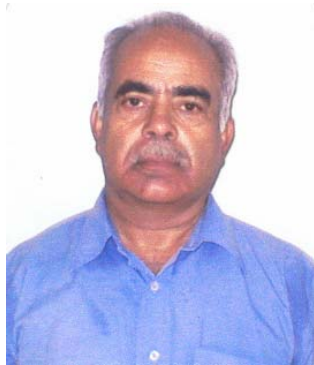


'BRÍJÛ DÀSS'



**THE OTHER FACE
OF
A
TEACHER**

(Internet Edition by M.K.Raina)

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1. BRIJDASS THE ZINI MAZOR

The Zini Mazoor (The woodcutter) was a favourite Kashmiri folk lore in sixties. Listeners would enjoy it and pity the poor Zini Mazoor.

The Zini Mazoor was a poor woodcutter. Despite his hard labour he could scarcely manage the modest plenty for his family. Day and Night he would weep and ponder how to feed his family in the evening. Seeing his plight, pitying, the Goddess Fortune gave him a pearl. The blessed woodcutter placed the pearl in his turban. On his way to his home, he had to cross a desert. While crossing the desert, a distant hawk dived and snatched his turban along with the pearl. His happiness was short lived. He was back to his miseries. Continued to weep bitterly, crying what to give to the family in the evening. The merciful God pitied the plight and blessed him again with a pearl. This time he held it fast in his fist. Dreading the hawk, the woodcutter changed his direction and now took to the river route. En route a fish jumped, pounced on his hand and snatched the pearl. The woodcutter kept again weeping Day & Night....what to give the family in the evening. (*Zini Mazoor wedan dohus ratus kalchen kia dhimme aialus . Yei wuchit aar awe Hazrati Sulemanus. Lal tulun dutun zini mazoorus. Zini....*)

At this stage realization dawned on me. To me it appears that the poet has narrated my plight in the poem. I believe the Zini Mazoor is none other than me, the Brijdass.

In the full bloomed family consisting of my father, brothers, the only sister, nephews and nieces, sixteen in total, I had to look for a chance to seize an opportunity to enjoy privacy with my newly wedded wife. Seeing the plight, the Merciful blessed the family with a big house where each couple could now enjoy a private life comfortably. As it is, the happiness was short lived. One day the only house in the midst of an area of ten kanals of land caught fire. This was an event beyond one's imagination. All save the clothing on the body got ablaze. Again the family put in hard labour. The Merciful Goddess Fortune blessed the family again. Now with a bigger, better and an RCC house. The private life was once again restored to the married couples. Then came the devil in 1990 and I was again on the road, now in a hostile surrounding and hostile environment at a hostile place. One room tenancy. Thanking and surrendering before the Goddess Fortune, I got a pearl once again. Thus the Fortune once again smiled at me. Now in exile we could not retain the title We. The family consisting of sixteen dispersed into six micro families of twos and threes. Now the Goddess Fortune granted each enough to recover from the miseries. By the time I could enjoy the pearl, my partner to miserable life, lost both patience and confidence in me. She did not wait to see that her earnest demand for an additional room fitted with an aqua guard has been met.

It seems that all from the middle class group are the cousins of the Zini Mazoor.
Enjoy life before the fish or the hawk or the Mujahid pounces to
deprive you of the pearl.

Brijû dâss chû vanàn lãsí vû bãsí.

2. BEGGAR IN THE GARB OF A KP

Early nineties. Er.Kuldeep Chaku alias kakaji at Surya Nagar, Gaziabad got a call from some of his non Kashmiri friends.

Hello Kuldeep : “Here is a Kashmiri Pundit in a very bad shape. He seems to be worst than any other migrant Pundit. He has approached us for some alms. It is for the first time that we see a Kashmiri Pundit Beggar. Please come soon. Let us make some collections for him and see how best we can help him.”

Prompt came the positive response from the other end: “By the time I reach, you issue a cheque to him for rupees one lakh on my behalf, provided he is a Kashmiri Pundit.” Ten minutes drive and Kakji was personally with his friends. On his interrogation and questioning the beggar turned out to be a professional Muslim beggar from Kulgam, District Anantnagh , Kashmir.

He was from the tribe who keep two types of caps in their bag. They approach Hindu benevolent with black Gandhi cap to pose as a Kashmiri Pundit and to the Muslim with a fur cap to pose as a Muslim beggar. In the valley they were generally seen after every natural calamity like ferocious flood or some earthquake or some fire incident.

The friends were astonished to see his intuition and asked him: “Kuldeep, how did you read the mischief of the beggar at an appreciable distance. We acknowledge your intuition, wisdom and ready wit.”

Kakaji said: “It is simple. A Kashmiri Pundit will prefer death within his four-walls to begging.

A DREADFUL EVENT

Soon I had a chance to prove kakaji wrong. His hair bristled when I narrated him *ankhoon dekhi* . I saw innumerable youths of the community though highly qualified as the VIP Beggars. It was a strange drama. The beggars were highly qualified in Engineering, Business management/ Medicine.....Some beggars were graduates in their field and some postgraduates. Many of them were even Gold Medalists. Qualification and academic merit were no inhibition for their birth right for begging. The Dreadful Event was that the donor was in his late sixties with weak and fragile constitution as per the demand of his age. Worries had further accelerated his ageing. The receiver was young and energetic. Most of the donors had either to part with the sale proceeds of their ancestral dwellings sold under distress sale or with the gratuity and accumulated provident fund that he had received after his retirement. The Beggar was the descendant of the ancestors to whom an orange or bread was a distant dream meant for the ailing person only. Now he is rich enough to distribute varieties of fruit that he receives from his old and fragile benevolent on the auspicious Day of

Janam Ashtami amongst his relations and neighbours. He distributes even sweets on Diwali that has entered the list in the recent past. He distributes varieties of bread amongst his relations and neighbours. The more he receives the more he swells with pride. He cares little for ethics. I shudder when he stretches his arm, opens his strong fist to receive alms from the eldest and the weakest of the family of the benevolent. How shameful and dreadful the event is! It seems that the spirit of the Self of the youth is dead.

Having been deprived of his ancestral dwelling, gratuity and the accumulated provident fund, the poor benevolent is left with little to care for his medical consultation, medicines and other needs of the old age. The only benefit he gets is that his age is cut short for want of medicines and medical advice. The beggar in the MNC has little time even to attend his funeral.

Ungrateful Beggar he turned out to be!

I witnessed a sikh beggar refusing alms of rupees five. He claimed his right for not less than rupees fifty. To my surprise the donor was convinced when the beggar said: "I am a beggar of National level. I am not an ordinary beggar. I visit you biannually. Rupees fifty biannually tantamount to less than two rupees per week". The argument appeared to be sound and quietly rupees fifty were paid to him with a whisper that the beggar behaves like a *bhate zamtur*

Brijû dâss chhû vanàn lâsív tû bâsív.

3. DAL RAZE

Dal lake the world famous lake starts from Dal-Gate and extends up to Shalimar. Boulevard is the motor- road around it from the city end to the village Telbal. One of its peculiarity is that all over the world it is the only lake, I believe, that is within the city periphery.

The diameter of the lake is 16 km. Encroachments may have reduced it a little. Its depth is 15 to 30 feet and nowhere more than that. During severe winters, it becomes a glacier. In early sixties our then Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad had driven a jeep car on the frozen lake. I myself walked on the frozen lake in winter 1965. To my memory drowning accidents till date have been far and few. In my lifetime, I remember two such accidents. The seaweed swaying very close to the surface water, gives the illusion of it not being deep enough to cause a fatal accident. One summer while we were diving from the top of a bathing houseboat, one of the tourists (Non swimmer) also plunged into it, little knowing the depth was enough to devour him. Buoyancy helped him. He was thrown up with the same force, he had jumped. To his good luck a fellow sardar tourist's timely help rescued him. Thus goes the saying "*Jinu rakhey sain maar sakey naa koie*" I am witness to a six feet Young man who met his end in a knee deep pool of water at Ganderbal.

