

IASTAM

INDIA NEWSLETTER

Communiqué

A Tribute - Shri P. R. Krishnakumarji

- » Pre Note 2
- » Dr. Ashok Vaidya 6
- » Shri Chandubhai Bhanushali 7
- » Dr. Indira Bhalchandran 8
- » Prof. G. G. Gangadharan 9
- » Vd. Rammanohar 11
- » Mrs. Shailaja Chandra 13
- » Shri Anil Kumar 14
- » Dr. DBA Narayana 15

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Connecting Systems; Bridging Disciplines

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"Bridges symbolize
change and flexibility"

- Mehmet Murat ildan

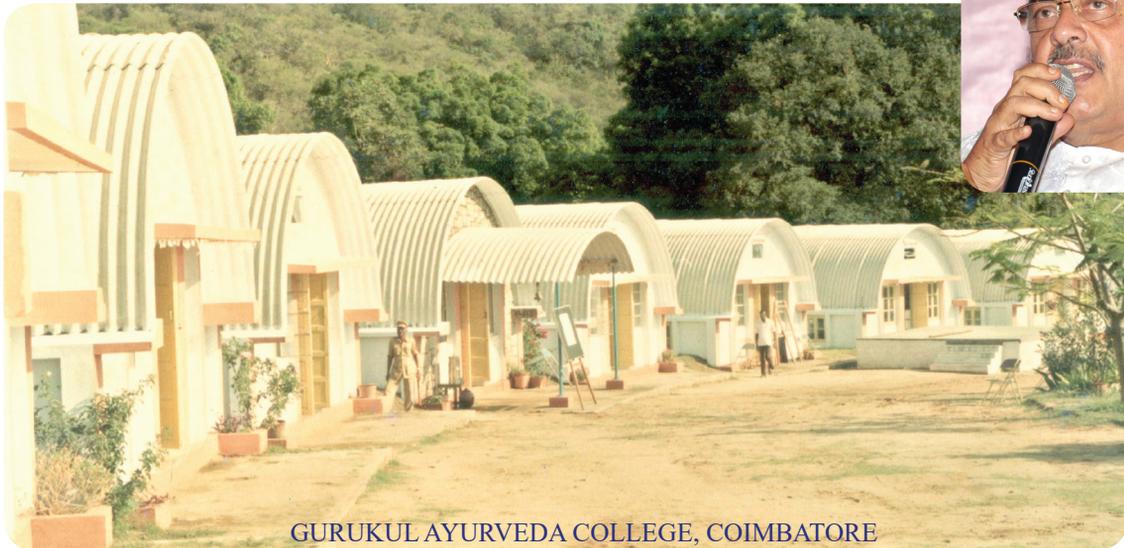
† Due to the lockdown printing and postal services were not available.
We are happy to bring you this issue after a gap of three months



Shri P. R. Krishnakumar (1951 - 2020)

A TRIBUTE

Dream, Vision and Reality



GURUKUL AYURVEDA COLLEGE, COIMBATORE

This issue of IASTAM Newsletter is dedicated to the memory of
Shri P. R. Krishnakumarji,
Founder Regional Secretary, IASTAM Pandit Shiv Sharma Awardee and
Our Ardent Supporter.

PRE NOTE

स्वप्नद्रष्टा, दीर्घद्रष्टा, कर्मद्रष्टा **P. R. KRISHNAKUMAR**
A SWAPNADRISHTA, DEERGHADRISHTA AND KARMADRISHTA

Dr. Narendra Bhatt

Vignettes

I met Shri Krishnakumarji for the first time when I was conference secretary of the Asian Conference on Traditional Asian Medicine [ACTAM] held in Mumbai between March 6th to 9th in 1983. The Asian Meet - ACTAM - was organised in response to the choice of Indonesia instead of India, of the international body (dominated by the then American approach) for ICTAM II. I still remember P. R. Krishnakumar strongly supporting the conference. Within days I was invited to speak at the Seminar on 'Science & Health for All By 2000 AD' organized by him under the aegis of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Ancient Insights & Modern Discoveries Project at Kochi between March 14th to 15th, 1983. It turned out to be a stimulating meet with the participation of several stalwarts of Ayurveda - Prof. Udupa, Prof. P. J. Deshpande, Prof. R. H. Singh and Prof. Vinayak J. Thaker on one hand and prominent experts like Dr. Keshwani (Jaslok) and several acclaimed neurosurgeons and physicians from Kerala chanting Sanskrit stanzas in full rhythms on the other hand and Ayurvedic principles being discussed in a pragmatic way. Within months thereafter he organized a *Workshop in a unique way on 'Traditional Systems of Medicine (Ayurved and Unani) and Primary Healthcare'* by Arya Vaidyan Rama Varier Educational Foundation of Ayurved at Coimbatore in April 1984 where group meetings were held under trees in very sylvan settings. There we were exposed to his dream, his vision, and his action in the form of the 'Gurukula' pattern school for learning of Ayurveda. That environment reminded me of Sandipani Ashram as read in Ramayana. Having overheard my comment of it being a dream coming true, he immediately asked me to join him, using the very words, "lock, stock and barrel"! Being a hardcore Bombayite, I responded saying my dream would be to have a similar model in an urban setting. He smiled and said it was not going to be easy. Our temperaments clicked at that moment.

That one school has produced about a hundred Ayurvedic scholars, practitioners, teachers, and researchers having their unique identity and influences.

In 1984 he was part of the IASTAM group participating at ICTAM III held at Surabaya, Indonesia. This was the

first largest ever participation from the field of Ayurveda abroad. We had a get together before our departure at the Hotel Taj Mahal where as a coordinator, upon the advice of the travel agent I had to share the news of Malaysia being dropped from the itinerary due to visa related problems and the option of choosing between US or Australian Dollars as that was the norm by which foreign exchange was controlled in those days. Amidst anxious moments he was the first to understand my dilemma and opted for Australian dollars, a cue picked up by several others. That 11-day trip became the most memorable for most of us - presenting papers, getting connected with scholars from different parts of the world, visiting Bali, Bangkok and Singapore and developing comradeship. Since then a unique kinship developed between the two of us.

We were actively involved with several academic, research and healthcare delivery activities like LSPSS and FRLHT where Krishnakumarji was the true force behind it all. It was this commitment that enabled people like Darshan Shankar, Narendra Malhotra, Prof. B. V. Sathaye, Vaidya Ramesh Nanal, Vaidya Vilas Nanal, Bala Subramanyam, Vaidya Gangadharan, several others and me to get aligned.

