

# Monsoon Journal

A parfait media publication

« 18<sup>TH</sup> YEAR IN CIRCULATION » OCTOBER - 2023



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## MJ's Deepest regrets

It is with deepest regrets we inform that Mr. Kanapathipillai Thirukumaran, age 60, formerly of South Brunswick, New Jersey, passed away on Friday, June 16th 2023 in Markham, Ontario.

He is the loving husband of the late Mrs. Nalene Thirukumaran from South Brunswick, New Jersey. The beloved son of the late Sangarapillai Kanapathipillai of Madduvil North, Chavakachcheri, Sri Lanka and the late Neelampikai Ammal Kanapathipillai of Kalvayal, Chavakachcheri, Sri Lanka. Earnest brother to Balakumaran (Shiranee), Baheerathy (Sriskanda), and Sivasakthy (Sivarajah).

He is the caring father to Harrish and Danesh, father in law to Bavatharini. Affectionate

uncle to his nieces and nephews. He is from Chavakachcheri, Sri Lanka and a former student of D.S. Senanayake College.

In the world, he was observant and open-minded - he was a literary enthusiast, writer, journalist, accountant, activist, rasika, and ardent devotee. When life showed him extremes, he remained measured and inquisitive, gathering wisdom from even the most challenging circumstances.

Driven by love and responsibility to his community, he compassionately served many. His way of life was deeply intuitive and sincere.

He is a cherished soul who will be missed.

Go to Page 23 to 35 for Tributes to Thirukumaran >>



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**Our Journey**  
See pages 48 - 53 >>

Kanapathipillai Thirukumaran (March 1963-June 2023), known to many as Thiru - is one of the founders of the Monsoon Journal. He devoted much of his life to bringing a variety of news topics to the Tamil and broader Canadian, American, and Sri Lankan communities. His recent passing is felt deeply. This special issue is dedicated to him and aims to honor his memory.

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# Increase in Drug addiction in Canada



- medium.com

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre appeared on a Global News segment discussing the taxpayer-funded distribution of heroin, cocaine, and meth to drug addicts in British Columbia. During the interview, Mr. Poilievre voiced his strong disapproval, stating: “I think it is a disgrace that the NDP government in BC, with the support of Justin Trudeau in Ottawa, are happy to give hundreds of thousands of tax dollars to illegal drug dealers.”

After eight years under Justin Trudeau, the crisis of hard drugs flooding our streets has reached a critical point, with overdoses becoming the leading cause of death among children over 10 in BC. The Liberal-NDP coalition has fostered a chaotic environment through decriminalization, a policy that has unleashed crime and disorder across communities. The time

for experiments is over; it's clear that Trudeau's hard-drug supply project has failed miserably.

In contrast, Mr. Poilievre advocates a common sense, comprehensive approach to tackle this crisis. He believes we must prioritize recovery and treatment over catch-and-release policies that have only flooded the streets with deadly reoffenders and poisons. His pragmatic plan aims to give addicts rehab instead of free drugs, focusing on bringing our loved ones home drug-free. It also calls for holding Big Pharma accountable for the opioid epidemic, as they should foot the bill for the necessary rehab programs.

Pierre Poilievre and Canada's Conservatives will fix the crime, chaos, drugs & disorder that are now common in our streets after eight years of Trudeau.

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## PUBLISHER'S DESK

# International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists 2023: Empowering journalists strengthens well-informed communities

By Harrish Thirukumaran

It is at this time, with heavy hearts, that the Monsoon Journal acknowledges the passing of one of its founders, Kanapathipillai Thirukumaran. He embodied a deep, spirited passion for journalism. A mindset that was about putting the people first by keeping them informed through good, quality information. His contributions gave this newspaper a vibrant life. These impacts have been felt across a wide readership community for the past 17 years, both online and offline.

Moving forward, the paper will be converting into a digital only format to combat rising costs, protect the environment, and improve access to good, quality information to its audiences. This last reason is something especially near and dear for Mr. Thirukumaran. Journalism was something not to be taken for granted in his view. This perspective also shines a light on why public days of observance, such as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, are important for society.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed November 2nd as the 'International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists' in General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/163. It called on member countries to put into effect systems to address the culture of impunity. It memorializes the assassination of two French journalists in Mali on November 2, 2013.

According to the UN, this landmark resolution condemns all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers. It also urges Member States to do their utmost to prevent violence against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability, bring to justice perpetrators of crimes against journalists and media workers, and ensure that victims have access to appropriate remedies. It further calls upon States to promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference to reflect on the role of these people, based on their public discourse and specific obligations.

This edition of this day also wants to emphasize the situation of violence against journalists and media workers during election periods. In this sense, it seeks to reaffirm the commitments of the States and the responsibilities of the other actors involved to prevent and counteract the intolerance, discrimination and deliberate disinformation that permeates much of the debate in these contexts. The objective is to give visibility to the role of a safe and free press in ensuring the integrity of elections and our democratic systems.

Finally, these sessions will delve into the obligation of States to adopt effective measures to protect the independent press and strengthen institutional frameworks that combat violence and impunity, and

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promote media independence, sustainability and diversity.

More information about the 2023 commemoration of this day of observance can be found through this concept note by the UN.

Journalism and information help to foster well-informed communities. In turn, this supports efforts to strengthen society for all when the journalists themselves are empowered. An example of this is how they support healthy elections. It helps communities progress in positive directions as Mr. Thirukumaran perceived it to be.



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# Vijay Thanigasalam, MPP for Ontario Scarborough-Rouge Park



Vijay Thanigasalam has been appointed Associate Minister of Transportation, working for the people of Ontario alongside Premier Doug Ford and Minister Prabmeet Sing Sarkaria.

He thanked his constituents in Scarborough - Rouge Park for their ongoing support, and the trust they have put in me as I continue to represent them at Queen's Park!"

## NDP seeks Auditor General investigation into Ford's forced urban boundary expansions

**QUEEN'S PARK** – Following a successful fight to protect the Greenbelt, Leader of the Official Opposition, Marit Stiles and her Ontario NDP are calling for the Auditor General to investigate Ford's shady backroom deals, and his government's decision to force municipal urban boundary expansions across the province.

"We know now that Ford's corruption almost gave a select few wealthy land speculators the chance to make billions with his Greenbelt Grab," said Stiles. "Everyone from farmers to First Nations to activists knew something wasn't right and together, we got to the bottom of it. **We're ready to do the same again.**"

The Ontario NDP's request to the Auditor General returned an explosive report finding that Ford's Conservatives rigged the system to give certain land speculators preferential treatment on Greenbelt lands.

**Evidence suggests that preferential treatment was given to some of the very same people when urban boundaries across the province were expanded.**

"These forced boundaries will cause unnecessary sprawl and pave over prime farmland," said MPP Jeff Burch (Niagara

Centre), NDP critic for Municipal Affairs. "After his Greenbelt scandal, Ford should know better than to push forward with an unpopular plan that ignores community decisions. I call on him to reverse course."

### Quick Facts

The Ontario NDP is requesting a value-for money audit and assessment of the financial and environmental impacts of the government's amendments to:

- Municipal official plans such as Hamilton, Ottawa, Waterloo, York, Peel, Niagara, Peterborough, Halton, and Wellington.
- Minister's Zoning Orders and ministerial orders under section 34.1 of the Planning Act.

The Ontario NDP made a similar value-for-money audit request into the Greenbelt, which led to the explosive August 9th report that led to several high-profile resignations in Ford's inner circle.

### Quotes

**Hamilton:** MPP Sandy Shaw (Hamilton West- Ancaster-Dundas)

"These forced urban boundaries are the other half of Ford's Greenbelt scheme that benefited wealthy land speculators. I call on Ford to do the right thing and respect the decisions of our Hamilton council and community by cancelling this plan."

**Ottawa:** MPP Chandra Pasma (Ottawa West - Nepean)

"Ottawa's city council has asked the new Housing Minister to review Ford's plan – but Ford can't be bothered to listen. I and the Ontario NDP are listening and are committed to getting to the bottom of what happened and reversing these forced expansions."

**Waterloo:** MPP Catherine Fife (Waterloo)

"It seems that Ford doesn't trust our cities to do their jobs. We're already losing 319 acres of farmland a day in the province of Ontario, and Ford's forced expansion will make it worse. After the backlash to his Greenbelt scandal, he should think twice."

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## Statement from Minister Miller on Canada's commitment to support migrants in the Americas



- chathamhouse.org

Ottawa, October 10, 2023—The Honorable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, issued the following statement:



Marc Miller

“Earlier this year, we announced that we will welcome 15,000 migrants on a humanitarian basis from the Western Hemisphere. We are providing a path to economic opportunities to help address forced displacement, as an alternative to irregular migration. Through this initiative, we are providing regular migration pathways to people in the Americas by leveraging permanent resident humanitarian and economic pathways, and temporary work programs.

“We are welcoming an additional 4,000 temporary foreign workers from the region this year, many of whom have already arrived in Canada. Based on current trends, we are on track to meet this target. In addition, we are connecting with non-governmental organizations in the region to leverage the new Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot, which helps skilled refugees and

other displaced people immigrate to Canada. “Today, I am announcing that, as part of this commitment to welcome 15,000 migrants from the Americas, Canada will welcome up to 11,000 Colombians, Haitians and Venezuelans through a new humanitarian permanent residence pathway.

“Starting this fall, Colombian, Haitian and Venezuelan foreign nationals located in Central or South America or the Caribbean who have extended family connections in Canada will be eligible to apply for this new pathway. To qualify, the principal applicant must be a child (regardless of age), grandchild, spouse, common-law partners, parent, grandparent or sibling of a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

“Successful applicants will be offered enhanced pre-arrival services, including an employment skills assessment and a referral to a settlement provider organization in their intended community. More detailed information will be available closer to the launch of the new pathway.

“We are actively collaborating with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to understand the regional context and humanitarian needs linked to migration in the Americas. We also support the work of the safe mobility offices in the region, whose objective is to consider individuals for humanitarian and other regular pathways.

“In addition to our commitment to welcome 15,000 migrants, we continue to be actively engaged in the Americas on migration and protection issues. We are on track to meet our goal to increase refugee resettlement from the Americas and continue to lend our support to the implementation of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, and to the North American Leaders’ Summits.

“We are increasing our assistance for capacity-building efforts in the region by investing \$75 million over six years for projects across Latin America and Central America. These projects focus on strengthening asylum capacity and better integrating migrants and refugees into local communities and labor markets. This support will help countries, including those that refugees and migrants are coming from, travelling through, or are being hosted in, address the challenges of irregular migration, while also improving the quality of life for migrants and refugees.

“Global displacement of people in search of safety is at an all-time high. The Americas are seeing unprecedented numbers of migrants seeking safe haven and new opportunities, in often dangerous situations such as crossing the Darien Gap. Working closely with the US, we expect to see these measures help curb irregular migration and promote safe migration as an alternative to the often-dangerous irregular routes in the Americas.”

# Health Canada Launches National Call for Proposals for the Substance Use and Addictions Program

Improving health outcomes for people at risk of substance-related harms and overdose across Canada

September 29, 2023 | Ottawa, ON | Health Canada

Canada is facing an unrelenting and tragic toxic drug and overdose crisis. No community has been left untouched. The impacts are seen and felt among our friends, our family, and our neighbours. That's why we are leveraging all the tools at our disposal to work towards an end to this national public health crisis—including prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement.

Today, the Honourable Ya'ara Saks, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, announced the launch of the 2023 national call for proposals for Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program (SUAP). The deadline to submit applications is November 22, 2023. Those disproportionately impacted, including Indigenous peoples and communities; Women; LGBTQ2S+ individuals; and rural and remote communities, are particularly encouraged to apply for funding.

In addition, Minister Saks announced more than \$4 million in funding for four community projects in Ottawa that have reached more than 40,000 people. The projects aim to increase access to services for those who use drugs and help improve health outcomes for people who are at risk of experiencing substance-related harms.

The Government of Canada will continue to work with all levels of government, partners, Indigenous communities, stakeholders, people with lived and living experience, and community organizations across the country to support a full range of services and improve health outcomes for all Canadians, save lives and work towards an end to this national public health crisis. "Community-based organizations across the country are working relentlessly to reduce stigma and provide much-needed support for people who use substances, saving lives. These organizations are using their expertise and experience to meet

the unique needs of the people in their communities where they are at, and getting them the help they need with innovative solutions. These organizations are at the frontlines of the overdose crisis across the country, and I encourage them to apply."

The Honourable Ya'ara Saks  
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health

"We are grateful to the Substance Use and Addictions fund for providing resources for life-saving programs and services to address the devastating impact of the toxic drug supply and overdose crisis, including our Drug Overdose Prevention and Education Project. Thanks to this funding, our peer workers have been able to reach members in our community who use substances, prevent overdoses and deaths, and create critical linkages to health and social services."

## Suzanne Obiorah

Executive Director,  
Somerset West  
Community Health  
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- Since 2017, over \$500 million has been committed through Health Canada's Substance Use and Addiction Program for more than 380 projects.
- Through SUAP, the Government of Canada provides funding to not-for-profit organizations, other levels of government, Indigenous communities, academia, and other groups for projects aiming to minimize substance use harms and improve health outcomes for Canadians. These community-led programs and projects leverage the expertise of people with lived and living experience with substance use, and/or are able to reach priority



- interiorhealth.ca

populations in Canada, such as low-income and low-education populations.

- Through new investments announced in Budget 2023, the Government of Canada is also proposing over \$359 million, over five years, to support a renewed Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy, which will continue to guide our work to protect the health and safety of Canadians. This includes \$144 million to the Substance Use and Addictions Program to fund community-based supports, and other evidence-based health interventions.
- Through the 2023 CFP, Health Canada will provide support for community-led projects designed to: support and enhance the role of people with lived and living experience (prevention, treatment, harm reduction), broaden services and programs that target post treatment aftercare and transition; address alcohol use disorder; and address adult tobacco cessation.
- In addition to holding a national CFP processes, Health Canada also funds SUAP projects through other mechanisms, such as targeted outreach processes and extensions of existing contribution agreements for projects that have demonstrated results.

Courtesy: Health Canada



## HEMAS HOLDINGS CEO KASTHURI CHELLARAJA OF SRI LANKA RESIGNS



Hemas Holdings, a leading conglomerate, today announced the resignation of Kasturi Chellaraja, the Group CEO, effective March 30, 2024.

Ms. Chellaraja, has served as the Group's Chief Executive Officer since 2020 and played a pivotal role in Hemas' growth and success during her tenure.

Kasturi Chellaraja's contributions have significantly contributed to the transformation of Hemas into a purpose-led organization that has strengthened its market positions in the Consumer, Healthcare, and Mobility sectors over the last three years.

The decision to resign was driven by Kasturi's desire to explore new opportunities for growth while continuing to contribute to Sri Lanka. Kasturi has embarked on a new chapter in her career by accepting a prestigious position with a renowned global corporation with diverse business interests. In this new role she will spearhead the global organisation's expansion efforts throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

## Tharman Shanmugaratnam of Sri Lankan Tamil origin becomes President of Singapore



Economist by profession, Tharman has spent his entire working life in the public service. Tharman has spent his entire working life in the public service for Singapore, in roles principally related to economic and social policies. He has also led various high-level international councils and panels simultaneously. Tharman currently chairs the Board of Trustees of the Group of Thirty, a global council of economic and financial leaders from the public and private sectors and academia. Tharman Shanmugaratnam served as Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister between 2011 and 2019, and as Senior Minister in the Cabinet between 2019 and 2023. He has also led various high-level international councils and panels simultaneously. Tharman currently chairs the Board of Trustees of the Group of Thirty, a global council of economic and financial leaders from the public and private sectors and academia. Tharman Shanmugaratnam served as Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister between 2011 and 2019, and as Senior Minister in the Cabinet between 2019 and 2023.

## INDIA ASKS CANADA TO REPATRIATE 41 DIPLOMATS

India has told Canada that it must repatriate 41 diplomats by October 10, the Financial Times of London reported on October 3. Ties between India and Canada have become seriously strained over Canadian suspicion that Indian government agents had a role in the June murder in Canada of a Sikh separatist leader and Canadian city- Zen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who India had labelled a "terrorist". India has dismissed the allegation as absurd. Citing people familiar with the Indian demand, The Financial Times said India had threatened to revoke the



diplomatic immunity of those diplomats told to leave if they remain in this country after October 10. Canada has 62 diplomats in India, and India had said that.

Canadian diplomats in India reduced. The total should be reduced to 41, the Times of India reported. The Indian and Canadian Foreign Ministries did not immediately respond to requests for comments.

Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said earlier that there is a "climate of violence" and an "atmosphere of intimidation" against Indian diplomats in Canada, where the presence of Sikh separatist groups has frustrated New Delhi.





# SRI LANKA CENTRAL BANK REDUCES INTEREST RATES AND COMMERCIAL BANKS TO FOLLOW ACCORDINGLY.

The first monetary policy review by the Monetary Policy Board under the Central Bank of Sri Lanka Act, No. 16 of 2023 has decided to reduce the Standing Deposit Facility Rate (SDFR) and the Standing Lending Facility Rate (SLFR) of the Central Bank by 100 basis points (bps) to 10.00 per cent and 11.00 per cent, respectively.

The CBSL said that the Board arrived at this decision following a careful analysis of the current and expected developments, including low inflation and benign inflation expectations in the domestic economy, with the aim of stabilizing inflation at the envisaged 5 per cent level in the medium term, thereby enabling the economy to reach its potential growth.

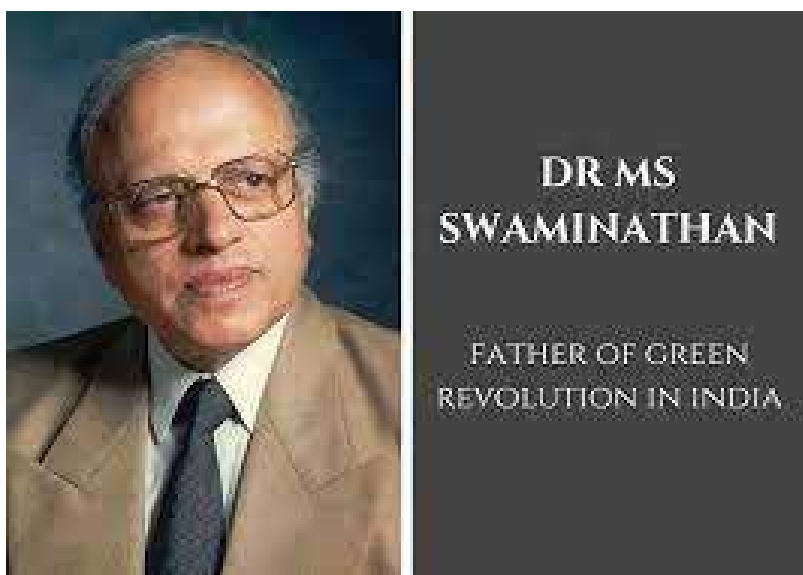
The Board expects that this reduction of policy interest rates, along with the significant easing of monetary policy effected previously, including the directions issued by the Central Bank



to licensed banks to reduce interest rates, and the significant reduction of risk premia on government securities, would accelerate the downward adjustment in market interest rates, particularly lending rates, in the period

ahead. The financial sector is urged to pass on the benefits of the continued easing of monetary conditions to individuals and businesses adequately and swiftly, thereby supporting the envisaged rebound of the economy.