Houseboat is a house floating on water. It is well decorated and well furnished house. Within, it has drawing room, bedrooms, dressing room, sanitary bathroom and all such other facilities. The rate (I believe per couple) for 24 hours ranges from Rs.1000-5000 (Depending on the season). It is inclusive of breakfast, lunch dinner etc. One can negotiate and bargain too. The Houseboat is attached with a Dunga and a shikara. The family of the Houseboat owner lives in the attached Dunga. The shikara is used to ferry the inmates(guests) across the lake on to the roadside. The school going children of the people living on islands in the lake ferry to and from their schools. They are not dependent. They own small boats, the way our children own bicycles etc. The Houseboats that float are anchored to keep them stationary. In my childhood, off season, the houseboats used to be rowed down the River Jehlum. It was being rowed by boatmen with long poles known as *humtul*. Then came the time of affluence when a mechanized motorboat was hired to pull it.

During the days of autocracy and a little thereafter, the toilet waste of these houseboats was being collected in the municipal (big open) boats ,named *khoch*. School and family picnics were being ferried in Doonga (a covered thatched or shingled roof boat) to Mugul Gardens, especially to Nishat. We used to prepare our meals, tea etc. with the lake water. It was neat and clean. No waste material was being thrown into it. Impression was given that Dul Raze (Dul Raja-a devta) will be annoyed and may harm us. Probably our those days ignorance and lower standard of education had saved the Dal from getting polluted. Today the so called educated learned people throw the hotel waste, houseboat waste and all the wastes directly into the lake. It has also become a regular source of easy money to our corrupt politicians in power. Only this month 380 crore have been sanctioned by the Central Govt. for the

cleaning of the lake. No accountability for all the money that is being poured into it for the purpose since mid sixties. During autocratic rule no hotels were allowed to be built on the Boulevard road to save the lake from pollution. Our Govt. was the first to encroach on the waters of the lake to have peninsular Centaur Hotel.

From Chashma Shahi Ghat, one can hire a spring shikara to enjoy a shikara ride to Char Cinari, Lotus Garden and the Floating Garden (unique thing to see). In 2003, we had to negotiate and bring the hire from Rs.400 to Rs. 100. Today also it should be 100-150. All the three are in close proximity to one another

Brijû dâss chhû vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

4. THE EMPEROR IN NEW CLOTHES

(*The story retold*)

Islam has yet to give birth to an innocent infant to expose the Emperor in New Clothes. The weaver has indoctrinated one and all beyond recovery. They nod in agreement and praise the invisible fabric, lest they should fall into the category of the infidels. The weaver assures them that the *houris* are awaiting them with open arms at the threshold of heaven for all their barbaric attacks on the non-believers. Such murderers are assured Peace Awards in heaven.

Member Indian Parliament, Miss Mehbooba Mufti has issued a futwa and declared all the militants who died while fighting against the sovereignty of the Indian Government as martyrs. They say that the martyrs directly land in heaven. They have not to bear the burden of the grave until the Doomsday. Besides, the martyrs shall reserve seats for their kith and kin in heaven, irrespective of their deeds, vicious or virtuous. Mufti Mohamad Syed, the ex. Home Minister of India is busy for the rehabilitation of the families of his martyrs, who attacked Indian Parliament, Rughnath Mandir, Akshardam Temple and killed innumerable Indian jawans in uniform and many innocents..... He expresses all sympathy for those who have sacrificed their children on the assurance of the weavers. It seems that the so called martyrs are doubly benefited. Once they shun their mortal frame, they shall directly land in the lap of the *houris*! Immediately, a munshi, the booking clerk in heaven, shall open his register to reserve seats for the kin of the martyrs. Weavers say that heaven has not as yet been computerized. All these benefits are in addition to the economic package to be declared by Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India on the persuasion of Mufti Sahib, the Ex. Home Minister of India. What a game plan of the weaver! The trio, Rubia Syed, the daughter of the then Home Minister of India, Mehbooba Mufti the MP and Mufti the Ex. HM of India have been weaving the invisible fabric since the eruption of militancy in the valley. Weavers of the past absconded once the infant saw through the game plan played by the cheats. The present weavers are too cunning to get exposed. On the contrary, they have exposed the weak emperor, who has no place to abscond.

Umer Abdhullah (MP), the Ex. Foreign Minister of India and Mehbooba ji (MP) are all praise for General Parvez Musharraf, the self styled President of undemocratic Pakistan. Both rated the world reputed Economist, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of the biggest democratic country in the world at a lower rung.

On 19 January 1990, hundred percent muslims in Kashmir joined the hysteric demonstration on the roads. To the best of my knowledge, most of them had compulsion. Even today most of them close their business establishments on the call of the gun wielding leaders. They can't ignore the threat of gun. They do not trust Indian security, because India has failed to protect Indian Muslim in Kashmir. Innumerable muslim sympathizers of India have mercilessly been beheaded. For the same mistrust, Kashmiri Pandit had to flee. Had they banked upon the Indian might, the community would have vanished in 1990 itself.

Brijû dâss chhú vanàn lãsí tû bãsí.

5. THE TWO FAROOQS, MUFTI AND THE PLUMBER

Farooqs, black or white, have to keep their pot boiling at the cost of their Muslim brethren in the valley. They, their fathers and grand fathers, befooled the masses to keep their hereditary profession going on. They accuse one another of exploiting the sentiments of the Muslims in the valley; little realizing their father and grand father did not do less disservice to the community. They have been put into a state of political dilemma and confusion. They cannot believe if they are the same people who raised the slogan ' Hamla-awer kheberdar, hum kashmiri hain teiar' in 1947; who reversed the decision in 1989 and welcomed the same hamla-awer as mujahid ; who sold each infiltrator in 1965 at a throwaway price; who welcomed Indra-Shiekh accord in 1975 and danced in frenzy on the roads, singing," *ale karenga wangun karenga -sher karenga-sheir karenga, Rai shumari berkh dobus olev bubus mubarak.*'

To befool them, at times they were divided as sheir-bakre and at times as Mahazi Rai Shumari and the rest.

The Indian National Congress in Kashmir was installed by one Noor Mohammed and Mohammed Shafi Qureshi in 1964-65. The eldest Shiekh resisted its initiation to the hilt and issued a futwa of 'terki-muwalat'(social boycott) against the organization. In the meantime, a woman died at Nawakadal leaving behind two sons, one in each organization viz, the Congress and the National Conference. To her bad luck, she died at the residence of the one affiliated to the Congress. Contrary to the *Hadith*' the so called Muslims' of the area refused to lend coffin to the dead. Somehow, the coffin was arranged clandestinely in the dead night and the dead was buried as per the rituals stealthily without recitation of jinaza, again against the *Hadith*. The height of the tragedy was that the next morning a boycott was lead by the son affiliated to the National Conference and the coffin used for the dead was declared to have been polluted and set ablaze at Nawakadal Chowk. Eleven years thereafter in 1975, the same Shiekh headed the coalition Government with Congress members in majority, ignoring the futwa. Today the same followers, ' damali faqir' contrary to the '*Hadith*' curse the dead leader for allegedly having been a confused and rudderless one.

To their misfortune and folly, they blindly follow their exploiters. Thus goes the couplet" *Tati gash daren rachi ani kansi wonei no*". Emancipated Muslims in the valley have pinned hopes on an illiterate plumber and the like. I shudder when I recall how Nizami Mustafa, such a chaste and pious concept was derailed and transformed into loot, arson, rape, killing, kidnapping and other inhuman and barbarous acts contrary to the Islamic edicts.

May good sense prevail upon them! May realization dawn upon them! May God pardon them!

Brijû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

6. FORTUNE TELLER

I am told that I was born on 16th.February 1939. As usual an astrologer was called in to predict the future of the newcomer. Each family member around had been eagerly awaiting his prediction. Moving his thumb up and down his fingers for calculation, the final conclusion the astrologer arrived at, was that the birth time had been inauspicious.

He declared: "The infant is bad for both the family and the universe, and advised my parents to give the boy in adoption or to let loose the umbilical cord to bid farewell to him. (Na rahega bhans, ne bajeghi bansri)

A debate ensued. All advisors and well wishers of the family sided with the astrologer and cited number of predictions he had made earlier. The house was divided vertically. Finally, the courageous father exercised his veto power and decided to retain and allow the innocent to survive. It was of course a bold decision. Being an infant, the innocent looks seem to have played a vital role. The father had opted to face miseries rather than to be swayed by the majority. At three plus, people around, worked hard to make me realize that I owed my survival to my courageous parents. Those were the days when majority belonged to the have-not class. Born with a rusted spoon in my mouth, I was not an exception. In realization, I was ahead of my age-group. Seeing around my class of have-nots, I was feeling guilty. I was made to believe that I had been the cause for their plight. My guilt had humbled me.

