

THE NAADI PALM LEAF ORACLE OF INDIA

*Collections of
Sanskrit and Tamil
writings on palm
leaves contain
personal messages
for individual
seekers as well as
prophecies about
global crises, and
are said to have
been dictated by
the Indian avatar
Shiva about 5,000
years ago.*

by Angela and
Andrew Donovan © 2008

Email:
webmail@angeladonovan.com
Website:
<http://www.angeladonovan.com>

If someone in a strange country said they could read your personal past, present and future from ancient Sanskrit or Tamil inscriptions written on an old palm leaf, would you be sceptical? My husband certainly was. In 2004, Andrew and I were invited to a wedding in Kashmir. This meant a major decision was needed, as we live in the UK and Kashmir is not exactly "up the road", so to speak. After procrastinating until it was almost too late, out of the blue Andrew suddenly said, "Come on, let's go!" He was so sure about it that I found myself saying, "Okay, let's RSVP and book the flights". And with that, the sense of synchronicity I'd felt at Andrew's sudden change of heart began to grow in earnest.

Just before we left, a friend in Los Angeles told me about the Naadis and how much they'd impressed Deepak Chopra with a "reading" for him. I'd never heard of them but was immediately intrigued and wanted to meet them if we could while we were out there. I won't go into the details of exactly how, but we did, and it changed our lives. For both of us it was the experience of our lifetimes and, as Andrew will explain, since then nothing's been quite the same—especially for him.

— Angela Donovan

ANDREW'S STORY

To all you curious, open-minded and well-read NEXUS people out there, it's somewhat embarrassing to confess that Angela and I (equally curious, open minded and well read) should have had our lives fundamentally changed by meeting some old palm leaves—two of them, in fact—that spoke to us in a language we didn't understand, in a country we hadn't been to before, at a time we hadn't expected to be there.

Well, in Angela's case perhaps her life didn't so much change as find many further positive reassurances, but, for me, meeting my particular "leaf" was a shocking revelatory experience for which I was totally unprepared. Sceptic that I was (and still am in many ways), nothing had prepared me for what the Naadis showed me that day: proof that my soul's destiny had been etched in staggering detail, by someone who could never have known me countless years ago, on a leaf of all things—one that related to me, and me alone.

Naadi palm-leaf readings

Yes, in India they have leaves that can do all that, and do it every day for hundreds of other people in just the same way—and, as we found out, do a whole lot more as well. For these are not just any old leaves: the inscriptions on them were first dictated thousands of years ago by several great Indian Rishis or sages (in our case, Sri Kausika), since which time they have lain dormant—at their choice—awaiting the exact moment of their predestined rendezvous with whomsoever they belong to.

But before you find all that out, you need to get started. Assuming you've been able to find an honest and trustworthy Naadi practitioner (it's not easy), the first thing is to leave him with your thumbprint—right hand for men, left hand for women—three impressions of which you carefully place in a ledger full of such prints, each one the start of a journey just like yours. You then initial them, adding only the barest details about yourself—Christian name, male or female, the day's date and an address or telephone number where you can be reached—and leave. The Naadi reader asks for nothing else—no nationality, occupation, age, surname, etc.—and very politely will usher you out the door.

Next, the reader examines your thumbprint to find the significant markings—the "dots", "crowns" and other impressions—that he seeks. And while each print is unique, to the

Naadi reader the number and grouping of the "crowns", etc., enable him to reduce the total number down to 108 basic types or "categories" covering the whole of humanity. So the next step is to find which "category", if any, your print falls within, for the Naadis offer no guarantees.

Very politely again, the reader will inform you that a significant percentage of the world's population cannot be found this way. For while the Naadi reader does not care and will not ask you which country, faith, religion, creed or colour you are, he remains certain of one thing: whoever is destined to come and meet their leaf will come, for "whoever wishes to look into the leaves will go to them of their own accord".

Even when your "category" is found, locating your leaf within it can take hours, days, weeks or even months, for finding yours amongst a number equating to a large proportion of the world's population can take some time—hence the "categories". Leaves with similar basic parameters are bunched together in bundles, each numbering up to 100 leaves, that largely correspond to the features on your thumbprint.

Armed with four or five such bundles, the reader will then call you in, hoping to reunite you with your leaf. This means checking the validity of each leaf until yours is "found" or no bundles remain (in which case they may send out for more from their archives, with the process repeated at a later date). You will also need a translator, for the Naadi readers are not necessarily fluent in English any more than you are in their Urdu, Telugu or Sanskrit.