He recognized the need for scientific inquiry and pioneered several landmark research activities.

Krishnakumarji was an able administrator who utilized his richness of resources and reach to authorities available to him in probably the most effective way with single minded commitment to developing Ayurveda. Simultaneously, Coimbatore became a point of visit for most of the scholars from abroad either from the humanities or from the sciences to visit and several times I had occasions to accompany them. He made a profound impact and his influence could be felt as soon as one entered Coimbatore. Habitually wanting to reach the airport before time I would often be caught looking at the watch uneasily and he would inevitably quip, "the flight will not leave without you" but would always ensure that when anyone arrived at the airport someone from the airline would be present to take care of the smooth transit.

Like several of my peers he was a little taken aback at my decision to quit teaching Kayachikitsa to join Zandu

PRENOTE

but after sharing my frustrations regarding the academic situation with him and my passion for research, the kinship bond took a new turn for the better.

We kept on meeting at times at Coimbatore or at my clinic in Mumbai which he visited 3-4 times or in Delhi where at the few government meetings he was at, I caught glimpses of a strong-willed man evolving his own strategies to deal with the authorities.

He provided strong leadership to the Ayurvedic industry in Kerala and was fully acquainted with my involvement in the activities of Ayurvedic Drug Manufacturers' Association [ADMA] and always extended support when needed. He tried to complement the activities of ADMA and the Kerala Association which was during those days already active.

We were also together at other international delegations to represent Ayurveda. I wish we had more such stints. I remember talking to him on different issues on several occasions and he was always incredibly supportive.

World Economic Forum

Unlike most trade-minded industrialists he was a sincere entrepreneur and was well connected with industry forums. In 2001 he succeeded in placing Ayurveda in the session on Health as a part of the World Economic Forum meet that was held in Delhi. He suggested my name and called to talk about Ayurvedic potential and my views about the situation. Along with two other top pharma heads I shared my views. To my immense surprise, of all the proceedings of the day, 'The Economic Times' put that dissemination of views on its front page. He felt immensely happy.

Journal - Ancient Science of Life, the journal from AVP had a unique characteristic in that, when he realised it was in need of change, he did not hesitate to reconsider it. Even when he was in London undergoing medical treatment, he coordinated my visit to Coimbatore and the entire presentation which was held in a systematic manner was video-taped in order to be sent to him. It was suggested that they continue with ASL but the proposal for a new journal *Tejas* was also simultaneously mooted which was to be published with stringent norms, but this has remained unfulfilled.

Father's Centenary Function - I also recollect the time when he invited me with Dr. Ashok Vaidya and Dr. Bhushan Patwardhan to help prepare the scientific program for the Centenary celebration of his father. Later he ensured that we participated while simultaneously acknowledging the inputs given in the concluding session.

During his Padmashri Felicitation held in Mumbai at the hands of Hon. Dr. D. Y. Patil in Mumbai he made it a point for me to be present. He was an emotional man who connected with the heart.

Industry Liaison - I happened to professionally represent the proposals of two different organizations allying with AVP for specific activities but somehow this did not fructify due to a lack of alliance on some matters but he realised that my effort was to bring in realistic changes and gains. Thereafter a brief exchange to get associated was taken up but again it did not materialise in concrete form.

AN ENIGMATIC VISIONARY

Krishnakumarji seemed to balance the triple roles of *Swapnadrishhta*, *Deerghadrishhta* and *Karmadrishhta* with equanimity. To dream with vision and ensure its realization is not easy. He was blessed to be able to do it naturally. He was imbued in spirituality and had a multidimensional personality. He displayed a penchant for logical reasoning while upholding the great traditional knowledge and role that Ayurveda could present to the world. In him I observed a mixed following of both, Adi Shankaracharya and Swami Vivekanand.

As a man of action, he was steadfast in principles and found it almost impossible to compromise. Being a man of strong views, he never flinched from expressing his opinion even at the expense of being seen as authoritarian. He was a modernist whose visibility took on subtler forms in applicability and utility without restricting itself to looks, shape, or hues. He was a man brimming with ideas; and there were times when it was difficult to cope with him but he managed it successfully perhaps, because of his equation with authority.

His belief in astrology helped in facing some of the challenges, I believe.

His legacy has been rendered more poignant by the fact that he was a lone rider who strode forward as a warrior with his uncompromising attitude and strong belief in self thereby exhorting us all to commit ourselves to pursue the model of passionate inspiration that enabled him to achieve so much.

My last conversation with him was just a few weeks ago when he shared his concerns about AYUSH and the Covid - 19 coverage in the newspapers. We had a brief discussion. He had asked me to pen down my views which he could then take forward. I shared my thoughts with him through a personal letter. But unfortunately, his illness must have played the spoiler as I did not receive any update.

His passing away has genuinely left a void which can never be filled in the truest sense. We seem to be losing the battle in the cause of Ayurveda when we lose leaders like him.

PRK and IASTAM: IASTAM could have been at AVP, Coimbatore but for

Shri P. R. Krishnakumar was probably the youngest participant at the ICTAM at Canberra, Australia in 1979 where the seeds of formation of IASTAM were sown. He was the founder Regional Secretary for the Southern region of IASTAM India and he believed in the advocacy of Pandit Shiv Sharma. Many IASTAM office bearers like Charles Leslie, Mitchell Weiss, Ken Zysk, Wuzastyck, Rahul Peter Das and others would always pay him a visit as Coimbatore was centre of learning for them and Arya Vaidya Pharmacy played a stellar role in this.

When IASTAM required to look for new location with strong organisational support, I remember talking

to him when he had sent Dr. Ram Manohar for a presentation to the committee and senior members. Among six proposals the committee had chosen AVP. His prolonged ill health at that time was the only reason why IASTAM did not shift to Coimbatore.