In the meantime I turned plus six. Astrologer's predictions were haunting me. Seeing his plight worse, I probed the credentials and authenticity of the astrologer. I was aghast to learn that the astrologer was hereditary illiterate and a man of no letters. He had never been to school like his forefathers. It was gimmick that he had picked up from his professional gimmick ancestors to make his humble living.

One day I gathered courage and asked him tactfully about his academics. He boasted to be an illiterate astrologer.

I asked: "How did you make prophesy about my being curse to the universe in general and the family in particular?"

Prompt came his reply: "Very simple. Your mother had hardly conceived when hysteric Hitler planned to open a war. You came to this world and the Second World War broke out. Bare necessities became rare. The gulf between the Have-nots & the Haves widened further. Besides, any lay man can predict that a fourth child in the family living on modest plenty will get nothing less than miseries. This was enough to mesmerize me and believe that prediction is nothing short of common sense.

To overcome my guilt, I am on a project to prove that I was born much earlier than 1939 to exonerate myself of the accusation that I brought the Second World War along with.

August 1945, resting my chin on the window sill, I was lost in reveries. All of a sudden cavalcade hoisting the Union Jack rushed through the narrow street by our house. I was told that they were celebrating their victory over the disaster of 75% of the world and the world economy. I vividly remember this and many other such episodes of the era.

I believe it is enough to prove that I was born much earlier and my age has been recorded wrongly? Know not why? It is for the reader to exonerate or convict me for the wrong that has been done by some one else.

Brijû dâss chû vanàn lãsí tû bãsí.

7. GHAR-ACHUN TE BAREA-NERUN

Nazir the butcher has two shops, one at Chota Bazar and the other at Jawahir Nagar, in Srinagar. Without any hesitation, he lent meat worth rupees thirty thousand to Sham Lal and refused the same facility to Kashi Nath.

I said: "Nazir why did you extend the facility to one and refused the same to the other"?

Nazir said: "It is business for both me and Sham Lal. Sham Lal has invited the parents and relations of the bride on the function of *Ghar-achun*. Both of us know that the guests will pay five times more than the expenditure on the feast. Immediately after the guests will quit, Shamlal will liquidate the loan and spare much for his rainy days. He is apprehensive. Statistics tells him that sons desert their parents after the first anniversary of their marriage. He believes in the proverb make hay while the sun shines and so fleeces Kashi Nath to the best of his capacity.

On the contrary Kashi Nath too has the same function of *Ghar-achun*. But it is with a difference. The guests and hosts have exchanged their positions. But the liabilities here are inversely proportional. Here kashi Nath, the host, after the feast is over, has to pay Shamlal and Co., the guest, heavily. Kashi Nath is already mortgaged. So it is wise not to take calculated risk". Nazir's argument was sound and I believe this was the reason why title of most of the houses had changed from some kashi Nath to Nazir Ahmad, or Sone Dhar to Shankar Mattoo.

Mid fifties. Sone Dhar (Changed name) was enjoying a peaceful life in his beautiful dwelling on the bank of the River Jehlum at Zaindar Mohalla. He married two of his daughters within the limits of his budget for the project. To his bad luck *phir-saal* to his sons-in-law was not within the budgeted schedule. One of his foes in friend's clothing persuaded Sone Dhar to do away with the function and offered a solution too. Little conceiving the mischief, a blank paper was signed by Sone Dhar for the sake of *formality* against a loan of rupees six thousand. The loan was managed from Roghe Kaw (Surname changed), the foe's friend. The mischief plot worked as it was planned. The two sons-in-law along with their relations were enjoying the *phirsaal* feast. The host Sone Joo, his wife and his other near and dear relations were joyfully exited to see the function through. The foe in friend was conspicuously absent. None had apprehended the climax. Soon Rogh Kaw along with a few dons of the time entered the premises to execute the blank paper that he had signed against a loan of rupees six thousand. No pleas worked. Finally on *humanitarian grounds* grace period of a few hours was allowed. Title of the house changed from that of Sone Dhar to Shankar Mote (First name changed), the son-in-law of Rogh Kaw. Within a week's time, one dark night, Sone Dhar & Family vacated the house and left for some unknown place. He could not stand the shock and the next month his foe in friend did not even participate in his funeral procession. Peace is to his soul. Unfortunately I am eyewitness to many such situations where *Barea nerun* was the immediate consequence of the *Ghare-achun*.

The height of it is that Shnkar is the nephew of Baghwan Saroop Swami Ji. And the Swami would often visit the house. The Swami seemed to be immune and indifferent to the tragedy.

Brijû dâss chû vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

8. HUSH---NOSH TE NIKAE BICHOR

This Universe is a Big Uniwood much more bigger than Hollywood and Bollywood. Unlike the two known ' Woods', Uniwood has a mass base. Each living creature is its active character. No actor in the Uniwood has a specific type role. All are its versatile players. At times one has to play a hero and at times a villain. Wisdom lies in playing the jester. It keeps the environment around healthy without any tension. In 'mera nam joker', while the clown was weeping over the death of his mother, the audience was giving him a thundering applause. Look around! You will find yourself far better than many others. They are wise enough to downplay the miseries to keep the surroundings pleasant. Boldness and valour lies in deflating the crises of whatever nature they are. Such actors live and let others live happily. 'Tu Tu Mai Mai' is the pleasant pastime of the two important characters of the family-drama. Each looks clandestinely towards the young hero and watches the tilt he is tilted until he turns bald and grey with deep wrinkles. Only a few heroes manage to hypnotize both the vamp and the victim. They manage to live with the unavoidable and enjoy the dreadful music.

Man is the strongest of all the living beings. He is capable of taming a wild bear to dance to his tune. He can tame a complex problem and reduce it to a no-problem. Unlike the stronger hero the weaker one tries to sideline one of the two and finally succumbs to a miserable life to be pitied.

Like the vital organs of our body, the vamp and the victim, both are very important characters of our society. In absence of either of the two, the drama will be wanting. For a minor or major problem with any of the organs, we try to cure it. We even helplessly try to treat the cell that has gone amuck. Until the end we live with the fatal. Likewise, a member in the society is to be chiseled, polished and accommodated, if sidelined, it will not be less than the fatal disease.

Let us pray every morning for peace to each and every family with a healthy ' tu-tu mai mai' like that of a mother and her daughter. Without tu-tu-mai mai, life and the melodrama will become monotonous and the role of the hero will end without any climax. The show will flop. All the phases of a family—tragedy, humour and finally triumph of the hero will make the Family a box office hit. The biggest tragedy and the climax of the melodrama are that the hero succumbs to the torture inflicted upon him by his own kin, Madam Vamp and Madam Victim. His death is heroic. While dying, he never says "eetu Brute". The mourners sob his death in whispers.

Brijû dâss chhú vanàn lâsív tû bâsív.

9. KAKANI & VETESTA

Immediately after crossing the north portal of the Jawahir Tunnel, we see a beautiful hamlet on the right. This very hamlet is Verinag. Weith wothur in Verinag has the privilege of being the source of the River Jehlum, locally known as Vetesta and Veith.

Kakani also is from Verinag. In her early teens, she was married in a village at a walking distance from Verinag. Kakani and Veith, both being from the same place used to live in close harmony. One of the distributaries of the Veith flows down via kakni's parental home, enters her marital home, irrigates her kitchen garden and then flows down through her kitchen for her onward journey.

Kakni is mother of two sons, Rattan Lal and Kedar Nath besides one daughter Yemberzal. Rattan Lal retired as senior most police officer and Kedar Nath is practising law. All her offspring are grand parents by now and parents of doctors, engineers and lawyers.

Both Kakni and her close associate the Veith face the same disgraceful fate at the hands of their beneficiaries.