## Dr. Swaminathan, India's Green Revolution, passes away at his residence



Dr. Swaminathan, India's Green Revolution, passed away at his residence in Chennai on September 28 at the age of 98. The Padma Vibhushan awardee was Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and headed the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines. He was the first to get the World Food Prize and used the proceeds from the prize to establish the renowned MSSRF non-profit trust. As tributes pour in from across the globe, here is a list of articles published by The Hindu today on M.S. Swaminathan's demise.

## District Judge Resigns Due to Threats to Life and Intimidation



Mr.T.Saravananaraja

Spotlight on Sri Lanka's Pervasive Attempts to Undermine the Independence of the Judiciary District Judge Mr.T.Saravananaraja from Mullaitivu in Sri Lanka has been forced to resign and flee the country due to the ominous threats to his life and intimidation from elected representatives and other officials in the country

In his letter of resignation which has now been published in the media, the esteemed judge who has recently ruled on cases relating to an ancient Tamil Hindu religious site in Kurunthumalai and a remembrance event to commemorate Thileepan, had written to the Sri Lanka Judicial Services Commission that he was resigning due to "threat to my life and due to lot of stress" forced upon him.



## CINEMA REVIEW



# தமிழ் இலக்கியத் தோட்டம்

## Tamil Literary Garden

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## HEALTH & WELLNESS



# Sunnybrook's BRAVE program receives renewed city funding and expands to SHN

Sunnybrook's Breaking the Cycle of Violence with Empathy (BRAVE) Program has received renewed funding from the City of Toronto to continue and expand its work. The program was developed at the hospital and launched in September 2020. It is the first of its kind at a Canadian trauma centre and promotes positive alternatives to violence in order to reduce retaliation, criminal involvement and re-injury among youth injured by violence.

The City of Toronto will provide Sunnybrook funding for one year of its BRAVE Program operations, and additional funding to support Sunnybrook in the hiring and oversight of two part-time BRAVE case managers for Scarborough Health Network and Humber River Hospital.

In recent years, Sunnybrook has seen an increase in violent injuries accounting for approximately 17% of all trauma patients, or over 350 patients a year. In many instances the same patient returns for multiple injuries, sometimes years apart. BRAVE aims to be part of broader efforts to reverse this trend.

"We'd like to thank the City for its continued support of the BRAVE

Program," says Brandy Tanenbaum, Injury Prevention Coordinator, Sunnybrook. "BRAVE continues to make a tangible impact on the lives of our patients, and our experience has shown how meaningful this work is and will continue to be. We look forward to the opportunity to expand our exceptional team together with our hospital partners and look forward to what we can achieve together."

BRAVE is informed by hospital-based violence intervention programs operating in the United States since the 1990s. It recognizes the modifiable risk factors associated with violent injury including: poor education, lack of job opportunities, socioeconomically deprived neighbourhoods, substance misuse, complex post-traumatic stress disorder, and lack of positive role models.

"We are pleased to partner with the North Western Toronto OHT, Sunnybrook and Scarborough Health Network to support our patients being cared for at home by a community worker after a violent experience," says Jane Casey, Director of Emergency Services at Humber River Hospital. "We truly hope this supports patients and



their significant others to reduce other violent episodes."

Evidence supports a model of longer-term case management to connect patients with community agencies to lessen risk factors and increase protective factors for violence.

"We are incredibly excited to be joining this partnership, and are confident that the foundation

of services we have built at our organization will allow the BRAVE program to deliver meaningful results here in Scarborough," says Sari Greenwood, Director of Mental Health and Addictions at Scarborough Health Network. "Our community needs and deserves a program aimed at addressing the root causes of violence."

## SHN to create new community mental health centre for Scarborough

Scarborough Health Network (SHN) is knocking on the door to a better healthcare experience for patients and clients who access our ambulatory and community outpatient mental health services. For the first time, SHN will bring these services together at one central Community Mental Health Centre, to be located at Warden and Eglinton in the heart of Scarborough's Golden Mile district.

With one of the largest hospital-based mental health and addictions programs in Ontario, and an increased need for care across our health system, SHN is committed to removing barriers and challenges in accessing services. This includes a community-based focus that emphasizes the importance of helping patients access care in the most appropriate setting to achieve their optimal level of well-being.

### "One door" approach to care

"Every year, SHN has more than 50,000 visits for ambulatory and community mental health services. Now imagine 'one door' for individuals with mental illness, right in the community – making it easier for them to get integrated services all in the same space. That's the vision for the SHN Community Mental Health Centre," said Dr. Elaine Yeung, Chief of Staff and Executive Vice President, Medical, SHN.

Typically, when it comes to mental health, hospitals have been known as places where people go for acute care needs – like crisis and emergency care, or for admissions.

While ambulatory services for therapy, treatments, and other appointments are better based in the community, removed from the stigma of hospital settings.

"Patients and clients living with mental health illness may seek care and access services more readily and easily when available in the community. This helps them to stay well and reduce the need for emergency or acute hospital care. Our Community Mental Health Centre will also offer collaborative care between services that will further help to improve outcomes and positively impact patient goals," explained Dr. Yeung.

The new centre will be part of a larger transformation of SHN's mental health services. Over the last two years, SHN has moved to a centralized intake model, which better enables our mental health and addictions program to support the over 10,000 patient referrals received each year from primary care providers, specialists, emergency departments, or as part of transitioning from inpatient admission.

"Our 'one door' approach starts with this centralized intake process that allows us to receive referrals promptly, and then screen and triage patients to the right service.



The development of the new centre will optimize that process, with services and our clinical team coordinated together at one site. Patients being referred will be connected to services as quickly as possible," said Dr. Ilan Fischler, Medical Director and Chief of Psychiatry, SHN.

### Development and next steps

The new mental health centre is a significant investment in the Scarborough community that generous donors have entirely funded as a part of SHN Foundation's Love, Scarborough campaign. Located in a mid-rise building at 1940 Eglinton Ave. E, the centre will occupy a full floor and be designed to provide the best possible experience for patients and clients.

"In addition to delivering exceptional, quality care, it's our responsibility to provide access to care that meets the diverse needs

of our patients and clients. The Community Mental Health Centre will be a welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and highly accessible space. It will offer large windows and natural light; be close to TTC access, including the upcoming Eglinton subway line; and will focus on patient, staff, and neighbourhood safety. We are incredibly excited that the new centre has found its home in the heart of Scarborough," said Sari Greenwood, Director, Mental Health and Addictions, Oncology and Palliative Care, SHN.

Over the coming months, SHN will continue to keep patients, families, healthcare partners, and community members informed on the creation of our new mental health centre. This includes providing further details on timelines, processes, and structures as this exciting development moves forward here in Scarborough.



# UNITED WAY GREATER TORONTO INVESTS AN ADDITIONAL \$2 MILLION TO SUPPORT PEOPLE AND NEIGHBORHOODS MOST IMPACTED BY POVERTY



**UWGT** will be providing long-term, flexible funding to 14 Indigenous and other equity-deserving agencies, and is focusing on agencies in Peel and York

October 12, 2023 (Toronto, ON)  
– United Way Greater Toronto is investing an additional \$2,125,000 across neighborhoods in Peel and York experiencing deepening poverty as well as agencies across the GTA led by and serving Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving groups.

The funding expansion builds on the first phase of UWGT's Anchor funding renewal of \$33 million, announced in February 2023. The new investment enables agencies to respond to changes in their communities and engage in the strategic work necessary to build lasting solutions to critical challenges at the intersection of poverty, equity and geography.

Recognizing the historic underinvestment in organizations led by and serving structurally disadvantaged communities, UWGT began the Anchor funding expansion process with a targeted invitation to organizations led by and serving Indigenous, Black, racialized and other equity-deserving communities.

Anchor funding is a unique-to-United Way model that provides stable, flexible and renewable funding for both targeted programming and core operational support, working towards a goal to equip agencies to meet evolving needs and build long-term organizational strength.

In 2021, the Barrett Family Foundation made a transformative gift to United Way, enabling UWGT to build on their commitment towards an equitable recovery from the pandemic. This gift helped to scale UWGT's support for organizations and programs serving Indigenous, Black and other racialized populations impacted by poverty, driving

long-term change while strengthening agency capacity and networks.

The new Anchor Agency funding builds on the Barrett gift and has added an additional focus, by expanding service provision in neighborhoods in Peel and York that experience higher concentrations of poverty.

The agencies receiving new Anchor funding are:

- *Afghan Women's Organization*
- *African Community Services of Peel*
- *Anduhyaun Inc.*
- *CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals*
- *Centre for Independent Living Toronto (CILT)*
- *Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)*
- *Delta Family Resource Centre*
- *Embrave Agency to End Violence (formerly Interim Place)*
- *Lance Krasman Memorial Centre for Community Mental Health (Krasman Centre)*
- *Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training*
- *Roots Community Services*
- *Sandgate Women's Shelter of York Region Inc.*
- *The Indigenous Network (formerly Peel Aboriginal Network)*
- *Yellow Brick House (Project Hostel)*

“At a time when the community sector is struggling to meet unprecedented levels of need, this Anchor funding targets investment to what it takes to bring about a GTA without poverty: Putting equity at the center. Supporting the leadership of communities most affected by poverty. And ensuring that responses to urgent needs are bolstered by strategic, forward-looking work. United Way Greater Toronto is pleased to partner with these dedicated organizations in our shared efforts to build inclusive, strong and vibrant communities.”

– **Daniele Zanotti**  
President and CEO of  
United Way Greater Toronto

“Through this investment, UWGT is putting resources behind a truth Indigenous communities have long known: That we hold the solutions to the challenges facing our communities. Access to stable, flexible funding ensures we can direct resources to where they are needed most and set our communities up to thrive, now and into the future.”

– **Jairus Skye**  
Executive Director of  
The Indigenous Network

“As we see rising operating costs and deepening needs in our community, it's critical that we work in ways that we know have a positive and meaningful impact. For the children, youth, women, men, seniors and families we serve, that means culturally relevant programming and supports. This Anchor funding helps us not only provide vital services at a time when they are critically needed, but also work strategically and holistically to empower Black, African and Caribbean communities in Peel in lasting ways.”

– **Angela Carter**  
Executive Director of  
Roots Community Services

## About United Way Greater Toronto:

Last year, UWGT helped over two million residents, bolstering a safety net of over 300 community agencies in Peel, Toronto and York Region that support individuals and families with a range of needs – from food security to mental health to housing stability and more. UWGT bridges this network of care with groundbreaking research, cross-sectoral partnerships, local advocacy, and strategic initiatives aimed at building a more equitable region and lasting solutions to the GTA's greatest challenges.



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF PALMYRA TREE

- *Borassus flabellifer* -



By M. Pushparajah

The Palmyra tree is native to South Asia, mainly - South India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and also Southeast Asia namely - Cambodia and Myanmar, to a lesser extent in Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. Almost every part of the tree – root, stem, leaves, fruit, sap, etc. is used widely by the rural people in the countries where the tree grows.

People from North and East Sri Lanka are remarkably familiar with its uses:

- Leaves as thatching material for fencing, fodder for cattle, sleeping mats, table mats, winnows, hand-fans, boxes, containers, and as recording scripts.

- Stem for rafters, beams, boundary posts, fuelwood. Palmyra timber in the form of rafters and beams constitute the roof timber of many houses in the north and east.

- Toddy, the sugary sap of the palmyra tree is obtained by tapping the young inflorescence either male or female and collecting the dripping juice overnight in hanging earthen pots. Toddy is the source of arrack, palm sugar, jaggery (panangkatti), etc.

- Palmyra fruit, the fruit is spherical or oval like coconut, and the outer covering is smooth, thin, leathery, and brown, turning black after harvesting. Inside the fruit is a juicy mass of long, tough, coarse white fibers, with yellow or orange pulp. Each fruit has about 2, 3, or four seeds, within the mature seed is a solid white kernel. 100 g of the fruit contains around Moisture-77.2, Protein-0.7, Fat-0.2, Mineral-0.7, Fiber-0.5, Carbohydrates-20.7, Calories-87, Calcium-0.9, and Phosphorus-0.33. Benefits of the fruit-treatment of acidity, osteoporosis, arthritis, lowering cholesterol, constipation, heat rashes, and urination issues.

Unripe palmyra fruit is popular for – nongu, a jelly-like delicious, substance that is scooped out after cutting the top part of unripe palmyra

fruit and eaten directly. It is very tasty and has amazing health benefits and nutritional value.

Most of us are not aware that nungu is rich in proteins. We are accustomed to drinking milk from childhood and believe it is rich in protein. However, the truth is there is three times more protein in nungu compared to milk is unknown to us. Milk has 3.3g of protein in 100g whereas nungu has 10.8g of protein in 100g. Our children living in palmyra surroundings are suffering from protein deficiency, but they are not told about the importance of nungu as a source of protein. Although we have more than 10 million palmyra trees we do not utilize even 5% of the palmyra fruit outputs. We have not even attempted how to protect these valuable fruits from pests and diseases and to fully utilize these fruits for our benefit. Protein-rich fruits are being wasted and end up as fertilizer for the soil or in landfills.

After extracting all juice from well-ripe palmyra fruits, the palmyra seeds are raised in nursery beds to obtain panangkilangu (Palmyra sprout), which are boiled and eaten, or it could be dried to make Pulukkodiyal. It should be possible to process the panangkilangu and preserve it for a long time. The raw palmyra sprout is dried in the sun and ground to make odiyol flour, used in the preparation of odiyol kool.

The yellow pulp (ularnirai) of Palmyra fruits has 11% protein and significant quantities of B carotene in addition to several vitamins, iron, and calcium too. There is an urgent need to initiate research as to how best to manufacture likable edible products from palmyra fruits and popularise them among children. Sweet drinks should be prepared from the palmyra fruit pulp and substituted for soda and other fizzy drinks that are harmful to health. By mixing Palmyra pulp in the preparation of string hoppers and

pittu it should be possible to improve the protein richness and the taste of the outputs. Pannatu is made from the pulp of ripe palmyra fruit and can be eaten like chocolates.

Palmyra fruit has several medicinal properties which are disease resistant. Scientific Research should be carried out to confirm these beliefs. If we succeed in this venture, it should be possible to manufacture these products sophisticatedly and market same globally. We fondly buy oats and consume them regularly happily paying high prices, but we do not pay any attention to pangkilangu which is better than oats in many ways and rich in proteins – 12%, vitamins and fiber, and very little fat content. The mapporul in pangakilangu is absorbed quickly into our system and is considered as a good food for people suffering from diabetes.

In spite, of the importance and usefulness of its products the Palmyra tree has not been recognized in the countries of its occurrence and the large-scale manufacture of its products and marketing have not been attempted on a global scale. Whereas if such a wonderful multi-purpose tree existed in developed countries the tree would have assumed importance and its products would be marketed sophisticatedly. We the gullible would have eagerly bought such products and consumed the same lavishly. The fact that the Palmyra tree is growing in developing countries, has made it lose its pride of place globally because it is in the wrong place among the wrong people! If the world was aware of the medicinal properties of the Palmyra, jaggery would have become very popular, nungu would have been given a place in the desserts in five-star hotels, pulukkodiyal, odiyol flour and Palmyra sprout (panangkilangu) would be available significantly in the world supermarkets.



# THE CRASH OF LION AIR FLIGHT 610

By: Kane Siva

In the early hours on the morning October 29th 2018, almost 15,000 km from Boeing Company, in Everett, USA, passengers were waiting patiently to emplane one of the Boeing's Brand new 737 MAX 8 aircraft at SOKARNO - Hatta -international airport, on a domestic flight to Pangkal Pinang, in Indonesia. The passengers never realised the life and death drama that would unfold in the cockpit after 30 minutes on the fateful day. The Stub-nosed



Lion Air JT 610: Previous flight crashed into sea in 201...  
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aircraft was the work horse of Airline fleets since 1970. This 737 is a new version of the Boeing and it was christened 737 MAX with two much larger engines, mounted in the front and, almost 15% fuel efficient than all the previous versions and the airlines clamoured for MAX 8. Lion Air shocked the world with a 22 billion US \$ deal for MAX 8 IN 2018.

Captain Bhavye Suneja, 31 was a dynamic, pilot of typical new breed, had flown in most of the other versions of 737, 6,000 hours under his cap. His co pilot Harvino had closer to 5,000 hours and ten years older. The pilots were going through their pre-flight checklists. 737 MAX is being installed with a soft ware system, Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System, MCAS. This is a stabilizer software developed by Boeing to prevent the nose of the aircraft going up in certain maneuvers and to avoid the stall. But Boeing never included this software in the aircraft manual and this was supposed to be with the FAA's approval.



The terrifying final minutes of Lion Air flight 610: 60 M...  
www.9now.com.au

Isn't alarming?? Both the pilots in the cockpit were unaware that a small sensor on the interior window on the captain side, supposed to compensate for the excessive nose up angle by adjusting the horizontal stabilizer to prevent a stall of the aircraft, was going to be the "DEVIL'S HAND" few minutes after the flight. MCAS, measures the Angle of attack of the air on the wing of the plane. The best part I read, that most people at FAA have never heard of this, except a few. Also interesting here to mention this sensor was installed with a 21 degree misalignment in the inside and the Boeing mechanics never noticed it.

Flight 610 was cleared for takeoff by the ATC and was airborne at 6.20 am, Indonesian time. Couple of minutes later the captain's control column started shaking, an indication for a possible stall of the aircraft. Pilots noticed the signals in the panel, promptly informed ATC "Problems With Flight Control" and was intending to return but could not maneuver the aircraft, they lifted the nose but it dipped. Harvino was flipping through the checklist never realising that this was intentionally omitted from the check list by Boeing with the FAA's blessing (may be). The ATC cleared the flight for 27,000 feet but it hardly reached 6,000 feet. Both the pilots fought with all their knowledge and skills to get the control of the flight, but finally the devil had its day and at 06.32 am the aircraft dived into



Lion Air JT 610: Previous Flight Crashed Into Sea in 20...  
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the Indonesian sea, all 189 members on board perished. Just imagine the horror the Passengers and the crew would have had on their faces. The cockpit voice recorder had the final emotional moments of the pilots invoking the blessings of the God according to their Muslim faith with the words "Allahu Akbar". Unbelievable & unimaginable horror. They lost their lives for no fault of theirs.

Before I proceed to delve into this crash, want to be fair and square with the manufacturer of 737 MAX. Lion Air has really a bad track record regarding the safety and maintenance. This is not a surprise for me with my aviation experience. That's I avoid flying in low cost airlines. But the responsibility for this crash solely lies in the hands of Boeing and for their lowest decency and disregard for human lives.

The pilots and the passengers became the scapegoat for the Boeing's corporate creed. Many may wonder how and why? Boeing never offered any training for their customer's pilots on this MAX, and white washed it saying "if any pilots



Lion Air crash: Off-duty pilot had identified plane malfu...  
meaww.com

had flown the previous 737 version" then they should be able to handle the MAX, further it's a cost cutting measure for Boeing. This was a highly ridiculous way of offering service and training to their customers and callous disregard for the value of human lives.