The most important event according to me, was his receiving the Pandit Shiv Sharma Oration Award as he seemed to have been the most deserving candidate to receive the award. His passion and commitment were obvious even on that occasion. He kept aside his written speech and spoke impromptu, which was tremendously motivating, offering such a clear picture to all of us but chiefly to the younger generation in the audience. ○○○



**IASTAM
AWARD
FUNCTION
2012**



ACTAM 1983



IASTAM PANDIT SHIV SHARMA
AWARD ORATION 2012



A Life of Sankalpa-Siddhi: How to Commemorate Maha Vaidya P. R. Krishna Kumarji

- Dr. Ashok D. B. Vaidya,
Research Director, Kasturba-Health Society-Medical Research Centre

“If one realizes that everlasting happiness can only come from within for no reason, then one starts mastering the knowledge of how unique a creature we are and what an amazing person we can become... a chip of the block-the Master, who created us and thereby we ourselves become a creator... We will start becoming what Maharshi Ramana called, ‘Performer of action through inaction’ and our power of intention (*Sankalpa Sakthi*) gets sharpened and focused. Our mission, prompted by the creator, starts getting manifested. Therefore, surrender and we start understanding and appreciating our own life and thereby life starts becoming meaningful.” – Dr. P.R. Krishna Kumar. (PRKK)

When I met Krishna Kumarji for the first time, some decades back, for a meeting to bring out a monograph of selected medicinal plants, I was struck by his sattvic aura. Unlike some agitated and anguished Ayurveda leaders I had met, he exuded spontaneous calmness and a strong will. We struck a friendship that lasted all these years, nurtured by a common spiritual world-view and mutual reverence for the individual domains of knowledge and expertise. His inspiring leadership of guiding the monograph project led to the CHEMEXCIL publication “Selected Medicinal Plants of India”, prepared by our team at the Swami Prakashanand Ayurveda Research Centre. Dr. K.M. Parikh (Zandu) and Sri Anand Puranik (Dhootpapeshwar) carried this monograph to the regulatory authorities of the EU, UK and USA, to convince them that there was enough evidence of usage-safety, activity and therapeutic use of these Indian plants. The efforts contributed to the development of the dietary supplements, EU herbal guidelines and eventually to botanical drugs. The rest is the huge success story of exports of medicinal plants, extracts and products globally. PRKK’s *Sankalpa* was fulfilled, with little credit given to him for this revolution.

The quotation of PRKK, cited above, bespeaks of the harmony he had realized in his words, works and life. His interests were wide and socio-culturally contextual to the contemporary problems. Being deeply rooted in the vedic culture and shastras, he was a living embodiment of ethical values, insistence on equity, civic behaviour, humane care, openness to collaborate and firmness in Ayurveda-activism. These qualities permitted the very first project on a study of the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, sponsored by WHO, through ICMR. Ayurveda’s contributions in rheumatology were accelerated significantly. With Ram Manohar, PRKK could also get NIH(US) involved in controlled trials. One more *Sankalpa* was actualized.

PRK’s initiatives in yoga, education, health camps, cultural activities and for the vision of Ayurveda are well-known and eulogized in newspapers, magazines and journals. His interest in music and devotional music is relatively less known. His photograph on internet with Satya Sairam, Ravi Shankar, Bhimsen Joshi, Yesudas Jalota etc. is a collector’s item.

Whenever I visited PRKK at his institutions, he would take me to the temple of the complex. We would spend some time there silently but praying fervently. That communion is a nostalgic memory. For the CSIR-NMITLI programme of new antidiabetic drug discovery from Ayurveda, AVPRF was one of our research partners. PRKK’s

critical inputs were quite useful. This integrative approach to drug discovery has to be pursued further as a tribute to PRKK. His initiative for clinical case records RUDRA also needs a national extension. That would facilitate serendipitous discoveries during observational therapeutics.

I met PRKK last on the first National Ayurveda Day (2016), when he was honored with *Sri Dhanvantari Puraskar* by the Ministry of AYUSH. It was a privilege for me to deliver Dhanvantari Oration, he being in the audience. He greeted Rama and me with much affection. I thanked him for taking care of the



problem of psoriasis of my niece, who visited Chikisalayam on a regular basis and found much relief, over the years.

How does one commemorate and celebrate so wonderful a life lived by PRKK? At the central government level, we can initiate an oration award in the name of PRKK for a distinguished young vaidya-scientist who has fulfilled some of the visionary dreams of PRKK. Once he had said, "To fulfill your dreams, first you have to wake up." COVID-19 is a strong wakeup call for the overhaul of national healthcare and health/medical/Ayurvedic education. At the state level, both Tamil Nadu and Kerala can support some of the major ventures started by PRK and expand those activities. IASTAM has enough number of orations commemorating eminent vaidyas and scientists. I would suggest that IASTAM can initiate to award research fellowships in memory of PRKK, to outstanding postgraduates.

Lastly, it is so appropriate that PRKK was a great admirer of Swami Vivekananda, the father of "*Bhartiya Renaissance*". A visionary sage, like PRKK, initiates many novel missions. Only some of them get fructified in his lifetime. Others are like seeds of banyan trees which would sprout much later. That is why Indulal cites PRKK's ethos, "each work has to pass through these stages – ridicule, opposition and acceptance. Those who think ahead of their time are sure to be misunderstood"¹. May his life inspire the future generations to fulfil his vision.

Reference:

1. Indulal U, A true plural being-A life profile of P.R. Krishna Kumar. *J Ayur Integr Med* 2011; 2:32-34



Shri P. R. Krishnakumar

- *Shri Chandubhai Bhanushali,*
President - ADMA

I, Mr. Chandrakant Bhanushali, President - ADMA would like to share some of the achievements of PadmaShri, Dr. P. R. Krishnakumar.

Dr. Krishnakumar was the Managing Director of The Arya Vaidya Pharmacy (Coimbatore) Limited, a premier ayurvedic institution in the country involved in production of quality medicines, promotion of Ayurvedic education, research and clinical services and also the Chairman of CARE Keralam (Confederation for Ayurvedic Renaissance-Keralam Pvt.Ltd), assumed office as Chancellor of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women on the forenoon of 23rd November.2015.

He studied Ayurveda at Shoranur Ayurveda College, Kerala and took up promotion and propagation of Ayurveda as his life mission. The Government of India honoured him in the year 2009 with the prestigious 'PadmaShri award' and in 2011 Kuvempu University conferred honorary doctorate on him, for his contributions in the field of Ayurveda.

His leadership has ushered into new avenues like:

- o Succeeded in creating an awareness about Ayurveda at the World Health Organisation (WHO) and thereby made a great breakthrough for the Science to be made known world-over
- o Set up the first Gurukula Ayurvedic College in the country.
- o Launched a popular journal of Ayurveda in English in the 1970's.
- o Established the Ayurvedic Trust Hospital and Research Institute at Coimbatore and also set up a number of centres and Joint Institutions in many parts of the country in collaboration with Hindustan Lever Ltd., Taj Group etc. He visited more than 50 countries promoting the cause of Ayurveda.