Kakni is an unwelcome and unwanted family member in the families of both of her offspring. The poor lady pockets all the humiliation while she is being shuttled from one corner of Jammu city to the other. At times she mourns the longevity of her life and feels sad to have been stretched so long. In the hostile summer weather, the whole family but for Kakani enjoys the cool of the air conditioned enclosure. Kakni is seen sitting near the gate in the open, resting her naked legs in a dry sink under a dry tap, probably expecting visit of her erstwhile associate, the Veith. Height of the tragedy is that in the valley, she had enjoyed her childhood and adulthood at the foot of a snow capped hill in close association of the dancing Veith and at the advanced stage the TIME has thrown her to the top of a dusty dry and hot Trikuta hill, where a bucket of water is seldom rationed to her.

Seeing the disgraceful plight of Kakani, I had once volunteered to adopt her as my mother. For their false prestige the offer has so far neither been accepted nor rejected. My offer is open to all mothers who are the Kakani for their offspring.

Brijû dâss chhû vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

10. HOW CIVILISED I AM



Majority of Kashmiri Pundits being literate, have been and are torchbearers for the Indian Sub-Continent. Pundit Jawahir Lal Nehru gave the concept of democracy to Modern India. Dewan Nand Lal has been Prime Minister of Afghanistan. There is an unending list of Kashmiri Pundit luminaries at National and International level.

Kashmiri Pundit does not resort to gun for his rights. Being educated, he has faith in the power of judiciary and the pen. Supreme Court judgement in the case of Trilokinath V/S J&K State is the most famous judgement that relieved KP of the big hurdle that was an impediment for his onward development in the State. Corporate world has replaced the public sector. Kashmiri Pundit is in the leading position in the changed scenario. Our girls, qualified in advance for the situation have managed their due share for themselves.

For atrocities on women, our daughters and their parents have right to approach the judiciary and lead the nation as they do in other fields. In our community, with the grace of god, we don't have cases of bride burning, bride suicide, murders and killings. We don't determine the sex of the unborn baby like many others. We aspire for a healthy baby and reconcile with the will of god. Crime rate in our community is zero. In the worst conditions our children went to school and did not resort to child labour.

Being the torch bearers, they have to lead the nation through civilised manners to fight against atrocities and other social evils in the society. If they go to court, they are exercising their right guaranteed by the constitution of free and democratic India in the civilised world. She has not to beg for mercy. She has right to claim an honourable life.

How nice it would be if the grooms father too would visit the bride's father on his birthday with a handful of almonds. Diwali, Shivratri, Zermatum and many such festivals are auspicious for both the grooms and the brides family. Why only bride's family should carry gifts, cash, rice and prashad to grooms family and their relations? What is the logic behind it, when both are equal? It is a social evil. It is male chauvinism. The height of hypocrisy in the most educated and civilised class is the shameful act when an educated youth stretches his hand before his old and fragile father-in-law or the mother-in-law to accept cash.

Living in a small place like India, my vision is out dated and narrow. I dare not to pelt stone into the ditch full of mud to escape its splash.

Brijû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

11. MAHRASHTRA QUOTA

1990

, the year of holocaust, Sushma Chowdry IAS, the then Commissioner Secretary Education J&K state was an additional curse for the Kashmiri Pundit Community. It seemed that she was bent upon to score her personal account with the community. It was nothing short of *khodai senz kher –te –naide senz cheph*. All regular educational institutions were closed to Kashmiri students. But for a KP, any student from any other state could get admission in a regular school at Jammu without any hassle. Makeshift arrangements for migrant students were arranged under tented accommodation in the scorching heat without any fan, toilet and drinking water facilities. Degree classes for migrant students were arranged in Science College and MAM College Jammu. Migrant students were registered with the Kashmir University. During the peak militancy in early nineties, students in Kashmir stretched three-year degree course to six to seven years for obvious reasons. Most of the migrant students at Jammu got exhausted and lost interest in studies. Date sheet was notified as per the convenience and dictation of the students in the valley. Very often the notified date sheet would get postponed. Street urchins used to lineup in the Science College Jammu to throw obnoxious remarks on our college going girls. Life of our students was made virtual hell. Dr.Veena Raina's son was humiliated in the Model Academy for he had bagged first position in the debate. Subsequently, he had to bear with stab wounds for the folly

Early 1991, late I.K.Raina from Anantnagh, (the then employee of SBI) did a yeoman's job for the community at this horrible juncture. Through paid advertisement in local dailies he offered his free services and collected bio-data from the students interested in engineering seats outside the state at the Canal Park Jammu. Within the stipulated period, single handed, he managed free seats for all the aspirants in the Indian benevolent State of Maharashtra ruled by the Congress and headed by Sharad Pawar. In our own state when the compulsory primary education was denied, Maharashtra opened the gates of the choicest engineering and Medical Colleges for our children. Here the "monkey in the cage" story was enacted by the self styled leaders in Pune who put lot of hurdles to Mr.Raina. Harassment beyond imagination was caused to him and to the administration in the University.

This was the time when most of the matrimonial advertisements published in Koshur Samachar had a foot note" Migrants need not apply." Our students by courtesy Maharashtra, had a blessing in disguise. They had hopped from pond into an ocean. They got the best. Today no body will have cheeks to add footnote to the matrimonial advertisement. Out of community marriage is a negligible side effect of the ocean culture blown beyond proportion. We have to look for remedial measures.

In the valley, matrimonial assistance was available at one's doorstep. Professional mediators would visit the interested parties and manage the alliance in the shortest possible time. Besides, most of the alliances were arranged through the friend circle or the acquaintance of brother or cousin or friend of the groom or bride. In exile, the only marriage bureau available is Koshur Samachar New Delhi, Janak at Janipur and Mohan Lal at Rajpor. We become laughing stock when Rustic Janak at Jammu mocks at us

with the routine resume attached to the tekni that reads as:” Own house; Double Storey House ; Corner plot; Convent read and English speaking will be preferred....and the like. Most of the boys delay their marriage, awaiting their suitable settlement. Old parents are worried to see their children married at right time. Girls can't wait beyond a certain limit. Parents in old age shuttle between the Bureaus, bank to prepare a draft for Rs.200 in the name of Koshur Samachar, then to nearby Post Office for Speed post in scorching heat at 40-43 degrees. One month's wait, then starts the session of correspondence. An activity of months consumes years. At times he becomes victim to sunstroke and succumbs to it before he could see the bride or the groom.

I would suggest a few remedial measures for consideration of my young and prosperous readers who are pained and feel concerned: -

- a) Community NGO to offer free matrimonial services preferably with a web site accessible on Internet.
- b) Youth to shun attaching commercial value to the sacred alliance.
- c) Boycott hi-fi marriage at banquet halls.
- d) Make marriage as simple and economical as possible.
- e) The hard earned money wasted from either side is draining the Community money.....
- f)

Brijû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

12. MATRIMONIAL HUMOUR

M/s Sabnam Maheshwari,



rganisations like that of yours give a ray of hope to boys of my agegroup at 67 plus. Your organisation is fit to be referred to Ankhon Dekhi for its conclusion " *yeh sanstha dheti hai choti see asha.*"

Let me introduce myself to you.

I am B.K.Dass. I am a teacher by profession. My recorded date of birth is 16-02-1939. Actual may be a little earlier. I vividly remember end of the Second World War, partition of the country, invasion by the Chiney Bhai, creation of Bangla Desh.....rise and fall of Zia, Ayub, Yehya, Z Bhuto, B Bhatoo, Mujeeb, Nawaz, and many others.

Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, Indra Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and now Pramod Mahajan to break the Gandhian rythem.

My head has turned bald helipad to the extent of 75 % area with a snow white border line. I can't read or write without glasses. Doctors have advised me morning walk to level my football like belly. My granddaughter calls me Nanaji. Her mother reluctantly boards the car, if I am at the steering wheel. When she comments that I drive like a boy of 17, I wonder when today's 17 will become 67, half a century ahead, how dead will be his speed.

I drink only if it is offered. Otherwise I am a teetotaler. I am a passive smoker. These days I reluctantly consume chicken served at parties. I believe the paid for chicken carries bird flu, hence dangerous.

Besides, I have many other plus points. Your prompt response shall be highly appreciated. Photograph if asked for will be arranged.

