

THE GLOWING TRIBUTES

PAID TO

**Late Prof.
S. SELVANAYAGAM**



**Professor and Head of the Department
of
Geography, University of Jaffna,
JAFFNA. (SRI LANKA)**



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*The moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,
Moves on : Nor all your Piety nor Wit,
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it. "*

From : Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.



எழுதிச்செல்லும் விதியின்கை எழுதி எழுதி மேற்செல்லும்
தொழுது கெஞ்சி நின்றாலும், சூழ்ச்சிபலவும் செய்தாலும்,
வழுவிப் பின்னாய் நீங்கியொரு வார்த்தையேனும் மாற்றிடுமோ ?
அழுத கண்ணீராறெல்லாம் அதிலோர் எழுத்தை அழித்திடுமோ ?

Born : 28-5-1932

Died : 23-5-1979



LATE PROFESSOR S. SELVANAYAGAM,

B. A. Hons. (Cey.), M. A., Ph. D. (London), F. R. G. S.

Born : 28-5-1932

Died : 23-5-1979

“ Thinking of you with an ache in my heart
Wondering where you are now without me
Striving to smile and to play my small part
Living all alone in solitude without thee
Thinking of you and the things that we planned
The castles we built in the air about our happy home.
The Schemes that we made for our lovely children.
When the future ahead of us looked so grand.
But Selva, in a moment everything was shattered to
pieces.
And the dreams that just did not come true ”

And now !

What could I expect of life to compensate for
the loss of my Precious Selva who had ever seemed
to me to be entirely and vitally desirable.

Selva, your tragic and sudden demise had
made me realise that. —

“ Life is a meaningless game played by help-
less pieces ; that worldly ambitions turn into ashes ;
that in the end — an end which comes all too quick-
ly. ”

Your beloved wife Daya.

Professor S. Selvanayagam,

Tribute to

a Scholar, a Colleague and a trusted friend.

R. Rees Rawson,

*Formerly Senior
London School*

D. J. Sinclair,

*Senior Lecturer
Undergraduate*

M. J. Wise

*Professor of Geography, London School of Economics
President of the International Geographical Union.*

Professor Somasundaram Selvanayagam began his association with the Department of Geography in the London School of Economics in October 1961 when, as a young lecturer on leave from the University of Ceylon, he spent two years with us studying for the degree of Master of Arts. He came again in 1970 to continue his research which on this occasion led to the award of the Doctorate of Philosophy. While he was with us he was able to build his academic reputation. At the same time his innate ability, his warm yet modest personality and his enthusiasm for the tasks he had undertaken helped him to create lasting friendships with his teachers and colleagues in London. To them, the news of Selva's tragic and untimely death has brought personal sadness and a deep sense of loss. They have lost a friend whose return to Sri Lanka promised much from the scholarly contributions that would have followed with the years. Alas, events decreed that this promise was only partially to be fulfilled.

Our first news of Selva came when he was recommended to us by his teachers in Peradeniya as a promising candidate for graduate work. He had entered his home university in 1953 and, at the General Arts Qualifying Examination in 1954, had been awarded the Rupasinghe Scholarship. He had always been an exemplary student and it was during his undergraduate career that he began his long involvement with land use studies. In particular, he undertook what was described as a "fine piece of investigation at undergraduate level", writing a report on "The Red Soil region of Jaffna." This contribution helped to lay the foundation of later research. The field experience then gained was strengthened and a new direction was found during Selvanayagam's first stay in London when he was able to carry out pioneer work on the application of aerial photography to land use studies in northern Sri Lanka. This research led to the award of the MA degree with a mark of Distinction. The Mark of Distinction was rarely given and in Selvanayagam's case was a further indication of his outstanding academic quality. Indeed, but for the pressing need to return to his teaching duties in Sri Lanka, Selva would have been able to extend his leave and develop his initial Studies to doctoral Standards.

In his later career, both in Sri Lanka and Ahmadu Bello teaching and administration made heavy demands on his time. But he was a prodigious worker and he lost no opportunity to press ahead with writing and research. In the late 1950's he had already been attached to the Official Languages Department of the University of Ceylon when he undertook the translation into Tamil of some important geographical texts. The list of such texts grew with the years to include L D Stamp's *Commodities and World Trade, Europe and the Mediterranean*, E H G Dobby's *Southeast Asia*. Meanwhile, his own research into the rural economy of Sri Lanka was beginning to be presented in a series of papers which, during the middle 1960's, made an important contribution to geographical literature. He wrote especially for the learned journals in his native country but his work had a wider recognition. This was expressed, for example, in the *Agricultural Economy of Ceylon*, a monograph for the *World Atlas of Agriculture* in which he collaborated with Dr. T. Jogaratnam.

But we shall remember him especially for his most distinguished analysis and interpretation of the economy of Dry Zone colonisation schemes. This was work that he started on his return from London to Peradeniya in 1963 when he was registered for the external degree of Ph D in the University of London. It took many years of painstaking field investigation and brought to light much new information on the relative achievements in productivity of the new colonies and the older Dry Zone villages. Hence, it was our good fortune that he was able to come to London School of Economics for a further year in 1970 to present his research in the form of a doctoral thesis. His Ph D was awarded to him in August 1971.

We followed his subsequent career closely and were delighted to see him and his family in London from time to time. He undertook important consultancy work for the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. We rejoiced with him on his appointment to the Chair of Geography and the Headship of the Department of Geography in the University of Jaffna. Again there were new challenges and much to do in a relatively new campus. There was heavy emphasis on teaching but Selvanayagam was taking steps to develop the research side of his department's activities. He wrote to us with his hopes for the future, outlining his plans, telling us of his own progress in collecting new materials and full of confidence that his book in project would some day be complete. It would have meant much to him and to us to see that hope come to fruition. Where could that have happened more appropriately than in Jaffna itself?

