുത്തപ്പൻ വെള്ളയും ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു അന്ന്
മുത്തപ്പനുടെ മിട്രിൽ ഒരുപോലെ സമൃദ്ധമായ
സദ്യയും. അങ്ങനെ മുത്തപ്പൻ ഹിന്ദിയും
(പ്രിയപ്പെട്ട ദൈവമായി. മുത്തപ്പനെ
മനസ്സിൽ ധ്യാനിച്ചുകൊണ്ട്..... ദൈവമാണ്.

Devang Krishnan, 4th grade

Sculpture Art

Mom
&
Me



by :Anvika Malugu 7 December
2018 Saturday
There once lived a girl, her name
was Claire. She lived with her mom.
Sometimes she was very lonely, other
times she was happy with her
mom. She wished she had a dad but
she did when she was a baby.
Claire got sad when she grew
older and older. But one day a
strange man came he looked
lonely like Claire. So she let
him in. Claire gave him cooking
milk. He said he was cold so
she turned on the fire place.
But it was just a trick.
He was just wanting to know if
she is nice and she was. After
that her mom came home
Claire told her the whole story.
The End

Anvika Malugu, 1st grade



Ankita Nair, 6th grade

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Recipes (Paachakam)

Puliyila Chutney without Puliyila ?

By Divya Chandran

Mushrooms or Egg plant – Wash & cut into small pieces
Green Chili - as required
Curry leaves - as required
Shallots - 3 or more (Optional)
Raw mangoes - as required
Grated Coconut - as required
Salt - to taste
Coconut Oil - as required
Banana leaves - for wrapping

NB: Banana leaves are available in Pan Asia Super Market.

Silver foil can be used instead of banana leaves.

Directions :

Instead of Puliyila (tamarind leaves) we are using raw mangoes. Grind raw mango cubes along with green chili, Grated coconut , shallots and curry leaves .

Add salt to taste. A pinch of turmeric powder is also good (optional).

Mix the ingredients with either Mushroom pieces, Eggplant cubes or both by adding coconut oil in it.

Spread the paste on the banana leaves. You can spread it like you would for 'Elai-Ada'. Cover it by adding one more leaf or simply wrap it with same leaf.

Flip both sides and cook in a pan or place it in a preheated oven at 350 C for 25 - 30 minutes. The leaf should get a burnt smell. Only then will you get the authentic taste of Puliyila Chutney.

Samiya Baath By Latha Madhu

Vermicelli (broken)- about 5 cups

Seasoning:

Oil(5tblspn), mustard(1tsp), urad dal(1 tblspn),
green chillies-chopped(1 tblsp),
ginger-chopped(1 tsp)
curry leaves(10)
Yogurt(add enough for a curd rice consistency)
Water(enough to boil the vermicelli)
Salt to taste
Green Grapes - halved(optional)

Direction:

Boil water, add the vermicelli and salt and let it cook for 3 minutes (don't overcook).

Then, drain the cooked vermicelli in a colander and transfer to a wide pan.

Now heat the oil in a pan, add mustard followed by other seasoning ingredients, once ready pour over the cooked vermicelli and mix well.

Let it cool. When ready to serve add yogurt and mix well and serve.

Add grapes if you like.

Finally garnish with chopped coriander leaves and enjoy!

Yogurt Rice By Suresh Krishnan

1 cup of raw rice

2 cup of full milk

1 cup of water

Cook over, stove for 30 minutes until mushy

Add 8 oz sour cream

Add 8 oz plain yogurt

Allow the mix to stand for 30 min

Add a pinch of asafoetida

Salt add to taste

Direction :

Heat 1 table spoon of oil. When hot, add 2 teaspoons of black pepper corn , 1 teaspoon of mustard seeds , 2 teaspoons of whole urud dal seeds, 1 teaspoon of chopped green chillies, & 1 teaspoon of minced ginger. Decrease the heat and wait until everything looks crispy. Turn off the stove and add 3-4 whole dry red chillies.

Once cool and the mix to the rice, and mix thoroughly.

If the rice mix is too thick at this time add hot, full milk to loosen up the mix so that it is more palatable.

Add ½ teaspoon of lemon juice to the final mix.

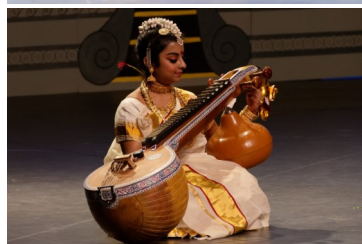
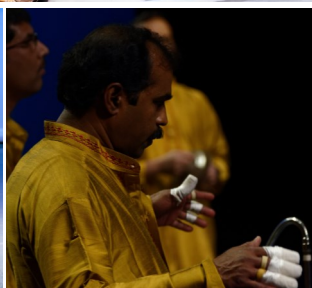
Let the mixed rice stand for a few minutes for the flavor to mix with the rice.

Serve warm if possible. Enjoy!





Kerala Express





KALAKRITI





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Gnanadeepam

**Satsangha tve nisangha twam
Nisangha tve nirmoha twam.
Nirmoha tve nischala ta twam
Nischala ta tve, jivamukti**

*When you are in good company, you are not in bad company
When you are not in bad company, you don't fall into delusion
When you don't fall into delusion, the mind becomes steady
When the mind becomes steady, you are liberated*

-- Adi Shankaracharya

Satsang is a Sanskrit word which means 'association with the good'. This year, with the blessings of Swami Udit Chaitanyaji, Ohmkaram has started 'Gnanadeepam', a monthly Satsang program. Gnanadeepam is a great opportunity for each of us to discuss and understand more about Hinduism, our scriptures, epics and to experience the power of group meditation. Many of us, who spent their early years in Kerala, were able to gather such information through elders in the family, books, temple festivals etc. Since our younger generation is devoid of many such opportunities, Gnanadeepam would be an informative and enlightening experience for them. A session of Gnanadeepam starts with an interpretation of few shlokas from the Bhagavat Gita or Bhagavatham. Followed by an interactive storytelling session from Ramayanam or Mahabharatham, for the kids. Group meditation and bhajans helps improve concentration levels and eliminate negative thoughts. And finally, a potluck of simple delicious homemade food. Furthermore, we have initiated a daily meditation session over phone conference. So, let's all be part of this initiative and spend some time with good people and good thoughts. We had three sessions of Gnanadeepam in 2017. **Our hosts:** Vimal and Priya; Sudhir and Prathibha; Prasad and Rajani; Suresh and Savitha

Swami Udit Chaithanyaji in St. Louis

Similar to previous years, this year too we were blessed with the presence of Swami Udit Chaithanyaji in St. Louis.

The event was organized on July 15, 2018 at the basement of the Hindu Temple. A huge gathering including children attended his session. In his 2-hour lecture, Swamiji talked in depth about the connection between Mind and Spirituality. He also emphasized the importance for us to understand our scriptures and study about Hinduism, it's principles and policies, in the right way. It becomes really essential since we



are living in times where, on one side we have clear indications of a Hindu renaissance happening while on the other, the very core existence of Hinduism is being questioned. Ohmkaram is thankful to all our members who helped in organizing this event and hope we will be able to bring such eminent personalities to St. Louis in future also.

Temple Backdrop at Kerala Express

One of the major objective of Ohmkaram is to promoting Kerala Cultural Heritage. So, Ohmkaram presents a major performing arts program from Kerala Every year. To visualize and present a setting for many of our temple arts presented during this years program titled Kerala Express, the committee created a temple backdrop for the stage. Several committee members worked tirelessly on weekends for 2 months to bring this live. This temple backdrop features 16 feet by 12 feet high panel design with 3D effect and with lighting.

The front cross section of sreekovil, the main shrine of a typical Kerala Hindu temple. The sreekovil is the inner sanctum sanctorum where the idol of presiding deity is installed and worshiped. Sreekovil is usually built on a raised platform and has a flight of 3 or 5 steps, called Sopanam or Sopanapadi. Carved on either sides of the Sopanam are two large statues, known as Dwarapalakas (Door Guards) to guard the deity. The square walls of the Sreekovil is ornate with a gallery of metal oil lamps supported on wooden trellis all around. The 'Idol' itself is of Lord Krishna, the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu.



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Advaita Philosophy

Kallazhi Sivadasan

Man has always pondered over the questions as to what exactly is the system to hold this world, what is the purpose of man's life in the world, ways and means to achieve those goals and ultimately what should be the belief basis with which one keeps himself happy in the world.

Man watched the stars and the planetary system in the universe, the repeated precise occurrences of the climate variations and eclipses, etc., etc. He was forced to believe that this phenomenon could not take place in this world unless there is a discipline governed by a super brain or power. They called this reality as cosmic force or the plenipotentiary power beyond the ken of ordinary minds.

The ancient Indian mind gave expression to his ponderings and beliefs in the form of Vedic texts the essence of which are called the Sruthis (principal Upanishads/vedantha). The Sruti is a collection of experience and meditative insights about liberating knowledge. The upanishadic quest is to understand brahman, the source of everything, the Atman, the Self, and the relationship between brahman and Atman.

