

# VIPRANUDI

English Journal from the house of AKBMS



Edition - 14

April - 2023

Pages : 40

Internal Circulation

## Chinya Ramachandraro Sathya A.K.A. C. R. Sathya

(12 August 1942 – 04.04.2023)

was a renowned Aerospace Scientist and an Award-winning Author

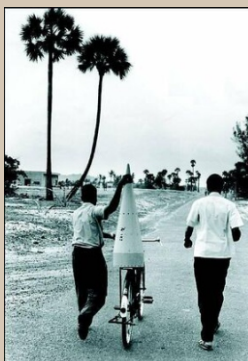


C.R.Sathya, was born in Mysuru in a humble Brahmin family. He is the grandson of Sri. A R Krishna Shastry, a prominent Kannada writer belonging to the Navaodaya times. Married to Shymala Sathya, he has two children – a daughter, Dr.Sowmya Rao who works as a Professor in a leading Management College in Bengaluru and a son, Sriharsha Sathya who works for a technology company in the US. C.R.Sathya completed his Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering from BMS Engineering College in Bengaluru in 1964. He then completed his Post Graduate Training in Nuclear Sciences and Technology from Bhabha Atomic Energy Establishment, Mumbai, in 1965. He started his career as a Rocket Engineer at Thumba Rocket Launching Station at Thumba, Thiruvananthapuram.



C. R. Sathya's photograph of walking next to the bicycle carrying a rocket nose cone at Thumba Rocket Station is now an iconic picture. This photo was taken by the renowned French humanist

photographer, Henri Cartier Bresson. Thumba became Vikram Sarabhai Centre later and here he established ISRO's Composite Technology Group which now gives all the key Composite products for ISRO's Satellites and PSLV/GSLV launch vehicles. His innovative work in the fields of Composite Nosecones and Rocket Motor Tubes drew large-scale appreciation from eminent scientists of the time, like Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and Dr. Abdul Kalam.



C.R.Sathya was also a prolific writer with eleven publications to his credit. His works of literature include - Subbamma Upvaasa; Biographies written on Dr. AR Krishna Sastry, Devarayanadurga Seshagiri Rao, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and Dr.U.R.Rao; Sahyandrindaachege; Alivillada Sthaavara and its English translation titled Sentinels of Glory. His literary achievements brought him accolades and awards – Prominent being The Karnataka Bhushana Award and Karnataka Sahithya Academy Award. Not many knew that he was the poet, who at the tender age of 17 , had written one of the most all-time popular Kannada songs – "ache mane subbamanavara ekaadasi upavaasa..."

*Editor's Note : C.R.Sathya had become a part of our journal writers' family. This is our humble tribute and homage to Sri. C.R.Sathya Ji, a gentleman and a marvelous human being par excellence... Om Shanti.*

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## VIPRANUDI

-English Journal from the house of AKBMS

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Public Relations Officer : Venkatesh Dwarakanath

IT & Web Design : Krishnaswamy Subbarao

Journal Design : Nagaratna Printers,  
Bengaluru

Printers : Parimala Mudranalaya,  
Bengaluru

**Office Timings** : Tuesday through Saturday

Morning : 9.30 to 13.00

Evening : 16.30 to 20.00

Sundays : 09.30 to 13.00

Weekly Holiday : Monday



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# Presidential Message

**Ashok Haranahalli**  
President - AKBMS

Dear Friends

A very Happy Ugadi to all of you.

Shubhakruthanamasamvatsara has just gone by and ushered in the Shobhakruthanaamasamvatsara. May this New Year bring in Peace and Prosperity to all of us.

Similarly, there is one more thing that is waiting on the corner to arrive. Our Legislative Assembly elections are in May 2023. Though at the helm of this strong democracy, there are differences in caste, creed, religion, language, and such similar kinds, we as responsible citizens have to come out to elect the leader of our choice. This is our fundamental right as well as responsibility. If we do not keep in mind the progress of our country, integrity, and a sense of patriotism while exercising our votes, it becomes a mockery of the entire system. Today you see a general apathy towards the system of voting, especially in some of the younger generations. If this trend continues, it is very imperative that we would regret it in the future. So let's put aside our disinterest and go down there and exercise our franchise.

In this context, we have been seeing that the votes are exercised based on caste and creed which in itself is very unfortunate. So how do we work around these situations? We as a duty-bound Vipra community can choose to vote for those who represent our Brahmin community and who have a history of good conduct, integrity, and national interest. Added to this we can also choose to elect those candidates who have respect for our Brahmin community and have worked for the betterment of our society. This could be the next best option. By doing so we are not only strengthening our Vipra society but also having a strong representation in the Parliament.

Another area that causes concern is the active participation of today's young Brahmin youths. Especially in a big city like Bangalore. Though a separate wing has been established for the Youth to come together and take up issues of interest to them, there is not much progress there. Going forward, we believe and hope that the awareness to participate and strengthen the community by the youth and the women will grow.

Recently we unveiled the statue of our Ex-President Sri. BNV Subramanya at our Vidya Vasini Vipra Mahila Vasati Nilaya Ladies Hostel. We truly acknowledge the



contribution of Sri. BNV Subramanya in building this hostel and providing shelter for hundreds of students who come to Bengaluru in pursuit of education.

On the 23rd of March, we all came together to witness Nage Habba, a unique program of laughter and humor in memory of the first President of AKBMS Late Sri. Master Hirannaiah.

AKBMS conducted its 41st General Body meeting on the 26th of March 2023. More details about this will follow in the coming edition.

Peace Be To All

*Ashok Haranahalli*  
Yours Truly

**Ashok Haranahalli**







## From the Editor's desk...

**Satyesh N. Bellur**  
Editor-in-chief

Dear Readers...

Welcome to our fourteenth edition of Vipranudi – the English journal from the house of AKBMS.



04.04.2023: Indeed it was a sad day for us all. With a heavy heart, I heard the news of the sad demise of our co-writer, Sri. C.R.Sathya. He was a renowned scientist, an award-winning writer and more than anything else, a thorough gentleman. I had the privilege of working closely with him for a few years when we used to get together regularly in connection with the Kannada Vijnana Parishat's working committee meetings. Though he was very senior to me and more learned than me, the way in which he treated me with humility and affection every time we met, spoke of the humane nature that surpassed all his

achievements and made me hold him in the highest esteem. After his demise, his daughter Dr.Sowmya Rao replied to my condolence message and wrote – "Satyesh, My father was very fond of you. You had a special place in his heart". I can only say that I reciprocated his feelings, word for word, all through my interactions with him. We convey our sincere condolences to the bereaved family and consider it our privilege to dedicate this edition of our journal to his loving memory. Sathya Sir, you will remain in our hearts for a long long time to come.

During this month, we also had the first Annual General Body Meeting of the Sabha. The large gathering acknowledged all the good work carried out by Sri. Ashok Harnahalli Ji and his team in the past one year. The AGM accepted all the proposals of the current management in unison and reposed its complete faith in Sr. Ashok Harnahalli's leadership.

During the AGM, initially, there were some voices of dissent from a certain section of the members. Constructive dissent and objections are always welcome as they pave the way for better governance. But there is a certain way in which these should be expressed. Shouting and raising slogans will demean the rich culture that the

Brahmin community stands for. I strongly feel that if Brahmins start behaving in an unruly fashion, then they would lose their high grounds of morality to preach to and correct society at large. I pray that such incidents do not recur again and differences are ironed out in a more civilized way, as we move forward.

I thank all my columnists and editorial colleagues for their continued patronage. Till we meet again in our next edition, wishing you all a blissful time ahead.



Satyesh Bellur  
**Satyesh N. Bellur**

When Sri. C.R. Sathya Ji was 17 years old, he wrote this poem and sent it to the then-most popular humor magazine "Koravanji". He never dreamt that his song would be published in the magazine and later would become a household song for years to come. This simple, yet humorous song has immortalized Sri. Sathya Ji. For your singing pleasure...