With regards,

Truly yours,

B.K.Dass

Bríjû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

13. MAXIMUM RATE OF INTEREST ON MINIMUM DEPOSITS

(Divine Bank, everywhere, anywhere)

April 15, 1995, 7 A.M. Digiana one-room compartment. Lunch & vegetables were prepared on electric heater and the electricity went off before the breakfast could be prepared. The only LPG cylinder had already exhausted and timely refill could not be managed for want of the relevant documents that had been left behind in the valley. K-oil too was out of stock.

So the family consisting of my wife and me had to be contented without breakfast.

CHAMATKAR

We reached our workplace at 8 AM. Being a Battaani, my wife was upset for her *patiparmeshwar* was not provided with the routine two dry chapattis and a kettle full of tea. Soon Mr. Fortune took a U-turn. Three of my colleagues approached me for sumptuous lunch with *rogan josh, kalia, yekhni, mucch, kubergah* and many other dishes. It was nothing short of a wazwan. The lunch was to celebrate their success in B.Ed. examination. I smiled within and thanked God Who had denied me the simple breakfast to reserve my appetite for the best.

Back to my make shift home, my wife, a vegetarian those days, had her vegetarian lunch. At 3 PM, one Kiran Koul of class 12th. stepped in to get coaching in Mathematics. Those days Kiran and his brother Rakesh were poor enough to qualify their entire school education free. So was his coaching. To dispose of my spared simple lunch, I said: '*Bitta bate chuia khiomut?*' (Bitta, have you had your meal?)

Kiran said "Ne Mahra". (No Sir.)

Chhul athhe te khey bate". (Wash your hands and have your meal.)

"Ne Mahra" (No sir)

Kiazi?" (Why?)

"Sir we afford only one-time meal. I don't want to get used to two time meals. If I have it today, tomorrow the system will ask for it. In that case I shall feel miserable."

'Wash your hand and have your meal. Even if you come daily, you will have the afternoon meal with me".

My wife said:" By the time you explain him some problems, I shall be preparing a cup of rice for him".

So Kiran was good enough to oblige both of us.

Next day, I had enough of material from missing of the breakfast to the disposal of the lunch to write to my daughter, who was at REC Rourkela.

She wrote back: "The same day the same time, when Kiran was having his lunch, I was feeling extremely hungry. On my return from my class, not a single grain of food was available in the hostel. I could not resist and knocked at the door of Bhawani Amma for food (Bhawani Amma, a workshop assistant, but Bawani in the real sense) . Bhawani Amma provided me with the choicest meal and I feel, how far I would have been, though so near to such noble soul, had I not had a chance contact with her again under crisis."

Kiran got training in computers at SOS Faridabad, courtesy Padamshri J.N.Kaul (Papaji). His board & lodg and transport was sponsored by one widow Mrs.Kamla Hali. Last week Kiran, senior Manager with WIPRO, Jammu had expressed his desire to purchase my Maruti Car 800.

I have come to the conclusion, that it was a transfer entry of the lunch in the Divine Bank. Lunch was transferred to Rourkela to my daughter through Kiran at Jammu. Good deeds get accumulated and multiplied in the Divine Bank to be cashed in need.

Brijû dâss chû vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

14. MISHA SABUN KAW

**Duniya wuchmai neko budh. Mey guzrad tai mey guzrad.
(Pt.Janki Nath safaya)**

Late eighties, after days work, at leisure hour, Professor C.L.Veshin called on me in my office at Chota Bazar Srinagar. While talking, I told the Professor: " I wonder how this whole show runs without any hassle. In the government, a fleet of six buses would be managed by the Manager, the Dy Manager, Works manager and a host of other Managers. Here it runs smoothly without any Managers". Prompt came the reply: "It is your managerial capacity, that runs the show efficiently".

I said : "No professor, it is the Misha Sahib's crow that runs the plough. As long as the crow runs the plough, everything will be smooth, otherwise the things will be different"

Once Krishne Joo Razdan was on his routine inspection tour of his rural area. In one of the village fields, he saw a plough that was being driven by a crow. Nearby under a tree, one rustic with favus scalp, was looking for lice through his tattered shirt. After inspection, on his requisition, Krishnejoo was provided with the services of the rustic to manage his horse. Out of the village, Krishnejoo dismounted the horse, and begged the rustic to pardon him and mount the horse. The rustic had tried to evade, but for Krishnejoo's mystic observation. With all respect and reverence, Krishnejoo introduced the great soul to his home people at Rainawari.

Long thereafter, people could see the spiritual power of Misha Sahib whose plough was being driven by a crow. It is said that once Misha sahib had implanted the source of the Dal Lake in the earthen pot at Razdan's House. The Dal Lake had dried up and the entire area had become scarce of water. Krishnejoo could see through and had begged Misha Sahib to release the source back to the Lake.

Our success and failure are subject to the favour or disfavour of the crow, who may or may not sit on our plough.

Choice lies with Him.

Brijû dâss chhû vanàn lâsív tû bâsív.

15. MY BICYCLE

1945

. I was six. The World War Second had ended. Father gave us a pleasant surprise. He arrived in along with a new bicycle. It was a 'Hercules Made in England.' Each part of the vehicle was engraved with the word 'Hercules'. The bicycle had been bought from the wholesale merchant at Harisingh High Street, second shop on the corner of the lane leading to Hunuman Mandir, for rupees forty nine and eight annas. The saddle was attached with a tool box, carrying a few wrenches, solution tube and a few rubber patches. The frame of the cycle had arrangement to fix one small pump.

The scene was festive. An astrologer was consulted in advance to look for the auspicious day. The news of the new arrival reached neighbours, friends and relations. The evening was unlike all other ordinary evenings. People poured in to congratulate. Mother changed *ath-athore* of her *dejhore*. She changed her sari too. The new *ath athore* and the sari had come from her mother.

The bicycle was garlanded. The whole family offered prayers at the local temple. The next day *satidev prashad* was distributed amongst neighbours and relations. It worked as an announcement of the purchase. The week turned out to be a week of celebration. Inmates were thrilled to entertain the guests. Local baker was instructed to be in readiness. Being at number three, the first day I did not get any chance to touch it. I had to be contented with a distant look. I could not resist the feel of its touch for long. All others, tired, went to bed. I waited and managed to steal a chance to satiate my thirst for the touch.

People around used to borrow our bicycle. It gave us a momentary feel of being from the privileged class. The facility could be availed by the restricted few on holidays only.

The bicycle was the sole property of our father. No other family member had any right on it. I usually stealthily used to seize an opportunity for a joy ride when my father would go for a nap.

To carry someone on the carrier and cycle after dusk without light were legal offences. Besides managing law and order, the police usually used to arrest cyclists for cycling without light after dusk or carrying someone on the carrier. The accused was charge sheeted in the court of law and fined to the extent of rupees two to three.

A token tax of one rupee and two annas was charged by the Municipal authorities. At times the authorities would come out on the road to boost the revenue collection. The brass token in exchange was screwed on the handle of the bike. The head of the collection team was our neighbour. Our bicycle as such never bore the liability of the token tax.

In 1954, I joined first year of the four-year degree course at Amarsingh College, Srinagar. The Principal of the college, Sahibzada Mohmud Ahmad used to come to the college on a bicycle of green colour. His peon Mahmud would always be in readiness to takeover the bicycle. While dusting the bicycle, he would look around with an air of authority. Professor N.L.Darbari, Professor Rehman Rahi, Professor T.N.Kilam, Professor Aslam Khan and a few more professors did not have facility of the caretaker. We the students would often discuss the quality, the colour and condition of the bicycles of the privileged professors. Many others were either not such affluent or did not know cycling.

After a lot of pleas, to facilitate my education, I was handed the ownership of the bicycle that once rested with my father. The night that followed the auspicious day, somehow became too lengthy for me. The whole night I did not get even a wink of sleep. Reveries flashed across my mind. At last the day dawned. The day was a long awaited one in my life. While cycling to college, my eyes were fixed on the row houses along the road instead of on the road itself. Four rupees as parking charges was an allied worry to me. I somehow managed to dig out some relation with the keeper, Vesh Nath at the parking booth and escaped the liability.

To be an owner of a cycle was not a smooth sail. A number of times I had to land in police lockup for carrying another person along with or cycling without light.

