

Thoughts Can be Open BUT Shaping Them Must be Discreet

From the pen of

VEESEM



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Stories Matter
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To

Reena. Swaroop and the tiny kids Aadi &
Angshu. You Guys. you are so far. yet so
near through your capacity to Love which is
the great inspiration

Preface

Thoughts originate in the brain, specifically through neural activity. This process is influenced by both internal and external factors including memories, emotions, and environmental stimuli. Essentially, the brain acts as a hub of generating and organizing thoughts based on a complex interplay of these elements.

After having understood the origination of thoughts and process of influencing factors, let me come to the aspect of shaping of thoughts. Brain originates innumerable thoughts of different in nature like sensible, sensitive, crazy, constructive and destructive also. The thoughts can be shaped in the form of stories, Poetry, articles and even in acts.

All the thoughts emanated cannot be and need not be shaped. In my opinion the thoughts which are interesting, constructive and worth memorising only to be shaped accordingly.

In this book I have shaped some of my thoughts in written words and hope they are tantalizing.

Dear Reader

“Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider”

FRANCIS BACON

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Shaping Of Pop-Ups

Introduction

Many events take place in our life and some turn into memorable experiences. Such events pop up now and then making us happy or sad. In this writing I have shaped some of such pop ups of my life in written words along with other uncanny pop ups.

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1. A thought I call Nerdy

How true is the saying "Idle's brain is devil's workshop."

It is more than a year after my quitting the job and leaving apart my visit to US for five months; I am totally idle from the past six months. Since then, constructive thinking has completely vanished, and crazy and nerdy thoughts are thronging endlessly in my mind. One of such being the non-traditional thinking about sex. In fact, the age of mine is for equanimity of mind through spiritual thoughts with philosophical approach.

Alas! things are in wrong direction in my case at this stage.

OK, let me try, to put one of my such thoughts in black and white.

As I understand, from the day one i.e. from the day of creation of Adam & Eve on this earth, Sex has become an issue of controversy though that is the root for creation.

What is Sex after all? It is again a natural phenomenon and is the biological necessity of not only of human beings, but of all living things on this earth. Of course, we have no idea about other planets as we are not very sure about living things. Whenever we are hungry or thirsty we look for food and water in the vicinity whether we are at home or outside. We are free to have food outside in the absence of it at home and whenever we feel for a change. Why this logic

does not apply to sex. I don't advocate this in general terms. There are sizable cases of dissatisfied married couples living together starving for sex unable to separate themselves for economic and social reasons. This is particularly so with many female folks. Also, are living many females with denial of genuine biological need due to their family commitments and fear of premarital/extra marital sex as sin. Is there any solution for this?

2. Swipe of Love

The word 'LOVE,' though seemingly simple with a vowel and three consonants, is profoundly complex, encompassing innumerable varieties of relationships. However, this discussion focuses on romantic love—the unique emotional and physical attraction that develops between two persons of opposite genders, often synonymous with sex.

"To begin, I will recount a story from the Mahabharata that I heard long ago. While I cannot vouch for its historical accuracy or documentary evidence, my interest lies purely in the narrative itself, not its authenticity.

The story goes like this.

"After losing their kingdom to the Kauravas in gambling, the Pandavas entered Vanavasa, their forest exile. Deep in the forest, they struggled to find food. One day, intensely hungry, all the brothers except Yudhishtira and Draupadi dispersed in search of sustenance. After an extensive search, Nakula, one of the five Pandavas, discovered a single fruit on a tree. Believing it would temporarily alleviate their hunger, he plucked it. Immediately, an invisible voice made a pronouncement:

"Paandavas, please note: This tree yields only one fruit in a year and the saint living in this forest eats only this and lives in penance for the whole year. If he doesn't find the fruit

in its place you will be cursed and you will be in big trouble. So, put back the fruit in its original place before he comes here. Also, please note that he doesn't eat if the fruit is on the ground or plucked one given by somebody. Do something that makes the fruit in its place immediately before the Saint arrives."

"Stunned by the announcement, the brothers and Draupadi were filled with sorrow. Unable to find a solution, they prayed to Lord Krishna for guidance. Lord Krishna, known as 'Paandava Priya' (beloved of the Pandavas), instantly appeared, feigning ignorance of their plight. He led them to the tree and instructed each of the five brothers to confess any sins they had committed in their lives." As they began, starting with the youngest, Sahadeva, the fruit began moving upward towards its original position. With the confession of the eldest, Yudhishthira, the fruit almost reached its branch, but a small gap remained. This puzzled everyone, including Lord Krishna, who couldn't understand the persistent gap despite the truthful confessions of all five brothers. The only one remaining was Draupadi, revered as one of the 'Pancha Kanyas' (five virgins) and believed to be sinless. Lord Krishna, the master of all mystics, hesitantly asked Draupadi if she had committed any transgression. Though embarrassed, she searched her memory for a sin or mistake. After a while, she recalled a suppressed desire to marry Karna, even after her marriage to the Pandavas. She realized this desire was a grave sin that should never have arisen. With humility, she confessed, and immediately the fruit

leaped up, reattaching itself to its branch. Just then, the saint arrived and was delighted to see the Pandavas with Lord Krishna. With his 'Divya Dristi' (divine power), he understood the entire episode. He then plucked the fruit, gave it to the Pandavas, and wished them a smooth exile.

My intention in recounting this story is not to debate its factual accuracy or Maharshi Vyas's literary prowess. Rather, accepting it as a narrative, my question is this: was Draupadi's desire to marry Karna—what I term 'Swipe of Love'—truly a sin?" The answer could be both **Yes and No**.

"From one perspective, **yes**. We live in societies governed by social norms and moral codes. Especially in the conservative, male-dominated society of that era, marriage was considered sacrosanct, and a husband was seen as divine by his wife. Thus, a married woman was expected to be 'pativrata' (devoted solely to her husband) and even contemplating romantic or sexual thoughts about another person would be considered a grave sin."

"Conversely, **no**. Draupadi was married to five husbands; without delving into the specifics of how this polygamous marriage came to be, it was an accepted practice in certain societal sects. As a human being living within a polygamous social structure, her 'swipe of love' towards Karna and the desire to marry him can be viewed as a natural drive, **a basic instinct** rather than a sin"

Given my limited knowledge of the Mahabharata, our revered epic, it would be inappropriate to elaborate further

on this specific aspect. Therefore, I will now transition from the epic and explore contemporary concepts of romantic love and sex.

For adult males and females, romantic love (RL) often manifests as an act of pleasure. There is nothing inherently wrong with this, as sex serves both as a tool for procreation and a source of pleasure. In essence, sex is neither sacred nor sinful

As Sri Sadguru says, “Sex is a simple biological need turned for many into a lifelong obsession”. Further he says “The biggest problem is that religious and moral teachers have told us that our biology is a Sin. This has created untold guilt and misery down the ages. The more you deny something it assumes disproportionate importance in the mind. This suppression mode has wrought untold havoc on the human psyche”.

Unquote:

I agree that it is a burning desire of life, and love invigorates life. Thus, mutual attraction between genders is a natural process for normal human beings.

Here, the story from our epic comes to my mind. Vishwamitra a great saint of unparalleled spiritual power also fell in love with Menaka and turned father of Shakuntala. If this is true, a normal man falling prey to RL is no big affair.

There is one more interesting story from Mahabharat.

“Urvashi, the apsara the divine beauty, gets attracted with the personality and looks of Arjun. She goes begging to him to satisfy her desires of love. When he does not entertain her request, she rages with anger and goes to the extent of cursing him to become a eunuch. This shows how strong is the desire of RL and the outcome if not fulfilled.

In earlier times—and even today—many individuals suppress their desires for romantic love due to social obligations. I have witnessed and heard of unmarried women and young widows who lost their spouses early in life suffering from mental disorders due to unfulfilled sexual desires. This is not an exaggeration."

Recently, there have been numerous legal separations stemming from sexual issues. Conversely, the increased encouragement of widow remarriage represents a positive societal change.

"Ultimately, my point is that romantic love should not be treated as an untouchable 'holy cow' with unnecessary associated implications. If two individuals develop a relationship that evolves into romantic love, for whatever reason, it can be a natural process and should not be branded as a sin. However, this does not imply that individuals should engage in immoral relationships that violate the moral code of the society.

Here the beautiful words of Sri Sadguru come to my mind

Quote:

“Our basic biology is not to be trashed. But it does not need to be glorified either. If you observe your development from childhood to adolescence, it should intrigue you, not rule you. A natural intelligence makes us all aware that we are more than the play of our hormones. Unlike animals, human beings are not at the mercy of their chemistry. The human need for emotional and intellectual companionship is far stronger than the physical need. Unfortunately, those who allow the hormonal process to dominate their intelligence lose their inner equilibrium”.

Unquote.

If this inner equilibrium is lost this love may turn to immoral relationships.

In conclusion, I quote the well said words of Sri. Sadguru

Quote

“All we need to cultivate is certain inner equanimity in body and mind, so sexuality naturally finds its place. It is important to acknowledge the sexual impulse but also conduct it responsibly.

Some simple Yoga can be hugely beneficial if one **starts practising it young**, because it harmonises the body and mind more effectively than any teaching can”

Reference: An article by SADGURU “Sex: Sacred or Sinful” published in Bangalore Times of “The Times of India” dtd.10th Sept 2018.

3. The word “LOVE” Redefined

Other day, I was watching TV serial “Param avatar Srikrishna”. In one of the sequences Lord Krishna tells his friend Udhav that there are two different types of Prem (love) Sansarik Prem” (Worldly Love) and “Aadhyatmik Prem (Spiritual Love).Further, he explains Sansarik is union of bodies (in my terms Romantic Love) and Aadhyatmik is union of souls. Also, he says the pleasure of Sansarik Prem is momentary whereas of Aadhyatmik is eternal and sacred. Lord Krishna who was lover for so many Gopis of Gokul says his love with them is only Aadhyatmik Prem and nothing other than that.

The serial was over by 9PM, but the words Sansarik and Aadhyatmik started lingering. The word Sansarik prem (worldly love/Romantic love). I could understand easily as we humans experience in and out as married couple or as lovers or even with immoral relationships etc. The word Aadhyatmik Prem became a big question mark and my inquisitiveness to solve the same became exponential. The whole of next day was spent in thinking about that and finally I came to conclusion that Aadhyatmik Prem is only an illusion and cannot happen to humans when they are alive. Also, felt that could have happened in “Dwapur Yuga” and not applicable to “Kali Yug” in which we are living.

The peculiar thing was that the word Aadhyttmik Prem became indelible and started recurring in my mind now and then. On that day, there were guests for the dinner. After sumptuous dinner in the night, I went to bed by 11.30. After a nap I suddenly got up and the time was 12.30. My wife was in deep sleep as she was tired in making arrangements for dinner from the morning. I silently got up from bed and moved to the front room and lied down with bed light on. It was 1.30 early morning, and an interesting and important event flashed in my mind. I started ruminating the same and the event goes like this

I was an engineer working for a PSU with the manufacturing unit at a place called K.G.F. I was staying in the company quarter with my small family of wife and son. My colleague Purushottam staying in the house next to mine with his wife Pushpa and a sweet teen aged daughter Asha. We were close family friends and my son Sunil of 6 years was pet to them specially to Asha. Also, Asha was a close young friend to my wife and was always a company for shopping, visits to our officer's club etc. She was quite jovial with me too with teasing and mischievous acts.

Asha in her adolescence, an age of upsurge of sexual feelings, tried many times to seduce taking advantage of my lenience with no avail, as I nipped in the bud her desires by making her to realise the pros and cons of such relationships.

My transfer to Mysore was already a news and Asha had also come to know. I was walking to Club with my shuttle

racket .Suddenly, Asha came from behind and her fast breathing was an indication of running behind.” Uncle, I heard you are going to Mysore. I will be missing you, aunty and Sunil a lot. Can you not get it cancelled, Uncle” was her series of questions with gasping. I simply smiled and proceeded.

I received my order of transfer and had 3weeks to join duty at Mysore. Shubha left immediately on house hunting mission as she had many relations at Mysore. I was also busy in the office in handing over charge and in collection of technical data which would come in handy at new place of work. On that day, when I came home ,it was 8O’clock.I was feeling tired and lying on the bed to relax. There was a knock, and I opened the door to see Asha with a box in her hand “what is that?” I asked. “Amma has sent some chapathis “ she said and kept the box on the side table. Then, she handed over an envelope and went out closing the door. I opened it to see a letter with the following content.

“Dear Uncle,

Don’t think badly about me after seeing this letter. I have written this with unbearable pain as I am going to miss you. I don’t know how long it will take for me to stabilize after you leave from this place. Neither infatuation nor adolescence, I am fully conscious of what I am telling

“Uncle I love you so much and I am missing you a lot”

I LIKE U

I LOVE U

I WANT U

Yours Ever Loving

“Asha”

In fact, I was shocked to see the letter. Next day at the same time she appeared. After seeing me her eyes filled with tears and said “I am going to Bangalore tomorrow for a week and will not be there when you are leaving this place, most probably. Convey my regards to Auntie and lots and lots of Love to Sunil” ‘After a pause she said “ Uncle! Give me something which I should remember throughout my lifetime” with tears rolling down from her eyes. .I also became highly emotional and said take this. I gave a **“Flying Kiss”**

She said “Goodbye” and went.