This crash immediately brought the Boeing's public relations to the forefront. They called the Boeing engineers, who pointed the finger at the newly installed software system, MCAS, which hardly anyone at the FAA was aware, including the Lion Air Flight Management and Engineering never heard about it at all its existence which was kept under the "Carpet". The passengers lost their lives for no fault of theirs. They became the scapegoat for the corporate creed of Boeing and to a great extent, the dereliction of duties by the FAA. Boeing's CEO, Dennis Muilenburg and his cohorts of engineers started convincing FAA, and airline officials that the "MAX is a safe aircraft" and blamed the Lion Air since it had a bad safety record in that region. But lots of pilots were skeptical of Boeing's version and pointed the finger at the MCAS, software system. I remember well while working in Houston, overhearing about the heated argument by the pilots of American Airlines with the Boeing executives over this incident. I would say it was alarming to note the Training pilots of Boeing, and the executives were saying none of this



Lion Air crash: First pictures emerge of passengers on ...  
www.dailymail.co.uk

happened with our American pilots and shifted the blame to the 2 Indonesian pilots and added that they did not know how to prevent the stall and some comments were racial. It was like adding insult to the injury. Boeing officials never accepted their failures, but were only interested to safe guard the image of the company to enhance the profits and the stock market, at any cost to the lives of people. It was said that Boeing was not interested in simulator training and never had a simulator for MAX up to the time of the crash. After this one of depressing employee had to say this in a mail "this aircraft was designed by clowns and monitored by monkeys". There were some honest employees said the culture at Boeing was toxic, all safety features get stepmotherly treatment and some of the pilots were of the opinion that the Indonesian pilots should have had been given a few hours training on the MAX alone. Lion Air requested the training for the pilots on MAX which was brushed off by Boeing



Victims Of Deadly Crashes Overshadow Boeing 737 M...  
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pilots with the approval of the management.

When you analyse all the evidence from the accident reports, subsequent Congressional hearings and the hand in gloves role played by the US, top independent "watch dog", FAA, there are many e mails, hand written notes, pilots warning on the safety of this aircraft, all of it points an accusing finger at the Boeing team, the FAA, and the corporate culture that was adapted by Prime Manufacturer of commercial and defense Aircrafts, the Boeing. Boeing embodies the aviation industry of America and a good money spinner for the US economy.

This and the subsequent events unfolded few months after Ethiopian Airlines 737 MAX crash made the US government to ground all the 737 MAX aircrafts indefinitely and forced Dennis Muilenburg to resign, stocks plummeted and spelt a death knell for Boeing .

There were clear evidences to suggest that systemic failures with Boeing at all levels of management which could have had been averted if more focus would have been there on safety and not to compromise on it. It's mind boggling to understand the former CEO Dennis who claim himself as a real religious, and regular church going man would have had the heart to do this heinous



Lion Air Flight 610 - Today In Aviation Second Annivers...  
mollyh-ours.blogspot.com

act, and knowingly endorsing this kind corporate behaviour because of monetary gains.

I wish to add this as of this month, the FAA has certified 737 MAX to fly again, once software system of the MCAS has been adjusted to function without any glitch. Hopefully no more malfunction and unwanted deaths because of manufacturing flaws.

This shameful act made some British newspapers to term the 737 MAX ----- AS A "DEATH JET".

AS ONE writer mentioned, A pilot who worked with Forkner & Gustavsson said this in a press release "Boeing Got AWAY WITH MURDER" IN MY OPINION "A REAL CORPORATE HOMICIDE"

**K.N. Sivagnanasunderam (Blue)**  
Former Flight Operations Officer,  
Air Ceylon Ltd,  
Kanesiva6@gmail.com



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Words of Peace

### Four Simple Things



What is important for you as a human being?

One: "Know thyself."

Absolutely. You cannot afford to be a stranger to you.

You can afford to be a stranger to other people who do not know you,

but you cannot afford to be a stranger to you:

"Know thyself."

### Secondly,

you need to have a heart full of gratitude.

Be thankful. Thankful for what? For very simple things, very simple things, Like being alive. So, could you begin by being thankful for being alive? could you in your moments of frustration could you be thankful for this breath?

It's still coming.

Do you know that when you are angry, the root of your anger is fear? To remove the anger, you have to remove the fear



and to remove the fear, you have to have courage.

So, courage is what will get rid of the anger!

So, can you have gratitude?

Only those people who have that courage, who have that strength can have gratitude: "Thank you. Thank you."

I say to people: I say: "Be thankful" and they go: "To whom?"

Then you don't know how to be thankful.

Just be thankful. Not to whom.

When you look at a beautiful rose, do you go up to it and say: "Are you beautiful for me?" "No. That rose is beautiful even if nobody's looking at it. And that rose is beautiful if it's a criminal looking at it.

And the rose is beautiful if a saint is looking at it. And the rose is beautiful if you're looking at it.

Gratitude: number two.

### Number three?



Noise.

So, have you heard this saying?

It goes, "You don't need wings to fly. You don't need wings to fly.

All you need to do is cut the ropes that hold you back."

Have you heard this?

So, where are the ropes? The ropes that hold me back are in my head.

And what do they look like? They look like noise.

What is the noise?

"You should do this; you should do that."

Words that are not yours, other people's words that echo in your head...

"Oh, yeah, but if you do this, you will go to hell!"

"Oh, but you want to go to heaven... You want to go to heaven..."

Do you know what heaven looks like?

If you didn't recognize the heaven here?

How will you know you are in heaven when you are in heaven?

The question isn't, you are flying, my friends, the question isn't: "You are flying?"

the question is: "Are you on the right airplane?"

So, do you know what heaven feels like?

Because heaven is here. And if you don't recognize it here, you're not going to recognize it anywhere else.

So far you are here, your heaven is here; your hell is here.

What is heaven? Heaven is the place where you are fulfilled.

What is hell? When you are not in heaven. Simple!

What does heaven feel like? It feels heavenly. It's in you; it's in you; it's in you; it's in you; it's in you.

### Fourth thing. The last thing.

You can fail, but don't accept failure.

So, you're going, "What does that mean?" Right?

When you were a baby, and you were learning how to walk,

did you fail? Every time you fell down, you failed. Right?

But did you accept failure? You never... You failed, but you never accepted failure;

you got right back up: "Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

Right? Till one day you learned how to walk, that's how you learned how to walk.

You failed, but you did not accept failure.

Now, look at you. A little failure: "Huh..."

So, you can fail, but don't accept failure.

Do those four things in your life, please.

Do those four things: "Know yourself"

You want to know yourself? I can help you. I can help you.

"Be thankful for this life; be thankful for the breath."

And then, "Cut the ropes of noise."

"Fail, no problem. But don't accept failure."

Do those things

and you will see a big difference in your life.



- Prem Rawat

[www.premrawat.com](http://www.premrawat.com)

[www.timelesstoday.com](http://www.timelesstoday.com)

## Nalavenba 203

## SPECIAL FEATURE



# CARNAL CULTIVATION

By: Kumar Punithavel

In the famous North Indian epic Mahabharata, when the Pandavas gambled and lost their kingdom to their cousins the 'Gowravas', they had to leave their kingdom together with their partner Panchali, to live in the forest. They were greatly saddened and depressed.

They went and met an ascetic Pragathasuvar, for counselling. The austere felt very sorry for the grieving brothers and Panchali. In order to peace their mind, the recluse told them a story, where the effect of previous birth in one's life is explained. This sub-epic 'Nalavenba', has been written in the form as he had narrated the story to cheer them up. This epic was written in Tamil by a great poet Puhalenti (புகழேந்தி). Poet Puhalenti was born in a village called Kalanthai, and served the Pandian royalty. During this time when a Chola prince married a Pandian princess, he moved to the Chola kingdom. The quarrel between him and another Chola poet Ottakuthar (ஓட்டக்கூத்தன்) is legendary. It all started because of the jealousy of the poet Ottakuthar, over Puhalenti. It was finally settled by the intervention of the Chola emperor, and peace prevailed.

Puhalenti was well known for his quatrains of four lines called as venpa (வெண்பா) In the sub-epic Nalavenba there are 427 quatrains. It is a very interesting story, but here I will give a quatrain as a sample of the poetic excellence of poet Puhalenti. Let us get a brief summary of the sub-epic 'Nalavenba'.

In a forest cave there lived a hunter clan couple called Aakuthi. One day a hermit passed by their cave, and they served him and gave accommodation in the cave for the night. As it was a small cave and could accommodate only two persons, the hunter slept outside the cave. He never worried that his wife was spending the night alone with a stranger. The recluse was greatly moved by the trust the hunter had on him as well as his wife too and praised him profusely in his heart. However, that night a roaming animal killed the sleeping hunter. When the wife realized what had happened to her husband she too died out of grief.

The benevolent hunter in his next birth was born as king of Nidatha country, as King Nalan. The King Nalan not only excelled in education, knowledge and valour; he was also a great chef. It is the tradition even to this day when someone cooks well, he is praised as Nalan. Whereas the hunter's wife was born as Damayanthi, a princess in the country Vitharapam. The ascetic was born as a swan in his next birth.

The Vitharpam princess Damayanthi was not only very pretty, but was with great decorum and grace. The swan went as an emissary for the princes to Nalan and expounded on not only her beauty, but also her other virtuous qualities. Hearing it he sent the swan to Damayanthi asking her to marry him. Hearing the noble qualities and valour of the suiter, she fell in love with Nalan.

According to the custom of that time suitors were invited to the Vitharpam palace, where a damsel was given to choose from the suitors.

Even the celestials too wanted to compete in the selection process. Knowing Damayanthi loves Nalan very dearly, with their magical powers they too appeared looking exactly like Nalan. But the princess, being very intelligent, knew that celestials do not wink their eyes, and easily spotted her human lover Nalan. The couple was blessed with a boy and a girl Indrasenan and Indrasenai. The celestials who could not marry the beautiful princess contrived and requested Lord Saniswaran to curse the couple with misery. But Lord being a fair one he could not hurt a righteous person. However, one day King Nalan in a hurry to do pooja did not wash his feet properly. For being careless in such a trivial task he decided to punish him. He made Nalan to gamble with Putpakaran and lose all his wealth, power and status. He had to abdicate the throne and go to the jungle with his wife and children. Seeing the suffering of the children he sent them to Damayanti's father through an ascetic they met in the jungle. Following this he got separated from his wife too.

Damayanthi, who was left alone, was attacked by a python and it curled around her. A passing hunter seeing her plight attacked and killed the python, but he developed carnal interest in the lone woman and started chasing after her. She managed to escape the pursuer and reached Sothy Country and continued her life as a servant woman there. Fortunately, her father managed to save her and took her to his place.

Nalan who was left alone without Damayanthi was bitten by a snake and turned black in colour. However, the snake gave him an enchanted cloak. Turned ugly he reached Ayothi (a city in Ramayana) and worked under the King Rithupannan as charioteer. Coming to know that he is serving as a charioteer, in order to woo him to come to her, she announced a second nuptial selection for her. Rithupannan wanted to try his possibility to be selected and decided to attend the ceremony. Nalan was reluctantly compelled to join as the charioteer. At that time Lord Saniswaran decided to leave him. Damayanthi was able to see through his camouflaged appearance. When Nalan put on the magical cloak he regained his original appearance, and lived happily with Damayanthi.

As mentioned earlier, of the 427 quatrains I have selected #203, which describes the carnal love Nalan and Damayanthi had.

அங்கைவேல் மன்னன் அகலம் னனுஞ்செறுவில்

He starts the quatrain describing the broad chested king, who carries a spear in the arm.



In the broad chest of the king whose arm holds the spear,

கொங்கையேர் பூட்டிக் குறுவியர்நீர் - அங்கடைத்துக்

The poet goes on to say that the damsel Damayanthi ploughed the chest with her breast as plough and sweat as water she confined

In it harnessed breast as plough, and sweat as water – confined

கொங்கையேர் பூட்டிக் குறுவியர்நீர் - அங்கடைத்துக்

The poet goes on to say using love as dykes holding the sweat for the plant of carnal pleasure to grow.

Inside the dykes of love, cultivated the plant of lust

கோதையரின் மேலான கொம்பு. 203

In the first line the poet describes the hero's chest as the field where the cultivation of desire was done and on the fourth line, he describes the farmer who did the cultivation of carnal love. The poet says our heroine is the greatest among the dames.

In all damsels she is the greatest. 203

Let us read the whole verse together;

In the broad chested king whose arm holds the spear,

In it harnessed breast as plough, and sweat as water – contained

Inside the dykes of love, it grows the plant of craving

In all damsels she is the greatest, 203

அங்கைவேல் மன்னன் அகலம் னனுஞ்செறுவில்

கொங்கையேர் பூட்டிக் குறுவியர்நீர் - அங்கடைத்துக்

காதல் வரம்பொழுக்கிக் காமப் பயிர்விளைத்தான்

கோதையரின் மேலான கொம்பு. 203

There are many lovely poems for those who want to enjoy the beauty of Tamil classical poetry.



BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM

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Mar 27:

## Just finished another IELTS batch.

In all the batches I've taught till now, I've noticed that even fluent speakers who can get 6.5-7 in IELTS speaking, are only in the 5 -5.5 range in writing.

It's a recurring issue so for my next batch, I decided to concentrate on only writing.

A 30 hour writing development course with the IELTS writing exam as the target. This course is for you if:

- You've already taken IELTS and scored 5.0 - 6.0 in writing.

- Planning to take IELTS but struggling with the writing component (I'll check your level first).

-Not interested in IELTS but want to improve your writing; you can write basic sentences already but want to develop to the level where you can write reports and essays.

I'll launch the course after April 14th.

It will be a **Monday - Friday, 8 -9pm** course via zoom. 30 hours is not really enough but we'll start with that for now.

You'll definitely improve in that time.

**Rs.30,000 for 30 hours.**

Get in touch on **0777793124** if interested. Please share widely among your friends and social media networks. Thank You.

Mar 18:

## Teaching English as a second language, to adults who've learned the alphabet early in school but little else, can be interesting.

It's always an uphill task getting them to use punctuation correctly when writing. Random capital letters in the middle of sentences, no capital letters at the beginning of sentences or proper nouns, no commas, apostrophe's or full stops.

Today I ticked them off for the umpteenth time.

"I can understand the use of capital letters being a foreign concept to you as we don't have it in Tamil. What's the big idea behind no full stops for sentences? Didn't you get into trouble with your Tamil teachers for this?"

"We did get into trouble with our Tamil teachers but the full stop is a foreign concept too. It was introduced to us by Arumuga Navalar during the British colonial era."

"Oh really? Since you were born well after Navalar, it needn't be a foreign concept to you."

Looking back on the incident though, while I appreciate the need for universal punctuation marks, what the devil were the English thinking of with capital letters? Most other languages manage just fine with one set of letters?

Now that I think of it, I share my students' confusion on the need for capital letters.

Mar 28:

## Congratulations Sakuntala Mohini Sachithanandan.

I just read this review. Seems to be a lovely and much needed book - introducing our children to the plight of local animals and the need to be kind to them.

And you illustrated with your own drawings? It's amazing to be this talented.

I will buy a copy when I next get to Colombo. Keep writing and shining.

# Sakuntala Sachithanandan's latest children's book

By Nanda Pethiyagoda

Way to go, Rover! is prose and poetry writer Sakuntala Sachithanandan's most recent treat to children, published in 2022. As kids would deduce from the title, a dog is the main character of the story. It certainly is a delightful tale of a stray dog who was not treated well but survived. As the author mentions in her Introduction, she has not written and got published this book merely to entertain young readers; she has a humane aim: "I am reaching out to you this time not with just a fun story but an arrow aimed straight at your heart on behalf of pet animals."

She mentions cats are tolerated in homes very often because they catch rats but have their kittens taken away from them as nuisances to the household – devoured by the kabaragoya. A cur or common dog suffers a worse fate and is often ill-treated and imprisoned in a kooduwa. Hence the appeal for treating well stray cats and dogs. She dedicates the book to "all voiceless animals of this world who are abandoned, or if kept as so-called pets, are caged, ill-treated, neglected... even killed."

The story unfolds interestingly as a conversation between Zelda, an awesome lizard and Pilihuduwa, brilliant kingfisher perched on a Nelli branch. Introduced in the chat is Granny Siriyawathie, eternally wielding a broom which is more a weapon than household cleaning aide. She is the villain of the story and the hero in distress is a poor stray dog brought to the home by her grandson, Gamini.

"He had just dropped a little something-or-the-other on the verandah floor out of a woven plastic pohora bag. It whimpered and

urinated. Then looking this way and that, it hopefully wagged its tail!" All this to the crescendoing screams of rescuer Gamini's grandmother. And Zelda elaborates on the tale: "Siriyawathie did not fail to kick the poor mite cruelly, shouting 'Nuisance! Kalakanniya!'"

Gamini being out of home most of the time – in school and at play – the dog now named Rover, is left to be screamed at and tortured by Siriyawathie. Chickadee the cat is introduced midway in the story and in Sakuntala's Dedication she mentioned her as the best beloved pet of her home.

The narration is full of action and clever imaginings of what the other animals think of the drama enacted in Siriyawathie's home. Throughout runs the strong streak of Sakuntala's love of animals and abhorrence at how people often treat animals who live with them, particularly the nondescript stray cats and dogs who are addressed discriminately as para saththu or val ballo/pooso as against pedigreed pets or jaathi ballo/pooso.

The style of writing which is light, conversational and informal, also simple and easy flowing, suits a book for children. Sakuntala being a painter fills the book with delightful colour sketches; so necessary in a kids' book.

The author invents terms which fit the text well and are delightful: like we people are referred to as 'Hoomans' when the animals chat and dogs barking to each other is said to use 'dogese'.

One point I did not approve of and found to be a stumbling block, interrupting the flow of the narrative, were English translations to Sinhala terms/phrases used, whether verbs, nouns or expletives.

These are added in parenthesis. Footnotes on translations and adding them in an index are out now. The reader is supposed to discern the meaning of the sentences or terms given in another language with the main text in English by its contextual use or position. That actually makes for a better flow of text. In her second novel (2017) The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, Arundathi Roy adds much in Hindi or Urdu relevant to Kashmir that is central to the story. Not one translation nor hint of the meaning of the terms/sentences is given. Sometimes they are even paragraphs in the Indian language. It's a 'understand or miss out' policy when using other languages in a story; which I approve of and adopt.

Asgar Hussein – journalist, writer, poet and winner of the 2005 State Lit Award for Poetry – in his back cover blurb in Sakuntala's book, introduces the author as "an acclaimed poet and writer of children's fiction. A gifted story teller, Sakuntala has for many years delighted young minds with her animal tales. Another charm of her stories is that she crafts her animal characters so wittily ..." This is so true of her narrator-conversationists – the lizard Zelda and kingfisher Pilihuduwa. Asgar ends by adding: "If, through her tales, that affection and sympathy are transmitted to the young, the world will be a kinder, gentler place."

Sakuntala, a lawyer by profession, has published Tales from the tree house and The adventures of



Sakuntala Mohini Sachithanandan

Sokadi the line-room Mouse for children. Her two poetry volumes are Sedahamy Selvakumari and others and On the street and other revelations for which she won the Gratiaen Award in 2010. Her empathy for the underprivileged woman and understanding of the hard lives led by estate workers are the underlying themes in most of her poems.

