

# ***READINGS ON KERALA***

**(ENG2A04)**

**II SEMESTER**

**COMMON COURSE**

**B.A. / BBA/ B.COM**

**2022 Admission onwards**



***UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT***  
***School of Distance Education***  
***Calicut University, P.O. Malappuram,***  
***Kerala, India-673 635***

**22004**

# **UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

## **SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

### **Study Material**

#### **II Semester**

**Common Course for B.A. / BBA/ BCom  
(2022 Admission)**

***(ENG2A04): READINGS ON KERALA***

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## PREFACE

ENG2A04 *Readings on Kerala*, the text required for the English Common course in the second semester of the UG programme, takes a "literature-based" socio-cultural approach to Kerala studies. This book is divided into four sections, each of which features a variety of genres and subject matter. **Formation**, the first module, depicts the infancy of the newly developing sub-nationality. The second section, **Evolution**, charts the social and cultural development of Kerala society as it became more enlightened and renaissance-inspired. The third module, **Simulation**, shows how social configurations originate and change over time, progressing from the most primitive to industrial capitalism on the one hand and land reforms on the other. The fourth module, **Propagation**, makes many attempts to depict the historical evolution of Modern Kerala. This course book contains texts that are either authored in English or that have been translated from Malayalam. The book is meant to give readers a critical understanding of Kerala's modern social development and historical evolution. Also, it will help students use English effectively and adapt it to different contexts and styles.



## **MODULE 1: FORMATION**

### **EARLY HISTORY OF MALABAR: THE PORTUGUESE PERIOD: A.D 1498 -1663**

**WILLIAM LOGAN**

William Logan (1841–1914) was a Scottish officer of the Madras Civil Service under the British Government. Before he was appointed as the Collector of Malabar, he had served in the area for about twenty years in the capacity of Magistrate and Judge. He was conversant in Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu. He is remembered for his guide to the Malabar District, popularly known as the Malabar Manual which was published in 1887.

The work was commissioned by the Government of Madras, and originally published in two volumes. The book was originally named Malabar, later renamed Malabar Manual by the Kerala gazette department. Logan spent about 20 years in Kerala as an acting resident collector and later judge under the British East India Company. The Malabar Manual is a collection of information and assumptions obtained from his travels and studies. Malabar Manual is a veritable book of accurate information about the geography, mountains and rivers, geology, climate and natural phenomena, flora and fauna, the people, their economy, ethnography, caste and occupations, manners and customs, religion, language, literature, the state of education and such other details. It also contains detailed descriptions of the various castes and communities that inhabit the region. It is believed that O Chandu Menon, author of *Indulekha*, helped Logan in the preparation of the Malabar Manual when the former

was working under him. The Malabar Manual is considered an important historical document and a valuable resource for researchers interested in the history and culture of South India.

The chapter on "History" in William Logan's "Malabar Manual" provides a detailed overview of the political and social history of the Malabar region from ancient times to the 19th century. It begins with a discussion of the early kingdoms that ruled the region, including the Cheras, the Cholas, and the Pandyas, and their interactions with other powerful empires such as the Mauryas and the Mughals.

The chapter then delves into the period of European colonization and the arrival of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British in the region. Logan provides a detailed account of the struggles for power between these colonial powers, as well as the impact of their presence on the local population and economy.

The chapter also covers the rise of the Malabar Rebellion in the late 18th century, which was a popular uprising against the British colonial administration. Logan describes the events leading up to the rebellion, its causes and consequences, and the role played by local leaders such as Pazhassi Raja and Velu Thampi Dalawa. Throughout the chapter, Logan draws on a variety of historical sources, including European accounts, local legends and folklore, and inscriptions on ancient monuments. The result is a comprehensive and nuanced account of the complex history of the Malabar region, which remains an important resource for scholars and historians interested in the region.

This article is an extract from the chapter 'History' from the Malabar Manual, which describes the journey of Vasco de Gama to Kerala and his association with the Zamorians. Vasco da Gama landed at Pantalayani, near Kozhikode in 1498. This was the first

time that a European had arrived in India via sea. Most importantly it was the beginning of colonial mercantilism and the subsequent colonialization of India

## **Summary of the Text**

Vasco da Gama's journey to Malabar, as described in the Malabar Manual by William Logan, was a significant event in the history of India and Portugal. Da Gama was a Portuguese explorer who set sail on the 25th of March 1497 from Belem near Lisbon with four ships and a crew of about 170 men, including sailors, soldiers, and missionaries. Gama's fleet consisted of three small ships called the San Raphael (his ship, 100 tons), The San Gabriel (his brother Paulo da Gama's ship, 120 tons), and the San Miguel (commanded by Nicholas Coelho, 50 tones) The purpose of his expedition was to find a sea route to the east and establish trade relations with the Malabar coast.

They reached Helena Bay on 18th August 1497 after five months and stood out to sea for one month to make for the land. Then rounded the Cape of Good Hope and entered the River of Meray. They spent a month there for careening the ships and breaking up the San Miguel, the crew of which was shifted between the other two ships. Their next destination was Mozambique, where they remained for about twenty days and left on Sunday, the 8th or 15th of April. On Sunday 29th April, they arrived at Melinde where they stayed for three months. The king of Melinda welcomed them friendly and provided them with pilots and a broker to help them in their trade. The king of Melinde directed them to Calicut instead of Cambey to find new trade relations. The two Portuguese ships came across the southwest monsoon and spotted the coast of Malabar on 26th August 1498. The first land they had seen on the coast of Malabar was the mountain Delielly, which was on the coast of Kannanore. The pilots called

it Mount Dely, because it was full of rats, and were not able to make a village there. They did not stop there and ran along the coast close to land. The pilots ordered to cast anchor in a place that made a sort of bay because there began the city of Calicut. This town was named Capocate. After some time, the ships moved northward from Calicut shore and anchored inside the mud bank of Pantalayini, Kollam.

The Muhammadans, the local Muslim traders in Malabar, were not happy with the arrival of Portuguese on their coast because they had a strong hand in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf Trade with Europe. They soon decided to destroy the expedition of Da Gama. The overseer of the treasury, the king's Justice, and the officer of the Palace Guard were the authorities who had great power under Zamorins. The first two of these were the first to be bribed to destroy the Portuguese.

Da Gama sent Nicholas Coelho on shore with a message to the Zamorin to get the sanction for trade. The authorities who were bribed by the Muhammadans tried to obstruct his attempt to meet the king. After some time, he was allowed to give his message to the King, who was sitting among a group of people. Finally, the king wrote his sanction on a palm leaf for opening trade and handed it over to Nicholas.

Finally, Da Gama was allowed to meet the king and he set out along with twelve men who were well-dressed and of good appearance. Da Gama wore a long cloak coming down to his feet of yellowish-brown-coloured satin, lined with smooth brocade, and underneath a short tunic of blue satin, and white buskins, and on his head a cap with lappets of blue velvet, with a white feather fastened under a splendid medal, and a valuable enamel collar on his shoulders and a rich sash with a handsome dagger. The appearance of the king was thus described. "The king was sitting

in his chair. He was a very dark man, half naked and clothed with white cloths from the middle to the knees; one of these clothes ended in a long point on which were threaded several gold rings with large rubies which made a great show. He had on his left arm a bracelet above the elbow, which seemed like three rings together, the middle one larger than the others, all studded with rich jewels, particularly the middle one, which bore large stones which could not fail to be a very great value. From this middle ring hung a pedant stone that glittered: it was a diamond of the thickness of a thumb; it seemed a priceless thing. Round his neck was a string of pearls about the size of hazel nuts, the string took two turns and reached to his middle; above it he wore a thin round gold chain that bore a jewel of the form of a heart surrounded with large pearls, and all full of rubies; in the middle was a green stone of the size of a large bean, which, from its showiness, was of great price, which was called an emerald, as according to the information which the Castilian afterward gave the Captain Major of this jewel, and of that which was in the bracelet on his arm, and of another pearl which the king wore suspended in his hair, they were all three belonging to the ancient treasury of the Kings of Calicut. The king had long dark hair all gathered up and tied on the top of his head with a knot made in it, and round the knot, he had a string of pearls like those around his neck, and at the end of the string a pendant pearl pear-shaped and larger than the rest, which seemed a thing of great value. His ears were pierced with large holes with many gold ear-rings of round beads. Close to the king stood a boy, his page, with a silk cloth around him he held a red shield with a border of gold and jewels, and a boss in the centre, of a span's breadth, of the same materials, and the rings inside for the arms were of gold; also a short drawn sword of an ell's length, round at the point, with a hilt of gold and jewellery with pendant pearls. On the other side stood another page, which held a gold cup with a wide rim into which the king spat, and at

the side of his chair was his chief Brahman, who gave him from time to time a green leaf closely folded with other things inside it which the king ate and spat into the cup."

Da Gama saluted the king and the king bowed his head and body a little, extended his right hand and arm, and with the points of his fingers touched the right hand of the Da Gama and asked him to sit upon the dais. But Da Gama refused the honour and remained standing during the interview. He demanded permission to trade and establish a factory in Calicut. Meanwhile, the Muslim merchants had been intriguing against the Portuguese with the help of the chief officer of the Palace Guard.

Zamorin permitted Da Gama to build a factory on the shore for trading purposes. The Chief officer visited Da Gama and invited him to meet King. He was borne off in a palanquin and headed towards the palace. They travelled till nightfall and stayed in a house in the middle of other houses and had boiled rice and boiled fish and a jar of water. They remained a day and another night in that bid house. On the next day, they reached the bank of a river where they were put into two Indian boats and so went on. Gama and his men landed on another shore at night and stayed in another house.

## **Glossary**

Voyage : a long journey by sea or in space

Saint Helena Bay (Afrikaans: St. Helenabaai): settlement in West Coast District Municipality in the Western Cape province of South Africa

Cape :The Cape of Good Hope is a rocky headland on the Atlantic coast of the Cape Peninsula in South Africa.

Squadron : a group of military aircraft or ships

Cannanore : Anglicized name of Kannur, a port on the Arabian Sea in North Kerala.

Mombasa : a coastal city in south-eastern Kenya along the Indian Ocean.

Cambay : Kambay or Khambhat was a princely state in India during the British Raj. The City of Khambat (Cambay) in present-day Gujarat was its capital. Cambay was known for its cotton and silk clothes. Cambay was one of India's most active trade centres since the 14th century (Source: Ibn Battuta). After 200 years, Duarte Barbosa described Cambay as an important commercial centre for carpets, and other textile goods.

A great mountain: Ezhimala/Elimala, a hill reaching a height of 286 metres (938 ft), is located near Payyanur, in Kannur district of Kerala, south India. It is a part of a conspicuous and isolated cluster of hills, forming a promontory, 38 km north of Kannur (Cannanore)

The Zamorin : The Samoothiri was the hereditary Nair monarch and ruler of the Kingdom of Kozhikode (Calicut in the South Malabar region of India

## Questions

### I Answer the following questions in a sentence or two.

1. Vasco da Gama started his journey from Lisbon on.....
2. What was the name of Gama's fleet?

3. Which mountain range is mentioned as the 'great mountain'? Which city was named Capocate?

4. Who was Nicholas Coelho?

**II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph**

1. Describe the journey route of Gama from Lisbon to Calicut.

2. Illustrate Gama's meeting with the Zamorin of Calicut?

**III. Answer the following questions in an essay**

1. Discuss how the Portuguese established their trade with India.

2. Evaluate Malabar Manual as a historical narrative.

## **TRIBALS OF KERALA**

**S ACHUTHA WARRIER**

### **Introduction**

Prof. S. Achutha Warrier (03 February 1941, Perunna) worked as a teacher of Malayalam at NSS Hindu College, Changanassery, and M G College Thiruvananthapuram from 1966 to 1996. His book Kerala Samskaram (Kerala Culture) published by Kerala Bhasha Institute is considered an authentic text on the cultural history of Kerala. "Kerala Culture" provides an in-depth exploration of the rich cultural heritage of the Indian state of Kerala. The book covers a broad range of topics related to the culture of Kerala, including its history, language, literature, music, dance, festivals, customs, and traditions. The book begins by providing a historical overview of the region, tracing the evolution of its culture from ancient times to the present day. It then goes on to explore the various art forms that have flourished in Kerala, such as Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Ottamthullal, and Theyyam, among others. The book also includes detailed discussions of the literature of Kerala, including its poetry, fiction, and drama. In addition to exploring the cultural achievements of Kerala, the book also examines the social and political context in which these achievements have emerged. It discusses the caste system in Kerala, the role of women in society, and the impact of colonialism and globalization on the region's culture.

The chapter "Tribal Tale of Kerala" in the book "Kerala Culture" by Prof. Achutha Warrier explores the unique cultural heritage of the tribal communities in the Indian state of Kerala. The chapter begins by providing a historical overview of the tribes in Kerala

and their migration patterns. The chapter then delves into the different tribes that inhabit the state, such as the Kurumbas, Irulas, and Mudugars, among others, and explores their customs, beliefs, and traditions. It discusses their unique lifestyle, including their modes of subsistence, dwellings, clothing, and social organization. This extract also highlights the importance of folklore and storytelling in the tribal communities of Kerala. It provides examples of their traditional tales, myths, and legends, which are often steeped in the natural world and feature themes of morality, justice, and spirituality. Warrier also discusses the challenges faced by the tribal communities in Kerala, such as the loss of their land and livelihoods due to development projects and the impact of modernization on their culture and traditions.

### **Summary of the text**

Before reading this article you should keep in mind that it is based on the data and observations of the author who belongs to the first half of the 29th century. Based on the studies of the remains of the Palaeolithic age found in Kerala, the historians assumed that the human started inhabiting Kerala around 4000 BC.on the basis of strong geographical and linguistic evidence, the studies reveal that the early lives began on the eastern side of the Sahya Mountain range in the southern part of the country. Later they expanded to the West. The terms Kizhakku (evolved from the word Keezhudhikku, which means lower part/section) and Mekku (Meledhikku or upper part) indicated the land to the west and east of the mountain. These terms remained even after they settled beyond the mountain.

The studies of several anthropologists reveal that the majority of the Indian tribes, including that of South India belong to Australoid - one of the broad divisions of humankind. The physical features of the Adivasis in Kerala such as the round face,

curly and silky hair, fat and swollen nose, and dark complexion are the features of the Australoid. The similarities among the tribes in Kerala, the tribes in Australia, and the Vedans of Ceylon point to this fact. The tribes common on the Eastern hills such as Paniyar, Irular, Kurivhiyar, Muthuvanmar, Malayarayar, Ulladanmar, Malavedar, and Kanikkar are the successors of tribes in Kerala. There are more than twenty tribal groups in Wayanad, Nilgiri and Attappadi hill ranges. The majority of tribes are Paniyar, Kurichyiar, and Irular. Among the tribes, Paniyar are the most backward community. Kurichyiar are seen only in Wayanad. They are known for their archery skills and were an integral part of the army of Pazhassi Kerala Varma in his guerrilla warfare against the British. The second position in terms of the tribal population goes to Attappadi after Wayanad. Irular is the largest community in this region. Muthuvanmar from Devikulam, Peerumedu, and Udumbanchila are believed to have come from the neighbouring state, Tamil Nadu. The main tribes in the hilly terrains of Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts are Malavedar and Kanikkar. As the name suggests, Malavedar are hunters. Kanikkar tribes are unique among the tribes because they dwell in caves and tree houses till the last century. They mainly depend on forest resources for their livelihood.

While considering linguistic factors, all the tribes in Kerala belong to the Dravidian family. They are mostly seen in Wayanad and Attappadi. Geographically these areas are very close to Mysore and Tamil Nadu. The language of the people who live close to Mysore is an amalgamation of Malayalam and Kannada whereas the tribes along the Tamilnadu border use a Tamil - Malayalam mixed language. The influence of Tamil is predominant in the language of the tribes of Devikulam, Peerumedu and Udumban Chola. Tribes in the other regions speak Malayalam with their dialects and usage.

## **Social life**

Tribes lead a community life which ensures their social unity. Their community is known as Gothram. The cluster of Gothrams forms Ganam. Each Ganam carries a unique symbol and it can be a tree or animal. Trees such as Neem, Kadamba, and fish and bow are some of the widely used symbols. Hunting places and food they gathered were the common property of the Gana but ornaments, utensils, and weapons were considered private properties.

Blood relations have an important role in assigning duties and responsibilities to the members of the Ganam. There were two types of descent - patrilineal and matrilineal have been followed by the tribes. The tribes in which women largely resorted to farming and agricultural labour followed matrilineal tradition whereas cattle-growing communities followed patrilineal routes for this job was mainly done by men. The Pulayar, Parayar, Kanikkar, and Malambandarans of erstwhile Travancore and Kurichyar of Malabar followed matrilineal tradition for centuries. The relationship between a male and the son of his sister was very strong in Matrilini. Father has no significant role in this system. The property right was vested in the person who had been assigned to perform the after-death rituals of the elder. The terms like Anantharavan, (successor) ananthraval (female successor), and Anantharavakasam (succession rights) are derived from this tradition. Marriages of cousins were common among the tribes.

The community feud among the tribes was known as Kudippaka. The entire community took responsibility for the humiliation or attack on a member of their Ganam. They took initiative to avenge him/her. They organized individual fights of the selected persons from each community to decide the merits of the issues. Each community has a leader. The leader acts as a mediator or decision-

maker in case of any internal conflicts and decides on the penalties for violating rules.

## **Rituals and worship**

The main deities of tribes are Kali, Hill gods, and Muthappan besides natural forces. Muthappan represents the ancestors of the community. Worshipping Kali is an essential part of the tribal culture. The enraged version of Kali in different manifestations like Kali, Rakthakali, Mahakali, Chamundy, and Rakthachamundy is worshipped by them. They believe that the anger of the Amman brings flood, drought, and epidemics. They offer milk, blood, and alcohol to Kali to make her happy. The calm version of Kali is the goddess of fruitfulness, blessings, and progeny. The Goddess of war is called Kotavai who is appeased before and after the war or disputes between two communities. This goddess is mentioned in detail in the sangha literature.

Tribes are leading a nomadic life in the forest and their main source of livelihood was hunting and collecting forest resources. After the day's work, they came together to celebrate, sing, dance, and dine together. Such get-togethers were common during marriages, harvests, feasts of the hill gods, and other special occasions. They performed Pulikkali, (leopard dance) Kaduvakkali (tiger dance), and Kumattikkali during these occasions. In such rituals, they play the roles of both the prey and hunter reminded of their past hunting-based living.

They usually buried the dead bodies along with the materials used by the deceased. Memory stones are left at the burial site by the tribes like Malayarayar as widely seen among the Australoids.

The tribes who depend on the forest have been facing many serious problems due to the scarcity of resources. Most of them resorted to small-scale farming and started work as daily

labourers in the plantations. The government-initiated welfare programmes have changed their lives, especially in their habitat, education, health, ways of dressing, and language.

This essay gives a detailed description of the lives and culture of the tribes in Kerala and throws light on the early history of their early lives. Overall, the chapter provides a fascinating glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of the tribal communities in Kerala, highlighting their unique practices, beliefs, and customs, and the challenges they face in preserving their identity in the face of modernization and development.

## **Glossary**

**The Palaeolithic Era:** (or Old Stone Age) is a period of pre-history from about 2.6 million years ago to around 10000 years ago. Palaeolithic humans lived a nomadic life in small groups.

**Neolithic age:** Also known as New Stone Age, was the last and third part of the Stone Age. In India, it spanned from around 7,000 B.C. to 1,000 B.C. The Neolithic Age is mainly characterised by the development of settled agriculture and the use of tools and weapons made of polished stones.

**Sahya mountain range:** The Western Ghats is a mountain range, also known as the "Sahyadri" (The Mountain of Patience). The Western Ghat Sahyadri Range from the Tapti to the Nilgiri is the largest mountain range in India after the Himalayas. In Maharashtra the range is called Sahyadri and in Kerala, Sahya Parvatham.