Within weeks’ time we left KGF once and for all. I never met Asha after that, not attended her marriage despite the invitation from Purushottam, due to certain problems.

It was the year 1985 that is 9 years after leaving KGF, I was in the choultry attending the marriage of my senior colleague Manju’s daughter. A sweet voice called me from behind “Uncle”. I turned back in surprise to see the lady with a baby, and I was unable to recognize.” Uncle, you have forgotten the letter, the flying Kiss” her words took me back to KGF and shouted “Hey! You naughty girl, Asha”.

“No, No uncle. No girl, Lady. see my son” was her spontaneous reply. She continued “Uncle! You know his name. Same as yours, Krishna”. After spending some time talking about my wife, Sunil and her parents, she whispered in my ears “Uncle! I am keeping your Flying Kiss safe in my heart. I still Love you Very much and love you forever” and bid adieu. I saw wetness in her eyes. What should I call her love towards me? **Aadhyatmik Love?**

Corollary

To

The word “LOVE” Redefined

Before getting into the details of Asha’s love, let me say a few words about our mind and heart (conscience) through theory of “Two Minds. As psychologists say humans have two minds a) **Rational** b) **Emotional**.

The rational mind makes conscious, explicit decisions, while the emotional mind operates implicitly and bases choices on feelings.

Further, they say, generally emotional mind will be very active during growing age (huduga buddhi in Kannada) and rational mind activates as we move towards maturity. Besides, the emotional mind is more attached to body and rational more to heart/soul/conscience.

Coming back to Asha and her Love:

As I have mentioned earlier, Asha was not just a neighbour but a part of our family. She was attached so much with all

the three of us with affection, concern, respect and what not ? In other words, she was part of us with “True Love”.

Asha’s turning age from puberty to late adolescence (an age of upsurge of sexual feelings with her emotional mind overactive) her romantic love was getting in making her to seduce me to fulfil sexual feelings, which was natural I say. As I could sense her basic instinct, I cautioned her repeatedly and counselled her timely making her to realise the immorality of such relationships. That had positive effect, and her behaviour changed day by day. Also, her rational mind was getting accelerated as her age was rolling towards maturity. Not just that. Her bondage towards me strengthened with her True Love.

Our association with Purushottam’s family came to an end with my transfer from KGF to Mysore. The sad part being we never met each other after my bidding Adieu to KGF, but for my accidental meet with Asha at Manju’s daughter marriage. Though we never met each other physically we carried sweet memories of our association in abundance. About Asha, my rational mind always carried her true love towards us especially for me.

I would conclude by saying Asha’s whispered words “ I still love you and love you for ever” were not from her emotional mind but from her heart, the true love with no tint of romance of any sort. In other words, her love was from her heart/soul towards my heart/soul. That is what Lord Krishna’s explanation of Aadhyatmik Love. So, I can

confidently say Asha's love towards me was nothing other than "Aadhyatmik"

**"True Love will not fade irrespective of Relationships
continue or not"**

4. Unsuccessful Love Story

It was the year 1966, I was a fourth-year student of engineering and was in last of my teens, age vulnerable to different attractions specially Love & Sex. Ritu, the nick name of Rekha Rao, a close friend of my sister She was good looking with a good physique, an arts student. She used to visit our house frequently as house was nearby. Also was on the way to my Engineering college which gave ample opportunity to meet her while commuting to college . There was no restrictions for our meetings as both the families were close. As the time was passing on our friendship was heading towards a deeper relationship. We started liking each other without knowing whether it was just a liking or love in offing.

It was a hot afternoon and was on my way back home from college. when I saw Ritu's house, felt like going in to have some cool drink. My knock on the door made her to open, but with a big yawn and partially opened eyes.

“ Krish, do you believe if I say, I was dreaming about you and you have appeared like the devil” She teased me and hit on my chest. With a push, I entered and shouted in a low voice “You stupid girl, get me some cold water first” She came with water, instead of handing over; she sprinkled some water on my face which irritated, and I tapped on her bums.

Telling “You nasty fellow”, she came to fight with me. I just pulled her and held with my arms around. She slid away and went towards kitchen saying, ‘I will get you coffee’. I went nearer to kitchen and asked, “Is aunty not at home”.

“Stupid, If aunty were there, would you dare touch me? She has gone to her sister’s house”

“Then, why you didn’t join her. What are you doing sitting alone at home”.

She came out with coffee and gave the cup and sat beside me.

“How sad for me? I was expecting my boyfriend, and you appeared like a devil” She taunted.

I gulped the coffee, got up and turned towards the door saying “Ritu, call your boyfriend and enjoy”

She thought, I was serious and pulled me back to sofa and started hitting me.

In the melee of her hitting and my protecting, we had a lot of physical proximities, and we got excited. In a reflex action Ritu came closer and kissed on my lips. That triggered my romantic love and me too reciprocated with much closer intimacy. Immediately, we came to senses and Ritu ran away to the room. In perspiration, I went to the sink nearby and washed my face. It was more than 15 minutes; she didn’t come out of the room.

“Ritu, I am leaving” My call made her to come out in shy, and I said Bye with a caressing handshake and rushed back

home on my Rolls Royce the Raleigh cycle. The whole day I was in a world of hallucination.

I had not met Ritu for the past 15 days as I was busy in organizing our college tour to North India. The previous day of my departure, when I told mom about my plan to visit Ritu's house, She expressed her willingness to join me. Both started walking and reached at 6 PM. Mr. Rao father of Ritu opened the door and her mother joined us later. I was telling about my trip to Rao uncle, but my eyes were looking eagerly for Ritu. Auntu understood my restlessness and told "Ritu is in the room. You can go there" I entered the room and said "Ritu! I will be away for three weeks roaming around north India looking at beautiful girls. How do you like it?" Her reaction was strange. She didn't show any interest in my words. After keeping lull for some time, she said "Go wherever you want. Don't come back to me" and lied down on the cot. I was about to go nearer to her to ask the reason for her callous behaviour, there was a call from mom. I came out in utter disappointment telling Ritu "I will meet you after my return from tour"

It was Saturday afternoon when I was back in Bangalore carrying a lot of sweet memories after 3 weeks. I was tired and went to bed after having had bath and sumptuous food prepared by mom, which I had missed for so many days. Also, I was restless and anxious for the next day, to meet Ritu and share my wonderful experiences. I got up leisurely at 9.30 and went straight to kitchen to have my first cup of coffee. As I was enjoying the coffee, came a thunder bolt from my mother." Krishna! Ritu's marriage has been fixed.

Her words, pierced my ear drums and shouted “Amma, don’t make such wild jokes. I can’t relish”. She was perplexed with my reaction and said “What is wrong with you? Two days back Ritu’s mother Sumangala had come to our house to inform this”. I kept down the half-finished coffee glass on the floor and came out of the kitchen. I got ready in a hurry and left the house denying the breakfast offer from mom.

The door was opened with a big smile by aunty and She asked me to take the seat.

“Krishna! Your Amma must have told about the engagement of Ritu. She is marrying Keshav a nice boy like you, an engineer at HAL” She was in all excitement.” Aunty, where is Ritu. I want to congratulate”. I said “Krishna, she is not at home. She has gone with Keshav and his family to buy some saris” was the reply. Immediately, I got up from the sofa and said “. Convey my congrats to her, Aunty I will meet her after some time”.

“Krishna, wait a minute, I will give sweets.”. She handed over a packet and to my dismay said “Krishna, you better avoid meeting Ritu here on. I know, you are quite smart to understand why?” In fact, it was really a very tough task to control myself from flaring up after hearing her. I rushed out and aunty closed the doors. That was not just closure of doors of her house, but a closure of relationship of Ritu once and for all. I bid “Adieu” to Ritu in absentia with a hole in the heart which was detected after decades when I

developed heart problem. The next I met her was in her wedding after 3 months.

I conclude my story by saying **“Me and Ritu met and became just friends, fell to each other at the wrong time and our love ended as unsuccessful Love Story”**

5. Walks of “Life”

After my engineering graduation from Bangalore university in the year 1968 I worked in 5 Engineering industries and out of which the highest service was in BEML a public sector heavy engineering industry of 33years. My career started as a Design engineer and ended as a Marketing General Manager. Further my career continued till retirement as Marketing General Manager. With this brief introduction of mine, let me come to the topic which I want to put forth.

The last company I worked before taking retirement was M/s SFPL a Dealership company dealing with Material handling Equipment of imported nature of “Linde” brand of German origin. As I was General Manager (GM) my area of activities was almost all except finance. The company was with a strength of 40 people excluding CEO. Out of 40, there was back hand group of 8 ladies working in Sales, Spares and Accounts departments. Out of eight all were married except two Ramya and Ranjani.

I am proud to say with my quality of excellent human relationship building I established myself as a good human being wherever I had worked. In SFPL also built good repo in a short time and was liked both by gents and ladies alike.

I have fancy (even now at the age of 70+) for fashionable dresses, also the habit of following dress code apt to the

occasion'. Due to this I was termed as fashionable and stylish GM in the office. At the same time I was good at talking to my junior and senior colleagues, witty at times. After a few months of working at the office, I started joining the lady folks for lunch, of course, on their insistence. The dinner time of 45 minutes used to be incredible time with merriment besides, discussions on official and technical matters. Within a short time, I became an iconic personality and my absence at dining table used to make the lunch time morbid (they had openly expressed) Also, my friendliness with all of them became very intimate making some of my close colleagues to tease me as "Lady Killer".

We all know that the words Catwalk and Ramp walk are terms pertain to modelling and fashion shows. Usually, Catwalk stands for female models who walk on the defined path to show their looks and beauty of the dress they have worn. Likewise, the word Ramp walk refers to male models. You may be wondering why the word ramp walk has been brought in when the topic is about a person who is quite elderly and working in a company dealing with machines. Yes! that is the interesting part of this written word.

As I was GM of the company I was provided with an A/C chamber as my office which was on the first floor of the building with most of the staff members accommodated on the ground floor. I had the habit of going to the person sit across to discuss official matters rather than talking over the phone. So I had to walk down the stairs to meet my junior colleagues. Whenever I used to do so, the fair sex group

used to stare at me and murmur something among themselves. On that day, we all had gathered at the dining table and I was with my pink blazer and neck tie as I had visited an important customer regarding purchase of sizable number of machines. Before the start of lunch there were some whispers from the ladies about my Dress which I had noticed silently. During the middle of the lunch, I asked “you ladies, why you stare at me and gossip something whenever I come down the stairs from my chamber. Please tell me frankly”. There was silence and no reply. When I raised my voice and repeated the question, the bold and beautiful lady of the group Ranjani with shy said “ Sir, whenever you descend through the stairs, we feel as if a model is on Ramp walk. It is only a compliment Sir, as you always wear fashionable dresses and your style of walking is unique. That’s all Sir” When she was saying this, other ladies were smiling with their heads down. Though, I was feeling good at heart of heart, I grumpily said “ Ladies, I am neither model nor my walking down the stairs is Ramp walk, understand “. We finished the lunch with big laughter and with joyous note. As I was about to get up from dining chair, was a call from CEO stating that the order from the customer is finalised and would be receiving communication in a day or two. This was a booster for my feel-good mood.

That was a sad day as it was my last working day at the company. A heart-rending send-off was given to me by one and all. Some of them were in tears almost. In fact, it was a proud moment also for me as I had built a good team and

wonderful human relationship. With a heavy heart I bid Goodbye and my Santro car zoomed out of the office premises. That was the end of my career with 43 years of working after my graduation in 5 different organisations.

“Time and Tide wait for None” The cycle of time was rolling with many changes in my health with age related problems. My right knee problem was in increase with Osteo Arthritis restricting my movement and totally changing my style of walk. It was more than two years and never visited SFPL even once though I was in contact with many of my ex-colleagues over the phone, That was mainly due to my trip to America and the fear of Covid pandemic.

I was alone at home with my spouse away to Nagpur since a week. On that day suddenly came the idea of visiting SFPL and reached the office by eleven. It was wonderful welcome by one and all making me highly emotional. On the insistence I had to stay for lunch. I spent lot of time with lady folks recollecting dining table talks, official discussions, Power point presentations every month (the system which was introduced by me) etc.. Also, I walked around all the places including service centre. My movement was slow and limping due to OA. This was observed by all specially by female group. As I was moving towards dining table, the good old bold and beautiful Ranjani, came close to me and said “Sir! We are all feeling bad. Your stylish walk has changed from **Ramp walk to Kunt walk**. Why can’t you do something for rectifying it Sir,” I just stared at her in reply and settled for lunch. More than the sumptuous lunch, I enjoyed the memories and

memoirs recollected and recapitulated during eating. After spending almost four hours I bid adieu and moved out. As I was about to ascend my Santro, Ranjani came and said “I am so sorry. I used the word Kunt walk and hurt your feeling. Please excuse me Sir.” I pinched her cheek with love and started the car. In fact, it was a great moment and tears rolled out of my eyes.