What none could foresee was that Selva's life would soon come to an end and that it would be left to others to carry on his work. This is now our hope for the future: that Selva's labours should be continued and that high standards he set for himself should be matched and followed by his younger colleagues and students. This would be his wish and worthy memorial. We in the London School of Economics who tried to help him achieve his ambitions will attempt no less within our powers for his successors for in this way we may pay tribute to a scholar, colleague and trusted friend.

Professor S. Selvanayagam 1932 – 1979

[*Reprinted from "The Geographical Journal" November 1979 of the Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore, London.*]

PROFESSOR S. Selvanayagam, fellow of the society and Professor of Geography and Head of Department in the University of Jaffna, died on 23rd May 1979 at the age of 47. Professor Selvanayagam had contributed notably to the study of the agricultural geography of his country. In his early studies he had applied aerial photography to land use studies in Northern Sri Lanka. He went on to analyse and interpret the economic aspects of colonization schemes in the Dry Zone. This led to important conclusions and was perhaps his central contribution. He later undertook consultancy work for the ministry of Agriculture and Lands and for the United Nations Research Institute of Social Development.

As a result of his studies at the London School of Economics Professor Selvanayagam held the degrees of M. A. (with Distinction) and Ph. D. of the University of London, the latter being obtained in 1971. He translated a number of important geographical texts into Tamil. He also spent a period in Nigeria as Senior Lecturer at Ahmadu Bello University. His friends had hoped that his current research work would have led to the publication of an important book on the agricultural geography of his country and they will be distressed that the promise of this book and of future work from a distinguished geographer has been cut short.

AN APPRECIATION

OF THE LATE

Professor
S. SELVANAYAGAM

BY

Mr. B. H. FARMER,

*Director, Centre of South Asian Studies
University of Cambridge, England.*

ALTHOUGH I had been aware of Professor Selvanayagam's excellent writings from about 1965, I only came to know him personally when he came to England in 1970, as a research student at the London School of Economics. As it turned out, I was appointed the external examiner for his thesis, which I well remember as a piece of work based on meticulous and painstaking fieldwork and embodying truly independent investigation and thought about the problem of economic holdings in peasant agriculture in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka. This problem was of great interest to me because of my own earlier work on colonization scheme, and I found Selvanayagam's findings highly illuminating.

I kept in touch with him in the later stages of his career, particularly because of his enquiry for UNRISD into certain aspects of the so-called "green revolution"; and was very pleased and encouraged when he was appointed Professor of Geography at the University of Jaffna. It is a great tragedy for his family, for his University and for geography and related studies in Sri Lanka that his life has been cut short in such an untimely manner. He will be greatly missed.

Professor
S. SELVANAYAGAM

A reputed scholar, a devoted teacher and
a humane personality.

Professor S. Arasaratnam,

Department of History, The University of New England
Armidale N. S. W., Australia.

THE tragic and untimely death of Professor Selvanayagam removes cruelly from our midst a reputed scholar, a devoted teacher, a humane personality and a good friend. Anyone who has had the good fortune to know him, even cursorily, cannot fail to feel a void when hearing of his departure from our midst. To those of us who have known him for many years and who, though circumstances have intervened to put great distances between him and us, have always cherished for him a love and respect, the news of his death was shattering.

One could record many things from a succession of memorable scenes of the past, from Selva as an undergraduate, as a young University lecturer blooming to maturity and scholarship and as a well-deserved appointee to the Chair of Geography in the University's Jaffna Campus. Memories also come to mind of Selva as a very politically and socially conscious individual caring and worrying about the tribulations of nation and Community. Memories come to mind of an absolute integrity in a world of fraudulence, of deep piety and devotion in a world of unbelief.

In the academic and University life of Sri Lanka, Selva's name is inscribed indelibly, though his career is cut short at the time he achieved the pinnacle of the academic profession. Through the many years he served at Peradeniya, he made a deep contri-

bution to the teaching of Geography, to research in the special problems of land use and farming he was interested in and in general to community life by his personality. As a teacher, he was superb. He was perfectly bilingual and achieved the transition from the English medium to teaching in Tamil with ease and without the least decline in standards or proficiency. He was in many respects, the backbone of the Tamil medium section of the Geography Department. Despite his heavy load of teaching he was able to carry on his research and his writing. He has been abroad several times and has completed finished pieces of research work of high standard. He has published the result of his work in academic journals.

For a time he was part of the braindrain from Sri Lanka giving to Nigeria the benefit of his wisdom and expertise. I am aware that he was greatly appreciated there and initiated research and teaching programmes that are beneficial to that country.

When the opportunity came to return to his mother country, he did not hesitate. Despite material sacrifices he returned to occupy the Chair of Geography in Jaffna. He had great and imaginative plans for his department and I am sure he would have put them into operation in the year or so that he has held that Chair.

Occupying the chair of Geography at a young age, it was clear enough that he had a great future ahead of him. It was obvious that he would rise to great heights in the management and policy-making of the University of Jaffna. That institution has now been robbed of one who could have been a great Vice-Chancellor at some future date. The Tamil community has lost one of its proud sons. The nation has lost one who still had many years of service in its cause.

On behalf of those of his generation, who have shared in his successes and his disappointments, I salute him.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
The University of New Brunswick,
Fredricton, N. B.
CANADA.

22nd. June, 1979.

Dear Mrs. Selvanayagam,

I was shocked beyond reason when I heard the saddest news of my life, the death of my dearest and beloved friend Selva. Can fate be more cruel than to remove the most decent and honourable man I have known? why must he have had to die so young when he had such a brilliant career marked out for him? He was one of my best friends, one of the very few, and I often went to him for help and advice. My heart has shed copious tears for my dear friend. I have no comforting words to say except that the good die young. But that is very poor consolation.

Selva was my friend, my kindest friend, and it is so sad and terrible that I will never meet him again. The last time that I saw him was when, typical of him, he took the trouble to drive all the way to Jaffna Station when we were able to get a glimpse of each other. May the good God comfort you and the children in your sad hour of grief.