**Australoid:** Australoid race was a word for the aboriginal people of Australia, Melanesia, and parts of Southeast Asia. In former times, human beings were categorised into four races. These races were called Australoid, Mongoloid, Caucasoid, and Negroid.

However modern genetics refutes the idea of races and concludes that there is only one race.

Vedda: indigenous tribe in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

Dravida: the Dravidian people; a linguistic and cultural group living in South Asia who predominantly speak any of the Dravidian languages which are around 70 in number. There are around 250 million native speakers of Dravidian languages.

Pazhassi Kerala Varma or Pazhassi Raja: (3 January 1753-30 November 1805) was the king of Kottayam, in Malabar between 1774 and 1805. His battles with the rulers of Mysore and the British East India Company are historic and earned him the epithet "Kerala Simham" ("Lion of Kerala")

Pulikkali, Kaduvakali, and Kummattikkali: traditional folk mask-dance forms of Kerala.

Vadakkan Pattu: Literally, ballads from North, these refer to the collection of Malayalam ballads from the Malabar region of Kerala. The songs present stories of heroes who fought in ancam (duels) to decide on the merit of a dispute.

Kadamba or Cadamba tree: (English common name: burflower tree)- an evergreen, tropical tree native to South and Southeast Asia.

Sparse: small in numbers or amount, often spread over a large area.

## **Questions**

### **I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two.**

1. In which present day districts were the weapons of the Neolithic age found?
2. Where can we see the largest adivasi settlements in Kerala?
3. What is known as kudippaka?
4. Which of the tribes is the most backward?
5. In what way is the matrilineal system associated with agriculture?

### **II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph.**

1. Australoids and Dravidians.
2. Rituals of the tribes of Kerala

### **III. Answer the following questions in an essay.**

1. Social life of the tribal communities in Kerala.
2. Trace the origin and growth of tribals in Kerala.
3. What are the present day issues and threats faced by our tribes? Elucidate.

## **GHOSHAYATHRA**

**KUNCHAN NAMBIAR**

### **Introduction**

Kunchan Nambiar (1705-1770) was a prominent Malayalam poet of the 18th century. He was one of the triumvirates of great poets of Malayalam, the other two being Thunchath Ezhuthachan and Cherussery. Apart from being a prolific poet, Nambiar is also famous as the originator of the dance art form of Thullal, most of his works were written for use in Thullal performance. Nambiar believed to be a native of Killikurissimangalam, near Ottapalam in Palakkad district, served in the courts of Marthanda Varma and Dharma Raja, kings of erstwhile Travancore. Kunchan Nambiar adapted stories from the popular and classical literature to ridicule the follies and foibles of contemporary Kerala society. As per a popular myth, Nambiar is believed to have devised the thullal form overnight to avenge a Chakiar who ridiculed him for falling asleep at his Mizhavu (a percussion instrument) during the performance of koothu.

Inspired by Padayani, Kolam Tullal, and other folk arts, Nambiar invented Thullal which involves a solo performer using exaggerated facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of the text. He retold the texts in rhythmic verse using Dravida meters. He composed songs for all three kinds of thullal viz., Ottan, Sitankan, and Parayan.

The story of the Ghoshayathra is taken from Vanaparva, also known as the Aranya Parva, which is the third book of the 18

parvas of Mahabharata. It means the Book of the Forest, as it contains the detailed accounts of the life of the Pandavas in the forest during their exile period of twelve years and an additional year to be spent in disguise as per a bet in a gamble which they lost to Kouravas. The Kourava king Duryodhana sends a person to gather information about the life of Pandavas in the forest. When the messenger arrives with the news of Pandavas, Kouravas are disconcerted by the fact that Pandavas are having a good time in the forest. Duryodhana plans to bring Pandavas down a little by exhibiting Kourava's wealth and pomp before them and thus destroy their calm and peaceful lives. The term "Ghoshal" of the title refers to pastures where cattle and cattle herders live together. There were many ghoshals in the precincts of Dwaithavanam, the forest where Pandavas spent their time in exile. Kouravas set out on the pretext of visiting these pastures. The poem is an amalgamation of the incidents in the epic and the cultural and social scenario of 18th-century Kerala. Duryodhana is depicted as a local king in Kerala with an army of Nair soldiers who are anything but courageous. The soldiers eat a lot, spend time with their wives and generally laze around. The king, although fed up with his army and its doings, understands that hunger is a powerful driving factor for everybody.

### **Summary of the poem**

In the first part of the excerpt given, the messenger comes back to Duryodhana, the Kourava king with news from Dwaitha woods. He reports that the Pandavas are leading a peaceful life in the woods because they are adorned with the blessings of the Gurus. Surprisingly, they don't have any sorrows or despair even though they are in the depths of the forest. The messenger glorifies Pandavans in front of their enemy king, Duryodhana. He was sent by Duryodhana to exhibit the pompousness of the Kouravas to bring Pandavas down and destroy their peace of

mind. But it ended in futility. The messenger says that they are under the protection of the supreme god, the benevolent enemy of hell, Vishnu.

In the second part, Duryodhana lashes out at the messenger and tells him that he should consider joining the Pandavas because enemies are better than friends who are kind to the enemies. He is irritated by the good words about the Pandavas and questions the loyalty of the messenger. He blames the messenger who has switched his allegiance to Pandava and dares to preach to enemies without any shame. He tells him that he should go join Pandavas and have fruits and berries collected from the forest for enemies proving more useful than friends who are generous to enemies.

In "Ghoshayathra", Kunjan Nambiar portrays the gods and goddesses of Hindu mythology as flawed and fallible characters, who engage in petty squabbles and display human-like weaknesses. The poem also pokes fun at the social and political issues of the time, such as the corruption and inefficiency of local officials, and the excesses of the wealthy and powerful. The poem is known for its clever wordplay, innovative use of language, and lively rhythm and meter. It is traditionally performed in a style known as Ottan Thullal, which involves a solo performer dressed in colorful costumes and using exaggerated facial expressions and gestures to convey the meaning of the text. The poem also pokes fun at various social and political issues of the time, such as the excesses of the rich and powerful and the inefficiency of government officials.

## TEXT

I

Hear O brave hear!

Hear and thus have peace of mind.

Those adorned with the blessings of the gurus

Are blessed for life, despair touches them not O' king! (hear)

Merrily live the Pandavas

Even in the depths of the forest Without any inkling of sorrow.

Along with the benign sages

Calmly do they dwell in Dwaitha woods. (hear)

No deceit of yours

Affected or touched them ,

Their refuge being the feet

Of the benevolent foe of inferno.

II

When sent on a mission

Limit yourself to that, do nothing more

Hey you, brute of a man

Try not to fool me slyly.

Side with the able Pandavas

You really must.

The one who dines from my feast  
Dares to ally himself with my foes  
And pontificate brazenly  
On my vices and their virtues.  
Haply you should go over to them  
And sustain yourself on berries and fruits  
For enemies prove useful than allies  
Who are gently generous to enemies. (Translated by the editors)

### **Glossary**

Adorned: honoured, blessed.

Guru: an intellectual or spiritual guide or leader

Despair : misery, anguish

Merrily: happily

Inkling : indication

Benign: kind and graceful

Sage : a person respected for his/her possession of wisdom, and experience, usually of a spiritual disposition

Dwell : live

Dwaitha woods: the forest where the pandavas were living during their exile

Deceit : trickery, deception, cheating

Refuge: shelter from danger

Benevolent: kind

Foe : enemy

Inferno: hell

Foe of inferno: the enemy of hell, Lord Vishnu of Hindu mythology

Benevolent Foe: compassionate enemy, use of the figure of speech oxymoron, in which contradicting ideas or images are combined

Brute: unkind and cruel

Slyly: in a deceitful manner

Pontificate: speak as though one were the only person with the right opinions

Brazenly: without shame

Vice: evil actions

Virtue: good actions

Haply: perhaps

Generous: kind, big-hearted

## **Questions**

### **1. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two.**

1 Who according to the messenger are blessed for life?

2. What is the refuge of Pandavas?

3. What is the figure of speech in the line "Of the benevolent foe of inferno"?

4. What is Duryodhana's allegation against the messenger?

5. What is Duryodhana's opinion regarding allies and foes?

**II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph**

1. Describe the context of the poem "Ghoshayathra"?

2. Why according to the messenger are Pandavas untouched by the deceitful Kouravas?

3. What does Duryodhana ask the messenger to do and why?

**III. Answer the following question in an essay**

1. Discuss how Kunchan Nambiar uses the poem "Ghoshayathra" to enlighten the audience

2 Comment on how the exchange between the messenger and the king becomes humorous as well as entertaining.

## **MODULE 2: EVOLUTION**

### **ATHMOPADESA SATHAKAM**

### **SREE NARAYANA GURU**

Sree Narayana Guru, regarded as the central figure of the Kerala Renaissance, was born on August 22, 1856, to Kutti Amma and farmer Madan Asan in Chembazhanthi, Thiruvananthapuram district. When he was five years old, Nanu—as he was then known—began attending a nearby school that followed the old “Gurukula” style. With the help of his father and uncle, he completed his study at home, where he was instructed in Sanskrit, Astrology, and Ayurveda.. He cherished isolation and introspection and started writing hymns and devotional melodies. Raman Pillai Asan taught him extensive courses in Sanskrit, poetry, theatre, literary criticism, logical rhetoric, the Vedas, and the Upanishads. He ran a village school for neighbourhood kids, which earned him the title “Nanu Asan”.

His relationship with Kunjan Pillai, afterwards known as Chattampi Swamikal, was one of respect and influence on both sides. He met Thycattu Ayyaavu, a "hatha yogi" and philosopher, through Chattampi Swamikal. These educational exposures and experiences left a lasting impression on Narayana Guru's later life and philosophy. He built a hermitage in Maruthwamala and lived in isolation there for eight years, doing yoga and meditation. He lived a simple life of learning for more than thirty years, getting married to Kaliamma along the way, and then he turned ascetic.

"One Caste, One Religion, and One God for Human Beings" and "Ask not, Say not, Think not Caste" are two of his well-known maxims that simply define the entirety of his spiritual teachings. He held that the only way to salvation and self-knowledge was via education. Due to their exclusion from temples, he constructed temples for underprivileged communities.

In the Age of Science, Narayana Guru, a seer with a logical approach, held that the underlying reality that underpins the existence of everything phenomenal is one and the same. He responded that the deity he had installed in Aruvippuram in 1888 was an Ezhava Shiva when questioned about his permission to install an idol. Later, he dedicated temples with mirrors in Murukkumpuzha and Vaikkom, as well as one with a lamp at Karamukku, near Thrissur, to emphasize the idea that true devotion should be of one's own inner worth and wisdom, as well as to give the oppressed and underprivileged a sense of confidence. Later, he made the declaration that we need more schools than temples and got to work. He advocated for equality and global brotherhood and against any form of prejudice based on caste, creed, or religion. Through spiritual instruction, compassion, and peaceful cooperation, he envisioned self-realization. He established the Advaita Ashram in Aluva in 1913, which was devoted to the lofty ideal of Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra. (all humans are equal in the eyes of God). Mahatma Gandhi, and Rabindranath Tagore were both greatly influenced by the teachings of the Guru. He died on September 20, 1928.

Sree Narayana Guru was an accomplished poet who has many devotional and philosophical poems to his credit. His works include, Advaitha Deepika, Anukamba Dasakam, Arivu, Athma Vilasam, Atmopadesaśatakam, Bhadrakaalyashtakam Chijanda Chinthakam, Daiva Chinthanam - 1 & 2, Daiva Dasakam, Jathi

Lakshanam, Jathi Nirnayam, Jeevakarunya Panchakam, Shiva Shathakam, Swanubavageethi (Malayalam),

Guru outlines his egalitarian ideology in his well-known book *Atmopadesasatakam* (One Hundred Verses on Self Instruction). The work centres on the concept of self-realization and is abstract and philosophical in nature. The title of an earlier manuscript, *Atma Bodham*, contained 114 poems. In the pursuit of knowledge, this text explains the Advaita (non-dualist) philosophy. It was initially published in serial form in the *Vivekodayam* monthly under various subheadings before being collected as a book in 1917. This creative poetic utterance, which was written in Malayalam about 1897, unquestionably comes from a spirit that has gained an experienced condition of fundamental wisdom and the quintessence of the Universe. It demonstrates Guru's capacity to perceive the human race with honour and awe, in complete equality and without prejudice. The *Mrugendramukham* metre is used to set the original Malayalam text. This brief passage captures the core of Guru's understanding of knowledge.

The lines of "Asthmopadesa Sathakam" provide direction on moral and spiritual values, highlighting the significance of self-realization, restraint, and compassion for all living things. The teachings are grounded in the Guru's belief in the essential unity of all humanity, regardless of caste, religion, or social status.

The text is known for its simple and direct language, as well as its clear and practical advice on how to live a virtuous and fulfilling life. The Guru draws on a variety of sources, including Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, as well as his own personal insights and experiences, to convey his message of spiritual liberation and universal brotherhood.

Many of the disciples of the Guru, such as Muni Narayana Prasad, Nataraja Guru, and Guru Nitya Chaithanya Yati, have translated and commented on Atmopadesasatakam in English. The passage that follows is taken from Muni Narayana Prasad's translation

## Text

### I

Attaining the core Reality that  
Transcends all ordinary knowledge,  
That irradiates both as the apparent form of the knower  
And all objects external at the same time,  
Requires the turning inwards of all five senses,  
Accompanied by repeated prostrations, reading,  
Chanting and mastering scriptures (like the present one).

### 2

Mental faculties, senses, the physical body,  
The tangible worlds that are many-  
All these, when thought over properly,  
Are seen to be but the various apparent forms  
Divinely assumed by the one Sun  
That shines in the transcendental sky above.  
This realisation would come through  
Intense and contemplative search.

The illusory appearance of the five basic elements  
Such as space that seemingly exists externally,  
Well-pondered over, are to be perceived  
As inseparable from (that Reality),  
As are the rows of waves arising in the ocean  
Inseparably one with it.

Knowledge, the object known,  
The knowledge of being the knower-  
These are but the primeval Greatness in substance.  
Into the unbroken splendour of that Greatness,  
That unconditioned Consciousness-substance,  
One should become merged and remain simply as "That

### **An Outline of the Poem**

Athmopadesa Sathakam was dictated to Sivalinga Swami and Chaithanya Swami in Malayalam at Aruvippuram in 1897. The hundred verses of this poem go not only into an analysis of the self , but also into the different levels at which the self must live out its search – covering items in a graded order of ethics, religion, etc.

The primary theme of the entire poem is covered in the first four verses that were chosen from Athmopathesa Sathakam. It is written in upanishad style. But in this instance, Guru and Sishya

are Athman. (Self is instructing Self). "Arivu" or "I" is equated with self. (awareness or being) The poet is investigating and examining the Self in these verses.

1

In the first stanza, the Guru demonstrates how to reach the fundamental Reality, which surpasses all common understanding. We should have restrained the five senses and focused solely on the inner self while reading, reciting, and memorising texts in order to fully comprehend the core Reality that permeates knowledge and magnificently shines simultaneously within and without the knower. a person who goes beyond empirical knowledge. Empirical knowledge is information gained via first hand observation or personal experience. First, consider this. Observe the stream of consciousness that is your awareness as it moves through you. Declare your status as the knower.

2

When properly understood, the mind, senses, physical body, and other tangible realms are viewed to be nothing more than the various divinely assumed apparent forms that the one Sun, which shines in the transcendent sky above, takes on. To realise this would require a lot of thoughtful consideration and research. The outer world is visible to your eyes because of the sun or another physical source of light. All of your visual perception is merely a result of how light is altered. There must also be a light from within for you to actually become aware of these visual visions and other impressions. Similar to how objects that can be seen are changes in light, what you think of as other people, things, and hobbies are all variations of your consciousness. The sun represents our consciousness in this context. Narayana Guru is transforming the individual's personal experience into a cosmic

phenomenon in the second verse. The sky in which we observe the actual sun is a closed system, but the sky or space to which the Guru draws our attention is endless, the open, empty space in which the Absolute and the space in which it shines are one and the same.

### 3

Using the traditional idea of the five elements—ether, air, fire, water, and earth—Narayana Guru draws our attention to the outside world in the present verse. These are both literal, factual truths and figurative representations of everything we encounter in life. Of all the elements, Earth is the filthiest. The phrase relates to genuine solid foundation and also alludes to the tangible, physical parts of life. Even the term "earthy" or "down to earth" has been used to describe some mindsets. Like earth, water is not rigid and static. It has a flowing nature and takes on the contour of its container. With liquids of a similar composition, it combines with ease. It depicts the physical element water as well as the vital fluids. Our emotional state is sometimes compared to water. Our emotions change like crashing waves, but it has depth like the ocean.

We come across a still more rarefied element when we move from water to fire. In our life, fire is essential. The thermodynamic fire of alchemy transforms the entire cosmos in addition to visible fire, such as a candle's flame or the sun in the firmament. Our lower mind is constantly inquisitive and wants to sample everything, much like a fire destroys everything in its path. The subconscious keeps being shaped into conscious forms by the lower mind. In addition to the heavenly fire known as the warmth of the heart, we also have the gastric fire in our stomachs that helps us digest food.

The element air is the following in the series. We float through an airy sea, just as fish do in water. It transports prana, the breath that sustains life. Air represents our psyche.

It is best to think of the five-element world as a succession of waves of altered states of consciousness that rise one after another from the divine treasure of a vast ocean of cosmic consciousness. The five-element world is experienced inside, but it is recognised as existing outside through the act of superimposition.

#### 4.

Guru links the known thing, the knower's knowledge, and the knower to the primordial Greatness, also known as the fundamental Reality or ultimate consciousness, in this stanza. The ability to experience the unitive wholeness of knowledge, in which the knower, knowledge, and the meaning or object of knowing are not distinct, is necessary for individuals who wish to realise who they truly are. Knowing and knowing are made of the same substance. Guru always refers to the fundamental or ultimate reality as knowledge. The world, according to Guru, is the one abstract Reality, atma or Arivu, that has taken on an apparent concrete shape. This seeming form consists of both physical and psychological components. Those who seek real knowledge should merge into that unconditional Consciousness and remain as the same.

### **Glossary**

Atmopadesham : self instruction

Satakam: hundred poems

Reality: truth

Apparent: clearly visible

Transcends: to go beyond limits

Irradiates : illuminates

Five senses: five sanities

Prostrations: collapse

Tangible: perceptible by touch

Carnal: fleshly

Penetrating: piercing

Search: quest

Basic : Rudimentary

Unrestricted: unhindered

Questions

I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two.

1. Atmopadesasatakam was published in the year-

2. What is the meaning of the title of the poem?

3. What is the metre of the poem?

4. According to Guru attaining the core reality' surpasses

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph.

1 "The knowledge of being the knower." Elucidate.

2. What is Guru's take on five human senses?

III. Answer the following question in an essay

L What is knowledge according to Guru?

2 What is the binding philosophy embedded in Athmopadesa satakam?

3. How can one realise ultimate reality according to Guru?

## INDULEKHA

### O CHANDUMEMON

#### Introduction

Oyyarathu Chandumenon (9 January 1847-7 September 1899) was a prolific Malayalam novelist. He is the author of *Indulekha*, the first major novel in Malayalam, published in 1889. He was born in Oyyarath House, near Thalassery, in Kannur district. After matriculation, he worked as a clerk in Thalassery Court in 1867. When William Logan was working as a sub collector in Thalassery, he had assisted him to write the Malabar Manual. He got promoted to the post of Sub judge during his career. Chandu Menon was also a social reformer. He was a member of the committee constituted to inquire into Marumakkathayam and report on the Malabar Marriages Bill. His observations on matrimonial practices among Nairs that prevailed at the time are of historical importance. He was given the title of Rao Bahadur in 1898 for excellent service. Chandu Menon died on September 7, 1899 at his Oyyarath residence in Thalassery due to cardiac arrest.