From the principal Upanishads developed six indian darshanas (philosophies) called Sankhya, nyaya, vaisheshika, yoga, poorva mimamsa and uttara mimamsa.

Uttaramimamsa - Advaita vedantha's roots trace back to the 1st millennium BCE. The most prominent exponent is the 8th century scholar Adi Shankara.

Advaita enunciates its idea that the soul (true Self, Atman) is the same as the highest metaphysical Reality (Brahman). The essential relationship between Atman and brahman is understood in different ways in the other vedantic philosophies.

Brahman:

Advaita, like all other Vedanta schools, states that Brahman referred to as sat-cit-ananda (truth-consciousness-bliss) is both the efficient and the material cause, "that from which the origination, subsistence, and dissolution of this universe proceed." What created all existence is also present in and reflected in all beings and inert matter, the creative principle was and is everywhere, always. It is not unreal, not unconsciousness, and it is not in the nature of pain.

Atman:

Jiva is subject-object, self and not-self, reality and appearance. It consists of the Atman limited or individuated by the object. It is the Atman in association with ajnana. Avidya or logical knowledge, causes the sense of individuality of the empirical self. Atma is compared to the universal space, and jiva to the same enclosed in a jar; and when the enclosed is destroyed, the limited space (ghattakasha) merges into the universal space (mahakasha). The two are one though for practical purposes we have to treat the two as distinct.

Purushartha:

Advaita, like other schools, accepts Puruṣārtha - the four goals of human life Dharma (the right way to life), Artha (wealth), Kāma (pleasure) and Mokṣha: spiritual liberation as natural and proper.

In Advaita Vedanta, the interest is not in liberation in after life, but in one's current life. This school holds that liberation can be achieved while living, and a person who achieves this is called a Jivanmukta.



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karma and previous experience with its sukshmasarira leaves the body. This subtle body does not meet with any obstacle in its way since it is transparent and at the same time could not be seen by any. This subtle body is not dissolved until liberation.

The subtle bodies of the wise are carried higher and higher on the path of gods (devayana) onwards into Brahman, where there is no return. The doers of works go upwards by the path of the (Fathers (pitryana) into the luminous region of the moon, enjoying there the fruit of their work, and then descend into a new birth determined by the character of the past life. Those who adhere neither to wisdom nor to works are assigned to a third place, and are born as lower animals and plants, which do not taste the bliss of the moon. Moksha is different from all of them.

Conclusion:

Sankara's system is unmatched for its metaphysical depth and logical power. He admits thought cannot solve all the problems, but stands in need of an intuitive grasp of reality. Sankara prefers the life of intuition to the light of understanding. It is great example of monistic idealism.

Ohmkaram Kids Crossword Puzzle

Challenge to all Ohmkaram kids – can they find their names in this crossword puzzle?

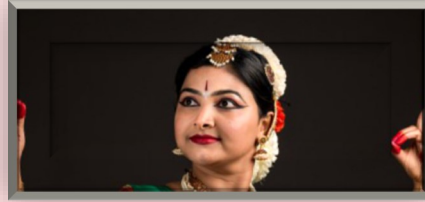
W	D	Q	A	S	W	E	R	T	Y	U	P	O	L	K	S	H	D	F	C	V	B
R	S	A	V	Y	A	H	A	R	A	N	S	N	I	G	H	D	H	A	H	K	N
T	G	M	E	E	N	A	K	S	H	I	U	V	E	D	A	E	R	A	N	A	M
Y	H	Y	M	F	G	H	J	K	L	A	R	S	H	Y	A	V	I	R	A	S	L
A	N	T	N	S	D	D	E	V	I	K	A	N	K	I	T	A	T	O	S	H	P
Q	D	H	Y	U	T	H	I	Q	D	G	B	A	E	C	S	N	H	M	L	I	O
X	H	I	E	F	A	Y	O	L	A	K	H	M	I	A	A	G	I	A	A	N	G
C	R	L	D	P	R	A	V	I	N	S	I	A	R	D	M	R	K	L	L	A	Z
G	U	I	S	H	Y	A	M	E	V	R	R	D	Z	H	I	U	A	R	I	T	W
H	V	A	I	S	H	N	A	V	I	I	A	H	N	W	R	B	J	L	T	H	Y
K	S	E	V	A	S	A	D	I	K	L	M	U	A	A	N	Y	O	M	H	U	T
E	I	G	A	U	R	I	I	N	A	A	A	L	N	I	Y	O	M	P	A	N	R
X	D	V	D	P	A	G	T	A	S	K	Y	I	D	T	R	N	K	R	M	R	E
T	D	A	I	A	O	P	H	Y	A	S	A	K	H	H	A	D	A	A	B	A	D
Y	H	S	T	R	A	C	I	K	O	H	Y	A	A	A	E	N	A	N	I	S	C
U	A	U	H	N	A	N	S	H	U	M	A	N	N	M	U	N	R	A	K	H	V
I	R	E	Y	I	B	A	S	H	W	I	N	V	A	I	B	H	A	V	A	M	B
O	T	L	A	K	S	H	I	T	A	R	J	U	N	T	N	E	V	A	N	I	N
P	H	O	S	A	M	E	E	R	A	K	A	S	H	A	L	I	K	A	L	O	M
J	A	S	H	I	L	S	H	Y	A	M	I	T	A	R	I	N	Y	O	M	I	U
F	N	O	S	H	R	U	T	H	I	M	E	S	U	S	H	A	N	T	U	I	P
A	Q	E	G	H	K	S	D	E	B	X	S	G	X	T	Y	I	J	W	J	J	L

Hints for puzzle on page 52 . . .

NATYAPADHANJALI SCHOOL OF DANCE

Artistic Director

Guru Prathibha Mannil



“NATYAPADHANJALI school of dance received certificate of appreciation for Women’s Empowerment *Yellow Rose Project* from Zonta club of St. Louis”



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Ohmkaram

Kid's Art



Madhulika Jinu, 2nd grade



Rama Alakkassery, 1st grade



Lalithambika Nair, 3rd grade



Aditya Nair, KG



Lalithambika Nair, 3rd grade



Surabhi Renjini, 1st grade



Shalika Menon, 10th grade



Hrithika Malugu, 5th grade



Aryan Valsa Pradeep, 6th grade

Shalika Menon, 10th grade



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Save Sabarimala



STL Ayyappa Seva Sangam successfully organized a protest meeting attended by few members of Ohmkaram to oppose Supreme court of India's latest ruling and the attitude of the Kerala State government against the centuries old custom followed in Sabarimala. These events led to immense hardship and grief to all Ayyappa devotees around the world.

Millions of Ayyappa devotees especially women rallied in the streets of Kerala protesting against the ruling and requesting Supreme court of India to accept a review petition against the it.

By organizing this protest in Mahatma Gandhi Center, St Louis MO on October 13, STL Ayyappa Seva Sangam wants to extend its support to all Ayyappa devotees and request the Kerala state government to respect the religious sentiments of all devotees.

~~ Ayyappa Jyothi ~~



Ayyappa Jyothi being performed by women.

Swami Saranam. In solidarity with Sabarimala Karmasamiti's Save Sabarimala movement, STL Ayyappa Seva Sangam & Ohmkaram participated in Ayyappa Jyothi at the St. Louis Hindu Temple during the Thalapoli function which was a part of the Mandala Pooja on the evening of 25th Dec 2018.

Ayyappa Jyothi was done by lifting the Thalapoli plate (consisting of a lamp and few flowers on an small mud plate) to the sky, and saying 'Swamiye Saranam Ayyappa' three times.

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REGENERATIVE MEDICINE: THE FUTURE OF JOINT & BACK PAIN THERAPY

Dr. Suresh Krishnan

When we think of joint pain, most people think of pain killers, joint supplements and injection of steroid therapy. In the realm of Orthopedics a relatively new frontier has opened up and it is relatively unknown at this time. They are called Ortho-biologics and it is becoming a rapidly growing field. The latest sub-specialty in the

field of orthopedics is called Interventional orthopedics. This does not involve conventional orthopedic surgery. It involves, as you can guess the use of Ortho-biologics.

So, you might be wondering what is Ortho-biologics. This involves taking a person's blood centrifuging the blood sample at certain specific speeds, and separating the components and using them as needed, appropriately.

The mechanism behind the use of Ortho-biologics is the benefit obtained from the end products we obtain. The end products contain a lot of growth factors, which help in healing and repairing the tissue that has been damaged by constant use and also due to injury. This is the concept behind Interventional Orthopedics. Instead of surgically removing damaged tissue, try to repair the tissue with use of body's own healing powers. These cells with healing powers are present in our own body. We can extract them and place them in places where they need to be in order to heal our damaged tissue.

The cells we are using are called stem cells. They are more specifically called Mesenchymal stem cells. These cells are so helpful in treating various diseases, they are called, sometimes Medicinal stem cells. The reason why they need to be extracted from the bone marrow or fat is because they cannot get out of their native location. They are mostly present in the bone marrow and fat. They are obtained by doing either a bone marrow aspiration or a fat extraction. The bone marrow aspirate or fat is then centrifuged with a special centrifuge and the resulting extract is then injected into the area we need to treat.