In 1960 I purchased a bicycle from Duran Cycle at Exchange Road Srinagar for rupees two hundred ten. This time it was a 'Raleigh Made in India'. The owner of the shop, Durani Brij Nath was kind enough to provide installment facility to me. Ten rupees monthly installment was fixed. My friend J.L.Pandita(retired DIG police) also went to Duran Cycle. He was refused the facility for want of a guarantor. On my guarantee, Pandita became my equal.

Maqbool the mechanic at the shop had the additional assignment of collection of the installments. He was feeling obliged for smooth installments of rupees ten each. Within eleven months the interest free finance was liquidated.

Both of us-the cycle and me lived in close harmony for a number of years. It stood by me in sun and shower. It accompanied me to Zainapore, Verinagh and many other places. It served me well during my post graduation from 1963-65. It saved me eight annas a day, the to and fro bus fare to the university. It added not to my personality only but swelled my pocket too. For its smooth behavior it had endeared itself to me. I had developed a lot of love for it. Its services in period of adversity was immense. It charged me nothing. It was unlike today's Maruti, which does not buzz an inch unless I fill its belly with costly gasoline. Had the Bike not been stolen, I would love to give it a feel of joy ride in the selfish Maruti.

Brijû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

16. NIZAM-E- MUSTAFA

August 1996. 11 pm. The days were very hot. The BSNL tariff for STD calls was one fourth after 11 pm. People used to stand in a queue at such an odd hour to avail of the facility.

He introduced me to a teen aged Kashmiri Muslim at the STD booth. A Kashmiri Muslim at the peak hot summer month in Jammu was nothing short of a curiosity to me.

I asked him:

'What brings you to Jammu in this month of the year?'

He replied:

'I am Abdul Rashid a JK police constable posted at Digiana Police Station. My routine job is to search vehicles, private & public including that of yours at Digiana check post'.

It was a check against any antinational activity. The vigilance check had followed a few days after an explosion of a bomb in a matador, that had killed a number of school going children, orphaned some and widowed a few.

By now, we had become friends. Because of the long queue ahead of us, we engaged ourselves in gossip.

I asked him: ' Where do you live in Kashmir?'

He said: ' I am from Sebdan.'

' Do you know Hriday Nath of Sebdan?'

' No.'

I was intrigued.

I told him: ' Then you are not from Sebdan.'

There was an ugly pause.

Then he said: ' A.....a.....I.....am fromSoibugh. Soibugh.'

I said:

'My friend Gh. Hassan also lives there. You must be knowing him! '

The reply was: ' No.'

I was mystified. After a pause, I said:

'You are neither from Sebdan nor from Saibugh. You are from nowhere.'

He gave out a long breath and said in a low voice:

'My dear, I am from Wadwan.'

'Mister, you cannot be from Wadwan either. Impossible!

A faint smile frisked upon his thick lips. I could see a mysterious surprise on his boyish face.

I said:

'The 'Believers' from Wadwan are hundred percent Jamati-Islami, engaged in Jihad..... looting the houses of the non Believers to install Nizam-e-Mustafa.' How come you a Wadwanian work for the anti Jihad organization!

I saw a shadow of guilt in his brownish-blue eyes. He scratched the top of his head with the pointing finger of his left hand. He turned his gaze towards his feet. The language of his gesture spoke volumes. I tried to make him comfortable.

Suddenly he swore by the Holy Koran:

'For four years, I was a militant fighting Jihad with AK 47. India is a great country. It has rewarded me with the job of searching you, the nationalist, against any antinational activity.

Since then, whenever a police constable stops me while I am on the wheels, I counter check him, lest he should plant some explosive in my vehicle. I openly tell him about my vigilance against him. At times, he laughs away my query, whether he is a Nabedi (A surrendered militant) a Mujahid (Pak trained) a Soieih (A wick-Kashmir trained) or a Teach (Mop-Trained nowhere), in uniform.

A few years later, at the gate of the Golden Temple, I called a Kashmiri hawker selling woollies, waistcoats and the like. I asked him:

'Where are you from? Are you a Nabedi Or a Mujahid.....'

He said:

'I am neither. I have come from Ashmuj, Kulgam to spend chill winter and make some living as well.'

I remarked:

This is the first day of the holy Ramzan. Obviously you must be on fast. Your forehead tells me that you must be offering Nimaz five times a day. You seem to be a pious Muslim.'

He could no longer resist revealing the impious truth:

' I am a Mujahid(Pak trained) with ten years rigorous training in the ravines of Afghanistan.'

Then he boasted:

'I am trained enough to down even a plane with just a pointer.'

Soon one more hawker joined us. He too was introduced to me as a Militant from Ashmuj. He was followed by one more from Kilam who was said to be a civilian and had fled his home town because of the torture of some inspector from STF.

I said:

' With such an experience and training in guerrilla warfare, why did you shun your noble cause?'

Shun! He said:

'Amongst us some traitors ditched us. Everyday Mujahids are caught in hundreds. The Organization has directed us to go into hibernation, until some popular government steps in to trim the wings of the traitor. As directed, I surrendered a petty pistol and returned AK-47 along with rest of the ammunition to the Organization to gain freedom. For them I am a misguided youth back to the mainstream and for the organization I am a sincere Mujahid in hibernation.

We bade goodbye to each other & parted. I was hardly a few metres away, when he called me back and said:

' Why don't you join us?' In Nizam-e-Mustafa, we shall guarantee you protection of life and property.'

I said: ' I am an Indian. I am proud to be an Indian. I have faith in the secular character of the Indian Constitution'

He laughed at me and said: Indian Constitution! Indian Constitution is a complete farce. It has guaranteed protection to your life and property. Did it protect your life and property Ha....haha... Did the Government treat teaching staff of the Gandhi memorial College and that of the Islamia College after their exodus at par to prove its secular character? Do your children enjoy to and fro air trips to Hyderabad under Sadbhavna scheme? You join us and enjoy all the benefits of Nizam-e-Mustafa. You have to pay only jazia, which you otherwise also pay to the Govt. of India with a different nomenclature?'

I was almost lured to his offer and said: Give me some time to think over it.

Brijû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

17. NOTHING IS PERMANENT

I try to compromise with the reality of life , lest I should harm my person. Recently one of my teeth fell down under its own weight. I held it in my hand and addressed to it as to why did it leave me half way when it had given me company for more than sixty years. It could wait a little more to accompany me to the final destination. In this world nothing is permanent, so better to go along with the current. Lord Krishna caused agony to all he parted when he left Gokul to join his closer relations at Dwarika. Better to be least attached to suffer little.

Brijû dâss chhû vanàn lâsív tû båsív.

18. PROPHECY

In the late eighties, while in Srinagar, one of my friends told me: “One day you will get a sound beating.” I retorted : “ Till date with the grace of god, I am strong enough to repulse any such eventuality”. He gave a sarcastic smile and tried to change the topic. On my persuasion, he disclosed: “It will be none other than your own people”. I said: “Shit!” “I have served my people to the best of my capacity. They trust me and have faith in me. Whenever in the soup, they consult me. They have the highest regard for me”. He said: “Don’t be in fool’s paradise.” I told him: “I don’t believe in prophecies.” He said: “This is not a prophecy. This is a natural phenomenon. If prepared in advance, it will hurt you less.” I said: “When I don’t have any expectations, why should I get hurt?” He said: “You may or may not expect, the returns will be inversely proportional. Family attachment has caused you myopia and Time will restore your vision to you”.

Time passed on. Migration took place. From the most resourceful, people became the most resource less. The Prophecy started to trickle down with every passing day. I started to shudder. My hair would get bristled whenever the worldly wisdom of my friend flashed across my mind.

The first installment of the prophecy, from a person whom I loved the most poured on the auspicious day of Raksha Bandan in 1994 . I looked around. Nobody came to my rescue to exonerate me. I was sentenced without having been heard or given any opportunity to prove otherwise. I pocketed the abuse as the first installment of the prophecy. Contrary to my expectations, almost all, who were expected to come to my rescue, played their innings well. A few, seem to have patience to score at leisure, little knowing, the Time waits for none. Memory of the past caused more injuries and left deep scars. Since Bhismpitama, a helpless person in the family prefers to be a silent spectator; one has no option but to live with it. At such occasions, I console myself with the verse “ Mustane gandhiji ha more paniniv”. I appreciate how badly Mahjur, the Great revolutionary poet of Kashmir, must have suffered when he was gagged and whispered “ Wani hay Mahjur dastani dhil zaroor, wen nus tei rudus naa war, bhe kus wene bhaliay lo.” Looking around, I feel lightened to find myself one of the crowds of the sufferers lead by Gandhi Ji, Julius Caesar, Promodh Mahajan, my friend and the like.