As the car started moving slowly the waving of my favourite lady colleague (ex) bold and beautiful Ranjani started fading and disappeared once and for all.

It was more than a year after my starting of Kunt walk. The knee problem began to deteriorate and finally had to go for walking stick. ie. my Kunt walk turned to three-legged walk. Oh God! What a change in a span of 10 years!

Ramp Walk to Kunt Walk to 3-legged walk. What next?

I never missed my morning walk though it was with walking stick. On that day morning when I was on my morning walk a hearse van with a dead body crossed the road. As my walk continued crazy thoughts started pouring in my mind with all sorts of imaginations. In the process, came to my mind the words of my uncle “Walking on 4 men”. Whenever he used to hear the news of demise, he used to utter the words “He/she will be walking on 4men meaning the body will move on the shoulders of 4 men who will be walking towards cremation/burial ground. With his words I got the answer for the question **what next**

To conclude I would say

Ramp to Kunt (Limp)

Kunt to 3legged and finally

Walking on 4men.”

That’s how the walk of life ends.

6. Transfer of Negative Energy through Namaskar (An Hypothesis)

It was Thursday and as usual I went to the temple of my favourite Guru “Sri. “Guru Raghavendra Swamiji”. As I was performing parikrama my attention was drawn to an elderly person who was looking religious, pious and dignified. Instantly, I got the feeling of performing Namaskar to him. After completing my parikramas, I went to him and bowed to touch his feet. Suddenly, he withdrew himself and said “No, No, don’t do Namaskar to me. Do it to God who is in front of you”. I was shocked and at the same time felt bad and insulted at his act. After a pause, I politely asked “Sir! What was wrong with me for you to do that? I felt you are most deserving person to do Namaskar and get blessings and I did “. With a pat and cool, he replied

“My dear young friend may I know your name.” I said Srinivas.

He started “Hare Srinivasa! Srinivasa don’t mistake me. Nothing was wrong with you. But it is my inability to accept your Namaskar, as, to accept namaskar one should have sufficient Punya to absorb others Papa that may enter through Namaskar. Am also an ordinary man with much more Paapa than Punya”. I became dumbfounded with his

answer. I came out of temple by conveying thanks to him and Saastanga Namaskar to God.

His reply became a complicated puzzle and variety of thoughts started swirling in my mind to find justification for his statement. Hours and Days passed on with no solution. It was next Thursday and as usual I stepped out to go to temple. Suddenly, an idea flashed to visit the temple other than the one I visited the previous week and proceeded. After completion of Parikrama, I sat in front of God in a corner and started thinking about the quiz put forth by that person the previous week. After some time, a peculiar thought came to my mind. Immediately I returned home and started dissecting that idea and arrived at the following hypothesis.

There are two types of energies related to humans irrespective of gender, cast, creed, or religion. They are Physical and the other Abstract. The Physical is the one generated in the body and the Abstract is acquired. The Physical as we all know the physical strength required and used to do physical work. The Abstract which is further categorised as Positive(+ve) and Negative(-ve) are obtained by human deeds. Let me not discuss Physical as the same is being experienced day in day out in the form of our strengths and weaknesses.

The abstract energy which is abstract in real terms, and its manifestation is very much unclear and debatable. In our traditional and religious terms, the -ve and +ve abstract energies can be taken as Paapa and Punya. In these modern

days living, many traditional and religious practices are losing ground but for the belief and faith in Paapa and Punya. Also, we are in the lookout for easiest modes to lessen our Paapa or the -ve energy. The best way for that being to look to God by visiting to temples, also do Namaskars to elders and religious persons and get their blessings. That means to say, neutralize our negative energy through other's positive energy.

We all know that there is abundant cosmic energy in the Cosmos (Universe) which is highly positive. As per Hinduism this energy can enter human body through mind by meditation. Also, it is understood that unlike +ve the negative energy can enter human body through conduction by physical contacts and only when the hand touches the feet. Also, it is believed that the transfer is mind controlled, that is only if it is intentional and not by casual or accidental contacts. The +ve energy always tries to neutralize -ve and is a morale booster.

In our culture we have different forms of Namaskars, but my reference is only to the Namaskar performing by bending and touching other's feet with the intention of getting blessings.

There is one more aspect that is, performing Namaskar by bowing and touching feet of elderly and religious persons is the tradition that has come from time immemorial. That was quite relevant in ancient days as the people used to have very high level of positive energy capable of neutralizing the external -ve energy entering, due to their

disciplined lifestyle, respect to human values, morality and so on. In the present day living conditions, we hardly find such deserving persons even in religious places, due to various factors. So, in my opinion the tradition of Namaskar (what I am referring), in these days is superfluous, of course, excluding some exceptions.

With the above analysis, I would like to justify the action of that person who denied my Namaskar on that day. Also, want to salute his school of thought on Namaskar which was an eye opener and thought provoking for me.

Coming to the concluding part, I personally not for namaskar by touching one's feet unless compelled and very much against somebody bowing and touching my feet. That doesn't mean I don't respect elders, religious people or anybody who deserve respect. I always respect all people irrespective of their age, cast, religion etc. who have virtues and who respect human values. Also, more importantly, I never advocate for giving up the tradition of Namaskar as that is left to individuals and their faith and discretion. One thing is definite with me; am a firm believer of God and in full faith and sincerity pray him and do Namaskars and Parikramas. I am in full confidence that God the almighty who is capable of absorbing the negative energy produced in the universe will absorb our's also, if our confessions are with honest repentance.

Before I wind up my hypothesis, want to quote the story I had heard from my grandpa in my boyhood days, which I feel may fit into the topic.

The supreme God Lord Vishnu took the incarnation of Sri. Rama in Kruta Yuga. Lakshman his most beloved younger brother will be always in service of his elder brother Lord Rama with devotion. In the process he acquires Punya so much that, it crosses the stipulated limit and starts overflowing (Punyatha koda tumbi hariya thodakitu). This became a problem to creator to find suitable place in celestial world to such a great sacred soul . Also, this made creator to look for a way to bring down Lakshman's Punya to its limit. So, in Dvapara Yuga he makes Lakshman to reincarnate as Balarama and he himself takes the avatara of lord Krishna the younger brother of Balaram. As younger brother he starts doing Namaskars touching Balaram's feet again and again,(many times without suitable reason) with the sole intension of bringing down his excessive Punya to the required limit. In other words, Lord Krishna was thrusting -ve energy into Balaram to get neutralized with the +ve, thereby diminishing the excessive +ve energy accumulated in his previous incarnation as Lakshman. This story I feel substantiates to the maximum extent my analysis.

“I am not Superstitious, but I am a little Stitious”

By Michael Scot

7. Amazing Aspects of Moon (Chandra Dev in mythological terms)

We all know that in the first fortnight of the month (Shukla Paksha in Hindu Calendar) from new moon day to Full moon day Moon will be Waxing and Second fortnight (Krishna Paksha in Hindu Calendar) moon will be waning. The scientific/Astronomical reason as we know is because Moon passes between Sun and Earth and hence its visibilities vary. Here is an interesting story of Hindu mythology about this phenomenon of Moon.

Chandra Dev marries all the 27 daughters of king Dakshaprajapathi, they are no other than 27 Stars of Galaxy starting from Ashvini. To start with he was loving all the 27 equally. As the time passed his attraction towards wife Rohini increased to the extent that he could not live even momentarily without Rohini. This attitude of husband Chandra Dev made other 26 sad and they started offering different services to love them also. But their efforts went in vain.

After some time, the nine wives Uttara phulguni, ,Bharani, Kruthika,

Aadhraa, Maghaa, Vishakha, Uttaraabhadra, Jyestha and Uttaraashada came to their husband to plead for his predilection in favour of them also. At that moment his

favourite wife Rohini who was sitting on his lap attracts him with her seductive acts and mesmerising smile. With her arrogance, all the nine get angry and start scolding her. Finally, they try to pull Rohini out from the lap of Chandra Dev. But ,he comes to her rescue and protects her from those nine. Then those ladies start advising Rohini in many ways telling “Rohini, we are 27 wives to Chandra Dev with rights to have the same share of love from him. In contrast, you are mesmerising him to love you alone. This is not good and may harm you” with those words, Rohini gets frightened and complains to her husband. Chandradev, gets wild and curses to his other star wives as below

The stars Ashvini,Bharini and Kritika to become cruel and dangerous (known as Ugra and Theekshna stars) also, Bharini and Kritika to be bad omen for all auspicious/good occasions on Planet earth.

Further, to nine stars Uttaraphalguni, Bharini, Kritika ,Aadra, Magha, Vishakha, Uttarabhadra, Jaysta and Uttarashada he curses to become inauspicious for all travelling on earth. In other words, the days on which these stars are prominent the travelling becomes hazardous, and the purpose of travel will become useless.

With this curse of Chandra Dev all the star wives (excluding Rohini) become very sad and go to their father Daksha Prajapathi to share their grief. They explain to him the reason behind all this and mention about Chandra Dev’s partiality towards Rohini in showing love to all. Also they pray him to intervene to get justice.

Daksha Prajapati along with the daughters comes to Chandra Dev to give suitable advice in the matter. Chandra Dev with due respect to his father-in-law agrees to adhere to his advice to love all the wives equally and impartially. With this promise of him, Daksha Prajapati returns leaving all the daughters with Chandra Dev.

As per the promise Chandra Dev starts loving all the wives impartially but was short lived. Again, his attraction towards Rohini enhances and his love towards others diminishes. This repeated negligence towards them makes other wives angry. They all move again to father and explain the behaviour of their husband. Daksha Prajapati comes once again to son-in-law and explains the theology behind marriage and the pros and cons, if not followed principally. Also, dares him with curse if not stick to his advice. Chandra Dev gets scared with in-law and once again promises to follow the advice.

Chandra Dev started loving all the wives equally to keep up his promise. Alas! that happened only for short time and things went back to square one. The romantic tricks and mischievous love techniques of Rohini trapped him again making him negligent towards others. The aggrieved wives were forlorn and again went to their father. With tears in their eyes, they expressed their desire of renunciation from married life and take sainthood. After seeing the pathetic condition of the daughters, Dakshaprajapathi boiled with anger and this anguish with extraordinary power led to the creation of an alien who was sick with tuberculosis, ferocious looking and with stick in the hand. This alien

prays Daksha Prajapati to provide him a place to settle. Daksha Prajapati asks the alien to go to Chandra Dev and settle in him comfortably. Alien moves from there and enters the heart of Chandra Dev.

Due to the entry of the sick alien, Chandra Dev catches Tuberculosis and becomes sick resulting in the loss of his charisma the moonlight. As the result of the absence of moonlight the whole universe including Gods suffered from problems of all sorts. All the Gods went to one of the three supreme Gods Lord Bramha requesting him to come to the rescue of the universe. He advised them to meet Dakshaprajapati and surrender to him requesting to save them and the universe. They all went and prayed him forgetting all their positions and prestige. He agreed and promised the chief of Gods Indra Dev to help in the interest of safety of the whole universe.

Indra Dev explained as below the consequence of the absence of moonlight and prays for pardoning Chandra Dev.

“Honourable Prajapati! Chandra Dev has become sick and very weak. This is due to your curse. Consequent to this, world is suffering from sickness and different problems .Not just that. The demons of Paathal Lok have become powerful and torturing all including Gods. Unless Chandra Dev recoups and becomes strong these sufferings cannot be overcome, and universe cannot go back to its original state. Kindly cool down and come to the rescue of universe.”

“Honourable Gods of Dev Lok, I assure, all these problems will be solved. But, I will not be able to take back my curse and has to be undergone by him. However, I can suggest a via media solution to solve the problem. This goes like this. Chanrdra Dev can be waving first half of the month and can be waxing in other half, provided he strictly cares and loves all the 27 wives equally. They were happy with his words and with the information went to Chandra Dev. Further, they all went to Lord Bramha along with Chandra Dev. Though, Bramha was aware, they narrated the happenings with Dakshaprajapati. Lord Bramha the well-wisher of the whole universe took Chandra Dev to a sacred lake called Bramhalohita and made him take bath in it. The lake was created by him much early for the same purpose. Immediately after the bath the sick alien came out from Chandra Dev’s body and prayed

“Oh! Supreme God, tell me where I should go and stay and what would be my duty” The reply from him was “He replies like this.

“You sick person, enter the person who urges for untimely sex and in the evenings. Also, a person who is sick and suffering from diseases goes for sex. You will have krishnaa (Leprosy) the daughter of death as wife. You leave Chandra Dev immediately and settle in persons I have mentioned The persons you enter would get sick and weakens gradually.”