The other common product used is platelet rich plasma. The platelets contain a large amount of platelet derived growth factors. They also have the healing power but to a lesser extent than the stem cells.

The biggest advantage of this therapy is there is no down time after the procedure. There is no hospitalization, required. You can return to work the same day. You will notice improvement in function as each day passes. Usually 2 or 3 treatments would be needed to achieve the best and long lasting results.

Common conditions treated are knee arthritis, hip joint arthritis, shoulder joint arthritis. Experts in the field also treat ankle pain tendon ruptures or tears, back pain neck pain and headaches. Research is also going on to treat end stage cardiac failure. Injections have to be done by people who are trained in the field and have sufficient knowledge of the anatomy and pathology and should not be done by someone who is brave enough to place a needle in you.

The best part of this new treatment is that people have avoided replacing knee and hip joints because of this treatment. This has been proved to be a good treatment choice for rheumatoid and osteoarthritis of the hands and feet. This is an excellent treatment for tennis elbow and golfers elbow pain.

Dr. Suresh Krishnan has an MD, and is a practicing physician for Interventional Pain Care and Regenerative Medicine in St. Charles – O'Fallon areas.



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My Special Spotlight Day

- Lakshita Senthil, 7th grade



A young, 8-year old girl stood in the sunlight shining through a glass window, trying to see her future. She held a microphone and talked to herself in a quiet, shy voice, “Just me, mom, and 2 long months of practice”. That was me, Lakshita Senthil. I may not be a professional singer just yet, but like all young talented artists, I was also nervous on my special day - the day I decided I want to become a singer.

One Sunday evening in 2014, my mom, dad, and I traveled to Gandhi Center, a tall brown building surrounded by colorful lights and cars of all different shapes and sizes. The road was a tarmac ribbon, one that had been worn out because of time. It was lined by several trees and allowed a white line to run down the center. What seemed to be a giant’s home welcomed me with open doors and beautiful flowers. As my parents and I walked in, I immediately caught a glimpse of the hundreds of children and adults seated in blue and red chairs. The sparkling crystal chandeliers stared at the red velvet floor. My parents led me to the metal stairs which I climbed with my high heels and flowing purple dress. As we arrived at the auditorium the hosts handed us tiny white pamphlets. My eyes quickly caught my name in it and I read it out loud “Number 20: Lakshita Senthil’s solo song - ‘Who’s The Hero’”.

The number of people invented a countless number of butterflies in my stomach. All this time I was fine, I felt this day would go by smoothly. I secretly whispered to myself, “What if I forget a line? What if I sing in the wrong pitch? What if my voice cracks?”

The beautiful angel on my left shoulder spoke in a voice as soft as a cloud, “Don’t think so negative. You got this.”

The black devil on my right shoulder hissed, “You’re totally going to flunk this song on stage... you’ll get a bad reputation in the end... your mom won’t be happy with you.”

My mom spoke in her soft, gentle voice, reading my mind “Don’t be scared. We’ve practiced for two months and you’ve pretty much mastered it.”

Before I could reply the lights went out and the murmurs in the enormous room muted. A bellowing voice spoke into the microphone, “Welcome to the 2014 Onam celebration hosted by Omkaram”. Then she spoke about the president and vice president who gave short speeches. I almost slept in my cushioned chair-probably because I can’t understand Malayalam. Other people danced, sang, and told jokes to entertain the audience. We either laughed to the point where salty tears came out of our eyes or watched in awe, speechless. Giggles and murmurs filled the room each time someone’s performance ended. Time flew by pretty fast, because I suddenly heard my name being called through a microphone.

I took a big gulp of hot water, cleared my throat, and rushed up to the polished hardwood stage. “Please welcome Lakshita who will be singing ‘Who’s The Hero’,” the bold voice said. The red velvet curtains opened just to let me see a bigger crowd than I saw before. My heart started beating faster. Thump, thump. Kids ran around and adults stared right into my dark brown eyes. The bright light’s orange and yellow tones beamed on my face like multiple suns in the sky, almost blinding me. Professional photographers stood high on small blue chairs taking my photo. There was no going back now, so I thought I might as well think positive. I closed my eyes and simply erased the audience from my head and replaced them with a single person - my mom. Now there was no reason for me to

hesitate. We had been practicing together and she enjoyed my music while giving helpful feedback. I tightened my grasp on the cold microphone, ready to overcome my stage fright. One.. two.. three.. go. I started to sing, following the karaoke's rhythm like a map "Who's the hero... Who's the hero... kaka vanda vadhearo..." The words flowed from my mouth subconsciously. I began to overcome one of my biggest fears. In about three minutes I was at the hardest part of the song-sustaining one note for eight long beats. Time was a snail, inching forward making every minute seem like an hour. I struggled to breathe. My voice started to waver and become quieter. A tear ran down my chocolate brown skin. I couldn't let the crowd down though. They looked at me with anxious eyes watching me struggle to hold one note for eight beats in a bold voice. So, I sang like a foghorn, loud and clear, "zarooooooooooooooooooooo." The crowd burst into cheers, whistles, and a loud applause. I shivered in happiness as I walked down the stairs and heard many compliments and praises from people I didn't even know. My mom sprinted to me and hugged me tightly with her soft, tender arms and congratulated me on my success, "I knew you could do it sweetie." That's it. I was done. I finally made it!

The savory aroma drifted into my nose, making me sprint downstairs in my flowing silk gown. I was quickly given my spicy food, though it seemed to be a lengthy line from a distance. As I devoured the rice, beans, and flavorsome vegetable curries on my plate, many unknown people who had been in the crowd earlier gifted me comments and so much love. This one aunty exclaimed, "I will be waiting for you to become a singer one day. I am always your fan." When the unforgettable memories filled my mind and put a wide grin on my face, I thought, "Today was an amazing day... It's a good thing I didn't listen to the black devil on my shoulder."

Nyomi's Art



Ohmkaram Kids Crossword

Hints for Puzzle... from page 41

Names in Alphabetical Order		
Abhiram	Dhyuthi	Sameera
Adithi	Gauri	Samir
Adithya	Hritiika	Sauparnika
Adwaith	Kashinathun	Savyaharan
Akash	Lakhshita	Shalika
Amit	Lakhshmi	Shruthi
Ankita	Lalithambika	Shyam
Anshuman	Madhulika	Sidharth
Anvika	Maya	Snigdha
Arav	Meenakshi	Srilakshmi
Arin	Mythili	Surabhi
Arjun	Nandhana	Sushanth
Aromal	Neva	Vaibhav
Arshya	Nyomi	Vaishnavi
Arshya	Omkaar	Vani
Ashwin	Pranav	Vasu
Devang	Pravin	Veda
Devika	Rama	Vinayak
Dhruv	Rashmi	
Dhyaan	Ruby	

The Village of Kuta in Bali, Indonesia

Sameera Sankar, 9th grade

The village of Kuta in Bali, Indonesia is a place of unique culture, breathtaking scenery, and bright faces. I will be telling you about my observations for two weeks with my family.

I was awakened by this whole different world of culture and customs, despite being in a place that's popular with tourists. Women were riding on motorcycles with baskets on their head, and most native people were wearing traditional clothing, such as sarongs and towels/flowers in their hair. Sometimes I even saw young kids ride on bikes with the dangerous streets full of unpredictable traffic. They were on the side of the road, but it made my mom bring up a valuable statement that stuck with me. "They probably ride their bikes to pick up milk or something from the grocery store." Life like that sounds quite tough.



Our driver told that events/festivals happen on certain days of the week. We attended a fire dance at the Zoo while we were doing "dinner with elephants." Another popular event we attended is bathing in holy water in the temple called Tirta Empul, which has a backstory that you can read upon, relating to one of the gods. Bali is an area heavily influenced by Hinduism, but most areas in Indonesia are heavily influenced by Islam. Since the weather is hot, the cool water is really refreshing and stress-relieving. Almost everywhere I went there was a little box full of flowers, incense, and coins. The flowers seem to stain, as my babysitter had color all over her fingers. Our driver told us that they were offerings to the gods. It seems as if sales are a big thing in Kuta, and the people are persistent when trying to get you to buy their product. It probably has something to do with this being a tourist area.

We went to two popular beaches while we were there. One had pretty clear and blue waters, but there were many rocks and it wasn't deep. Admittedly, it was more private. The other beach was more popular & crowded, but deeper and there was a little cave that we explored. We also went to a few temples, and it's a custom that we all wear sarongs to them. For the most part, at the temples we walked around to see the different statues and other scenery. At the zoos they let you get close to the animals, and we got the chance to hold an orangutan's hand, feed meerkats, ride elephants, and feed them as well! It was a long drive, but we drove all the way to the monkey temple. Those monkeys are quite cheeky, as one stole my sister's toy and started eating it. Luckily, they didn't steal anything else!