He is recipient of many prestigious awards such as Confederation of Indian Industry's prestigious "Glorious Captain of Industry" award, "Pathanjali Ayurved Gaurav Samman (2010-2011)" by Shri Swami Baba Ramdev, "Kulapthi Munshi Award"- 2011 by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Coimbatore Kendra, "The Iconic Ambassador of Coimbatore" by the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Coimbatore, "Vaidya Sundarlal Joshi Smriti Prabandhana Puraskara" on behalf of the Mahagujarat Medical Society and J.S.Ayurveda College & P.D.Patel Ayurveda Hospital, Nadiad and First Dhanvantari Award -2016 by Government of India for lifetime achievement in Ayurveda.

We, managing Committee and all the members of ADMA pray to almighty God to give the strength to bear the irreparable loss to the members of the family and entire Ayurvedic fraternity.



Dr. P. R. Krishna Kumar, A Remembrance

- Dr. Indira Bhalchandran,
Project Director, Centre for medicinal Plants Research, Arya Vaidya Sala

The passing away of Dr. P. R. Krishnakumar at this juncture when Ayurveda is getting set to open its wings of global reach with added vigour and enthusiasm will, indeed, be perceived as a major loss by all those who have been pinning their hopes on his tireless efforts in taking the science and practice of this Indian heritage to a wider horizon. For me, personally, it is also the departure of a good friend and professional wellwisher.

It was three decades ago in 1984 when I came in close contact with Dr. Krishnakumar during our travel to Surabaya in Indonesia for participating at the Conference organised by IASTAM (ICTAM). Thereafter, we have remained good friends all through these years and had many a occasion to exchange our views on various matters related not only to Ayurveda but to other aspects of human life and its predicaments. I have, in fact, derived much inspiration from watching his missionary zeal and visionary approach. He was an exceptional human being. He knew what his life mission was. And he did not spare himself any hardship while taking extraordinary efforts and while travelling that extra mile for achieving the goals that he had set for himself. And those goals were never set for accruing any personal gain for himself, but they were all set for establishing, nurturing and stabilising various institutions, organisations and movements, all of which had societal well-being as their thrust areas.

Dr. Krishnakumar's yeomen service in attempting to bring up the contemporary practices of Ayurveda to a global platform is well known. He did that as the head of a seven decades old Institution, by being a member and leader of several professional and functional Organisations like Care-Keralam, by engaging in discourses with global health leaders and also by purposefully liaising with the policy makers of the country. He inherited the reputed Arya Vaidya Pharmacy of Coimbatore from his illustrious father, Aryavaidyan P. V. Rama Varier and he expanded the scope and reach of that Institution by new initiatives. He partnered with WHO, National Institute of Health of USA, DST and DoE of India, in commencing innovative research in basic concepts of Ayurveda. Bringing up a new crop of young, enthusiastic, ardent and dedicated physicians of Ayurveda was his fervent yearning. The modern gurukula school that he set up at Thadakam near Coimbatore gave birth to a hundred or so competent physicians and they bear witness to the success of his passionate efforts. Until the onset of these difficult times of pandemic, he used to spend valuable hours wrested from his otherwise busy schedule in the company of young postgraduate students of Ayurveda during the Tatwaprakasini training workshops he used to organise for them. Just a couple of months ago he spoke to me over the phone expressing his anguish at the threat posed by the dwindling resource base of medicinal plants and enquiring about possible solutions.

A reminiscence on Dr. Krishnakumar, however brief it is, will not be complete without making a mention of the wide variety of other philanthropic and spiritual activities that he got himself proactively involved in. Kshetropasana Trust is an important one among several of his brain-children, which is established in a 20 acre premises at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. It is a multipurpose complex where a magnificent temple and an old age home are located. Apart from providing an effective platform for engaging people for attaining ultimate spiritual enlightenment, the Trust also engages itself in many activities of social relevance. It has succeeded in providing means of livelihood for a large number of individuals and families who have otherwise been part of disadvantaged segments of the Society. Many are the philanthropic activities the Trust has taken up for the social upliftment of the Community. A reference must also be made to the Dhanwantari Temple at Coimbatore. Apart from being a place for worshipping the presiding deity of Ayurveda, the Temple has also become a Centre for sponsoring and supporting classical art forms.

Dr. Krishnakumar was a multifaceted personality. One will always remember his most pleasant and elegant personality emanating such a lot of positivity impacting all those who are in his presence. Those who knew him closely would have seen him suffer from his long standing condition of ill health. He did not allow that health issue to come in the way of his focused and planned actions. He was a man of compassion with a ready willingness to provide succour to those who sought help. He was also a man of vision and a warrior of action. Many, like me, are his friends who have whole heartedly admired his achievements and now feel extremely sad at his untimely demise. Let the Heavenly Gods grant his soul ultimate peace !



Dr. P. R. Krishna Kumar – An Embodiment of Ayurveda

- Prof. (Dr.) G. G. Gangadharan,
Director, Ramaiah Indic Specialty Ayurveda - Restoration Hospital

Shri P.R. Krishna Kumar - many of us respectfully call him KK ji, is a man with multiple personalities. The man lived a many-faceted life, and contributed immensely several domains. He will be remembered eternally.

A recent history of Ayurveda would not be complete without a few chapters on KK ji. He did many things an ordinary individual would not dare to do. He lived life like a candle – giving light to everyone who came to him, wearing himself down.

Shri KK ji was born in 1951 to a great scholar, physician and philanthropist Arya Vaidyan P.V. Varier, who founded the Arya Vaidya Pharmacy in 1943. He completed his schooling in one of the most modern school (STANES) in Coimbatore. From there, he moved into a traditional form of education in Ayurveda in a well-known Ayurveda college in Shoranur, Kerala managed by the Ayurveda Samajam.

During the course of his Ayurvedic education, he became profoundly unhappy with the way Ayurveda was taught, and outspokenly rebelled against conventional institutional models of Ayurveda education that broke Ayurveda down into pieces, instead of in-depth, holistic, text-based education that was based on Darshanik principles.

He became the Administrative officer of AVP founded by his father, exploring the frontiers of Ayurveda as practiced then. He was saddened by the state of research and education, and thought unless the world rediscovers Ayurveda, it will never come become mainstream. Haunted by these ideas, he became a frequent visitor to Delhi where a branch of AVP was operating and at the tender age of 23, he visited every influential person he knew in Delhi. literally knocking on doors along the ‘corridors of power’ in Delhi. He went to the ICMR, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and ultimately the World Health Organization (WHO) at a time when there was not even an office for the WHO in India. But he managed to influence Dr Gunaratne, the then Regional Director of South-East Asia of WHO to accept a collaborative research with ICMR on Rheumatoid Arthritis based on Ayurveda principles.