Sincerely,

A. Jeyaratnam Wilson,
(Professor A. J. Wilson)

Dr. S. SELVANAYAGAM,

**a most worthy unofficial ambassador
of Sri Lanka.**

Dr. Kingsley Ologe,

*Reader and acting Head, Department of Geography
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria, Nigeria.*

DR. S. Selvanayagam joined the Department of Geography, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria as Senior Lecturer in 1974 after a distinguished career as a student and as a University Lecturer and researcher in his own country.

While he was with us he taught two new intensive regional geography courses - the Developing World and Arid Lands to final year students. These were courses which the Department had been unable to offer until his arrival. He also shared in the teaching of practical work and the tutoring of Part I and II students and supervised many undergraduate dissertations. His teaching was popular with his students and he received special commendation from one of our External Examiners for his ability as demonstrated in the examination performance of his students. He shared most willingly and capably with the rest of us the administrative chores of the Department. On top of all this he managed to continue his research activities and to initiate new ones.

A hard and conscientious worker, Dr. Selva will be remembered by all those who were associated with him for his

maturity, his friendliness, his integrity and his concern for the welfare of his students. All of us here in this Department will remember Selva for his warmth, his hard work and dedication to duty and for the progress of Geography at Ahmadu Bello University and in Nigeria.

When Dr. Selvanayagam put in his letter of resignation in August 1977, he was being assessed for a readership in Geography. But we were not at all surprised that he was offered the chair in Geography in the University of Sri Lanka. We bade him farewell with mixed feelings, knowing that we were losing a most valuable colleague but also recognizing that he was leaving to take up a much deserved enhanced position.

It came to us as a rude shock when we heard that ~~DM~~ Selva was dead. It is with a heavy heart that I, on behalf of his former colleagues at A. B. U. pay my last respects in the form of this message of appreciation to a great man and to a most worthy unofficial ambassador of Sri Lanka.



Dr. S. Selvanayagam,

a very modest, warm hearted and
much valued colleague and friend

Michael Mortimore,

*Professor and Head
Bayero University
Kano, Nigeria.*

UNLIKE many of his professional colleagues, I came to know Selva only very recently, when he took up appointment as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. To leave his own country after many years of established professional and family life, and to travel to Africa and a completely unknown institution, called for considerable courage and he adjusted to the change in a way that attracted my admiration. He found a working situation that had many problems, and his family had also to make many adjustments. They all did this with a persistent cheerfulness that endeared them to all of their friends in the very cosmopolitan community at Zaria. In fact one of Selva's strong points was his ability to get along well with people of every type of background.

This was possible because he had a quiet, unassuming personality which respected other peoples' integrity and yet was backed by professional competence in his field which commanded his colleagues' respect. Since he was a specialist in the geography of South Asia and I have had all my experience in Africa. I never read all his work. But what I did read impressed me, and I know that he also had many friends in other countries who admired his work.

As a colleague he was always ready to co-operate in joint activity, and although his experience was considerable, he never indulged in criticism or showed the slightest trace of arrogance when we discussed academic and policy matters in our young and inexperienced Department. This was appreciated. His students, too, liked him and his lecture courses were popular.

When he left Zaria, we began to appreciate that he was indeed a very modest, warm hearted and much valued colleague and friend. I greatly regretted that I had not been able to spend more time with him. He left behind more real friends than many of us realize, notwithstanding his short stay, and all of us share the sorrow of his wife and family and are grateful for the privilege of having known him.



Professor S. Selvanayagam,

a colleague, an intimate friend
and my Teacher.

Dr. Paul Mirchaulum,

*Formerly Senior Lecturer in Geography
Ahmadu Bello University,
Zaria, Nigeria.*

FOR all of us at Ahmadu Bello University who knew and worked with Professor Selvanayagam, it is very painful to hear of his tragic death. I knew Professor Selva since he joined the Department of Geography, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1974. To me he was much more than a colleague but both an intimate friend as well as my teacher. He was, as one of the Senior Lecturers then, a most liked teacher and all of us had great respect for his simplicity and dedication to duty. He was a good example of a senior teacher who was ready to encourage his younger colleagues to carry out research and publish the results with faithfulness.

Ever since his departure from Nigeria, I have never forgotten him and I had always thought of getting an opportunity to visit him, God willing, Alas! He is no more. What a loss! I wish I had a book to dedicate to him. All of us in the Department of Geography remember him as one who never got involved in campus politics but would not hesitate to give his useful advice when called upon to do so.

I remember very well the role he played in commenting on my Departmental Occasional Paper (" The diffusion of the ox-Plough innovation in Lunguda district of Gongola State, Nigeria " Occasional paper No. 6. 1976). I had always found his advice very objective and useful and I believe that wherever he went, he would have given real academic leadership to his subordinates.

All of us at A. B. U. Zaria will long remember his useful advices and contributions to the department. He was really an asset to both the staff and students,

May his soul rest in Perfect Peace.



Professor S. SELVANAYAGAM

a sound Academician, a gifted teacher
and a peace-maker.

Michael Etherton,

*Senior Lecturer in English, Department of English
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria, Nigeria. 1*

It was with deep shock and disbelief that those of us in Zaria who knew Professor Selvanayagam learned of his tragic death in Sri Lanka. He was a friend of mine, and also a colleague because although we were not in the same Department, or the same academic discipline, we were in the same Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Professor Selvanayagam was highly thought of in the faculty and in his Department: a sound academician, a gifted teacher who was respected by his Nigerian students, and a peace-maker in committees who worked tirelessly for consensus and harmony during a time when the University was seeking for a new direction and a more nationally - committed role. We missed him when he left to take up his chair of Geography at Jaffna Campus, but felt glad for his success. We wished well and knew he had much to contribute to higher learning in Sri Lanka.

As a friend I hoped to see him again soon and planned to visit him in Jaffna and now I will not, and feel as deprived of his genial company and good sense as the University of Jaffna must of his professional capability. It is a deep irony that he survived the dangerous roads of Nigeria to die thus in Jaffna which he always told me was so safe.