If you ever visit Bali, you'll notice that the air is filled with natural positive energy. In our resort hotel, we were always greeted with wide smiles and great service. Sometimes they even left us with little gifts in our room. At the mall, they were very lenient, letting us do mall activities without orderly bossing us around. There were also people who would come up to us and ask for our pictures. Instead of constant work and stimulant activities, people would relax and attend events and come to temples to watch dances or look at the scenery as such. I wish that it was like that everywhere. Wouldn't that be nice?

With all of these things being put into play here, Bali is definitely a wonderful place to visit and I had a great time.

The Fall of Abhimanyu

Vijayalakshmi Harish

The thirteenth day at Kurukshetra
verily an unfortunate day
for this is the day a hero falls
the likes of which were never seen again

there he stands on his chariot
his armour shooting arrows of light
truly he looks like the son
of the king of the night

but his face is clouded with worry
mind disturbed by confusion
a David among Goliaths he stands
a mammoth task on his youthful shoulders

his uncle, the king must be protected
his father is away
the enemy has planned a tricky strategy
a war formation-which only he knows how to break

The Chakravyuha or Padmavyuha as it is called
in the shape of a circular lotus it is arranged
a deadly trap like a venus fly-catcher
death is certain for those who enter

*"I know how to enter, he laments
but of how to escape i i am unaware
my father taught it to my mother
when I was in her womb*

*but my lovely mother fell asleep
uninterested in the skills of warfare
so I learnt only how to enter
and of knowledge of the exit I was deprived"*

*"Go forth bravely", his uncle says,
we'll follow you closely
no one can harm even a hair
on your head while we are there*

and so Abhimanyu enters
a hero-true to his name
with courage in his heart
and the Lord's name on his lips

he prays, *'let me make my father proud today'*
like a lion he is fierce, like an eagle swift
ten thousand soldiers fall
under his wrathful gaze

so rapidly do his arrows fly
that they remain unseen to the eye
only their stabbing tip is felt
before the receivers keel over and die

the brave warrior forges on
unaware of the goings on
his uncles have been trapped behind
he's alone behind the enemy line

when he realizes the danger
its far too late
a true warrior does not his fate berate
bravely onwards he wanders

finding chinks in the enemy's armour
he is Yama himself incarnate
into every heart he strikes a mindless fear
claiming lives as he plans an escape

but treachery raises its evil head
alone he battles a crowd
Karna, Drona, Vrshasena, Salya, Durmashana
Duryodhana, Dussasana, Lakshmana, Aswathaman

and Kritavarman all surround
scavengers against this lonely lion
Karna does his bowstrings break
and Kritavarman leaves him chariotless

multiple arrows upon him rain
he is now grievously wounded
yet unnerved and undaunted
he rises with sword and shield in hand

he challenges his attackers thus,
"O mighty warriors, this cowardly act
does not your stature befit, the laws of war
do not prescribe for many to stand against one

*come one by one and I shall be glad
to give you a good fight
and in this fair combat befitting kings
may the best man win"*

but his plea for fairness went unheard
Karna breaks his shield and Drona cuts his sword
unarmed and bleeding he employs
his chariot wheel as a final defense

but corruption is a cruel master
that ruled the minds of his attackers
together in all injustice
they smash the chariot wheel to smithereens

they laugh their wicked laughs
and rejoice at Abhimanyu's helplessness
to his honour and their ignominy
with ruthlessness they strike

with deceitful swords he is felled
but even in death he is dignified
his only regret is that he shall not live to see
his queen, Uttara and his child

but as he thinks of his father
his heart is filled with pride
"look father", he screams to the skies
"your son has died a hero's death"

*"against many Maharathis he has stood his ground
and fulfilled his dharma - he hopes you are proud
his last wish is that you should avenge
the treason that has driven him to this end"*

with these last words
he leaves this world
the villains around him dance
in a shameful victory celebration

poor Abhimanyu - his words echoed
filling the battlefield with dread
his uncles hear his bellowing roars
and know that their beloved is dead

with their mind-numbing sorrow
comes their unquenchable fear
how will they let their brother know
that he must light his son's pyre

with bloodshot eyes they swear
that his noble death will be avenged
and then they fall deeper in sorrow
as the sun sets upon their beloved

his blood mixes with the earth
as the Gods rain praises above him
"here lies a true champion
unbeaten and courageous

*his death shall be a reminder
that honour comes not with age
but by one's actions is one's worth determined
ascend Abhimanyu to the heavens!"*

The thirteenth day at Kurukshetra
verily an unfortunate day
for this is the day a hero fell
the likes of which were never seen again



മനസ്സ് എന്ന പ്രതിഭാസം

രമണി വത്സരാജൻ

മനസ്സ് എന്ന പ്രതിഭാസത്തെ എങ്ങനെ അവതരിപ്പിക്കണമെന്നറിയാതെ എന്റെ മനസ്സാകെ ഇരുട്ടിൽ തപ്പുകയായിരുന്നു. അതേ അതാണ് സാക്ഷാൽ മനസ്സ്. ആർക്കും പിടികൊടുക്കാതെ തെന്നിമാറുന്ന മനസ്സ്. അതിനെ പിടിച്ചുകെട്ടാനുള്ള ശ്രമം വിജയിച്ചുവെന്ന് ഇപ്പോഴും പറയാൻ ആവില്ല. എങ്കിലും നമുക്ക് അന്വേഷണം ആരംഭിക്കാം. ആ പഠനം എവിടെ നിന്നും തുടങ്ങണം? ഫ്രോയിഡിൽ നിന്നോ അതോ യൂങ്ങിൽ നിന്നോ? നമ്മളെന്തിന് പാശ്ചാത്യരുടെ പിന്നാലെ പോകണം? നമുക്ക് വേദ കാലഘട്ടത്തിലേക്ക് പോകാം. നമ്മളെ വിസ്മയിപ്പിക്കുന്ന അറിവുകൾ അവിടെ നിന്നും ലഭിക്കും. മനസ്സിന്റെ ശക്തിയെ സംബന്ധിച്ച പഠനങ്ങൾ ആരംഭിച്ചത് വേദ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ ഭാരതത്തിലാണ്. ഉപനിഷത്ത് ദർശനങ്ങളിൽ ഈ പഠനം കാണാവുന്നതാണ്. കപിലമുനിയുടെ “സാംഖ്യദർശനം” ആണ് ഭാരതത്തിലെ, ലോകത്തിലെ തന്നെ ആദ്യത്തെ സമഗ്രമായ മനഃശാസ്ത്ര ഗ്രന്ഥം. നാം ആരാണ് എന്ന അന്വേഷണത്തിനൊടുവിലാണ് മനസ്സിനെ നാം അറിയുന്നത്. നാം ആരായിരിക്കണം എന്ന് തീരുമാനിക്കുന്നത് നമ്മുടെ മനസ്സ് മാത്രമാണ്. ആ മനസ്സിനെ അടുത്തറിയാനുള്ള ശ്രമങ്ങളാണ് മനഃശാസ്ത്ര പഠനങ്ങൾ.

മനസ്സ് എന്നും മനുഷ്യനൊരു പ്രഹേളികയാണ്. മനസ്സ് യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ എവിടെയാണ് ഇരിക്കുന്നത്? നമ്മൾ ടെലിവിഷനിൽ കാണുന്ന പരിപാടികൾ, ടെലിവിഷൻ സെറ്റിനുള്ളിൽ അല്ലല്ലോ ഉള്ളത്. അതുപോലെ മനസ്സ് ശരീരത്തിൽ ഏതെങ്കിലും പ്രത്യേകിച്ചൊരു ഭാഗത്ത്, ഒരു അവയവത്തിൽ അല്ല ഇരിക്കുന്നത്. മനസ്സ് ഹൃദയത്തിലല്ല, മനസ്സ് ഹൃദയമല്ല. മനസ്സ് തകർന്നു, ഹൃദയം തകർന്നു എന്നൊക്കെ നമ്മൾ പറയുമെങ്കിലും. ദുഃഖം വരുമ്പോൾ നെഞ്ചിൽ ഒരു വേദന, വിഷൽ, വിഷമം ഒക്കെ അനുഭവപ്പെടാറുണ്ട്. സന്തോഷവും സംതൃപ്തിയും ഉണ്ടാകുമ്പോൾ ഒരു പ്രത്യേക അനുഭൂതി ഉടലെടുക്കുന്നതും നെഞ്ചിലാണ്. അതുകൊണ്ട് ഹൃദയത്തിലാണ് മനസ്സ് സ്ഥിതിചെയ്യുന്നതെന്ന് നമ്മൾ കരുതുന്നു. പക്ഷെ ഹൃദയത്തിലല്ല മനസ്സ്. നമ്മുടെ ബോധതലത്തിലാണ് മനസ്സ് ഇരിക്കുന്നത്.