The two giants viz., WHO and ICMR the international and national health leaders respectively came together to conduct a seven year long clinical trial on rheumatoid arthritis at Coimbatore between 1974 and 1981. Even though the study came out with promising results, due to various pressure groups within the system, the final results remain unpublished till date! However, this event broke the myth that Ayurveda is unscientific and also established that empirical verification of Ayurveda is possible.

The second and perhaps most important contribution of KK ji was to conceive, organise, establish and run a seven and a half year Ayurveda degree course - “Ayurvedacharya” – recognized by the CCIM and affiliated to the Madras University from 1978 to 1992, which ran as a successful pioneering and path breaking Ayurveda degree program where students and teachers lived together in a 70 acre campus adjoining the Western Ghats adorned by exquisite waterfalls and stunning mountains. With a daily program from 5 AM extending till 10 PM, students were introduced to the classical Darshanas, Sanskrit grammar and ancient Sanskrit literature, by gifted and experienced teachers and professionals. Students were also made to practice the ancient martial art of Kalaripayattu, Yoga, meditation and prayer as part of their daily regimen. The 10 batches of students who came out of the college have gone on to become torch bearers of Ayurveda across the world.

Krishnakumarji’s interest was not only in Ayurveda but also in India’s cultural heritage in toto. In association with Prof. Prema Pandurang, he established the Kshetropasana Trust to revive old temples, bring back temple rituals and culture attached to them. The trust also took over many unattended temples in the south and started Goshalas and organic farming in various places.

To revive the Indian visual and performing arts, he established Bharatamuni Foundation for Asian Culture in association with Ms. Padma Subrahmanyam, which enhanced benefits to Asian artists and those associated with puppet theater, painting and sculpture. “Sharanagathi” an old age home for unattended parents was another contribution of his.

To orient Ayurveda graduates to clinical practice, he started ‘Tatvaprakashini’ and ‘Karmaprakashini’, annual programs for theoretical and practical training in clinical Ayurveda. All over India, thousands of students have benefited from these programs.

The International Institute of Ayurveda (IIA) was established by him in the year 1980, the foundation stone of which was laid by the then president of India Dr Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy. “Ancient Science of Life” an international journal with a good impact factor was a product of IIA.

He had great faith in Jyothisha and many undiagnosed cases were diagnosed and treated with greater efficiency by removing the ‘blocks’ in individuals using Jyothisha Sastra as a complementary approach.

He also began a school where students are initiated into value based education and informal learning of Indian sciences in traditional ways together with conventional subjects in the current school curricula. He called this school ‘Divyam’.

He also established the Arsha Yoga Vidya Peetham Trust, where keen students were introduced to Ayurveda for eight years under a single Guru, in the model of the traditional Gurukula, which did not offer or place value upon a formal degree or registration to practice, but was solely an effort to gain knowledge and wisdom at a master’s feet.

He slept, probably for 4-5 hours a day, and began his daily interactions with students, disciples, friends and family from 4am. To some, insisted that they call him between 4 – 6 am in the mornings only!

The Padma Shri was awarded to him in 2009, though he deserved more. He received many accolades from National and International bodies for his yeoman service.

In 1980 in Canberra, Australia in a WHO conference he presented a path breaking paper on the role of Ayurveda in public health, a subject not explored well even today.

Many of his thoughts and activities were far ahead of his time and hence were ridiculed by the mediocre contemporary world, but proved to be of great value.

There are few books written about him in Malayalam. I hope more will be published in future. His institution the Arya Vaidya Pharmacy is a great ray of hope in the field of Ayurveda manufacturing and markets over 600 genuine classical products. It has a well-established R&D division, publication unit and a group of young and vibrant Vaidyas and support staff.

A person who was married to Ayurveda, but remained otherwise a bachelor, left us at the age of 69 to bless us from heaven. However, his institute, AVP, will be well managed by his nephews Dr Ramkumar Kutty, an established Vaidya himself and product of what has now come to be known as the ‘Coimbatore model of education’ and Sri Devidas Varier, a management professional. Both of them have been working in AVP under the direct guidance of Shri KK ji.

One can be sure that KK ji’s noble thoughts and deeds will grow further and fly higher in the realms of health and healing in the years to come.



Volumes can be written about this great soul and still fall short of doing justice to his great and selfless contribution to Ayurveda and the society at large.

I lived in close proximity to him for 25 years with him as a student first, then as a colleague and as an associate. The last 15 years have shown me that this soul belongs to all and not to a selected few.

With Pranams and regards.



Dr. P. R. Krishna Kumar – An Epoch in the Modern Development of Ayurveda

- Vaidya P. Ram Manohar,
Research Director, Amrita School of Ayurveda

Padmasri Dr. P.R. Krishnakumar was holding the offices of Managing Director, Arya Vaidya Pharmacy, Chairman, AVP Research Foundation and Chancellor, Avinashilingam University, Coimbatore, when he passed away on 16th September, 2020. He was a doyen of Ayurveda, having made significant contributions for its development in India and towards its global recognition. In 2009, the Government of India honoured him with the Padmasri and in 2016, the Ministry of AYUSH conferred upon him the Dhanvantari Award. He has also been the recipient of many other awards and also received a honorary doctorate from the Kuvempu University in 2011.

Krishnakumarji, as we fondly called him, was a man of big dreams and achievements. He believed in his dreams with such intensity that he could transform the reality around him to manifest his dreams. When he was still in his twenties, an age when people are usually struggling to settle down in their career, Krishnakumarji set up a school of Ayurveda in the traditional gurukula style offering free education to revolutionise the career of youngsters seeking the knowledge of Ayurveda. Many of us who joined this unique educational program were handpicked by him. Krishnakumarji realised that one of the reasons behind the lack of motivation of Ayurveda physicians is because Ayurveda is generally a fall back option for those who do not manage to get admission in the Allopathic medical colleges. “Catch them young” - was his motto. Admission to the Ayurveda Gurukula at Coimbatore was after matriculation. The two year pre-university course was integrated into the seven and a half BAMS course creating an opportunity for the students to get a grounding in Sanskrit, the Indian Knowledge systems and also an introduction to Ayurveda before entering into the main course on Ayurveda. This educational experiment stands out as a milestone in the development of Ayurveda in modern times. It also bespeaks the amazing boldness of Krishnakumarji as he took the risk to establish the college even before the recognitions were obtained. Here was a visionary who wanted to demonstrate his intentions by action.

