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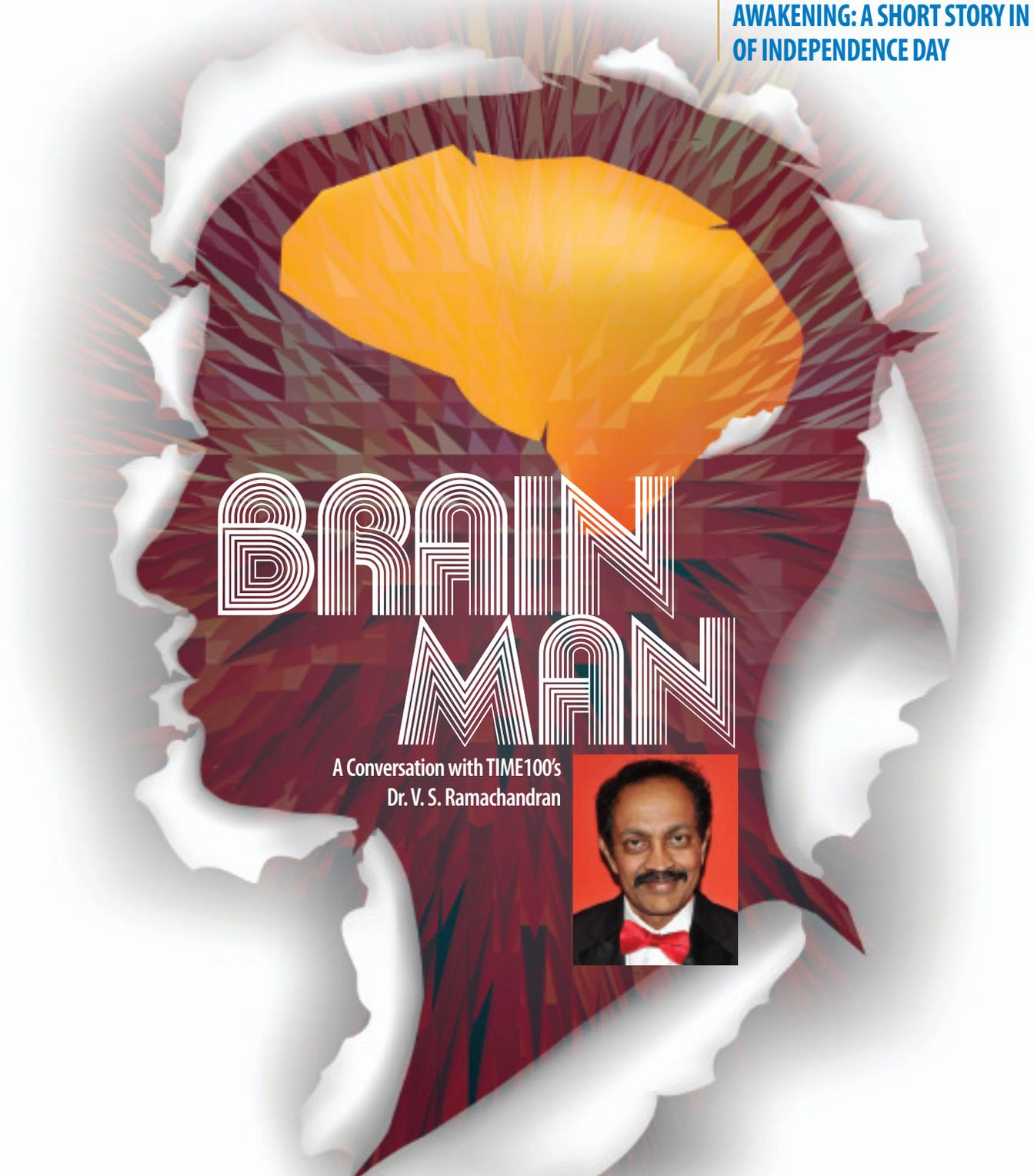
Your Passport to the Indian-American Community

**MUMBAI BOMBINGS:
I SEE CELL PHONES**

**SPELLING BEE CHAMPS REVEAL
THEIR SECRETS**

PARENTING: SLEEPING LIKE A BABY

**AWAKENING: A SHORT STORY IN HONOR
OF INDEPENDENCE DAY**



BRAIN MAN

A Conversation with TIME100's
Dr. V. S. Ramachandran



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CoverFeature



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DR. V. S. RAMACHANDRAN: THE BRAIN MAPPER

One of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people of the world, this neuroscientist belongs to that select group of researchers who study the brain to find out how the mind works. From his home in San Diego, Ramachandran spoke to *Khobar* about his groundbreaking work, which continues to make a deep impression.



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VOYEURISM NO WAY TO STOP TERRORISM

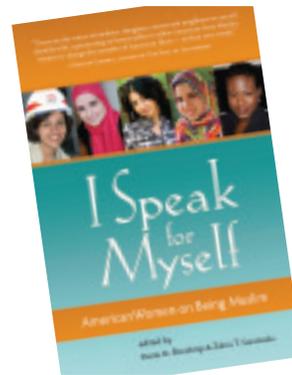
In the aftermath of the latest Mumbai bombings, instead of compassion, efficiency, or even outrage, the author saw grinning yahoos holding up cell phones.



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THE ABCS OF BEES

Spelling bee champs talk about why Indian-Americans so dominate in this area.



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MUSLIM AMERICAN WOMEN SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Maria Ebrahimji, executive editorial producer at CNN, along with Chicago-based writer and editor Zahra T. Suratwala, compiled and edited the prose of 40 stories of Muslim women about their journeys to acceptance.