മനസ്സ് ഒരിക്കലും ഹൃദയത്തിനകത്തല്ല ഇരിക്കുന്നത്. ചുടുകരണം പമ്പ് ചെയ്യലും രക്തചംക്രമണവും വാൽവുകൾ അടയലും തുറക്കലും ഹൃദയമിടിപ്പിന്റെ താളവും ശബ്ദവും ബഹുവുമെല്ലാമുള്ള, 24 മണിക്കൂറും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്ന ഒരു ഫാക്ടറിയാണ് ഹൃദയം. മനുഷ്യശരീരത്തിലേക്ക് 5.7 ലിറ്റർ രക്തം പമ്പ് ചെയ്യുന്ന അവയവമാണ് ഹൃദയം. ഒരു മിനിറ്റിൽ 60 മുതൽ 80 പ്രാവശ്യം, ഒരു ദിവസം 100000 പ്രാവശ്യം, ഒരു മനുഷ്യന്റെ ജീവിതകാലത്ത് ഏകദേശം 3 ബില്യൻ പ്രാവശ്യം ഹൃദയം മിടിക്കും മുദ്ദല വികാരങ്ങളൊക്കെയുള്ള മനസ്സിന് ഒരിക്കലും അങ്ങനെയൊരു സ്ഥലത്ത് ഇരിക്കാൻ സാധിക്കില്ല.

മനസ്സ് വിചാര വികാരങ്ങളുടെ കേന്ദ്രമാണ്. ശാരീരിക കർമ്മങ്ങളോട് മനസ്സ് കൂടി യോജിക്കുമ്പോഴാണ് ആ കർമ്മങ്ങൾക്ക് പൂർണ്ണത കൈവരുന്നത്. കണ്ണ് തുറന്നിരുന്നാലും നമ്മൾ ഒരു കാഴ്ച കാണണമെന്നില്ല, മനസ്സ് ആ വിഷയത്തിൽ ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചില്ലെങ്കിൽ. മനസ്സ് ഒരു വികൃതിക്കുട്ടിയെ പോലെ മാറി നിന്നാൽ പഞ്ചേന്ദ്രിയങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ടും നമുക്കൊരു ഗുണവുമില്ല. കണ്ണുകൾ കാഴ്ചകൾ കാണില്ല, മുക്ക് ഗന്ധമറിയില്ല, നാവ് രുചിയറിയില്ല, ചെവികൾ ശബ്ദം കേൾക്കില്ല, ത്വക്ക് സ്പർശമറിയില്ല. നമ്മൾ അശ്രദ്ധമായിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ പറയാറില്ലേ, ഞാനത് കണ്ടില്ല, കേട്ടില്ല, തെട്ടത് അറിഞ്ഞില്ല എന്നെല്ലാം? ആ കാഴ്ചകളും ഗന്ധവും രുചിയും സ്പർശവും എല്ലാം അവിടെ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അവിടെ ഒന്നുമാത്രം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. മനസ്സിന്റെ സാന്നിധ്യം മാത്രം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല.

ഒരു ജീവൻ ഓരോ ഘട്ടത്തിലൂടെ കടന്ന് ഒരു പരിപൂർണ്ണ മനുഷ്യനായി പരിണമിക്കുന്നത് എങ്ങനെയെന്ന് സാംഖ്യദർശനത്തിൽ കപില മഹർഷി വിവരിക്കുന്നു. ആത്മാവ് ശരീരത്തിൽ പ്രവേശിച്ചു കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ ഓരോന്ന് ഓരോന്നായി രൂപപ്പെടുന്നു. അഹംബോധം, ചിത്തം, ബുദ്ധി, മനസ്സ്, അഞ്ച് ജ്ഞാനേന്ദ്രിയങ്ങൾ, അഞ്ച് കർമ്മേന്ദ്രിയങ്ങൾ, പത്ത് പ്രാണനുകൾ. അങ്ങനെ ആകെ ഇരുപത്തിനാല് എണ്ണത്തിനെ തിട്ടപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവയെ തിട്ടപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നത് ഇരുപത്തിയഞ്ചാമത്തെ എണ്ണമായ കാലമാണ്. ഈ ഇരുപത്തിയഞ്ച് എണ്ണത്തിനെയും നിയന്ത്രിക്കുന്നത് ഹൃദയരൻ അല്ലെങ്കിൽ ആ പ്രപഞ്ച ചൈതന്യമാണ്. ഇത്രയും വിശദമായാണ് കപിലമുനി മനുഷ്യമനസ്സിനെ വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നത്.

“മനഃകൃതം തത്കൃതം രാമ” എന്ന് യോഗാവസിഷ്ഠത്തിൽ ശ്രീരാമനോട് വസിഷ്ഠ മഹർഷി പറയുന്നുണ്ട്. മനസ്സിൽ എന്താണോ ചെയ്തത്, അതാണ് ചെയ്തത്. മനസ്സിൽ ചെയ്യാത്തതൊന്നും ചെയ്തതല്ല എന്നാണ് ആ സംസ്കൃത വാക്കുകളുടെ അർത്ഥം. ഇന്ന് ലോകത്തിലെ എല്ലായിടത്തുമുള്ള കോടതികൾ അംഗീകരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള ഒരു നിയമമാണിത്. നേരത്തെ മനസ്സിൽ ചിന്തിച്ചുറപ്പിച്ചിട്ടാണോ ഒരാൾ ഒരു കുറ്റകൃത്യം ചെയ്തത് അതോ പെട്ടെന്നുള്ള ഒരു വികാരത്തിനിടിപ്പെട്ട് അത് ചെയ്തു പോയതാണോ എന്ന് നിതിപീഠങ്ങൾ ഇന്ന് പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു. കുറ്റകൃത്യത്തിൽ മനസ്സ് കൂടി പങ്കെടുത്തിട്ടുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ശിക്ഷ കടുത്തതായിരിക്കും.

ആധുനിക മനഃശാസ്ത്രം ബോധമനസ്സ്, അബോധമനസ്സ് എന്നിങ്ങനെയാണ് മനസ്സിനെ തരം തിരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. ഈ അബോധമനസ്സ് തന്നെയാണ് ഉപബോധമനസ്സ്. ഫ്രോയിഡാണ് ഈ ആശയം മുന്നോട്ടു വെച്ചത്. ശിഷ്യനായ യൂങ്ങ് കളക്ടീവ് അൺകോൺഷ്യസ് മൈൻഡ് എന്ന മൂന്നാമതൊന്നിനെ കൂടി അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. അതായത് നമ്മുടെ പൂർവ്വികരുടെ അനുഭവങ്ങൾ. പൂർവ്വികരായ മനുഷ്യരുടെ മാത്രമല്ല, പരിണാമം വഴി ഉണ്ടായ അമീബ മുതൽ ഇങ്ങോട്ടുള്ള സകല ജീവികളുടേയും അനുഭവങ്ങൾ, ഓർമ്മകൾ ഒക്കെ മനുഷ്യന്റെ മനസ്സിലുണ്ടാവും. കുറങ്ങുമാർ ഉറങ്ങുന്ന സമയത്ത് മരത്തിൽ നിന്നും വിഴുന്ന ഓർമകളാണ്, നമ്മൾ ഉറക്കത്തിൽ താഴെ വീഴുന്നതായ സ്വപ്നം കാണാൻ കാരണം. രക്തം അപകടങ്ങളുടെ പൂർവികാനുഭവമാണ്. ചുവപ്പു നിറം നമ്മിൽ ഭയം ജനിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. പച്ചനിറം ഐശ്വര്യ സൂചകമാവുന്നതും അതുകൊണ്ടാണ്. പച്ചനിറം എന്നത് സസ്യങ്ങൾ, ധാന്യങ്ങൾ, പഴങ്ങൾ കൃഷിയിടത്തോടനുബന്ധമായി കാണുന്ന നദി, ദാഹജലം അങ്ങനെ പല ഓർമ്മകൾ ഉണർത്തുന്നു. ഒരു പശുവിന്റെ പുറത്ത് കാക്കയിരിക്കുന്നത് പൂർവികാനുഭവത്തിൽ കൂടി പശു തന്നെ ഉപദ്രവിക്കില്ലെന്നു കാക്കക്ക് ഉറപ്പുള്ളതുകൊണ്ടാണ്. പക്ഷെ ഒരു മനുഷ്യനെ കണ്ടാൽ കാക്ക പറന്നു പോവും. അത് മനുഷ്യന്റെ കയ്യിലിരിപ്പുകൊണ്ടാണ്.

ഈ പൂർവ്വികാനുഭവം, പൂർവ്വികരുടെ അനുഭവം എന്നൊക്കെ പറഞ്ഞാൽ നമ്മുടെ മുൻജന്മങ്ങളിലെ അനുഭവങ്ങളുടെ ഓർമ്മകൾ അല്ലാതെ മറ്റെന്താണ്? നമ്മുടെ സ്വന്തം അനുഭവങ്ങളുടെ ഓർമ്മകൾ അല്ലാതെ നമ്മുടെ പൂർവ്വികരുടെ അനുഭവങ്ങളുടെ ഓർമ്മകൾ നമുക്കുണ്ടാവില്ല. നമ്മൾ സ്വയം അനുഭവിക്കാത്ത ഒരു കാര്യവും നമ്മുടെ ഓർമ്മകളിൽ ഉണ്ടാവില്ല. അതായത് പുനർജന്മം ഉണ്ട് എന്നത് ആധുനിക മനഃശാസ്ത്രം പറയാതെ പറയുകയാണ്. പുനർജന്മം എന്നോ മുൻ ജന്മങ്ങൾ എന്നോ ഉള്ള വാക്കുകൾ അവർ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നില്ല എന്നു മാത്രം.