Upto the time that he was active, handholding the young aspirants of Ayurveda in their journey of education was a priority for him. He would go out of the way to inspire and instill in young students a deep passion and commitment for Ayurveda. The Tatvaprakāśinī, Karmaprakāśinī and such other programs that he organised for the benefit of the students and practitioners of Ayurveda were deeply inspired by the need he felt to offer guidance and inspiration as they struggled with the limitations and challenges of the present educational system. It was amazing to see how he could connect to such a large number of students at a personal level in a very intimate manner. During the conduct of events like Tatvaprakāśinī, we would be surprised that he could find time to spend with the participants even late into the night. And then in the wee hours in the morning, he would be there sitting and smiling with no sign of fatigue in his face. He has himself remarked that the four hours he finds to sleep is luxury for him.

In spite of his health challenges, when it came to executing his mission, Krishnakumarji was a true karmayogi. He worked with such passion and zeal, with such self discipline, especially in sticking to a schedule, which was awe inspiring. Punctuality was his hallmark. I have witnessed many meetings and functions where he would just get going with the program, even if all the people had not arrived. He lived life with a sense of urgency, he executed his programs with such speed that it was very difficult for us to catch up with him. One had to be extremely attentive and alert when working with him. Yet, he was so considerate and any one who met him even once could not forget his magnetic personality and kind disposition.

His personality was enigmatic. One moment we would see him with a saint and the next moment, he would be with a politician, not just anyone, but the Prime Minister himself or the President of the country. He could engage himself in serious discussions with eminent scientists and physicians and leave them impressed. Filmstars, musicians, journalists, artistes - people from all walks of life have crossed paths with him in his life. Being associated with him gave me rare opportunities to meet great people in my life. I remember an incident during my tenure as a student in the Ayurveda College, Coimbatore. At that time, I was drawn more to science than spirituality. I was still digesting many things in Ayurveda, especially its philosophical moorings. It was the year 1986 and I was in the first year of the BAMS having completed the Pre-Ayurveda Phase. I saw on the notice board a poster announcing the

First World Congress for the Synthesis of Science and Religion being organised by Bhaktivedanta Institute in the month of January in Mumbai. I became very curious as I thought that this conference may help me to find answers to some of the nagging questions in my mind. But I did not have the courage to propose the idea to my teachers or my parents. Soon we went home for Christmas vacation. But the poster of this conference remained in my mind. I could not let go of the temptation to attend this meeting that seemed to be beckoning me. But how can a first year BAMS student even think of attending an international conference in which some of the most eminent Nobel laureates, scientists and religious leaders were participating. I was just seventeen years old at that time. The inner urge was so strong that I decided I will ask Krishnakumarji himself. I came back to Coimbatore from my home town in Kerala and went to meet him. He was surprised to see me during the vacation time. “What brings you here now?”, he asked affectionately. Gathering all the courage that I could, I blurted out. “Would it even be possible for me to attend this conference on Science and Religion. There are many questions disturbing me about science, spirituality and religion. I think if I can attend this conference, I may get answers”. I was so astonished and thrilled when he patted me on my back and said, “I am so happy that at least one of you responded to the poster that I had put up on the notice board. You will attend this conference. Get the permission from your father. We will take care of your travel and stay in Mumbai and I will get you an entry into the conference as well”. I saluted him in excitement and prepared myself to attend this conference. In this conference, I met stalwarts like George Wald, Nobel laureate in Medicine, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Nobel laureate for Peace, Karan Singh, the Former Minister of Education and also eminent scientists from India like Raja Ramanna and ECG Sudarshan. This conference created a ‘wow’ moment in my life where I saw the relevance of Ayurveda in the platform that synthesised science and spirituality in a harmonious manner. I am ever indebted to him for this opportunity that completely revolutionised my perspective on life and Ayurveda. What was even more surprising was the discovery that I was not the only person who was supported by Krishnakumarji to attend this conference. I met an Ayurveda student there from another college also sponsored by Krishnakumarji. Even though he was passionately developing his own college for Ayurveda, Krishnakumarji was magnanimous to reach out to the Ayurvedic community at large and encourage people beyond the boundaries of his immediate karmic space. Surely, he was a dispassionate karmayogi.

Krishnakumarji’s vision of Ayurveda was truly one that embraced the most rigorous science and the most sublime spirituality. When he set up the Ayurveda college in the midst of the forest and at the same time, a temple for Dhanvantari in the middle of a bustling city, when he organised Vedic rituals for the peace of the world and also set up one of the most advanced research facilities which was recognised by DSIR and also by the Bharathiar University as a PhD centre, we were witnessing this amazing ability of Krishnakumarji to make the opposites co-exist together without contradiction.

Many many years later, Krishnakumarji gave me another great opportunity to participate in an international clinical study which was funded by the National Institutes of Health, USA. It was a great blessing to be a part of the team that executed this study under the leadership of Dr. Daniel Furst, a renowned rheumatologist from UCLA, USA. This study demonstrated for the first time that whole system multimodal Ayurvedic treatment could be equivalent to methotrexate in the management of rheumatoid arthritis and the outcomes were published in high impact research journals like Annals of Rheumatic Diseases. Even the most vehement critic of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM), Dr. Edzard Ernst recommended this study as a blue print for future studies on CAM. It was a moment of realisation for me to participate in this study and it was more than a reaffirmation that Ayurveda passes the test of the most rigorous science and goes even beyond.

In my humble opinion, Krishnakumarji had grasped in his vision the master plan of some key moves that could bring Ayurveda into the mainstream of public life and into the international arena. He knew that the master stroke had to be made in the field of education, in integrating Ayurveda with science even as we preserve its spiritual moorings and holistic vision.

The passing away of Krishnakumarji marks the end of an epoch in the modern development of Ayurveda. He is an example of a powerful mind, a profound soul who withstood unimaginable trials and tribulations in his life, especially with respect to his health and physical well being. His life mocks at the old adage. “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”. He lived his life in a manner that demonstrated that if the spirit is willing, even a weak flesh cannot be a deterrence, but rather an instrument for the achievement of one’s aspirations and dreams.

My pranams.