His bereaved family have been very much in our thoughts here in Zaria and we offer them our sincere condolences.

Dr. S. Selvanayagam

Always remembered as a fine personality

Bernard J. Buntjer,

**Rankum
Netherlands**

*(formerly of the Institute of
Agricultural Research, Samaru, Nigeria.)*

I met Dr. Selvanayagam at one of these occasions at which children form the bridge between people, borders and even continents. While waiting till the children had finished a party we happened to start a conversation which proved to be the beginning of a friendship. Both of us were involved in aspects of development work in a country foreign to us. Both of us shared emotions of similar kind in our work that brought us into contact with a new yet receptive culture.

In as much as we had common motivation, we ourselves were from different backgrounds. Yet this fact did not create a gap but on the contrary worked towards an enriching exchange of views and opinions on a variety of matters. At various occasions our families shared the pleasure of being together.

Dr. Selvanayagam had an open mind. He was receptive to views dissenting from those he held himself. He had an enchanting way of making you listen to him and to listen to an idea new to him. There can be no doubt that he must have been able to inspire his students to approach this world in an open spirit recognizing that different views do not necessarily lead to antagonism, indeed may not lead to antagonism. His own character and his professional field of interest must have contributed to this attitude.

Recently I met a lady from Sri Lanka who presently follows a course in The Netherlands. I told her we had friends in Sri Lanka and I ventured to ask her whether she knew Dr. Selvanayagam. She turned out to be one of his students from Peradeniya before he went over to Nigeria. She was aware that he died in an accident. It was nice to hear her speak about him with admiration. I think it had been Selva's character which must have created a great many people who remember him as a fine personality.

We remember Selva because of his friendship. This friendship was only possible because of his human approach to whichever problem he was exposed to and to whoever brought the problem to him. May that attitude be a source of inspiration to all those who have had the privilege of knowing him.



RESPECTED AND LOVED BY HIS COLLEAGUES

Robert Nation,

Winnipeg, Canada.

(formerly of the Department of Mathematics
A. B. U. Zaria, Nigeria,)

Helen Nation,

Winnipeg, Canada.

(formerly of the Institute of Agricultural
Research, Samaru, Nigeria.)

DR. Selvanayagam was known to us when we all served at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. There he was a strong, responsible member of the Department of Geography, at a time when conditions were not easy in the department. He was respected and liked by all his colleagues, and he and his wife made friends of all nationalities within the International Community of the University.

We were fortunate to be able to renew acquaintance with him and his family on our visit to Sri Lanka in January 1979. We remember that visit with gratitude for the enthusiastic welcome he gave us, and his concern in taking us around the

area to show us its interesting historical sites, and especially his sharing with us his knowledge and understanding of the ordinary farmers and their activities and efforts. We enjoyed his enthusiasm for the countryside and his pride in the University of Jaffna.

He was also devoted to his fine family and it was a great pleasure to visit their happy household.

Dr. Selvanayagam is remembered and his tragic, untimely death is mourned by friends all around the world. We would like to quote the following words:

“To our friends and loved ones, we shall give the most worthy honour and tribute if we never say nor remember that they are dead, but rather that they have lived, that thereby the brotherly force and flow of their action and work may be carried over the gulfs of death and be made immortal in the true and earthly life which they had worthily used.

The dead are not dead if we have loved them truly. In our own lives, we give them immortality, Never are our loved ones so powerful to influence and inspire us as after death has withdrawn them from us. Then we feel with a new intensity the elements of sweetness and love in their lives. Then they take their place like stars in a region of purity and peace.”

LATE PROFESSOR
S. SELVANAYAGAM

Professor S. Vithiananthan

edt

Vice - Chancellor,

University of Jaffna,

Jaffna,

It is almost . . . years since we lost SELVA one month after I lost my wife. As far as the University is concerned, it will be long before, we, can see the like of him.

Professor Selvanayagam's success as a Lecturer was due to his passion for teaching and his interest in his subjects — two factors which have always put a halo round the most humble of University teachers.

Dayanithy — within the last one year you have had the courage to build a house and educate your children in the manner which Selva would have wished. I would end this message with a quotation “One does not solve problems; one must earn to live with them”. These words are reported to have been said of General de Gaulle of France when he was confronted with the problem as to what plans he had, to solve the Algerian issue.

I can never forget the smile on his face as he passed my room at noon on the 23rd of May to go home.

Professor

S. Selvanayagam

Pioneer of the University teaching programme
of Geography in the Tamil Medium.

Professor

H. N. C. FONSEKA,

*Department of Geography
University of Colombo.*

I have known late Professor S. Selvanayagam both as a student and as a colleague on the staff of the Department of Geography, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya since 1954.

Selva has throughout been a very good student of Geography and an excellent teacher. He pioneered the University teaching programme of Geography in the Tamil medium in 1960. He has made valuable research contributions in the field of Agricultural Geography pertaining to the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka. His publications are a lasting memory to his scholarship.

Personally Selva has been very sincere and extremely helpful to his colleagues and students alike.

His untimely demise is a great loss to the advancement of Geography in Sri Lanka and has created a void among us, his close friends, which can never be filled.

SELVA - A MAN OF ACTION

Professor T. Jogaratnam,

Dept. of Agricultural Economics

University of Peradeniya,

Peradeniya.

THE news of the death of "Selva", as he was always known to me, came as a rude shock. I was out of the Island at the time of the tragic incident and when the news reached me through another friend, it was beyond my comprehension. It was only after my return about a month later that I heard the full facts and to this day it is difficult to think that Selva is no more amongst the living.

It was a long time ago that we first met and from the very first the chemistry appears to have worked. Our major interest was in the field of Agricultural Development and this brought us even closer. I have been with him through his troubles and triumphs and he has shared in mine. In the academic field we worked closely and had vast plans for the future. A modest beginning was made and it was God's Will that it should not reach fruition.