ಆಚೆ ಮನೆಯ ಸುಬ್ಬಮ್ಮನಿಗೆ  
ಏಕಾದಶಿ ಉಪವಾಸ  
ಎಲ್ಲೋ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ತಿಂತಾರಷ್ಟೇ  
ಉಪ್ಪಿಟ್ಟು ಅವಲಕ್ಕಿ ಪಾಯಸ || ಪ ||

ಮೂರೋ ನಾಲ್ಕೋ ಬಾಳೆಹಣ್ಣು  
ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಚಕ್ಕುಲಿ ಕೋಡುಬಳೆ  
ಘಂಟೆಗೆ ಎರಡೆ ಸೀಬೆ ಹಣ್ಣು  
ಆಗಾಗ ಒಂದೊಂದು ಕಿತ್ತಳೆ

ಮಧ್ಯಾಹ್ನಕೆಲ್ಲ ರವೆ ಉಂಡೆ  
ಹುರುಳಿ ಕಾಳಿನ ಉಸಲಿ  
ಎಲ್ಲೋ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಬಿಸಿ ಸಂಡಿಗೆ  
ಐದೋ ಆರೋ ಇಡ್ಲಿ

ರಾತ್ರಿಗೆ ಪಾಪ ಉಪ್ಪಿಟ್ಟೇ ಗತಿ  
ಒಂದ್ ಲೋಟದ ತುಂಬಾ ಹಾಲು  
ಪಕ್ಕದ ಮನೆಯ ರಾಮೇ ಗೌಡರ  
ಸೀಮೆ ಹಸುವಿನ ಹಾಲು ||





# Guest Column

**C R Sathya**

Space Scientist, Kannada Sahitya Academy Award-Winning Author

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## **A QUEST FOR STONES : In the abode of Ananthashayanam**

I wish to narrate an exhilarating experience of mine in the temple of Shree Ananthapadmanabha Swamy, at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Working with ISRO, I was a resident of this city for nearly a quarter century from 1965 onwards and naturally, visits to this famous shrine were more frequent with my family and my visitors. Of course, I was awed by the magnificence of this stone temple but specifically, nothing attracted my engineering instinct for many years. One day, in mid 80, I was asked by a friend of mine and the Director of Trivandrum Doordarshan to write an audiovisual program on the temple. As I did not possess any good proficiency in the Malayalam language, or any knowledge about the religious practices followed in the temple, my engineering instincts prompted me to look at the construction features of this famous edifice. Built with thousands of sculpted stone blocks, I was awed by the massiveness of the structure, enclosed within an imposing 360 stone pillared outer corridor in which is an embedded shrine with musical pillars and the Sanctum Sanctorum of the main Deity-Shree Ananthapadmanabha Swamy. The temple has an inner fort wall, surrounded by an

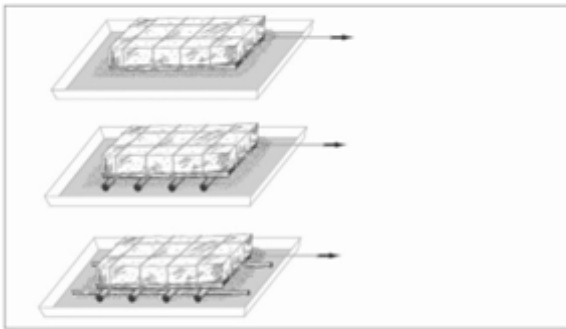
outer fort wall, both walls again built solidly from thousands of geometrically assembled stone blocks

The idol of Shree Ananthapadmanabha Swamy by itself is grand to behold, big enough to be viewed in sections through three doors, with devotees standing on a platform made of a single piece of the stone block called OTTAKKAL in Malayalam meaning a single stone. Ottakkal is a square piece of about 400 square feet area and is about three feet thick. The devotees have to climb up to this stone slab to have a glimpse of the Deity.

This Sanctum Sanctorum is surrounded by various functional Mandapams, and their roof slabs in stone are supported by stone pillars. There are many idols of Gods and Goddesses encircling the main shrine, all sculpted in stone. However, the sculptures are not exquisite in their artistic appearance as in Belur or Halebid temples. But what is surprising is the way stones are so liberally used in mind-boggling quantities and the very fact that stones form the main building blocks for this shrine. This is a deviation from the conventional way the Kerala temples are



built, with locally available materials like laterite stones, wood, copper sheets, lime mortar and such.



The centrepiece of my curiosity, however, turned out to be Ottakkal apart from the stone blocks that I saw all around. Weighing around 15 tonnes, Ottakkal aroused my sense of curiosity as to its origin, transportation and positioning in place. Several questions popped up in my mind regarding this stone slab as well as the thousands of stone blocks used in the construction.

-What is the geological nature of the rocks to which the stone blocks belonged?

-Which quarries around Thiruvananthapuram provided the source for the stones? How many quantities of stone were cut out of rocks for the Temple construction?

-Who were the sculptors, and where did they come from?- How did the sculptors transport such heavy stone blocks to the Temple premises? In particular, what specific technique they employed to transport the OTTAKKAL to its present place?

-Who were the rulers who commanded the major construction works?

The quest to find answers to the above questions unexpectedly embarked me on an adventurous, exciting discovery encompassing the many facets of the temple, based on scientific methods coupled with historical research. Thousands of bundles of palm leaf inscriptions about the details of the Temple, derived from the collection of earlier rulers, had not been looked at by scholars and catalogued to refer to. But the former Maharaja ChitiraThirunal Rama Varma who took a specific interest in my quest, helped me by referring me to a renowned scholar, Sri SoornadKunjan Pillai, to provide me with selected historical information about the Temple and the Royal families of the past.

To trace the origin of the stone blocks, I sought the help of the Director of Mines and Geology, Kerala State, who identified the geological nature of the stone blocks in the temple and realised that the sculptors have used two types of stones namely Leptynite (most extensively used in temple structures and some idols, including OTTAKKAL) and Acid Charnockite or Granite (selectively employed at a few locations and for the repair of the structures). Armed with some finer aspects of the geological nature of these stones and with a feeling that the sculptors would have chosen nearby quarries for the origin of stones, I visited eleven stone quarries located around Thiruvananthapuram to see whether the stones in those quarries matched the geological nature of the temple stones. This involved sample collection at these distant quarries and their laboratory examination. Homing on to a possible quarry of origin involved other aspects like the easiness of transportation to the temple premises, distances to be covered, rivers to be crossed, inclinations of the terrains and the soil conditions of the possible path of transportation. With this logic, I zeroed in on two quarry locations to the east and west of the temple location, about 8 km and 20 km respectively. The eastern location of the quarry turned out to be a small hill, named Tirumala, housing a temple of Lord Krishna on its top, overlooking the city of Thiruvananthapuram to its left and the borders of Tamilnadu to its right. This happened to be a source of Leptynites. The

other quarry happened to be near the famous Kovalam beach on the western side of the temple and a source for Acid Charnockites. On intuition, I spent days examining the hill and its flanks, covered in wild shrubs and infected with snakes. One day, a person watching me during my wanderings took me to one BrahmasreeMadhavaSwamiji near the hill, who had established an Ashram and a religious group named Satsang there. On hearing about my quest, he gave me a bag which contained nine ancient chisels, which were noticed by him under the soil when he dug the foundation for his Ashram. He felt that as a Space Technologist, I could test the chisels for their antiquity and origin. These chisels opened up a new chapter in the history of the temple. Buoyed by this, my search around Tirumala became more vigorous and under the camouflaging of the shrubs, I noticed various marks of ancient chiselling at several locations, half-dressed stone blocks and pillars as well as one large depression in the stone face, the size of which almost matched that of Ottakkal!

I got the chisels examined for their composition and hardness properties in our Space Centre laboratory and was in for an amazing technological surprise. Steel which contains carbon as an alloying element in the range of 1-2% is called ultrahigh carbon steel, which exhibits very high hardness properties so essential for engineers looking for applications where usage imparts a high level of abuse and

shocks on a part. The chisels of Tirumala showed a carbon content of 1.2% and sulphur (an impurity) of 0.055% using the X-Ray Fluorescence technique and an extraordinarily high hardness (400 microhardness number on Vickers Pyramid - using a standard metallurgist's way of testing). Out of curiosity, I compared these values with some modern-day stone cutting chisels, which are in the high carbon steel category and these chisels yielded a maximum hardness level of only 270 micro hardness level on the Vickers Pyramid while the Sulphur impurity level was around 0.055%, a carbon content of 0.61% and traces of Manganese between 100 to 1000 ppm. Modern metallurgists use manganese to neutralise the Sulphur impurity in the steel but the Tirumala steel showed no presence of manganese at all! It appeared that the steel chisels were products of very sophisticated steel smelting technology. I went around asking metallurgists at IISc, Bangalore and some experts in Tamil Nadu universities. The search yielded the origin of these steels as the early city of Salem in Tamil Nadu which was a famous location for the production of high hardness steels, from which the Tamil Nadu sculptors created extraordinarily beautiful temple structures and idols, now seen across India. For some technical reason, the age of these steels could not be determined but what excited me was the location of its find and the tell-tale marks at Tirumala hill indicating massive rock cutting and sculpting operations.