With these words of lord Bramha, the alien disappears from the sight of all Gods. Then ,Bramha Dev blessed

Chandra Dev. He first drank the nectar possessed by Chandra. Then, he lifted the bedridden Chandra with his hands and the nectar he had drunk removed and kept in the secret place of Ksheera Sagar (Milky Ocean). Due to the tuberculosis Chandra Dev was left with one stain. All other stains of him were in pieces and distributed in three parts. Also, the moonlight of Chandra Dev vanished due to the disease. The nectar in him had become water due to dreaded disease. Bramha Dev with his extraordinary power took out the nectar out of the transformed water and dropped in the Ksheera Sagar. Then the moonlight and charisma of Chandra Dev re-established. o

When once the disease of Chandra Dev vanished, Lord Bramha brought back nectar and returned to Chandra Dev after washing them in Ksheera Sagar making him complete.

8. Cultivation of Head inside and Outside

“People think you are crazy if you talk about things they don’t understand”

After a long gap of 4 years, I was in Westford an outskirt town of Boston, where my son and his cute family lives. Though it was fag end of winter Westford was too cold with almost freezing temperatures. This made me to stick to my room with heater on, always. As there was no chance to go out or to have any physical activity, I was compelled to stick to Books which were in abundance at his house. As the days were passing on my interest in serious reading was diminishing and finally resulted in just glancing through the pages.

The other day I was arranging the books in the shelf from the heap I had created and a book which was in the upper portion of the shelf drew my attention due to its stunning title “WHAT EINSTEIN TOLD HIS BARBER”. The book authored by Robert L. Wolke was quite interesting with scientific answers to everyday questions made me to give a serious reading. Another interesting thing about the book being the introduction part which begins like this.

QUOTE:

I know what you're thinking. You're thinking. "Did Einstein even have a barber?"

You have seen his pictures, right? And it's perfectly clear that the great man devoted a lot more time to cultivating the inside of his head than the outside. ~~~~~"

UNQUOTE:

As the D-day to depart to home sweet home was approaching fast, the weather of Westford was getting friendly. At the same time my anxiety to reach home was in increase as I had come to US alone leaving my wife at Bangalore. A Finally, I landed after four months of wonderful stay at my son's place. It took quite some time to come back to normal and was just sticking to home without moving out. Also, I didn't bother for hair dressing even, despite teasing and taunting from my wife. My head was full of long and haphazardly grown hairs giving a crazy look in actual in contrast to my illusion of "Yankee look".

After almost 20 days I felt like moving out and decided to meet my close friend Mohan. When I entered his house at 6PM he was alone. I came to know that his wife was away to her parents' house for Pooja and would be back next day. After some fun and frolic Mohan opened the Chivas Regal which I had brought from US. With cheerful CHEERS we started and as the pegs of alcohol was entering the belly, lots of events came out from our episodic memory. After about half hour Mohan abruptly stopped the conversation and shouted

“ Dirty fellow why you have grown your hairs like crazy, was there no barber in US or you wanted to save Dollars?”. I was shocked with his shouting and paused for few minutes. Then, I let out a huge guffaw and replied “ Hey! Buddhu, you have seen the picture of Einstein ,right? he was devoting more time in cultivating Head inside, it seems than the outside. That’s how he became a great man. Of late, I also devoting more time for cultivation of head inside, not bothering much about hair dressing or hair style outside. Got it?”

“Hello! My dear crazy friend, you can neither be Einstein like nor Great man, first you become descent man with haircut. Otherwise, you will be taken to AIIMH {All India institute of mental health}.This is Bangalore, crazy man” was his reaction.

We bottomed up with heartful of laughter. The long awaited get together ended with great pleasure and satisfaction.

Next day I got up at 6.30AM in spite of booze and hang over. Sudha was fast asleep. Silently, I closed the main door and came out and reached nearby SPA in my red chariot (Honda Activa two-wheeler).When returned, it was 8AM and I pressed the calling bell switch. The door was opened and Sudha stood in aghast staring at me looking at my neatly dressed hairs. After some time ,she breathe a sigh of relief and went inside murmuring “ Thank God and Thank Mohan, my crazy husband is getting back to normal”

Then on, I sincerely devoted more time for my descent look giving up fancy for “Great Man or Yankee look”.

9. Is Parenting A Conundrum

Nitin a handsome, qualified, talented youth and the only son of educated parents turned to substance addiction. He revealed the reasons for that extreme step to me as he is a distant relation of mine. Though his reasoning is not acceptable in totality, we have to agree to certain extent that the family atmosphere and social environment can greatly influence in shaping one's character during growing age,

The childhood of Nitin was in a joint family of three brothers with misunderstandings among them often and frequent altercation among lady folks. These incidents many times used to happen in front of growing children and remained as disturbing memories of Nitin throughout his lifetime.

By the time he grew up to boyhood, Nitin was out from joint family and was with parents in an independent house, of course, a small one. His parents who were youthful still, used to turn to privacy to meet their biological needs. Unfortunately, Nitin happened to see accidentally their sexual acts many times. These sights corrupted his young mind with despicable thoughts towards parents.

"Time and tide wait for none". Nitin grew up and entered mid-teens. To his bad luck, I would say his cousin sister (Uncle's daughter) a smart and late teen girl joined his family, as she took job in Bangalore. Her relationship with

Nitin grew closer day by day and she started exploiting his adolescence to meet her sexual desires secretly. These objectionable acts of her made Nitin the guilty conscience as he turned to a matured youth.

The disturbing memories of childhood, despicable thoughts of boyhood besides the guilt feelings of adolescence kept popping up in his mind in series making him lunatic. To come out this trauma and to get hallucinated he took to drug abuse. To his unhinged mind, the insistence and encouragement by cohorts of fine arts college where he was studying made Nitin a substance addict.

This is not the end of the story. Besides the drug menace, the cropped-up problems in the family like sudden demise of his mother, financial problems etc. made Nitin to take the extreme step. One day he was hanging from the rope tied to the fan of the room bidding adieu to this world.

What we should say for this real-life story

Nitin was a victim of impaired parenthood or victim of circumstances or both.?

10. Hell Or Heaven

We believe that all living creatures on earth are the combination of two things a mortal and perishable the body and the immortal the Soul. Also, the Soul will be taken to Yama loka after death and then sent to its destination Hell or Heaven after assessing its Karmas (Paapa/Punya) during its living on earth.

Mahesh a decent man was having a comfortable life. Like any other normal person, a victim of circumstances, was doing both good and bad deeds. The day to leave this earth came and he died at a matured age. As we believe, Yama Kinkaras arrived and took his Soul leaving his mortal the body behind. The kith and kin, some happy and some sad, performed his last rites praying God to rest his soul in peace.

Mahesh's soul arrives at Yamaloka and the statistician of Yamaloka Chitra Gupta who maintains the records of Paapa and Punya of all the creatures, started looking at the details of Mahesh. He was astonished to see his records' with Paapa and Punya equal with 50% each which was unique. Not able to decide Mahesh's landing place (hell or heaven) Chitra Gupta rushes to his boss Yama Dharma. After hearing Chitra Gupta, he ordered Kinkaras to bring Mahesh to his court. Yama Dharma with a big smile which was fearsome gave an unorthodox option telling.

“Mahesh! Surprisingly your Paapa and Punya are balanced. So, I want to give the benefit of doubt to you and give the option to choose your destination that is Hell or Heaven, as a special case.”

Mahesh after thinking for some time replied as below.

“Sir, Thanks, for your gesture of giving option to choose my destination.

Sir! I prefer to go to hell”.

Yama Dharma was shocked and was not able to digest the reply of Mahesh. After a pause he asked

“You foolish creature! when you have the option of Heaven, you want to land in Hell. Tell me what is that pressing reason for opting Hell?”

“Sir, I Have lived for 70 long years on this earth with the environment of mental agony, misery and physical hardships. I have learnt to live and made myself comfortable in such atmosphere. I have heard and read about Naraka that the surroundings there would be similar to what I have lived in. So, it would be much easier for me to acclimatize there. About Swarga, I really do not know how the habitat would be and how much time would be required to adjust myself. I don’t want to take chances.

Sir, I once again request you to send me to Naraka and oblige.”

Yama Dharma was shocked and anguished and ordered Kinkaras to take him back to earth and put him back to his original status. He also said” You human creature, continue

to live for five more years on earth in the accustomed life and come back. By that time, your balance sheet of karmas would have changed making you eligible for Naraka. Then I will put you in Naraka as per your wish”.

At this stage let me digress and try to know something about Naraka (Hell). As per our Vedic Cosmology Yamaloka exists above the Garbhodaka ocean, which is under the earth. This ocean is dark matter ocean. In Yamaloka there are 28 narakas which are situated in the direction of South. These narakas are categorised depending on the type of sins committed by humans and the type of punishments equipped with lakhs of Yama Doothas to carry out various punishments in different Narakas. The following are those narakas.

1. Thamista Naraka
2. Andhathamisra Naraka
3. Raurava Naraka
4. Maha Raurava Naraka
5. Kumbhipaka Naraka
6. Kaalasutra Naraka
7. Asipatravana Naraka
8. Sookaramukha Naraka
9. Andhakupa Naraka
10. Krimibhojana Naraka
11. Sandamsha Naraka

- 12.Thaptasoormi Naraka
- 13.Vajrakantakashalmali Naraka
- 14.Vaitharani Naraka
- 15.Pooyooda Naraka
- 16.Praanarotha Naraka
- 17.Vishasana Naraka
- 18.Lalabhaksha Naraka
- 19.Saarameyaadana Naraka
- 20.Avichi Naraka
- 21.Ayahapaana Naraka
- 22.Kharakardama Naraka
- 23.Rakshogana Bhojana Naraka
- 24.Shoolaprota Naraka
- 25.Dandashooka Naraka
- 26.Avatanirodha Naraka
- 27.Paryaavarthana Naraka
- 28.Soochimukha Naraka

Note: The details of sins and the punishments of respective Narakas are available in the Kannada spiritual magazine “Ranaga Vittala” volume 17 of July 2021.

Apart from the above, there are 51 other Narakas also. About the details of these Narakas, Lord Yamadharma informed to Sati Savitri.

Coming back to the story of Mahesh, after getting grace of five years of earthly life Mahesh came back to earth and started living in his original lifestyle. While doing so he committed many more sins, some knowingly, some unknowingly and some out of compulsion. Again, he was taken to Yamaloka after completion of five years. It was again a big problem to Chitra Gupta in allotting a suitable Naraka. Mahesh's sins were so many and of all categories. This made Chitra Gupta to rush to Yama dharma to get solution for this complexity. Yama dharma got perplexed after hearing the details of Mahesh. Both started discussing in detail about the deeds leading to his sins. Immediately, Yama dharma could not find solution about allotment of Naraka to Mahesh. He instructed Chitra Gupta to send Mahesh to Trishenku till he finds the right decision. After deep thought and analysing the sins committed by Mahesh, he decided to create another Naraka. So, he goes to Lord Bramha to get the approval as Bramha is the God of creation of Universe. Also, he requested Lord Bramha to give blanket approval to create fresh Narakas whenever needed without coming to him. Then on came into being 51 additional Narakas other than the 28 mentioned with horrid surroundings and with varied torturing (About these additional 51 Narakas Lord Yama Dharmatold Sati Saavitri during the dialogue between them - Ref. Ranga Vittala of August 2021)

Then Mahesh was taken out from Trishenku and sent to the newly formed 29th Naraka. He spent his punishment term in that Naraka till his rebirth.

“I am pregnant with a story that I am dying to deliver. I may have accidentally conceived it when the life was brutally raped me”

11. Trash to Triumph

(Fact is Stranger than Fiction)

It is almost three years after shifting to this apartment leaving the bungalow like independent house at Konanakunte. Of course, very much against the wishes of my wife Sudha, who was not able to appreciate the advantage of community living specially during advancing age. Anyway that is not the topic to discuss and let me come to the core of the story I am writing “how a person can come to triumph from trash with the support of society and people with broad mind of uplifting the downtrodden”

The apartment I live in has only 14 houses with 3 stories. It is a tiny building with no luxuries like swimming pool Gym centre or Party Hall. The inhabitants, mixture of senior citizens and young blood, highly cultured and very co-operative with upper middle-class background. The location of the building is at a convenient place with all the daily needs available at walkable distances. Another advantage being the vacant sites both sides of the building with abundant ventilation and uninterrupted breeze. Of course, a common nuisance of strewn trash and unwanted things from people who don't bother about cleanliness and don't care attitude for warnings of Nagara Palike. My flat is situated in the third floor with panoramic view of green trees and elevated Gopurams of temples. The utility is at the back fully grilled to avoid entry of birds and other

animals. We will be going to this portion frequently for various household activities. Whenever I go to utility, I see a rag picker in the adjacent vacant site with torn clothes surrounded by waste papers, plastic bottles, milk and curds Nandini covers etc. He usually will be sleeping with torn blanket on or sitting and sorting out his collection of rag. Many times I feel like going and thrashing him for throwing the unwanted things around the area. Somehow, I was not able to do that and also was feeling sorry for his pitiable condition.

On that day I was coming back home in the afternoon on my Honda Activa. It was quite hot as it was mid-summer. Suddenly my attention was drawn to that rag picker sitting below the roadside tree. I stopped my scooter at the side of the road and signed to that person to come to me. After few minutes he came to me limping. I took out a ten rupee note from the purse and offered him. It was unbelievable and at the same time shocking at his reaction.