Selva was a man of action, a go-getter if there was one. His achievements were still to come and it is an irony of fate that he departed this life with promises unfulfilled. His wife and children were equally close to us and one can never forget his deep devotion to his family and his concern for his children. One cannot offer them any consolation except to hope that God will provide the necessary strength to go through life without Selva by their side.

**PROFESSOR
S. SELVANAYAGAM.**

— An eternal pride to our Alma
Jaffna Hindu College.

M. RASANAYAGAM,

Assistant Secretary
Presidential Secretariat
Colombo

IT is extremely difficult and even more painful for those who have had the good fortune to come into contact with Selva to get reconciled to the fact that Professor Selvanayagam or Selva as he was affectionately called is no more. He had a personality that was charming, so throbbing with dynamic life and liveliness, a disposition that was warm, friendly and endearing, an appearance that was slim, prim and proper and youthful, a heart that was ever so generous and a genius that was amazing.

Having had the blessing of being closely associated with such a man as a friend and collegemate for so many years, one feels an unbearably painful wrench of heart when one has to prefix his name with the phrase "The late"

Selva had his education at Jaffna Hindu College, our Alma Mater. Selva always knew and had said on quite a many

occasion that he received his real education at Jaffna Hindu. He left Jaffna Hindu fully equipped to build up on his own the intellectual and cultural edifice that he turned out to be, to the eternal pride of his Alma Mater, his teachers and college mates. After spending couple of years at Zahira College, Colombo, Selvanayagam entered the University of Ceylon Peradeniya. He did the Geography Special course and on obtaining the degree did a short stint at Official Language Department which gave some scope for his intellectual and linguistic talents of rare calibre. He soon returned to the university of Ceylon, Peradeniya to teach.

While there he obtained his Master's and Doctoral degrees at the London School of Economics. Sometime later, in 1974, Selva went to Nigeria to teach in a University there. It was when he was there that the Geography chair at the Jaffna University was offered to him. He grabbed the offer though the post had no pecuniary attraction and though the Jaffna University, was still a toddler because Jaffna was always close to his heart. He did a yeoman service at the Jaffna University organizing the geography department starting from scratch, so to say, contributing to other departments and guiding the Hindu Students Union there.

Like a brilliantly glowing meteor, he flashed across the mid-heavens of the Jaffna University, but unlike a meteor which sets without a glow, Selva had the brilliant glow right to the moment he went out of existence and his physical remains were cremated. Nay, the glow, the dazzling, brilliant glow, has outlived his existence; it is still there Professor Selvanayagam was very successful as a scholar and teacher. The legion of his students will bear testimony to this. He was an authority alike in Geography as in Tamil Language, Literature and culture, Civilization and Philosophy. This might sound and look

queer and difficult to those who have been nurtured in and used to an intellectual and cultural atmosphere as has prevailed in and permeated in Jaffna Hindu. Just a month or so before his untimely and unwarranted demise, he with his charming personality and beaming smile adorned the Jaffna Hindu College Old Boys Association Annual General Meeting, got elected as one of our eminent and distinguished Vice-Presidents and had lunch with us

To us fellow Old Boys of Jaffna Hindu, the wanton killing of Selva by the cruel and lifeless nature of things is a tormenting, agonising thrust into the heart of being as it is infinitely more so to his dearly beloved wife Dayanithy. Yes. Selva and Dayanithy were an ideal Couple. Bonded together by a unity nay identity, of purport and feeling, they went through the thick and thin of life, through fair weather and foul, up the rocks and down the depths, always a shining example of what a family, what a couple should be, always jointly beaming with a charming smile. It will be always and forever be the lasting torment of Dayanithy that Selva did not live to see the bloom and feel the fragrance of the achievements of their children. To these tender children, the loss of their father is an irreparable one. To Dayanithy however, the demise of her everything into which she fused two decades back, means the annihilation of all sense and meaning of life. Nobody can console her. Nobody can share her bereavement. Just as Selva, the gentle but steadfast and sincere lover, the adoring and protective husband, the hero of achievements was hers exclusively so is this cruel and unspeakably tragic bereavement. May the strength of her love for Selva and children are hers and that they are with her to look after and be looked after.

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எனது இனிய நண்பன் செல்வா

(மு. ஷரீப்,

பிரதம கல்வி அதிகாரி,
கல்வித்திணைக்களம்,
மலர்.

“ஆண்டவனைத் தவிர யாரையும் நேசியாதே” என்ற பெரியார் அறிவுறுத்தல் என்னைப் பொறுத்த வரையில் பெரிய உண்மையாகி விட்டது. கல்லூரிப்படிப்பின் போது ஏதோ ஒரு சக்தியினால் பிணைக்கப்பட்ட நானும் செல்வாவும் இருபத்தொன்பது வருடங்களாகத் துறையாத அன்போடு வாழ்ந்ததையும் இரு குடும்பங்களுமே எமது அன்பின் காரணமாக ஒன்றோடொன்று நெருங்கி வாழ்ந்ததையும் நினைக்கும் போது, அன்று இன்பங் கொண்ட நான் இன்று வேதனைப் பட நேர்ந்து விட்டது.

பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற்கு நாமிருவரும் ஒன்றாகச் செல்ல வேண்டும்; ஒரே பாடங்களையே படிக்கவேண்டும் என்று நாமிருவரும் பலமுறை கூறத்தும், பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற்கு தன்னோடு என்னையும் கூட்டிச் செல்லப் பல வழிகளிற் பாட ஆயத்தங்கட்காக என் செல்வா எனக்கு உதவியதையும் என்னால் மறக்க முடியாது. எனக்கு மட்டுமன்றிக் கல்லூரியில் சக மாணவர்கட்கும் புவியியல் போதித்து மனநிறைவு கொள்வது செல்வாவின் போக்காக இருந்தது. பல்கலைக்கழக வாழ்வு முடிந்து, நான் உத்தியோகம் பெறச் சென்ற முதல் நாள் செல்வா என்னுடன் வந்தும், தான் உத்தியோகம் பெறச் சென்ற முதல்நாள் என்னை அழைத்துச் சென்றும் மாறா அன்பை என் மீது காட்டியதை மறக்கவே முடியாது. இப்படியான பல பெருங் குணங்கள் என் செல்வாவிடமிருந்தமை எனக்குப் பெருமை தருவதாயிருந்தது. எனது ஈடுமீட வாழ்வில் அடியெடுத்து வைக்க முன் பல வழிகளில் உதவியாயிருந்து, தனது குடும்ப வாழ்வை ஆரம்பித்து வைக்க நான் உதவ வேண்டிமென வேண்டி இருவரது வாழ்வும் வளம் பெற வழிவகுத்த என் நண்பன் செல்வாவைப் போன்ற நண்பரை ஒவ்வொருவரும் பெற வேண்டுமென்பதே எனது ஆசை.

எந்தப் பேரிடியும் அசைக்க முடியாத மனத்திண்மை எனக் கிருந்தது. எவரது பிரிவும் என்னைக் கண்ணீர் கொட்டச் செய்ததை மாவறிவோன். எனது அன்புச் செல்வாவின் இழப்பு என்னை ‘அசைத்து’ விட்டது.

நன்றிக்கடன் செலுத்த இறைவா எனக்கு இடந்தருவாயா?

பேராசிரியர்

சோமசுந்தரம் செல்வநாயகம்

ஒருநண்பனின் அஞ்சலி

பேராசிரியர் கார்த்திகேசு சிவத்தம்பி

தமிழ்த்துறைத் தலைவர்
யாழ். பல்கலைக்கழகம்,
யாழ்ப்பாணம்.

விதியின் குரூர தாண்டவத்திற்கு யாழ்ப்பாணப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் 23-5-79 அன்று பலியாகிற்று.

அது தனது முதலாவது புவியியற் பேராசிரியரைக் கற்பனையிலுங்கூடக் காண முடியாத ஒரு கொடூர விபத்தில் இழந்தது. பேராசிரியர் சோமசுந்தரம் செல்வநாயகம் காலமானார்.

யாழ்ப்பாணத்தின் மண்வளத்தினின்றும் முகிழ்த்துக் கிளம்பி அந்த மண்வளத்தையே தனது ஆராய்ச்சித்துறையாக்கிக் கொண்டு, யாழ்ப்பாண மண்வள வீருத்தியினதும் அதன் அறிவு வியாப்தியினதும் நம்பிக்கைச் சுடர்களில் ஒருவராக விளங்கிய 'சோ. செ.' காலமானார்.

இந்த மரணத்தைக் காலமானார் என்று சொல்வது பொருத்தாது. காலன் ஒருவரது, ஒரு கல்வி நிறுவனத்தினது, ஒரு குடும்பத்தினது எதிர்காலத்தை சிதைத்துச் சூறையாடிய ஊழிக் கூத்தினை அவ்வாறு கூற முடியாது. அவ்வாறு கூற மனமும் ஒப்பாது.

'சோ. செ.' எனது ஒருசாலை மாணவன். கல்லூரி நண்பன். பல்கலைக்கழகச் சகமாணவன். கல்லூரியொன்றில் சக ஊழியன். சக மாணவியொருத்தியின் காதற் கணவன். இறுதியில் ஒரே பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் சக ஊழியன்.

புவியியற்றுறைப் பேராசிரியர் செல்வநாயகம் தன் புவியியல் அறிவு கொண்டு தமிழியலறிவினை வளப்படுத்தியவர். பண்டைய தமிழகத்தின் புவியியலமைப்புப் பற்றியும், நவீன தமிழ் கூறும் நல்லுலகத்தின் மொழிபெயர்ப்புப் பிரச்சினைகள் பற்றியும் சர்வதேசப் புகழ்பெற்ற ஆய்வுக்கட்டுரைகளை எழுதியவர். செல்வநாயகத்தின் மறைவில் தமிழியலும் தாக்கப்படுகின்றது.

செல்வநாயகத்தின் வாழ்க்கை மிக முக்கியமானது; முன்னுதாரணமாக விளங்கத்தக்கது. செல்வாவின் முழு வாழ்க்கையும் — அறிவுத்துறை முதல் அகத்தினை வரை சகலதும் — செய்வன திருந்தச் செய்த எனும் கோட்பாட்டின் ஒளிக்கதிராகவே அமைந்தது. தன்னம்பிக்கையுடையவன்தான் வாழ்க்கையை எதிர் நோக்க முடியுமென்பதற்கு அவரது வாழ்க்கை ஒரு விளக்கம். தான் கண்ட உண்மையையே தன் ஒரே எசமானாக விசுவாசித்து வாழ்ந்து வந்தவர். இத்தகையோரின் இழப்புத்தான் காவிய சோகத்தை ஏற்படுத்துவன.

காலம் மறைப்பதனால் காவியப் புகழ்கள் ஒடுக்கப்படக்கூடாது. செல்வநாயகத்தின் ஆராய்ச்சிக் கட்டுரைகள் தனி நூலாக வெளிக்கொணரப்படல் வேண்டும். இது செல்வாவின் மாணவர் பரம்பரைக்கு யாழ்ப்பாணம், ஏன் முழுப்புவியியலுலகே இதும் உரிமைக் கட்டளை.

செல்வாவின் அன்பு மனைவி, ஆசைப் புதல்வர்கள் புதல்விடமின்று கருங்கடலிற் காற்றடித்த கப்பல்கள். செல்வாவின் ஆத்மா கலங்கரை விளக்கமாக நின்று அவர்களை வழிநடத்தும். அவர் தன் குடும்பத்தின் பால் வைத்திருந்த பாசம் அந்தப் பணியைச் செய்வீர்களும். செல்வாவின் மரணத்திற்கான அநுதாபத்தை கூற முனையும் பொழுதுதான் அந்த அநுதாபத்தை அவரது நண்பர்கள் தத்தமக்கே தெரிவித்துக் கொள்ள வேண்டுமென்ற உண்மை பளிச்சிடும்.