Writing stories for children with inherent positive messages and in good English is more a service than a giving into an author's urge to write. This is especially true in Sri Lanka where, mercifully, there seems to be a surge in the desire for English skills. What better way of getting kids to acquire reading and comprehension skills than offering them good stories, illustrated and very well written.? Hence Sakuntala deserves congratulations and thanks for the service she has rendered without consciously intending her book to be a service. We wish her good luck for more books to be published by her.

## TRIBUTE



## A MODERN DAY

## Azhwar

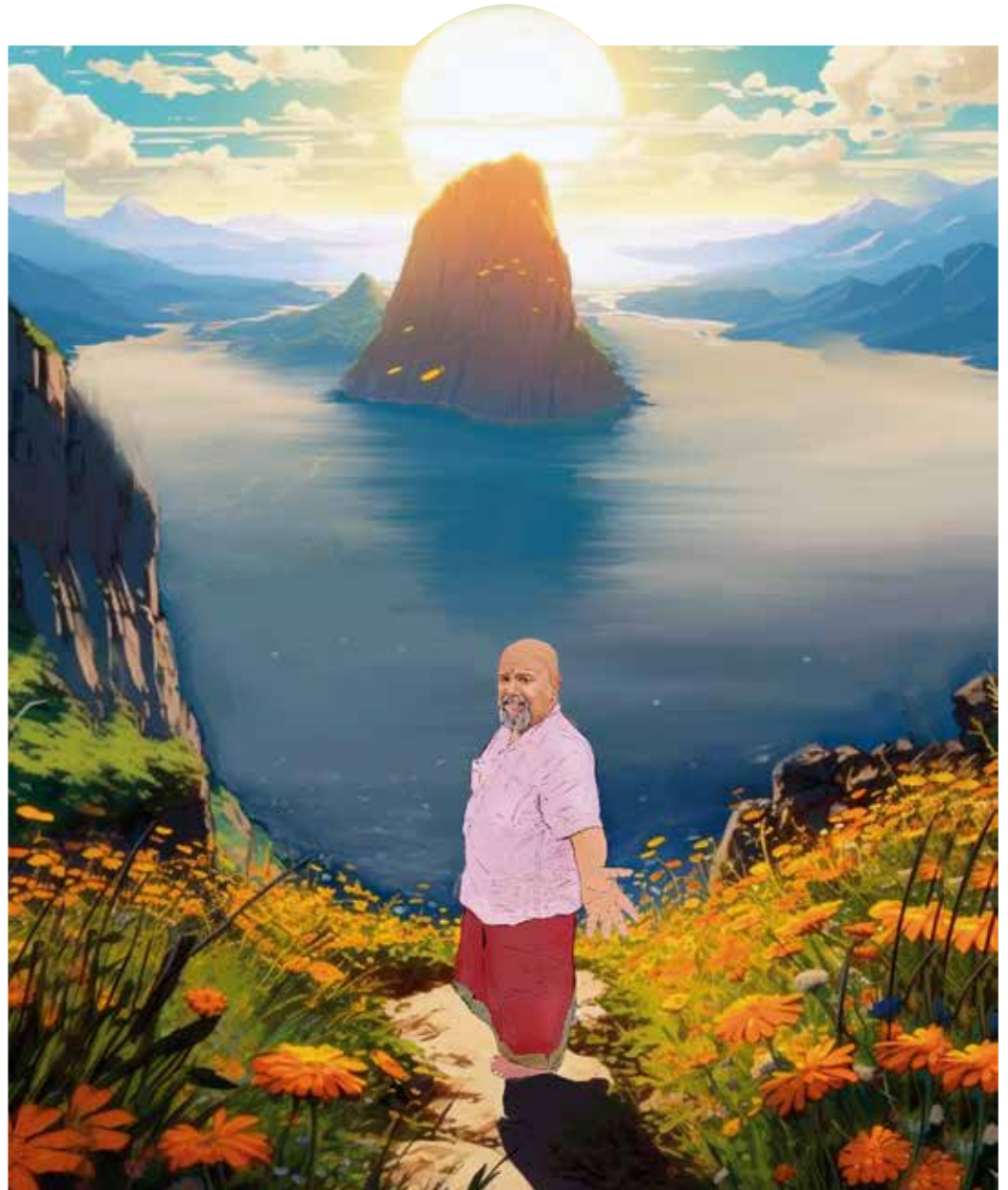
By : Harrish Thirukumaran

“One day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful.” This was one of dad’s favorite quotes by Austrian neurologist, Sigmund Freud. And as we look back, his life was truly beautiful.

He told Danesh and I that quote was printed on a mug by one of his coworkers. His duty was being an accountant. However, this did not fully define who dad was as a person and his life.

Dad or Thiru, as most people knew him, was larger than life itself. He assumed various roles in his life spanning across places in Sri Lanka, the USA and Canada. From being a literary enthusiast to an ardent devotee, Dad was the type of person who appreciated the finer things in life.

As the first child in our immediate family, I felt as though I had a unique father-son relationship. What can be seen as tough love was really him seeing and cultivating the potential in me. He didn’t want me to repeat the same mistakes he made during the many trials and tribulations of his own life. This potential he saw in me took the form of writing. A great love of his that he shared



with everyone around him including myself.

Sometimes I saw our relationship as though he was also a close friend of mine. It makes the pain of his sudden loss ever more deeper, but the memories all the more greater.

Dad was a deeply religious man; A devout Hindu. It was an interest and knowledge that he shared with Danesh and I over our own lives as children in South Brunswick, New Jersey to our lives today. For myself, this was expressed through our pilgrimages to the Richmond Hill Hindu temple every Saturday morning.

Dad helped so many people in his life when it was needed for them. It seemed to reach points where he couldn’t even help himself.

Yet while it seemed as though he came off as someone expecting nothing in return, his strong sense of faith gave him the comfort that he, Danesh, I and mummy would be alright during challenging times. He gave more than he took. That was the essence of his character.

Dad was a modern day azhwar of Perumal, a god in human form. He really was someone beyond this world. A soul gone too soon, but one that will forever live in our hearts.





# Trust in the Journey

By : Danesh Thirukumaran

Nothing makes sense. I hope it will as I look back in some time.

Just a few months ago, we celebrated 60 years of life for you. I'm glad we spent that night expressing how deeply loved you are. It gives me some relief to know that you spent the last few months of this life being reminded of this.

As your "sweet boy", I saw you as a dad who knew everything. Who raised me both sternly and compassionately. I attribute the strong commitment to my values to you.

As I think about our life over the last few years, it feels as though you were preparing Harrish and I for this exact moment. That you somehow knew your time was coming soon, and that you needed to impart all your wisdom upon us. I wonder if that's why the amount of depth within a single moment with you leaves me speechless. A man defined by duty, seemingly any challenge that stood in your way you overcame it. I realize now the strength to overcome these comes from the amount of love you have for life and everything within it.

How can I move on without you? I still have not accepted that you are gone. It's too hard to say goodbye. You guided me to trust in my path and live happily amongst it all. I would call you almost everyday the last 2.5 years, and you would motivate me to reach higher in life in each call. Reminding me that I am divinely guided, and



paying close attention to your favorite Vedic astrologer, Harikesanallur, you would express to me how blessed I am in this life. I hope to remember my blessings forever.

After mummy passed, you swallowed your sadness and put on a face consumed by duty. Duty to assume both parental roles, to ensure we felt connected to our mother, our roots, and ensure we had a good footing to begin our adult life. On the surface, duty subsumed you, but the deep pain you felt from mummy passing laid underneath. Only recently I came to know the pain you felt, the pain of losing your life partner.

It's hard to understand what life is trying to show me. Losing mummy less than 3 years ago, and losing you now. I am grateful to be graced with a dad like you. Despite all the fear, the troubles, and the pain in the world, you found a way to exist purely.

The foundation you have laid for us, and many others, has not gone without notice. I can't wait to see you again. I love you dearly, dad.

- Om Shanti -



## TRIBUTE



# CAREFREE CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD

By : Ken Balakumaran

Today, I stand before you with a heavy heart, struggling to come to grips with the fact that I have lost my little brother, Thiru. I would like to first take this opportunity to thank all of you for your kind support and for keeping our family in your prayers during this difficult time. My family is grateful for all your support in helping us get through this difficult time.

I do not even know where to begin as I am still in shock that Thiru is no longer with us – it feels like a dream saying farewell to my dear brother. We shared a lifetime of memories, from our carefree childhood to adulthood.

To all of us who knew him, Thiru was always there for us. He always made himself available to his family and friends, dedicating his life to service and spreading love. One call of his name, and he would be with us in a heartbeat. Once mentioned that you were in need, and he would go the extra mile to ensure you were taken care of. Thiru, by nature, was not someone who would talk about the help or support he provided to others. Deeply connected to his spirituality and traditional roots, Thiru's love, care and empathy for others had no boundaries, in this ever-changing world, Thiru was always there - he was our constant.



From a young age, Thiru embraced the world around him, constantly seeking new experiences and knowledge. He was knowledgeable in all areas; as a well-read intellectual and journalist he was able to engage in captivating conversations on world politics, religion, and culture.

Thiru, I will miss your daily WhatsApp messages in our sibling group chat filled with encouragement, your unwavering support throughout everything we have faced together, and the way you never failed to lift my spirits. I will dearly miss your wise advice and counsel on life's decisions, as well as your profound insights on matters of faith. Your intellect, brilliance, and thirst for knowledge from a young age captivated all those around you, and whoever associated with you were so blessed to have had the privilege to be guided by your wisdom. Although you are no longer physically present, your spirit will live forever in our hearts, and we will find comfort knowing your brilliance and love will continue to guide us to eternity.

While composing this Tribute, I was looking for insight and wisdom on what to write about and about the future. It then occurred to me to do what I have done in the past – look towards my little brother for guidance, and a few nuggets of wisdom that I learned from Thiru occurred to me:

First, Thiru had a very long memory for happy occurrences and a very short memory for difficult ones. Thiru always believed in ever lasting memories, such that he would want us to celebrate his life, not mourn his passing. Just during these last few weeks, Thiru reminded us to enjoy life and have get together, to celebrate and enjoy this life with the company of others. His mantra was to always “Enjoy



- Thiru in Colombo, Sri Lanka at age 5

life and create new memories.”

Over these last few weeks, I heard so many wonderful stories about Thiru, from friends and family, particularly about his sense of humor, his accomplishments and his genuine kindness. Receiving numerous messages from Thiru's friends across the world, from Sri Lanka to Australia and to the US, it is a clear testament my brother has influenced everyone, who has known him, that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. It is important these wonderful stories continue to be shared, as Thiru continues to live on through these memorable moments and his bright children Harrish and Danesh.

We are saddened by the sudden passing of Thiru, let us celebrate the beautiful legacy that Thiru leaves behind. Thiru, my dear brother, you may be gone, but you will never be forgotten. Your legacy of love, wisdom, and encouragement will forever be ingrained in our souls. You have made this world a better place to live in. May you rest in peace, knowing that you have left an undeniable mark on all of us. Thiru – we will miss you so much and we love you. Let us cherish the moments we shared, the laughter we embraced, and the lessons we learned from your life.

## TRIBUTE



## Angel on Earth

By: Baheerathy Sriskanda

I am Thiru's older sister Rathy. I am here with lots of sorrow and sadness to remember my brother and celebrate his life with you.

His demise was very sudden and I cannot let this day pass by without sharing some lovely memories of him.

I was part of his life in every aspect. From the time we played together in Chavakacheri to his very last breath. I don't need to repeat that he was an angel on earth and I was lucky to have been his akka. In the next life as well, I wish to be born as your sister.

You gave me an opportunity to take care of you in your final days and I wish I could have done more. I thought that you will get cured in few days and you will enjoy my dosas as you always did. Life without you is a void and no one else can fill it.

I remember back in 1983, when my husband was teaching both of us to drive, you learned much faster than me. He would be very strict with me for not driving properly. But he was always patient with you. This made me very jealous of you. Of course, you quickly learned to join my husband in pointing out my mistakes.

When we were living in Dehiwela, I remember when a person from the village visited us, and wanted to deliver some jackfruit to one of his friends. Amma made Thiru go with him so he doesn't get lost. They decided to sit in the last row of the bus, and when the driver hit the brake, all the fruit started rolling to the front of the bus.

The man was too old to fetch the fruit himself, and started shouting on the bus saying 'enta pala palam pidi pidi'. Thiru finally came home after chaperoning this man and his jackfruit to his destination, only to give amma a nice long speech about never sending him on such missions in the future.

When I stroked your arms and head in your final days, you told me several times that my hand felt like our amma's. I didn't need any more affectionate words than these few words you uttered in your death bed. You have helped so many people in so many ways. But for me you helped me to realize how a person should live. Though you are my younger brother, you gave me advice like my pappa and made me realize that there is nothing in this world that is permanent.

Pls forgive me if I have made any mistakes and I promise you that I will be there for your sons until I leave this earth.

## In Loving Memory of My Beloved Brother

By: Sivasakthy Sivarajah



Thiru you are one of a kind, maintaining dignity and quality and great wisdom that is hard to find.

I still remember the day you began your schooling at DS. You were an all-rounder. You excelled in studies and you organized events; you were a prefect when you were in grade 10.

After passing the high school graduation exam GCE AL at DS you moved to Connecticut for higher studies and obtained MBA at university of Hartford. Later on, you began your career in the accounting field in US. We were all glad when you moved to Canada in 2019. I never thought it would be such a short stay!

You had great passion for journalism and writing. Everyone loved your articles published in monsoon journal. I am glad that both your sons have inherited your writing skills. I hear tributes have been pouring in from your fans.

You were my best play mate - I remember reading to you until you started reading on your own. We used to hang around in the house and yard playing and exploring! You are so kindhearted Thiru!

I was staying in Jaffna with our grandparents for a short period in my early childhood. Upon returning to Colombo you took me around and introduced me to your new friends and told me who is a softy and would be my best playmate. You were such an adorable, cute boy in your childhood days and I recall one lady in the neighbourhood asking you to grow up fast so she could marry you.

When I was by your side while you were ill you would request me to sit down and take rest, this made me to run into tears and you would ask me to stop crying.

You and Nalene were blessed to have two smart and intelligent sons. I will definitely be a part of their wellbeing.

You know Thiru, our siblings chat group has been quiet since you felt sick. You were the first and last one to post daily in the group.

Everyone in the family loves you so much. When you left us on Friday night you were surrounded by all your loved ones.

I still cannot believe you left us!

Thiru you will always live in my heart.



# Unforgettable Memories

By ; Shiranee Balakumaran

I am taking this opportunity to speak about Thiru. I had the incredible privilege of witnessing his growth from a young man to an adult.

During Thiru's early years of exploring the United States, we spent valuable time together, creating memories that will last forever. We embarked on numerous adventures, traveled to so many places, and had the pleasure of getting to know many of his close friends who were also living in U.S. Those moments of exploration and shared experiences which formed memories that will never be forgotten.

One of the most significant milestones I had the honor of being a part of was Thiru's wedding in 1990 in Sri Lanka. I had the chance to meet Thiru's wife, Nalene, for the first time and it was a joyous occasion filled with love and laughter.

During my early years in Canada, I operated a Indian classical dance school. Throughout that time, Thiru consistently showed his support for my school. He assisted me in various ways, such as arranging emcees

for our shows and sharing his deep passion for classical music. In fact, Thiru's close friends Senthil and Sri graciously served as the Tamil speaking emcees for a few of my students' dance shows.

Thiru was an extraordinary person who possessed an infectious positivity and a pleasing personality that captured many people in my own family. His radiant spirit would uplift everyone around him. He had a unique ability to find joy in the simplest of things and an approach to life that was truly remarkable. Thiru's presence brought warmth and laughter into every room he entered.

As we reflect on Thiru's life, let us remember his unwavering optimism and his ability to spread happiness to those around him. His legacy will forever be in our hearts, and we will continue to honor his memory by embracing his positive outlook and cherishing the moments we shared. Thiru, we will miss you, we love you and may your soul rest in peace.

## Thank you for your Courage



By : Kumar Sriskanda

Thiru, when did we first meet? Must be in 1978 but I grabbed you as my brother-in-law in January 1983. This is the time we started to live under one roof. You were born in Kalvayal, Chavakachcheri and grew up in Colombo. I was born and bred in Batticaloa. But it was God's wish that we connect with one another. That was a God given gift to me. From day one, I noticed that you had a kind of non-assertive personality that made everyone to like you.

There are so many stories and experiences I can mention here about you. But one memory I cannot forget in my life. You remember, on Monday 25 July 1983, we left home in Dehiwela around 6:00 am and went to Colombo Fort Police Station to pick up my car that had been in a minor accident. We took the car and drove to Orugodawatte Toyota Car company. On our way, we noticed an unusually large crowd outside.

We did not suspect anything. On arriving at the Car Company, the employees there wondered about our presence. On making further inquiry, we learnt that the country is facing racial riots and we were asked to leave the premises immediately.

We then noticed that the army trucks were moving towards Colombo city and there were no buses on the road. So, we started to walk towards Colombo Fort-your father's office. While walking through Kotahena, Maradana, Panchikawatte and Fort railway station, we witnessed the most violent incidents such as shootings, burning of vehicles and shops, and the beating of Tamils. The rioters were making fun of Tamils with filthy language. Being Tamils, we just walked along with the crowd. The way we walked gave the impression to the rioters that we

were not Tamils. When we arrived at the old Parliament building where your father's office was, we realized that he had left the office for the day. Then we stayed in his office that night sitting under the office tables and calling everyone we could.

It was only then that we came to know that Colombo was burning and there were racial riots in Sri Lanka, later known as the Black July riots of 1983. It was the worst racial riots in Sri Lanka's history. We were wondering how we escaped from the killers that day. I was fortunate enough to take you with me that morning. It was only recently that I realized that it was you who gave me the courage to take those bold steps of just walking among the worst riot Sri Lanka had ever faced. Thank you again, Thiru.

There is a saying in Tamil about good souls who tread so softly and gently that even grass does not get crushed underfoot. You were such a man, Thiru! Your elder sister, my wife, is saying every day that you are playing a game with us, and that you will be back.

We were fortunate to take care of you during your last days and be with you during your last breath in our home. I am sure that your soul will break away from the cycle of rebirth and find eternal bliss with the almighty!

## TRIBUTE



# Treasured Possessions



By : Harshini Sriskanda

When I was growing up, Thiru Mama was, in my mind, always my young and cool uncle. He would take us fun places that I had never been before, such as Taco Bell. He ordered the spaghetti, which has since been discontinued, and would add packets of hot sauce to it and encourage me to try it. It was delicious. He would take us to play with the children of the friends he had. I remember running up and down the hallways of Alton Towers Circle with my brother and cousins and new friends, screaming and pulling the fire alarm. These were memories that Thiru Mama created for us.

When Thiru Mama visited us, he often brought gifts for my brother, Varun, and I. These were nearly always books. I did not own many books at that time, as my parents preferred to take us regularly to our local public library. The books that I did own were some of my most treasured possessions. He brought me Winnie the Pooh and Tintin comics. He brought me Asterix and the Gauls. He brought me a thick volume of poetry. He also brought me books that, in retrospect, were hardly suitable for a 10 year old girl, but I read them anyway. One was a fictionalized account of an Italian soldier and his lovers during the Great War. Another, one of Rohinton Mistry's earlier works, was the story of a struggling Parsi family in Delhi during the 1970s. I'm not sure if he read these himself and enjoyed them or if he came across them and just thought I would like them. I certainly did enjoy them and I read these books again and again.