“Sir! Do you think I am a beggar, just because I look nasty? I may a rag picker and not beggar to take money just like that. Please go Sir” he said with grumpy voice. I felt bad and about to start the scooter. Suddenly he said “Sir! You want to give money, Good. Please give me some work. I will do and accept.”

I was confused and started looking around. An idea flashed and I asked him to pick the strewn waste material in the site and put it in one corner for BBMP people to pick them up. He willingly accepted and finished the work neatly in

twenty minutes. and came to me. The passers-by were looking at us surprisingly.

“Sir, you give me now. I accept it as cooly for my work.” He said and stretched his hand. I gave twenty rupees and moved towards the scooter. Silently. He came behind and said “Sir! You tell me any cleaning work. I will do it and earn some money. Please Sir!”. I nodded my head and started my scooter. I was back home totally perplexed.

2

Even though, I had not seen that person for more than fifteen days, he was alive in one corner of my mind. Also, the desire of meeting him to know his background was hovering continuously. It was Sunday, Sudha my wife was out of Bangalore and the domestic help Nisha was on holiday. It was 9AM and. I came out to utility to wash some utensils. I saw that person lying down on the grass with a torn blanket on. I felt like giving him a blanket and spread. By ten, after my breakfast I reached him crossing the bushes of parthenium and wild grass.

When I said “Hello”, he got up in shock and started blabbering “No sir! I have not done anything, not done anything”. I got scared and was taken aback thinking he would be furious and hurt me. After a few minutes he cooled down and said “Sir, you are the same person who gave me 20 rupees. Sir, why you have come to this place”

I asked him to calm down and offered the blanket and spread. Again like earlier, he said “Sir, I don’t accept these

things unless you give some work”. After convincing and committing about the task, he accepted. I showed the flat. from there and asked him to meet on the coming Sunday. In fact, he was very scary to look at with dark complexion and reddish eyes with unruly long hairs and thick black long beard.

It was Sunday and was all alone at home. Though it was 9AM I was tossing and turning on the bed. The phone call from Veeru our security guard telling “Sir! The bhikari who lives in that vacant site has come here and making behas. He wants to meet you” made me to get up from bed and rush to the gate.

“Sir, I have come, tell me the work” he said. As I had planned the work, I took him to the side showed the waste spread all over the site beside and asked him to clean all that and put them in a corner so that the same can be taken by bbmp trash van. Also told him to inform Veeru once the task is completed. I came out of the bathroom after my bath and veeru informed about completion of the work by him. As I had decided to give a pant, shirt and lungi, I put all of them in a bag and got down. He took me to the side and showed the work done and about to move. Without giving him chance to talk I said “take. these clothes and money. I will give you some other work after some time. Also have haircut” in commanding voice. He hesitatingly took and left with a big salute to me.

3

I was away to Mysore for about 15 days. The next day morning of my return I went to utility expecting that person to be in his usual place with his booty of trashes. He was not there, and same thing happened for subsequent few days. I came to know from Veeru that during my stay at Mysore, that character had come in search of me. His disappearance brought me an inexplicable pain. Also, whenever I went to utility, I was feeling his absence. It was almost a month and there was no trace of that person.

There was a calling bell ring, when I went out Veeru was at the door and told me about guy waiting outside the apartment gate asking for me. I went hurriedly with Veeru without answering Sudha's call who was busy in her morning Pooja. It was a shocking surprise and was not able to believe the person in front was no other than the same rag picker.

"Sir, Sir, it is me Sir" he said with shy. What a change in him. Oh! God with nice haircut and shaven face.

I immediately asked, "What is your name". The reply was strange. "Sir! I don't know my name and who are parents. The people with whom I was living used to call me as "Kench". that is my name I think."

He continued and asked, "What is the meaning of Kencha Sir". As I myself was not clear I told him "Don't worry. It is a good name. Here on I will call you as Kencha only".

After a pause of few minutes, with a low voice he asked “Sir, can you get me some job.”

I said, “I will try” and returned.

Mr. Vignesh a young occupant of one of the flats, had observed my meetings with Kencha. He met me on my way back and I briefed him of my experiences, his change of look etc. He appreciated my efforts to change Kencha and willingly accepted my request to find job for him with his contacts.

4

When I came to utility, I saw Kencha sitting in his usual place surrounded the rags he had collected. He was looking different with pant and shirt with well-dressed hair style. Sudha was busy with her pooja as usual. I hurriedly finished Upma she had prepared and went to meet Kencha. After seeing me he got up and in anxiety he asked “Sir, you could find some job for me”. I said “no” but assured him of getting one soon. I asked him to come with me and both moved towards a bench nearby. He didn’t heed my request to sit beside and sat on a boulder close by. After some formal talks I asked him the background and his past. He told in detail his gruesome past which goes like this.

Kencha from his boyhood was living with an old lady whom he used call as “Ajji” and never knew who his parents were. He had to go for begging for livelihood of himself and Ajji though he was against it. He was a boy of 10 years when he lost his Ajji. Then he was taken by a gang and turned him

to a pick pocketer. After some time, he was captured by police and sent to juvenile detention centre. After two years he ran away from there with other three inmates. Then on he was moving like nomad from place to place looking for food in garbage and living space on footpaths etc. In the last two years he turned to a rag picker living in deserted places and vacant sites. This is only a brief, and I don't find words to explain in detail the sufferings he underwent during his journey of 18 or 19 years. I would say in one word it was horrendous.

It was more than an hour, and I got up dejected. I asked his hide outs during nights and rainy days. He took me to the other side of the road and showed a tiny shelter looking like a hut in an open ground.

5

I was sitting in front idiot box looking at “Man ki Baat” of PM Modi and there was a sound of calling bell. That was Vignesh and called him inside. “No uncle, I have to go somewhere. Before that I want to share some information. I met a known person in bbmp office, he has given some hopes about a job for Kencha.” Again, I insisted to come in and share a cup of coffee.

“Uncle, I saw Aunty in the basement walking around. I know you can't make good coffee. I will come some other time when aunty is there” he told and went in a hurry. With a big laugh.

It was 6.30 morning, and I was sipping my first dose of coffee. There was a call from Vignesh to come to the gate. When I reached the gate coming out of the elevator he was talking to somebody and the bbmp (**Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike**) van was parked at the gate.

“Uncle, meet Mr. Naidu a contractor of bbmp. He wants to take Kencha in his group.”

I said “Hello” and collected some information about wages and accommodation etc. It was sounding good with Rs.50 per day wage and a free accommodation and felt the offer would be best suited to Kencha. He said to call Kencha at the same time at the gate next day and left. Both me and Vignesh went in search to his hide out showed me other day. He was about to move with his bag on shoulder and came running after seeing both of us and did Namaskar. I asked him to be present at the apartment gate right in the morning next day.

When me and Vignesh came down at 8 AM he was sitting leaning to the compound. He stood up and did Namaskar. He was looking pretty good with shirt and Lungi. By 8.30 Naidu arrived in the van He explained the nature of work, wages etc.to Kencha and also introduced him to some of his workers who had come with him. I also advised Kencha to be sincere and well behaved. With tears in his eyes and with Namaskar to us left the place in the van. In fact, his exit was quite touching to both me and Vignesh.

Days turn to weeks, weeks turn to Months, Months to Years. That’s how time passes, and Time turns life in

different ways. It was more than two years of job for Kencha, and he invariably meets me and Vignesh whenever he comes to our area and expresses his gratitude through wetted eyes. We were in touch with Naidu and were getting information about Kencha regularly. He was very happy with his sincerity and hard work.

6

It was 8.30 in the morning, and I was moving towards Nandini booth to fetch some extra milk as some guests were expected in the evening. The voice “Sir, Sir, made me to stop and turn back. The TVS moped stopped near me. A person alighted and removed the helmet.

Oh God! That was no other than our Kencha with a uniform and apron bearing the logo of bbmp.

He did namaskar and said “Sir! I got appointment in Palike as Waste clearing Supervisor on permanent basis and getting good salary from the last month. All because of the blessings of you and Vignesh Sir. I got this vehicle through bank loan arranged by bbmp. I will be moving round Bangalore for supervision and to guide others for proper waste management”.

He continued and said “Sir, one more thing. I have learnt reading and writing of Kannada with the help of Naidu Sir”

I felt very happy and proud and with a pat on his back I wished “Every success” in his job.

“Sir, please tell Vignesh Sir also. I am in a hurry to go to Kengeri side to supervise the work going on” he said and left.

7

It was the year 2017, I was back from USA after staying with my son’s family for six months. I came to understand from Veeru that Kencha had come thrice to meet me during my stay at US. I was about to board my car. Kencha’s moped stopped in front.

“Sir, I had come thrice to meet you and came to know that you were away to America. Sir, I got married” he

“Sir, I missed both of you. Vignesh Sir was also not available”.

I congratulated and wished him “Happy married Life”. After a few minutes, he broke the silence and said “Sir, I have taken a small house for rent and living with my wife. I will bring her sometime for your blessings.”

He was about to move, and something came to my mind. I immediately asked him to wait and rushed back. I came down and handed over a small marble idol of Ganesha with best wishes. With tears in his eyes did Namaskar and took leave of me. Many years have passed, but Kencha’s visit has never stopped, and I feel that will continue till my end.

Whenever I go to utility, invariably my attention will be diverted towards the adjacent site to see the big vacuum created due to the absence of the rag picker. But a rising star appears in the sky by name Kencha.

Conclusion

This writing of mine on social climbing of Kencha from “Trash to Triumph” may look like fiction. But it is the fact of life and remains ever fresh in my emotional repertoire.

12.Happiness Is -----?

“Strange events do happen in life. Some call them as miracles and some call them as coincidences”

It was the year 2014 and I was working as GM in a company called M/SFPL.I used to sit in a separate chamber in the first floor. I was quite friendly and was a liked person both by junior and senior colleagues. There were eight female junior colleagues, and I used to be very jovial with them. Also, used to have a lot of interactions with them both official and personal.

I am in the habit of contributing a small amount every month to 5 NGO's running orphanages, old age homes etc. Besides, they used to contact rarely for additional help.

On that day, right from morning I was out of moods and morose for the reason not known. In the office my colleagues started asking about wellness as I was not the usual GM. Around 11.30AM there was a phone call from “Poor Children Home” requesting a financial help of Rs.3500 for treatment of an orphan child. At that moment I felt the amount as too high and said sorry. After about an hour, I started feeling guilty as I had sufficient money but denied. The rest of the day I was restless and had sleepiness night. My wife Sudha thinking of some health problem advised me to see the doctor. As usual, I woke up in the morning and went to office with heavy heart. I was not in

a mood to work, and my mind was with swirl of contrition. Around 11AM there was a SMS in my phone mentioning an amount of 3500 has been credited by the publisher. (I am a writer with six published books to my credit, and I get Royalty from the publisher quarterly) It was a shock and was like thunder bolt as the amount was the same as the Poor Children home had asked Rs. 3500. Tears started rolling out from my eyes. Rajatha who came to me for some clarification was stunned and started consoling me. I moved to washroom and came back with face wash. Immediately took my phone and did IMPS of Rs. 4000. That relieved me a bit. After about 15 minutes came the call from Poor Children Home thanking me for timely help.

The words of thanks from other side brought a sigh of relief and a sort of happiness. To feel that one should experience it. The whole day I was filled with joy and happiness.

What should I call this event of my life?

To conclude I would say “Helping the needy is true Happiness and a bliss.

This experience of mine made me to recall the words of my father “Think Good, Do Good and Feel Good” How true are the words of him.

Answer to “Happiness is ~~~~~?”

Extending the helping hand to the Needy

13. A Reminisce about “Err and Forgive”

There is a famous saying “To Err is Human To Forgive is Divine” which we all know.

One day I was sitting in the sit out of my apartment and innumerable thoughts were emanating from my brain. Out of them caught my mind an important event of my career, an instance involving an error of my junior and the positive result of forgiveness of the act. This happened in the year 1986.

I was Manager of R&D in the factory a Public Sector undertaking under Defence production department of Govt.Of India. The factory is situated in the place called KGF(Kolar Gold Fields) an industrial town about 100 Kms from Bangalore city involving in the manufacture of heavy earthmoving equipment like Hyd. Excavators, Bull Dozers, Rear Dumpers etc. mainly used in mining and construction activities. The main responsibility of the group I was heading was designing of new equipment based on specific requirements of customer, building and testing of prototype and getting approval of customer for manufacturing and supply to them. Besides, our group used to get special assignments involving customer's complaints, study of field conditions to improvise applications of our equipment etc.

In my group, there were seven engineers of different levels like Asst.engineer ,Engineer and Asst.Manager. Mr. Mahesh Babu, one of the member of my group was in the grade of Engineer. He was a sincere worker and intelligent too. I would say, he was almost my right hand and used to come handy for all the special assignments of the group.