മനസ്സ് മനുഷ്യന്റെ ശരീരത്തിൽ എവിടെയാണെന്ന് പോലും നമുക്കറിയില്ല. അത് ശരീരത്തിലെ ഒരു അവയവം പോലുമല്ല. പക്ഷെ മനസ്സിനെപ്പോലെ പഴികേട്ടിട്ടുള്ള മറ്റൊന്നില്ല. നമ്മുടെ എല്ലാ ദുഃഖങ്ങൾക്കും ദുരിതങ്ങൾക്കും കാരണം മനസ്സാണെന്ന് ഗുരുക്കന്മാരും മനഃശാസ്ത്ര വിദഗ്ദ്ധരും പറയുന്നു. മനസ്സിനെ ഒരു കുരങ്ങനോട് ഉപമിക്കാറുണ്ട്. ഒരിടത്ത് ഉറച്ചിരിക്കാതെ മറച്ചില്ലകൾ തോറും ചാടിചാടിനടക്കുന്ന കുരങ്ങന്റെ സ്വഭാവമാണ് മനസ്സിന്. ഒരു മിനിറ്റ് പോലും വെറുതെയിരിക്കാൻ മനസ്സിനാവില്ല. കടിഞ്ഞാണിലൊഴിഞ്ഞുപോയ ഒരു കുതിരയെപ്പോലെയാണ് മനസ്സെന്നു പറയാറുണ്ട്. മനസ്സിലെ ചിന്തകളെ നമ്മളെത്ര വിചാരിച്ചാലും നിയന്ത്രിക്കാൻ പലപ്പോഴും സാധിക്കില്ല. അനാവശ്യമായ ആ ചിന്തകൾ മനസ്സിന് മിക്കവാറും ദുഃഖമായിരിക്കും നൽകുക. മനസ്സിന് ദുഃഖവും ആകുലതയും ആകാംക്ഷയും പേറി നടക്കാനാണ് കൂടുതൽ താല്പര്യം. മനസ്സിന്റെ സ്ഥായിയായ ഭാവം പലപ്പോഴും ദുഃഖമാണ്. മനസ്സ് സന്തോഷിക്കുന്ന സമയം വിരളമാണ്. മനസ്സിലെ ആഗ്രഹങ്ങൾ തീരമാലകളെ പോലെയാണ്. ഒന്ന് കഴിയുമ്പോൾ മറ്റൊന്നായി ആഗ്രഹങ്ങൾ മനസ്സിൽ ഉയരുന്നു. അവ സഫലമായില്ലെങ്കിൽ പിന്നെ മനസ്സിൽ നിരാശ ഉടലെടുക്കും. നിരാശ ദുഃഖമായി പരിണമിക്കും.

മനസ്സിന് ഒരു സമയത്ത് ഒരു ഇന്ദ്രിയവുമായി മാത്രമേ ബന്ധപ്പെടാൻ സാധിക്കൂ. കാണുമ്പോൾ കണ്ണുകൾ മാത്രമേ പ്രവർത്തിക്കൂ. ഭക്ഷണം കഴിക്കുന്ന സമയത്ത് നമ്മൾ കാണുന്നില്ല. കാണുന്ന സമയത്ത് നമ്മൾ കേൾക്കുന്നില്ല. കേൾക്കുമ്പോൾ നമ്മൾ സ്പർശം അറിയുന്നില്ല. മനസ്സ് അഞ്ച് ഇന്ദ്രിയങ്ങളിലും മാറി മാറി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു. മനസ്സ് അതിവേഗതയിലാണ് ഒരു ഇന്ദ്രിയത്തിൽ നിന്നും മറ്റൊന്നിലേക്ക് പോകുന്നത്. അതുകൊണ്ട് മനസ്സ് ഒരേ സമയത്ത് തന്നെ എല്ലാ ഇന്ദ്രിയങ്ങളിലും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് കരുതുന്നു. ഇതിനാണ് “മനോവേഗം” എന്ന് പറയുന്നത്. യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ മനസ്സ് ഒരു സമയത്ത് ഒരു ഇന്ദ്രിയവുമായി മാത്രമേ ബന്ധപ്പെടുന്നുള്ളൂ. മനോവേഗം എന്ന വളരെ വേഗതയിൽ നടക്കുന്ന പ്രതിഭാസം മൂലമാണ് നമുക്ക് അവയെല്ലാം ഒരേ സമയത്തു നടക്കുന്നതായി തോന്നുന്നത്.

പഞ്ചേന്ദ്രിയങ്ങളെയും പ്രവർത്തിപ്പിക്കുന്നതും പ്രവർത്തിപ്പിക്കാതിരിക്കുന്നതും നമ്മുടെ ആത്മാവാണ്. കണ്ണ് തുറന്നിരുന്നാലും ഒരു കാഴ്ച കാണാൻ പറ്റാത്തത് മനസ്സ് ആ വിഷയത്തിൽ മുഴുകാത്തതു കൊണ്ടാണ്. മനസ്സ് മറ്റേതെങ്കിലും വിഷയത്തിൽ മുഴുകിയിരിക്കുന്നതു കൊണ്ടാണ്. ആദ്യം ആത്മാവ് പിന്നെ ആത്മാവിന്റെ ഒരാവരണം പോലെ മനസ്സ്. അതിനുപുറത്ത് പഞ്ചേന്ദ്രിയങ്ങൾ. അങ്ങനെയാണ് അവയുടെ ഘടന. മനസ്സ് വഴിയാണ് ആത്മാവിന് ഇന്ദ്രിയങ്ങളുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെടാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നത്. മനസ്സ് വഴി മാത്രമേ അതിന് കഴിയൂ. ആത്മാവ് ശരീരത്തിൽ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നത് മനസ്സ് വഴിയാണ്.