There was more information to come on Tirumala. It became obvious that the temple construction employed not only steel chisels from Tamil Nadu but Tamilian sculptors as well, as Kerala lacked such stone-related expertise. I traced a sculptor's family, hailing from Tamil Nadu living on the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram city and was fortunate to meet an old sculptor named SomanAchari. He narrated his family history from which I learnt that his ancestors, who were all sculptors staying in Siruvengadam Street, at Cherakulam, Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu and were called to come to Thiruvananthapuram by an emissary of Maharaja Marthanda Varma (1706-1758) to undertake renovation work on the main Temple and settled down at Karamanai, on the outer fringe of the city.

My focus now shifted to research based on palm leaf inscriptions, stone inscriptions on the Ottakkal itself, other helpful documents in the libraries, Travancore Archaeological Series and State archives of Kerala to substantiate the role of Maharaja Marthanda Varma in the temple renovation. By then, I had discovered the details of incremental growth of the temple from around 800AD-1000AD, fostered by successive Venad kings in time frames of 1050 AD, 1125-1155AD, 1459-1461 AD, 1481 AD, 1490 AD, 1565 AD, 1587 AD, 1595-1608 AD, 1605-1610 AD and during 1729-1758 AD, when Maharaja Marthanda Varma undertook the biggest



reconstruction of the temple giving it an almost complete shape as we see it today. A key Sanskrit inscription on Ottakkal, translated into English revealed an amazing detail linking Maharaja Marthanda Varma with Tirumala, Ottakkal and the Transportation of Ottakkal.

An interpretation of these inscriptions by scholars revealed that Maharaja Marthanda Varma embarked on the renovation of the temple immediately after he ascended the stone and the massive work was completed by 1731 AD. A mention is also made that Ottakkal was carved out of Tirumala hill and " was loaded on a trolley, officials and others including people from the ten lands comprising Nanchnadu, Elarakerai, Neyittil, Panikakkam, Thenganadu, Thiruvananthapuram and Pallipuram pulled the stone reaching the inner part of the temple on the 42nd day through an opening on the north side...". This historical record substantiated my findings that Tirumala, based on the stone classification and examination of the chisels, happened to be the origin of Ottakkal and other stone blocks. Through the study of topography between Tirumala and the temple, I charted the possible route by which Ottakkal could have been transported.

Some palm leaf inscriptions also revealed that many other complementary materials were employed by the builders. They were lime plaster, random rubble, iron-brass

embedding, wooden rafters and beams, doors and lintels, Panchaloha, copper and zinc, vegetable-based paints, clean river sand and laterite blocks. The main idol is made of a skeleton in wood to start with, roughly representing the figure of the idol, held in position by copper sheets. The inside of the idol has 12,008 Saligramas (specially procured from Nepal) as they are considered sacred for Vishnu. And then the final form is achieved by a very elaborate process involving the application of a specially prepared herbal or a resinous coat all over the idol's surface on which the intricacies of the figure are finally introduced. The imposing flagstaff at the entrance to the temple is made of a single wooden pole enclosed in the gold sheathing. And finally, to my question as to how much stone (semi-finished blocks) was employed in this reconstruction program, my estimation turned out to be like this: 55,000 bullock cart trips, 1,83,000 hand-drawn trips or 19,000 lorry trips!

Hundreds of elephants and sculptors of the temple premises with hearths running, were working day and night at the temple premises, some employing the earlier versions of A Frame –Pulley systems to haul up the heavier blocks. I could reconstruct the type of ramps they used to do this. I studied the construction of the outer Fort walls of the temple and noticed that they used self-locking blocks of stones (without mortar, in a way similar to the technique employed in Egyptian Pyramids).

Lastly, I did an engineering model of the Ottakkal, and at home, simulated the pulling of the same on the type of soil picked from the path of travel and estimated manpower required to pull the 15-tonne block, using rollers and slides, over the actual gradients encountered in Ottakkal's path. Considering the friction involved, the experiment yielded a minimum number of 212 people on a dry path with much less manpower on a wet path.

With the above essential information that I could put together over 3 years ( in my spare time as I was working full-time at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre), I was told much of the information was unknown to the Royal family as told to me by the Maharaja and his successor. In 1988, I left Thiruvananthapuram to settle down in Bangalore to take up another assignment with TATAS and I had to tearfully take leave of the Maharaja and Sri SoornadKunjan Pillai, both of whom passed away after my return to Bangalore. But what stays in my mind is the love and affection I received from them as also from dozens of scholars and sculptors I met. They were all appreciative of the fact that I hailed from Karnataka, and yet showed such unflinching interest in local history.

Even today, decades later, I keep a bundle of Palm leaf inscriptions presented to me by Sri SoornadKunjanPillai and samples of stones and chisels recovered by me in this project, as memorable mementoes. I also

penned down two books explaining the above research; AlivilladaSthavara in Kannada and Sentinels of Glory in English, which give all the details that were to be abridged in this article for obvious reasons. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam was kind enough to appreciate the work and provide a foreword to the books.

Accompanying images to the article: -

Image 1: The stone varieties employed for the temple construction

Image 2: The nine historic chisels recovered at Tirumala

Image 3: Home experiment to estimate the pulling force required to pull Ottakkal

Image 4: Transportation of the Ottakkal from the quarry to the temple

(based on the home experiment)

**(Editorial Note :** Sri. C.R. Sathya was formerly: Group Director, Composites, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram and Senior Vice President (Technology), Tata Advance Materials Ltd, Bengaluru. He is a well-known name in the field of Kannada Literature. He is a recipient of the prestigious Kannada Sahitya Academy Award.)



# TIMELESS TRADITIONS...

**Dr Jayant Agasthya**

Writer, Seeker & Teacher

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## **Necessity of Sandhyavandana (Part 3) Why is the Gayathri mantra important?**

Shree gurubhyo namah.

The main part of Sandhyavandana is the Gayathri Japa. Giving a lot of prominence to the correct performance of Gayathri Japa, our shastras have unequivocally declared that the performance of Gayathri Japa is a "Nitya karma" and not a "Kamya karma".

Our shastras say that performing nitya-karma doesn't give any specific result. However, the non-performance of these nitya-karmas only gives rise to unwanted negative results. Sri Shankaracharya confirms this in his Geeta-Bhashya:

“ ನಿತ್ಯಸ್ಯಚಕರ್ಮಣೋವೇದಪ್ರಾಮಾಣ್ಯಬೋಧ್ಯತ್ವಾತ್ಪಲೇನಭಾವಿತವ್ಯಮ್ | ಅನ್ಯಥಾವೇದಸ್ಯಾನರ್ಥಕ್ಯಪ್ರಸಂಗಾತ್ ||”.

A famous Taittareeya mantra which all of us chant while doing Sandhyavandana –  
ಯದಹ್ನಾತ್ಕುರುತೇಪಾಪಂ

ತದಹ್ನಾತ್ಪ್ರತಿಮುಚ್ಯತೇ | ಯದ್ರಾತ್ರಿಯಾತ್ಕುರುತೇಪಾಪಂ ತದ್ರಾತ್ರಿಯಾತ್ಪ್ರತಿಮುಚ್ಯತೇ ||

which means, that the negative karmas done during the day and night are absolved when we perform morning and evening sandhyavandana.

### **Significance of Gayathri mantra :**

Taittareeya brahmana exalts the Gayathri mantra thus – once, Bharadhwaja Rishi wanted to gain complete knowledge of the Vedas. Hence, he took a vow to dedicate his complete life to this sadhana. While doing intense Tapasya to gain Vedic wisdom, he realised that the life he had got in that birth wouldn't be adequate and worshipped Indra to obtain long life. Indra granted Bharadhwaja Rishi's wish three times. However, even with these extensions, Bharadhwaja Rishi wasn't able to learn the Vedas completely. But Indra was pleased with the rishi's efforts and to show him the reality took a handful of sand from a huge mountain and said that whatever the rishi had learnt thus far was akin to the handful of sand and nobody could learn the Vedas completely as it is a known fact – “ಅನಂತಾವೈವೇದಾ:”. As a solution, Indra recommended that the rishi could understand the essence of Vedas by invoking and worshiping Saavitragni. A person gets the complete fruit of vedokta-karma by worshiping this Agni. Having said this, Indra himself initiated the rishi with the Savitr mantra. Bharadhwaja attained the mantra-siddhi of this supreme mantra and understood the essence of the Vedas. One of the greatest Srividya Upasakas –



Bhaskararaya Makhin summarises the essence of Gayathri in his magnum opus – Varivasya Rahasya as follows:

ತಜಶ್ಚನಾರ್ಥಮುಪಾಯಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲೋಕೇಚ್  
ತುರ್ದಶಪ್ರೋಕ್ತಾಃ

ತೇಷ್ವಪಿಚಸಾರಭೂತಾವೇದಾಸ್ತತ್ರಾಪಿಗಾಯ

ತ್ರೀ || meaning the fourteen Vidyas have been declared to be the expedients in this world to understand Her (Parabrahman as Lalita Mahatripurasundari). Even among them, the most essential is the Vedas and therein indeed Gayathri.

