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Editorial

This issue has been uniquely blessed by a message from Swami Purnamritananda Puri. In these tough times, Swamiji has encapsulated Amma's message to discover our inner strength and resilience in order to face the challenges imposed by the ongoing pandemic situation. Like a ship that is anchored safely, only a life rooted in righteous duty shall be endowed with the requisite strength and turn itself into something worthy of emulation. AYUDH movement, as highlighted in this issue shows the way. This edition continues with details of Faculty, Staff and Ashramites who remain as pillars of strength for the institution to grow and flourish. Student publications and the illustrious alumni have added lustre to their teachers. As the saying goes, 'tough times do not last, while tough people do'. The inspiration behind this institution, Chancellor AMMA, continues to provide the spiritual and moral canvas for each one of us to shine and prosper in our respective roles.

Special Thanks

Dr. George Mathews John
Dr. Remya S
Mr. Prasad V G
Mr. M V Thampi
Mrs. Prajitha M
Mrs. Jayalakshmi S Pillai
Mr. Guruvayurappan K V
Mrs. Nithya S
Mrs. Praseeda
Mrs. Jani
Mrs. Chandralekha
Mrs. Manjusha
My Divine Sisters and Brothers,

The human birth is very unique. It has great potential. It has many possibilities which other beings in nature don't have. The greatest possibility is that human beings have the potential to taste divine bliss. Of course, all beings in creation are divine. The Sanatana Dharma says that everything in creation is divine. Everything is an expression of Chaitanya. Yet, only humans can actualize their inner divinity. Only they can experience the infinite bliss of inner divinity. Only man can experience his inherent oneness with God.

However, we find a paradox in the human situation. In spite of this great possibility, man is not able to find even happiness. In fact, he is surrounded by an abundance of material prosperity. Yet, he is living in emotional poverty. He lives in the midst of all kinds of comforts and luxury. Still, he is not happy. For, he is not willing to admit that the source of happiness is within, not outside. He must search for it within, not outside. Life is a journey. The destination is eternal peace. The bliss of immortality. We are not meant to live and die like birds and animals. Endowed with a human life, we must have done something special in it. Some special thing which birds and beasts, and plants and trees, cannot do. For, human beings are special.

Other living beings live in happiness. They don't get bored. They don't get fed up with life. For, they live by instinct. They are tuned to nature. They know how to ride the tide. But humans get bored up easily. Only human beings experience boredom in life. He lives in the midst of all kinds of comforts and luxury. Even children complain that life is boring! We are often very frustrated. What is the solution to this human problem? The solution has already been given by our ancient rishis. The ancient super scientists of India. The spiritual scientists who accurately diagnosed the malady and prescribed the remedy for it. And what is it? To turn inward. We are indeed embodiments of bliss. We only need to derive infinite bliss from that perennial inner source. How is it possible? By following a certain discipline in life. By following Dharma. Our actions should come out of love. Every action becomes spiritual if it comes out of love. Any action coming out of selfishness is worldly.

Amma says, “The ocean is not designed for swimming; still, you can enjoy swimming in it if you are a trained swimmer. Likewise, this world is also is like an ocean. It is easy to get drowned by unexpected waves if you are not trained properly before jumping into this ocean. That training program is called spirituality.” Spiritual life is not running away from responsibilities. It is a different way of living in this same world. It is a way by which whatever we do in this world automatically becomes spiritual work. That is what our Amma is doing. Amma is guiding her children in their journey to the inner source of everlasting contentment and peace. She is guiding them in their day-to-day duties and in their daily work. How is that? It is mainly through two kinds of activities. Through the spiritual work of her ashrams, and through the worldly work of her institutions. In fact, there is no difference between materiality and spirituality. What the world requires today is such a value-based life. Especially, in these tough times, when a tiny virus has taught human beings that the brains of the greatest intellectuals cannot solve the problems that humanity faces. We need the grace of this nature to lead a blissful life. We have to sustain the purity of nature and learn to respect everything. Only love can solve today’s problems. Love is the eternal solution to all kinds of problems.

May Amma, the Embodiment of Divine Love, continue to inculcate at least an iota of Her infinite love and compassion in us. So that we can live quality lives, and the world will become a better place.
Luminaries

Dr Bini Faizal completed her post graduation in ENT from Bangalore Medical College scoring record marks. She has been with us for 16 years and is the pioneer of the salivary gland clinic, a first in the state. Her expertise includes diagnosis of salivary gland disorders through sialendoscopy and treatment through interventional sialendoscopy for removal of stones and strictures in the salivary gland.