It was the month of August and one day a call came from my big boss Director(R&D) to meet him in Bangalore, where our head quarter was situated with offices of different directors and top management staff. The next day I was in Bangalore and met my director and got the details of assignment. The assignment was regarding study of the complaint raised by an important customer M/s Northern Coal Limited pertaining to the carrying capacity of one of our heavy-duty dumper of 50ton capacity. Understanding the complexity of the problem, I decided to depute Ramesh Babu for the study at the mines and to prepare comprehensive report to Management to take up suitably with customer.

The place of study was at Singrauly mines situated in Madhya Pradesh in north India. To reach that place, one has to Varanasi by train and from there by road. Mr. Babu was in the grade of an engineer and was not eligible for travel by flight. Other day, I called him to my chamber and briefed him about the customer complaint and importance of his study and observations. After two days he started his journey to Singrauli. He came back after a week after completing his study at coal mines and interactions with concerned mining engineers of M/s NCL. After discussing

the details of his study and the data he had collected about mining operations, I asked him to prepare a detailed tour report to submit to management. The report was finalised after some alterations from my side, and I sent him to hand over the same personally to director's office. After three days, there was a call from Director's office about acceptance of report with appreciation which made both me and Ramesh Babu very happy.

It was Monday the day of beginning of the week. I was seriously going through the mails received. There was a knock on the door of my chamber. There was a surprising entry of Mr. Natarajan, our security chief. I jocularly said "what Sir! Any problem with our department or what?" With grim face he said "Mr. Murthy, Please call your Ramesh Babu immediately, I must take him out of factory premises as per managements order. I was shocked and asked for the reason. "Mr. Murthy, call him to your chamber first, and tell the details in front of him" was his commanding words. I sent the attender Ramu to the design hall to bring Babu immediately.

He entered the chamber and asked "Anything urgent about my report. Sir". Immediately Mr. Natarajan said Mr. Murthy. you know he is a big fraud and caught by vigilance department in a scam of giving wrong information in his expense report. He has travelled by third class by train to Singrauli and claimed the first-class train fare giving somebody's ticket number. This is a grave crime and management has suspended him till further notice and have to take him out immediately out of the premises"

Mr. Natarajan's words came like a thunder bolt, and I shouted "Natarajan, take him out of my sight and throw him out of factory". I was so much upset and ignored the begging words of Ramesh Babu" Sir, Sir please hear me ~". In fact, he was virtually dragged out of my chamber by Natarajan and, was a big scene in the department.

I was feeling so bad that I came home much earlier and lied down on the bed. I was alone with Sudha and Swaroop away to Bangalore. Around 6PM there was a calling bell sound which made me to get up from bed. To my shocking surprise, Ramesh Babu was at the doors. I shouted at him and was about to close the doors. He bent and held my legs and requested to allow him inside. I reluctantly called him and shouted "I don't want to hear any justification for the nasty thing you have done. Please get out from here." He started crying and begged to hear his words.

"Mr. Babu, tell whatever you want and get out from here"

His explanation was " Sir, My brother was not well, and he wanted some help from me. Even I am in financial crisis. So, I gave him the money which I had drawn advance for my Singrauli trip. I did that mistake of claiming first class fare though I travelled in third class. You also know that many employees do that. My bad luck and I am caught by vigilance Sir. Kindly help me Sir. Otherwise, my career will go to dogs and my family will be in big trouble. Please excuse me and do something Sir."

"Babu, I don't think I will be able to help you in any way. I know you are sincere and intelligent as far as the work is

concerned. But what you have done is a crime. Please go away. Let me think” I said. He walked out with tearful of eyes. The whole night I could not sleep as varied thoughts about Ramesh Babu were hovering in my mind.

Next day when I entered the office, I felt bad to see the empty workstation of Ramesh Babu. I took the phone and discussed with Mr. Parthasarathi our HRD manager about Ramesh Babu’s case in detail. What I could understand was in such cases revoking would be very rear and could be possible at management level with consent of directors and will be with severe disciplinary action like demotion to lower grades, transferring to other departments of insignificance etc. After considering all his merits and contributions to the department, I decided to try for the forgiveness of Babu from management

After confirming the availability of our director D(G) I went to Bangalore to meet him. After long discussion and pondering the pros and cons, he accepted to consider my request for revoke of Babu’s suspension.

A week later, the decision from the management arrived. It stated that Ramesh Babu’s suspension would be lifted but with a set of strict disciplinary actions as outlined by the director. He was to be demoted to a lower grade. Additionally, he was required to reimburse the excess amount claimed and undergo a formal reprimand.

I called Ramesh Babu to my house and informed the management’s decision. His face was a mixture of relief and remorse. He expressed gratitude repeatedly, vowing to

rectify his mistakes and prove his dedication. I reminded him sternly that this was his final chance and any further lapse in integrity would result in immediate dismissal. He was back to his work after three days after getting the official intimation from the HRD department. I could see a significant change in Ramesh Babu's demeanour after he returned to work. He became more reserved, keeping a low profile as he went about his duties with meticulous attention to detail. It seemed as though the incident had instilled in him a profound sense of accountability and humility

It was the month of April of the year 1988, I had to move to Mysore due to my transfer to head R&D unit with promotion as AGM(Asst.Gen.Manager).This was an unwelcome move to colleagues of my group as my team was well knit, with good understanding of one another and co-operation in work irrespective of grades etc.in my captaincy. Specially, this was highly stunning to Ramesh Babu for obvious reasons.

Anyway, what was destined to happen, happened and I bid Goodbye to KGF. The journey to Mysore was bittersweet though it was with elevation. My thoughts often wandered back to my previous team, especially to the episode of Ramesh Babu, which had left a deep imprint on me.

Months passed why months, years passed, and I occasionally received updates about the department I had left behind. Ramesh Babu was steadily becoming an example of redemption, earning the respect of his

colleagues through hard work and steadfast commitment. His ability to rise from the ashes of his mistake was so inspiring that he was awarded “ Employee of the year” in 1990. With that achievement of Babu, I felt a quiet pride knowing I had been instrumental in giving him that opportunity. It reminded me that leadership is not just about enforcing rules, but about nurturing potential even in the face of adversity.

To conclude I would say, I realized something profound:

“Forgiveness is not just about giving someone a second chance. It is about believing in their capacity to change, to learn, and to grow. And in Ramesh Babu's quiet resilience, I found a lesson in humanity, that I would carry with me for years to come and till end of life”

14. Power of wink

It was almost 7 years after my right eye cataract surgery and had good sight of both eyes. About six months back my left eye started giving problem of blurring, wetness of eye and discomfort during driving which made me to go to a reputed eye hospital in our area. After thorough check up, eye surgeon advised for cataract surgery of left eye. After 3 days I underwent surgery and was on different eyedrops for about a week. After a week, my sight came to almost normal.

One fine day I developed discomfort in my Right eye and had to rush to hospital. After detailed examination doctor who had operated the left eye explained in medical term meaning a sort of coating on the eyeball and referred to Laser procedure which was carried out by a lady eye specialist. After the procedure she asked me for follow up after a week. On contrast, things started deteriorated and my right eye got closed with lid and I was not able to open fully. I rushed to the doctor after 4 days. Dr. Sujata who did laser procedure, advised to consult Neurologist and get the opinion. Next day, I rushed and had Brain MRI. The Neurologist explained the problem and mentioned that the problem has occurred due to paralysis of one of the nerves originating from brain to the right eye. Also, he mentioned, that will become alright after 3 months on its natural course and no emergency as such.

I went back to Dr.Sujata with reports of MRI and Neurologist. After going through, she also mentioned the same thing and prescribed some steroids and blood thinner tablets for a week. The things started improving and was feeling better. As per her advice I went to her for follow up after completion of the medicinal treatment. After examination she expressed satisfaction about the improvement and asked me to stop taking medicines and advised continuation of eye drops. During conversation, I expressed my concern and anxiety. She categorically mentioned “You are patient and should have patience and wait for its natural course of cure”.

After having had some friendly talks, I asked her “Doctor, please tell me any other mode to hasten up the curing process of my problem”. After a pause, in a jovial mood she asked me “Mr. Murthy, did you wink at a lady with whom you are not supposed to do so?” I also replied in the same mood “Doctor, might be and I don’t remember”. Immediately, with a big laugh she said “Now I understood the reason for your problem.

Me, Doctor and the nurse present there started laughing. After a few minutes I once again asked “Doc! Any other treatment other than medicines for early recovery?”

She seriously asked “Mr. Murthy, you have any beautiful girl friend? If you have, you ask her to wink at you. That may help.”

I replied merrily “ why? The wink of beautiful female has so much power! madam?”

“What do you think Mr. Murthy? You know very well you got this problem because of your wink to a wrong person. So, the wink from a willing lady will have positive effect. Do you know, that has been proved medically also.” She continued and said “Murthy Sir! Don’t repeat the mistake of winking to a wrong person, you may lose your other eye also”

The conversation ended in a friendly and comical way. My medical journey, which began with anxiety and uncertainty, concluded with laughter and a most unconventional, yet memorable, prescription.

Depiction Of Aliens

Tale
of
Two Mohinis

Introduction

When we hear the word “Mohini” our mind look to our Long-term memory to find Mohini as the only female avatar of Lord Vishnu with enchanting beauty and her role in churning ocean, myth and so on.

The Mohini I am referring in this story is an alien. Mohini as I have heard from the people of our countryside, is supposed to be the spirit of young lady who had premature death with unfulfilled love in life. It is said that this spirit will be in the form of beautiful woman, always in white dress. Mohini would be wandering in the nights and early mornings in lonely places especially on full moon day looking for young and youthful males. When once this spirit enters a person, he starts losing interest in life and loses energy gradually turning to sick. If not properly attended well in time it may turn fatal finally. Also, they say treatment for this would be more effective with Tantric than the regular medication. The vital point in my narration being, characterizing Mohini as a positive energy as against the one causing harm to humans.

1.Maaya the Mohini

Our house is situated in a place away from the city. In other words, it is in the outskirts of Bangalore with more of countryside atmosphere than the city surroundings .Hence the prime feature of our area being poor illumination, bad roads, untidy construction etc. There is a big background for constructing this house in this locality. In fact, I had built a descent house in Mysore during the year 1995 with the plan to settle down after retirement, as Mysore is heaven for retired people. .Unfortunately, within a year's time I was called to head office at Bangalore on promotion, which I could not deny due to the promotion and to fulfill the ambition of my wife Sudha to live in Bangalore at least for some time before we settle down at Mysore. Further, my son got a job in M/s Tata Consultancy Services with a posting at Pune just after completion of engineering at Mysore

In the year 1998 after three years working at Bangalore, I was expecting transfer back to Mysore. For my shocking surprise I was asked to go to Nagpur. We lived there enjoying extreme weather of Summer and winter. But for the weather Nagpur was a good place to live. During the year 2000, there was a major reshuffle in the Marketing division of the company and in that context, I made a request for sending me back to Mysore. For my deep dismay I was called back to Bangalore to head the department with

an assured incentive of promotion to Deputy General Manager within six months. Again, I missed the chance to return to my home at Mysore.

We were getting used to living in Bangalore and an inclination to settle down at Bangalore was craving in our mind, more so with Sudha. The main reason for this being the chances of Swaroop coming to Bangalore with change of job were brighter than to Mysore. There was a surprising development and Swaroop left for USA for continuation of studies in August 2001. Then, we firmed up our mind to shift the venue for settlement after retirement to Bangalore from Mysore. The house at Mysore fetched a descent returns and hunt for house in Bangalore began. The opinions and differences thronged between me and Sudha, with me for an apartment and Sudha for an independent house to her taste. Finally, I had to budge to the pressure of a wife and agreed to go for construction of a house within the budget. The problem was getting site, and the hunt went on for some time. With compromise on the location and to suit my pocket we decided on the site where our house stands now. The house was ready with not many hurdles, pretty big for two and we occupied by end of 2002.

As we were in the process of settling down in our new house, there was a major upsetting in my career, and I was asked to go to Singrauli. By that time, I was 58 years with only two years left for retirement. There was no other go for me, but to opt for early retirement. After prolonged resentment and denials I got my Voluntary Retirement and thanks to my Director (Marketing), but for his strong

recommendation it would not have happened. By end of 2002 my career ended at 58 and was at home as a retired man.

What was destined to happen happened. Let me come back to my house and its surroundings and then on which is my topic of narration.

After retirement, I was finding a lot of leisure time free of tensions and stress which made me to look for some activity that takes care of my health and also makes useful occupation of my leisure time. Nevertheless, my wife always kept reminding me of my retirement and attention towards good health. This being the more compelling reason than my own realization which made me to give serious thought in that direction. The simplest of all the exercises at that age I thought was morning walk and was looking for an early start.

My wife left for USA to have a good time with our son, for a long stay of six months. These days I wake up early in the mornings and my repeated attempts to sleep are proving futile. This may be due to loneliness and the long afternoon sleep. This early natural wake up calls were the pressing reasons to make up my mind for morning walk.

The sound of alarm made me to wake up suddenly. But it didn't flash to me immediately the reason why the alarm came as a disturbing element in my sound sleep. Quickly I realized it was the D-Day for starting off to my Morning Walk .I woke up from the bed reluctantly and my watch was showing 4.30AM. The cold water of the sink made me

to feel fresh to some extent after the wash. I could realize the enjoyment of early morning coffee only after I finished it. It was exactly 5.15AM and I stepped out of the house making the eventful beginning.