**Below are a few shruti-vakyas that further strengthen the need for a brahmana to perform Gayathri Japa:**

1. Manusmriti says –

a. ಸಾವಿತ್ರಾಸ್ತುಪರಂನಾಸ್ತಿ – there is nothing more powerful than the Savitr or Gayathri mantra.

b ಸಂಧ್ಯಯೋರ್ವೇದವಿದ್ವಿಷೋವೇದಪುಣ್ಯೇನ ಯುಜ್ಯತೇ – A brahmana performing the Gayathri japa that has the mantra prefixed by the pranava and vyahruti attains the punya of the entire Vedas.

2. S a n d h y a b h a s h y a s a y s – ಗಾಯತ್ರೀಮ್ಚಿಂತಯೇದ್ಯಸ್ತು....ಪರಮಾಂಗ ತಿಂ || - the person doing the japa with complete concentration and placing the Savitr in the lotus of the heart attains the ultimate happiness (Brahma-ananda)

**The inner meaning of Gayathri :**

ಗಾಯಂತಂತ್ರಾಯತಇತಿಗಾಯತ್ರೀ- meaning She protects the one chants (sings) this

mantra. It is interesting to note that the word Gayathri stands for all three – mantra – chandas (prosody) and the mantra devata. Since the mantra reflects the essence of the Savitr devata, the mantra is called the Savitri mantra.

People sometimes wonder who should be the upasya-devata while chanting the Gayathri mantra. Shastras categorically state that the upasya-devata is Aditya. From a Saguna (an entity with a form) standpoint, it is Aditya, however, from a nirakara (formless entity), the essence of Aditya is the Parabrahman.

How to do the Japa?

1. Japa basically means having understood the meaning of the mantra, constantly and consistently thinking about this meaning while chanting the mantra in the mind.

2. Gayathri Japa should be done standing while performing the morning sandhyavandana and sitting while performing the evening sandhyavandana.

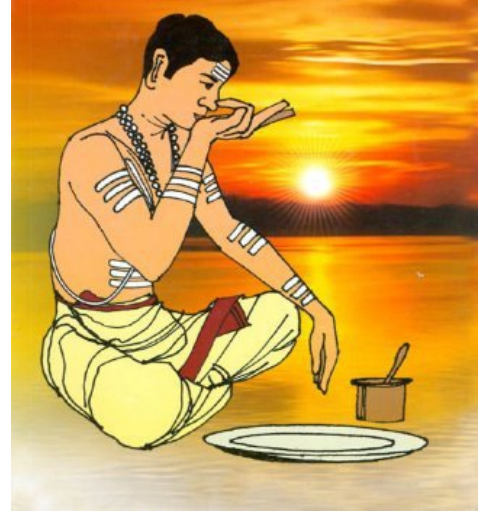
3. We see people holding the ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಗಂಟು, twirling the upavita in their fingers, using the counting machine (japa mālā), etc. while performing japa. These are not mentioned in any shastras and therefore not necessary per se but have been followed as per sampradaya.

4. There is no need to count the number of times Gayathri Japa is done. However, due to the paucity of time in today's hectic schedule, it has become

a common practice to chant at least 108 times (concept of ಮುಖ್ಯಕಲ್ಪ and ಅನುಕಲ್ಪ which have been explained in previous issues)

5. We chant the bija-shakti-keelaka, along with the rishi-chandas-devata before commencing the japa of mantras. However, Dr. Shatavadhani Ganesh, in his book ಸಂಧ್ಯಾದರ್ಶನ has given references indicating that especially for the Gayathri mantra, none of the above are required. Further, there is no need to even perform ಅಂಗನ್ಯಾಸ ಕರನ್ಯಾಸ for the Gayathri mantra. Even showing the different ಮುದ್ರಾs are also not required.
6. As Sri Krishna says in Geeta - ಯಜ್ಞಾನಾಂ ಜಪಯಜ್ಞೋಸ್ಥಿ - performance of japa-yagna is the foremost.
7. While doing Japa, mantras can be chanted loudly (ವ್ಯಕ್ತ) or can be chanted while moving only lips (ಉಪಾಂಶು) or chanting happens only in the mind (ಮಾನಸಿಕ).
8. ಉಪಾಂಶು japa is 10 times more effective than ವ್ಯಕ್ತ whereas ಮಾನಸಿಕ is 1000 more effective than ಉಪಾಂಶು.
9. However, doing ಮಾನಸಿಕ Japa with supreme concentration requires a lot of practice. Even experienced sadhakas find it difficult to hold their minds steady while doing anushthana.
10. Once ಮಾನಸಿಕ Japa stage becomes stable, this automatically leads to the ಅಜಪಾ ಸ್ಥಿತಿ.

Culmination – Many sadhakas have performed only Gayathri Japa throughout their life and have seen fantastic results, both spiritually and otherwise. The author had met a sādḥaka who had completed 48 lakhs Japa and had a divine aura around him. Strictly speaking, we as brahmanas need not have any other anushthana other than Gayathri.





# Thus Spake Lord Krishna

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## SHRADDHA

śhraddhāvānllabhate jñānaṁ tat-parah  
sanyatendriyah  
jñānaṁ labdhvā parāṁ śhāntim  
achireṇādhighachchhati (Gita 4.39)

one who has a belief(faith), self-control and steadfastness will attain knowledge and in turn eternal peace.

Many Samskruta words do not have an exact English translation, and "shraddha" is one such word. It can mean faith, belief, self-confidence, respect or a combination of these words. Two anecdotes from the book "Kshana hottuAni muttu" by popular Kannada writer S. Shadakshari highlight the importance of faith in achieving great things.

Tensing Norgay, a Sherpa climber who reached the summit of Mount Everest at the age of 40, along with Edmund Hillary, claimed that he had climbed the mountain mentally many times before doing so physically. His mother had shown him, Mount Everest, when he was 10, and she had asked him if he would climb it someday. Tensing's ambition to climb the mountain took root then, and he believed that he would achieve it.

The Wright brothers' father, a bishop, had claimed that man could not fly because he had no wings. However, the brothers believed that they could fly and worked towards that goal tirelessly until they succeeded. Tensing Norgay and the Wright brothers are good examples of the above-mentioned shloka.

The Shloka is not talking about what the goal should be, but it emphasises the belief one should have in oneself to achieve any goal. The first step is to believe that it is possible to attain any goal. Once the goal is set, the next thing is to prepare oneself to achieve it. Krishna advises to be devoted(tatparah) to the goal and to focus on it by controlling the senses (sanyatendriyah)

To gain knowledge (in the shloka it is knowledge of the self, but it can be applied to any knowledge as evident in the anecdotes mentioned above) it is essential to believe that there is something beyond what is comprehensible by our senses. Our five sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin) are enamoured by what they perceive. It is challenging to focus on

something that cannot be perceived by them.

daivī hyeṣhā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā  
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etām taranti te  
(Gita 7.14)

This Maya (the creation, the world we see) is divine and made of the three gunas. Focussing on me is the only way you can cross over this Maya.

When we genuinely believe in something, we can focus on our talk, just as students do during examinations. Believing and having trust in our abilities are important in accomplishing any goal. So, it is for gaining knowledge of the self. The soul is considered pure when it is devoid of desire, anger, greed, attachment, arrogance and envy.

dhūmenāvriyate vahnir yathādarśho malena cha  
yatholbenāvṛito garbhas tathā tenedam āvṛitam  
(Gita 3. 38)

just like fire is shrouded by smoke, mirror by dust and embryo from the womb, so is the soul shrouded by desire. The only obstacle to gaining knowledge is our attachment to desires, which shrouds our souls. Krishna wants us to realize that we are part of Him and, therefore divine like Him. We are as complete as Krishna is. The Shanti mantra from the Brihadaranyaka and Ishavyasa Upanishad sums up this concept

Om Puurnnam-Adah Puurnnam-Idam  
Puurnnaat-Puurnnam-Udacyate |  
Puurnnasya Puurnnam-Aadaaya  
Puurnnam-Eva-Avashissyate ||  
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

It means "That is (Purna)complete this is also complete. From completeness comes completeness. If completeness is taken away from completeness, only completeness remains."

In the previous articles in this column, the creation of this world has been explained, and grossly it can be said that the creation is an illusion to make the One (Paramatma tattva) seem like many. Krishna wants us to look at the whole instead of the part and to realise our divinity. Once this realisation comes śhāntim achireṇādhigachchhati, we can attain peace instantly

sattvānurūpā sarvasya śhraddhā bhavati bhārata  
śhraddhā-mayo 'yaṁ puruṣho yo yach-  
chhraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ (Gita 17.3)

Everyone's faith depends on their nature (innate qualities) and humans are what their faith is.