Dr Rajesh Thachathodiyl completed his MBBS and MD (General Medicine) from S.C.B. Medical College Cuttack, Orissa and went on to specialise in Cardiology from KMC Manipal. He has 15 years of experience in interventional cardiology and has accumulated a wealth of experience and is adept in rotablations, CTO recanalisation and interventions in left main, saphenous vein graft, carotid artery, endovascular stent grafts and other peripherals.

Dr Sudheer O V has been in the Amrita family for the past 22 years and currently is the head of GI surgery. He has performed a record number of minimally invasive oesophageal and bariatric surgeries in Kerala. His area of interest is laparoscopic hepatobiliary surgery and colorectal surgeries.

Dr Sajesh K Menon has over 20 years of experience in Neuro - spine surgery. He has a keen interest in scoliosis surgery, Complex spinal deformity correction, Intramedullary tumors surgery, minimally invasive spine surgery. He has pioneered various innovative surgeries like circumferential CVJ reconstruction, cervical foraminotomy, ilio-lumbar fixation techniques. He is AO spine board member, faculty and director AO spine centre at Amrita, DNB Assessor and faculty and currently holds the post of national president of Neurospine Surgeons Association of India. He has 30 peer reviewed articles in various scientific journals. He has mentored over 25 fellows in the Amrita and AO spine fellowship programme which are still ongoing.

Dr K K Chandrababu, is an astute clinician and academician par excellence. With over 36 years of teaching experience in various institutions of repute, he remains in a league of distinguished clinicians and medical teachers. He designed the annual Amrita Fracture Course and Amrita Bone Tumour course which are among the most sought after educational programs by trainee surgeons from India and abroad. He is regarded as teacher of teachers and plays an indispensable role in postgraduate training programmes.

Dr Shreesh Sadasivan, Professor, Head of the Department of Gastroenterology, has over 18 years of experience as a teacher and clinician and has many research publications to his credit. His compassionate patient care has added strength to the excellent patient care provided by AIMS.

Ms Rehana C. Mukundan, the charismatic Bri. Rehanaji has been in AIMS from its inception in 1998 and has played a significant role in its administrative board. She wears many hats with excellence: Head of patient services and in the student welfare activities, Ayudh and other social outreach activities. Her infectious optimism and willingness to help anyone who approaches her with a problem has earned her the coveted title of ‘chechi’. Her organisational ability was amply manifest in the Institutional Flood Relief work. The first and second COVID waves saw her as a frontline worker, inspiring many. She is currently heading the COVID-19 vaccination drive. Her constant, tireless striving is a living testament to her mantra, “work is worship”.

Dr Sajesh K Menon
Professor and H.O.D of Neurosurgery

Ms Rehana C Mukundan
General Manger and Student Welfare Administrator
MA, MBA, M Phil ( Hospital Administration ) & Research Scholar

Dr Bini Faizal
Clinical Professor and H.O.D of ENT

Dr Rajesh Thachathodiyl
Professor and H.O.D of Cardiology

Dr Sudheer O V
Professor and H.O.D of Gastrointestinal Surgery

Dr Sajesh K Menon
Professor and H.O.D of Neurosurgery

Dr K K Chandrababu
Professor and H.O.D of Orthopaedics

Dr Shreesh Sadasivan
Professor and H.O.D of Gastroenterology
Dr Jacob Thomas was trained in Dermatology at CMC Vellore and Government Medical College, Kottayam. He was part of the Government Medical College service for nearly 35 years. He has won many accolades for academics and research. He has guided research programs for UG and PG students.

Dr Jacob Thomas
Clinical Professor and HOD of Dermatology

Dr Sajitha Krishnan has been an integral part of AIMS for the last 19 years. Her outstanding contribution towards setting up Totally Automated Labs and maintaining quality standards for the last 14 years need special mention. She has over 24 years of experience in teaching and clinical lab administration. She also has numerous research publications to her credit.

Dr Sajitha Krishnan
Clinical Professor and H.O.D of Biochemistry

Dr Gireesh Kumar K P, a pioneer in the field of Emergency Medicine and has played a stellar role in developing emergency medicine specialty in Kerala. He has authored 12 books on Internal Medicine/Emergency and Critical Care Medicine. His presence in ER is enough to instill confidence in his team members and patients.