Brijû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

19. RESOLING

Mid 1989, militancy was at its peak , I changed my pair of shoes at BATA shop Regal Chowk, Srinagar. The manager of the shop, Shri Surrinder Wali suggested that he would get the old pair resoled to give it a fresh look & fresh lease of life. I declined the advice with an aristocratic air, and said that in the States and elsewhere in the West even motor cars with minor defect are shown the junk yard and why we Indians should resole the pair when it has lived its life. Further free advice was restrained and the packed pair landed in my matador. In my office, a shoemaker who had come for some other purpose chanced to see the pair and offered his free advice for resoling. The advice was not sustained and the poor pair went to my then accountant, Shri Bushan Lal, obviously, with a mercy appeal for its survival.

Sh. Bushan Lal owned it, and know not how long did it serve him. A few months later, I left for Jammu, on 16th January to be back in March 1990, little knowing that it was my permanent exile from my hometown that belonged to me for generations.

Despite mass migration on 18th January, my elder brother Shri Girdhari Lal Ji had opted to stay back. He could not resist longer and had to leave during the night of 31st January and 1st Feb. Along with, he brought my scooter.

One day, to start my scooter my right shoe stuck into the kick of the scooter. With a lot of physical labour, I freed my foot, only to find a palm size puncture on the sole. Paucity of enough resources, I continued with it, and thought myself lucky, the puncture being at a hidden place. Besides, my prayers were granted by the Lord, and it did not rain until the pair got resoled at rupees sixty. It is not exaggerated. That time I had fixed my salary at Rs.750.00 per month and unfortunately that month I had to be contented without salary for I had been out of state for one month to seek admission for my elder daughter and so had not qualified myself for remuneration. More wear & tear of shoes on Jammu roads was an additional agony of the exile. By now I had tamed the problem and renewed the sole very often. In the meantime the shoemaker too had become friendly to me.

I believe, had I acted upon the advice of the Manager at Regal Chowk at the very outset, the pair would not have taken revenge with such vengeance.

Brijû dâss chhû vanàn lâsív tû bâsív.

20. RETURN OF KASHMIRI PUNDITS

Mufti's statement regarding receipt of 1500 applications from migrants for their return to the valley was nothing short of trying to divide the community, looting the Central Govt. and creating confusion amongst the disturbed community in exile. There were a few who were on the pay roll of the Govt. Mr. Kak from Sathoo Barbarshah & Mr. Raina from Chattabal on way to Srinagar met a fatal accident along with the driver of the taxi on road fringing the Central Silk Mulberry farm at Pampore. It is said that they were State guests. I had personally gone to express my condolences to Mr. Raina's. His mother innocently told me that late Raina was reluctant to go to Srinagar. He was persuaded by Mr. Kak and was told that they were going on the State expense and had arrangements from the Govt. in some Hotel, so why not to enjoy the Govt. courtesy.

The Central team happens to be a pack of corrupt fools who are purchased at a very low price, and so not to be taken seriously. Once, a CID officer told me that Central team comes after every major episode to inspect the situation on spot and draw their independent conclusion. They are supposed to counter check the observation of the State Govt. The State police, which is to be countered, entertain them with heavy wazwan, drinks sight-seeing for the limited two days at their disposal. Then the State police on their behalf prepares the report and hand them the file containing the report along with a shawl and some other gifts for the Babi Ji and ask them, "*Saheb theek hai*" to the response, "*haan theek hai*". The report is generally handed while the team is boarding the plane back to Delhi.

It is said that the area acquired for the migrants at Sheikhpora had been acquired from some relation of the then Revenue Minister. It was a mound of little value acquired at a very high price. The soil of the mound which could fetch money, as the same was in great demand to lay the railway road, had instead been paid for, heavily, for its clearance. This is the project of making easy money at highest level from both the State & the Centre.

Projects which are bound to cause regional imbalances are taken in hand . Rs.380 crore for Dal, Shiekhpora Clusters and the like are taken in hand, where not a single penny benefit goes to the other regions.

Let us not bother our head on this account. Worrying on such issues will further bleed our wounds.

Jai Ramji ki.

Brijû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

21. SEX SCANDAL & THE FLESH TRADE

These days in the Indian subcontinent, Sex scandal & Flesh Trade are the only headlines of the print & the electronic media. Srinagar, to prove itself as an integral part of the country has surpassed all its limits to push itself into the columns of such common-interest news.

It has been a natural phenomenon from time immemorial. Know not why it has invited special attention of the fourth estate. The leaders seem to have been no exception. They have been waiting for such opportunity to exploit the situation to make hay while the sun shines (please don't read shines) The press, the rudderless self-imposed leaders have left no stone unturned to seize the opportunity to be in the lime light. How come that the press and the exploiters of the society have awakened to the situation after a long slumber since the day the so called Movement to install *Nizami-Mustafa* was launched in 1990. They should foresee the consequences. The infamous trade has been going on since 1990 itself.

In 1994, at Rughnath Mandir Road Mr. Ali Mohamad Gujri(Driver in Sales Tax Department) of the same now infamous Zaindar Mohalla asked me, " How a four day abundant alive child is discovered in the house of a Kashmiri Pandit, that has been lying deserted for the last four years." I explained him that such things are the direct consequences of the Great & unchaste Movements laid on chaste doctrine like *Nizami Mustafa*.

A senior police officer from Kashmir Police heaved a sigh of relief when popular government came into being in 1996. He was infamous in the department for indulging in immoral sex.

Until 1996, the central security forces dealt with the law and order situation of the state. As such, he had to approach the BSF officer for the release of the militant to oblige the militant's obliging sister. Soon after 1996, the officer was a crownless king of the law and order situation himself. Now he had no more to share his client with the BSF officer. To confirm his confession, I asked Mr. Rafiq of Tankipora, if there is a house on the roadside next to his lane under which there is a weaver's shop. He said: "Yes"

I asked: "Is one of the inmates of the house under police custody on the charges of being a militant." He said: "Yes".

I asked: "Does the militant have young and beautiful sister and mother" He said: "Yes". The officer had told me that the mother and her daughter together would share their drinks and enjoy sex to the hilt. The tipsy officer would be surprised to see the capacity of the two. They, once dropped near their house would enter the lane like normal beings without making others to suspect their intoxication.

Mujahids' sisters would invariably claim to be very close to the *Sahib* (officer) who was one of the prominent members of the review committee for the release of her brother under detention.

How sad! Poor Mujahid who had launched a holy war to loot the abundant houses of Kashmiri Pandits, had to pay a heavy price for the favourable recommendations of the infamous officer.

Besides, *Romios* of the day must be thankful to their rudderless leaders in general and Kashmiri Pundits in particular who abandoned their houses behind for them to have hideout for enjoying immoral sex without any hindrance. They have not to make romance like their ancestors in dark and dingy lanes to face the music of the street urchins.

Those conceived or born in the abundant houses in 1991 and thereafter must be a brigade of young 16+ by now. Their DNA test will prove their legitimacy. This evil is beyond the purview and monitoring of the Judiciary, the CBI or Asyas or Qureshis. The street urchins who dismantled the infamous house at Zaindar Mohalla should go for DNA test secretly to ensure that their house may not fall prey to the demolition Brigade.

Brijû dâss chhû vanàn lâsív tû bâsív.

22. SOLUTION

Solution to the present monotonous life is impracticable. Only basic character of an individual will one day triumph like that of the hero of a Hindi Movie. The only solution to the problem is to face the problem boldly. Rightly said, what can't be cured must be endured.

In the present scenario, one may discover a dodo, but not a friend. Gone are the days when one would find one's friends around in sun and shower. All are dispersed and lost in exile. They are continent apart, some physically and some mentally. Friends used to be next door. Meeting almost all friends every evening at Habba Kadal or Kanya Kadal has remained only a sweet dream shelved in the archives of mental memory.