*Indulekha*", published in 1889, is considered a pioneering work in the history of modern Malayalam literature and is widely regarded as a classic of Indian literature. The novel tells the story of *Indulekha*, a young, intelligent, and independent-minded woman who lives in a traditional Hindu Nair household in Kerala. She has an English education and is skilled in English pastimes like embroidery, painting, and playing musical instruments. She is pursued by two men: Madhavan, a Nair educated man, and Soori Namboothirippadu, a Brahmin landlord. She is in love with Madhavan, and her family knows their

relationship. The novel is set against the backdrop of the Nair matrilineal system. Matrilineal is the kinship system in which you trace the descent of the family through the female line. So they lived as joint families, which were called Taravadu. Each Taravadu is headed by the eldest male member, called the karanavar. And they practised a form of marriage called sambandham, in which there is no legal validity to the relationship between the husband and the wife, and it is not even considered a ritual marriage. So, there is no obligation for the husband towards his wife and children; they remain within the woman's taravadu, and the father figure is not even present. Indulekha is the granddaughter of Panchu Menon, the Karanvar of the family. Panchu Menon is a very steadfast, short tempered, old man, and everybody in the family is afraid of him. Nobody even dares to speak right in front of him. Indulekha is in love with Madhavan. Madhavan is Panchu Menon's grandnephew. The uncle decides to marry Indulekha off to Suri Nambudiripad in a form of sambandham. There are complications that ultimately are solved, and the heroine and the hero are seen moving to Madras at the end of the novel, which also represents a move from a joint family into a nuclear one. The novel explores Indulekha's struggle to assert her independence and make her own choices, even as she faces pressure from her family and society to conform to traditional gender roles and expectations.

The entire novel is presented from the point of view of an English-educated man who questions the seemingly uncivilised traditional practices from his perspective. Chandumenon also argues for the cause of women's education. The first translation of the novel into English came out in the year 1890, and it was done by John Willoughby Francis Dumergue, the collector of Malabar. R. Leeladevi and Anitha Devassia have also translated the novel into English. The present excerpt is from the translation by Anitha Devassia.

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## **Summary of the text**

This passage is from the novel Indulekha's first chapter. Madhavan, one of the novel's primary heroes, is introduced in this chapter. Beginning with the ramifications of his action against the Karanavar, Panchu Menon's judgement over the schooling of Shinnan, a young kid in the family, Madhavan's brother Chatharamenon reminds him of his actions. Madhavan had asked Panchumenon for permission to bring Shinnan along so that he could teach him English. Panchumenon, however, refused to provide his permission. Madhavan becomes agitated and chooses to act against Karanavar's wishes. Shinnan's mother Kumminiamma opposes him and requests that he take his siblings so that they might be educated in place of Shinnan. Because Panchumenon has a rage, she is terrified of him.

The novelist then describes Madhavan and his situation in life. Madhavan is a brilliant and exceptionally good-looking young man. He is excellent in studies and learned English until his BL degree. He has cleared every exam in very first attempt. He has passed both F A and B A in the first class with Sanskrit as his second language. He is well versed in Sanskrit, too. He won many prizes in various competitions at school and has received several awards and scholarships for higher studies.

The author of the novel then goes on to describe Madhavan's situation in life. Madhavan is a young man of exceptional intelligence and attractive looks. He has a stellar academic record and studied English until earning his BL. Every exam he has taken and passed on the first try. With Sanskrit as his second language, he passed both F A and B A in the first class. He also speaks Sanskrit fluently and becomes a scholar in Sanskrit. He participated in numerous school competitions and won numerous awards, including scholarships for graduate school.

The novelists then go into great length to describe Madhavan's physical splendour. His entire physique is golden in tone. He exercises every day to keep his body in good shape. He is taller than the typical person. He has an angle-length kuduma ( a tuft of hair; men used to wear kudumas in the olden days.). He possesses a well-proportioned body and a glowing face. His body is well-balanced, and his face is radiant. Every European who meets Madhavan is immediately drawn to him by virtue of his attractiveness, and they all quickly become his friends. Madhavan understood the benefit of having people value his name and persona highly when they are still in their youth. Young men are sadly prone to unethical behaviour from the time they are approximately eighteen until they marry and start a family. Madhavan didn't engage in anything of the sort, either as a consequence of rigorous consideration or his innate wisdom. His inherent brightness, cleverness, and virility are therefore beautiful to behold when he is mature.

Madhavan has a superb command of the English language. He was also a prodigy in English sports like cricket and lawn tennis. Madhavan, who has a liking for hunting that he picked up from his father, has tried his hand at it at a very young age. Hunting was Govindapanikkar's passion, and Madhavan has a keen interest in this activity. His kit always includes two or three top-notch rifles, a few handguns, a revolver, and other miscellaneous items. Up until his passion finally found another way, hunting was Madhavan's main form of enjoyment.

The novelist draws our attention to the conversation between Sankara Menon and Madhavan. The mother of Madhavan, Parvathi Amma, also present in this scene. Sankaran Menon questions Madhavan on how he could have handled Karanavan

so impolitely. This helps serve as a reminder of the money he has spent on Madhavan's education. Disappointed, Madhavan responds that he cannot put up with this kind of injustice. He has never made his maternal great uncle, Valiayammaman, put in even a rupee of his own labour. He should use the money that their ancestors had given him for the family's prosperity and growth. Madhavan claims that Kumminiamma and her children have been treated like servants by Panchu Menon and inquires as to why they have been so blatantly ignored. He didn't impart the discipline of an English education to either of her sons. Kalyanikutty's education received none of his attention.

Madhavan declares that he will take Shinnan along with him and ensure that he receives a suitable education. He is reminded by Shakara Menon that the consequences of invoking Karanavar's wrath could be terrible. The moment Madhavan heard his uncle warn about invoking Karanavan's anger, he immediately thought of Indulekha, and his emotions showed on his face. He quickly regains control, though, and responds with a smile that he is not afraid of his uncle's rage when it is unjustified. Shankara Menon blames Madhavan's English education for everything. Parvathi Amma arrives there in the meantime, with Palkanji in a silver dish. She is consulted by Shankara Menon over this matter. She disagrees with Madhavan's wish and asserts that Valiyammaman should make the ultimate decision regarding Shinnan's schooling. She is unwilling to hurt her brother's feelings.

The novel is notable for its realistic portrayal of Kerala society and culture during the late 19th century, and for its nuanced exploration of themes such as caste, gender, and class. It is also recognized for its stylistic innovations, including the use of Malayalam dialogue in a novel for the first time, as well as its use of a third-person narrative voice.

## **Glossary**

Initial : existing or occurring at the beginning

Public sphere : the social space where people can be together when they can freely express themselves

Mulishness: the quality of unreasonably holding on to one's own opinions and ideas: stubbornness

Karanavan : the head of the family

Physique: physical structure

Cast: formed

Decree: order

House : contain

Delineation: description

Encompass: contain

Cascading : coming down in abundance

Kuduma: Malayalam word for a tuft of hair; Men used to wear kudumas in the olden days.

Unethical: improper, unfair

Virility: masculinity

Reiterate: state or say again

Dexterity: mastery

Sundry: various, miscellaneous

Atrocity: cruelty

Demeanour : behaviour, disposition

Pacing: walking back and forth

Insolence: rudeness, audacity

Gulp: swallow

Jeshtan: Malayalam word for an elder brother

## **Questions**

### **I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two.**

1. Who is Shinnan?
2. What is Parvathi Amma's opinion regarding Shinnan's education?
3. Whom does Madhavan first remember when Sankara Menon talks about his uncle's anger and its consequences?
4. Why does Madhavan say that Kummini Amma's family has been mistreated by his family ?
5. What were the circumstances that led to the writing of Indulekha?

### **II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph of not exceeding 100 words**

1. Attempt a character sketch of Madhavan.
2. Why is Madhavan being criticised and by whom?
3. Describe the matrilineal system followed in Kerala.

### **III. Answer the following question in an essay.**

1. How does the novel question the evils of the matrilineal system?
2. Chandumenon emphasises the importance of education in bringing about socio-cultural changes in Kerala. Comment.

## **AYYANKALI**

### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SADHU JANA PARIPALANA SANGAM**

**M NISAR & MEENA KANDASAMY**

Ayyankali, a prominent Dalit leader and social reformer in the Kerala Renaissance, was born at Venganoor, Thiruvananthapuram (28 August 1863–6 June 1941). His paternal name, Ayyan, was then added to the name Kali, which his parents had given him. Later, he rose to prominence as Mahathma Ayyankali, Kerala's revolutionary Dalit leader.

He was born into a 'lower' caste, and both of his parents worked as farm labourers. In those days, the agrarian and social structures were feudal in nature, with a landlord or Janmi controlling substantial tracts of land where landless people laboured and battled to survive. However, because their landlord had given them some land to call their own, the Ayyankali family's living circumstances were a little bit improved.

Ayyankali actively fought for the Dalit community's rights. His well-known "Villuvandi Yathra," which occurred in 1893, was a one-man revolt against the injustices that his people had to endure. Although Dalits were legally permitted to use the public roads, the upper caste Hindus' harsh physical assault discouraged them. Ayyankali rode a Villuvandi down the forbidden lanes, defying the upper caste. (a bullock cart adorned with bells and used by upper caste people). Ayyankali questioned the customs and practises that cast the Dalits as second-class citizens. During

this period, Dalits were denied practically all fundamental rights. Ayyankali demonstrated that even one guy can challenge society as a whole and affect change.

Ayyankali frequently encountered physical conflict from the caste Hindus, to whom he retaliated in the same way. In order to foster cooperation and improve the material situations of sadhu janam, or servile people, he founded the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangam (SJPS) in 1907. Reformers like Sree Narayana Guru and Ayyavu Swamikal served as inspiration for Ayyankali. He campaigned for the cause of the underprivileged classes' education while being uneducated. To the displeasure of the upper caste Hindus who burned the school on fire, Ayyankali enrolled the Dalit student Panchami in a school in Ooruttambalam. The ensuing violence spurred Ayyankali to call for the first-ever farm labourers' strike. The schooling limits had to be lifted, thus the government had to step in when the prolonged strike began to affect the agrarian sector.

He urged Dalit women to stop wearing their stone jewellery and start donning blouses in 1915. One of the most significant anti-caste demonstrations in Kerala, though violent at first, eventually succeeded. He became the first Dalit to be elected to a legislative body when he was nominated to serve in the Srimoolam Praja Sabha in 1912. During his lengthy time in the sabha, he championed the rights of Dalits and served as their mouthpiece. The text given is an extract from M Nisar and Meena Kandasamy's book "Avyankali: A Dalit Leader of Organic Protest". It describes how Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham was founded.

Meena Kandasamy (b 1984, Chennai) is a poet, fiction writer, translator, and activist focussing on issues related to caste and gender. She has acted in the Malayalam feature film,

Oraalppokkam M.Nisar is a teacher of history and a researcher who writes extensively on social issues.

### **Summary of the text**

Ayyankali attempted to expand his sphere of influence after his initial campaign for civil rights, which involved him forcibly invading public venues with members of his caste. In Kerala, a "public sphere" dominated by the middle class of various castes was developing at this time. The public realm was only accessible to educated individuals who knew English. The Dalits simply had knowledge of the numerous production techniques/methods, as far as they were concerned. Such restricted, specialised knowledge was insufficient to function in public. Ayyankali only pushed for Dalit education in this situation because he was well aware of the severe disadvantage that illiteracy offered.

Education was withheld from the Adiyalar (slave-castes) of Kerala since it was a valuable resource. In Keralan society, the sources of knowledge were completely under control. This conservative custom was upheld by the "upper castes and intermediary caste groups." Consequently, individuals in charge of such potent cultural assets grew increasingly aware of the necessity to protect them from outside interference. The middle class of Kerala made full use of colonial modernity's opportunities while simultaneously depriving the Dalits of all human rights. As a result, Kerala's public realm should not be used to problematize or address the problems of the Dalit groups. Ayyankali's valiant efforts were strong enough to end the public's wilful silence regarding the Dalit condition. The primary reason to enter the public sphere was modern education, which colonialism brought about. English education eventually came to be seen as a collection of cultural resources. Despite the fact that colonial modernity produced a liberal environment that supported

reformist ideas where Dalits had no place. As a result, Ayyankali formed the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangam (SJPS) in 1907. The group brought together all the unhappy submissives, even though it was not intended for any one caste. (sadhu janam). As a result, Ayyankali was effective in giving the Dalits a platform for the first time. Ayyankali was not interested in belonging to any religious sect, despite the active attempts to integrate Dalits into their various religions by Christian missionary groups and Brahmanic Hindu "reformist" organisations. He was more interested in the Dalits' economic advancement than in any type of spiritual enlightenment. Ayyankali was affected by Thaikkatt Ayyavu Swami's teaching, but he did not fully enter the spiritual world; rather, he applied the Swami's wisdom to his fight against social injustice and prejudice. He also realised that the Brahma Nishta Sabha and Christianity alone could not address the root of the Dalit issue. He therefore took the effort to address their issues and uphold their rights. Above all, the SJPS helped the downtrodden castes come together and adopt the banner of Sadhu Janam. The SJPS and its initiatives might be seen as the beginning of Kerala's current Dalit consciousness.

Ayyankali was inspired by Sadananda Swami and Sree Narayana Guru (and their actions) in the formation of SJPS. This group was only founded after the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sangam was established. (SNDP Sangam). The SJPS may have taken inspiration from the SNDP, as seen by the similarity between their names, policies, and programmes.

## **Glossary**

Domain: area or territory

Possessed: owned

Acutely : keenly

Illiteracy: inability to read or write

Reactionary: conservative, not ready to change

Intervention: the act of interfering with something

Colonial modernity : the modernity the country experienced during the British rule

Grievance: hardship

Criterion norm : basis, yardstick

Repertoire: collection

Fostered: encouraged the development, nourished

Servile: having the characteristics of slaves

Vigorous: energetic

Sect: group

Spiritual : related more to spirit or soul than to body

Crux: most important point, essence

Solidarity: sense of oneness

Genesis: origin, starting point

## **Question**

### **I. Answer the following questions in a word or two**

1. What is SJPS?

2. Who all influenced the formation of SJPS?

3. Why was education denied to Dalits?
4. Why couldn't Dalits enter the public sphere?
5. Readings on Kerala
6. Who are "Sadhu Janam"?

**II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph.**

1. Describe the circumstances that led to the formation of SJPS
2. Write about Kerala's public sphere during the early 20th century.
3. Why did colonial modernity never reach beyond Kerala's middle class? 4. Why were Ayyankali's objectives for SJPS more material than spiritual?
4. How did the upper class use education as a tool to keep Dalits off the public sphere?

**III. Answer the following questions in an essay.**

1. Write about education's role in bringing about a socio-cultural change.
2. How and why did SJPS labour to organise the voiceless and marginalised people?

## **NO, NOT A SINGLE LETTER IS SEEN**

**POYKAYIL APPACHAN**

### **Introduction**

Poykayil Appachan, a revolutionary Dalit leader and social reformer, was born in Eraviperoor, close to Thiruvalla, on February 17, 1879, and died there on June 29, 1939. When he joined the Marthoma Church, he changed his name from Komaran to Yohannan. He became a pastor and had a solid knowledge of the Bible. He came to understand that Dalits were still marginalised and subject to prejudice by the church even after conversion. By founding the Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha (PRDS), of which he claimed before a colonial court that he was the God, he worked for the equality and liberty of all Dalit groups. In several prathyaksha raksha meetings, he travelled the country spreading the gospel of his novel ideology. His talks and music attracted attendees to the sessions. He overcame violent opposition and survived attempts on his life, and others who came to hear him were scared away by attempts to interrupt gatherings. In one of the sessions, he burned a Bible and warned attendees that both Hinduism and Christianity would fail the Dalit cause. The PRDS maintained that salvation should be evident right away rather than being something that happens after death.

He promoted legislative actions in support of Dalits when nominated to Sree Moolam Praja Sabha in 1921 and 1931. He constructed spinning mills, the first English-medium school for the Dalit community, and employment opportunities for Dalits. He was a part of the Ayyankali-founded Sadhu Jana Paripalana

Sangam as well. Poykayil Appachan contributed to the development of Kerala modernity with other figures from the renaissance such as Sree Narayana Guru, Chattambi Swamikal, Thaicaud Ayya Guru, Ayya Vaikundhar Ayyankali, Sahodaran Ayyappan, Chavara Achan, and Vakkom Maulavi. He was a passionate writer who exposed the flaws in society through his writing.

His poems discuss the injustices and brutality experienced by the poor and underprivileged. At the legendary Raksha Nirnaya Yogam conducted in Kulathoor Kunnu in 1910, the poem "No, Not a single letter is seen" was sung. When asked to speak about the history of members of his race, he discusses the guilty silence of history. He believes it is his obligation to talk about his people because the underprivileged don't have a place in history books. Dr. Ajay S. Sekher, a writer and activist who teaches English at Kalady's Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, has translated the poem.

## TEXT

No, not a single letter is seen

On my race

So many histories are seen

On so many races

Scrutinize each one of them

The whole histories of the world

Not a single letter is seen

On my race

There was no one on this earth

To write the history Of my race in the olden days

What a pity!

Think of it

Regret fills within

Let me add something

In my own melody

The story of

A people who lived in Kerala

Since the ancient times

And how they became demons

No shame have I

To say the faults of my caste

Though all blame me

A cursed offspring on earth

How is it possible

That all blame us

Till the end

---

Of earth and sky

How can God

Who shaped everything

Allow this to happen

On earth today?

### **Summary of the poem**

Poikayil Appachan wrote this poem as a way of expressing his sorrow over the fact that his race has never been mentioned in any historical accounts. World history discusses the diversity of races in the world, how each race has either triumphed or fallen and how history has continuously attempted to neglect or deliberately erased the story of the oppressed. However, the poet acknowledges that no one has written about his race since the ancient era. He is forced to write anything in his own melody out of regret and grief. He starts off by telling the tale of a group of individuals who have long since resided in Kerala. They received the worst treatment out of all the castes. For thousands of years, Dalits have been kept deprived of power, property, and position. It was propounded that “god created this hierarchy”, so that Dalits may not rebel against this social order. Thousands of Dalits have continued to endure this injustice. Poikayil Appachen belonged to the marginalised group and had to suffer bitter humiliation and slavery from the people of the upper caste. He accepted Christianity to escape from this caste system. But he realised that the Christian community in Kerala would not accept him because he was a Dalit and he would forever be known only by this identity.

However, he adamantly declares in the following lines that he is not ashamed of his people's faults and shortcomings. They were condemned to blabber on earth forever and given the blame for everything. In his final line, the poet expresses his confusion over why God, who gave everything form and existence, let everyone continue blaming his people forever. If they are treated in this way, there will be divine justice on the day of judgment.

The well-known Dalit poet and critic Sarankumar Limbale describes Dalit literature as works about Dalits written by Dalits with a Dalit Consciousness. The revolutionary mind-set associated with struggle is referred to as "Dalit Consciousness" in Dalit literature. The goal of Dalit literature is to make Dalit society aware of its servitude. As a dalit poet, Poykayil Appachan recognises the inhumane caste discrimination against his race and has shown the courage to combat it through his songs, poetry, and acts.

## **Glossary**

Scrutinize: carefully analyse, inspect

Regret: feeling of sadness or disappointment, sorrow

Demon: evil spirit, devil

Shame: painful feeling of humiliation, disgrace

Cursed: doomed

Offspring: children, descendant

## **Questions**

### **1. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two.**

1. Why does the poem scrutinise the histories of the world? What does the title of the poem mean?
2. What strikes the poet as pitiable?
3. What is the poem's take on God?