With lot of search and research I had located a route with the best possible illumination and lesser number of potholes for my early morning walk of 5Kms.

I was on my maiden morning walk with no humans seen on the way. The occasional barking of dogs and patches of total darkness here and there on the way were scary at times. Being January, I could see mist also here and there. As my stroll was approaching the end, Dawn's first light spilled giving a delightful look to a portion of the sky. I came back home around 6.15AM covering about 5Kms. with a satisfaction of a great beginning of an event of my life. The new day was on, and I was getting a feeling of brighter days ahead.

The mute mornings and the adorned weather that I always liked, kept my morning walk on without interruptions despite minor disturbing incidents now and then. Also, during the walk for more than an hour or so, I would totally be in tranquil mood, due to the quiet moments of the early morning. The serene moments during walk induce me to think about "The remains of the life" with a philosophical approach. Altogether, the habit of morning walk brought a sea change in me. It was unbelievable for my wife Sudha about my habituated morning walk for the past four

months, uninterrupted, when she returned from US curtailing her stay from the original plan of six months.

On that day when I came out of the house feeling fresh after my morning coffee, the sky was bright due to Full moon day besides the cool breeze, making the morning totally ideal for a walk .I must have walked about a Km or so, I saw a vague figure coming from the crossroad to my right. In a few minutes that figure reached the main road, overtook me and disappeared in the darkness ahead. Though I couldn't see clearly, I made out the person as a young lady in her white track suit. That was the first time I saw somebody coming from that crossroad in my morning stroll of more than a year. Then on, I used to see that lady every day at the junction of that crossroad and the main road. It was nearing a month and our meeting at that junction point (which I call our meeting place) was almost regular; but neither of the two bothered to say 'hello' to each other. In fact, at that wee hour no one used to be seen around, except we two. Also, it was quite surprising to see that lady on jogging alone at that early hour in the area totally dark almost and risky for ladies to move around.

There was too much barking sound in the surroundings when I stepped out for walk, which was unusual. As I approached the meeting place, I saw that lady coming very scared, as the dog was chasing her continuously. I whisked away the dog with the batten I had in my hand (I usually carry it for my morning walk) and told her to stop for some time. After a few minutes she just said thanks and continued her jog. I was disappointed at her behavior as I

was expecting a formal introduction of ourselves, if not a long talk.

I was feeling uneasy when I got up, which was mainly due to the disturbed sleep of previous night. Despite that, I decided to go for walk and started late. By the time I reached the meeting place the dawn was just setting in making the morning slightly brighter compared to other days. Surprisingly, I saw that lady also coming at the same time. As she came nearer, she said “Good morning, Sir, I am also late today. You know why? I received your telepathy about your late starting. So also, I did. Otherwise, I would have missed you.” smiled and continued without even waiting for my reaction. Her wit was unsavory, but her looks were scintillating. The closer look of her which I wanted to have from quite some time was amazing. She was in her twenties with perfect physique, bright eyes, inviting lips with a charming complexion. More than that her face was radiant and glowing, which is unusual. In other words, she was one of the few beautiful ladies I had ever seen. when I narrated the incident and about her looks my wife gave a fitting reply “Hello, my dear husband, be careful with that lady, she may fool you one day.”

There was a welcome change in her attitude from the day next and she started wishing me regularly “Good morning, sir, how are you doing this morning” and say “Bye” before over taking me. I just used to reciprocate by wishing “Good morning”.

When I reached the meeting place, I saw that lady standing. She wished 'Good morning' and said "How come you are late? It looks you want to talk to me?"

I was perplexed and said "No, not at all. By the by who told you that?"

"What sir, you are bluffing. Didn't you convey the message to me last night?"

Her words made me livid and with a grunted voice I said

"You young lady, what nonsense are you talking? I neither know your phone number nor your house. Sorry, I can't relish such jokes. No kidding with me please".

"Sir don't tell lie. Last night at 9.30 did you not remember me and felt like talking to me? Tell me honestly?" came the question with all seriousness.

Before I could reply she said Bye and continued her jog making me highly irritated. I continued my walk recollecting the thoughts that came into my mind the previous night. To my shocking surprise, she was correct. At about 9.30 when I was watching TV a desire to talk to her had flashed in my mind. I was shaken by this coincidence. While sipping the coffee after getting back home, I told my wife about the strange experience I had with that lady. She didn't take it seriously but teased me by telling "You be careful with that damsel. She may be Mohini". Though my wife laughed it off, I could not take it lightly, as it was a strange experience.

TWO

I was not well and was not able to go for walk for three days. On the fourth day I felt better and stepped out as usual, very much against the wishes of my wife. When I reached the meeting place that lady also arrived, with a difference, in the sense, she was in her blue tracksuit instead of her usual white and was not as charming as she was.

“Sir, Good morning, why you were missing for three days? Were you not well or what?” she asked. Surprisingly, she started walking with me instead of overtaking with a ‘Bye’.

“Sir, from today I want to come along with you rather not going me alone, if you don’t mind”

“Why? What happened young lady? Are you scared of dogs or what?” was my tickling question.

“Nothing of that sort Sir. Somehow, I like to join you. That’s all. You have no objection, I suppose. One more request sir. Hereafter you don’t call me young lady like a stranger. I am Maaya Sharma. You can call me Maaya.”

“It is my pleasure Maya to walk with you and what objection I can have” I said and both of us started walking together.

There was silence for quite some time which I broke and said “Shall I take the liberty of asking you, Maya, why you are wearing blue track suit instead of your regular beautiful white one, today? “

She laughingly replied “Sir, you are quite naughty! You observe what I wear daily. Sir! today is Amavasya (new

moon day) and I don't like Amavasya first of all; so also wearing white dress on this day. Strange! you know, sir?" After a pause she said again "Why sir? Am I not looking good in blue?"

"Nothing like that. I just asked you. Only thing is you look different today." Maaya, I have a small doubt. How come Your face will be glowing always? This is something unique... What face cream you use" I said.

"Uncle! Sorry, Sorry, Sir! you observe so many things. You look at my dress and face only or something else also?" She asked with a mischievous look and quaint smile. I felt embarrassed and said "Sorry". Sir don't feel bad. I said just as a joke. The answer to your question is I never use any face cream as I am allergic to these chemicals"

Our walking together became routine .She used to come from the crossroad and join me at the meeting place at the same time; walk along for about forty minutes and depart from the same meeting place telling 'Bye'. The time of saying "Bye" used to be not later than 6AM and most of the mornings used to be still dark. Our walk would be with more of reticence and blissful smile of Maya now and then. One thing I could not understand was how Maya could join me exactly at the same time even during my late or early arrivals at the meeting place. Twice or thrice, I reached the meeting place much early deliberately without informing her in advance. But to my shocking surprise she was there exactly at the same time. Whenever such things happened,

she commented “Sir, do you think I will not come to know your early start, if you don’t tell me?”

“I feel, I have come quite close to you. So, I want to call you “uncle” instead of Sir if you permit” she said one day amid our walk. I gladly gave consent to her and from then on Maya started addressing me as Uncle.

THREE

Time had gone on and our acquaintance was for more than four months. Our intimacy levels went up progressively from superficial level to feeling level. We were really close and good friends. We started getting to know each other more personally. I learnt that she was basically from Belgaum married to Sharma and landed in Bangalore about six months back. Her husband a Software engineer was in USA on an assignment and was expected back shortly. She was staying alone with a servant maid and her parents were expected to join her, which had not happened from quite some time. She also fairly understood me and my background. Though Maaya became close and good friend, her behavior at times used to be peculiar. One thing I distinctly observed was that she used to be very hesitant and vague while talking about her family matters. Another surprising thing was despite my repeated invitations to visit my house and meet my wife; she didn’t make it even once in these four months though she was living alone. It was also a bit strange that Maya never called me to visit her house even as a formality. The most astonishing thing was

keeping herself away from me at minimum three feet at all time and any of my attempts to go closer than that used to be futile. In all, with her odd behavior now and then and uncanny experiences of telepathy I felt her paranormal many times.

It was cloudy and morning was still dark, when we came to the meeting place to depart to our respective destinations. It started drizzling. As I was having umbrella I told Maaya that I would accompany her to her house. For my shocking surprise, She vehemently reacted “I don’t want anybody to come to my house .I know how to take care of myself. This rain can do nothing to me. You please go back to your house.” and rushed towards her house disappearing in no time. I felt affronted and terribly upset with her rude behavior. I immediately decided not to meet her thenceforth.

“I am so sorry uncle. Please join me for the walk. I will give written apology to you. I will be waiting in our meeting place.” The words of Maaya made me to jump up from the bed. My watch was showing 5AM.Due to my sudden waking up my wife got disturbed and said “What happened? Since yesterday you are not keeping well. You better skip your walk.” As I had determined to avoid Maya, I went to sleep again.

The day next to next of the incident I started much early from the house with the intention of not meeting Maya. When I reached the meeting place, she was standing there waiting for me. I continued my walk ignoring her, without

even wishing her. She followed me and called me with a repentant voice “Yesterday itself I apologized. I thought you would pardon me and join for walk yesterday itself. I once again beg your pardon. Uncle, kindly understand, I was totally disturbed other day. I know you were upset with my behavior. I am a lonely lady; don’t give me such big punishment. I hope my uncle is magnanimous.”

I was silently listening to her without any reply continuing my walk. After a long pause I busted out “Maya don’t try to appease me by giving stupid reasons. I am repenting for being friendly and affectionate with you. I take this as a grave insult to me. After all, it was a basic courtesy from a cultured person to anybody in that situation. The reaction from you was not expected from any rational human being. I am sorry, that sort of arrogant behavior I can’t tolerate from anybody.”

She was following me silently and started crying after a few minutes. I could not bear that and asked to join me by telling “you are excused.” she was immensely happy and said “Uncle, Thanks a lot” wiping her tears from the hanky. Even, I was in tears for the reason not known. My act of pardoning was for her repentance or my own interest of keeping her intimacy, honestly, I didn’t know.

It was the month of September, and my wife took North Indian tour along with her brothers and cousins. She was very angry with me as I didn’t join her. It was almost a week after she had left. I and Maaya were on our usual morning walk.

“Uncle, shall I join for dinner in the night today” she asked breaking the silence prevailing for some time.

“No, dear, my wife is not in station, and you have to eat what I cook”

“I know that Aunty is out of station. I will cook for you. Only thing is you have to say OK.” was the reply.

There was no other way but to say yes. Also, it was another incomprehensible experience of Maya, how she came to know about my wife’s non availability though I had never made a mention about her trip.

I never wanted Maya to cook anything in the house for dinner. So, I prepared some colored rice and curds rice and brought some sweets and fruits from outside. I set right some of the things in the house which were untidy due to my wife’s absence. Right from nine my anxious waiting for Maya was on with mixed feelings and crazy thinking. I was so restless that I was moving in and out of the house again and again. Any sound outside, was making me to rush to the gate in the illusion of Maya’s arrival. It was almost ten and was terribly boring which made me to switch on the TV. The ringing sound of phone made me to wake up from the nap. As I rushed to the phone to receive the call, it disconnected. I was feeling miserable and decided to have dinner and moved towards dining table. Immediately I changed my mind to wait for some more time as I was very much hopeful about Maaya’s arrival. The sweet voice of Maaya “Sorry Uncle, I will not be able to join for the dinner. Kindly excuse me” followed by serenade, shook me up

from my sleep and made me to run to the window to see nobody. The clock was showing eleven. I was enraged with the fooling trick of Maaya and had my dinner with mouthful of cursing.

I had decided to bang Maya next day for her nasty game. As usual she joined me for the walk in the morning in our meeting place. She was very casual and said “Good morning” with no reciprocation from my end. We were walking together silently. I got annoyed at her long silence as I was expecting a deep regret immediately after our meeting in the morning. I shouted “Maaya, I never expected that you are so discourteous and ill mannered. OK, you didn’t join me for dinner. But you didn’t have the courtesy to phone up and tell me your inability to join even though you knew my phone no. I am really sorry for your nomadic behavior.” But her reaction was very cool.

“Uncle, I know you are angry with me. But it is not right on your part to blame me like this. Did you not hear me telling “Sorry” at eleven? Perhaps you have forgotten as you were not fully awake. Does not matter. I say sorry once again.

Uncle! I remember a quote of Aristotle and I think I must tell you.

‘Any one can be angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – this is not easy.’”

I just stopped and was about to thrash her. But there was a flash in my mind about her voice of regret at eleven

previous night. I shivered with that experience and was totally confused.

“Why uncle, am I correct?” she said, and we continued our walk. Maaya was about to take turn towards her house. I asked her to stop and about to pat her to say, “just ignore about my anger”. She suddenly said “You mischievous uncle, you want to touch me or what? Don’t think of it. You will never be able to do that” with a sarcastic laugh.

Maaya! How can you think so mean like that? You know I am fifty-eight years and a father-like figure. It is my habit to pat a person whenever I feel close and affectionate. It is very bad of you.” I said with a sorry figure.