The Krishna Kumar I Knew

- Mrs. Shailaja Chandra,
Former Secretary of the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine & Homeopathy,
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

It was the year 2014 when I met Krishna Kumar (KK) the Managing Director of Arya Vaidya Pharmacy for the first and last time. The then Health Minister had set up a Task force and the members were to meet in S-VYASA in Bengaluru to brainstorm. I was a (short-lived) member of the Group. But in that short sojourn I came to know Krishna Kumar a little and because I had met practically all the stalwarts of the indigenous systems during my long association with Indian medicine, I wondered how I had never met him. Perhaps because he never came to the Ministry of Health or to all the events that were organised by the Department of ISM as it was then called.

As KK entered the room his tall frame and handsome face overshadowed everyone else. He wore a traditional mundu with a gold border and carried a colourful veshti and was in every way distinctive.

Most contributions around the table were predictable but what Krishna Kumar said made me want to listen. We both shared a similar approach and naturally gravitated to the same canteen table for breakfast and lunch. He talked to me in a way I was not accustomed to. I had all along been a hard, no-nonsense task master and had little patience with chest thumping, impossible claims and homilies about performing miracles. But KK neither spoke of his achievements nor criticised any system- allopathy or Ayurveda. He did not lament that the Government, the allopathic fraternity, paucity of funds and step motherly treatment had been unfair to Ayurveda. He spoke quietly and calmly exuding the confidence that comes with experience and exposure to a wider world. I liked him.

For the first time I was meeting a man who understood the importance of creating evidence to break the fixed barriers of modern scientific opinion. But when he spoke there was no bombast, no references to his personal or institutional achievements despite these being several. I had come across the AVP name often and seen their products being used by practitioners across the country- from remote Palampur in Himachal Pradesh, to flourishing private clinics in Jaipur. AVP (Cbe) is among the top Ayurvedic treatment and drug manufacturing companies. A substantial part of the income comes from a single hospital in Coimbatore and the sale of products. Once Washington Post spoke about this hospital as the Mayo Clinic of Ayurveda in India. The hospital also featured in a story that was broadcast in the PBS (Public Broadcasting Service.) (1)

It was much later that I learnt that scientists at Arya Vaidya Pharmacy (AVP), Coimbatore, had compared the safety and efficacy of complete Ayurvedic treatment against methotrexate a synthetic drug used to treat rheumatoid arthritis. The findings have been published in the Journal of Clinical Rheumatology in 2011 being the first double-blind, randomized, controlled, pilot study using classical Ayurvedic medicine, methotrexate, and their combination in patients. (2) The clinical benefits had been measured according to the criteria of the American College of Rheumatology and the study was partly funded by National Institutes of Health (NIH), USA. The results are favourably tilted towards Ayurvedic treatment and its value can be judged by the sizeable grant being given by the Government of India to widen the study. It was Krishna Kumar who sowed the seed which has sprouted into this recognition by garnering substantial financial support. Despite being the chief protagonist of this initiative, KK never tom –tomed anything on television and nor did he make any public claims. He quite simply opened doors and windows for conducting valuable research and aimed high. Behind the scenes he had overseen that the research methodology did not get confined to a mere comparison of two drugs -Ayurvedic and allopathic but embraced complete Ayurvedic therapy which is the essence of this ancient system. This is where KK scores over many who have waved flags but failed to make it to top journals. KK understood that nothing was to be gained by berating RCTs and was instrumental in bringing Ayurvedic treatment – not just a single drug -into mainstream research.

In one of our conversations at S-VYASA University KK spoke to me about the Gurukul tradition of teaching as a way of retaining the real strength of Ayurveda. I understood what he was saying because I too believed in reviving the system by embracing the Ayurvedic way of life- not just drugs and therapies. Later in a joint paper authored by me with Kishor Patwardhan of BHU we had observed how although the Ayurveda system of medicine was being practiced country-wide, there existed wide variations characterised by the approach of individual Universities and the beauty of regional approaches were not being harnessed. KP and I argued that the methods of practice engaged in

Kerala and Western Maharashtra differed widely from those in the Northern Hindi belt states. We had concluded that a common syllabus and teaching methodology prescribed by a national body like CCIM was serving little purpose and the distinctiveness of regional variations as well as consumer preference for Ayurvedic treatment in different locales must be factored into teaching and learning. (3) Although the paper was written much after our meeting, I was encouraged to follow this line of thought by KK's words which favoured the guru Kul system- not by sitting under a tree at the Guru's feet- but where learning could be made contextual in contemporary times. That two of my favourite people Ram Manohar and GG Gangadharan are products of KK's Gurukul system speaks volumes for KK's ability to foster the individual genius instead of trying to standardise Ayurveda- an approach that has produced generations of vaidyas that lack confidence in a system which essentially embodies a way of life – not just treatment of medical conditions.

I remember Krishna Kumar for his ideas and his ability to convince without becoming combative. Perhaps he was the only person I have known who shunned a blind obeisance to the approaches of modern medicine which Ayurveda can never emulate. Instead he put Ayurveda where it belongs – as an incomparable holistic system which should never have jumped on the bandwagon of modern medicine. I wish there were more people like Krishna Kumar guiding the future of Ayurveda.

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Krishnakumarji – Epitome Of Kindness And Generosity

- *Shri Anil Kumar,*
Executive Director at Kerala Ayurveda Limited

A doyen of Ayurveda industry is no more. Krishnakumarji was a mentor, great leader and a guiding light to the Ayurveda industry.

Dr. P.R.Krishnakumar was born on 23rd September 1951 as the son of Aryavaidyayan P.V. Rama Varier founder of Arya Vaidya Pharmacy. Sri. Krishnakumar studied Ayurveda from Shornur Ayurveda College. After studies he decided not to practice as physician but to take up promotion and propagation of Ayurveda as his life mission. Dr. Krishnakumar started various manufacturing, research, hospitals and educational institutions in humble way and under his leadership raised all such organizations to premier status under the banner The Arya Vaidya Pharmacy(Coimbatore) Ltd. To provide more focus on research in Ayurveda he started AVP Research Foundation which is now a world renowned center for research in Ayurveda .

When Dr. P.R. Krishnakumarji felt the gap in research, standardization, testing and packing and the impeding growth of small and medium Ayurveda industry units promoted the consortium CARE KERALAM Ltd in 2008 convincing and taking support of Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of Kerala and coordinating major players of Ayurveda units in South India. CARE KERALAM now function as a common facility centre making resources and technology available to small and medium entrepreneurs also to produce and promote products of International standards.