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AroundTown

the larger tapestry of the Indian cultural heritage. This was followed by *Acham Acham Illai*, the legendary song of emancipation from the poet-philosopher Subramania Bharati: the younger dancers captivated the audience with this piece, with its music from the soundtrack of the movie *Indira*.

The last piece in this segment was a unique interpretation of what constitutes the *id*—that inaccessible part of our personality which is dominated by instincts and emotions. Titled *Vyaktitva*, this piece explored the different emotions that make up the human entity, both in isolation and in totality. This remarkable piece was noteworthy for another reason, too: it was conceptualized, choreographed, and performed entirely by the senior students of Nriya Sankalpa.

The second segment featured guest artists in *Krishna Bharatam*, a unique dance drama by Sheejith Krishna, a dancer from Kalakshetra. Daring and innovative both in content and in form, *Krishna Bharatam* explores the complex blend of the divine and mundane, the philosopher and the realist, the reformer and the preserver, and the pacifist and the warrior that is Krishna. In a series of six vignettes that carried the audience through the epic *Mahabharata*, from the *Draupadi Swayamvara* to the revealing of the *Bhagavadgita*, Sheejith presented different faces of Krishna: now a silent witness, now a political agent, anon a succorer of the oppressed, then again a strategist in war, and so on. One of the scenes showing Krishna as an ambassador in the Kaurava court on behalf of the Pandavas was executed in the Kathakali style, down to the music which consisted of the *padams* from the



Photo: K. R. Sundararaghavan

Guest artist Sheejith Krishna (on the right).

Doothu scene of *Duryodhanavadham*, a popular Kathakali play. This bore witness to Sheejith's mastery in integrating different styles of dance and his avant-garde approach towards experimenting with form. Although *Krishna Bharatam* was originally intended to be a solo performance it was modified to include two other exemplary dancers, Paulomi Pandit and Anupama Aranaprasad from the Rangashree Dances of India (California) who accompanied Sheejith with impeccable style and grace.

The proceeds from this performance benefited Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

- Arun Madangarli

Mohini-Bhasmasura – A Magnificent Dance Drama

Who says you get what you pay for? There are some things in life that you get free and yet are very valuable. Atlanta Indians were treated to one such free event in the form of a magnificent dance drama *Mohini Bhasmasura* on Sunday July 17, 2011 at Hindu Temple of Atlanta in Riverdale.

The dance drama was presented in classical Kuchipudi style by Hari Rama Murthy's academy, Kuchipudi Kalakshetra, based in India. A disciple of Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam, Rama Murthy has himself mentored many successful teachers and performers. He came as guest of Atlanta's Kuchipudi dance exponent Sasikala Penumarthi and her hus-

band Ravi. *Mohini Bhasmasura* is Hari Ram's debut choreographed dance drama.

The legend goes like this: the demon Vrikasura, who is a powerful, ruler wants to assert his power over the world and seeks Sage Narada's advice. The sage asks him to meditate upon Lord Shiva and obtain his blessings. Shiva, pleased with Vrikasura's devotion grants him the ability to incinerate people. However, Vrikasura, now known as Bhasmasura, turns the table and tries to test his newly acquired power on Shiva. Fearful, Shiva goes to Lord Vishnu for help. Vishnu promises that he will destroy the demon, and incarnates himself as a beautiful and

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Left: Sage Narada advises Vrikasura to meditate upon Lord Shiva

Below: Shiv and Parvati's dance



charming woman named Mohini. Mesmerized by Mohini's beauty, Bhasmasura accepts her challenge to show his prowess in dance to win her love. Bhasmasura and Mohini start dancing, with Bhasmasura matching every move and footstep with Mohini like an expert dancer. During the final stage of the dance, Mohini puts her hand over her head gesturing Bhasmasura to do the same. Bhasmasura becomes his own victim as soon as he puts his hand over his head and within seconds pulverizes himself and thus destroys himself. In the final scene, Shiva and all the deities are relieved and express their gratitude to Vishnu for bringing peace to the earth.

The whole dance drama was divided into seven scenes, each scene gripping the audience with melodious music, *taal* and movements of the dancers, who were clad in gorgeous and life-like costumes. All the characters, including Rama Murthy as Bhasmasura, performed exceptionally well and the choreography was commendable.

There was no live orchestra. However, following names were announced: Vaikuntha Narayan Murthy as scriptwriter, Srinivas Venkata Sastry as composer and music director, Hari Rama Murthy as director, choreographer and *nattuvangam*, Srinivasa Venkata and K. Nitya Santhoshini as vocalists, R. Dinakar on violin, Meduri Srinivas on veena, V.B.S. Murali on flute, K. Raja Gopalacharya on mridangam, R. Srikanth on

tabla, Varanasi Bhanu Prasad on *chatam* and *pakhwaj* and effects by D. Jaya Kumar Acharya.

The dance drama lasted two hours, after which two priests were called on the stage who prayed and blessed the artists. Sasikala presented each artist a gift and Dr. Seshu Sarma offered vote of thanks. Sasikala mentioned that the artists, who came from India, have dedicated their entire life for the promotion of Kuchipudi dance and they do not charge any money; however, she urged the audience to donate generously to the temple.

— Report and photos by Girish Modi

Submitting your report for consideration in Around Town

Please send post-event reports for consideration in the Around Town section to AroundTown@khabar.com. Publication of reports is based on several criteria, including the volume of reports submitted for a given issue. Guidelines for reports will be available on our website.

Deadline: 16th of each month—for consideration in the following month. However, chances of inclusion are better if reports are received well in advance of the deadline.