And believe it or not (I still have trouble with this), it's not actually up to you at all, or even the Naadi readers, whether you get to meet your "leaf" or not. However incredible it sounds, it's the "leaf" that decided all those centuries ago the precise date and time it will meet up with you, and even though you're sitting there, hoping to meet it, it may still not appear. Many seekers leave the Naadis having found their category but not their leaf, as it decreed it was "not the time" to do so.

The actual checking is done by the reader, who asks for confirmation on matters covered in the Sanskrit or other writings on the leaf; that is, he/the leaf will say, "You are a Brahmin" or "You have two sisters, both alive" or "You have moved house eight or nine months ago" or whatever, to which you answer "Yes" or "No" as appropriate, and nothing more. This can go on for quite a while, and with each "No" the leaf is discarded and the reader moves on to the next, whereas a "Yes" means he stays with that one until he gets a "No"—or if all your answers continue to be "Yes", after several more he'll smile delightedly and agree it is your leaf.

And take it from me, by then it means a very great deal. For by now you'll have transcended a vast range of wholly unexpected and conflicting emotions—suspicion, distrust, disbelief, arrogance, surprise, disappointment, laughter, shame, guilt, fascination, delight, shock, horror, sadness, grief, grudging recognition and utter amazement—all in about 40 minutes or so (in my case). And by the end of it you'll be sitting there sweating, having trouble breathing, and staring hard at a strip of palm leaf covered in minuscule scribbles on the table in front of you, knowing that without any doubt everything written on that leaf, however many years ago, is about you, and only you... It's your

DNA sitting there and no one else's, and even more amazingly you had absolutely nothing to do with it or even knew it existed until that moment.

Yet by then (in my case), the leaf via the reader had very precisely told me my parents' Christian names, my family background, my childhood story, ambitions, education, degree, profession, career moves, homes, health, possessions, abilities, spouses, children, birthday, illnesses, accidents and so on—and every detail correct and written down on that leaf. The sheer depth and range of the secret, intimate details that the leaf reveals, about which only you could possibly know, are far too personal for even the most brilliant guesswork by any trained reader or clever eavesdropper. And very worrying, for not even Angela knew some of the things revealed in my reading, and certainly no one could ever have found them out unless all was exactly as the Naadis said it was—already written on that leaf.

Now, I'm probably like you: I don't fall in that easily with every scam that goes around the block. So when something of this magnitude happens in less than an hour, it's a real shock to the system. Put simply, it goes against everything you've learnt and grown up with, yet it's all just happened in front of your eyes and you've agreed with every word of it.

And it doesn't stop there. Just when you think you can escape to your hotel for a stiff drink and a smoke, the reader tells you he

needs about 40 minutes to prepare your "predictions" and "remedies". For now that your leaf has identified itself, it can tell you your future and the sins you're still carrying... You blench. Sins? What sins? You sit there dumbfounded, stunned, your mind in a whirl. After all the truths that leaf's told you already, whatever else can there be? Your sins—and your future as well? It's all too much...

Suffice it to say that the rest of my life was then told to me in two-yearly tranches up until my "early 80s", with

each significant moment spelt out throughout. And while most of it remains to be proved, the three critical events I was told would take place in the time that's since elapsed have all happened exactly when and how my leaf said they would.

And as for my "sins", I was surprised, shocked and saddened by those it told me of—for although I'd imagined I had none, it pinpointed issues and moments where I'd been less than honest and honourable, and truly I knew the leaf to be right. But—*mirabile, mirabile*—the Naadis can help you with that: they have "remedies" that can purge ongoing sins once and for all by *puja*, which I heartily recommend.

So while I still am a sceptic somehow, with all that I was told that time how could I possibly doubt any of it? And all from three thumbprints, my Christian name and my gender. It still beggars belief.

Oral and written traditions in India

For those of you who are interested, the philosophy behind the leaves comprises the Naadi Granthas, a set of very highly organised manuscripts, each of between 16 and 24 chapters or *kandams*. The number of chapters depends upon which Naadi astrologer you go to, as each of the original Sapta Rishis—the Seven Sages (Agasthya, Kausika, Vyasa, Bohra, Bhriugu, Vasishtha and Valmiki) credited with being the very first to

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inscribe the leaves all those thousands of years ago—has his own following. (The names vary depending upon which source you read. There are other names as well, such as Athri, Parasara, Jaya-Muni, Bhujandar, Vidura and Narada.)