### **II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph.**

1. What does the poet want to write about?
2. Why was the history of his race never written?
3. Why does regret fill the insides of the poet?
4. What is the world's attitude to the people of his race?

### **III. Answer the following questions in an essay.**

1. Describe how the poem criticises written histories.
2. "It was caste that cast the major hurdle in Kerala's walk to modernity". Comment.

## **VAKKOM MOULAVI: MY GRANDFATHER, THE REBEL**

**SABIN IQBAL**

### **Introduction**

It is widely believed that Vakkom Abdul Khadir Moulavi (28 December 1873–31 October 1922) is the father of Kerala's Islamic Renaissance. Abdul Khadir, who was raised in a renowned and wealthy family of traders, was taught by eminent academics, from whom he absorbed the spirit of learning. He was also the founder and publisher of the regional daily *Swadeshabhimani*, as well as an author, social reformer, religious scholar, and liberation warrior. According to K M Seethi, Director of IUCSSRE at MG University in Kerala, the Muslim reform movement in Kerala, led by Vakkom Moulavi, did not merely seek a "return to the Islamic pristine purity," as some have claimed; rather, it was forward-looking and constantly engaged with the challenges posed by modernity.. On January 19, 1905, Vakkom Moulavi started the weekly journal *Swadeshabhimani* to lead the battle against corruption and to fight for the citizens of Travancore's democratic rights. He was able to import the most modern automatic flatbed printing press at the time, straight from England. The British East India Company at the time directly controlled the British colony of Anjuthengu (Anglican: Anjengo), where the press was based. The first newspaper in Kerala to establish contact with Reuters in London was Moulavi's *Swadeshabhimani*. Because of the harsh criticism that its editor K Ramakrishna Pillai had unleashed, the British government seized the newspaper and the press in 1910. As the business's owner, Moulavi had granted the editor complete discretion in the

content selection and release. He himself was a journalist and author of the highest calibre. However, society did not pay much attention to Moulavi's accomplishments. In the essay "Vakkom Moulavi: My Grandfather, the Rebel", his grandson Sabin Iqbal, states that "Moulavi had a strong belief in the crucial role of the media in social reformation and in achieving and protecting civil rights and liberty."

Sabin Iqbal is a well-established Bangalore-based journalist and author of the critically acclaimed novels *The Cliffhangers* and *Shamal Days*. He has worked in India and the Middle East as a journalist. He was the editorial director of Kochi-Muziris Biennale, senior editor at Tehelka and senior assistant editor at Business India. This autobiographical essay was published in the Open magazine Freedom issue, 2019.

### **Summary of the text**

Iqbal was passing through Palayam, the centre of the city, where a church, mosque, and temple are situated adjacent to one another, on a rainy afternoon in July in Thiruvananthapuram. He glanced to the other side as he passed the Martyrs' Column. whenever he is in this area of the city, he always does. A granite plaque depicting the front page of the *Swadeshabhimani* newspaper, which was seized by the then-king of Travancore in 1910, is located next to the statue of *Swadeshabhimani K Ramakrishna Pillai*. The owner of the illustrious newspaper, Vakkom Abdul Khadir Moulavi, his grandfather, who granted his editor unprecedented and unrestricted freedom to run the paper as a weapon to combat corruption and nepotism, which were common in those days, is regrettably side-tracked in the act of remembrance.

“According to renowned Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiong'o, colonisers "replaced memory" by removing a people's traditional memory and substituting their own. By changing the names of streets, roads, airports, railway stations, cities, and towns, people are eliminating memories connected to those places and forming new memories in their place. According to Thiong'o, we use our memories of the past to plan for the future in the present. Omission can also be used as a powerful tool to change the narrative”. “Since I was a young child, I've had a sneaking suspicion that the textbook picture of the elderly, bearded, and conventional "moulavi" was not my grandfather”. He added.

The man depicted in the textbooks did not match the family legends and numerous childhood recollections he had heard. Numerous letters from him and his family claiming that Vakkom Moulavi was not the person in the pictures (there were two or three distinct pictures) were sent to government agencies, but no one listened. All they needed was a photo that resembled a "moulavi." The images were of an elderly man, but his grandfather passed away at the age of 58, but who cares about the facts as long as it appears like a "moulavi"? Looking at the blurry, inadequately reproduced portrait in our social studies text, his sister and he used to claim that this man was not their grandfather. Their father, the youngest son of Moulavi, had no recollection of his father, who had died when he was just a toddler. The family therefore felt compelled to swap out the portrait of the "unknown moulavi" for one of Vakkom Moulavi in order to avoid doing a disservice to a man who had spent his life's work and everything that was left of his legacy to improving society and his own community. The problem, though, was that there wasn't a single picture of him with any of his ten children or grandchildren. Iqbal's paternal cousin AK Suhair, who serves as the chairman of the Vakkom Moulavi Foundation Trust, accepted the task as a challenge and a purpose. After much research and speaking with

people all around the state, he found what may be the sole known photograph of Vakkom Moulavi. (1873. 1932).

The picture was restored. They then had to appropriate the man's legacy and body of work. The main categories of their grandfather's reformation work are social and religious/communitarian. And he used journalism as a means of outreach. In his book "Islamic Reform and Colonial Discourse on Modern India: Socio-political and Religious Thought of Vakkom Moulavi", Jose Abraham Says, "Vakkom Moulavi is known as the 'father' of the Muslim socio religious reform movement in Kerala. He effectively used communication networks to promote his ideas of patriotism, modern education and religious reform. The son of an educated and wealthy merchant, he received a well-rounded education, characteristic of the children belonging to the 'noble' (ashraf) class. Like his contemporaries, he was shaped by discourse on modernity, nationalism, and socio religious reform movements in Kerala, North India and Egypt, spearheaded by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida through the periodical al-Manar. He was a staunch patriot and began his career as a journalist. In 1905, he started a Malayalam newspaper named Swadeshabhimani (patriot) to educate people about their rights and responsibilities and campaign for a responsible government committed to public welfare in Travancore. He used his journals—two in Malayalam (Muslim in 1906 and Deepika in 031) and one in Arabic- Malayalam (al-Islam in 1918)—to motivate Muslims to pursue modern education and to bring them to the forefront of the nationalist movement. He also initiated a religious reform movement among Mappilas condemning popular religion rejecting the authority of ulama."

Iqbal has always been astounded by how someone who has never left Kerala could have such a progressive viewpoint on the world and a futuristic and modern outlook. The Kerala Muslim orthodox

had never taken kindly to his beliefs or ideals. It's understandable why he continues to irritate them. Maulavi Abdul Khadir did not accept the puritanical excesses, petty intolerance, and violent methods of enforcement frequently associated with Mohammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and his movement, according to MA Shakoor, Senior Assistant Editor of Dawn and later London Correspondent of Pakistan Times.

On the other hand, he supported a secular society and made a concerted effort to reform Kerala's Muslim population since he was aware that India as a nation could not advance without the development and reform of its minority communities. Vakkom Moulavi's narrative needs to be presented differently in this day and age, when religious intolerance and jingoism have turned to violent and bizarre ways of expressing themselves, where a moulavi should absolutely be considered "an enemy within" and a "patriot Muslim" is an oxymoron. He was an exceptional individual who envisioned a secular, united India where people of all faiths coexisted in peace. Additionally, he had dreams in which his community was free of all puritanical excesses, intolerance, and superstition. He once stated in a main article for his Al Muslim magazine titled "Hindu-Muslim Unity " that Muslims should refrain from killing cows and buffaloes even during Eid el Ad'ah if it offends the Hindus' religious sensibilities! Imagine a Muslim scholar from a remote area of the south pushing his own people to contribute to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity 100 years ago. He also possessed a keen intellect. He was raised in a rich household and received specialised language and academic training from chosen academics in the former princely state of Travancore. He was able to establish a national perspective and recognise the value of education for social progress because of his extensive reading and thirst for information. He kept up with global events, whether they had to do with Islam, science, or geopolitics, through foreign periodicals and books. In contrast to

most religious experts, he supported science education and carried books on film and photography. He thought they were strong mediums.

Iqbal and his siblings, his youngest son's children, were constantly told as children about their grandfather's steadfast conviction in social harmony and humanity as well as how he had opposed and written against the absolute folly and incorrect teachings of the clergy. "Early in life, our parents instilled in us the importance of love for one another, religious harmony, and humanity. These were the principles instilled in my father's Blood. Nearly all of my uncles, aunts, and cousins share the same sentiment. Nearly everyone here enjoys reading, writing, and teaching. My earliest memories are of my father and my uncles talking about politics, philosophy, and literature during supper. Burke, Koestler, and Russell were as common as stew, appam, and dosa". He remembers. In his edited book *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook*, academic Charles Kurzman recognized Vakkom Moulavi as one of the 52 intellectuals from throughout the world who made up the early modernist Islamic movement. The entry on Vakkom Moulavi reads: 'He was indefatigable in organising local Muslim organisations dedicated to secular education, including women's education.'

Vakkom Moulavi issued his own call for a return to what he described as authentic Islam, which emphasised the importance of the Quran and Tawhid (unity), reinterpreted in the context of contemporary circumstances. He was influenced by Mohammed Abduh, Mohammed Rashid Rida's *Journal al-Manar*, and reformers of earlier centuries. The overcoming of ignorance, taqlid (limitations of earlier scholars), saint veneration, and other common religious practices were all part of this homecoming.' It makes sense why the popular clergy still finds him difficult to accept. He had a passionately pounding patriotic heart by the time

he was 30. He thought that the media had a crucial part in bringing about social change as well as in securing and defending civic rights and freedoms.

He challenged the "divinity" of the king and defended the rights of the populace as citizens rather than merely as "subjects" to the king.

In order to empower the people of Travancore, Vakkom Moulavi founded Swadeshabhimani as a weekly in 1905. In doing so, he was promoting his countrymen's democratic rights at a period when civil rights campaigns had not yet gained traction throughout India. At a time when an acre of land in Thiruvananthapuram could be purchased for Rs 100, he imported an automatic flatbed printing machine from England through Pierce Leslie more than a century ago for Rs 12,000!. The fact that The Swadeshabhimani was the first newspaper in Kerala to subscribe to the Reuters news agency demonstrates how up to date Vakkom Moulavi was on industrial developments. He gave both the printing press and the journal the name "Swadeshabhimani" because his actions were characterised by patriotism rather than commercial concerns. He was fully aware that running a newspaper was a less-than-profitable endeavor, and when some of his relatives tried to talk him out of starting Swadeshabhimani, he responded, "I am not a businessman. With the journal, I hope to promote social responsibility and patriotism. The ultimate benefit I need is not money. I am confident that my country will achieve its goals. That is enough for me". He also had a strong will. When he made the decision to employ journalism for the welfare and prosperity of the people, he was fully aware that it would not be an easy assignment. One of the goals of Swadeshabhimani was to not "conceal any public grievances out of fear of harm that may come to us." The editor of Swadeshabhimani, CP Govinda Pillai, stated in the editorial of

the publication's inaugural issue published on January 19th, 1905, "We don't assert that Swadeshabhimani would accomplish big things for the Muslim Readings on Kerala community and other communities, who wish their well-being. Our fundamental goal is to promote public welfare and prosperity through Swadeshabhimani's efforts. We shall do everything possible to accomplish this goal. We will not conceal any public grievances fearing danger that may happen to us."

Jose Abraham writes: "When people's rights and privilege were not respected by state bureaucrats, no one dared to raise voice against it and bring it to the attention of the Maharaja. Moreover, no journals in Travancore were ready to carry out this challenging responsibility". This was the gap that Swadesabhimani promised to fill. By risking all and consistently upholding its beliefs, editorials and columns have highlighted people's rights when they were under attack or denied. In light of Travancore's political and social institutions at the start of the 20th century, Swadeshabhimani served as a forum for citizens to voice their complaints to the government and, in certain cases, to question its accountability. Under the masthead of Swadeshabhimani, he published, "Fear, crookedness, and greed will not build a country," and he engaged in a kind of journalism that had never before been attempted in India, particularly in Travancore. Influential nationalist publications like Allahabad's Leader (1909) and Bombay's Chronicle (1910) only started running after Swadeshabhimani was crushed, the press was seized, and its editor Ramakrishna Pillai was exiled by royal order.

Today, everyone immediately thinks about K Ramakrishna Pillai when we talk of Swadeshabhimani. Ramakrishna Pillai is not where Vakkom Moulavi or Swadeshabhimani's narrative begins

or ends. Both individuals had their own stories and were distinctive journalists. Vakkom Moulavi's journalistic efforts, both before and after his association with Ramakrishna Pillai, have not received the recognition they deserve, whether it be due to the peculiarities of history or narratives that reinvent history. Ramakrishna Pillai, who was the newspaper's second editor at the time he made the decision to start the weekly, had not yet been introduced to him. Vakkom Moulavi had the skills and the ability to make Swadeshabhimani a leader in political journalism, but he had other obligations.

Maulavi Abdul Khadir sought an editor for "The Patriot" who would live up to the high standard of integrity, courage, and political principles he had set for his journal. MA Shakoor writes: "The dual task of running 'The Patriot' (Swadeshabhimani) and leading the Muslim reformist movement at the same time soon proved unmanageable. He was looking for a young journalist who would adhere to his ideas without wavering, and he found that in Ramakrishna Pillai. Ramakrishna Pillai shared the same luck in matching up with the ideal colleague. Ramakrishna Pillai's integrity, patriotism, and political principles aligned with those of Maulavi Abdul Khadir, who had implicit faith in them. Maulavi Abdul Khadir never felt the need to alter his journal's editorial policies during its stormy tenure in order to maintain it on the path he had mapped out for it. This political partnership, which was started in 1906 by two young radical Democrats, represents a wonderful period in Kerala's political history.

"Crisis brings a man's genuine character to the surface. We, his family, are proud of what he did when he was faced with adversity in the form of a royal decree to shut down the press". Iqbal says. Vakkom Moulavi reportedly refused to apologise for what he stood for and declared that he did not want the press without the editor when the king of Travancore, on the Dewan's advice,

repressed Swadeshabhimani, confiscated the press, and sent the editor into exile. Despite suffering a significant financial loss as a result of losing the press, he continued to publish Deepika and Al Islam in an effort to "clean up" the deeply superstitious Muslim community and to make the argument for the necessity of educating Muslim women.

Jose Abraham opines in " Islamic Reform and Colonial Discourse on Modern India," "While Ramakrishna Pilla, editor of Swadeshabhimani, remains a hero today, it is highly unfortunate that Vakkom Moulavi, who founded the newspaper, has not been given his due place and recognition in the journalistic history of Kerala."

Vakkom Moulavi was a shining example of a journalist and media entrepreneur whose knees did not jerk nor did his spine bend in submission to the powers that be but who had the cold-blooded courage to combat widespread bureaucratic corruption and defend the democratic rights of the populace in his own right and by virtue of his sharp and incisive writing. Additionally, he spent practically all of his fortune for the benefit of society and his community without firing from anyone else's shoulder. Vakkom Moulavi's marginalisation or relegation to a single column in the history of Kerala's social reformation as a purely religious reformer is unjust. In Kerala society, he was the one who planted the first seeds of democracy and civil liberties.

" Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie rightly says, "power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person". If we do not tell his story honestly, we will be doing a grave injustice to Vakkom Moulavi and his visionary journalistic endeavours. He was not only a kind newspaper owner; he was also a fearless journalist, well-read, with felicity of language, moral honesty, and an intent to spend

even his last penny for its cause. He was in debt when he passed away at the comparatively early age of 58. Vakkom Moulavi's story is not a appendix to anyone else's story and should not be". Iqbal added. The essay concluded by describing what the author saw in Thiruvananthapuram that July afternoon when it was pouring hard. Near the monument of K. Ramakrishna Pillai, a granite plaque recognizing Swadeshabhimani had fallen from the wall.

## **Glossary**

Omission: deletion

Confiscated: taken or seized with authority

Unprecedented: never done or known before

Nepotism: the practice among those with power of favouring relatives or friends, especially by giving them jobs/offers

Bust: sculpture or statue of a person's head, shoulders and chest

## **Questions**

**I Answer the following questions in a sentence or two.**

1. Who is the founder and publisher of Swadeshabhimani newspaper?
2. Who was the first editor of Swadeshabhimani?
3. Who talked about the idea of "replacing memory"?

**II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph**

- 1 Why is Vakkom Moulavi called a rebel?
- 2 What is Vakkom Moulavi's contribution to Kerala's social milieu?

**III. Answer the following questions in an essay.**

1. Why is Vakkom Moulavi considered as the leader of Islamic Renaissance in Kerala?
2. What are Vakkom Moulavi's journalistic contributions to the cultural space of Kerala?

## **MODULE 3**

### **STIMULATION**

#### **DAUGHTER OF HUMANITY (1960)**

**Lalithambika Antharjanam**

#### **LALITHAMBIKA ANTHARJANAM (1909 – 1987)**

Lalithambika Antharjanam is a Malayalam novelist, social activist and writer. "Antharjanam" is a Namboodiri caste name. Literally, it refers to "one who is inside." A cognate is "akathullol," which means "one who is inside," in its gendered feminine form. Lalithambika was born in 1909 to a traditional Namboodiri household in Kottavattom in Kollam, Kerala. Unlike many Naboodiri girls of her generation, her parents especially, her progressive father (Kottavattath Damodaran), allowed her to secure an informal primary education along with her brothers. Lalithambika spent more than 40 years, from the late 1930s to the 1970s, drawing with tremendous compassion and unrestricted imagination largely of this women's world. By exposing the heinous injustices experienced by Namboodiri women in Kerala, Lalithambika's stories exposed the harmful patriarchal structures and made them answerable for the sexism of women throughout history.

The short story was Lalithambika's form of choice because, in her words, it is "the art form best adapted to the forceful portrayal of a total union of thought and emotion". Some of her major themes

are the plights of antharjanams, the freedom struggle and the dilemmas of a woman writer.

Her published works include nine volumes of short stories, six collections of poems, two children's books, and a novel, *Agnisakshi* (1976). Her autobiography, *Aathmakadhakkoru Aamukham (An Introduction to Autobiography)*, is also regarded as a significant work in Malayalam literature.

In 1976, she won the State's prestigious Vaylar Award, and the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award and the Kendra Sahitya Award for her one and only novel, *Agnisakshi* in 1977.

*Cast Me Out if You Will, On The Far Side Of Memory* etc are some of the famous works written by her.

## INTRODUCTION

The prescribed story "Daughter of Humanity" is the translation of the short story *Manushyaputri*. "Daughter of Humanity" was published in an anthology titled *Cast Me Out If You Will* in 2000. The story represents a period of transition in the state's social history. It was written after the communist government enacted land reforms in 1959, effectively ending the state's Janmi system. Though the reforms freed thousands from bonded labour, they had some unexpected and unnoticed consequences, such as the one that serves as the story's theme. In the story, she raises the difficult question of what would happen to the women in the Namboodiri households that were breaking up. A Namboodiri woman (Kunhathol Amma) visits a minister with a small prayer. For him, it is a startling realisation. Gita Krishnan Kutty translated "Manushyaputhri" into English as "Daughter of Humanity."

## **OUTLINE OF THE STORY**

The protagonist of the story is Govindankutty. He is a busy government officer. His mother's name is Lakshmi. Another important character is Kunhathol Amma. The story centres around these three characters.

In the beginning of the story, we see a very busy government officer with tight schedules and meetings. He was completely busy in the sense that he could have food, take a bath and so on. He was suffering from a headache as well. It is sad that he did not get time to spend quality time with his new born baby. Whatever his condition is, he met the visitors with a smile but he showers all his anger on his secretary.

That day an old lady was there to meet him. When the secretary informs about the last visitor, he shouts at him but his anger showers down when the secretary informs him that the old lady was waiting for him in the morning without having food.