വ്യക്തിത്വ വികസനം, ജീവിതവിജയം എന്നിവ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുന്ന വിദഗ്ദ്ധരും പ്രാധാന്യം നൽകുന്നത് മനസ്സിനാണ്, ബുദ്ധിക്കല്ല. മനസ്സിനു പരിശീലനം നൽകിയാൽ നമുക്ക് ഏതു കാര്യവും നേടിയെടുക്കാം. മനസ്സിലാണ് എല്ലാത്തരം ദുർബലങ്ങളും ഉള്ളത് അവയെ തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞ് മനസ്സിൽ നിന്നും എണ്ണുന്നേക്കുമായി ഒഴിവാക്കാനുള്ള മാർഗ്ഗങ്ങളാണ് ആ വിദഗ്ദ്ധർ പരിശീലിപ്പിക്കുന്നത്. അങ്ങനെ അപകർഷതാബോധം ഇല്ലാതാവുകയും, ആത്മവിശ്വാസവും ലക്ഷ്യബോധവും ഉള്ള പുതിയ വ്യക്തികളായി അവർ മാറുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. മനസ്സിന്റെ അനന്തമായ ശക്തികൾ തിരിച്ചറിയാനാണ് വിദഗ്ദ്ധർ പറയുന്നത്. മനസ്സിന്റെ ഭാവനാശക്തിയെ ഉയർത്താനുള്ള പരിശീലനം അവർ നൽകും. നമ്മുടെ ആഗ്രഹങ്ങളെ എല്ലാ ദിവസവും മനസ്സിൽ കാണുക (വിഷലൈസ് ചെയ്യുക). നല്ലൊരു വീട് ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന വ്യക്തി, അയാളുടെ സങ്കല്പത്തിലുള്ള വീട്ടിൽ താമസിക്കുന്നതായി മനസ്സിൽ എപ്പോഴും കാണുക. ഉയർന്ന പദവിയിലുള്ള ഒരു ജോലി ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്ന വ്യക്തി, താൻ ആ പദവിയിൽ ഇരുന്നു ജോലി ചെയ്യുന്നതായി മനസ്സിൽ എപ്പോഴും കാണുക. മനസ്സിൽ തുടരെത്തുടരെ അത്തരം വിഷലൈസേഷൻ നടക്കുമ്പോൾ അതിനു വേണ്ടിയുള്ള അശ്രാന്ത പരിശ്രമത്തിലേക്ക് മനസ്സും ബുദ്ധിയും ശരീരവും ഒന്നിച്ചു നീങ്ങുകയും തന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യത്തിലേക്ക് വ്യക്തി എത്തിച്ചേരുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ വിഗ്രഹം പ്രതിഷ്ഠിക്കുന്ന പ്രക്രിയയ്ക്ക് പറയുന്നത് “പ്രാണപ്രതിഷ്ഠ” എന്നാണ്. തന്ത്രി സ്വന്തം പ്രാണശക്തി ശില്പത്തിലേക്ക് പകർന്നു നൽകിയാണ് അതിനെ ചൈതന്യമുള്ള ഒരു വിഗ്രഹമാക്കി മാറ്റുന്നത്. അല്ലാതെ ഈശ്വരനിൽ നിന്നോ മറ്റെവിടെയെങ്കിലും നിന്നോ പ്രത്യേകിച്ചൊരു അലൗകികശക്തിയും ആവാഹിച്ചെടുത്ത് ശില്പത്തിനു നൽകുന്നില്ല. തന്ത്രിയുടെ - അതായത് ജീവിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു മനുഷ്യന്റെ - പ്രാണശക്തിയാണ് ശില്പത്തിനു നൽകുന്നത്. തന്ത്രി വ്രതാനുഷ്ഠാനത്തോടെയുള്ള ജപസാധനകൾ കൊണ്ട് സ്വന്തം പ്രാണശക്തി ആദ്യം വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കും. ആ പ്രാണശക്തിയെ മനസ്സു കൊണ്ട് ശക്തമായി ആവാഹിച്ചെടുത്ത് തന്ത്രി തന്റെ കൈകളിലൂടെ ശില്പത്തിലേക്ക് വിനിമയം ചെയ്യുന്നു. തന്ത്രിയുടെ മനസ്സിന്റെ സങ്കല്പം അനുസരിച്ചുള്ള ഭാവം ആയിരിക്കും ആ ദേവവിഗ്രഹത്തിന്. ദേവൻ ബാലനാണോ, ഗൃഹസ്ഥനാണോ, നൈഷ്ഠിക ബ്രഹ്മചാരിയാണോ എന്നെല്ലാമുള്ള പ്രതിഷ്ഠാരഹസ്യങ്ങൾ അറിയുന്നത് തന്ത്രിയ്ക്കു മാത്രമാണ്. ദേവന്റെ ഭാവമനുസരിച്ചുള്ള മൂലമന്ത്രം ആയിരിക്കും തന്ത്രി ആ ക്ഷേത്രത്തിൽ സ്വീകരിക്കുക. അത് തന്ത്രി മേൽശാന്തിക്കു മാത്രം രഹസ്യമായി ഉപദേശിക്കും. മനസ്സു കൊണ്ട് സ്വന്തം പ്രാണശക്തി വിഗ്രഹത്തിലേക്കു പകർന്നു നൽകിയ തന്ത്രിക്ക് ക്ഷേത്രത്തിലെ ദേവന്റെ അച്ഛന്റെ സ്ഥാനമാണുള്ളത്. ശില്പത്തെപ്പോലും ഈശ്വരനാക്കി മാറ്റാനുള്ള മനുഷ്യമനസ്സിന്റെ അനന്തമായ ശക്തി വിവരിക്കാൻ “പ്രാണപ്രതിഷ്ഠ” യേക്കാൾ മികച്ചൊരു ഉദാഹരണം വേറെയില്ല. ഗായത്രിമന്ത്രം അക്ഷരലക്ഷം (24 ലക്ഷം തവണ) ജപിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളവർക്കേ വിവിധ പ്രകാരമുള്ള പ്രാണപ്രതിഷ്ഠ സാധ്യമാവൂ.

മനസ്സ് അതിന്റെ എല്ലാ ശക്തി ദുർബലങ്ങളും പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുന്നത് മനുഷ്യനിൽ മാത്രമാണ്. സുഖവും ദുഃഖവും, ആശയും നിരാശയും, അഭിമാനവും അപമാനവും, സ്നേഹവും വെറുപ്പും, കരുണയും, രൂഢിയും,



ഒരോർമ്മകുറിപ്പ്

കവിത അനീഷ്

അനുവാദമില്ലാതെ കടന്നുവന്ന്
മനസ്സിന്റെ അകതളങ്ങളിൽ കുടിയിരുന്ന്
മറക്കില്ലെന്ന് പറഞ്ഞിട്ടും മറന്ന്
അകലില്ലെന്ന് പറഞ്ഞിട്ടും അകന്ന്
പൊട്ടിച്ചിരികളെ ഓർമ്മകളെ
കണ്ണു നീരിന്റെ ഉപ്പറിയിക്കാൻ
തനിച്ചാക്കി പോകുന്ന ബന്ധങ്ങളെ
എന്തു വിളിക്കണം...
രക്തബന്ധങ്ങളും സൗഹൃദങ്ങളും
പ്രണയങ്ങളും അതിന്റെ
ആകെ തുകയത്രെ..
മരവിപ്പ് പടരുന്ന നിസ്സംഗതയിലും
ഇലപ്പൊഴിഞ്ഞ മരങ്ങൾക്ക് പുതുമനയെപ്പോലെ
വരണ്ട മണ്ണിനു ദാഹജലമായെത്തുന്ന
മഴത്തുള്ളികളെപ്പോലെ
ഇരുട്ടിലെ മിന്നാമിനുങ്ങുകൾ
പടർത്തുന്ന പ്രകാശം പോലെ
പ്രതീക്ഷയുടെ ഒരു ഓർമകുറിപ്പിതാ
മടങ്ങിവരാത്ത ചിലസൗഹൃദങ്ങൾക്കും
നഷ്ട പ്രണയങ്ങൾക്കും തകർന്ന
രക്തബന്ധങ്ങൾക്കുമായി...



(മനസ്സ് എന്ന പ്രതിഭാസം.... continued from page 57)

യൈര്യവും അയൈര്യവും, ആത്മവിശ്വാസവും ആത്മനിന്ദയും എല്ലാം അനുഭവിക്കാനും പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കാനും കഴിയുന്നത് മനുഷ്യനു മാത്രമാണ്.

കലാകാരൻമാർക്ക് സർഗ്ഗശക്തി കൊടുക്കുന്നത് അവരുടെ മനസ്സാണ്. അവരുടെ മനസ്സിൽ വിടരുന്ന ഭാവനകളാണ്, സങ്കല്പങ്ങളാണ് അവരുടെ കലാ സൃഷ്ടികളായി നമ്മുടെ മുന്നിലെത്തുന്നത്. ഒരു ശാസ്ത്രഞ്ജന്റെ മനസ്സിൽ ഉടലെടുക്കുന്ന ഭാവനകളാണ് പിന്നീട് ശാസ്ത്രീയ കണ്ടുപിടുത്തമായി പരിണമിക്കുന്നത്. മനുഷ്യന്റെ ഭാവനകൾക്ക് ഒരു പരിധിയുമില്ല. ആകാശത്തിന്റെ അനന്തതയിലേക്കും സമുദ്രത്തിന്റെ അഗാധ നീലിമയിലേക്കും സഞ്ചരിക്കാൻ മനസ്സിനു ഒരു നിമിഷാർദ്ധം മതി. മനസ്സിനെ ചരട് പൊട്ടിയ ഒരു പട്ടത്തോടും ഉപമിക്കാം. ദിശ അറിയാതെ സഞ്ചരിക്കുന്ന ഒരു പട്ടം. ഒരു നിയന്ത്രണവുമില്ലാതെ പായുന്ന മനസ്സിനെ ബലമായി പിടിച്ചു കൊണ്ടുവന്ന് നമ്മുടെ വരുതിയിൽ നിർത്താൻ പാടില്ല എന്ന് നമ്മുടെ ഗുരുക്കന്മാർ പറയുന്നു. മനസ്സിനെ സ്വതന്ത്രമായി വിട്ടിട്ട് നമ്മൾ അതിന്റെ ഗതി വിഗതികളെ സസൂക്ഷം നിരീക്ഷിക്കണം. അപ്പോൾ നമ്മുടെ മനസ്സിന്റെ പ്രത്യേകതകൾ മനസ്സിലാകും. എന്തുകൊണ്ട് ചില പ്രത്യേക വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ മനസ്സ് വ്യാപിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് മനസ്സിലാകും. ആ കാര്യങ്ങളിൽ മാറ്റം വരുത്തിയാൽ മനസ്സ് നമ്മുടെ നിയന്ത്രണത്തിലാകും.