Particular Granthas deal with particular issues; for example, the Satya Naadi deals with the lives of the great and the good, the truly outstanding and world-renowned persons in whatever field, whilst the Kaka Bhujandar Naadi concentrates solely on future world events.

That said, there appear to be two main types of Naadi astrology: the Tantra Naadi—which utilises horoscopes—and the Mantra Naadi—which relies on only a few simple questions and answers, from which the Naadi reader will make his pronouncements. Our readings were made up of both elements: extensive questioning to find our relevant leaves, supplemented by horoscopes based on the dates and times of our births.

Each *kandam* or chapter relates to a specific aspect of a person's material and spiritual life. We received guidance on all 16 of the chapters that our Naadi astrologers practised—the Kausika Naadi—for which *kandams* 1–12 were covered by the "readings" and then expanded with the "predictions", while *kandams* 13–16 dealt with the "remedies" for our ongoing sins in whatever appropriate form was necessary.

We were also curious as to how old the leaves and indeed the writings on them could be, so we looked into it. India has always had a strong oral tradition. Since the very earliest times, "knowledge" was handed down by word of mouth from guru to student, elder to elder, for generation upon generation. Which is maybe why I can find no Indian equivalent to Euclid, Archimedes, Pythagoras or Herodotus, for such knowledge was always jealously guarded by the Rishis—the highest Brahmin priests—who disseminated it to up-and-coming initiates only, thereby keeping the power amongst themselves.

This changed with the publication of the Vedas, the four books covering creation, the universe and the gods, followed by the Upanishads and then the Epics (the Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita), all written between around 1000 BC and AD 200. And it was through these great works that the printed word and, more importantly, the concepts and information behind it, became known to a wider populace, even if it was still principally the upper spheres of Indian society.

But once that oral tradition was broken, monks and scribes started recording India's scientific, literary and cultural heritage on palm leaves in both Tamil and Sanskrit, India's principal classical languages. The treatises in Tamil alone cover an extraordinarily impressive number of subjects: acupuncture, agriculture, anatomy, animal husbandry, architecture, astrology, astronomy, Ayurvedic medicine, carpentry, drama, love songs, martial arts, mathematics, metalworking, music, poetry, recipes, sculpture, shipbuilding, temple art and architecture, veterinary science, writing techniques and yoga—that is, all aspects of Tamil art, culture, language, literature and science of that time, which was indeed great.

Yet while the period in which these works were written is impressive (some 1,200 years), it's nothing like the span between now and the time of Sri Kausika or his mentor, Lord Shiva, who it

is said relayed the details of our lives to him between 2,000 and 4,000 years before that, or some 5,000 years ago overall.

Not possible, I hear you say: no leaves could survive intact for that long. And you'd be right, of course. But there's a world of difference between the age of the palm leaf and the age of the words etched upon it.

Palm leaf preparation and protection

Ancient writing came in many forms—on cave walls, stone slabs, animal skins, birch bark, copper scrolls, clay blocks, papyri—but I hadn't heard of the use of palm leaves until just before we went to India. To my shame, I then found out that from antiquity until well into the 19th century palm leaves had been a natural writing medium not only in India and Sri Lanka but in Malaysia, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Nepal, Cambodia and Indonesia as well, where each developed the "leaves" to suit their own emerging cultural identities.

And as a plant, the palm is indeed old enough: the date palm, for example, was cultivated by the Mesopotamians and other Middle Eastern races as long as 5,000 years ago, with good reason. Nearly every part of the palm has been used to provide indigenous peoples with their basic needs, from shade and shelter to thatching and other building materials as well as ropes, furniture, clothing, nets, cooking oils, foods, medicines, drinks

and staple products needed to maintain lives and livelihoods. And because it was natural, fast-growing and widespread, it was also cheap. It was so useful, indeed, that in some cultures the palm became a symbol of peace, fertility and victory, particularly in pre-Christian times when it was deemed important enough for mention in both the Old Testament and the Koran.

So perhaps it's not so strange that the palm became a surface for writing. Two palm trees were most appropriate: the strong palmyra and

the softer, more flexible talipot. As the thicker palmyra leaves were prone to insect attack, they were used principally for letters and notes, while the less-insect-prone but thinner talipot was kept for more important treatises and books, which is odd when you realise that the fans, mats, basketware, wicker trays, umbrellas and other handicrafts which tourists buy are mostly in talipot.