Our actions depend on what we believe in. If we believe in ourselves, we can achieve any goal we set for ourselves, be it smaller or the ultimate. The ultimate goal is to achieve liberation from this world, reaching a state where we desire nothing, and there is no need to set any more goals.





# My Quest for Spiritual Well-being

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## Enough is enough...

Contentment comes naturally to most of the species in the animal kingdom. Once the lion's pride has eaten to its fill, they seldom hunt again. They start looking around for other prey only when hunger pranks strike them. Till then, they are playing around and sleeping as though nothing in the world bothers them. To kill lots of animals in one go and keep them in cold storage is not their innate nature! On the other hand, contentment is a virtue that is rarely found among humans. Those who possess it are blissful and those who don't, are eternally stressed.

A person who is content in life would proactively use the phrase "enough is enough" more often than anyone else and in every aspect of life. He will treat whatever he has as the gift of God and has been offered to him in exact proportions that he finds appropriate. Anything more would have made him crave for a little more and anything less would have made him crave a lot more. Either way, he would have been an unhappy soul!

"Enough is enough" is a very powerful phrase to utter and more so, to practice. Learned men have advised us from time

immemorial on ways to cultivate this state of mind. One of the methods they suggest is to develop an aversion towards anything that is materialistic in life-be it wealth or power or fame and so on. This way, one grows up with disdain towards all those aspects of life that would make him aspire for more. Another method suggested would advise people to develop a healthy practice of giving away all that is earned. This way one would not be attached to his possessions and would naturally be contented with what he earns or gathers. As there are a hundred different ways to reach one's goal, there exist a hundred different practices to perfect the art of feeling contented in life.

Spirituality is not about treating anything in life with disdain – even wealth or fame or power. It is not about running away from entices that are distractions to mind and soul. It is all about being in the midst of all of this and still being able to firmly say – enough is enough! It is all about transforming vices into virtues by holding them by their horns.

One simple way to achieve this "enough is enough" mindset probably would be to

start immersing oneself completely in the work they are doing. Without worrying about its possibilities or limitations and without bothering about the returns, if one is passionately involved in whatever they are doing, they will achieve contentment in their work. They will feel that their work has given them everything that they deserve and there is nothing more to aspire for. Once they can say "enough is enough" about their work, it will not be difficult to achieve the same sense of contentment towards other things in life. One has to start somewhere and starting with the work that they are doing probably is the best place to begin! It is also the safest bet!

ಎಂತು ಕೆಲಸವೆ ಇರಲಿ ಇಷ್ಟಕಷ್ಟವದೆನದೆ |  
ಎಂತೂ ನೀನದರಲ್ಲೆ ದುಡಿಯುತ್ತಲಿರಲು ||

ಅಂತರಂಗದಿ ತೃಪ್ತಿ ಮೂಡುವುದು ಅರಿವಿರದೆ |  
ಅಂತರಾಳದಿ ಶಿವನು - ನವ್ಯಜೀವಿ ||

Spirituality is all about taking small steps toward a larger goal. How can one achieve contentment in life and feel the presence of omnipresent in their heart, if they are not content even with the work they are doing? "Work with contentment and contentment will then work for you" probably could be a very sound motherhood statement that we can derive out of this and practice. Why not?

ॐ

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत्  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः





# Career Guidance

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## Creative writing as a career option

Writing is an inborn trait. If you have creativity in you, you start expressing your thoughts in various forms like a story, poetry, scripts for dramas etc. The way one expresses his or her thoughts is very distinctive and exclusive. This uniqueness in writing is what makes one popular and recognized.

Creative writing is a term used to distinguish certain types of writing from writing in general. The lack of specificity of the term is partly intentional, designed to make the process of writing accessible to everyone and to ensure that non-traditional, or traditionally low-status writing (for example, writing by marginalised social groups, experimental writing, genre fiction) is not excluded from academic consideration or dismissed as trivial.

### Creative writing includes but is not limited to :

#### 1. Fiction:

Fiction (from the Latin *ingere*, "to form, create") is storytelling of imagined events and stands in contrast to non-fiction, which makes factual claims about reality. A large part of the appeal of fiction is its ability to evoke the entire spectrum of human emotions: to

distract our minds, to give us hope in times of despair, to make us laugh, or to let us experience empathy without attachment. Fictional works—novels, stories, fables, fairy tales, films, comics, interactive fiction—may be partly based on factual occurrences but always contain some imaginary content.

#### 2. Drama for stage or screen:

Drama is a literary form involving parts written for actors to perform. It is a Greek word meaning "action," drawn from the Greek verb  $\Delta\text{PAN}$ , "to do."

Dramas can be performed in a variety of media: live performance, film, or television. "Closet dramas" are works written in the same form as plays (with dialogue, scenes, and "stage directions"), but meant to be read rather than staged.

#### 3. Poetry:

Poetry often uses extremely condensed forms to convey an emotion or an idea to the reader or listener, as well as using devices such as assonance, alliteration and repetition to achieve musical or incantatory effects. Furthermore, poems often make heavy use of imagery, word association, and musical

qualities. Similarly, poetry's use of nuance and symbolism can make it difficult to interpret a poem or can leave a poem open to multiple interpretations.

#### 4. Screenwriting -- Writing for movies:

Screenwriting refers to the art and craft of writing screenplays. Writing for film is potentially one of the most high-profile and best-paying careers available to a writer, and as such, it is perhaps the most sought. It is increasingly difficult to make a living as a screenwriter, but that does not stop tens of thousands of people from trying every year, as the capricious nature of the Film industry makes it possible (though improbable) for a completely unknown to launch a career simply by writing a commercially-appealing screenplay and getting it into the hands of the right people.

#### 5. Self-exploratory writing (e.g. Autobiography)

An Autobiography is an account of a person's life written by that person.

The Creative Writing Process permits the author to construct through a series of well-planned stages, a thorough piece of writing that is both organised in its presentation and thorough in its development. Since this is a process, we are dealing with several stages of development from the initial thoughts and ideas to the final polished product.

The first stage of writing is usually the selection of a topic to write about. It

involves the consideration of several possible subjects of study, listed for consideration. Following a critical evaluation of the pros and cons of each possible candidate, a selection is made and stated with a reason given for its choice.

Once a topic has been selected, one must organise the subtopics that will be included within the piece of writing. One of the easiest methods of visualising the proposed topics that will be developed is to draw a web map. This graphic organiser is the blueprint for our writing as it shows the relevant paragraphs and their supporting thoughts that will form the body of each paragraph. When the web map is completed, we have before ourselves the basic elements of our story and the sequence in which they shall occur. With this one can write in earnest with all the zest and vigour that we possess. In preparing the First Copy, one can make liberal use of adjectives, adverbs and colourful descriptions. Use a variety of simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences.

Once it is done, one can get the proof corrected and you can edit the work to improve the way that your sentences flow, change awkward wording, and add or remove words to make the sentences more polished.

Taught courses in creative writing are increasingly popular, ranging from one-day workshops to three- or four-year university degrees. The university program has become a common and



popular addition to the English field of study alongside such emphasis as English education, Technical writing, Communication and Professional writing. While some people still argue that true writing talent cannot be taught, it is now generally accepted that it is possible to teach techniques which help people access or exploit their creativity, from overcoming writer's block and generating random ideas to understanding how standard genres of writing achieve their effects and structuring their work. The field has also made a way to teach young minds about the processes of editing and publishing such work.

### Personality traits :

Creativity, Good language skills, Willingness to collect information from various sources, Sense of anticipation, Sense of visualization, and Good Communication skills are a few traits expected in this career path.

Career prospects are bright for those who have the skills. With the outburst of TV Channels, Films, Small screenplays, and Theatre activities which are gaining recognition, the salaries are high for the deserving. There are a lot of courses at the diploma, degree and Post graduation levels. Those who are creative with a flair for Languages and a passion for writing can pick this career.





# Mind over Matter

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## Beyond 'RIP' and 'May God give you strength...'

Suguna heard the news of the death of her cousin's husband. He was just forty-five and Suguna was shocked to hear the news. It was unbelievable that her cousin's husband is no more. Her cousin, Swetha, just turned forty-one last week. Suguna lived in the States and it was not possible to fly immediately to meet her cousin. She picked up the phone and dialed her cousin's number. But she cut the call immediately. She didn't know how to start the conversation with her grieving cousin or what to say.