Dr Gireesh Kumar K P
Professor of Neurology and head of the Division of Paediatric Neurology and Amrita Advanced Center for Epilepsy

Dr Vinayan K P graduated from Calicut Medical College in 1995 and was the Second rank holder in the Kerala Medical Postgraduate Entrance Examination in 2002. He completed DCH, MD, DNB in Paediatrics from the Institute of Maternal and Child Health, Calicut Medical College in 1998. He was selected for the Asia-Oceania Fellowship in Epileptology by the International League Against Epilepsy and Japanese Epilepsy Research Foundation in 2005, also had training in epilepsy and electrophysiology at National Epilepsy Centre, Shizuoka, Japan.

Dr Vinayan K P
Professor and H.O.D of Neurology and head of the Division of Paediatric Neurology and Amrita Advanced Center for Epilepsy

Ms Sai Bala M is a self driven nursing professional equipped with clinical and managerial expertise enriched through multidisciplinary work exposure and experience. She is a passionate nurse leader who strategically views issues and solves problems with a balanced outlook and person oriented perspective on outcome resolution, simultaneously upholding global views for long term success. She is currently the Additional Medical Superintendent at AIMS, Kochi. She has over 15 publications in various journals. She is also the member of UNESCO Chair for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. She has been a vital part of the COVID-19 vaccination drive.

Ms Sai Bala M
Nursing Director

Dr Srikant Moorthy has been heading the Department of Radiology in AIMS since its inception in 1998. He initiated the Neuro interventional program and Hepato-biliary and Vascular Interventional program in the Institute. His effort in developing low dose scanning protocols is commendable. A leader par excellence, Dr Srikant Moorthy has ensured that he developed and nurtured a team of enthusiastic radiologists through the spirit of “cooperative federalism”.

Dr Srikant Moorthy
Professor and H.O.D of Radiodiagnosis
Dr. Anna Kurian, Resident, Department of Microbiology received the first prize in poster presentation on the topic - A rare case report of mycotic keratitis due to Microsporum gypseum in Kerala presented at MYCOCON 2021. She was guided by Dr. Poornima B. and Dr. V. Anil Kumar.

Dr Prasanna ED and Dr Prateek Nayak, Residents, Department of Dermatology secured 1st prize in paper and poster presentation in the recently held Kerala State Conference. They received a Cash Prize, Memento and Certificate from IADVL presented and were felicitated by our Principal.

Dr. Binshy Latheef, 2nd year Resident, Department of ENT, received third prize for presenting a paper titled, "Low Dose Intratympanic Gentamycin in Meniere's Disease" in MAGENTA 2021 & AOI Kerala Midterm Conference held on 11th April 2021.

MBBS students, Sreekanth Syamkumar, John M Joseph, Ashwin Rajeev Pillai, Navnit G Nair and Joel Benny Joseph of the 2017 batch have been manning the COVID War room by the end of April,2021. They have been mentored by Dr T S Dipu and Dr Merlin Moni.
Dr. K P Vinayan, Department of Neurology, AIMS, Kochi is the recipient of the Asian Oceanan Epilepsy Outstanding Achievement Award as a tribute to his outstanding and exceptional contribution towards Epilepsy care. The Award was presented during the 13th AOEC 2021, held from June 10-13.

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Yuva Dharma Dhara, in Sanskrit means “the youth who perpetuate the wheel of dharma (righteousness).” Inspired by this, Amrita students have formed the Amrita Yuva Dharma Dhara - AYUDH, an organisation devoted to dharma. Founded in India in 1985, AYUDH empowers young people to integrate universal values into their daily lives. Starting with themselves, the goal is to establish a future of hope, peace, and social engagement. Today it has become an international youth movement active in more than 40 countries across Asia, Europe, North America, South America, Australia, and Africa.

Amma says that, we need to set aside some time to make a difference in the lives of those who are less fortunate; that our lives are not meant to be lived only for ourselves. It comes out of Amma's tenet that we are not isolated islands but are linked to each other like the links of a chain. We have been living her teachings, making small but impressionable changes around us.

During these difficult times, teams of volunteers of AYUDH India have come together to set up COVID-19 helpdesks across India, to assist people with Covid resources during this critical time of the pandemic. Through helplines which were set up by the organization, many affected persons, along the length and breadth of the country, are provided satisfactory answers to their queries and access to resources. The support desk functions from 6 AM to 10 PM and provide COVID-19 related guidelines like vaccine registration, disease prevention, and treatment methods.

The guiding light of the AYUDH chapter at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences is Bri. Rehanaji. It encompasses students, doctors, and alumni. The COVID-19 helpdesk attends to queries such as general covid safety measures, vaccine-related and medical doubts, and emergency calls for ventilators, ICU availability, ambulance, oxygen requirement, ward beds, and medicines. These frontline workers have brought solace to many.