At that time, Thiru Mama did not have the responsibilities that my parents had. Eventually, he

and Nalene Mami had Harrish and Danesh and moved back to the US. I saw him less and less often. We both grew older.

I hope in his last days that I was able to convey how much he meant to me.

I would like to end by reading a poem from the book of poetry that he bought for me in 1994. This is called "Remember" by Christina Georgina Rossetti.

*Remember me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning to stay.  
Remember me when no more, day by day,  
You tell me of our future that you planned:  
Only remember me; you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
Than that you should remember and be sad.*

*Thank you.*

## Lessons for a Lifetime

By : Priyank Bhatnagar

Thiru Mama was someone who could comfort you simply with a smile. He could lift your spirits with the smallest gesture. He could give you strength even with just a few words. He was a pure soul in the truest sense.

I will never forget the privilege of being able to care for him as he fell sick. In those four weeks, he taught me lessons that will last me a lifetime, and we developed a deep connection for which I am forever indebted to him.

With the strength he showed in facing each day, in spite of the harsh and unfair reality thrust upon him, he taught me how to be resilient. With his expressions of gratitude for the nurses, PSWs, friends and family, while facing physical and emotional exhaustion, he taught me what it means to be kind. With his calm demeanor and clear mind, even in the midst of ever-growing uncertainty surrounding his condition, he taught me what it truly means to achieve spiritual peace.

As we grew closer, I learned more from Thiru Mama on a personal level. Amongst appointments and treatments, we had many difficult conversations during which we both shared feelings and vulnerabilities. We spoke of hopes and fears, wishes and desires. He humbled me by feeling comfortable in opening up to me in this way and honoured me by trusting me with his thoughts and emotions. I am still not sure why it is that we were able to connect so quickly and so deeply, nor why he chose to do so with me specifically. Nonetheless, I am incredibly grateful that it happened and that I was able to be there for him.

At the end, Thiru Mama thanked me for the help I had given him. I hope he knew how thankful I am, and will forever be, to him for having imparted on me his wisdom and teachings. I am lucky that I got to care for him. I am a better person for having known him. I am blessed to have met him.



# Full of Heart

By : Anushini Sivarajah

Dear  
Thiru Mama,

I have always admired your strength, your hard work, and your sparkling sense of humour. You made me roar with laughter as a child, and shared treasured books with me as I grew older. In one of our last conversations, you told me we didn't have much family around when I was small, so you always spent extra time playing with me. How lucky I was; I am grateful for this love, and this early connection.

I miss you at our family gatherings - your warm smiles, your colourful stories, your thoughtful treats and the way you so happily greeted everyone around you. You shared so much with us, with such passion - clever observations, deep wisdom and your true awe for the world around you. I find myself poring through words you wrote and images you captured - everything you did was so full of heart. Stories about your kindness, compassion and of course, your antics, now abound - and they bring with them a certain comfort, as thoughts of you always do.

Thinking about you often, with great fondness and lots of love.

## Yearning for simpler times

By : Vishalini Sivarajah



I don't even know where to begin. I feel as if the last few weeks have been a strange nightmare, morphing into something I never could have fathomed and one that I am still waiting to wake from. I'm sure many of you feel the same way. As his worried niece, I tried to provide company, answers, and advocacy while Thiru Mama was sick. In the days and weeks I spent doing this, I felt so privileged. So privileged and grateful that he allowed me, someone that he probably still viewed as a child, the chance to help him for once. So privileged that I was able to provide care for him while he was sick, even if it was just to sit in silence while we waited for tests and answers, to massage his hand or to share a little smile. To be able to spend those many moments with him, and to be with him in his last ones, I am so grateful and I will never forget them. I couldn't believe, how calm and composed he was, always so polite in thanking the many nurses and doctors for their care, and then turning around to comfort us, his family, whenever we would get upset. There were many days that I could not find the strength within myself, and I would look to him and feel in such awe of his stoic nature. He would always tell me, and our other tearful family members, not to cry or worry about him; that the "good" thing that came out of us was uniting the family together; that we would be okay without him; and that he was ready to move on.

While these past few weeks have really stood out in my mind, Thiru Mama's passing has made me yearn for the years past, for what felt like a simpler time. A time when visits from him started with

his long journeys from New Jersey, ones that would span several days to weeks long as they always stayed with me and my parents. These visits of course included my two young and very energetic cousins Harrish & Danesh, jokes about my school (which he hilariously referred to as a "parippu school"), kinder surprise eggs and other treats, and a breakdown of new finds at Whole Foods, a fancy grocery store that had not yet made it to Canada at that time. When he started Monsoon Journal, he would bring copies to read and share, and eventually encouraged me and the other nieces and nephews to write for him. Throughout the years, he shared many tidbits of knowledge, ranging from politics and historical figures, and even to celebrities. We once joked about how he had a passing resemblance to Celine Dion's husband when he had started sporting a longer beard.

In more recent times, I had grown to appreciate his move back to Toronto in 2019. I cannot imagine how difficult this must have been for him to separate from Danesh and his New Jerseyian home of 20 plus years; but I know I speak on behalf of all the cousins and kids when I say that we truly cherished his renewed presence in our lives. To witness his interactions with my own nieces and nephews was always a treat, and served as a reminder of his kind, gentle, silly nature.

Later when he lost his wife, he was still ever present with us, with his wit and jokes. I have only recently realized how much this loss weighed on him... and as usual, I'm in awe of how resilient he was through it all. Now it seems, his time with us has come to an end, and I truly do not know that I could ever emulate his strength. It's so hard to say goodbye, so I won't, just a "see you later".

I know we are all sitting here with extremely heavy hearts this morning, so I would like to share with you a quote that has kept me going these past few days and I hope it provides some comfort for you too. So it goes,

"Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give, but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go."

We all love you Thiru Mama, and we will miss you so much.

# TRIBUTE



## REMEMBERING THIRU CHITHAPPA : A LETTER OF LOVE, SUPPORT, AND REMEMBRANCE

By : Praveen Balakumaran

*Dear Danesh and Harrish,*

As today is the 31st day after the passing of your beloved father, Thiru Chithappa - I hope this letter finds you both surrounded by the warmth and love of our family, even as we navigate through the depths of sorrow and loss. The pain we feel from his absence is immeasurable, and I want you to know that you are not alone in this journey of grief.

Thiru Chithappa, a remarkable man who left an indelible mark on all our lives, was not just a loving uncle but a guiding light who illuminated the path for us. One of his most remarkable qualities was his unwavering willingness to help others, irrespective of the nature or magnitude of their struggles. His selflessness knew no bounds, and he touched countless lives with his acts of kindness and compassion.

Your father's desire for your success and happiness was truly unparalleled. He believed in you both and supported your dreams and aspirations with fervor. He understood the importance of education and intellectual growth, and he consistently encouraged you to broaden your horizons. His fondness for journalism was evident in the way he engaged with the world around him, always seeking truth and understanding. His intellectual mind was a constant source of inspiration for all who had the privilege of knowing him.

As you gather with family and friends for the 31st day, acknowledging the immense void that your father's departure has left in our lives, I want you to understand that the road ahead will not be easy. The weight of his absence will be felt for the rest of your lives, and the pain

of losing such a cherished soul cannot be diminished. However, I urge you to find solace in the fact that his imprint on your lives and the lives of so many others will forever endure.

This letter has taken me a considerable amount of time to put together, for I wanted to ensure that my words were not hasty or superficial. I wanted to convey the depth of my emotions and the profound impact your father had on my father and myself. But more importantly, I wanted to emphasize the immense support system that surrounds you, and our unwavering commitment to being there for you every step of the way.

In times of sorrow, it is essential to lean on the love and support of family. We may not be able to ease your pain entirely, but together, we can offer strength, comfort, and a shoulder to lean on. We are here to listen, to provide guidance, and to hold your hands as you navigate the intricate paths of grief.

As you mourn the loss of your father, remember that you are not alone. The memories you shared, the love you received, and the values he instilled in you will forever be cherished. Let

his legacy be a guiding light that propels you forward, empowering you to carry on his spirit of kindness, generosity, and intellectual curiosity.

May you find peace in the knowledge that Thiru Chithappa's memory will forever be a part of your lives and that his love will continue to envelop you in the embrace of family and friends. Lean on us, my brothers, my cousins, for we are united by blood, by love, and by the profound impact of your father's life.

With deepest sympathy and support, Praveen.

## Lost for Words

By : Amarnath Amarasingam

*Thiru mama,*

*I'm usually pretty good with words, but words have failed me over the last month. I haven't had much to say. Instead, I've been finding comfort in the words of others. Listening to your family and friends speak about you at your funeral and in the days since, I have been struck by the themes that came up repeatedly: good-hearted, pious, helpful, humble, soft natured. These words are, of course, perfect.*

*I was thinking that perhaps I didn't have much to say because our relationship was largely an academic one. We spoke about politics often, joked about the dumpster fire that is Sri Lanka, and shared articles with each other. Because of this, I felt my words didn't carry the weight they needed to carry to be spoken alongside those of your family and friends. But listening to what others have been saying about you since your passing and revisiting some of our old emails and texts has brought me the realization that this was actually a core joy of yours. You were a scholar at heart. An always-curious journalist and writer. A theologian, wanting to dive deep into the numinous to make better sense of the seeming senselessness of our lives.*

*And so, I hope our fleeting chats meant something to you – and were maybe even helpful?*

*As many have said, it was a real blessing that we were able to spend your final days together as a family. Instead of a featureless and drab hospital room, you were surrounded by family, singing, and telling stories. You were surrounded by friends, who traveled from all corners, clouded by how they would carry on without your guidance and support. One moment that will always stick with me is when you told a friend, with weakened and strained breath, that you were sorry for not returning his call. Less than eight hours later, you were gone. Good hearted, soft natured, and helpful – until the very end.*

*We will miss you dearly, Thiru mama. Rest in thevarams. Rest in peace.*



# To Dad...

By : Bavatharini Jeyarajah

*Knew you more As  
'Dad' Than 'Mama'  
Heard him talk about you  
For hours in Awe.  
His friend and parent,  
Guardian and Guide,  
His Version Of 'Perumal' on Earth!*

*Peeked through his phone cam once,  
To see you in the temple,  
Dressed in a white Vesti,  
With a Sweet and Gentle Smile.*

*Roles you played  
From a beloved father,  
To the most caring friend,  
Tell more about you  
Than few sparing words from you.  
Didn't stand next to you in your final days,  
Nor did I say any healing words,  
Didn't take care of you when it ached,  
Didn't share those final moments with you.*

*You let me have the rose-tinted glasses  
And see you only at your best,  
To always be remembered  
With a kid's excitement on your face  
In visiting temples,  
Or savouring your favorite food,  
Singing thevaram,  
Or playing with the calf.  
As vain as it sounds,  
Wish I had more time with you.*

*I'm not the closest of All.  
But you gave me the Best Among All.  
Your priceless possession,  
The kindest soul, That you held close.*

*I bow to your Gentle Heart,  
And Generous Soul,  
The Devoted Mind, and  
The Artist in you!*

*I don't see the meaning  
Nor the gain in this pain  
It is a vacuum,  
That will never be filled.*

*All these words,  
Spoken to the Void,  
Are more of a consolation  
To Us than you.*

*Let our Hearts Heal!  
While Your Soul Rests in Peace!*

# A Dedication to Thiru...

By : Logan Velumailum

All these past 32 years,  
Thiru kumaran gave me  
the strength in many ways.

The way he handles the  
work always inspired me.

Whatever I do, I consult  
with Thiru and he gave me  
the confidence and support  
with positive guidance.

Thiru helped me serve  
in the board at Canadian  
Tamils' Chamber of  
Commerce and also in  
establishing the monthly  
english Newspaper Monsoon  
Journal.

I am confident that the  
Gods, Lord Murugan, Lord  
Perumal, Lord Ganesha  
and Lord Krishna give me  
the strength for the next 5  
minutes to say a few words  
about our dear Thiru.

Every speech i delivered, every script i made, i make sure to run it  
by Thiru for his final guidance and approval.

Back in 2006 while working under NAFTA agreement Thiru was  
working at New York from 1997 until 2019.

Thiru was operating an online media called Tamilweek with daily  
updates that became very popular and at that time after discussin  
with him, started the Tamilweek in print media and our first issue  
was June 2006. Thiru was my partner but refused to get the credit.

During 2006, after 3 months in publication of Tamilweek, for  
various development reasons, we re named the publication Monsoon  
Journal. His passion for media and his contribution was entirely ever  
for sale. He refused to get any rewards or compensation.

His sons Harrish also is our regular contributor mainly with  
an article or message for the publishes desk with a a news item  
every month. Danesh was also contributed at many occaions. Their  
writings and articles have always insipred me and to a wider  
readership. Just to name his reviews ranges wider topics. They  
reviewed sports, arangetrams and a review on Ponniiyin Selvan too.

I have requested to Thiru so many times during the past 17 years  
to accept the credit in publishing the English newspaper Monsoon  
Journal, however as always the same answer from the humble Thiru  
refuses to get the credit for the abundance of his contribution.

In 1991 when the Tamil community was establishing the Canadian  
Tamils' Chamber of Commerce, Thiru at the age of 28 did lots of  
work to establish it but never wanted to take any higher official  
position. He invited me to the meetings and got me interested and  
I ended up serving in the board from 1993 onwards for so many  
years and rest is history. The best part is that he stood by me and  
supported me until now for any support I needed.

A selfless, dedicated and always wants to do good for the  
community.

I dedicate this to Thiru for and if any fame I may have received  
from my association with Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce  
and Monsoon Journal.





# An Embodiment of Virtue

By : DBS Jeyaraj



*Dear Family members, relatives, friends and acquaintances of Thiru,*

At the outset, I want to thank Thiru's family members in general and his two sons in particular for this invitation to pay tribute to Thiru on this solemn occasion. I regard this as a great honour.

Thiru has enriched our lives in many ways. In that sense, I am aware that I may be preaching to the converted in paying tribute to Thiru. Nevertheless I shall try to focus briefly on Thiru's role in my life and what he meant to me. I hope this sentimental journey would strike a responsive chord in many hearts and minds as possible.

Kanapathipillai Thirukumaran known widely as Thiru and I have been friends for 35 years. He came into my life in November 1988 at a meeting organized by the New York Tamil

Sangam. Thiru was then studying at Hartford University in Connecticut. I was on a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard. I was the guest speaker at the Sangam meeting.

Thiru introduced himself and engaged in conversation. He then invited me to spend a weekend with him. Though he was a total stranger, I had no qualms about accepting the invite. I trusted him completely and felt at ease with him. I spent a happy weekend with Thiru. This was the beginning of our friendship.

Subsequently both of us relocated to Canada and began residing in Scarborough. He got married to Nalene. Thiru's parents as well as siblings and their families were here too. I was then a bachelor and had no family members here. I never felt lonely mainly due to Thiru and his family members and also because of Neela Aunty, Senthil Uncle and their extended family circle of which Thiru's brother Bala was also a part. Those were indeed happy times!



# TRIBUTE



I began editing the Tamil weekly “Senthamarai” and then the “Muncharie”. Thiru was of yeoman service in this project. He wrote a weekly column “Canada Kathambam” under the byline “Ka. Thi. Kumaran” that encapsulated news and views relating to Canada and Tamil Canadians. He also translated into Tamil from English many news items and articles.

Professionally Thiru was a successful citizen of the world of finance and commerce, but he always had a penchant and flair for journalism. Prior to leaving for the US to pursue higher studies, Thiru had a short stint at the “Virakesari” published in Colombo.

Meanwhile I too got married. Thiru and Nalene were blessed with their elder son Harrish and later moved to the US where their younger son Danesh was born. Though Thiru had geographically moved south, our bonds remained strong as ever. Thanks to the telephone, email and intermittent visits, our friendship continued to flourish.

In a joyful turn of events from my perspective, Thiru and Nalene returned home to Canada some years ago. Sadly this happiness did not last long as Nalene passed away in 2020. Now the bell has tolled for Thiru. He has gone out gently into that good night! We falter in the dark.

There was another dimension in my relationship with Thiru that very few people know about. I am somewhat technologically challenged and not very computer savvy. It was Thiru who stepped in voluntarily to help me out in this regard. He helped me to buy what was then a state of the art PC and set it up. Thiru also opened my first electronic mail address. It was he who started my websites and blog and operated them for me. He set up my Twitter and Facebook accounts. He guided me in all these matters and I simply followed.

Thiru was of immense help to me in running my websites earlier and currently my blog. Functionally he was my admin. I wanted to acknowledge his role and contribution openly but with characteristic modesty, he always prevented me. I do so now only because I feel that his invaluable help to me must be placed on record.

The generosity and friendship that he bestowed upon me was unique. From organically grown nuts and seeds to various natural health foods, he showered me with gifts. He would regularly bring shirts and tee-shirts and Mixture from the Pittsburgh temple whenever he came here from the US. My first iPad too was a gift from

Thiru. In recent times, Thiru and Harrish would bring divinely sanctioned “Prasadam” from the Richmond hill temple every Saturday. My wife and I are truly blessed to have had Thiru as our friend.

Thiru was a man of deep piety, compassion, understanding and tolerance. He was not judgemental about the faults and foibles of his numerous friends. He was not merely intelligent or educated but wise. He possessed real wisdom. Above all, Thiru was an embodiment of virtue, a “Nallavan” or good man.

Those of us who followed his FB posts regularly would have been struck by four things. His rendering of Thevarams and Pasurams, his references to inspiring personalities, his reposting of enlightening Quotes and his photos of trees, flowers, birds and the skies. A recurring motif were pictures of a temple Gopuram against the backdrop of a colourfully brilliant sky with the phrase “Celestial architecture”.

And now Thiru has departed to that celestial architecture. I hope and pray that his soul would end its cycle of rebirths and gain eternal rest at the feet of his Gods in their celestial abodes.

Former poet laureate of England, Alfred Tennyson wrote a beautiful poem “Break, break, break” when his dear friend Arthur Hallam died. I conclude my eulogy with three excerpted verses from that elegy –

“Break, break, break,

On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

And I would that my tongue could utter

The thoughts that arise in me.”

“And the stately ships go on

To their haven under the hill;

But O for the touch of a vanish’d hand,

And the sound of a voice that is still!

“Break, break, break

At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!

But the tender grace of a day that is dead

Will never come back to me”

*Thank You.*



# Thiru K Thirukumaran: A true man of peace and one who loved his fellow beings – may his tribe increase.

By Thulasi Muttulingam

He was not a force of personality. He did not dominate the conversation in any room. He did not attempt to take center stage wherever he was. And thus it is, that many of us might never know just how much of a linchpin and livewire for the Sri Lankan Tamil community Thiru K Thirukumaran was, for much of his life. In a good way.

I don't generally trust showy Sri Lankan community livewires. They are usually loose sparks working to set off a conflagration to show off their own glory.

Thiru by contrast, worked unobtrusively behind the scenes, to ensure peace and harmony in his community, without seeking credit for himself.

Thus it is, that it is only after his untimely passing, when many of us compare notes on what he did for us personally as well as what we individually know of his services to the community, we begin to comprehend the stupefying scale of all that this truly extraordinary man was coordinating behind the scenes as well as achieved for our collective wellbeing.