Jennifer got a message from Rohit that he would be back in the office the next day. Rohit was on Jennifer's team. He had lost his wife in an accident three weeks back. Jennifer's first thought after seeing the message was how to start a conversation with Rohit. Jennifer was thinking if he asked 'how did all that happen', and 'How is he doing now' might remind Rohit of his wife and increase grief. Jennifer was really concerned about Rohit. He didn't know what is the appropriate way to show his concern and condolences to Rohit.

Mahesh heard from Rekha(Rakesh's sister), that their mother passed away. Rakesh was very attached to his mother. Mahesh knew how shocking and painful it was for Rakesh to lose his mother. Mahesh wanted to be there for Rakesh. Mahesh immediately

called Rakesh to talk to him. Even after multiple rings and messages, he didn't respond. He started getting ready to go to Rakesh's place. He received a message from Rekha requesting him not call or meet Rakesh for a few days. It was a request from Rakesh. Mahesh could not just believe this.

It is very common for all of us to face a situation similar to what Suguna, Jennifer and Mahesh faced. What do we do when we hear the death news from people who have lost their loved ones? We express our condolences. When we do not know what to say, we say standard statements like 'May the soul rest in peace', 'May God give you strength and courage to cope with the loss' and so on. Expressing condolences over email or chat is relatively easier. What if you need to talk to someone very close to you, like Suguna and Mahesh, or someone with whom you spend most of the time in a day, like Jennifer? Are we equipped for that sensitive talk? Do we know what will help the other person to feel understood? Or what kind of help they may need to process their grief? Many of us struggle with this. We may avoid talking to them. Some of us may use the standard statements used, 'Be strong', 'He is in a better place now', 'She was so good, God also wanted her' and so on.

Grief is triggered as an event of a loss. Loss

can be the death of a loved one (including a pet), divorce, relationship loss, miscarriage, or even job loss. In this article, we are focusing more on grief generated due to the loss of a loved one. Grief is a natural response to loss. Grief is defined as emotional suffering when something or someone we love is taken away. It is a cognitive, emotional, behavioural and functional response to any loss. A person who is grieving goes through a range of emotions based on their equation with the person they lost. It could be intense sorrow, anger, fear, anxiety, hurt, guilt, shame and so on. Each individual may grieve differently. Based on the personality type, one may want space and want to process their emotions on their own or some people prefer to talk about what happened and how they are feeling. Some people may even reach out for professional help. In grief therapy, therapists help the client to navigate through different stages of grief before coming to the acceptance stage. Kubler Ross, a psychiatrist has come up with five stages of grief - Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression & Acceptance.

When we have a grieving relative, friend, or colleague, we would be concerned about that person and want to talk to them and help them. As said earlier, there is no standard protocol for grieving. It is very individualistic. As a well-wisher, we need to leave that choice to the grieving person and respect their choice. We can assure we are there for them if they need help. We can tell them we are available to listen to them if they feel like talking. Giving that choice helps them to reach out for help when they need it.

A grieving person may need help to run some errands in the initial days of the death. When we ask them if they need help, they may not be in a position to tell us what kind of help they want. Even if they ask, we may not be able to help them in that way. So it is better to offer specific help to them. Ask them if you can cook for them that day. You can offer to buy the veggies or babysit. If you want to help them financially, especially when a person has died after illness and hospitalisation, you can ask them if you can pay any hospital charges or the cost of rituals.

A grieving person wants to be understood. In the grieving state, a person may not be able to think rationally, hence advice may not work. Giving personal examples of coming out of grief may not help as the person does not feel understood.

It is common for most of us to feel uncomfortable or unequipped to start a conversation with a grieving person in a way the person feels understood. Here are some examples from a study of what is an appropriate way of talking and what may be inappropriate in a conversation with a grieving person.

Inappropriate statements to make the grieving person feel understood:

1. At least she lived a long life, many people die young
2. He is in a better place
3. She brought this on herself
4. There is a reason for everything
5. It has been a year now since he passed away. It is time to move on.

6. You can have another child
7. She was such a good person God wanted her to be with him
8. I know how you feel
9. She did what she came here to do and it was her time to go
10. Be strong
11. It is all God's wish
12. Think about your kids' future. You need to be courageous at least for that.
13. Time will heal

Appropriate statements to make the grieving person feel understood:

1. I am so sorry for your loss.
2. I wish I had the right words, just know I care.
3. I don't know how you feel, but I am here to help in any way I can.
4. You and your loved one will be in my thoughts and prayers.
5. My favourite memory of your loved one is...
6. I am always just a phone call away
7. We all need help at times like this, I am here for you
8. I am usually up early or late, if you need anything
9. You can call or message me when you feel like talking
10. I am going to the grocery store. Do you want me to pick up anything for you?
11. Wanted to check if it is okay if I get dinner for you guys.

12. Do you want to talk about it? I am here to listen (And no advice please)

13. Give a hug instead of saying something

14. Saying nothing, just be with the person

Putting ourselves in the shoes of the griever gives us an idea of what words can help to feel understood. If you are going to talk to a person who is grieving, be mindful of your words, be sensitive and prepare yourself before you talk to them. Listening empathetically and non-judgmentally are powerful tools. If you see a person grieving beyond 3-6 months, guide them to seek professional help.

Loss and grief are inevitable. We cannot avoid them. But we can make the grieving person feel understood by empathetic and non-judgemental listening.

Words are powerful. They can make a huge impact. They can bring changes. Choose your words mindfully.







# Real Lessons in HISTORY

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## The Imperial Era: A Flashback

As per the adage "History is always written by the victors," it is now a well-known fact that a majority of writings in the past were Europe-centric.

It is no surprise that the very nature of history appears different when viewed through the lens of the conquered nations. It has also been established beyond doubt that the expansion of the empire was the foundation for the establishment of capitalism in Europe.

Political and economic deliberations received primary importance in analyzing the chain of events of the expanding empire. The concentration of political and economic power, and subsequently its corresponding actions led to influence on society and other areas too.

However, very few have grasped in full measure the depth and width of the fact that baseless cultural and social theories were embedded to promote imperialism.

'Discovering' other countries through seafaring expeditions, expanding the colonies, establishing the empires – and ultimately ousting the imperialists and forming local government – writing history in this sequence has been the exercise so far. There is, however, a need to study the history of each part of the world in light of



its backdrop; and this study must be conducted under the supervision of native scholars.

If this point of view is taken, a history quite altered from what is currently prevailing may be brought to light.

### Enthusiasm for Expansion

The history of colonization did not begin with the Europeans uncovering new land masses through naval expeditions. These 'adventures' only added new dimensions. The desire for expansion is older than colonialism. The traditional argument of the Arabs was that the expansion of Europe commenced with the Crusades. But the Westerners argue that the Crusades were waged to win back the Christian Holy Land captured by Islam.

Until the 16th century, the Arabs expanded in the Mediterranean; after that, the Christians expanded around the Atlantic. In both these expansions, the thirst for religious extension was as important as the augmentation of wealth. On 26th December 1492, Christopher Columbus wrote in his diary: I hope to find gold in such quantities that the kings (of Spain) will be able, within three years, to prepare for and undertake the conquest of the Holy Land (meaning Jerusalem).

The natives of America and other lands, who do not use arms or naval power and do not accept the 'Holy Gospel,' deserve to be subjugated, and the Spanish, who have those 'competencies,' are a better race – thus spoke López de Gómara. Columbus was amazed at the innocence of the communities he conquered: "They do not calculate how much they receive for what they offer!... They do not desire others' possessions. They give away their gold without a thought, as they would their vegetables," he exclaimed. In a similar vein, the foreigner was unable to grasp the beyond-the-business dimension of the oriental world.

### **Boundless Repression and Manslaughter**

Columbus did not hesitate to kill and deform such innocent people. While occupying Mexico, Hernán Cortés killed 67,000 natives in one go. Before that, more than 50,000 had died of disease and hunger. Cortés made arrangements to ensure that no one had access to food or water. He barricaded the canal that supplied water to the place. He converted

the local Aztec temple into a St. Francis cathedral. In reality, such a large army necessitating that magnitude of manslaughter did not exist in Cortés. But the locals, who had never imagined even in their wildest dreams that they may face this kind of battle, were rendered helpless thus making even devout Christians shudder.

Juan de Silva of the Franciscan friars wrote appeals to Philip II, the King of Spain. The Vatican had passed an order in 1659 that there should be no relation between the Christian missionaries and political administrators. But then, religious zeal is as inebriating as political insatiability. In 16th–17th century China, missionaries used to sentence to death those who did not accept their 'religion.' This became so widespread, that the Chinese king started penalizing the missionaries.

Arriving in Japan in the guise of traders, the missionaries started weakening the local Buddhist religion. Enraged by this, Japan cut off all its contact with the West in 1639 CE.