Leaf preparation followed—a process varying from area to area but where the width remained fairly constant (between 50 and 90 mm), thereby generally determining page size and format, save for larger manuscripts where leaves were stitched together along one edge to widen them. They were then treated, rolled and boiled until fully pliant, then washed and dried before "polishing" by rubbing with a stone over a particular wood—*Alstonia scholaris*—until smooth, whereupon two holes were punched in each leaf and a cord pulled through to tie the growing stack of leaves together, so forming a "bundle" of between 50 and 100 leaves.

Each bundle was then finished with thin wooden slats top and bottom as protective covers, and all that then remained was to ensure the pages were all uniform and insect-proofed, done by pressing down hard on them and cutting all round, then singeing the raw edges with a hot instrument before putting the whole stack in a wooden "mould" and sealing it airtight.

Depending then on the value and significance of the "book" to its owner, the wooden covers could be enhanced or substituted

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with ivory or ebony or embossed with silver, gold, precious or semiprecious stones, lacquered work or mother of pearl, with any of it worked to whatever design or pattern the author or client required. Not that any such extravagance applied to Angela's and my "bundles", however, where simple wooden slats sufficed for the covers and each leaf or *ola* had been etched by the scribe in *Vatta Ezhuthu*, the ancient Tamil script,* with every letter the same size and evenly spaced with no gaps or punctuation marks whatsoever, all done by a sharp stylus called an *ezhuthani*. (* Not all were in Tamil; other languages were used to suit the region: Telugu, Pali, Singhalese, Sanskrit, and even English during colonial times.)

Bundles were kept flexible and proofed against their enemies—light, climatic changes, staining, discolouration, insect and fungal attack—by regular rubbings with peacock oil, whereby the life of each leaf could be very greatly extended to perhaps 300 to 400 years. Even so, it became standard practice for leaves that had become too discoloured or had deteriorated to be copied and replaced, as occurred between the ninth and 13th centuries AD under the kings of Tanjore. They instructed that any leaves found fading or beginning to disintegrate were to be completely re-written and renewed by scholars appointed to do so—a tradition that has been maintained by all subsequent dynasties and peoples interested in the leaves.

So while you sit there having your Naadi reading, the leaves in the bundles before you need not be as old as you'd like to imagine, or indeed be old at all, and certainly not nearly as old as the words that are etched upon them. For however old the leaf is, that wording will still be exactly as dictated for that very first leaf, with every mark and syllable inscribed precisely as spoken by Lord Shiva.

So, this is a very good reason why we wouldn't recommend having your "reading" done online or by email.

While many websites offer this, in our opinion they cannot offer a valid experience in the same way as visiting the reader in person and working through the whole extraordinary process leaf by leaf. Do it on the web and, sure, in Adelaide or Des Moines you won't have to leave your living room, but the "online Naadi reader" wants his money upfront and he'll expect you to fill in a questionnaire—one that gives the details on you and your family, so in due course, on the pretext that he needs to be sure he's located the right "you", he'll give you some of those back, just to convince you... But don't get caught.

True Naadi philosophy remains very much for the real initiates, and there's only a small number who can faithfully read the ancient Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu or other inscriptions with the depth of knowledge, accuracy and integrity required.

I know it's expensive, but go there in person and you'll see what we mean. Give absolutely nothing away to the reader before or during the reading (he will not want or expect it) and, like me, you should still end up being told everything about yourself in the very greatest detail—even the facts you've long since forgotten. And that's not possible online.

ANGELA'S STORY

While Andrew would probably say that his is "still under consideration", my life's journey has been a spiritual one.

I've always seen the world as one big picture, so it was inevitable that I would ask the Naadis for a "global" reading on significant happenings over the next 10 to 11 years, 2007 to 2018.

In this, I'd been inspired by the famous astrologer Dr B. V. Raman, who in 1950 wrote in *The Astrological Magazine of India*:

"Kaka Bujander Naadi deals with such topics as astronomy, international affairs, spiritual elevation of mankind and so many other things in which humanity is interested. One cannot but admire a system of literature, written thousands of years ago and containing references to current and future international problems."

Dr Raman also gave a sample of a reading done in the early 1900s:

"The native will be born in a holy city on the coast of the ocean. At the age of 20, he will go to a foreign country. His mother will die [when he is] at the age of 22 in his absence. He will marry at 13. At 32, he will be a lawyer. He will always speak truth and will be pure in heart. There will be no distinction between his thoughts, words and deeds. Before the age of 65, he will meet the King of the white race. He will resort to fasting for the good of the world. He will live beyond the age of 70."