He shouts at the secretary asking if he wants to kill him. The lady entered and she wore the attire of the eighteenth century. She covered herself with a dhoti and had an umbrella and a dangling earring. Along with her, there was a boy of seven years old.

The leader was perplexed. There was something familiar about the woman, some resemblance that brought back memories, but he wasn't sure. He abruptly rose from his seat. The visitor remained silent; her gaze fixed on the ground. He spoke gently, trying not to show his impatience.

The visitor raised her head. The dhoti that had been covering her head slid down, allowing him to see her face. She was trembling and appeared confused and scared. Her eyes welled up with tears.

She said quietly, "I don't want to sit down, Govindan Kutty. I'll leave now. I simply wanted to catch a glimpse of you."

She evidently found it difficult to speak. He suddenly noticed a familiar scar on her forehead, caused by years of daily obeisance to the rising sun, and the mark left on her wrists by bell metal bangles. He eventually realised it was Kunhathol Amma.

They locked their gazes on each other. He could see the intensity of a mother who had been separated from her son for a long time in her eyes. It seemed to express nothing more than faith in the reality and gentleness of love. It was as if his entire life was playing out in front of him at that moment.

In the presence of that old woman, whom he had previously attempted to turn away, the party leader forgot his duties. A wave of guilt and sorrow washed over him. He felt himself shrink in front of her, this woman who had suffered so much. It also took him back to his childhood. His father had died when he was a child, and his uncles had abandoned the widow and their children. His mother, Lakshmi, struggled to keep them from starving. She wanted to educate him, set him up with a good life but she was not able to manage it. Since he was a bright child he could manage his studies with the help of Kunhathol Amma. She asked him to collect flowers for her prayers every day and she gave him money for that work. Every morning, he plucked flowers for her and reached the *illam* (house) almost by the time he was hungry.

The only times he had enough to eat were when Kunhathol combined curd and mango pickle with rice, rolled it into balls, and handed them to him.

When Kunhathol's mother cried, he would comfort her by telling her that he would bring fame and wealth when he grew up. This made Kunhathol's voice sweeter than the delectable food. His

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mother was not around to observe the changes he made to his home. As a child, Kunhathol was his only refuge following the passing of his mother. She cared for him, often gave him money and always kept sweets aside for him from the offerings to the deity. She cared for every destitute irrespective of the religions they belonged to. When Govindan Kutty finished the school and left the village, he did not think it important to bid farewell to Kunhathol Amma.

Later, as he grew older and began to study extensively, he learned a lot about caste conflicts and realised that feelings of affection, a sense of debt, or appreciation were wrong and fake.

Kunhathol's predictions came true with the youthful Govindan Kutty. He quickly rose to prominence in the public eye and gained the respect of many organisations. He started to forget his native village as the years went by. Significant changes occurred in the village as well.

Govindankutty noticed the Mana (where Kunhathol Amma provided food) was locked, the tank was full, and the gate was prepared to fall when he had just crossed the village to attend a function. He was accompanied by a guy who claimed that charity had caused the people to lose everything. They borrowed money to feed 500 family members during the rituals after the family head passed away out of charitable intentions. They must sell their property in order to pay this. The second son gave up on finding a career, joined a political party, and is currently lazing around while the older son suffers from rheumatoid arthritis.

Due to the compassion of an earlier tenant, Kunhathol relocated to a tiny house nearby with his son Unni and his family and now resides there. He was eager to speak with Kunhathol and learn more about all of her business. The act of fasting did not bother

Kunhathol much. She observes fasts on Monday, Ekadhasi, and Pradoksham. Every month, she would observe a 20 or 21 day fast. Even during those days of fasting, she provided food for everyone else. The locals refer to her as the goddess who resides at the top of the mountain and the daughter of the mountain, respectively.

He regains consciousness when the horn sounds. The secretaries were peering in and both were silent until, at that precise moment, their eyes locked. Kunhathol apologises for disturbing him and expresses her happiness that Unni has found some good fortune. She claims that Unni has been bedridden for more than eight years and that the family has been completely destroyed, and that his brother has given up hope of finding employment and joined an anti-political party. She also has a daughter who is single. And they advised me to meet Govindankutty so that he might help me with all of my troubles.

She continues, "If you could not do anything about it, at least help in admitting unni's son to a school so that at least he will have meals in the middle of the day," and she begs Guruvayurappa to assist and save her.

Now Govindankutty apologises and claims that we are to blame for your current state of affairs. During our times of hunger, we were quite aware of the food we consumed, but we never noticed the hands who served it to us. That is your devotion for Kunjathalamal—you don't even express hatred towards us despite everything that has happened. I want to ask you to be the mother this motherless Govindankutty needs—be the same mother you are. After letting all of his emotions and tears out, he contacts his secretary to ask her to prepare the car and find a seat for Kunhathol before revealing that he is the son of humanity.

## MAJOR THEMES

Plight of Namboodiri women

Motherhood

Decline of power of landlords (*Janmis*)

Poverty

## GLOSSARY:

Aghast : filled with horror or shock

Anteroom : an antechamber, typically serving as a waiting room.

Idler : a person who avoids work or spends time aimlessly or lazily.

Morsel : a small piece or amount of food; a mouthful.

Obeisance : deferential respect

Brittle : hard but liable to break easily

Benediction : the utterance of a blessing, especially at the end of a religious service.

Unstinted : given without restraint; liberal

Granary : a storehouse for grains

Fortress : a military stronghold, especially a strong fortified town.

Curse : a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something.

Shirk : avoid or neglect (a duty or responsibility)

## **QUESTIONS**

### **I. Answer the following in a sentence or two:**

1. Who is the daughter of humanity in the story?
2. “Do you want to kill me? Tell her that I am a human.” Who said this?
3. “Poverty is a terrible thing.” Who said this?
4. Whose voice was sweeter than delicious food for Govindan Kutty?

### **II. Answer each of the following in a paragraph:**

1. Kunhathol Amma looked like an odd creature. Why?
2. “We starve because we do not have enough to eat. Why do you starve?” What made Lakshmi utter these words?
3. “Govindan Kutty is a sinner”, what made him think like this?
4. Character of Kunhathol Amma.

### **III. Answer each of the following in an essay:**

1. “Illam was ruined by its own generosity”. Elucidate this in the light of 1959 land ceiling laws.
2. Why did Govindan Kutty seek refuge in the household of Kunhathol Amma? How did she help him?
3. “Her charity had borne no fruit. The fortress of the aristocracy lay shattered at his feet.” Describe Kunhathol Amma’s destiny in light of the socio-economic scenario of Kerala of 1959.

## **KUTTIPURAM BRIDGE (1954)**

**Edasseri**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

#### **EDASSERI GOVINDAN NAIR (1906-1974)**

Edasseri is a famous modernist Indian poet and playwright of Malayalam literature. He is known as one of the major poets of Malayalam literature. He was the recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award for Poetry in 1969. He was also the recipient of Asan Smaraka Kavitha Puraskaram which was awarded posthumously in 1979. He did not receive formal education due to the death of his father in 1921 when he was only fifteen years old and started his career early as an assistant to a relative, who worked in Alappuzha.

However, he compensated for the lack of formal education with hard work with voracious reading, learning Sanskrit and English on his own, seeking help from his friends, constantly engaging in debates on literature, criticism, science, astronomy, and even astrology. In early 1930, he moved to Ponnani. Edasseri was associated with various literary and cultural forums. He was influenced by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and the national Movement and also by the socialist ideals. Edasseri's works include nineteen books and over three hundred poems in ten anthologies, six books of plays and a collection of essays. He was among the poets who changed the romantic traits of Malayalam poetry to realism.

His narrative style, as shown in his poems such as *Alakavali* (*Ornations*) *Puthankalavum Arivalum Poothapattum* (*New Pot and Sickle*), *Panimudakkam*, *Kalyana Pudava*, *Karutha Chettichikal* (*Dark Nomad Women*) and *Kavile Pattu* (*Song of the Grove*), was reported to reflect strong humanism.

His other major collection of poetry includes *Laghu Ganangal* (*Simple Songs*), *Thathwa Shastrangal Urangumbol* (*As Philosophies Sleep*), *Oru Pidi Nellikka* (*A Handful of Gooseberries*), *Thrividikramannu Munnil* (*In front of Thrividikrama*), *Malayalathinte Priya Kavithakal* (*Endearing Poems of Malayalam*) etc.

His important plays are *Noolamala* (*The Entanglement*), *Kootu Krishi* (*Co-operative Farming*), *Kaliyum Chiriyum* (*Fun and Laughter*), *Jarasnadhanante Puthri* (*Daughter of Jarasandhan*) etc.

His other books are *Edasseriyyude Prabandhangal* (*Essays of Edasseri*), and *Edasseriyyude Cherukathakal* (*Short Stories of Edasseri*).

## (POEM)

### KUTTIPURAM BRIDGE

[I have known about the Kuttipuram ferry from my childhood. This poem was born out of mixed feelings I experienced when I crossed the bridge recently over this river]

Upon the bridge built recently  
at a cost of twenty-three lakhs,  
I stand proud. My eyes fixed  
on the dwindling Perar below.

This is the river  
On whose sandy shores I once played  
Endless games of “poothankol”.  
The river in whose cool waves

I dipped for daily prayers!  
Now I stand proud and tall.  
Level with the kingfisher,  
The sparrow and the crane that once flew over there.

My eyes were fixed on the Perar below.  
Here is the river bank  
That would be washed away  
The river was in spate.

When no boat would venture out,  
Or kite dare fly across,  
O Nila! You will swell again  
And inundate your banks.

But I can't help laughing  
At the thought of you crawling

Under the bridge now, doing a tame Natta.

Yet as I stand tall. My foot firm

On this mammoth human achievement.

There wells up in mind

A dull ache I cannot fathom

Standing upon this bridge, now

Truly the threshold of a new world

I caress in my mind the rustic vista

That fades away day by day

Of charming Gramalakshmi

My playmate from the day of my birth,

Now receding far, far away

And ready to bid the final adieu.

The wide expanse of paddy fields.

Where green and yellow playfully intermingle.

Grove with houses

Flanked by fruit-bearing trees.

Slopes covered

With flowers of myriad hues.  
Festivals in the kavus  
Marked by elegant lamps and the pipal tree  
With its stone-encircled base.

The songs of ploughman during the day  
And the fearsome silence of the night-  
All these are moving slowly away  
Yielding to stone

Soot, cement, steel  
Reigning over the flowers.  
Howling and surging ahead  
Are tyre and petrol, day and night.

Walls spring up everywhere  
Jostling for space left and right.  
Everywhere the rough day is raucous  
As it is a rough night, too.

Everywhere noises quickening.  
Everywhere, movements quickening.  
Strangers brawling, locking horns.  
No not strangers, neighbours all.

Strangers are Neighbours!  
And Neighbours Total strangers!  
“Malloorkayam” shall be mere name from now on  
And the deity of Malloor, but a wayside deity!

Even this Anthimahakalan kunnu  
That stands in still grandeur  
Will seem like a spinning top  
Hurled by a hot- headed child robot!

Man is full of play, tears, and laughter.  
If he turns into a machine  
O! mother Perar, would you also turn  
Into grieving, reeking drain?

The poem was first published in *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, Feb 21, 1954 and translated by Ashokakumar Edasseri and Jayasree during June 2018.

### **Some Important Notes:**

**1. Bridge:** construction of the 11 span-bridge on National Highway (NH17) in Kuttipuram, Kerala (India) was started in January 1949. Construction was completed in September 1953. This is the most important bridge that connects north Kerala to the south, crossing the river Perar (also known as

‘Bharathapuzha’ or ‘Nila’). Edasseri was born on 23 December, 1906 in Kuttipuram. The poet must be 47, when he walked over the bridge for the first time.

**2. ‘Poothankol’:** a game played in olden days by children using a small stick. While one playmate looks away, other playmates hide the stick. If the game is played on a river bank, they hide it below the sand. Once concealed, this playmate is challenged to locate the spot and find the stick. On nearing the spot, the playmates would signal ‘hot’ and while moving away, they would say ‘cold’, thus helping him/her to locate the stick. The child wins, if the stick is located.

3. The line ‘under the bridge now, doing a tame Natta’ does not convey the full impact of the mockery that the poem conveys. The poet has used the phrase “natta noozhum” in Malayalam. This phrase has a connotation that is difficult to translate into English. In the games children play, there was this ordeal of making the loser crawl below the spread legs of the winner. This is the ultimate shame for the loser, as the kid has to perform this act in front of the onlookers. Present flow of the river below the bridge between the piers is compared with the crawling of the defeated (the river) between the spread of winners (The bridge/ the mankind).

## **ANALYSIS OF THE POEM**

The Kuttipuram Bridge is in Malappuram district. This poem is written in the wake of the construction of a bridge across the river Nila (Bharathappuzha). This poem expresses the poet’s concern and anxiety about the process of modernisation and mechanisation which is ruining the beauty of nature around him. In the poem the bridge is only a metaphor for developments in general. The river is known as Nila/ Perar/ Bharathapuzha. The

poem “Kuttipuram Bridge” is an eco-poem which addresses ecological concerns. The persona or the narrator of the poem is the poet himself. The poem discusses the blindfold attitude of modern idea of ‘development’ which destroys nature. He says he feels proud but actually he uses it to mock the idea of ‘blind developments’. Hence, we understand that he is ‘sad’ as he sees the pristine beauty (*gramalakshmi*) around him slowly fading.

The poem is a critique of mindless urbanization. The poet feels proud when he stands on the newly built bridge as it is built at a cost of twenty-three lakhs. Here the poet’s use of the word ‘proud’ is filled with a little bit of contempt. The bridge itself is a metaphor for urban developments in general. The river was a part of his daily life. He played endless games of ‘poothankol’ on the shores of the river. After the construction of the bridge, kingfishers, sparrows, and cranes left the place which is a sign of danger. The deity of Malloor became a roadside-deity. When the river is in spate, the river bank would be washed away. No boats would go out. No kites will fly. The narrator feels like laughing when he sees the pale river crawling under the bridge. It is doing a ‘tame naatta’. Naatta Noozhuka’ is the act of crawling between the winner’s legs on penalty upon losing a game. It means man won the game; nature lost it.

The poet once played endless games of ‘poothakol’ on the sandy shores of the river. He used to dip in the cool waves of the river for his daily prayers. Irony in “level with the kingfisher, the sparrow and the crane that once flew over here” – is that the poet laments the present condition of the river side. He says that after the bridge is built, he can hardly find the kingfishers, sparrows and cranes which used to fly over the river once. When the river is in spate the river bank would be washed away. At that time, no boats would venture out to the sea and no kite would dare to fly across the sky.

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In the line “but I can’t help laughing” – the narrator feels like laughing when he sees the pale river crawling under the bridge. He feels that the river is doing a ‘tame naatta’ as if it has failed before man’s cruelties.

The poet calls “the charming Gramalakshmi” as his playmate from the day of his birth. He feels that he is losing his playmate forever because of modernisation. The poet feels that stones, cement and steel reign over the flowers. He is critical of the developments that blot out the greenery of a village from his eyes. As a result of urbanisation, walls grow between neighbours and they start to behave like strangers. Because of flat-culture, strangers become neighbours but all those neighbours remain strangers forever.

Next the poet talks about the fate awaiting the deity of Malloor and ‘Anthinmahalakalan kunnu (hill)’. When the roads developed, the deity of Malloor became a road-side deity. The poet feels that soon the ‘Anthinmahakalan’ hill will be destroyed by the hands of a mechanical excavator. Then the poet says that if a man turns into a machine, Mother ‘Perar’ would turn into a grieving, awful drain. The poet clearly sees the imminent death of the Perar at the hands of the greedy human race.

In short, his melancholy and fears about the coming of industrialisation and mechanisation are conveyed in wonderful imagery. He also fears that alienation from nature will lead to alienation of human beings and ultimate dehumanisation. The poet initially takes pride in the fact that humans have conquered nature. Later, this emotion gradually shifts to its erasure in the future. One of the first ecocritical works in Malayalam literature, "Kuttipuram Bridge," is acclaimed. in the following stanzas, he reminisces about his boyhood, about growing up on the riverside, with the river as the companion. He is concerned that the progress

of urbanisation will destroy everything that makes up village life, including the river, the *kavu*, the pipal tree, the ploughman's songs, etc.

## GLOSSARY:

I have...river	: most of the Edasseri poems begin with a prescript of this kind.
In spate	: overflowing due to sudden flood.
Inundate	: to flood, overspread with water
Natta	: originally Naatta Noozhuka is the act of crawling on all fours between the victors' legs as a penalty upon losing.
Mammoth	: huge, enormous
Fathom	: measure the depth of something
Threshold	: entrance, gateway
Rustic	: rural; village life
Adieu	: farewell, goodbye
Soot	: carbon powder produced by the completed burning of something
Jostle	: to force by pushing; to elbow in a crowd
Raucous	: harsh, noisy
Lock horn	: engage in conflict

Malloorkkayam	: the malloor deep, a part of the river that is very deep
Anthimahakalan	: the name of a cliff on the banks of Bharathappuzha at Kuttipuram
Top	: a conical toy that with a quick twist can be set to spin
Reeking	: smelling unpleasant
Grandeur	: magnificence, impressiveness
Drain	: gutter channel

## QUESTIONS

### I. Answer the following in a sentence or two.

1. What makes the narrator feel proud as he stands on the newly built bridge?
2. “Level with the kingfisher, the sparrow, and the crane that once flew over here.” What is the irony in these lines?
3. What happens when the river is in spate?
4. Who was the narrator’s playmate from the day of his birth?
5. What would happen to mother Perar if man turns into a machine?

**II. Answer each of the following in a paragraph:**

1. Explain the usage of “doing a tame natta”
2. How does the narrator describe the beauty of the village?
3. What are the similes, metaphors, and images used by the narrator to represent mechanised development?
4. How does the narrator contrast the river and the newly constructed bridge?

**III. Answer each of the following as an essay:**

1. Edasseri’s poem “The Kuttipuram Bridge” is a critique of mindless urbanisation. Explain.
2. As a visionary poet, Edasseri laments the state of human beings in the future. Elucidate.

## **CHRISTIAN HERITAGE**

### **Vaikom Muhammad Basheer**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

#### **VAIKKOM MUHAMMED BASHEER (1908-1994)**

In Malayalam literature, Vaikkom Muhammed Basheer is acknowledged as a key figure. Basheer, who was born in Thalayolaparambu in Kottayam, obtained a contemporary education in an English-medium school, which was unheard of among traditional Muslim families of his time. He became a freedom fighter because of his early involvement with the national movement and Mahatma Gandhi, as well as his later allegiance with Bhagat Singh's revolutionary views and the Hindustan Socialist Republican Organization. After being twice jailed, he later fled Kerala to avoid capture and travelled extensively. These voyages, together with the unimaginable suffering he endured while on them, provided the inspiration for his stories and books and elevated him to legendary status in Kerala.

Along with Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai and Ponkunnam Varkey, he is one of the trinity of contemporary novelists and short-story writers. By telling the stories of the oppressed and marginalised sections of society, these realist writers helped to herald an era of change for Malayalam literature. *Balykalasakhi* was described by critic M. P. Paul as "a page torn from life with blood still fresh on the torn edges," and this description fits other works by Basheer

as well. His distinctive writing style, subtle humour, apt description of the world around him, profound understanding of people, expert use of everyday language, and the philosophical gravity of his themes made him a revered and well-read author. He insisted on speaking in languages that were understood by everyone. His writing style and diction later entered the canon of Malayalam literature. He described himself frequently as "a humble historian."