நல்லவர்கள் மறையும் பொழுது நமது இரத்தத்தின் பல்புகழைக்கப்படுகிறது. உண்மையில் எமது சமுதாயத்தில் இத்தகைய மாணவர்கள்தான் தெய்வம் எனும் கோட்பாட்டைத் தேவையாகக் குலிப்பறன். ஏனெனில் தெய்வமில்லையேல் தேற்றமில்லாது போய்விடும்.

வளர்க செல்வாவின் நினைவு.

(ஜூன் மாதம் 1979 இல் வெளிவந்த 'மல்லிகை' என்ற கலை இலக்கிய மாத இதழில் பிரசுரிக்கப்பட்ட கட்டுரை)

சடங்கன்று சந்தித்த வேளையில், பேராசிரியர் வித்தியானந்தனின் மனைவி ஹெரெனப் பரிதாபமாகப் பிரிந்தமையினை எவ்வாறு நம்புதல் கூடும் என்ற வினாவின் எழுப்பினார் பேராசிரியர் செல்வநாயகம். ஆனால் ஒரு மாதத்தில் செல்வாவுக்கே அதைவிடக் கொடூரமான முடிவு வருமென்று யார் எதிர் பார்த்திருக்க முடியும்?

நெஞ்சங்களை உலுக்கும் வகையில் மறைந்த செல்வா வாழ்ந்த வாழ்க்கையினையும் செயற்பட்ட சிறப்பினையும் எண்ணிப் பார்க்கும் போது இழப்பின் துன்பம் பன்மடங்காகின்றது. 28-5-1932-ல் புங்குடு நீலில் பிறந்த செல்வா யாழ்ப்பாணம் இந்துக் கல்லூரியிலும் கொழும்பு பல்கலைக்கழகம் கற்று, 1953-ல் பல்கலைக்கழகம் புகுந்து 1957-ல் புவியியற் சிறப்புப் பட்டதாரியாக வெளியேறினார். சிலகாலம் அரசுகளும் மொழித்திணைக்களத்திற் செயலாற்றிவிட்டு 1959-ல் இலங்கைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் விரிவுரையாளராகிய செல்வா 1961-ல் இலண்டன் பல்கலைக்கழகம் சென்று 1963-ல் அப்பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் கலாநிதிப் பட்டத்தையும் பெற்றுக் கொண்டார்.

பல்கலைக்கழகத்திலே தாய்மொழி மூலம் போதனைகள் தொடக்கப்பட்ட போது, புவியியலைத் தமிழ்மொழி மூலம் கற்பிப்பதில் அவர் காட்டிய உற்சாகமும் திறமையும் வியந்து குறிப்பிடத்தக்கவையாகும். கிராமவியலுக்குச் சிறப்புக் கொடுத்துக் கிராமப் பிரதேசங்களைப் பற்றிய ஆராய்ச்சிகளை மேற் கொண்ட வகையில் அவர் பிறருக்கு ஒரு முன்னோடியாகத் திகழ்ந்தார். தமிழியற்கழகம் என்றதோர் அமைப்பினை உருவாக்கித் தமிழ் பேசும் மக்களின் வரலாறு, கலை, இலக்கியம் முதலிய துறைகளிற் பயனுள்ள பல கருத்தரங்குகளை நடாத்துவதில் அவர் காட்டிய உற்சாகம் மறக்கத்தக்கதன்று.

இவ்வாறு பேராதனையில் வாழ்ந்த காலத்துப் பல வகைகளில் உழைத்த செல்வா 1974-ல் தமது பதவியைத் துறந்துவிட்டு நைஜீரியா சென்று அகமது பெல்லோ பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற் பேராசிரியரானார். தாய் நாட்டுக்கும் தாய் மொழிக்கும் தக்கமுறையில் தொண்டாற்றும் வாய்ப்பு யாழ்ப்பாணப் பல்கலைக்கழகப் பேராசிரியப் பதவி மூலம் கிடைத்த போது, நைஜீரியாவை விட்டு 1977-ல் யாழ்ப்பாணம் திரும்பினார். யாழ்ப்பாணப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்திற் சென்றசபை அங்கத்தவராகவும், இந்து மன்றப் பெருந்தலைவராகவும் செயற்பட்ட செல்வா, தமிழ்ப் பிரதேசங்களின் விவசாய, பொருளாதார வளர்ச்சிக்கு உதவத்தக்க ஆராய்ச்சிகளையும் மும்முரமாக மேற் கொண்டதோடு பல கருத்துக்களையும் ஒழுங்கு செய்தார்.

மேற்கொள்ளும் எந்தக் காரியத்தையும் வேகமான உற்சாகத்தோடும் நேர்மையான உறுதியோடும் மேற்கொள்வது செல்வாவின் புவியியற் தேவையான பொருளினைத் தேடவென்றே ஐந்து ஆண்டுகளின்

உற்சாகமும் மனிதாபிமான உணர்வும் உள்ள

பேராசிரியர்

சோ, செல்வநாயகம்

சி. தில்லைநாதன்,

கிரேஷ்ட விரிவுரையாளர்

தமிழ்த்துறை

பேராதனைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம்

பேராதனைப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தில் இந்து மாணவர் சங்கம் ஆரம்பிக்கப்பட்ட காலத்தில் ஒரு மாணவராயிருந்து சங்க வளர்ச்சியில் ஆர்வம் காட்டியவரும், பின்னர் பல்கலைக்கழக விரிவுரையாளராகிய சங்க முயற்சிகளில் ஒத்துழைத்துக் குறிஞ்சிக்குமரன் ஆலயம் அமைத்தும் பாபிஷேகம் நிகழ்ந்த காலப் பகுதியிற் சங்கப் பெரும்பொருளாளராக உற்சாகத்தோடு உழைத்தவருமாகிய பேராசிரியர் சோமசுந்தரம் செல்வநாயகம் தமது நாற்பத்தேழாவது வயதில் 23-5-79 அன்று அகால மரணமெய்தியமை அதிர்ச்சிமிகு துயருள் எமை ஆழ்த்துவதாகும்.