I highly recommend you check out his son Danesh Thirukumaran's video compilation on youtube, of various tributes sent in by individuals who knew his father. The testimonies are varied, wide ranging and mind-blowing. A kaleidoscope of mirrors reflecting Thiru's multi-faceted interests and activities – all culminating in one goal – ensuring the success, prosperity and comfort of the communities around him, both in Canada /



America as well as those he had left behind long ago, in Sri Lanka.

He worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure other's wellbeing and to promote truth, ethical journalism, reconciliation and harmony.

In any community, this is a rare breed. In the Sri Lankan community, he is a unicorn.

One of the facets of our community I have long been disappointed by, is realizing how much many among us work, to undercut each other. Generations of trauma and insecurity (going beyond just the recent civil war) seems to have instilled in us a paranoia over sharing resources that makes us fear anyone else prospering. It is far more common to see people claiming to be philanthropists, hogging the limelight for themselves on community issues while actually working actively to undermine the community.

# TRIBUTE



If Thiru had introduced himself to me as a diaspora philanthropist, I'd have run a mile. He didn't. He reached out simply as an admirer of my writing, asking why I had suddenly stopped writing.

That was exactly 10 years ago from today, back in 2013.

I was a struggling journalist at the time and considering quitting journalism altogether. He had apparently been quietly following my work for some years, and reached out only after he noticed the flow had stopped.

I am wary of unknown men suddenly popping up in my inbox, no matter how polite they are. To be clear, that's not a reflection on him – he was never anything other than professional and polite. It's a reflection of me and indeed my experiences of other community men.

I briefly responded that I had left journalism; he again worked tirelessly and unobtrusively behind the scenes to ensure my output continued – so quietly in fact that I didn't appreciate it enough at the time – and though we continued to exchange messages every few months as and when required for his facilitating of my work – I didn't let down my guard for a very long time. Something I regret now. It was my loss entirely.

Despite over 10 years of facebook friendship, I've met him only thrice. Twice when I visited Canada in 2017, which visit he again facilitated through my contributions to the diaspora newspaper there, the Monsoon Journal that he had earlier facilitated to ensure my journalism output continued, and once in Sri Lanka, only a few short months ago, when he invited me to his son Harrish Thirukumaran's wedding. I generally avoid our community weddings like the plague.

Again, this is a reflection of me and my community.

Not of Thiru. I honestly wish there were more of his kind in our community; kind, mentoring, warm and beneficent. If only.

Generally at weddings here, I am made to feel uncomfortable as a single woman. I blanket ignore any and all wedding invitations I get, no matter how close the family is.

When Thiru's invitation came though, I ensured I cut back all my work that week in order to travel to Colombo. I had not made the 8 hour trip from Jaffna to Colombo in three years at that time.

It was only then, as I upended all my plans to attend his family wedding, I realized how much I valued Thiru. Because he had been so unobtrusive and because I had gone with the

flow without thinking about it, I had not fully cognized till then how much he meant to me, as a friend and mentor.

I also made the trip for Harrish. When I first got the invitation to go to Canada for the Monsoon Journal awards at Thiru's instigation, I was a broke journalist – as usual. My mother threw a fit about how much money I was going to lose travelling about there, even if I was sponsored the flight tickets. I placated her by telling her that I would travel via cheap public transport as in Sri Lanka and visit only museums which are generally free or low cost entrance – little knowing that both are often unattainable or expensive in Canada. Then I made a humorous facebook post on it and thought nothing further of it.

Just because of that post, Thiru who was then based in America but had come to see me briefly in Canada, ensured his poor son Harrish escorted me to many of the major museums in Toronto. I blinked when I saw the ticket prices but I was not about to make Harrish, then a university student, pay for them. I offered to pay, only to be told, "Oh no, this is my father's gift. He ensured I had enough money to pay for us both." That was Thiru. He brushed it off when I tried to thank him and inquired whether I had had a good time.

He likewise, ensured I had a good time at his son's wedding. I enjoyed myself at that wedding. He was a genial lovely host who spoke to all his guests and personally saw to their comfort – and being Thiru, instead of snide insulting remarks as at other community weddings, I received much warmth and genuine compliments about my work. I had the privilege of lunching with him at that wedding, and took the opportunity to interview him briefly about his life and life goals. He had so much yet he hoped to do. Typical Thiru. Even when I interviewed him about his life, he deflected from himself and his various achievements of which I then didn't have a clue. It was never me, me, me even then. It was all, what about you, what about others, what can we from the diaspora do?

As well as, there's this community issue, that community issue and the other community issue I want to work on. He quizzed me a lot too about the community issues we were facing post corona pandemic and the ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka.

He was a self-effacing giver. A true lover of humanity.

Just like Abou Ben Adhem, may his tribe increase.

Rest in peace Thiru! You are sorely missed.



# MONEY CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS

**Mahinan Mathyalagan**

**Grade 9 student**

Money has become a very vital thing in our lives over the past decade. Money has always been important to us but it is more important than ever now as it is a necessity to survive. What do you think? Can money buy happiness? I disagree with the statement "Money can't buy happiness." because you need money for survival, achieving things and to buy what you want. These are the reasons why I disagree with the statement "Money can't buy happiness."

Firstly, I disagree that money can't buy happiness because you need money for survival. You need to survive in order to be happy and having no money definitely doesn't bring happiness. Everything in life has a price whether that be food, water, shelter or even clothes. When you think of it that way then definitely money can buy happiness. This is one reason why I disagree with the statement "Money can't buy happiness."

Secondly, I disagree with the statement "Money can't buy happiness." because money helps you to achieve things and succeeding brings you happiness. For example when you find a partner and you both open a restaurant putting the same amount of money down and you run the restaurant for a couple of months and start making a profit after having received the money you each put down initially. You get a feeling of joy and happiness knowing within you that you have accomplished something. This is one example of how money buys happiness through achieving things. Without money you wouldn't be able to achieve things as you wouldn't have anything to put down upfront to start a business or make an

investment. This is another reason why I disagree with the statement "Money can't buy happiness."

Thirdly, I disagree with the statement "Money can't buy happiness." because you will want to buy things from time to time and when you buy whatever you want that will bring you joy. In order to buy whatever you want in the first place you need money. Money isn't used to directly go to the store and buy happiness, but instead is used to buy things you like, for instance clothes, food, toys etc. If you take the literal meaning of the statement then I will agree with it, but if you look at the implied message of the statement then I will disagree because whether you're putting your money towards something you want or not like your mortgage or utility bills you have to spend your money because having ultimately no money brings you nowhere close to happiness. This is the third reason why I disagree with the statement "Money can't buy happiness."

In conclusion, I disagree with the statement "Money can't buy happiness." because you need money for survival, achieving things and buying whatever you want from time to time. Ultimately, in order to be happy in life you need money and that is why I disagree with the statement "Money can't buy happiness."



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# BE CAUTIOUS TILL THE RIGHT OF WAY...



C. Kamalaharan

Two elegant elephants gently pacing  
 Along the rough and arid terrain  
 Unaware of the vehicle following  
 On the ground scorched without rain.  
 Are the animals in search of edible foliage  
 For a sumptuous meal in a nearby village  
 Their urgent need is a pond not a puddle  
 To cool their heated body and huddle.  
 Can't we overtake them and speed away  
 To reach our distant home far away.  
 "Oh no, you're you only inviting danger  
 When the beasts are experiencing hunger.  
 Follow them constantly and cautiously  
 Without attempting to move hurriedly  
 Until the right of way comes your way  
 To speed up and fly away."



## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Noble Norms of Naaladiyar

# Choosing Friends



**By: J A Rajah**

*“Unara unarum unarvuday yaarai,  
Punarit punarumam inpam-punarin;  
Theiyath theriunth theivila tharaip,  
Piriyap periyumam noi.”*

உணர் உணரும் உணர்வுடை யாரைப்  
புணரிற் புணருமாம் இன்பம் - புணரின்  
தெரியத் தெரியும் தெரிவிலா தாரைப்  
பிரியப் பிரியுமாம் நோய். - 247

It is always good to cultivate friendships with those who could instinctively understand your inner mind from your facial expressions .It is a joy to be friends with such men of great intelligence and presence of mind. On the other hand it is better to give up the friendships of those who cannot act according to what- that was told to them by word of mouth of what you have in your mind. It is always good to cultivate friendships with men of character and good conduct so that you will not become victims of unexpected trouble or danger.

“A man is known by the company he keeps’. We should always cultivate friendship with people who have the inner magnetism to understand and make you to happy

to get along with. One could understand a good friend by just looking at him. Friendships make people good about themselves. We should invest time on friendship. Social isolation is damaging. Loneliness involves high-blood pressure and heart disease. Friendships take time, work and kindness. They are good for one’s health and soul. Valluvar re-inforces the same idea when he asserts

*“Cheyatkariya yavulla nadpin athupol,  
Vinaykariya yaavulla kaappu”.*

செயற்கரிய யாவுள நட்பின் அதுபோல்  
வினைக்கரிய யாவுள காப்பு

There is nothing so rare to achieve as a good friendship, and no better armour against enemy machinations. Noble friendships gain in worth and grace day by day. The throne of genuine friendship is found, without doubt, where two allied heartbeat, under all circumstances, in unison and mutual support.

**(Naaladiyar-247).**

# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



## MANY CANADIAN CITIES PROCLAIMED DARK SKY WEEK

### Protect Our Dark Skies to Avoid Harmful Effects on Humans and Wildlife

*OUE Research Institute*

Many cities in Canada proclaimed International Dark Sky Week (IDSW). The first City in Canada to announce the proclamation of IDSW is the City of Pickering. Subsequently, the municipality of Clarington, the town of Whitby, and other cities such as the City of Markham, the City of Richmond Hill, The City of Brampton, the City of Mississauga, the City of Oshawa, and the City of Vaughan proclaimed the IDSW. The City of Brampton invited the public to “Watch Council Live” on April 5, 2023. The City of Mississauga plans to make tower lighting at the beginning of IDSW on April 15, 2023, with orange, yellow, and light red, which are environmentally friendly colors. Canada is the second-ever international country besides the US and Italy in the world to proclaim IDSW, said Bettymaya Foott, Director of Engagement, IDA. The author of this article is the Dark Sky advocate for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and is responsible for this initiative in Canada.

The residents, businesses, visitors, employees, and neighbors of the Cities “to celebrate the night sky and the natural nocturnal environment; and to learn about responsible lighting practices that prevent or reduce light pollution and that protect the natural qualities of the night for people, wildlife, ecosystems, and climate. The experience of standing beneath a starry night sky inspires feelings of wonder and amazement. It encourages a growing interest in science and nature, especially among young people within the community.

The proclamation references light pollution and the adverse effect of artificial light, which grows at an average rate of two to six percent per year in North America. Therefore, the Cities encourage the community to celebrate the night sky’s wonders and learn about responsible lighting practices to lessen light pollution—the impact of light pollution on creating widespread skyglow that can affect the natural view of the sky.

#### International Dark-Sky Association (IDA)

According to the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) – founded in 1988 and based in Tucson, Arizona – light pollution is increasing twice of population growth, and 83% of the global

population lives under a light-polluted sky. That’s why the group established International Dark Sky Week (IDSW), which falls in 2023, from April 15 to 22. Goals for the week include turning off unneeded exterior lights and considering leaving them off all year. IDA also hopes you will learn about the stars and constellations, teach them to others, and join the global dark-sky movement to protect and celebrate our shared heritage.

According to the IDA, light pollution may seem harmless, but it has far-reaching consequences that are harmful to all living things. Adequate outdoor lighting reduces light pollution, leading to a better quality of life for all. The dark sky movement is working to bring better lighting to communities worldwide so that all life can thrive. Poor lighting in cities leads to more significant amounts of light pollution. From a rural or natural area sky, you can see the river of stars that makes up our galaxy, the Milky Way.

#### The Night Sky is in Threat

In honor of IDSW, it is vital to highlight the dangers of light pollution, why it is happening, and what you can do to help. The lights from our homes,



offices, streets, and cars brighten the night sky and make it harder for us to see space’s natural beauty. With the continuous advancement of technology, pollution has only worsened over the past century.

While a limited view of the stars may initially seem like a small price to pay for the comforts of today’s electronics—there are more significant implications affecting all living things. An article released by the national geographic society noted the serious effects artificial light could have on wildlife—hindering some species’ ability to follow their typical migration patterns and reproduction cycles. Insect-eating predators find it more difficult to locate food sources as bugs attracted to outdoor light fixtures can die upon impact. The circadian rhythm of



humans and animals shifts while excess light affects the release of melatonin needed for sleep. Not only that, but human-made light often uses unnecessary energy—wasting money and contributing to the negative impact of climate change.

So, why does sky pollution happen? For the same reason, the sky is blue during the day and turns red at sunset. When the sun’s light interacts with Earth’s atmosphere, it experiences what scientists call Rayleigh Scattering, meaning sunlight is scattered in all different directions. Energetic

photons that correspond to blue light get scattered more than others, making the sky appear blue throughout the day. Yet, as the sun sets in the sky, sunlight passes through more of the Earth’s atmosphere—causing blue and even yellow light to scatter and primarily leave red light coming from the setting sun. The same phenomenon happens with human-made light. Its shine is scattered into the atmosphere, brightening the night sky and creating what scientists call a sky glow.

While much of the sky’s pollution comes from human-made items on the Earth’s surface, new challenges will come with the planned influx of satellite launches. Nature reports tens of thousands of satellites are expected to launch in the coming years to provide broadband Internet for people worldwide—a significant increase from the 4,800 satellites orbiting Earth now, of which nearly half of those have been added in the last few years alone. Satellites can reflect sunlight and contribute to sky glow the same as lights on the ground, and it is predicted that in the next decade, the number of satellites visible in the night sky will exceed the number of stars.

#### Ways to celebrate IDSW

If you are looking for ways to celebrate IDSW, google the IDSW events worldwide, organized by astronomy clubs, schools, universities, communities, and more. Visit Earth Sky’s night sky guide to see what you can view in the sky. Visit Earth Sky’s Best Places to Stargaze page to find an excellent dark-sky observing site close to home. Share your night sky photos at Earth Sky Community Photos. Paul Bogard has written extensively on the importance of darkness. His book is titled The End of Night. His TEDx Talk focuses on why we need darkness. Curbing light pollution also benefits wildlife. Celebrate night skies and help limit light pollution by raising awareness through the annual International Dark Sky Week, April 15 to 22, 2023.



#### Cityscape to the Milky Way

A lot of the outdoor lighting used at night is inefficient, overly bright, poorly targeted, improperly shielded, and in many cases, completely unnecessary. This light and the electricity used to create it are being wasted because it spills into the sky rather than being focused on the objects and areas that people need illuminated.



## MONSOON KITCHEN

GENIE SISTERS

SAMAYAL  
SANTHAI



Welcome to our recipe corner! We sisters will entice you with recipes that we have fallen in love with and teach you a little Tamil along the way, as all the ingredients will have their Tamil names. Both of us love to cook and we have developed very different styles. Niranjini has a very refined palate and cooks more contemporary world cuisine with an Asian touch. Rajini is a seasoned homemaker who loves making traditional dishes for her friends and family. Follow us on Instagram: @ninjaeatsfood and @tamil\_food

**Eat more, learn more!**

Sisters Niranjini Mandalia and Rajini Nathan are both food enthusiasts from England. Niranjini, who lives in London, has a degree in Human Biology and is a trained chef. She makes it her business to know everything about what she eats, from nutritional value to source producers. Follow her food obsession on Instagram @ninjaeatsfood. Rajini, lives in Toronto and has a background in psychology. Her speciality is in Tamil food from around the world, catch up on her meal ideas on Instagram @tamil\_food.

# PRAWN THOKKU

We can all feel the change in the weather as we begin to settle in to the colder months of the year; this recipe is one that will tantalize your taste-buds as well as keep you warm during cold winter evenings. Pairs well with chapathi's, which are again great for the winter, or ghee rice.

### Ingredients for marinade:

- ✓ 300gms Prawns – shelled and cleaned
- ✓ 1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
- ✓ ¼ tsp turmeric powder
- ✓ ½ tsp ginger garlic paste ✓ Salt

Marinate for 24hrs or minimum 20 mins in the fridge

### Ingredients for Masala:

- ✓ 2 tbsp oil of choice (sesame or mustard would work well)
- ✓ 2 medium onions, diced (colour doesn't matter)
- ✓ 3 medium tomatoes, roughly chopped
- ✓ 1 tbsp Jaffna/ preferred masala powder
- ✓ ½ tsp ginger and garlic paste
- ✓ ½ tsp coriander powder ✓ ¼ tsp turmeric
- ✓ Salt to taste

### Ingredients to temper: (Tadka/ thaalippu)

- ✓ 2 tsp oil (or ghee, if you're feeling extra indulgent) ✓ 1 tsp fennel seeds
  - ✓ 2 stalks of curry leaves ✓ 2-3 dry red chillies
- Garnish lime and chopped coriander leaves.

### Method:

Marinate the prawns and remove from fridge to rest at room temperature before cooking.

In a wok, add the oil and once hot, brown the diced onions, followed by the ginger and garlic paste, tomatoes and the turmeric, coriander powder, masala/ Jaffna chilli powder and salt. Let this cook till the tomatoes are mushy- add a little water if needed to prevent it from sticking to the pan. This should take no more than 5 minutes- add the prawn in and cook for a further 3-4 minutes, until you see the prawns curl into "C" shapes (not "O" or "U" shapes) once they're done. Switch off the heat.

In a separate pan, add the oil (or ghee) and once hot add the fennel seeds, curry leaves and dry red chillies- temper till the chillies start to turn red and switch off the heat. Pour this mixture over the prawn and dress with a dash of lime and chopped coriander leaves.

Try making this dish and hashtag #monsoonjournal on Instagram and send us your pics, comments and feedback. Spread the love (and our tips!)



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# How to navigate challenges when leading a remote team

By: Muraly Srinarayanathas

With the rise of hybrid and remote working patterns, team leaders and managers face a new set of challenges when it comes to achieving their goals.

While remote working has a range of benefits both for employees and employers, it does present operational hurdles that need to be addressed. As well as difficulties in ensuring consistent reliable access and collaboration for teams that may be dispersed across locations and time zones, there are a lot fewer immediately tangible issues that will need to be addressed.

Let's explore some of the key challenges and see how they can be navigated.

## CLEAR COMMUNICATIONS

Members of a remote team need to be on the same page. To do this, clear communication protocols need to be established and everyone should know how to use the tools they have available.

Ensuring people know how to communicate, and that this is as intuitive as possible to mirror an in-person working relationship, is all-important. In time, this can become second nature, but teething problems can occur, particularly when new team members are being on-boarded.

Focus on what your teams need to effectively communicate with each other and keep listening to the feedback you receive so that you can act upon it.

## DEVELOP A COMMUNITY

Remote team members can easily feel disconnected and isolated. This, in turn, can lead to broader issues in terms of their well-being, especially for those individuals who live alone or who don't have a support system in place.

To address this, team leaders should look to develop a strong sense of community within the team. This can't be done overnight, and much will depend on how communication develops across your various team members.

A community can be fostered through regular, non-work, based communications, partnering relationships where two or more team members work more closely together, virtual team building and online socializing.

Create a plan for the above and monitor its progress.



## SUPPORT COLLABORATION

Remote working can present challenges when it comes to collaboration. The lack of physical proximity presents an extra barrier to collaborative working that will need to be creatively overcome.