His major works include short stories and novellas like *Sabdangal*, *Anuragathinte Dinangal*, *Anavariyum Ponkurisum*, *Ntuppuppakkoranendarnnu*, *Pathumayude Aadu*, *Sthalathe Pradhana Divyan*, *Balyakalasakhi*, *mathilukal*, *Janmadinam* and *Premalekhanam*. Many of his works including *Neela Velicham*, *Balyakalasakhi*, *Mathilukal* and *Premalekhanam* were adapted into feature films. His other works include *Kathabeejam* (One Act Play), *Ormayude Arakal* (autobiography) and *Nerum Nunayum* (miscellany).

He has received many prestigious literary awards. Basheer was made a fellow of Sahitya Akademy and a distinguished fellow of Kerala Sahitya Academy. He was the recipient of Padmasree in 1982.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY

An unexpected visitor shows up to Basheer's house in the story "Christian Heritage" just to meet him. He was visited by Kochu Thommi, a tough peasant and ardent reader of the narrator. But, deep down, "Christian Heritage" also sustains his steadfast conviction in unconditional love and humanity. Basheer portrays this visit as a pan-religious one; a Christian has gone to visit a Muslim. He also challenges the preconceptions held by society

towards common people like farmers. The story's title is quite stirring. The editors have translated the story into English.

## **STORY IN BRIEF**

One day, the narrator (Basheer), who was looking down the road, noticed someone pacing close to the gate. The narrator asked, sceptically, who that was, and the stranger appeared before him, saying he was there to meet him (Basheer). Basheer was perplexed since he had no idea who this man was or why he had arrived there. He questioned whether the guy was his fan or if he had come for financial gain, etc. The man afterwards revealed that he had read a lot of Basheer and wanted to at least once see him in person.

Kochu Thommi was the man; he was a Christian from Changanassery. He had brown skin, was strong, and had rough palm skin from hard labour. He wore a shirt made of JK stone-washed fabric. He carried a towel on his shoulder and wore a dhoti. He lived for eight or nine years in Malabar. He had planted black pepper and coffee plants. He lost his wife. Five daughters and four sons make up his nine children. His boys have made their homes with their families, and he has married off his daughters as well.

Kochu Thommi eventually sat on the chair against his will after the narrator insisted. Kochu Thommi was hospitalised last month, and as soon as he was discharged, he came to visit the narrator. As a Christian man arrived to meet a Muslim man, Basheer felt proud. They shared a cup of tea, chatted for a while, and shared stories of Changanassery, Thalayolapparambu, and Vaikkom. They discussed the prices of rubber, black pepper, and coffee on the market. They continued talking throughout the night. Kochu Thommi was requested to stay the night, and Basheer knew that

he had no intention of leaving that day. In the reading room, Fabi stretched out a mat. His pillow was *Christian Heritage in India* by Sri John Ochanthuruth. After breakfast, Kochu Thommi departed. To Basheer's amazement, when he offered him ten rupees as way-fare, he took it. A relative of Basheer's son-in-law came home to stay there. Once more, *Christian Heritage* was to act as a pillow. Something dropped from the book when Fabi opened it. That was two brand-new hundred-rupee notes, which was a significant amount of money in those days. About 100 rupees was the price of 10 grams of gold in the 1960s. The story ends thus.

Major themes discussed in this story could be humanity, mutual respect and love, religious harmony and so on.

## GLOSSARY

Bob up	: come up
Dubiously	: doubtfully, suspiciously
Stout	: rather fat or heavy
Sinewy	: muscular
Calloused	: having areas of hardened skin
Reluctantly	: unwillingly, hesitantly
Industrious	: diligent, hard working

## Two Hundred

Rupee notes : a large sum of money in those days. 10 gm gold cost approximately one hundred rupees in the 1960s.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:**

1. What makes the narrator proud?
2. Who all were there in Kochu Thommi's family?
3. What served as a pillow for Kochu Thommi?
4. What was Kochu Thommi's gift to the story writer?
5. Why has Kochu Thommi come to see the narrator?

### **II. Answer each of the following in a paragraph:**

1. Describe the character of Kochu Thommi.
2. Justify the title of the story.
3. Comment on the author's attitude towards Kochu Thommi.

### **III. Answer each of the following questions as an essay:**

1. describe how the interactions between the author and the guest in the story "Christian Heritage" speak about Basheer's philosophy of life.
2. "Christian Heritage reiterated the author's faith in humanity and kindness." Comment.

## **MODULE 4 PROPAGATION**

### **MYTH AND LITERATURE**

**M. T Vasudevan Nair**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

#### **M.T VASUDEVAN NAIR (1933- PRESENT)**

MT Vasudevan Nair is among the greatest contemporary Indian writers. He was born on July 15, 1933 in Kudalloor, Palakkad. He is a screenwriter, film director, reviewer, novelist, short story writer, editor, and critic. M T, as he is commonly referred to, is a prolific and varied writer who possesses all the traits required for the enormous success he enjoys right from the start. His excellent works are characterised by remarkable powers of observation, vivid imagination, freshness of ideas, and profound narrating talent. By digging into his characters' psyches and depicting their mental landscapes using the rich emotional experience of his formative years, MT made a distinction in Malayalam literature, which had until that point been dominated by realism. His works also portray human life's hardships with acute social awareness.

After pursuing a number of careers, he received his degree in chemistry from Victoria College and began working as a sub editor for Mathrubhumi Weekly in 1957. Up until 1999, he was the chief editor. His literary career began with poetry before he eventually switched to short fiction. At the age of twenty, he took

home the award for the best Malayalam short tale in the International Short Story Competition of the *New York Herald Tribune*. When he was still a college student, his first collection of short stories was published. At the age of 23, he published *Naalukettu (Legacy)*, his debut novel, which won the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award in 1958. *Manju (Mist)*, *Kaalam (Time)*, *Asuravithu (The Demon Seed)*, and *Randamoozham (The Second Turn)* are some of his other books. *Iruttinte Athmavu, Olavum Theeravum, Bandhanam, Varikkuzhi, Dar-S-Salam, Swargam Thurakkunna Samayam, Vaanaprastham*, and *Sherlock* are a few of his short story collections. He received the third-highest civilian honour, the Padmabhushan, in 2005, and the highest literary honour in the nation, the Jnanpith, in 1995 for his overall contributions to Malayalam literature. In addition, he has received multiple honorary degrees and titles from various Universities, as well as the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award, Kerala Sahitya Academy Award, Vayalar Award, Vallathol Award, Ezhuthachan Award, and Mathrubhumi Literary Award. The Kerala Jyoti award, Kerala's highest civilian honour, was given to him in 2022.

He has authored the screenplays for about 54 movies and directed seven of them. *Nirmalyam*, his first film, won the President's Gold Medal (National Award for the Best Film) in 1973. For his work on *Oru Cherupunchiri* in 2000, he received the best director award for a second time. With *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* (1989), *Kadavu* (1991), *Sadayam* (1992), and *Parinayam* (1994), he received the National Film Award for Best Screenplay four times. He has also received numerous state film awards in different categories.

His ability to write plays, autobiographies, travelogues, essays, and children's books demonstrates his great flexibility. This specific passage is derived from the speech collection *Vakkukalude Vismayam*. This speech, which was first given in

1995 at Sahitya Akademi, explores the manner in which myths, legends, and folklore have affected Malayalam writing. The editors translated the speech into English.

## ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

Literature has always been influenced by the history, geography, mythologies, and local knowledge of the locations where it was first written. Throughout the Ramayana and Mahabharata, one can see the impact of different Indian areas. We will refer to it as a pan-Indian impact. Every community and hamlet has a collection of its own myths and legends, and there are countless regional myths in existence. How much are these local legends influencing our literature? The former question may not be a simple one to answer because there hasn't been much exchange of information across different Indian languages through translation.

*Aithihyamala*, an eight-volume book that is a compilation of local tales, has been one of the books that has been sold most frequently in Kerala over a number of decades. Kerala's origins are associated with a myth. Parasuraman gave all of his ancestors' possessions to Kasyapa Muni in order to atone for his crimes of killing Kshatriyas. Standing on Mount Gokarna, Parasuraman threw his axe into the sea as the muni reminded him that he doesn't possess a single square inch of land. The sea moved back from the spot where the axe had landed, giving that area of land to Parasuraman, and this area of land became known as Kerala. Although Parasuraman is a figure from pan-Indian mythology, this specific tale is quite regional. He thus has a major role in both local and national Indian myths. While some believe this tale to be a historical account of the Aryan invasion of the Dravidian areas, with Parasuraman playing a key role as its leader, others believe it to be fiction. This narrative is believed to be true

according to *Keralolpathi*, a significant book on Kerala history. According to this text, Parasuraman prescribed Kerala's social structure, caste system, temporal arrangements, customs, and practices.

Many poets in Kerala have used this narrative as inspiration. The axe being thrown away is seen by our celebrated poet Balamaniamma as the height of sacrifice. A pioneer of Malayalam modernist poetry, Vyloppilli Sreedharanenon, praises the axe as an instrument that pierces the depths of forests to feed the early migrating societies. The Parasuraman myth, however, did not intrigue Malayalam fiction writers. Even though Kerala is a coastal region and the sea has always played a significant role in its history, there aren't many sea-related legends that appear in our fiction. Our sea has seen numerous conflicts and battles; through Kerala's coastal regions, the Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English arrived in this country. The battles for control of the Arabian Sea have still only been mentioned in a relatively small number of our novels.

In Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's well-known book *Chemmeen*, Sea plays a significant role. The fishermen of the Alappuzha coast, known as Arayans, revere the sea as Kadalamma, the sea goddess. She is a motherly figure that watches over the men while they are out at sea fishing, and she expects the women to lead clean lives while their husbands are out in the ocean. The sea goddess punishes them by taking the lives of their men if they give into any temptations and commit adultery. When Thakazhi stated this in his book, he received harsh criticism from many for supporting superstitions. Another critique was that he neglected to address the frequent issue of class conflict when writing a love story. This book is relevant because it demonstrates how nature can both give and take life. The woman, her husband, and her

lover in the tale are all killed by the same sea that provides sustenance.

Myths and legends had no noticeable impact on the early fiction of our languages. In their thirties or forties, well-known Malayalam authors started penning stories. They were openly or indirectly connected to the state's political left. They were therefore influenced by the idea of class conflict, which left them with the responsibility of practising realism in their trade.

Our interest may be aroused by the knowledge that the lives of our ancient authors are intricately connected to various myths and stories. The man revered as the founder of the Malayalam language, Thunchath Ezhuthachan, is thought to be the reincarnation of an ethereal spirit (*gandharvan*). Although coming from a disadvantaged background, he learned the Vedas and Upanishads, became an expert poet, and was well-versed in them. The *Gandharva* myth makes it acceptable that someone from the fringes of society has talent and creativity. Poets like Poonthanam Namboothiri and Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri's life have reportedly been touched by divine and paranormal forces.

Local folktales are used by our modernist writers in their literature, and in their hands, these legends take on the stature of parables and allegories. They have been successfully included by OV Vijayan, Kovilan, Punathil Kunhabdulla, N.P. Muhammad, and M. Mukundan into their works. By displacing the linear storytelling and realistic description, younger novelists like KP Ramanunni and TV Kochubava go against the traditional ideals of novel writing. They make an effort to update the folktales for the present. In many parts of India, the lines between history and myths are blurred; they mix and blend. These myths and stories must be rejected as the illusions of a pre-Christian pagan culture in accordance with modernist scientificity (technical experts).

Myths are rejected as fabrications by the practicality of history. The creative artist, however, views them as the outgrowths of the archetypal ego. He or she searches for the continuity of culture and civilisation in the exclamations and dreamlike sequences of these myths and stories. These people have the responsibility of rediscovering the past in order to merge it into the present. They examine myths, folklore, and folktales as what they actually are—imaginary possibilities—rather than as factual details.

## GLOSSARY

Provincial : regional

Pan : all, relating to all

Repertoire : collection

Gandharvan : an ethereal/ supernatural spirit

Pragmatism : practical nature

## QUESTIONS

### I. Answer the following in two or three sentences

1. How does the myth regarding the origin of Kerala become regional as well as pan- Indian?
2. What is the myth that Thakazhi adapted for his novel *Chemmeen*?
3. Why hasn't the early Malayalam fiction made use of myths and legends?

4. How do KP Ramanunni and Kochubava bring about a change in Malayalam literature?

**II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph:**

1. How has Malayalam literature treated the myth of Parasuraman?
2. Why was Thakazhi criticised for making use of a fisher-folk myth and what is MT's opinion regarding it?
3. Why are the lives of our early writers linked with the supernatural?
4. How do artists differ from various other disciplines in their treatment of myth and folktales?

**III. Answer the following questions as an essay:**

1. Comment on the rediscovery of past attempted by the modern creative artist and the factors that prompt her/him into this mission.
2. Describe the ways in which myths, legends and folktales have figured in Malayalam literature through the different ages.

## **RAIN – AT - NIGHT**

**Sugathakumari**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

#### **SUGATHAKUMARI (1934-2020)**

Sugathakumari is one of the foremost writers in Malayalam. She is noted for her philosophical and perspective poems. She is also a renowned environmental and social activist. Her poetry is noted for its emotional empathy, humanist sensitivity and moral alertness. Her poems also reflect a quest for a women's identity. She is the founding secretary of Abhaya, a centre for underprivileged women, and the Prakrithi Samrakshana Samithi, an organisation for the preservation of nature.

She received the Sahitya Academy Award in 1968 for her work *Pathirapookal* (*Flowers of Midnight*). Her collection *Rathrimazha* (*Night Rain / Rain at Night*) won the Kendra Sahitya Academy Award in 1978. She also won the Odakkuzhal Award in 1982 and Vayalar Award in 1984. She is also the recipient of many other awards like Kerala Sahitya Academy Fellowship (2004), Saraswati Samman (2012), Mathrubhumi Literary Award (2014), and O.N.V Literary Award (2017) and so on. She was conferred with Padma Shri in 2006.

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM**

While staying essentially romantic, Sugathakumari's poetry combines a variety of emotions and anxieties related to feminism,

humanism, love of nature, and concerns about nature, women, children, and adivasis. A typical example is the romantic poem "Rathrimazha," which contrasts the narrator's imprisonment in a hospital bed with an unexpected downpour. The night rain calmly approaches the narrator's worn-out, gloomy bedstead as she is suffering from a scorching illness and writhing in pain. In addition to referring to the rain as a consoling friend, the narrator also associates herself with it. Moreover, this identity is not a sneaky or mysterious one. In one of her interviews, Sugathakumari recalled being startled by an unexpected downpour while alone in her chamber contemplating things. However, the soreness and loneliness that are suffocating the speaker and rising over her like a menacing halo make it more of an emotional elegy. As the narrator is depicted lying in a sanatorium bed, shrunken and worn out by sickness, the poem has an unhappy and hopeless tone.

Prof. B Hridayakumari, the poet's older sister and a well-known author, critic, and educator, translated the poem.

## **(POEM)**

### **Rain-At-Night**

Rain-at-night,  
Like some young madwoman  
For nothing  
Weeping, laughing, whimpering,  
Muttering without a stop,  
And sitting huddled up

Tossing her long hair.

Rain-at-night,  
Pensive daughter of the dusky dark  
Gliding slowly like a long wail  
Into this hospital,  
Extending her cold fingers  
Through the window  
And touching me.

Rain-at-night,  
When groans and shudders  
And sharp voices  
And the sudden anguished cry of a mother  
Shake me, and put my hand to my ears  
And sob, tossing on my sickbed  
You, like a dear one  
Coming through the gloom with comforting words.

Somebody said,  
The diseased part can be cut and removed  
But what can be done with the poor heart  
More deeply diseased?

Rain-at-night,  
Witness to my love,  
Who lulled me to sleep  
Giving me more joy than the white moonlight did;  
The bright moonlight  
Which in my auspicious nights  
Made me laugh  
Made me thrill with joy.

Rain-at-night,  
Now witness to my grief  
On my sweltering bed of sickness  
In the sleepless hours of night  
And forgetting even to weep  
Alone, slowly freeze into a stone.

Let me tell you,  
Rain-at-night,  
I know your music, kind and sad,  
Your pity and your suppressed rage,  
Your coming in the night,  
Your sobbing and weeping when all alone;  
And when it is dawn

Your wiping your face and forcing a smile,  
Your hurry and your putting on an act:  
How do I know all this?  
My friend, I, too, am like you  
Like you, rain-at-night.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE POEM**

The poem “Rain-at Night” (also known as “Night Rain” is taken from the collection ‘Rathrimazha’ that has been translated into English by her own sister and literary critic, H. Hridayakumari as Rain-at-Night”. This poem is written in five sections, but does not have regular stanzaic form. The speaker in the poem identifies herself with the rain at night. The shifting moods of the persona which is parallel with that rain at night can be seen in the poem. You can see different emotional states of the women – youth, love, melancholy, mental agony, disease, loneliness and so on. The rain has become a companion in all these different emotional stages.

In the first stanza, this poem addresses the emotional trauma experienced by women in a patriarchal society. Rain at night is compared to a young mad woman who is sometimes laughing, and weeping like a mad woman. Intensity of rain is implied here. Here we can see different emotional states of women like youth, love, melancholy etc.

In the second stanza, the mood shifts from happiness to sadness. In the sick state “Extending her cold fingers” is the symbol of death or sorrow. Night rain is compared to a girl with cold fingers. Here the rain at night is personified.

The third stanza portrays different stages of night rain and at one point it is heavy rain and sometimes it is like a mother's sob. This sound shakes the speaker. He closes his ears. The rain comes through the gloom with comforting words. She also says that somebody said that diseased parts can be removed but the heart cannot be removed like other organs. This is the rhetorical question in the poem. "deep diseased" indicates the sufferings of women in the patriarchal society.

In the fourth stanza, night rain is the companion to witness the happiness during those happy nights. Night rain is now the witness of her grief. She says that she even forgets to cry in the sleepless hours of the night and becomes like a statue.

In the fifth stanza, the poet identifies with the rain. It is kind, sad, and with suppressed anger. The poet says that when it is dawn she wipes her face forgetting all her sorrows and she is in a hurry to act (pretend). This reminds us of the routine life of women in the society who do not get consideration.

## **MAJOR THEMES**

Loneliness is a predominant theme. Suffering of women in a patriarchal society who forgets to cry is yet another theme. The image of the woman is such that she is devoid of identity and survival in the social system which never understands her. This poem reminds the routine life of a woman who has to suppress all her tears and do all the work for the family. During the night she has to weep and express all her emotions in her lonely state. Next morning she engages in her routine life pretending as if nothing has happened. The plight of women in patriarchal society compares with the rain which comes at night. Alienation is yet

another theme. Here the women in the patriarchal society try to find solace in the natural phenomenon.

In short, “Rain at Night” is a poem that portrays the loneliness, dejection and despondency of women through the image of rain.

## **GLOSSARY**

Whimpering : crying

Muttering : murmuring

Huddled : clustering

Tossing : mixing

Dusky : shadowy

Groans : a low, mournful sound conveying pain or grief

Shudder : trembling convulsively, as a result of fear

Anguish : auspicious

Sweltering : boiling

## **QUESTIONS**

### **I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:**

1. How does the rain at night behave as a mad young woman?
2. Who sits huddled up tossing the hair?

3. When does rain at night shake the narrator?
4. What can be done to the poor heart that is deeply diseased?
5. Rain at night is the pensive daughter of \_\_\_\_\_.

**II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph:**

1. What does the narrator say to the rain at night?
2. What are the symbolic elements in “Rain-at-night”?
3. “My friend, I too am like you.” Elucidate.

**III. Answer the following questions in not more than 200 words:**

1. The music of the rain at night is the tone of the narrator’s grief. Explain.
2. “Rain-at-Night” as a lyrical elegy.

## **FIFTY YEARS OF MALAYALAM CINEMA**

### **V. C. Harris**

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

##### **V. C HARRIS (1958-2017)**

In addition to being a teacher, V.C. Harris was also a translator, thinker, and critic. In Kerala's cultural settings, he is renowned for his theoretical interventions. In addition to serving as the Director of the School of Letters at MG University until his untimely passing, V.C. Harris also taught at Farook College in Kozhikode. His interests included theatre and film. He was an active participant in the John Abraham-founded, politically-charged film fraternity Odessa, which C V Sathyan eventually took over as its manager. With plays like Howard Zinn's *Marx in Soho* and Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, he was lauded for his solo performances as a skilled actor. He frequently served as a forum moderator at IFFK and was a continuous presence there.