It was a part of Mahatma Gandhi's leaf!

The writings I'm particularly interested in are with the Tamil families and are closely coveted, so I've yet to record their details.

However, during my research I did come across a couple of old books, reprinted in India over 50 years ago, which spoke on the subject, so I was determined to seek out the Naadis who knew more on the matter and who would read the predictions for me, even if I knew it wouldn't be easy.

The way the leaves are written for individuals, it was reasonable to think that a similar technique would have been used to "categorise" the world's regions. The Naadis spoke to us of the world divided into sections, e.g.,

"two countries east of India", "12 countries west of India", "an area to the north", etc., as well as utilising the same planetary aspects for specific times in the *kandams* for major studies of the economy, wars, politics, health and so on.

And with these, and through each of the readings that I've been involved in and others that I know of in detail from our closest Indian friends, I understand there is a great sense of alteration and change due in the world during the "now" time. So I married together all the Naadi readings I've been privy to, dovetailing them to test whether the difficulties would show in the same years in each and all of them.

This is what I found. Based on the placement of the planets at specific times ahead, the calculations tell a story of grave upheaval—first economically and politically, and then environmentally—that resonates across the globe.

Naadi revelations for the world

It is written that in 2008 there will be some kind of economic collapse and political unrest in numerous regions worldwide (I have an unsettling feeling it could already have taken place before you read this), and the awareness of it is already affecting a greater number of people than ever before.

There will be times of great danger from two warring factions who fight for supremacy in three regions of the world.

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The environment will be altered by climatic changes due to the Sun's activity. The most extreme events will take place first in 2009, and second between the end of 2012 and 2013.

The Asian continent will suffer greatly, as will the Middle East and the northern regions.

There will be two geological shifts (planetary pole shifts?), and water will be involved in some way on both occasions.

Everyone will be working to help people in the countries (including India) that suffer during 2009 and later.

Peace and calm are not evident in any readings till 2018.

I gave thought to these issues and on reflection I think the world's history is actually far worse than its future. There's never been peace on Earth (there's always at least one war going on somewhere at any one time), and volcanoes, earthquakes and flooding have all been regular occurrences as well, even if they do seem to be increasing in regularity and size just lately. And when it comes to the world economy, in the last 100 years or so it's been a roller-coaster of collapses and recoveries all the while, so nothing's new there!

Yet, what does seem to be different is how many more of us are believing less and less what the politicians and media are saying. There's an ever-greater thirst for true knowledge, which, coupled with our growing unrest and unease, is like the instinctive sense of a mother "knowing" something is about to happen to her child.

And I'm with the Naadis on that, whatever the politicians and media choose to say. I believe it's the Sun that will have the most significant effect on our planet and the other planets, so we'll have to learn how to shift our whole way of living and thinking way beyond what we imagine now. But our instinct for survival is so great and inventive that I've no doubt we'll find the new ways to suit whatever changes become necessary to implement.

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Editor's Note:

This article is based on Angela and Andrew Donovan's latest book *The Hidden Oracle Of India* (O Books, 2008), telling readers how to seek out and find their own Naadi reading just as they did. See this edition for our review of their book.

About the Authors:

Angela Donovan is a spiritual mentor and medium. She is regularly involved in mentoring and advising on television series in the UK, Europe and the USA. She is the author of *The Secrets of Psychic Success* (Rider, 2007) and has done numerous workshops, radio and TV interviews, speaking about the many positive ways in which people from all walks of life can turn their lives around for optimum benefit. She is currently writing on the past, present and future with regard to alternative sciences, as well as preparing a TV series in which the greatest living avatars meet high-profile personages. She is a columnist for the Asian Interactive Media Group, BabyChoice and The Parallel Community. See her websites <http://www.angeladonovan.com> and <http://www.futurecast.com>

Andrew Donovan was educated at Harrow School and Cambridge University, where he trained as an architect. Mentioned in *Who's Who In Architecture*, he had his own successful practice in Central London until 2003 when he

decided to develop a still greater passion—writing. Since then, he has written several books and screenplays as well as many program formats for TV documentaries and entertainment shows.

Both Angela and Andrew are presently working on a TV series where they take interesting people to India to seek their own Naadi leaf and reading (included is the Duchess of York, who has become a close friend and wishes to take her life's journey).

Angela and Andrew can be contacted by email at webmail@angeladonovan.com.