Ensuring you have the right collaboration tools at hand, such as virtual conferencing platforms and project management software, is a prerequisite.

Opportunities should be provided for team members to work together on projects through virtual brainstorming sessions and group webinars. This is a great way to bring your teams together so that they are all working towards a common goal.

## ESTABLISHING TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY.

Establishing trust is important in any team but isn't always straightforward. The challenge is compounded when teams are working remotely. Transparent decision-making processes, clear progress reports and attainable deadlines and goals, all help to build trust.

This is underpinned by open and honest communication, with team leaders following through on their commitments and swiftly addressing any issues that may arise.

## SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Managing workloads and staying motivated can often be difficult for remote teams. It's therefore crucial that remote

team members are provided with a cohesive set of support and resources.

This might include training and development opportunities, flexible working arrangements, and access to other resources such as mental health support and counselling services.

With the right tools and leadership approach in place, remote working can help companies become more efficient and employees more productive. It just requires some strategic thinking, effective planning and proactive decision-making.

To keep informed about the changing world of work, follow my blog and be sure to subscribe to my social media channels.



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## SPECIAL FEATURE

# LORD NATARAJA AND LORD GOVINDARAJA TEMPLES IN CHIDAMBARAM

Compiled by : KIDAMBI RAJ

### INTRODUCTION

Chidambaram is a temple town located in the South Arcot District in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. As mentioned in the title, it is a very important place for both Saivites and Vaishnavites. It is popularly called the Thillai Nataraja Temple dedicated to Lord Nataraja, the form of Siva as the Lord of dance. The temple architecture symbolizes the connection between the arts and spirituality, creative activity and the divine. The temple wall carvings display all the 108 **karanas** from the *Natya Sastra* by *Bharata Muni*, and these postures form the foundation for Bharatanatyam, an Indian classical dance.

### NATARAJA TEMPLE

It is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Siva located in the heart of the temple town of Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu, India. Chidambaram is one of the **five holiest** Siva temples, each representing one of the five elements of nature. Chidambaram represents **akasha** (aether). The other four temples in this category are: Thiruvanaikaval Jambukeswarar in Srirangam representing **water**, Ekambareswarar in Kanchi representing **earth**, Arunachaleswarar in Thiruvannamalai representing **fire** and Kalahasthinathar in Kalahasthi representing **wind**. For Saivites, the very word **koil** refers to Chidambaram.

The word Chidambaram is derived from **chit**, meaning **consciousness**, and **ambaram**, meaning **sky** (aakasam); and refers to **chid aakasam**, the sky of consciousness, which is the ultimate aim one should attain according to Vedas and scriptures. Another theory is that it is derived from **chit + ambalam**. Ambalam means a **stage** for performing arts. The chid akasam is the state of supreme bliss or **aananda natanam**. Yet another theory is that it is derived from the word **chitrambalam**, from **chithu** meaning **play or dance of God** and **ambalam** meaning **stage**.

The story of Chidambaram begins with the legend of Lord Siva strolling into the Thillai Vanam (forest of Thillai trees, a species of mangrove trees). In the Thillai forests resided a group of rishis who believed in the supremacy of magic and that God can be controlled by rituals and mantras or magical words. The Lord strolls in the forest with resplendent beauty and brilliance, assuming the form of **Pitchatanadar**, a simple mendicant seeking alms. He is followed by His Grace and Consort who is Lord Vishnu as Mohini. The rishis and their wives are enchanted by the brilliance and beauty of the handsome mendicant and his consort. On seeing their womenfolk enchanted the rishis get enraged and invoke scores of **serpents** by performing magical rituals. The Lord as the mendicant lifts the serpents and dons them as ornaments on his matted locks, neck and waist. Further enraged, the rishis invoke a fierce tiger, which the Lord skins and dons as a shawl around the waist. Thoroughly frustrated, the rishis gather all their spiritual strength and invoke a powerful demon Malakand, a symbol of complete arrogance and ignorance. The Lord wearing a gentle smile, and steps on the demon's back,

immobilizes him and performs the **Ananda Thaandava** (the dance of eternal bliss) and discloses His true form. The rishis surrender, realizing that this Lord is the truth and He is beyond magic and rituals. Adhishesha, the serpent who serves as a bed for the Lord in his manifestation as Vishnu, hears about the Ananda Thaandava and yearns to see and enjoy it. The Lord blesses him, beckons him to assume the saintly form of **Patanjali** and sends him to the Thillai forest, informing him that He will display the dance in due course. Patanjali who meditated in the Himalayas during **Krita yuga** joins another saint, **Vyagrathar** (Pulikaalmuni or the saint with tiger feet). This saint got the feet and eye sight of a tiger to help climb trees well before dawn to pick flowers for the Lord before the bees visit them. The story of sage Patanjali as well



as his great student sage Upamanyu is narrated in both Vishnu Puranam and Siva Puranam. They move into the Thillai forest and worship Lord Siva in the form of Sivalinga, a deity worshipped today as **Thirumoolataneswarar** (Thiru – sri, Moolatanam – primordial or in the nature of a foundation, Eswarar – the Lord). Legends say that Lord Siva displayed His dance of bliss (the Ananda Thaandavam), as Nataraja to these two saints on the day of the Poosam star in the Tamil month of Thai (Jan.-Feb.). The Ananda Thaandava posture of Lord Siva is one of the famous postures recognized around the world by many. This celestial dancing posture tells us how a Bharatanatyam Dancer should dance. The Demon under Nataraja's feet signifies that ignorance is under His feet. The Fire in His hand (power of destruction) means destroyer of the evil. The raised hand signifies that He is the savior of all life. The arc of fire called **Thiruvashi or Prabhavali** signifies the cosmos and the perpetual motion of the earth; The drum in His hand signifies the origin of Life forms; The lotus pedestal signifies Om, the sound of the Universe; His right eye, left eye and the third eye signify the Sun, Moon and Fire/knowledge respectively; His right earring (**makara kundalam**) and left ear ring (**sthri kundalam**) signify the union of man and woman (right is man, left is woman; The crescent moon in His hair signifies benevolence and beauty; The flowing of river Ganges through His matted hair signifies eternity and The dreading of His hair and drape signify the force of His dance.

### SIGNIFICANCE



The temple is supposed to be located Lotus heart of the Universe: **Virat Hridaya Padma Sthalam**. On the spot where the Lord displayed His dance of bliss, the Ananada Thaandavam, a spot exactly south of the **Thirumoolataaneswarar temple**, today it is known as **Ponnambalam** or **Ponsabai** (Pon meaning Gold and

Ambalam/Sabai meaning stage) housing Lord Siva in the dancing form. The Lord is also hence referred to as Sabanayakar, meaning the Lord of the stage.

The gold-roofed stage is the sanctum sanctorum of the Chidambaram Temple and houses the Lord in three forms:

1. The **form** – the anthropomorphological form as an appearance of Lord Nataraja, called the **Sakala Thirumeni**,
2. The **semi-form** – the semi-anthropomorphological form as the Crystal Linga of Chandramouleswarar, the **Sakala Nishkala Thirumeni** and
3. The **formless** – as the Space in Chidambaram Rahasyam an empty space within the sanctum sanctorum, the **Nishkala Thirumeni**. Chidambaram is also one of the five places where Lord Siva is said to have displayed His dance and all these places have stages/sabhais. Apart from Chidambaram which has the Pon Sabhai, the others are: the Rathina Sabhai at ThiruvaaLangadu (Rathinam – Ruby), the Chitra Sabhai at Courtalam (Chitra – painting), the Rajatha Sabhai or Velli Ambalam at Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple (Rajatha/velli-silver) and the Thaamira Sabhai at Nelliappar Temple in Tirunelveli (Thaamiram – Copper).

### ABOUT THE TEMPLE & ITS COMPLEX

The present temple was built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century when Chidambaram was the capital of the Chola dynasty, making it one of the oldest surviving active temples in South India. After its 10<sup>th</sup> century consecration by the Cholas, who considered Lord Nataraja as their family deity, the temple has been damaged, repaired, renovated and expanded through the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium. Most of the temple's surviving plan, architecture and structure is from the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, with later additions in similar style. The Chidambaram temple complex for example has the earliest Amman temple in South India, a pre-13<sup>th</sup> century Surya Shrine. The image is unusual as it depicts a three headed Surya same as Brahma, Siva and Vishnu, with eight hands holding iconographic items of these deities, along with two lotuses in a pair of hands in front accompanied by two small female figures possibly Usha and Pratyusha, standing on a chariot drawn by seven horses and Aruna as Charioteer.

The temple is spread over a 40-acre (16 hectare) in area, in the heart of the city, within layers of concentric courtyards. The inner sanctum, its connecting mandapams are pillared halls near it are all either squares or stacked squares or both. The complex has nine Gopurams, several water storage structures of which the Sivaganga sacred pool is the largest with a rectangular plan. The Nataraja temple complex is embedded inside

## SPECIAL FEATURE



four *prakarams* (courtyards). Each of the courtyards has walls that were defensively fortified after the 14<sup>th</sup> century plunder and destruction.

The temple has nine major gopuram gateways connecting the various courtyards. Four of these are huge, colourful and visible from afar, a symbolic and convenient landmark for pilgrims. These gateway towers or *gopurams* each have 7 storeys facing the East, South, West and North. All gopuras are built of precisely cut large stone blocks all the way to the main cornice. Upon this is a stone, brick and plaster structure with layers of pavilions. Each gopuram is colourful and unique in its own way. They narrate stories from various Hindu texts, showing religious and secular scenes from the various Hindu traditions. The earliest built western gopuram is the only one with inscriptions below each art work that identifies what it is.

There are quite a few Sabhas (literally means community gathering) inside the complex. Two of those are the, *Chit Sabha* and the *Kanaka Sabha* inside the sanctum area of the Nataraja shrine. There are also other halls named *Nritta Sabha*, a 56-pillard hall, near the *kodi maram* or *dwaja sthambam*; *Raja Sabha*, also called the 1000-pillard hall where Music and Dance events are held; and *Deva Sabha*, also called as *Perampalam* meaning Great Hall. It houses the temple's revered collection of historic bronze sculptures and modern era frescoes.

Chidambaram temple is well endowed with several water bodies within and around the temple complex.

The most important of these are:

1. *Sivaganga tank* in the third corridor of the temple opposite to the shrine of Devi Sivakami It is accessed by flights of stone steps leading from the shrine;

2. *Paramanandha Koobham* is the well on the eastern side of the *Chit Sabha* from which water is drawn for sacred purposes. There are eight more water bodies around and close to the temple.

The Chidambaram temple car is used for procession twice a year, where it is drawn by thousands of devotees during the festivals. There are five temple cars, with the biggest one for Lord Nataraja. The main deity in the sanctum sanctorum will be taken out on the procession, unlike the other temples where only Utsavar idols are taken out. The four feet idol of Lord Nataraja and Goddess Sivakama Sundari, adorned with precious gem-studded jewelry and flowers, are taken out of the main sanctum amidst a grand number of devotees in a golden platforms. Fifteen of men hold the huge wooden log connected to the platform making a circumbulating around the *Chit Sabha*, before being taken out to the temple car. After the procession across four car streets, the deities are taken in a similar fashion to the *Raja Sabha* at night, where *Laksharchana* is performed.

## AMAZING FACTS ABOUT CHIDAMBARAM TEMPLE

After eight years of research and development,

Western scientists have proved that Lord Nataraja's big toe is the Centre Point of World's *Magnetic Equator*. Our ancient Tamil Scholar *Thirumoolar* proved this Five thousand years ago in his *Thirumanthiram* which is a wonderful scientific guide for the whole world. To understand his studies, it may need 100 years for us.

Chidambaram temple embodies the following special characteristics:

1. This temple is located at the Centre Point of World's Magnetic Equator.

2. Of the five temples that



represent each one of the Pancha Boothas (the five basic elements, wind, water, fire, earth and space), Chidambaram Temple represents the Skies. Kalahasthi Temple represents the wind and the Kanchi Ekambareswarar temple represents the Land. All these three temples are located in a straight line at 79 degrees 41 minutes Longitude. This can be verified using Google. An amazing fact and an Astronomical miracle.

3. Chidambaram temple layout is based on Human Body having 9 entrances denoting, 9 entrances or openings of the human body.

4. The temple roof is made of 21,600 gold sheets, which denote the 21,600 breaths taken by a human being every day ( $15 \times 60 \times 24 = 21,600$ ).

5. These 21,600 sheets are fixed on the Gopuram using 72,000 gold nails which denote the total number of *Naadis* (nerves) in the Human body. These transfer energy to certain parts that are invisible.

6. The great Tamil scholar, Thirumoolar states that man represents the shape of Sivalingam, which represents Chidambaram, which represents Sadasivam which represents His dance.

7. Ponnambalam is placed slightly tilted towards the left. This represents our Heart. To reach this, we need to climb 5 steps calls *Panchakarma Padi*. Si, Va, Ya, Na, Ma are the five Panchakshara Mantras.

8. Ponnambalam has 28 pillars denoting the 28 Agamas, as well as the 28 methods of worship of Lord Siva. These 28 pillars support 64 Roof Beams. The 64 Roof Beams represent the 64 Arts and the 64 Cross Beams represent the Blood vessels running across the Human body.

9. Then there are Four Pillars holding the Kanakasabha, representing the Four Vedas.

10. The 9 Kalasas (vessels) on the Golden Roof represent the 9 types of Sakthis or Energies.

11. The 6 Pillars in the Artha Mandapa represent the 6 types of Sastras.

12. The 18 Pillars in the adjacent Mandapas represent the 18 Puranas.

13. The Dance of Lord Nataraja is described as Cosmic Dance by Western Scientists.

Whatever Science is propounding now has been stated thousands of years ago!



## GOVINDARAJA TEMPLE

The Govindaraja Shrine is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is one of the 108 holy temples of Vishnu called the *Divya Desams* revered by the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century Vaishnava Saints called the *Azhwars*. King Kulothunga Chola II who considered himself to be a Saiva King and believed to have uprooted the image of the presiding deity Govindaraja from the shrine. This shrine had close connections with the Govindaraja temple in lower Tirupathi, dating back to the time of Saint Ramanuja, 11-12<sup>th</sup> century. It is said that Ramanujar fled to Tirupathi with the utsava idol of Govindaraja to escape persecution. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, King Krishnappa Nayak was instrumental in installing the image Govindaraja back in the temple. There was a lot of resistance from those belonging to the Saivite tradition against re-establishing the Vishnu image in what had become a revered Siva Temple, but the King was unmoved, and the image was installed in the present form. There

is no satisfactory evidence of co-existence of the Siva and Vishnu shrines within the same temple built during the same time. There was a dispute in 1849 regarding the rights on the Govindaraja idol and Azhwar Sannidhi, between the Vaishnavas and the Dikshitaras, and the position of the Vaishnavas was upheld by the Court.

This temple is revered in *Naalaayira Divyaprabandham*, in the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century by Vaishnava canon, *Kulasekhara Azhwar* in 11 hymns and by *Thiruman-gai Azhwar* in 13 hymns. According to legend, Lord Govindaraja is believed to have descended upon the earth for the sage *Kanvar* and 3,000 *Dikshitaras* of the *Thillai Natarajar* temple. This temple is one of two rare *Divya Desams*, with the other being *Nilathin-gal Thundam Perumal Temple* the shrine inside *Sri Ekambareswarar temple in Kancheepuram*, Tamil Nadu. Here in Chidambaram, Vishnu is worshipped as *Lord Govindaraja*, and His Consort is *Pundarikavalli*. *Brahmotsavam* in the month of Chittirai, *Ekadasi* in Margazhi and *Gajendra Moksham* are prominent among the many festivals celebrated here.

Here, Lord Govindaraja is reclining on the serpent couch with right arm placed on the pillow and the other hand stretched out straight and the left leg slightly bent, and is called *Ardhasayana Vishnumurthi*. The space between the two legs is as prescribed in the sastras with Sri Devi seated on His right and Bhoo Devi near His feet. This posture is called *Bhogasayanam*. This is one of ten *Sayana* poses of Lord Vishnu. Another interesting thing here is about Lord Brahma. Usually, the idol of Lord Brahma is always with his four faces and in a sitting position on the naval cord of Lord Vishnu. But here, Lord Brahma is in the standing position.

This temple is called as *Thillai Chitrakutam*, and equates the *Chitakuta* (Madhya Pradesh) of *Ramayana* fame with this shrine. *Chitrakoot* means a *Hill of many forests*. *Chitrakoot* is one of the important places connected to the great epic *Ramayana*, where Lord Rama was persuaded by his brother Bharatha to return to *Ayodhya*. It was also here that Rama performed the last rites to his father *Dasaratha* in the presence of all the Gods and Goddesses. Also, it was on this forest that Rama, Sita and *Lakshmana* took refuge and spent 12 years in the woods, which was already home to several hermits. The ancient Indian sages, including *Atri Muni*, *Rishi Agastya* and few others are said to have meditated in the forests of *Chitrakoota*. When he was in exile he found the place in South India that reminded him of the *Chitrakoot* of North India and that is how Lord Govindaraja's abode in Chidambaram came to be known as *Thillai Chitrakootam*,

## LEGEND

The place Chidambaram is used to be known traditionally as *Thillai* or *Thillaivanam*, named after the grove of *Thillai* trees that are found here in large numbers. As per the legend, Lord Govindaraja came down to this place for the sake of Sage *Kanwar* and the *Dikshitaras* of *Nataraja* temple. But there is an interesting story linking the Gods *Siva* and *Vishnu*, and Goddess *Kali* to this place. Once, there arose an argument between *Siva* and His Consort *Parvati* (*Kali*), as to who was better in dancing. A competition was held in *Thillaivanam* with *Vishnu* as the judge. It was a tough duel with an exemplary performance by both *Siva* and *Parvathi*. *Siva* chose to perform *Urthvathandava*, by picking up His earring with His foot and wearing it in the ear by raising His leg to that level. But being a woman, *Parvati* could not perform this feat. So, judge *Vishnu* declared *Siva* the winner, while *Parvati* as *Kali* out of frustration at her defeat went to the other end of the town, where She is worshipped as *Thillai Kali*.

## UNIQUE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE CHIDAMBARAM TEMPLE AND THE RICHMOND HILL GANESHA TEMPLE

A devotee standing in front of Lord Govindaraja turns 90 degrees to his/her right he/she can have a good darshan of Lord Nataraja. At the Ganesha temple in Richmond Hill, a devotee standing in front of Lord Srinivasa turns 90 degrees to his/her left, he/she can have a good darshan of Lord Nataraja.

**May the Blessings of Lord Nataraja and Lord Govindaraja be with you all !!!**



## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Pilgrimage to the HOLY LAND



The Temple Mount, a holy site in the Old City of Jerusalem

### By: Carl Muttiah

Former Member of the Staff of  
St. John's College, Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Going on pilgrimage is common for adherent of all religions. The Muslims go on pilgrimage to Mecca, the Buddhists go to Boudhayan, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, the Hindus go to Thiruppathi, Sithamparam and the Christians go to the Holy Land in Israel. Apart from the tenets of my faith based on the Apostles Creed on which my faith is well founded, and in my belief that all Christian churches, including the Orthodox, the Catholic, etc., where we all follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, it is an interesting question to ponder as to how a trip to the holy land can catalyze and enthuse Christian faith from within, spiritually. In my case, it very much did! Thanks to Pastor Jebanesan and his wife, and to each and everyone who participated in this pilgrimage.