இன்றைக்கிருந்தாரை நாளைக்குக் காண்பது நிச்சயமில்லையெனும் இயல்பினது மனித வாழ்க்கை என்பதனை நீண்ட நெடுங்காலமாகவே அறிந்துள்ளோமாயினும், அந்நிலையற்ற தன்மையினை, மிகப்பிரியமானவர்களை எம்மிடமிருந்து பிரித்தெடுக்கும் செயல் மூலம் இரக்கமின்றி இடைக்கிடை அதிர்ச்சியினூடே இடித்துணர்த்துகிறான் காலதேவன். தெல்லிப்பழையில் திருமதி கமலாதேவி வித்தியானந்தனின் இறுதிச்

முன் அவர் சொந்த நாட்டை விட்டு நைஜீரியா சென்றார். சமய வழி பாட்டுக்கென்றும் கல்விப் பெருக்கத்துக்கென்றும் சொல்லிக் கொண்டு பிறநாடுகளுக்குச் செல்லும் பலர் பணம் சேகரிப்பதற் பேயாய் அலைவதுண்டு. ஆனால் ஒளிவு மறைவின்றி உண்மையைச் சொல்லிக் கொண்டு செயலாற்றும் சிலருட் சிறப்பாய்க் குறிப்பிடத்தக்க ஒருவர் செல்வா.

நேசிப்பவற்றைத் தீவிரமாக நேசிப்பதும் எதிர்ப்பவற்றைத் தீவிரமாக எதிர்ப்பதும் சிருஷ்டியாற்றல் மிக்க கலைஞர்களுக்கு உரிய தோர் இயல்பு என்பர். அவ்வியல்பு செல்வாவிடம் சிறந்து மிளிர்ந்தது. செல்வாவோடு சண்டை போடுவது கூடச் சுவாரஸ்யமான ஓர் அனுபவமாகும். கருத்து மாறுபாடுகளையும் தவறான எண்ணப் பதிவுகளையும் முகத்துக்கு நேரேயே அவரோடு அலசித் தீர்க்க முடியும்.

யாழ்ப்பாணப் பல்கலைக்கழகத்தின் புவியியற்றுறைத் தலைவராகவும் பேராசிரியராகவும் விளங்கிக் காத்திரமான பணிகளில் அவர் கருத்துச் செலுத்திய தறுவாயில் அன்னாரை இழந்தமை தமிழ் கூறும் உலகுக்கு மட்டுமன்றி இந்நாட்டுக்கே ஒரு பேரிழப்பாகும். உற்சாகமும் உறுதியும் மனிதாபிமான உணர்வும் கூடிய செல்வாவின் நினைவு என்றும் பசுமையாகவே நிலைப்பதாகும். அவருடைய ஆத்மசாந்திக்கும், அவரைப் பிரிந்து தவிக்கும் காதற் துணைவியாரதும் நான் குபிள்ளைகளினதும் ஆறுதலுக்கும் குறிஞ்சிக்குமரன் அருளினை வேண்டுகிறேன்.

[பேராதனைப் பல்கலைக்கழக இந்து மாணவர் சங்கத்தினரால் 1979-ல் வெளியிடப்பட்ட “இந்து தருமம்” என்ற மலரினில் பிரசுரிக் கப்பட்ட கட்டுரை]

உள்ளத்தில் வாழும் உத்தமர்

கி. இரத்தினகோபால்,

அதிபர்,

கடுகண்ணாவை தமிழ் வித்தியாலயம்,

கடுகண்ணாவை.

சப்ததீபினில் ஒன்று

தன்னிகரில்லாப் புங்குடுதீவு

அங்கோர் கிராமம் தன்னில்

அயலவராகப் பிறந்தோம்

இந்துக் கல்லூரி வாழ்வில்

இருவரும் சந்திக்கலானோம்

பள்ளிப் பிள்ளைகள் நாங்கள்

பழகிக் கொண்டோம். ஒன்றாய்

செல்வா ! என்றே அழைப்பேன்

நண்பா ! என்பார் அன்பாய்

நானோ நினைக்க வில்லை

நன்றாய்ப் பழகி விட்டார்

ஈருடல் ஒருயிர் ஆகி
இயங்கி வாழ்ந்தோம் வேறாய்
இருவர் நட்பையும் கண்டு
ஏங்கிய பலபேர் உண்டு
பொய்யைச் சொல்லவும் இல்லை
புகழ்ச்சி கூறவும் இல்லை
செல்வன் தன்னை நினைத்தால்
உள்ளந்தனில் நிற்பார்
சொல்ல நினைக்கச் சொல்வார்
சொல்லாமல் நினைக்க வருவார்

திருமந்திரமெனு மொரு நூல்
தேடி வாங்கும் ஆசை !
ஏனோ என்னிடம் வந்து
இன்னற் படுத்திய காலம்
நானோ கேட்க வில்லை
தானே வாங்கித் தந்தார்
நாற்பது ரூபா காசைத்
தானே கொடுத்தார் அன்பால்
நானோ கொடுக்க வில்லை
அவரும் வாங்க மாட்டார்

அவரே அறிவுரை வரைந்து
அன்பாய்த் தந்த இருநூல்
இன்றும் என்னிடம் உண்டு
இவர் பெயர் என்றும் வாழும்
நினைக்கக் கொடுக்க வல்லான்
இவரே ! எந்தன் நண்பன்
செல்வா ! என்னும் நற்பெயர்
சிறப்பாய் இவர்க்குப் பொருந்தும்
கொடையில் பெரிய வள்ளல்
கொண்டவன் நானே சாட்சி