ഈ കാണുന്നതെല്ലാം മായയാണെന്നു സാധാരണയായി പറയാറുണ്ട്. എന്താണ് ഈ മായ? മനസ്സാണ് മായ. ഇല്ലാത്ത ഒന്നിനെ ഉണ്ടാക്കി തീർക്കുകയാണ് മായയുടെ ജോലി. മനസ്സ് ഇപ്രകാരമാണ് പെരുമാറുന്നത്. ദുഃഖിച്ചു കരയുക, സന്തോഷിച്ചു ചിരിക്കുക എന്നിവയെല്ലാം ശരീരം, ഇന്ദ്രിയങ്ങൾ, മനസ്സ് എന്നിവയുടെ വികാര വിചാരങ്ങളുടെ ബഹിർ സ്പർശനങ്ങളാണ്. ആത്മാവ് ദുഃഖത്തിലോ സന്തോഷത്തിലോ വികാരപ്പെടുന്ന ഒന്നല്ല. ആദ്യം ഉണരുന്നത് മനസ്സാണ്. ശരീരത്തിലെ മറ്റുഭാഗങ്ങളെ ഉണർത്തുന്നതും പ്രവർത്തിപ്പിക്കുന്നതും ചിന്തിപ്പിക്കുന്നതും സംശയിപ്പിക്കുന്നതും എല്ലാം ചെയ്യുന്നത് മനസ്സാണ്. ഉള്ളിൽ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നതും പ്രവർത്തിപ്പിക്കുന്നതും മനസ്സാണ്. കാര്യങ്ങൾ വ്യക്തമാക്കി കൊടുക്കുന്നത് ബുദ്ധിയാണ്. പക്ഷെ പലപ്പോഴും നമ്മൾ ബുദ്ധി ഉപയോഗിച്ചല്ല കാര്യങ്ങൾ ചെയ്യുന്നത്. ദുഃഖങ്ങളിൽ മുങ്ങി പോയ മനസ്സിനെ ഉയർത്തിക്കൊണ്ടു വരാൻ നമ്മുക്ക് മാത്രമേ കഴിയൂ. സമ ബുദ്ധിയുള്ള മനസ്സാണ് ചൈതന്യമുള്ള മനസ്സ്. ഏത് പ്രതിസന്ധിയിലും ഉലയാത്ത മനസ്സ് നമ്മുക്ക് ഉണ്ടാവട്ടെ!!!

“ഉദ്ധരേത് ആത്മനാ ആത്മാനം ന ആത്മാനം അവസാദയേത്
ആത്മൈവ ഹ്യാത്മനോ ബന്ധു ആത്മൈവ രിപുരാത്മനഃ” (ഭഗവദ്ഗീത 6.5)

“അവനവൻ തന്നെയാണ് അവനവനെ ഉയർത്തേണ്ടത്. നമ്മളെ തളർത്താൻ ആരെയും അനുവദിക്കരുത്. അവനവൻ തന്നെയാണ് അവനവന്റെ ബന്ധുവും അവനവൻ തന്നെയാണ് അവനവ ശത്രുവും.” ഭഗവദ്ഗീതയിൽ ഭഗവാൻ ശ്രീകൃഷ്ണൻ അർജുനന് നൽകിയ ഈ ഉപദേശം ഉദ്ധരിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് “മനസ്സ്” എന്ന അത്ഭുത പ്രതിഭാസത്തെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള പഠനം അവസാനിപ്പിക്കാം.

KERALA FLOOD RELIEF FUNDRAISING

Ohmkaram in association with Sewa International USA raised \$6000 for Kerala flood disaster. Sewa International USA is a charity specializing various social activities around the world. Sevabharathi, the local partner of Sewa International in Kerala is directly engaged in the rescue & rehabilitation work after Kerala flood of 2018. All the funds donated by Ohmkaram will be used for relief and rehabilitation of people affected by floods.

Ohmkaram held several activities in support of flood relief fundraising. "Ohmkaram for Keralam" during Onam 2018 on August 24th was held to publicize and generate awareness of the flood disaster in Kerala and collect donations.

OHMKARAM FOR KERALAM



Ohmkaram supported Kerala flood fundraising event organized by India association of Saint Louis and Mahatma Gandhi Center held in August 31st 2018 at Mahatma Gandhi Center.

Ohmkaram donated all proceeds from its 5th annual Vallomkali and food sale conducted on September 15th to Kerala flood relief.

5th ANNUAL VALLOMKALI & FOOD SALE



www.ohmkaram.org



www.sewausa.org



www.sevabharathikeralam.org

School Supplies Donation Drive

Ohmkaram organized a school supply donation drive in summer this year to support children's essential need to improve their education. Ohmkaram worked with Little bit Foundation to provide essential school supply to elementary school children in St Louis area low income families. Over 600 articles were collected and distributed.

All supplies were dropped with Little bit foundation on August 11, 2018; 10:00 AM at their facility in 516 Hanley Industrial Court, Saint Louis, MO 63144. This was one of voluntary and charity activity organized by Ohmkaram.



Ohmkaram Local Community Activities

Ohmkaram was represented by President, Anjana Prayaga, along with other local Indian Associations Community leaders in hosting Minister Of State For Tourism, Government of India, Mr. Alphons Kannanthanam and Consul General of India, Chicago, Ms. Neeta Bhushan, on June 22, 2018 in St Louis.



L to R: Mr. Krishna Rao Moharir, President India Association of St Louis; Ms. Neeta Bhushan, Counsel General of India, Chicago ; Dr. Vijayakumar Buddhiraju, Chairman Hindu Temple of St Louis; Mr. Alphons Kannanthanam, Minister of State for Tourism Government of India; Mr. Sharath Rao, Treasurer Hindu Temple of St Louis; Mrs Anjana Prayaga, President Ohmkaram.

Ohmkaram was represented at Asian American Chamber of Commerce of St. Louis (AACC) Connections Dinner on May 8, 2018 felicitating Ashwin Patel as the Business Owner of the Year.

Ashwin Patel, the owner of Seema Enterprises and Seema Travels, is a very active member of Indian community in St Louis. He has been the president of India Association of St Louis among many other major community activities he help.



Scholarship Program 2018

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 Mr. Abhiraj M R from Perumkuzhy, Thiruvananthapuram district. He is currently a 4th year student in B.Tech Computer Science at TKM College of Engineering, Kollam.



"I am pursuing engineering and my sister is doing a veterinary surgeon course. Our parents cannot run the family with their small income. Scholarships turned to be my only hope to procure study materials and hostel facilities. My primary goal at this point is to obtain this degree and achieve a job to support my family."

- Abhiraj M R

"Abhiraj is very brilliant among my students, I see a great future in the boy. He is from a family in need. It is great to know that Ohmkaram is supporting him financially."

– Dr. Ansamma John, HOD, TKM College of Engineering

"I know Abhiraj's family for a long time. His father's income is not helping them to take care of both their children's future. I am glad that Ohmkaram is considering him for the scholarship, he is very much deserving."

– Mr. R. Anil, Panchayat Member, Perumkuzhy



മലയാളം സ്കൂൾ

Malayalam School of Saint Louis

Malayalam School of Saint Louis Entering 12th Year of Service to Community

Malayalam School of Saint Louis is entering 12th year of service to the community. Malayalam School of Saint Louis is a voluntary organization open to public and 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 meet twice a month for 1 ½ hours each and runs from September through May every year. This year we have 27 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.

Malayalam School is now a registered kendra of Malayalam Mission, Government of Kerala.

Photo taken on Malayalam School Annual Day held in May 6, 2018 at Mahatama Gandhi Center



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



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.

2018 Office Bearers

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Vinay Menon (Chairman)

Madhu Madhavan

Dr. Suresh Krishnan

Sunil Krishnan

Prasad Malamel

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Anjana Prayaga (President)

Sona Mukesh (Vice President)

Amritha Kossery (Secretary)

Nisha Ashtath (Joint Secretary)

Remya Prashob (Treasurer)

Prashanth Sivadasan (Assistant Treasurer)

OHMKARAM MEMBERS BENEFIT

Ideal for **CHILDREN** to learn and **PRACTICE** Kerala and Hindu **TRADITIONS** and create a **CULTURAL IDENTITY**

MALAYALAM SCHOOL for children and adults to learn to speak, read and write Malayalam

Celebrate **VISHU & ONAM TRADITIONALLY** in full grandeur

Participate in **ANNUAL PICNIC** and other periodic **SOCIAL MEETINGS** and gatherings

FULL ACCESS to Ohmkaram **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS** and right to **ELECT** Board and Executive **MEMBERS**

JOIN US

You will feel at home.

HELP and SUPPORT US to

- preserve & promote our rich culture
- instill traditional values in our children
- provide a cultural IDENTITY to our children

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'Night Sky' by

Hrithika Malugu, 5th Grade

"This oil painting is set in a warm summer night, portraying all lights from buildings and stars."

Crazy Laws !!!

Arkansas !! It's strictly prohibited to pronounce "Arkansas" incorrectly.

Hawaii !! Coins are not allowed to be placed in one's ears.

Georgia !! Donkeys may not be kept in bathtubs.

Massachusetts !! Snoring is prohibited unless all bedroom windows are closed.

Missouri !! Single men between the ages of twenty-one and fifty must pay an annual tax of one dollar (enacted 1820).



Michigan !! A woman isn't allowed to cut her own hair without her husband's permission.

North Dakota !! It is illegal to lie down and fall asleep with your shoes on.

California !! Sunshine is guaranteed to the masses.

Virginia!! It is illegal to tickle women.

Oklahoma !! People who make "ugly faces" at dogs may be fined and/or jailed.

Nebraska !! If a child burps during church, his parent may be arrested.



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