The first thing I noticed among the people in Israel was the presence of civility among people of the different religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam as opposed to the animosity as is often displayed in the media. Thank God. I hope that

these are the signs of times yet to come for us to sing the happy Hosannas at the time of Jesus' Second Coming.

Of course, there are many different churches and holy sites for pilgrims to visit and pray and sing praises. To me the most important place to look for was the City of Jerusalem with the surrounding wall and its 12 gates. At the time of Jesus there were just 8 gates. Jesus entered Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate which was also known as the Golden Gate. So, this East Gate leads us from Jesus' First coming to His Second coming. This final event of history will be a time of great rejoicing. In his wings will be final healing from sin, sorrow, physical suffering, from the worry and catastrophe of earthly life into the joy and peace of His heavenly Presence. Glory be to His Name.

None of us want to be tempted. But the dastardly and diabolical devil dared to tempt our Lord Jesus Christ himself! Jesus walked several days to the top of Temptation mount. We went up there by cable-

car. Thank God and thanks to modern technology. In our lives, anytime, anywhere we are beset by temptations galore! Even on Mount Temptation (Advertising stuff)! So, the devil is playing his merry devil everywhere right to the very end of time, in every spot of religious importance. Even on The Way of the Cross, The Via Dolorosa. Beware and be aware!

And what more joy can one have been baptized in the same River Jordan where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist! That was a truly amazing feeling. Personally, I had to miss a few other important places to visit because of my own carelessness with my diabetic condition. All the same I plodded on to the very end with help from my fellow pilgrims and God's grace. Thank God. It was inconvenient, to say the least. I had to undergo much suffering too. But all for God's sake with full submission which I might term as repentance which is a prerequisite for forgiveness. It was indeed a great blessing to have gone on this pilgrimage.



# Exodus 87



- Dinuka Liyanawatte / Reuters

**By: Veronica Edirveerasingam**

Jaffna lost her happiness  
 Jaffna lost her silence  
 Men in boots paraded the streets  
 Men with guns drove in fleets  
 Bombers, missiles, and artillery shell  
 Reeked explosion and caused hell  
 Air spewing bullet rain  
 Landscape coughing shrapnel grain

Mothers, sisters, brothers and fathers  
 Screaming for help  
 Running for life  
 Run! Run!  
 Here there anywhere  
 Hide! hide!  
 Where is the bunker  
 Where is the shelter

Brothers tortured  
 Burnt to death  
 Lynched bodies on Palmyra trees  
 Black crows circling their head  
 Mangy dogs licking the dead

“Amma the last word they cried  
 In pain before they died  
 Before they swallowed cyanide  
 Before they threw grenade  
 Hands tied mouth gagged  
 Soldiers shot and dead

Blood drenching the alleys  
 Forming red valleys  
 Burning Pyre  
 Corps on fire  
 Mothers plea could not stop his ghosts  
 Mothers arms could not cradle his bones

Limbs lost to landmines  
 Souls gone before their time  
 The days were filled with sadness  
 That stretched from months to madness

What good is Freedom  
 When her heart is poisoned  
 What good is Freedom  
 When her virtue is stained  
 What good is freedom  
 When earth is pregnant with the dead

No future no education  
 The language was bloodshed  
 No peace no ceasefire  
 Footage was the trapped dead  
 Soil was drenched with Mothers tears  
 Tombs were inked with fallen peers

Knowing she cannot cradle her sons  
 Knowing they are never safe in her arms  
 She sent them to lands  
 Far far away  
 To live .. to live ..  
 To make a name  
 There .. there.. please fly  
 Imagine the other side  
 Go! Go! do not die

What good is freedom  
 When her sons are gone  
 The elite, the nobles, the untouchables  
 With faith, with hope, with silent prayers  
 Thus, the exodus of Jaffna's sons

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# THE EYES OF THE BEHOLDER- THE ROOT CAUSE OF ALL CONFLICTS



**By: Ariaratnam Gobikrishna**

A thunderous eruption shook the morning sky, hands went up in unison and the cacophony of instruments reverberated the rolling out of the chariot- the Nallur Chariot Festival was in motion. The frenzy and the religious fervor were as palpable as the drum beat itself. Then I went in to my reverie, going down memory lane 45 years back.

I was a young boy growing up within a stone's throw from the temple, always looking forward to this festival. It had such a joyous impression because it was the best entertainment in town, let alone the religious piety of a young impressionable boy. Now that I'm an old man having been exposed to many different cultures and circumstances, my perspective has been reshaped— to the better, I hope. I remembered years ago in New York my Catholic friend had once asked me how I subscribed to such barbarous practices so pervasive in Hinduism. His revulsion made a lot of sense, I had thought then, and here I am again partaking. But this time not for the entertainment, not even for the religious reasons but as part of my cultural upbringing and a sense of belonging.

As I watched the procession moving forward, the chaos turned into a well coordinated wave form from afar. And I wondered if my friend's aversion was justifiable. He had professed that the Ganesh Festival in Mumbai-which was depicted in the movie *Nayakan*, starring Kamal Haasan-had left a bad taste in his mouth that sounded reasonable to me given his religious persuasion prohibiting idol worship of certain kind. Then I thought to myself whether this phenomenon was unique to Hindu religion, probably the oldest practicing religion with its multitude of iterations. "Are Hindus the real savages that Winston Churchill once portrayed as?" I wondered. As the drum beat faded away my reverie delved deeper.

As a boy I had seen the fury firsthand against idol worship in the eyes and the action of Charlton Heston as Moses in the movie *The Ten Commandments*. Right then and there, before even leaving the movie theater, I knew what we were doing was wrong. My low self-esteem as part of being a "Hindu" helped to make that assumption easier. Then years later I had my serious doubts. I watched hordes of people bobbing and chanting, leaving notes in the crevices of the Wailing wall in Jerusalem and I saw Rabbis dancing with the Torah encouraging the congregants to let loose. But I wanted to give the benefit of the doubt so I retracted my doubts with the notion that those were just symbolic gestures.

My reverie was broken once more: showers of flower petals started falling on top of the chariot from the Kopuram. No war planes this time showering flowers instead of bombs, probably due to Sri Lanka's financial constraints.

I quickly relapsed into the reverie. My travels to many Muslim countries came to the fore. Their pristine Mosques with looming minarets; the Muezzin's call to prayer; their inner sanctum with nothing but Quranic Verses—all flashed back into my mind. Here is one religion that seems to be doing everything right; unlike us, how disciplined and orderly they always are.

The chariot had turned the corner and came the group of dancers slathered in ash, jumping up and down, not to the drum beat but to some wild imagination, breaking my reverie again. No wonder people frown upon our practices, no uniformity but total disarray. And who would dance for the Gods anyway?

The Dervishes of Turkey with their swirling skirts popped up as one of many possibilities; but one may be quick to point out that this is a small Sufi sect, not to confuse with the majority Muslims. By this time the moving mass had swelled on the edges encircling the temple completely, inching forward clockwise en masse. I'm back in my deep thoughts, thinking about a million Haj pilgrims milling around the Kaaba, but counterclockwise though, in Mecca.

I remembered the first time when I saw people being suspended on hooks for the fulfillment of vows. It was awe-inspiring and terrifying at the same time. But now it evoked a different feeling- it was repulsive and grotesque. The mere human torture under the sweltering sun was too painful to watch. "Why on earth would someone do this?" "Is it because we as heathens enjoy self inflicted misery with such a glee?"

Then my mind went back to this incident. Once during the course of a medical examination in New York I was surprised to see scars crisscrossing the back of a well-educated gentleman from Pakistan. I figured out silently that it could have been from self-flagellation- a ritual the Shiites followed for the Muharram commemoration. I gently tried to confirm but the gentleman simply brushed it off as irrelevant to my medical history taking. It was equally startling to watch nails being driven into the palms of Philippino diehards during the reenactment of *The Passion of the Christ*—but again one may discard it as not part of mainstream because Vatican doesn't condone the practice.

The age old practices of physical hardship to vouch fidelity to the religion is more common in many religions than we realize. The male rollers on the dirt, the female fire pot bearers, the fire walkers, and many others that follow the ritualistic physical hardship may be unique to Hindu religion but the concept is not. In fact when I visited St. Michael's church in Montreal the church had a row of steps built in such a way to enable the ascent on the knees for penance. People carrying crosses along Via Dolorosa is common to all Christian denominations as well.

The chariot had reached the final destination. The Deity was about to be carried off. The culmination of idol worship. My mind wandered in to the movie *God Father- The Feast of San Gennaro*. While the Saint was being paraded around Robert De Niro was waiting for the moment to pull the trigger. Then came the myriad Catholic festivals of many European cities to my mind, practicing similar themes with gusto. The scenes in which revelers waded into the waters at the end of the procession. The festival Sri Lanka is famous for perpetuates the same theme— parading the sacred tooth of Buddha on elephants and Buddhists all over the world subscribe to different versions.

The day after the chariot festival in Nallur is the water festival when many immerse themselves as a cleansing ritual. At a condescending glance it may look uncouth but with some self reflection you will realize that it's integral to all religions. The baptism scene in *God Father* set the tone for the most memorable moment in movies. That brings us to the various ablution practices all over the world; and the ones that stand out are at the Jordan River and at the Ganges. Fasting is another common thread that weaves through the tapestry of all religions.

The erudite argument by Sam Harris for the end of faith, in my opinion, falls flat because human expectation is a moving target and it invariably creates void in its wake and faith will always be there to fill the void—at least temporarily, until a new one is created.

The more I look for jarring contrasts between religions the less and less I see as evidence and that begs the question as to why people are so critical and divisive about each other's religion. And my humble observation is that the mind set of tribalism makes them blind to the obvious similarities.

In conclusion, I think, the prejudice thrives owing to the lack of self-critical eyes of the beholder.



## COMMUNITY WATCH

### JHCA Canada TSA

# Our Journey



Starting by supporting 13 students in 2009, with the help from a small group of JHCA members and the JHCA community, TSA was formed with the purpose of supporting Tamil students in need to continue & complete their education. Over the years, TSA has grown and now provides monthly financial support to 183 students and conducts group students projects at 5 educational institutions with the help of 80 donors. Currently over 1000 students get benefits from TSA projects and continue their studies.

**Vision:** Create a self-reliant Tamil Society through education.

**Mission:** Uplift the lives of children in need by providing access to quality education to help them realize their full potential, as empowered, self-reliant citizens.

**Values:** Our values are designed to achieve our ambitious goals. We are transparent and accountable to our donors and stakeholders. We maintain fairness in identifying the projects which are impactful.

Go to page 49 for photos >>

## Kalaiyarasi 2023:

# Illuminating the Night with Art and Heritage

In a mesmerizing display of cultural richness and artistic excellence, the Jaffna Hindu College Association Canada's Art and Heritage Subcommittee organized the Kalaiyarasi 2023 event. Held at the Flato Markham Theater on October 8, 2023, this enchanting evening was a testament to the power of art and heritage to transcend darkness. The event's theme, "we shall pass any darkness by our art flame," set the stage for a remarkable cultural journey.

### Local Artistry Shines Bright

One of the standout features of Kalaiyarasi 2023 was the utilization of local artists to bring this event to life. This decision not only added an authentic touch to the proceedings but also showcased the incredible talent within the community. It served as an inspiration for other alma maters, setting a remarkable precedent for celebrating local culture and talent.

### A Cultural Journey Through the Evening

The evening commenced with a poignant Mangala Vilaketral, a traditional ritual involving the lighting of five threads. This set the tone for an event that would illuminate the hearts of the attendees.

The trilingual rendition of the National Anthem, performed by the talented Catalina Ellakia Morisious, was a harmonious start to the evening. It was followed by the soul-stirring Thamil Thai Vazhthu, beautifully rendered by Isai Kalaimani Pannishikala Vidhthagar and Mrs. Siyamala Sandapavan, evoking a deep sense of pride.

The heartwarming school anthem, sung by the Executive Committee members, invoked cherished memories for alumni and a sense of belonging for all in attendance.

A moment of silence paid tribute to the innocent lives lost, acknowledging the gravity of history. Arunmozhivarman followed with a Land Acknowledgment, recognizing the significance of the indigenous land upon which the event took place.

The Welcome Dance by the talented students of Samskrithi School of Arts, under the guidance of Sutharsini Thileepan, radiated warmth and welcome. It was a visual feast that set the stage for the evening's cultural showcase.

Sayon Balasuntharam, the Chief Coordinator of the Art and Heritage Subcommittee, took the stage for a warm and inspiring welcome speech, emphasizing the significance of art and culture in overcoming adversity.

The Parai Drumming and Dancing by Ahkenam Arts, with its traditional instruments and vibrant



- Souvenir

dance, provided an authentic glimpse into the region's rich heritage.

President Kugathan Sarangapani's speech was a testament to the association's goals and achievements, highlighting the commitment to preserving culture and heritage.

A mesmerizing dance performance by Abhinayakshetra Fine Arts Canada, under the tutelage of Karthiha Parthiban, MFA, captivated the audience.

The unveiling of the Kalaiyarasi magazine, with the release by Parathan Navaratnam and receipt by Prem Premachandra, was a symbolic moment. A brief magazine introduction by Prem Premachandra added depth to the event's cultural narrative.

Keynote Speaker Jeyanthe Karunanithy (JK), an alumnus from the class of 1994, delivered an engaging speech that was not only humorous but also rich in content, resonating with the diverse audience.

The "BASS"ment Sound Crew presented an epic traditional instrumental music performance, with legendary Ananthakumar Nadarajah and his team taking the audience to new heights, setting the stage for the interval.

After the break, a thought-provoking drama by Jaffna Hindu Ladies College alumni, directed by Devaki Muneeswararajah, addressed current social issues within the community, showcasing the power of art to reflect and comment on society's challenges.

The Chief Guest, Honourable Rajathungam

(Sudar) Mahendran, former principal, was honored by Association President Kugathan Sarangapani and Art & Heritage Subcommittee Chief Coordinator Sayon Balasuntharam. Sudar Mahendran's insightful speech added depth to the event.

The evening reached its pinnacle with a sensational musical performance by Shibothan's Shianaaz Band, featuring Sivakumar Murugaya, Sri Vijay Raghavan, Sri Jeyanthan, and Vithusayni Paramanathan, leaving the audience mesmerized.

MC KR Krishna brilliantly hosted the event, guiding the audience through the evening with finesse and charm.

The event concluded on a note of gratitude, with a heartfelt Vote of Thanks delivered by Raveendra Kandasamy, the Secretary of the association, acknowledging the collective effort and support that made Kalaiyarasi 2023 a memorable experience for all in attendance.

Each program at Kalaiyarasi 2023 added to the elegance and cultural richness of the event, creating an unforgettable evening that celebrated the power of art and heritage in illuminating the darkest of times. It was not just an event but a journey that celebrated the soul of a community, echoing the theme that through art, any darkness can be transcended. Kalaiyarasi 2023 was a resounding success and a testament to the vibrant culture and heritage of the Jaffna Hindu College Association Canada.

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# COMMUNITY WATCH



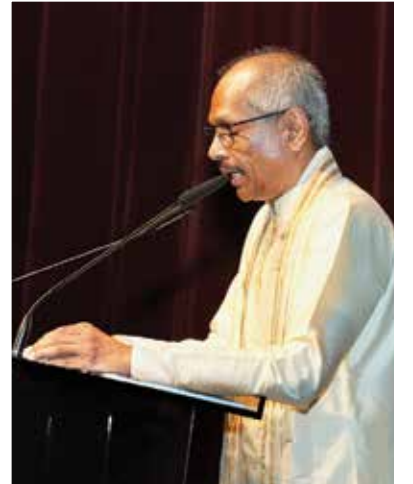
## Jaffna Hindu College Association Canada's TSA





# COMMUNITY WATCH

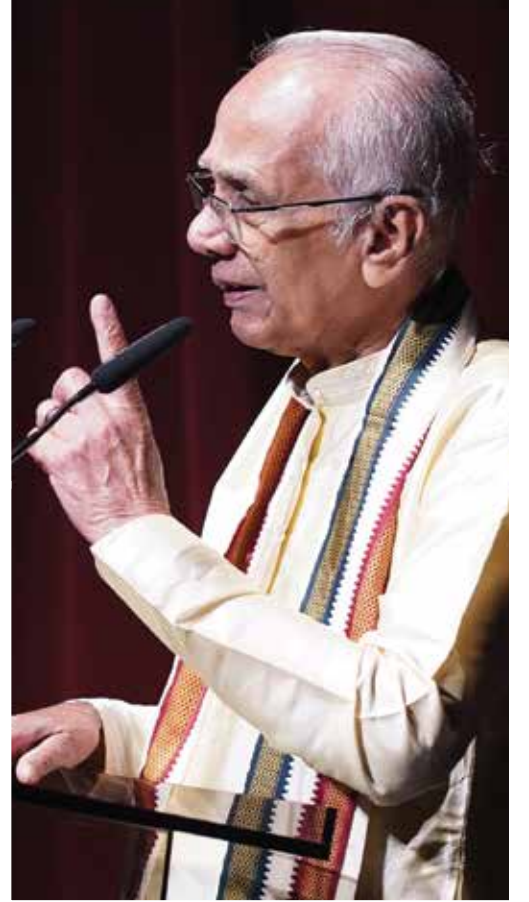
## Kalaiyarasi 2023



# COMMUNITY WATCH



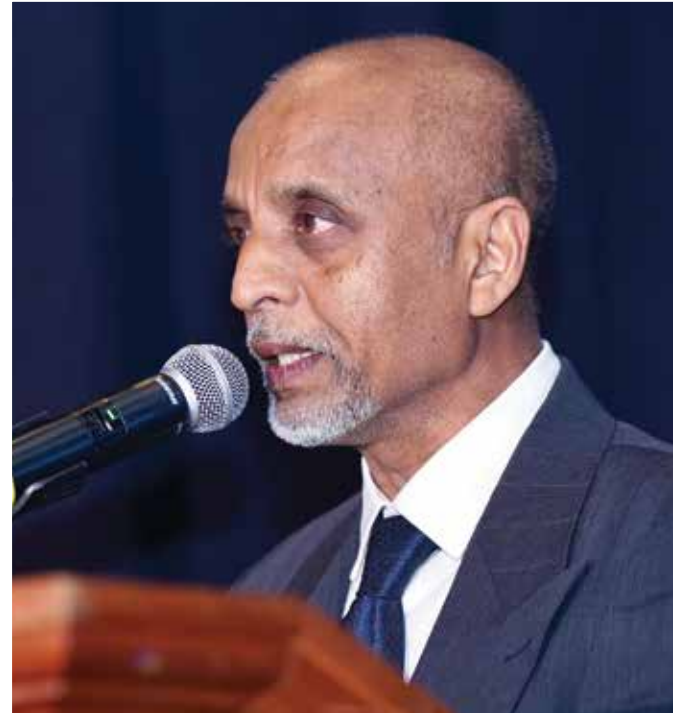
## Kalaiyarasi 2023





# COMMUNITY WATCH

## Jaffna Hindu College Association Canada's Gala Dinner 2023



# COMMUNITY WATCH



## Jaffna Hindu College Association Canada's Sports Events 2023