He was known as Kerala Derrida because of his obsession with French philosopher Jacquez Derrida, who was born in Algeria. One of the earliest works on cultural studies in Kerala was his piece "*Kidilolkkidilam: Viswaniroopanathinte Prethabhavana*," which addressed Malayalam historiography. He has translated into English the writings of Basheer, Madhavikutty, VKN, G Sankara Pillai, Methil Radhakrishnan, Narendra Prasad, P Balachandran, Sajitha Madathil, and C Ayyappan. He wrote the works *Spectres of Writing* and *Ezhuthum Parachilum*.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ESSAY

In this essay, V C Harris traces the evolution of Malayalam film over the course of fifty years, starting with *Neelakkuyil* (1954) and concluding with *Paadam Onnu: Oru Vilapam* (2003). The optimism of the 1950s gradually gave way to an increasing sense of unhappiness and disillusionment with post-independence India in the 1960s. The politically and culturally turbulent 1990s were not well represented in Malayalam films throughout the National Emergency and Modernism eras of the 1970s and 1980s. Harris discusses the poor portrayal of Muslims in film and the cheap commercialization of movies. The essay's main premise is that film music creates a public space where everyone may gather and share their common histories and future plans.

## ANALYSIS OF THE ESSAY

V. C Harris begins the essay by stating that Malayalam cinema shares some general characteristics with other Indian theatres, but Kerala's unique socio-political history, which differs from the rest of the nation in many important aspects, has helped to create a film heritage that is rather unique.

According to him, Kerala was reorganised as a state in 1956 after India gained its independence by combining three territories—Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar—largely on the basis of a shared language. The last of these territories, Travancore, was directly governed by the British, while the first two were princely states that the British had indirect control over. The repercussions of numerous significant late-19th-century social reform struggles and movements — which persisted well into the twentieth century — along with the advent of the Nationalist movement and the Left ideology are largely what make up Kerala's history in the twentieth century.

He says that caste inequality, class consciousness, nationalism, and progress were among the key problems of the 1940s and 1950s that influenced the processes of artistic production, including cinema. There was a sense of excitement and confidence. *Neelakkuyil* (Ramu Kariat /P. Bhaskaran, 1954), frequently regarded as a landmark film in Malayalam, contained all of these elements because it was successful in combining, for the first time, a number of ingredients: a truly local, well-crafted story; a distinct engagement with issues like caste inequality, progress, and the construction of a modern secular subject; ; a strikingly unique use of cinema music that drew from folk musical traditions; and a variety of actors and technicians, including well-known writers and political activists, most of whom had a strong socialist inclination and who would subsequently rule the Malayalam film industry. Although the patriarchal ideology present in the movie is clear to see today, *Neelakkuyil's* popularity and critical acclaim played a significant role in the development of Kerala's dominating pattern and logic of film narrative. Later, it can be seen that this is further supported ten years later by *Chemmeen*, another important movie by Ramu Kariat in 1965. *Chemmeen*, which is an epic portrayal of a particular fishing community in Kerala and is based on a novel by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, one of Kerala's most well-known authors, emphasises local culture and mythology as well as the issues associated with caste and community divides. The film's underlying premise—that the safety of the fishermen at sea hinged on their wives' virginity and loyalty at home—makes the patriarchal ideology at play fairly clear.

It can be seen that with its tragic conclusion, *Chemmeen* simultaneously reinforces long-standing conventions of cinematic form and substance while also illustrating a significant transition from the optimism and idealism of earlier decades to a growing sense of unhappiness and despair. This has historically

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operated on two levels. When the social consequences of capitalist development started to become apparent, the national fantasy of a free and affluent modern India—which had sparked the anti-colonial struggle—was starting to fade. At a different level, in Kerala, the Left ideology was under pressure as the Communist organisations in India started to feel the effects of developments in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and other areas of the world, causing divisions inside and unrest outside. The underlying conflicts in society related to urbanisation, bourgeoisification (imposing of middle class values), the realignment of castes and communities within the new polity, and, generally, the competing trajectories of tradition and modernity, were aided to take shape by all of this.

In the next part he says that, with the advent of what is frequently referred to as the modernist movement in the 1960s, Malayalam writing started to be significantly marked by this transition, which could be partially read into *Chemmeen* in retrospect. The early 1970s saw the emergence of a new cinema, commonly referred to as "art cinema," that was a reaction to the shifting boundaries between politics and aesthetics. This movement was led by Adoor Gopalakrishnan, G. Aravindan, John Abraham, and others. The 'inaugural' film in this genre, *Swayamvaram* (Adoor Gopalakrishnan, 1972), articulates the dilemma of the middle class, which is caught between the modern drive to make one's own decisions and move on and the conventional social standards relating to family and sexuality. The issues of unemployment, poverty, and a lack of opportunity play a significant role in the film's depiction of the overall unhappiness in metropolitan or semi-urban life. The movie also creates a new cinematic idiom in the process, which will continue to influence a lot of artistic creation over the next twenty years.

Next, he talks about the movie *Thampu* (1978) by G. Aravindan which depicts the drama involved in a small community having to deal with certain notions of modernity, which are symbolised by the presence of a circus group, in a slightly different but related manner. The tensions underlying Kerala's rural/urban split and social mobility are symbolised by the village youth who feel attracted to quit his conventional vocation and join the circus. The fact that the movie accomplishes this without being sentimental or tragic is essential because it highlights how resilient village life is in the face of tremendous internal and external obstacles.

He also points out that the values attributed to religious beliefs and practices were among the many old forms of thought and conduct that underwent stern examination during the 1970s. However, it should be observed right once that by the 1990s, the process was being reversed. The secularisation and modernization of the Indian polity contributed to the critique of the religious in numerous ways. But it is especially significant today, when religious intolerance and fundamentalism are on the rise, that M.T. Vasudevan Nair was able to depict in *Nirmalyam* (1973) the degeneration that social change, with all its implications for the priests and the lay people alike, brought to temple-related rituals. (Nair is represented in this season by the excellent, nearly silent *Kadav* (1991), a moving tale about a young kid who escapes his nearly stifling family and works as a ferryman.)

It is common practice to view 1975 as a turning point in post-independence India's history because it saw the constitutionally mandated declaration of the National Emergency, which severely restricted all political and civil rights while giving a small number of politicians, government officials, and police officers unchecked power. *Amma Ariyan* by John Abraham released in 1986 is one of the many films from this time period and is a

notable example. The story follows a group of men as they travel from one region of Kerala to another, charting their hopes and despairs as they attempt to identify with the cause but ultimately coming to a sense of futility that is still politically significant. The main character's confession to his mother that he understands his middle class roots keep him from fully identifying with the revolutionaries and the working classes is a profoundly significant statement on the general profile of the movement itself. Hence, the movie is a crucial record of the emergence and demise of the revolutionary spirit in modern Kerala.

It can be seen that the last decade of the 20th century saw the emergence of a whole new set of social and political challenges, with the LPG (Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization) slogan beginning to play a key role on the one hand and various forms of religious fundamentalism, particularly the Hindu Right, gaining political legitimacy and influence on the other. Along with this, new social groups emerged that, in a groundbreaking way, started to voice the concerns of women, Dalits (members of the lowest castes, formerly known as "untouchables"), Adivasis (indigenous tribes), as well as other minorities and environmental activists.

Furthermore, the state of Kerala was simultaneously rising to a position of prominence in the nation with the highest social welfare index, despite some limitations in terms of size and resources (near total literacy, low birth rate, good health care as evidenced by low infant mortality rates, and good working conditions). Kerala, on the other hand, has one of the highest suicide rates in the nation.) There has been talk of a unique Kerala model of development, but it must be acknowledged that this model appears to be getting more and more problematic today, especially in light of the stagnant economy characterised by little industrial growth and revenue generation, as well as the

significant inflow of foreign income from the sizable Malayalee diaspora in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States.

But it can be also seen that the impact on cinema continues to be quite little, the cultural realm was a significant location of dispute. Since the arthouse tradition began to wane in the 1970s, there has been a larger degree of commercialization, which has resulted in a shortage of resources for good, meaningful cinema. While pictures depicting the Hinduization of culture are on the rise, there are also initiatives to drastically redefine the form and substance of cinema. At the same time, there is increasing variety in the types of movies created. For instance, Shaji N. Karun reworks material from Kerala's performance-art traditions in *Vaanaprastham - The Last Dance* (Pilgrimage-1999), with the goal of redefining and re-articulating the subject of art in the context of evolving society perspectives. This is also true of TV Chandran's work, which has consistently strived to reinvent itself in the context of the shifting times despite being deeply steeped in the political culture of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The film he made in 2003, *Padam Onnu: Oru Vilapam* (*Lesson One: A Wail*), abundantly supports this.

There has never been a shortage of movies in Malayalam cinema history that focus on the daily lives of Muslims in Kerala. Kerala differs from the rest of India demographically in that it has a population that is almost 40% non-Hindu (mostly Muslim and Christian), but within the "Hindus" themselves, the "backward" caste known as Ezhavas predominates. The representation of minorities has, however, generally been problematic over the years. This is likely because, despite constitutional requirements, India's social agenda of secularism remains a challenging one. One must see movies like *Padam Onnu: Oru Vilapam* and *Olavum Theeravum* (P.N. Menon, 1970) in this context.

He concludes the essay with a word on movie music. It is clear that the forms of music and traditions that were prevalent in Kerala up until the turn of the 20th century were largely community- or region-specific.

Without regard to community, caste, or geographical diversity, there was no one musical heritage that the entire population of Kerala could listen to, appreciate, and enjoy. Various types of music were available to various social groups. With the introduction of film music, which had its roots in theatre music and other similar activities, all of this significantly changed. Everyone could listen to this particular genre of music, which aimed to speak to various facets of society. Formally, this was made possible by an essentially eclectic fusion of components taken from several sources, including folk, classical, and others. The entire procedure is in line with the dynamics of Indian society's democratisation. The creation of a public sphere—a place where people of different backgrounds may come together, share experiences, and set goals for the future—has been actively supported by film music in India, and particularly in Kerala.

## **GLOSSARY**

Princely States	: States in British India which were not directly ruled by the British
Fusing	: combining
Patriarchy	: a system controlled or governed by men
Chastity	: the state of not engaging in sexual relationships that are considered immoral
Parameters	: guidelines

Galvanize	: stimulate
Bourgeoisification	: imposing of middle-class values
Trajectory	: path
Spearhead	: lead, pioneer
Laity	: common people
Fundamentalism	: strict adherence to any set of basic principles
Moorings	: anchorage
Unprecedented	: not known or experienced before
Eclectic	: diverse, wide-ranging
Antecedence	: existing or occurring before

## QUESTIONS

### I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:

1. How did *Neelakkuyil* become a landmark film in Malayalam?
2. Which was the decade of the emergence of the Modernist Movement in Malayalam cinema?
3. How did Aravindan's *Thampu* portray the arrival of modernity into a village community?
4. How is *Nirmalyam* significant today?

5. How is the year 1975 significant in the history of post-independent India?

## II. Write a paragraph on the following:

1. How do *Chemmeen* and *Neelakkuyil* cater to the patriarchal ideology?
2. Comment on the ways in which *Chemmeen* marks a shift in Malayalam cinema?
3. What makes *Amma Ariyan* politically meaningful?

## III. Write an essay on the following:

1. Describe how Harris delineates the fifty years of Malayalam cinema.
2. Malayalam cinema has always responded to the cultural and political scenarios around. Comment.

## **MALAYALAM'S GHAZAL**

**Jeet Thayyil**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

#### **JEET THAYYIL (1959 – Present)**

Jeet Thayyil was born in Kerala, India and educated in Hong Kong, New York and Bombay. He is a poet, novelist, librettist, and musician. He is the recipient of Grants and awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Swiss Arts Council, the British Council and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Basically, Jeet Thayyil is a contemporary poet as he raises contemporary issues which need to be addressed and answered. Socio-political conditions prevalent during Jeet Thayyil's time. It is already said that the two World Wars affected the literary scenes too much and in this regard we find that Jeet Thayyil's poetry represents the age that he was part of. It was an age in which the majority of poets started practicing individualism. They started thinking of the contemporary problems of life. They were sandwiched between scepticism and rationalism. On the global level, there was several problems. And, in this regard there were many youths and many people who often took retreat to drugs and despair. An air of disillusionment was also prevalent. And in earlier days when we talk about poetry, we find in poetry a sort of order, there used to be a sort of attraction for several things. Brokenness, fragmentation, alienation from family and religion were major themes of modern contemporary poetry.

His major works include: *Narcopolis* (2012), his very first novel which was shortlisted for Man Booker Prize in 2012. He won Sahitya Academy Award in 2012 for the collection *These Errors are Correct* (2008). His other major poetry collections include *Gemini* (1992), *Apocalypso* (1997), *English* (2004).

His other major fictions are *The Book of Chocolate Saints* (2017), *Low* (2020) and *Names of the Women* (2021). His important edited works include The Bloodaxe Books of Contemporary Indian Poets (2008), 60 Indian Poets (2008), Divided Time: India and the End of Diaspora (2006), Give the Sea Change and It Shall Change: 56 Indian Poets (2005). He has compiled the definite compendium of Indian Poetry in English, *The Penguin Book of Indian Poets* (2022).

He won many awards like DSC Prize for South Asian Literature and Sahitya Academy Award for English Literature. Jeet Thayyil is very much influenced by Dom Moraes.

Characteristics of his poems are surreal humour, satiric and intense, dense texture of sound and echoes, a widening capacity to embrace the Dionysian, attractions of drug, alcohol, sex and death, concerns about corruptions in life, he experiments with Ghazals and songs. In short, he is a poet of passion, persecution, love and loss.

In addition to this, the characteristics of his Ghazal poems: the ghazal (Asian origin) is a poetic vehicle ideally suited to express pangs of love and separation. It is thematically unrelated. We can see structural unity in patterns of rhyme, repetition and rhythm. Thayyil boldly experiments with the structure. He regrets the loss of the native tongue. Apart from this, his poems are humorous, use Biblical references and so on. His world is that of suffering.

## (POEM)

### **MALAYALAM'S GHAZAL**

Listen! Someone's saying a prayer in Malayalam.  
He says there's no word for "despair" in Malayalam.

Sometimes at daybreak you sing a Gujarati garba.  
At night you open your hair in Malayalam.

To understand symmetry, understand Kerala.  
The longest palindrome is there, in Malayalam.

When you've been too long in the rooms of English,  
Open your windows to the fresh air of Malayalam.

Visitors are welcome in The School of Lost Tongues.  
Someone's endowed a high chair in Malayalam.

I greet you my ancestors, O scholars and linguists.  
My father who recites Baudelaire in Malayalam.

Jeet, such drama with the scraps you know.  
Write a couplet, if you dare, in Malayalam.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM

Before getting into the poem, it is better to understand what is ‘ghazal’. Ghazal is a poem that is usually composed of five to fifteen couplets, often a meditation on love or melancholy or the metaphysical, in which each couplet stands independently yet offers another “puzzle piece” on the theme established in the first couplet. It can also be noted that the last ‘bit’ – it could be a phrase or word – of the second line in the first couplet is repeated in the second line of all succeeding couplets. It is a poetic expression, both of the pain of loss or separation from the beloved and the beauty of love in spite of that pain. We can also see romantic love, spiritual expressions etc in ghazal. Another peculiarity of the ghazal form is that the last couplet often contains the poet’s name.

*The Collected Poems* (2015) contains the poem "Malayalam's Ghazal". The poem has a refrain and is composed in conventional rhyming couplets. The metre is the same for each line. The poem frequently repeats lines that conclude with the word "Malayalam," notably at the conclusion of each stanza. In essence, the poem expresses what is lost in translation. It demonstrates the terrible inability of a multilingual writer to find words that translate into another language with the same meaning or impact. The poet cries out in his writing that some English terms lack appropriate translations. Each language is unique and has depth. When seated in English-speaking rooms, the poet seeks to understand the country of his birth. He urges his audience to throw open the windows and let in the fresh air of their own speech. He welcomes his readers as guests to the school of lost languages that is poetry. Through translation, foreign literature is brought to Malayalam. And finally, he sets a goal for himself to compose a Malayalam couplet.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE POEM**

The poem is written in the form of seven couplets. We can also see that among the couplets, the second line of each couplet ends with the word “Malayalam”. The poet addresses the reader in the beginning of the poem. He says that ‘there’s no word for “despair” in Malayalam’, which means we cannot convey the exact meaning while translating from one language to the other. There is loss in translation. In the next part the poet talks about singing ‘Gujarati garba’, which is a traditional form of art that originated in Gujarat and “at night you open your hair in Malayalam”. Here the poet says that at the end of the day we return to our mother tongue to recollect our emotions and feelings and so on. In the third couplet, he uses the term ‘symmetry’ and ‘palindrome’ to bring forth the uniqueness of Kerala culture and heritage and also to show the importance of Malayalam language which is one of the classic languages that consists of 51 letters and it is the longest palindrome among the Indian languages so far.

In the lines, “Visitors are welcome in The School of Lost Tongues. / Someone’s endowed a high chair in Malayalam.”, it could mean Malayalam is an important classic language which evolved from Tamil language and it has also borrowed words from Sanskrit as well. It is a rich language which has affinity with the ancient classical languages. Hence the poet welcomes all to Malayalam language and poetry.

In the lines. “I greet you my ancestors, O scholars and linguists./ my father who recites Baudelaire in Malayalam”, the poet salutes his ancestors (Malayalees), scholars and linguists and his father who reads the translation of Baudelaire, the French poet, in Malayalam. Maybe because with the translations of Foreign writers into Malayalam, the language is enriched and we are

exposed to foreign writers and their works as well. Maybe he is trying to put forth the richness of his mother tongue, Malayalam, to the world.

In the last couplet, Jeet Thayyil challenges himself to put away his drama of what little he knows and to write a couplet in Malayalam if he dares to do so. This shows his regret for the loss of his mother tongue and also his affection for the same too.

In the poem we can see poetic devices such as **refrain** (a phrase or verse that is repeated regularly in a poem or song) for example the phrase “in Malayalam” is repeated regularly throughout the poem, couplet, rhythm etc. The poem is written in the form of Ghazal as well.

## **GLOSSARY:**

Garba : is a form of dance that originated in Gujarat; it is a Gujarati word

Symmetry : the quality of being made up of exactly similar parts facing each other or around an axis.

Palindrome : a word, phrase, or sequence that reads the same backward and forward, e.g., madam or Malayalam

Linguist : someone who studies the structure and growth of language.

Charles Pierre

Baudelaire : a French Poet

Couplet : a pair of successive lines of verse, typically rhyming and of the same length.

## **QUESTIONS:**

### **I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:**

1. What is a refrain?
2. Which palindrome is repeatedly used at the end of each couplet?
3. Who recites Baudelaire in Malayalam?
4. Who challenges the poet to write a couplet in Malayalam?
5. Who comes to the school of lost tongues?

### **II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph:**

1. What should we do to understand symmetry?
2. Why does the poet say that there is no word for ‘despair’ in Malayalam?
3. “When you’ve been too long in the rooms of English” what should be done to get relaxation?

### **III. Answer the following as an essay:**

1. “Write a couplet, if you dare, in Malayalam.” Who challenges the poet? Why?
2. “At night you open your hair in Malayalam.” Explain.