Krishnakumarji's care and concern for the poor and the students and his abiding interest in spirituality is well known. He will be remembered forever for his simple living, innate sincerity, humility and capacity for untiring hard work. His pioneering efforts towards making Ayurveda popular across the world will be greatly remembered and his name will be always be inscribed in golden letters in the mind of Ayurveda fraternity .



A Homage to Dr. Krishnakumar

- Dr. D. B. A. Narayana,
Retired Director, Regulatory Affairs, Foods, Home & Personal Care,
Unilever Research

My association with Dr. Krishnakumar, began when I was working at Dabur Research Foundation way back in 1991, continued when I moved to Hindustan Unilever and post my retirement.

Many people will write about him and his contributions. I would pay my homage to him by saluting his zeal to promote scientific scrutiny of Ayurvedic recipes and methods of treatment, which was not common during these years amongst many. 2 examples are what I cite here.

HUL had a collaboration with Arya Vaidya Pharmacy for providing inputs and guidance on Ayurvedic aspects to HUL. HUL was setting up Therapy Centers across the nation to provide Ayurvedic therapies to consumers in an authentic way. More than 50 such centers were working under a qualified Ayurvedic physician in these centers.

A number of medicated oils were used in these centers for oleations and treatments. Quality and safety clearances in the HUL of these oils demanded lot of scientific data without which HUL would not permit their usage on consumers.

I was one of the scientists involved in this effort. Rationalization of the oils used in these centers, reduce their number to a list minimum recipe, (for logistic reasons of manufacture, standardization, their safety & regulatory clearances) was focus of these discussions with Dr. KK and his team of experts at AVP. Questions on why there is a need for over 130 traditionally made pils were needed, why in many oils the recipes use over 30 herbs and ingredients, what is the proportion of the herbal components that go into the medicate oil during the Taila pak vidhi, and a number of such questions I used to ask during these meetings.

Unflinchingly Dr. KK used to support discussions, frankly saying “we don’t have an answer, why don’t you evaluate and tell us,” used to be the response some time over riding his Colleagues. Based on a scientific logic he prompted and approved a much less number of Ayurvedic oils that could meet most of the requirements of treatments of consumers who visited these Therapy centers.

An in depth research on Taila pak vidhi, role of Kalka, Kwatha, Oil soluble extractive values and other aspects resulted in data that got published in Indian Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences. He was very happy for these outcomes.

Another equally important aspect was “how to have uniformity in the way the therapies are administered in all centers run by HUL within the flexibility as decided by the Vaidya at each centers “used to bother us. I discussed this with Dr. KK, and decide to write a Training Manual for each of over 30 therapies that are commonly used in these centers. When I gave a draft of such a Manual written with the help of a Ayurvedic Doctor with MD in Panchakarma, in a style & formats that Pharmaceutical firms adopt to document Standard Operating Procedures (SOP”s) Dr. KK was very happy. He not only reviewed them himself but made his expert Vaidya’s look at it and give valuable inputs. The result was HUL had a training and SOP Manual that was used to train the therapists in the centers and adopt them. After I rolled out these manuals, in one of our meetings when I briefed him of the good outcome and thanked him, he told” The credit should go to you for not only questioning, but to find answers and documenting the answers for use by all. This has added value to Ayurveda and made in practicable in contemporary days”.

He gave me a gift of a Wooden decorated Thrissur Elephant, that I adore in my Study. Later HUL did not continue the Therapy centers for strategic reasons. Permitted in Public interest by HUL, this manual with many additional sections, and chapters was published later as a book” Good Ayurvedic Therapy Practices”.

Dr. KK’s quest and support for scrutiny of Ayurvedic wisdom may find few parallels in India. I am sure his search continues. Pray for God to keep his souls with him and take care.



Excerpts from Pandit Shiv Sharma Oration by Shri P. R. Krishnakumarji

I was fortunate enough for being with Pandit Shiv Sharmaji in Canberra during 1979. This morning, we had a wonderful dialogue on integrative research, and for me this thought started way back in early 1973.

I thought that before the other countries let me put Ayurveda, my country in order and that is how the WHO project was started. The world only accepts biochemical language. They don't know about Ayurvedic sciences. Do you need the western acceptance? Yes! If it is a science that can benefit the whole world, and as Veda says, Shastras should go to every nook and corner of the world.

It is so wonderful to find today's young thinkers here and more than me you youngsters, I am happy that you are with such a great plethora of thinkers, and scientists, and scholars, who gave their wonderful views today. You are lucky to get it. Today my friends, there is tremendous scope for you. You are lucky.

Our education system never taught us to think. This is not only for ayurvedic colleges. In the schools elsewhere also, where is the time to think? Everyday exams, in the first place, the rotten western education system should not have entered this country. But it was unfortunately brought by the British, unfortunately continued by the people who are there in power. High time it is thrown out and at least for ayurvedic students.

.....and today also there are so many questions related to Ayurveda but where are the answers? Where are the people who can think? Every day we have groups coming from almost all the countries in the world, today another group from Ukraine, then Brazil and then others are coming. And great doctors from western science are coming to ask for the dialogue. We want all of you to be prepared for taking the great challenge of the future.

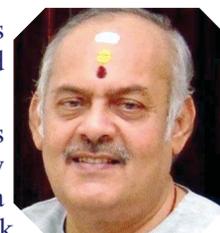
We have 64 great Shastras, arts; we need to revive all of them. Apply logic to all the patients who come to us. That time Vaidyas knew basic astrology. You need to go into all those things. Today if you go to Tantrashastra, patients used to come to us rejected by hospital to be treated.

Don't look at the western diagnostics. Start with your own understanding of what your treatises have taught you. You will be able to find it. And there are new diseases are coming every day with new names. But if you go to our texts, it is very much mentioned in our texts.

There is rotten syllabus they have created. What is the need to study all these things for?

My youngsters you need to imbibe a lot from the old traditional masters for the modern world of the future.

We started Gurukula College because my father mentioned, he sat for twenty hours a day for twenty years and said I learnt a little Ayurveda. And you want to say that you are making great masters of future? That is why believed in Gurukula.



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From,
INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF
TRADITIONAL ASIAN MEDICINE (IASTAM INDIA)
Bharati Vidyapeeth University,
College of Ayurved, Dhankawadi, Pune - 411 043
Ph. : 020-24373954, 9860085980

To,