**Activities across the country**

- **Food Kit distribution**
- **Covid resource center run by Ayudh that provides patients with medical treatment and food supplies.**
Outreach and Social Impact

Not Too Late to Donate

Dr. Veena Shenoy

According to the World Health Organization, one percent of a country's population should be donating blood to maintain an adequate blood supply. However, India, with a population of 1.38 billion, is lagging by two million blood units. Instead of the required 13 million, the average blood collection in our country is 11 million. However, Kerala was able to collect 4.4 lakh blood units in 2019-2020.

Donation of blood and maintaining reserves is a constant and critical element in sustaining the healthcare system of any nation, especially during a pandemic due to the non-availability of eligible donors. The Covid pandemic saw up to a 30 per cent dip in blood donation in blood banks across Kerala.

Organizational Issue

Blood shortage occurred primarily due to difficulty in organizing outdoor blood donation camps, like all colleges and educational institutions remaining closed indefinitely. People were also reluctant to visit hospital-based blood banks due to the fear of contracting Covid. Also, voluntary blood donation declined with the increase in cases in the community.

Blood banks are taking all safety precautions so that they can keep every blood donor safe. This includes frequently cleaning the maximum touch surfaces and providing adequate personal protective measures for staff.

Why donate?

The majority of blood donors prefer to donate to familiar patients. Despite social media campaigns, the number of voluntary blood donors are very few. All eligible donors must donate periodically to have all our blood banks filled with safe blood components. Haematology and oncology centres are always in need of platelet component which has shelf life of five days.

The author is an associate professor, Department of Transfusion Medicine, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi.
Outreach and Social Impact
An alum of MBBS 2014 batch, Dr Vishnu Sasindran the Medical Officer, UPHC Muthathi, Kannur District has been instrumental in bridging societal gaps. His work is not confined to routine medical care in the out patient department in the PHC. His helping hands support IRPC, Kannur reaching out to the bed ridden and mentally retarded in their care. With humility beyond his years, he attributes it all to the training he received at the alma mater. His work is a translation of the ethics and ethos of AIMS. He has done us proud!!!

The Amrita Global Alumni Network (AGAN) is the formal Amrita alumni association and is all set to welcome Amritians on board to engage with their alma mater. Amritians can register themselves in their local alumni chapters and be in touch with other alumni in the region! AGAN is a great way for Amritians to reconnect, refresh and give back to their University!

The Beacons of Amrita Alumni shared their tips to crack exams like USMLE, PLAB, MRCP and NEET. The Program was held on 18th April 2021 at 5pm via Zoom Video conference. The Alumni speakers were Dr Bharat Pillai, Dr Nisha Annie George and Dr Ajay Ashok. Certificate of appreciation were presented to them online by Dr Prem Nair, Medical Director, AIMS, Kochi.

IAM, a simple combination of yoga, pranayama and meditation that takes just 20 minutes a day. It is a distillate of many traditional and time-tested relaxation techniques, suitable for the modern man with his time constraints and constant stressors. Our alum and Associate Professor, Department of Physiology, AIMS, Dr Vandana Balakrishnan guides us through this wonderful, energizing and invigorating technique.
Flight Lieutenant Srikant V S, alumni of 2016 - 2019 MD General Medicine batch was commissioned into IAF. While posted at Air force station- Jaisalmer, he was awarded the prestigious Chief of Air Staff Commendation for meritorious services. While in college, he had done exemplary work during Kerala flood disaster which was appreciated by DIG Sanatan Jena of 4 Coast Guard District Headquarters, Kerala and Mahe. He had also received the young investigator award from international Society of Infectious disease at Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2018. His achievements are a matter of great pride for our university and AIMS.

Group captain Dr. Mujeeb senior advisor (Medicine and Gastroenterology) has been approved for promotion to the rank of Air Commodore. He is the alumni of 2008 - 2011 batch DNB of AIMS, Kochi. He did his MBBS and MD in General Medicine from AFMC, Pune. Subsequently, he proceeded to do DNB in Gastroenterology from 2008 to 2011 in Department of Gastroenterology, AIMS, Kochi. He is a very accomplished Gastroenterologist and has many publications to his credit. He has served in an Indian Medical team at Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan. He was awarded the chief of Air Staff Commendation twice in 1998 and 2008 for meritorious service. He is presently serving as Senior Advisor (Medicine) and Gastroenterologist at command Hospital(Air Force). He has brought accolades to AIMS, Kochi.
School of Medicine

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