In any case, why should India or any other country except the self-anointed supremacy of Europeans? If one were to scrutinize the plight of the Africans one would know that the Europeans carried them, tying them up like animals, to enslave them. They did not provide them with food, water, or freedom enough to make possible the physical labour expected of them. Unable to withstand the Europeans' cruelty, tens of thousands of Africans committed suicide even before the ships reached their destinations. This continued well into the 17th and 18th

centuries. In this context, the only avenue open to the Africans to show their opposition was to be as inactive as possible. The Europeans viewed this as lethargy! Even at the smallest opportunity available, the Africans used to mutiny for freedom. During the 17th and 18th centuries, several such mutinies took place in San Domingo, British West Indies and other places. Naturally, all of them failed. But even to this day, those people who organized rebellions against European repression are remembered as great heroes by the Africans. In 1991, Haiti had a grand celebration of the 200th anniversary of the slave Boukman who led the 1791 Haitian revolution.

### **Invasion: Second Nature**

Destroying a civilization and its people, and then establishing its supremacy is the way of Semitic-based imperialists. In this manner, Christianity trod heavily on Greek and Roman civilizations. Even after the Renaissance period, Greek and Roman civilizations remained as museum artefacts and never came alive. In contrast, despite multiple invasions, though it was weakened now and then, the Indian civilization has bounced back again and again without losing its essence.

Christianity considered Greek, Roman and Oriental civilizations as detrimental to its expansion. In later years, European imperialism also became a tool for spreading

Christianity. Gradually, the upper classes in Spain and Portugal gave up their traditional family vocation into which they

were born and joined hands with commercial establishments. Later, beyond the 17th century, the Dutch, the British and the French also embraced it, even more efficiently. The increasing population in those areas was also a contributing factor.

Initially, in the eyes of the expansionists, occupying ungoverned lands were justifiable. However, even such careful arguments were gradually abandoned. America, which acquired Louisiana in 1805, put forward the 'argument' that one who controls a river's birthplace gets the right to reign over all the land through which the river flows! The phrase 'Spheres of Influence' came into usage by the end of the 19th century. Even earlier, the Christian expansionists had taken upon themselves the 'sacred duty' of civilizing the whole world. After all, isn't 'Civilization's' synonymous with 'Christianity'? The Catholic expansionists used to express concern that 'mutineers' (meaning natives) were coming in the way of religious conversion. Incorporating several aspects like religious growth, geographic extension, commercial expansion, and a penchant for 'civilizing' made the colonization efforts of the British more effective. England appointed itself, without basis, as the leader of the European nations, nay, of all white races.

### **'Civilization' – A New Interpretation**

The key aspect we need to note in this whole process is that the westerners, based on their five hundred years of history, gave a new interpretation of what 'civilization' means. With this, the 'civilization' that ought to have been rooted in culture, was



shrunk and it reflected only a few distinctive commercial and political practices. They labelled anyone with a different characteristic as 'uncivilized' or 'uncultured'. Several local communities of India, outside the cognizance of the British's ability to grasp, came to be labelled criminal tribes.' By thus describing them, these communities were kept outside the domain of decent and fair practices.

In this manner, the definition of culture-based 'civilization' was mutilated. 'The British Empire is the pinnacle of social

progress' - this was the proposition. British historians firmly believed that the British Empire was at the peak of historical

progress. It was argued that the purpose of 'civilization' was a victory over other nations and other people. Philosophers like Oswald Spengler devised a 'philosophical' base for such propositions. In this way, Darwin's theory was extended to the political domain too. The philosophy that the ultimate aim of the political process is geographic expansion, took root.

**(To be Continued....)**

(Reference: Ramaswamy, S R. A Passage Through India. Trs. Vedavyas, M G and Nadig, Paresh. Bengaluru: Rashtrorothana Sahitya, 2022, Page no. 182-186)







# Crime Prevention - A Criminologist's Perspective

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## COPYCAT CRIMES... TRENDS TO WATCH FOR

"Copycat kills the rat"... A proverb commonly used to dissuade children from aping others and encouraging them to be their original selves. Copycat killings or behaviours have normally been associated with psychopathic incidents like murders, rapes, or extremely violent behaviours. However, one often tends to overlook sociopathic behaviours with the same yardstick which can be the first step towards 'Crime Prevention'.

According to the Oxford dictionary "An action (usually deviant) by a person or persons that resembles an incident reported in the mass media or seen in a television drama or a film". So, examining this through the lens of an 'Information overload era', these actions are only bound to multiply. Information flowing from social media platforms has the least guardrails. This means that it is difficult to get visibility into who is consuming such information and for what purpose.

### Below examining a few such trends in recent times

1. 2017 / 18 Mob lynching series– The pent-up anger of the mob on outsiders, right-wing protectionism, and beef eaters led to the ad-hoc lynching of people on highways, resulting in fatalities at times. The act was not only committed but was propagated through video recording of the act and making it viral on social media platforms. This led to further mistrust in the community and many socially deviant individuals took advantage of the situation. Few data on this are XX cases, XX killed.
2. 2022 / 23 Murders and cutting of body parts- Post Pandemic times in India have witnessed a series of murder cases where the Modus Operandi has been to not only kill but also cannibalize the body parts and store them in the deep freezer. The first case was in XX 2022 of Shradda Walker, and then it has been aped across the country. Few data on this are XX cases.
3. 2022 / 23 Pee gate incidents- What has been seen as a horrendous and unbelievable act of passengers peeing on co-passenger in an inebriated state of mind has become a nightmare for travellers. After that India witnessed three more incidents of similar nature,

one in the air, one on the bus and one on the train. This has led to the regulators working towards monitoring the behaviour of passengers.

While the above cases are of negative/adverse behaviours the question is always asked can this also be applied to Positive behaviours too. The most quoted examples are how this trend is used in inducing consumer trends in the retail sector. Brand marketers often use these phenomena to create a trend in fashion sectors or buying trends. Some of these examples are

- a. Fashion industry: Celebrity fashion trends are aped by many and those materials do get sold like hotcakes.
- b. Food industry: Fitness or diet regimes by social media influencers are always aped creating a new regime of lifestyles
- c. Travel industry: Adventure tourism by influencers induces travel to remote unthreaded paths

In terms of the positive impact behaviours that can be seen are in two spheres

1. Sustainable living/travel- Climate change has induced perspective change in individuals and corporations that they are now adopting lifestyles that reduce consumption of everything from energy to water to food. Recycling and reuse are the buzzwords for even a newborn child today and with more and more youngsters becoming the

brand ambassadors for such causes, one is seen out of society if you aren't an environment protectionist.

2. Aware citizen– Today every citizen is meant to be aware of the stand its nation is taking on any global geopolitical event whether it is wars or pacts for land, jobs, oil, food grains or even ideologies. Today, even local election speeches are alluding to global happening, thus making every citizen essentially a global citizen, connecting the macro policies to micro lives.

This necessitates changes in workplace policy. The risks they have to address are

- a. Can they regulate the conduct of their employees
- b. How will they define freedom of speech
- c. Will they be expected to monitor the private lives of their employees
- d. Will they be expected to bring in adherence to set ideologies

One can only say this with an increase in AI and automation there is an expectation of uniformity of human behaviours in a reduction in diversity, especially in expressions

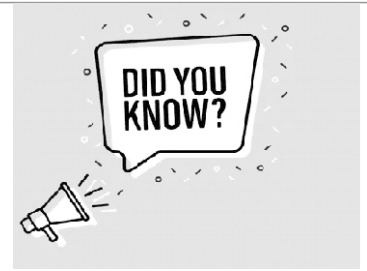




# Did you know?

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## SNAKES AND LADDERS

As everyone is aware, inculcating good habits at the formative age is of primary importance and duty of all parents. From days of yore, in ancient India, one believed that as the future of the Nation is in hands of the younger generation, moulding children armed with good qualities need to be initiated at a very young age. The moral instruction was conveyed not only through bedtime stories and grandma stories but even in their day-to-day activities like games and sports.

One such game with morals embedded is the board game - Snakes and ladder. It was even called PARAMAPADA SOPANA PATAM . The word Parama pada means Ultimate position which is moksha. Sopana is steps or a ladder and Patam is the Board Game. The word implied that it was a Ladder to heavenly Bliss.

The game is played to navigate one's game piece according to the dice rolls from the start of the first square to the finish square which is helped by climbing ladders and hindered by biting snakes that pull you down.