Each age group had a meeting place. Shri J.L.Tikoo's saffron shop at Kral Khud Habba Kadal, a '*bathek*' for elders was the seat of great saints and intellectuals. It had become a seat of learning. Legendry figures like Master Zind Koul, Prof.Toshkhani, Professor Jia Lal Koul, Pt. Jia Lal Nazir, Pt. Sarwanand Charagi and the like used to honour the '*bathek*'. It has left behind a monumental imprint. A little ahead across the river Jehlum, at Habba Kadal, was the '*bathek*' of Late Gopi Nath Parimoo. It was an assembly of all political parties, Parimoo playing for Chaterji. Prof.(Dr.) Suraj Hashia's '*bathek*' was serving as the meeting place at LOC dividing Karan Nagar from the slum Chota Bazar for the youngsters.

Mr. TIME has thrown us to a deserted place which lacks the facility of a Coffee House, a common feature of all civilized cities. This is the place of Prof Bhim Singh, who has never been to a class and still prefixes Professor to his name. Recall, how intellectuals and so called intellectuals used to park their bicycles along the footpath and gossip for hours together over a cup of coffee in the India Coffee House Regal Chowk, Srinagar. Those days only a few had a scooter. Scooters were not available in the open market. Different departments (Police & Secretariat) had a fixed quota on priority. Most of them would sell the same on premium. A few could afford to purchase it in the black market. Today a bicycle in such unclaimed situation will be suspected as a bomb and invite attention of all the armed forces and the bomb squared unit. NDTV, Aaj Tak, Barkha Datt will not miss the opportunity to make news.

My house had become a temporary Home for a fortnight. Both my daughters along with my grand daughter Bulbul Sherien Jalali +2 had joined me. They left on first April, feeling that they have set the house in order, little knowing that the only inmate has been left upset. Until their arrival, I had a smooth living, unconscious of the difference between the Home and the House. Their company had given me a feel of homely atmosphere.

Soon, I shall overcome the situation and be a normal boy of 67 plus.

Brijû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

23. THE BATANI

To me it appears that the *Batani* is the greatest gift that God has given to a *Bata*. She has contentment to the hilt. She is the only person who stands by her husband in distress. She is the maker of the family. It is she who grooms her children. She is always on the giving end, while rest of the family is on the receiving end. She manages herself on the little leftovers. She has all the virtues of a mother/sister/a friend in distress/ an ideal wife and what not. At different stages she plays different roles. She is a bonded labourer. No Labour law is applicable to her. The greatest achievement of The Second International formed in Paris on 14th. July 1889 was the limit of the working day to eight hours. But the Batani is an exception to be round the clock at the service of the family. She is a tireless machine. The French Revolution, the Russian Revolution or any other revolution so far has failed to liberate the Batani. No Human Rights are guaranteed to her.

Unfortunately a small so called vice has made her a worldly object. Minus the flaw, she would otherwise become a divine soul to be worshiped. To err is human. She knows the weakness of her husband. She knows when where and how to strike it to get the outburst in response. Panditji realizes his folly only after the outburst has caused the desired damage to his image in the society.

While analyzing, I realize, it is neither vice nor an error on her part. She basically bursts to give vent to her sufferings. None in the family is her sympathizer. What is wrong, if she tells her husband: " Will you tolerate to see your sister or daughter suffering the same life style." We are guilty. We take it as a curse on our dear one.

Immune to the sufferings of my wife in the family, I had once reacted the way I should have not. My disproportionate outburst damaged my image beyond repairs. I turned dumb, when someone rightly accused me of having been harsh to my wife. My repentance for my outburst will not raise my stature in my own eyes.

I vehemently condemn Brijdass and advise others to be wise to learn from the mistakes of others.

Brijû dàss chhú vanàn lāsív tû bāsív.

24. THUS SPAKE THE PUMPKIN

On Monday the 17th. Oct.2005, my cook Pooja did not come. In her absence Amit, my domestic help, and I decided to cook the pumpkin that was lying in the corner of the room beside its fellow pumpkin. We made this choice since the pumpkin is easy to cook. While preparing the dish, Amit, the chef, sought my advice, regarding the input of 'heing'. The advisor with little knowledge, as expected, proved too dangerous to be consulted thereafter. When the lunch was served, the dish was so bitter, that even after a week the bitterness continued. Somehow, I managed my lunch with a few pieces of chicken. For dinner, I placed order for the fellow pumpkin to be prepared without heing. To my dismay, I discovered that both the pumpkins had been spoiled in one go.

On such occasions, I immediately reconcile, recalling the Kashmiri proverb, " Muden henz maji nai presun, trukin hundi ghere kith khesun". Had the delinquents' mothers not delivered, how the other household could rise.

For dinner, I preferred to have three instead of four chapatis. The three were swallowed with the little leftover of the chicken. Instantly one more was served. I paused a little. Good sense prevailed. I enjoyed the fourth one also without any chicken or anything else. A tablespoon of pumpkin in my plate seemed to be looking and speaking to me. No justice was done to it for its bitter taste.

Finally, I raised my hand in gratitude to Great Lord, knowing well, that many mortals must have gone to bed without even a single morsel of food.

Here I quote Sule Nale" Ya pakh perverdighara wendhhai seenchi teri, meger tim ti chum chaniai; wendai te wndei kiah. Ne thouthus fakei zanh, ne duthum yed berith" (Oh! Holy God,I would sacrifice my ribs, but these too are yours. So what to sacrifice. You have never kept me hungry, but never given me belly fill.

Brijdass chu kanchan rut te huiot saarinei kuet.

Brijû dâss chû vanàn lâsív tû båsív.

25. VIGILANCE RAID

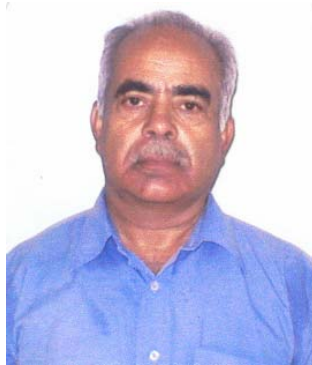
In mid-seventies, the then Vigilance Commissioner of J&K State, was known for his gimmicks to make news. One day he manipulated a vigilance raid on the premises of one of the senior most SSPs, at Jawahir Nagar, Srinagar.

Next day the achievement of the commissioner was the headline of the local Dailies. It was alleged that a bribe of Rs. 200 was recovered from the pocket of the SSP's coat . Later it was proved beyond doubt that he was wearing a shirt with no pocket at that time). The accused was subsequently bailed out. The corruption case lingered on for many years. In the mean time the poor fellow attained his retirement in suspended animation. While the accused suffered humiliation, the manipulator was rewarded with the Director General's post, of course, at the cost of the promising career of the victim. Dy. S.P Jalla from Shaheed Gunj was one of the witnesses to the raid. Subsequently, he was blessed with the pilgrimage to Mecca. On his return, Haji Sahib's conscience persuaded him to withdraw his false witness given under duress. Likewise many other witnesses turned hostile. One of such witnesses, a Dy. S.P by rank, was summoned from Jammu to Srinagar, to stand the witness. He wanted to act according to his conscience, but at the same time he was scared of the erstwhile Commissioner, who had by now become the DG. Somehow, he sought my advice. I advised him not to go with a predetermined mind. Whatever the consequences, better would be the spontaneous response that would fountain out. He was declared hostile by the Prosecuting Officer. As expected, the DG ordered for an enquiry. During enquiry, consideration of promotion in the department is kept in abeyance. The Dy.SP had already suffered stagnation in the department. He had continued for 18 years on the same rank, when his juniors had superseded him.

A game of gimmick versus gimmick ensued. One time Dy. S.P Anticorruption approached the concerned clerk, the custodian of the enquiry file and paid him Rs.200.00 for *sweets* to his children. The clerk brought the file, made a bonfire of it and said: "*Huni kheie bastea kheller*". Subsequently the officer in absence of the enquiry purchased his belated promotion. This is how fake corruption case was buried by the real one.

Brijû dâss chhú vanàn lãsí v tû bãsí v.

'BRÍJÛ DÀSS'



**THE OTHER FACE
OF
A
TEACHER**

(Internet Edition by M.K.Raina)

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