## AGNI (FIRE)

**Sithara S.**

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

#### SITHARA S. (1972- Present)

Sithara is a well-known Malayalam short story writer and translator. Her short works have fetched her the Kendra Sahitya Academy Award. She is the winner of the Geetha Hiranyan Endowment Prize and the Katha Award for Malayalam literature. Her short stories focus on issues of sexuality and patriarchy while subtly and uniquely identifying women's positions as inferior to men's in terms of status, privilege, and power. Like many other feminists, Sithara lives in a dystopian world that demonstrates patriarchy's rejection of female freedom and space. Her characters are individuals determined to control their own fates. They are rebels with a twist. They simply brush off embarrassing circumstances and make fun of gender stereotypes. Another feature of her characterization is that her protagonists look for their true selves.

Some of her significant short story collections are *Agniyum Kathakalum* (2000), *Veshapakarcha* (2002), *Nrithasala* (2003), *Edam* (2007), *Ushnagrahangalude Sneham* and so on.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY

In "Agni," sexuality and man-woman relationships are seen from a fresh angle. It presents the story of a rape victim who refuses to be destroyed or treated with contempt or persecution. She decides to punish the wrongdoers on her own without waiting for help

from anyone and develops an exceptional method of revenge that the reader can attest to. The narrative is an attack against the mistreatment and commodification of the female body. After being gang raped, the protagonist, Priya, refuses to allow herself to become emotionally and physically withered. She makes use of her right to speak frankly about her sexual experiences and humiliates the aggressors by pointing out their inability to satisfy her sexually. The narrative is told from a feminist angle, and the institutions of authority and the legal system that conspire to subjugate women are vehemently attacked. It draws attention to the societal flaws that deprive victims who are women of justice and dignity. The title alluded to two contrasting interpretations of 'agni' (fire), namely Sanjeev's fire of desire and Priya's fire of vengeance. Jayasree R. K., an English teacher and ardent feminist activist, is the translator of "Agni."

## **ANALYSIS OF THE STORY**

"Agni" recounts the story of a rape victim, her nonviolent response to the rapists, and how Priya, the protagonist, protests against the harsh and cruel deed as a victim. The victim never displays any remorse for this because it was not her fault. "No one causes rape, but the rapists," she reiterates. Clearly, the incident illustrates this reality. Here, she finds immense satisfaction in her meagre triumphs that come from questioning masculinity.

The protagonist of the novel, Priya, responds and reacts to her circumstances. The story is written and presented in an unique style, and it features the topic of women and the problems pertaining to, around, and within the so-called "weaker sex." The author focuses on how sexuality and gender are oppressed in public spaces. Her character does not want to follow the well-travelled paths of submission and servitude. Due to the circumstances, her female characters revolt and fight against the

injustices that the dominant patriarchal society perpetuates against them. Instead of taking their own lives out of humiliation and disgrace, they attempt to advance in life.

They never aim to waste time worrying about the future. Here, the "Agni" story enriches a conversation on the unusual portrayal of a rape incident. The short story describes the issues related to gangrape, verbal and physical assault, humiliation, revenge, and the issue of masculinity.

As Sanjeev, Ravi, and the stripling gangrape Priya, she feels like "the most humiliated woman on earth." Even her menstrual blood, which was previously only her property, has been claimed by someone else. Her chastity is questioned by society. Despite the fact that she feels like the most powerless woman, she goes to work as normal. She meets the people who recently molested her.

They threaten to kill her and her own people and warn her not to reveal anything to anyone. They then stopped her and inquired about the day before. She is aware of how challenging it is to please the masculine ego. Sanjeev, the first to rape her, questioned after a torrent of abuse. How did you feel the day before? His smiling face darkened into a scowl with her unexpected reply: "You were not simply up to the mark. You don't pack enough punch. I don't think you will ever be able to satisfy a woman." Priya is aware that society will not uphold her rights. She herself has to work for her own justice and upliftment. She tries to forget the incident that happened to her the previous day but the very next day these three people are waiting for her. She will have to offend and conquer them.

Then she turned towards Ravi, "But I liked you very much. You are a real man." Touching his cheek lightly once and looking from one face to the other, both of which were full of suspicion and

consternation, she climbed the steps to her office. This befitting reply in fact questions and ridicules the masculinity of Sanjeev.

Priya very well knows that she cannot defeat them physically, but mentally by torturing them, she is replying in this manner. She tries to hurt them. A woman is always burning with desire, just like the flame of fire, she is also burning and brimming in her life. Priya has her own desires but the trauma will continue to haunt her till her last. She doesn't wish to surrender her highly spirited self to those who had taken the claim even on her menstrual blood. Priya stands as an epitome of a spirited girl who wishes to fight against all odds with her small triumphs and sweet revenges. She is pushed aside from the mainstream society.

Language is being the spokesperson of a particular locale; it is capable of rendering the flavour and favour of local. Thus, "Fire" is a tale of revenge and small triumphs. The title is perfect in every sense.

Contrary to the expectations of the conservative society and the inquisitive readers, the protagonist of the story Priya, does not even show a stain of depression, making her confined to the corner of the house. Priya, here, is found to subvert all the conventional practices. From the very next week onwards, Priya goes everyday to Sanjeev's telephone booth to make phone calls. She calls up all her friends whose numbers she knows and talks to them, watching in a spirit of revenge. A feeling of inferiority kept creeping over his face, every time he saw her. Each time she reminds herself that, there is nothing which gives greater satisfaction than the small triumph. Priya is well aware that she cannot physically abuse them. So, Priya tries to find happiness in small and simple ways by humiliating Sanjeev and Ravi.

Priya's revenge took the form of love and she told him that she likes him. Ravi was the stranger with lust in his eyes and that started haunting her thoughts as well. It was Ravi, who was her first man in every sense. It was only later that she realised it was him. But, when Ravi dominated Priya that day, it was a sense of shame that she felt at first. But she began to like him and felt that the other's acts of domination only provided a yardstick to measure him, which is the attitude of masculinity.

Her blood and tears could crave for him. He was in the prison cell she could not afford to leave. Ravi turns out to be in a prison cell and his love for her becomes revenge for Priya. Ravi was confused about how to deal with Priya. Ravi has dominated her or locked her up in a prison cell of physical humiliation. Ravi captivated Priya in the prison cell. Priya torments Ravi mentally. She evoked a feeling of love in him. Priya saw the tears in his eyes and Ravi sat watching her smile. Her love is now capable of hurting him. Priya has emerged triumphant in showing vengeance in her simple satisfactory ways.

## **GLOSSARY**

Reiterate	: say something again or a number of times, typically for emphasis or clarity.
Stripling	: somebody who is no longer a boy and not yet a man; a very young man
Nightmare	: a frightening or unpleasant dream.
Scowl	: an angry or bad-tempered expression
Lust	: strong sexual desire
Dominate	: to rule
Crave	: a powerful desire for something

Beckon	: make a gesture with the hand, arm, or head to encourage or instruct someone to approach or follow.
Sprout	: spring up, start to grow
Retracting	: withdrawing

## **QUESTIONS**

### **I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:**

1. What was Sanjeev employed as?
2. What was Ravi's threat to Priya on the morning after he raped her?
3. Who all tried to rape Priya?
4. "Your love is my revenge." Who said this?
5. When did Priya feel that she is the most dispossessed woman on earth?

### **II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph:**

1. "I must be the most humiliated woman on the earth." What made Priya think like this?
2. "There is no sense of shame in your mind even while you're being shamed." What made Priya think like this?
3. What was Ravi's reason for humiliating Priya?

### **III. Answer the following questions as an essay:**

1. How do you evaluate Priya's decision of taking revenge against criminals in a novel way by just walking from all legal assistance?
2. How is Priya successful in her small triumphs and revenge?

## **PICTURES DRAWN ON WATER**

**K. Satchidanandan**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

#### **K. SATCHIDANANDAN (1946 – Present)**

Satchidanandan is a bilingual poet, critic, playwright, editor, translator, fiction writer and travel writer. He started his career as a teacher of English at KKT M College, Pulloot and later on moved to Christ College and taught there till he voluntarily retired from this post in 1992 to take up the editorship of *Indian Literature*, the English journal of the Sahitya Academy. Later, he held the position of Secretary of Sahitya Academy. He also served as a Professor in the Translation Department of Indira Gandhi National Open University. At present, he is the President of Kerala Sahitya Academy and lives in Thrissur.

His poetic career began in the late 1960s and has crossed half a century. He is one of the founders of Malayalam ‘after modernist’ poetry. He is noted for his universal outlook and appreciation of poetry from all over the globe, constantly opening doors for himself and others.

“In Satchidanandan, one notices a great modernity, a chosen but simple terminology of immediate understanding. Something like a non-rhetorical dialogue with himself and with the reader, a wealth of symbology, a fascinating smoothness of the verses, a subtle irony.” – wrote critic Carlo Savini in an introduction to the Italian translation of Satchidanandan’s poetry. For

Satchidanandan, writing offers a remarkable and effective form of dissent. To him freedom means freedom to oppose. He has written extensively about the dangers of the rise of Hindutva ideology and globalisation. Women, environment, and marginalized are the abiding concerns of his poetry.

Through translation, he has broadened the readership of many world poets and enriched the resources of Malayalam poetry. A torch-bearer of the socio-cultural revolution that redefined Malayalam literature in 1970's and 80's. Satchidanandan has advocated the rights of the oppressed, minorities, marginalised castes and classes and women. He is a pioneer in Women's Studies in Malayalam. He coined the term "*pennezhuthu*" (Women's writing). He continues his activism for a just and egalitarian society.

He has sixty poetry collections to his credit. Out of which, twenty-three poetry collections are in Malayalam and an equal number of translations of poetry, plays, essays and travelogues and four critical works in English. His poems have been translated into nineteen Indian and international languages.

His latest books of poetry in English include *What I Write*, *Misplaced Objects and Other Poems*, *The Missing Rib*, *Not Only the Oceans*, *The Whispering Tree*, *No Borders for Me* and *Singing in the Dark*.

As a translator, he introduced Malayali readers to Garcia Lorca, Alexander Block, Pablo Neruda, Cesar Vallejo, Bertolt Brecht, Paul Celan, Zbigniew Herbert, Eugenio Montale, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Mahmud Darwish and Yehuda Amichai.

Satchidanandan is the winner of thirty five awards, prizes and honours including four Kerala Sahitya Academy (for poetry, drama, travel writing and criticism), three National Awards,

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Friendship Medal from the Government of Poland and Knighthood of the Order of Merit from the Government of Italy and a Dante Medal from Italy.

### **(POEM)**

#### **PICTURES DRAWN ON WATER**

##### **AS WE LOOK ON**

As we look on water comes in

Like a long-known neighbour:

Through the gate to the courtyard

From the steps to the corridor

From the drawing room to the store room

Without caring to announce its name,

Even forgetting it is a river:

“Sorry, nowhere else to go”, water crisply

tells the awe-struck people of the house.

Slowly it enters the kitchen, devours

Whatever it sees, goes to the bedroom,

Stretches itself behind the door left ajar.

Then slowly, slowly, it wakes up,

Straightens its back and scares the residents

With its exposed muscles.

It breaks fast on whatever it comes across,

Touches the ceiling with its swollen belly,

Until the people in the house exclaim in fear,

“We shall leave, we shall.”

### **THE BOAT**

A sick mother, pregnant daughter,

A son who looks after all at home.

The rescue-boat has space left only for one.

The three quarrel among themselves,

Not to get into the boat,

But for the other to climb in.

Tragedy makes human beings selfless

And death, fearless.

## **THE CAT**

The cat abandoned in the house  
Saw fishes coming close, tickling  
And laughing at him.  
Can preys laugh like this?  
And transience spread its net so fast?

When there is no branch or wall to climb upon.  
Even a cat becomes a philosopher.

## **SLATE**

Sitting under the water in the vacant house  
The child's slate remembered:  
The history of evolution that lay hidden  
In the rock from which it was cut,  
The words and sketches scrawled  
On its grey surface by tiny hands.

Now the slate is thinking of creating  
A new universe within its four wooden frames

It dreams of a sky where

Letters rise like stars.

‘Let water recede. Let the sun return.

I will again be a part of the earth,

And thus, of infinity.’

### **SLUSH**

The slush gathered in the house

Is full of turbid memories, now solid.

Fields. Paddy. Pond. Lily.

Blue flowers in the harvested fields.

Children racing to gather flowers,

Little flower-baskets hanging from their necks.

Parrots like flying green coral leaves.

Yellow butterflies as if on fire.

The tranquil high noon of grazing cows.

The dawn of men and bulls.

Dark hands sowing seeds.

The lean hands of the rain.

The first fertile day of the earth  
When it was burnt out and it had rained,  
Turning the soil into slush.  
The first blade of grass.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM**

In the wake of the devastating flood that hit Kerala in 2018, the poem "Pictures Drawn on Water" was created. This poem is divided into five sections, each of which is devoted to a particular stage of the flood. The poet masterfully draws a comparison between the approach of flood waters and a trespasser who enters a home, eats, takes a nap, and then orders the occupants to leave. This analogy illustrates how a monsoon that was forecast to be just another typical one suddenly transformed into a violent downpour and caused devastation in the state. The next brief segment makes a statement on the people's bravery and resiliency in the face of a tragedy. The poet wants us to think that hope beams like the sun over all suffering. Slush, the last section, is a superb work of environmental poetry. The poet makes a subtle allusion to what we lost that is now preserved in the recollection of water's slush. The author of the poem translates it from Malayalam.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE POEM**

In the part 'As We Look On', the poet describes the coming of flood (water) like a long -known neighbour. The water enters through the gate to the courtyard and then goes inside the house climbing the steps to the corridor, drawing room and store room

as if familiar with the place. It does not introduce its name and forget that it is a river. Here, the water is personified as a neighbour. Later, it informs the surprised residents of the house that it is sorry as it has no other place to go.

Later the water enters the kitchen, relishes whatever it sees and then goes to the bedroom to rest itself behind the door which is left open. In the process, gradually it wakes up and stretches and scares the residents with its power. In this part, the poet portrays the threats caused by flood to the people. The water shows its fierce nature until people leave the house out of fear.

In the next section titled ‘The Boat’, the poet explains the selfless attitude of the people in the face of tragedy. In this part, the poet depicts the situation when space is left only for one in the rescue-boat. There are three people- a sick mother, pregnant daughter and a son who looks after his family. They quarrel among themselves not to get into the boat but to help the other one to climb in. This part highlights that “tragedy makes human beings selfless and death fearless.”

In the part titled ‘the Cat’, the poet describes the condition of an abandoned cat in the house. It saw fish coming close, tickling and laughing at him. So, the poet asks if preys can laugh like this and he also talks about the impermanence of life. Usually, fish run away from the cat out of fear. But here the cat remains helpless. The poet says that even “a cat becomes a philosopher” when there is no branch or wall to climb upon. Here the poet is questioning the law of nature. The relationship between the predator (Cat) and the prey (fish) was defined by nature. But this calamity (flood) has distorted or nullified this law of nature at least temporarily as we see the cat is helpless due to the flood. In this context, the cat has become a philosopher as it stares at its own fate of being made a helpless creature by nature itself compared to a fish in the water.

In the next part titled ‘Slate’, the poet talks about the child’s slate. He expresses the condition of the child’s slate in an abandoned house in the wake of flood. Slate remembers the stories of evolution written on the layers of the stone it had been carved out from. So just like a slate, the people affected by the flood might also be thinking about the hardships of their forefathers and their resilience through ages. As the slate wishes to start on a new journey of letters (as stars in the sky), the flood affected people might also be thinking of starting life afresh. Here again the ‘slate’ is personified. Here the poet ends on a hopeful note saying that the water will soon recede and the sun will return with hope and the slate says that it will be part of the earth and thus infinity once again.

In the concluding part titled ‘Slush’ is a piece of ecological poetry. After the withdrawal of the flood, the slush (liquid mud) gathered in the house has become solid and the house is full of chaotic memories. The poet talks about children running to gather flowers, particularly, blue flowers in the harvested fields. His memories are full of greenery- fields, paddy, pond and lily. He also remembers little flower baskets hanging from their necks. Yellow butterflies appear to be on fire. The poet also talks about the farmers who graze their cows in the pastures. They work hard on the fields and sow seeds on the land and the plants grow depending upon the rain it gets. Later he describes the first productive day of the earth when it was burnt out and the soil turned into a slush due to rain. The first blade of grass sprouts. In this part the poet talks about greenery and ecological balance that is maintained after the devastating flood. This part portrays the beautiful side of nature. Hence, the poet reminds us of the importance of nature in our existence and the various ecological concerns which affect us badly are unfortunately the by-product of our own actions.

The poem is written in free verse style. Major themes discussed in the poem are resilience of human beings, their ability to resolve and dream about new life or future. Their experience of flood is now mere memory.

## **GLOSSARY**

Devour : eat or swallow hungrily, gobble down

“Sorry, nowhere

else to go” : an allusion to the closed waterways and abandoned watershed systems.

Abandoned : forsaken, deserted

Prey : an animal that is hunted, victim

Transience : the quality of impermanence

Slate : School children in primary classes use slate-pieces in wooden frames to write on.

Slush : liquid mud

Scrawl : to write or draw

Turbid : obscure, opaque

Tranquil : peaceful, quiet

Grazing : feeding on grass

Sowing : scattering over land

Fertile : productive

Blade : leaf

## **QUESTIONS**

### **I. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two:**

1. How does water come into the house?
2. Why do the three people quarrel as the boat arrives?
3. What makes the cat a philosopher?
4. What does the slate remember?
5. What happened to the slush gathered in the house?

### **II. Write a paragraph on the following:**

1. Describe the coming of water into the houses?
2. What are the memories of the slush gathered in the house?
3. “The flood makes the people selfless and fearless.”  
Comment.

### **III. Write an essay on the following:**

1. Describe how Satchidanandan uses the deluge as a metaphor for social and ecological concerns.
2. Comment on the changes that the flood brings about.

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**SECOND SEMESTER BA/B Sc./ BCom DEGREE  
EXAMINATION**

**MODEL QUESTION PAPER  
(CBCSSUG)**

**Common Course - English**

**ENG2AO4: READINGS ON KERALA**

**Time: 2.5 Hours**

**Maximum Marks: 80**

**Section A**

**Answer the following questions. Each carries two marks  
(Ceiling 25)**

1. Malabar Manual was first published in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Name three early tribes of Kerala.
3. Kunchan Nambiar belongs to which genre of writing?
4. Who translated *Indulekha* into English?
5. How many slokas are there in *Athmopadeshashathakam*?
6. "Not a single letter is seen on my race," are the words of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Name the newspaper founded by Vakkom Moulavi.
8. Which event is described as "Laying claim to the public space" in *Ayyankali The Dalit Leader of Organic Protest*?

9. Kunhathol Amma is a character in \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Who is known as Beypore Sultan?
11. Name the first feature film in Malayalam.
12. “There’s no word for “despair” in Malayalam.” Who wrote this?
13. Who is the lead character in *Agni*?
14. Who translated “Rain at Heart”?
15. Which work by Edasseri received the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award?

### Section B

**Answer the following questions. Each carries five marks  
(Ceiling: 35)**

16. Define the concept of religion according to Sree Narayana Guru.
17. Irony in Christian Heritage.
18. Describe the socio-political background of Kuttipuram Bridge.
19. Significance of Swadeshabhimani in Kerala History.
20. Describe the context of the *Daughter of Humanity*.
21. Describe the origin of the word Kerala, according to William Logan.
22. *Indulekha* as a modern novel.

23. Comment on the relationship between Myth and Literature.

### **Section C**

**Answer any two questions. Each carries ten marks**

24. Describe the social, political and literary renaissance of Kerala inspired by Narayana Guru, Ayyankali, Poyikayil Appachan and Vakkom Moulavi.
25. Read *Agni* as a feminist story.
26. Discuss the history of Malayalam Cinema.
27. Reflect on the lifestyle of early tribal people of Kerala.