It is said that the game was played as early as the 2nd Century B. C. Some historians attribute it to Sant Gyan Dev in the 13th

|     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 |
| 81  | 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 |
| 80  | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 |
| 61  | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 66 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 70 |
| 60  | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 |
| 41  | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| 40  | 39 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 35 | 34 | 33 | 32 | 31 |
| 21  | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 20  | 19 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 11 |
| 1   | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |

Century. The original Indian game consisted of a big square which was further subdivided into 100 small squares or houses. There were 5 ladders in all and 12 snakes. Probably it implied that the chances of falling were more than ascending the moral ladder. They were symbolic. Snakes represented vices of life namely, Vanity, Vulgarity, Theft, Lying, Drunkenness, Debt, Murder, Rage, Disobedience, Pride, Lust, and Greed. The 5 Ladders represented the 5 Virtues namely Truth, Dharma, Non-Violence, Knowledge, and Sacrifice. The 100th Square represented the last destination which is the attainment of Moksha or heavenly bliss.



Even though this game is one of chance and not of strategy, one believed that chance itself depended on one's deeds in the past. With the Ladder, representing good deeds and Snakes representing bad deeds, the child was constantly reminded of the fruits of good and bad deeds. It was a wake-up call to do good deeds. It even helped in counting and number recognition.

It is said that the game was so popular in olden times that game was a part of the household. Young brides used to sew on the cloth the squares of Snakes and Ladders and would carry it to their husband's homes after marriage. The wealthier the bride, the more decorative the board game.

During the British regime, it caught their attention and was transported to England with modifications. They stripped the moral and religious implications and undertones of the game. Snakes and ladders meant nothing more than a snake – a reptile and a

ladder – a wooden piece to climb. The number of snakes and Ladders which were 12 & 5 respectively made no sense they were conveniently put aside and the numbers of snakes and ladders were equalized. The name PARAMAPADA SOPANA PATAM was adorned with a new nomenclature "SNAKES AND LADDERS". The didactic character of the game was thus completely eroded. sometime in the 1940s the game gradually attained its present commercial importance and was picked up by Americans and given a new name "Chutes and Ladders"

The game has become online now. It doesn't have to be Snakes and Ladders either. It can be slides and stairs Slippery ice and lifts or Pitfalls and rockets or even Fire Poles and Cranes.

Thus the game has lost its main purpose of moral instructions to the Children. But one is grateful to our ancestors to have gifted such a game with moral implications to us – their descendants.







## Short Story

### B.R. Bhimachar

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(At 98 years, he is the youngest writer we have...!)

## THE SECRET



“My Dear, Meet Raghav my classmate from college. He is a popular writer” Sudhakar was making the introductions. “Raghav, this is my wife, Rathna. She has been an ardent fan of yours. She has probably read all your stories. As for me, you know me well Raghav. I don't read much. My hobbies and likings are different”.

Rathna's eyes gleamed gleefully upon hearing my name. It was as though she wanted to meet me for a long time. I felt good.

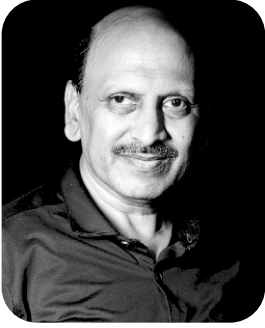
I broke the ice first. “I have heard from Sudhakar many times that you are a voracious reader. Is it so”? She snapped “Yes. A good book is my first husband. For example, your second book of stories – Lonely Life. Sudhakar, at best can only be my second husband”. She winked at her husband. Sudhakar had a hearty laugh at

the joke. He then excused himself, left us together, and went towards the bar where his friends were waiting for him.

“Raghav, in your book – Lonely Life, I immensely liked the story titled 'Heartbeat'. The heroin of that story caught my imagination like never before. I must have read that story a hundred times and every time I read it, it felt as though I was reading it for the first time. Her character has impressed me so much. Your description of feminine sensitivities is exquisite. You have probed deep into the depths of her inner and amorous emotions. Raghav, will you please tell me honestly as to how you could dissect a woman so well? How in the very first place, you got to this idea”?

Two years ago Sudhakar had come home fully drunk... He had then told me everything about his wife... He had cried... He had wept... I had consoled him...How can I tell her all of this now?

(The story is a translation of the original in Kannada from the book  
“Putapaaka”  
written by Satyesh N. Bellur)



# Whip of Humour

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## THE SLIPPERY PUPIL

"How much time does a car take to cover a distance of two hundred miles if it is running at a speed of eighty miles per hour?"

This was all Sonu had to answer. But...

"Insufficient information sir" declared Sonu.

"What more do you need?" with Sonu around, the exclamatory mark remains etched on my forehead.

"Which car sir? Diesel, Petrol or electric?"

"Why should it matter?"

"Electric car may run out of charge sir. We have to add for such delays."

"Diesel car."

"Summer or winter?"

"I don't see any reasoning behind this question."

"Diesel cars may get heated up in summer sir, especially if it's an old car."

"No such fears. The engine does not get heated up for such short journeys."

"Which road sir?"

"This is too much Sonu. It can be any road. It's none of your business. Answer the question this instant!"

Sonu bit her lower lip; her eyes welled up. "I will report this to the administration, sir. You are deliberately withholding information" her voice quivered.

I backtracked. Sonu was one of the 'premier students' of our school. Her donation ran to several lakhs. We just cannot look such gift horses in the mouth.

"Mysore road" I replied.

"Old one or new one sir?"

"Look Sonu, at a given speed, irrespective of the road, the time taken will be the same," I said.

Sonu smiled; slowly it turned from a grin to a guffaw. "You are so naive, sir. A car travelling at a given speed can suddenly screech to a halt owing to a somnolent buffalo. The difference between the old Mysore road and the new Mysore road is two hours. The old road makes your body sore; the new one makes you soar!"

I was transfixed. A girl with so much knowledge about roads must be able to answer this question in a jiffy. Maybe, my approach was wrong!

"New Mysore road Sonu" I towed her line.

"Any minister slated to travel at the same time sir?"

"Sonu..." I glared.

"Who is driving sir? Man or woman?"

"Gender would not hamper the time taken, would it?"

"Ah! I forgot a very important question! What is the purpose of the travel sir?"

"Come on Sonu, please be done with the answering bit. There are four more questions to be answered" I pleaded with her. That her distant cousin's father-in-law happened to be the education minister just popped into my foggy memory.

"Purpose is important sir. If it's just a picnic, a girl will not be too bothered about her looks. If it's a function, she must be conscious of how she looks at the end of the journey. In such cases, she may have to take a few 'lipstick touch-ups', 'hairdo patting', 'eyeliner repair' breaks."

"Let's assume that a driver is a man and it's a picnic."

"Does he smoke?"

"No. No smoke breaks. Now calculate the time and give me the answer."

"Not so fast sir. I cannot answer your question, sir. It's wrong."

I was taken aback. What can be wrong with such a straightforward question?

"New Mysore road is only 118 kilometres long sir. The sum says 200 miles. Actual and given distances do not tally. Why don't we move on to the next question sir?"

"Look Sonu, the destination is just a hypothetical one. It's the duration that's in question here." I was not going to budge this time.

"Four hours is the answer sir" she declared.

"What is the logic behind your answer?"

"No logic sir. I just reached the hypothetical distance in a hypothetical duration."

"Ok. You may assume that it's the Bangalore-Madras road. It's 200 miles" I said.

Sonu googled and giggled. "It's 181 miles, sir. But I will assume that we are starting from Bidadi on Mysore road. Now, we have more questions on hand, don't we?"

"What questions?" my patience was at the end of its tether.

"Does the car have Fastag?"

"Yes."

"Is the driver's Adhar card and PAN card linked?"

"This is too much Sonu. Even you will not be able to explain the reason behind this query" I fumed.

"Au Contraire sir, If the two cards are not linked, shortly the car owner's accounts will be inoperative and Fastag will not be operable. In such eventualities, the driver will have to pay the fine by cash and get the receipt which would result in added time to the journey" explained Sonu.

"Sonu, you may assume that the car, the driver and all things about the two are in shipshape condition. Now answer the question please" a mixture of rage and helplessness is not my cup of tea, but on that day my cup of such tea was overflowing.

"What is the age of the driver, sir?"

"Give me one solid reason for asking this question."

"Dudes drive at breakneck speed. Not for them these tortoise-ish paces. They will cover the distance in half the time taken by oldies" said Sonu.

"Unless a lovely lass happens to be cruising at 40 miles per hour. Then he will reduce the speed to 39 mph" I allowed my mind to follow her thought pattern.

"Oldies too ogle, sir. For instance..." a sparkle twinkled in her eye as she threw a sideways glance at me.

"Will you answer this question or shall I mark zero to this?"

"You are an angel, sir. If only you had asked this earlier! Go ahead, sir. I would have got a zero by answering too" she chirped.

Emanating a deep sigh and with a silent prayer I fortified myself to throw the next question at this impossible imp masquerading as a student.











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April - 2023

VIPRANUDI

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