“Oh, uncle, I made a joke. Don’t take it seriously. Even if you hug me, I don’t feel bad. I know you can’t do that”. I could not understand what she meant by that.

“Maaya, I want to visit your house soon. I want to talk to you something personal seriously.” I told her with the intention of getting more details about her.

“The time will come uncle. I will invite you to my house. You know, I have not settled down fully. My husband is in USA. I am alone here only with my servant maid. My parents who had promised me to join have not joined yet. Also, I have no phone connection. I will call you soon and host a grand candlelight dinner. Uncle! You will have a surprise gift also.

Anyway, I will show you my house from here. But Uncle! Don’t venture to come to my house till I call you.”

Immediately I said “What will you do if I come”

“Uncle! You will miss a great thing in your life! that is me.”

She showed me a house with blue color which was almost at the end of the crossroad and bid “Bye”. The house was not clearly visible as the morning was not bright.

FOUR

Day by day Maya was becoming complex and also a disturbing element. Her unusual behavior in various incidents was increasing and telepathic experiences became very frequent. Many times, I was frightened with her bizarre acts of telepathy. I was waiting for the earliest opportunity to ask her thread bare about her factual background.

“Maaya, I want to talk to you frankly certain things today. I don’t bother whether you like it or not.” told her with all seriousness in the midst of our walk one day. She immediately stopped and stared at me with a mesmerizing smile. She was gorgeous and sparkling even in the dim light of street lamps. I was dumb founded and became totally blank after seeing her. I simply said “Maaya! You are so beautiful. I don’t know how a human can be so beautiful?”.

With a wild laugh she said “You wanted to say I am beautiful! To say this you made that blab, blab uncle?”

Uncle! You are just seeing me in my tracksuit and in darkness. I don’t know how you feel if you see me in moon light with my traditional dress on.

Uncle! You know? I used to be called as Beladingala Baale (Moon light girl) in my college days”. There was silence for some time.

How is that you becoming romantic? Uncle. Hannele is chiguring (The old yellow leaf is growing greener)?” I felt bad with her teasing words.

“What do you mean by that Maya? Just because I am fifty-eight, I should not appreciate beauty. Is it?

It is not the age that decides one’s ability to enjoy beauty. It is a person’s Zest for life is the deciding factor which I have in abundance still.”

“I didn’t mean like that uncle. I just said if you become more romantic it would be problematic to you only, especially now, that aunty is away.”

“Maaya, you are not just beautiful, but, taunting too”

By the time our conversation ended, we were near our meeting place, and we dispersed.

Ridiculously, I was infatuated and started thinking always about Maaya after her electrifying look of that day. My mind was full of Maaya’s smile, Maaya’s eyes and Maaya and nothing else. The eagerness to see Maaya in moon light turned agonizing. It was more than a week. I was totally restless and opened up one morning and spoke

“Maaya, even if you think me shameless, I don’t mind. Please tell me when I will have the look of True Maaya?”

In fact, I was expecting her resentment if not her vehement reply. After a long pause she whispered with a smile “Uncle, it can happen whenever you want. But you may not see me anymore after that.”

I didn’t understand what she meant and with a big laugh I said “How can it happen? Maaya can never leave me and go. She is my best and close friend.”

There was no reply from her and after a while she said “Uncle, today is Tuesday and the next Monday is ‘Adbhuta Poornima’ (wonderful full moon day). On that day I will be visiting Annapoorneshwari temple in the night along with my few selected friends for special pooja. I will be passing in front of your house between 10.30 and 11PM. You can definitely see me in my traditional dress on that night; of course, if you sincerely want to? Uncle! My request to you is, you neither come nearer nor talk to me on that night, if you see me. The reason being I am not supposed to talk till I finish my pooja and back home.”

“Maaya, you have not seen my house and say you would pass through my house. I hope you are not kidding?”

“Just because I have not visited your house, you think I don’t know. I will be passing through your house very often, especially in the nights and also seen you many times standing near the gate. Perhaps you might not have identified me.”

“Hay, Maaya, I have heard so many Poornima but not heard of Adbhuta Poornima. Can you tell me what its significance is”

“Uncle don’t ask too many questions. I will not be able to answer, and I only want your assurance that you will not talk to me during that time. OK! Regarding Poornima better ask Aunty when she comes back.”

By that time, we were back in the meeting place. Maya said “Bye” and left the place though I was wanting to talk for some more time.

FIVE

The D-Day, the Adbhuta Poornima started with a big disappointment, as Maaya didn’t join for the morning walk. I consoled myself thinking her to be busy preparing for Pooja. I was restless right from morning in the eagerness of seeing Beladingala Baale. I finished my dinner in a hurry, as I was not relishing it. I was becoming impatient as the moon was rising gradually towards pinnacle spilling the pleasant light all over, as if to combat the cruelty of darkness. It was 10.30 and I was in total turmoil with anxiety and apprehensions swirling around. I was feeling as if my eyes had come to stand still for not taking chance of missing that unknown beauty even for a moment. It was 11 o’clock and the sky was totally milky with the brightest moon in the middle. There were no indications of Maaya’s arrival and shadows of disappointment started setting in. An emotional conflict arose with my mind telling ‘too much hope deceiveth’ and heart believing ‘Hope is brightest when it dawns from fears’.

When I looked at my watch it was showing 11.15 and all my hopes to see Maya came to cold. I decided to go to bed thinking Maya to be a big cheat. As I was about to close the door, the sound of chanting mantras was heard which made me to rush to the gate like mad with heart palpitating.

Oh! God! It was incredible; amidst the group of five beautiful ladies was Maya the most beautiful, in her milky white sari with long hairs and diamond studs in her ears shining and the radiant eyes reflecting Moon light. She was an abode of divine beauty and “Beladingala Baale” to the core. My eyes welled up with tears of joy. Maaya stopped in front of my house momentarily as if to make me understand ‘what really beauty is’. Though I was tempted very much to go nearer to have a closer look of that celestial beauty, the promise I had made to Maaya held me in thrall. She walked away and disappeared imprinting the bliss in my indelible memory.

I was standing near the gate gauging the vacuum created by the disappearance of Maaya. Madness, cowering in the chill of full moon day I was praying God, to grace the look of that blissful beauty at least for one more time. The chirping sound of a flock of white cranes flying in the sky brought me to senses and I went inside. I was lying on the bed in a strange state of mind. ‘My emotional mind was telling Maya to be a celestial body and not human, though my rational mind was not prepared to accept’

As psychologists say, ‘our emotions have a mind of their own, one which can hold views quite independently of our rational mind.’”

The Adbhuta Poornima ended in a real wonderful way with all my agonies turning to ecstatic moments.

I was the man who always disagrees with the opinion of two separate identities of Sex and Beauty as far as woman is concerned. I always pleaded that Sex and Beauty are synonymous and there is nothing like Beauty without sex and sex without beauty. But the transcending beauty of Maaya I witnessed reversed my opinion. That was true happiness in the disguise of beauty with not a tint sex in it. There was no other rational reason not to accept “Beauty is God”. It was my heart that saw Maaya and not my eyes.

‘It is with heart that one sees rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eyes’

“Not like earthly beauty dangerous to look upon, but like the morning star which is thy (God’s) emblem, bright and musical, breathing purity, telling of heaven and infusing peace” ~ Bible.

SIX

I had sleepless night almost. I started early in the morning and reached the meeting place much before my usual time in the anxiety and excitement of meeting Maaya to express my feelings. She was not there. Thinking that she would be late due to late night Pooja, I decided to wait for some time.

It was almost half an hour and Maaya didn't turn up. Totally disappointed, I went back home instead of continuing the walk. To my great dismay she didn't come for walk for four days causing concern. I felt many times to visit her house to enquire her welfare. But her words "Uncle, don't venture to come to my house till I call you. Otherwise, you are going to lose a great thing in life that is me" virtually scared me and made me to abstain from doing that. Days turned to weeks with no trace of Maya and not even her telepathic messages. My growing anxiety turned to restlessness, and I decided to visit her house at any cost. It was Saturday, around 10AM I went in search of the Blue house, which she had shown, from a distance. When I reached that house, the gate was locked. My knocking of the gate and calling for Maya yielded no response and had to come back frustrated. The next day being Sunday, hoping against hopes of seeing Maaya, I went to that house again. It was same thing with door locked. As my tension was unbearable, I went to next house to enquire thinking that they might have some information about her. The reply from the gentleman next door "There is nobody staying in this house by name Maaya Sharma. In fact, the house is vacant for the past six months and the owner is in Dubai. The house key is with me only. He has asked me to look for a good tenant for renting out." was diabolic and made me to rush back home shivering. Subsequently, I visited every house almost in that road enquiring for Maya, thinking that I mistook the house she had shown, with no avail. My wife's words "You be careful with that damsel. She may be **Mohini**" started haunting in my mind. The

loneliness besides mystery of missing Maya made me delirious. I was forlorn at Maya's act of desertion. I stopped my morning walk as I developed a sort of agoraphobia (fear of open space).

I was relieved to a great extent when my wife returned from her long tour of 45 days. She felt bad after seeing my plight

"Why are you looking so sick? Were you not eating properly in my absence? I told you many times to go to your brother's house regularly for food. I know you have not done that." was her series of questions. I was silent as the reason was not that and was totally different. Next day when she got up, I was on the bed awake. She was surprised and asked me "Why? What happened? You have stopped your morning walk or what?

I simply said "Yes".

"Any unpleasant incident with your girlfriend Maaya?" was her next question with a quaint accent. At that moment I felt like telling Maya's episodes in her absence. The apprehension of her mistaking the incidents prevented me from doing so. I kept mum.

It was again a full moon day after a month. I came to portico after my dinner, looking at the moon recollecting the celestial experience of Adbhuta Poornima. This Poornima was a real "Nirasha Poornima (Disappointing Full moon day)" in stark contrast to the previous one, lifeless, without the appearance of Maya. The call of my wife informing me of the time as eleven made me to come to senses. I went inside with heavy heart.

“Uncle, I am so sorry. I should not have done that. I had to go in a hurry without informing you. I had summons from the far-off place. I know you are too upset. I also know you can very well understand my problem.

Come on Uncle! I am back and will be with you forever. Resume your walk. Get up fast, I will be waiting in our usual meeting place.” the musical voice of Maya startled me and made me to leap from the bed .I started looking for Maaya all around. After some timeI realized that it was not Maaya but her telepathic voice. My heart was pounding with joy in anticipation of meeting Maya after a long gap. I got ready and left the house as before. My wife was fast asleep.

I reached the meeting place in high spirits to see Maya and burst out all the feelings I was holding for the past one month. Her absence was disheartening, and every minute of waiting was increasingly painful. There was no trace of her even after half an hour which drove me crazy, and I started crying loudly. I decided to return home in disgust and turned back

Suddenly, I heard the sound of wild laugh followed by a sweet voice “Uncle” which made me to turn back.

Oh, God! It was my Maaya there with her White track suit on. It was unbelievable .My eyes were shedding tears of joy, and I was totally dumb founded.

“Uncle, You want to continue walk or stand here just looking at me? Her words made me conscious and the joy of sight of Maaya turned to anger.

“You Maaya the cruel lady, where were you all these days? How can you vanish without informing me. I am feeling like hitting you” I said and lifted the batten I was carrying.

“Uncle ! Uncle! Halt.” She shouted and stared at me .The flash of her look and the mesmerizing voice turned me to statue like, and I stood with my raised hand unmoved. Maaya looking at my plight, came a little closer to me. I became totally wet with sweat and shivering set in that chilly morning.

“Uncle, shun your anger, it is not good for health. Come on, let us move and continue our walk. ”As she said, my hand came down automatically and I began to walk behind her slowly. I was speechless and was following her like a pet dog following his master. After about ten minutes, I broke the silence and resumed my talk in shrill and shivering voice. I was highly emotional.

“Maaya, why you play such tricks? You don’t know how much I am attached to you and how deserted it will be without seeing you.

Maya, you please tell me who are you?

From that night of Adbhuta Poornima, I am very much scared of you.”

Interrupting my breathless talk, there was a flashing reply

“Why Uncle? Was I looking so scared? I thought you would be appreciating me. I am really disappointed. Uncle, I have already told you the reason why I was away from you.”

“Maaya, it is not like that. You are not just beautiful. You are a celestial beauty and super natural. I think my wife is right. You are not Maaya! You are “MOHINI”

“Uncle, please stop that crazy thinking. I am neither Mohini nor Rohini. I am just Maaya Sharma.”

Suddenly, a black dog appeared from nowhere and started barking at us. I was shocked with its appearance and chased it away with my batten. It looked; Maaya was bit shaken. Our walk continued but, silence hovered again.

A stupid idea popped up and I jumped forward towards her to hold her hand who was about 5 to 6 feet away from me. I stumbled and was about to fall down. Fortunately, I didn't.

“Uncle, I have told many times, You can't touch me, still you tried, and this is the result” she said with sarcastic laugh.

“OK! You want to know who I am. You don't want to believe that I am Maaya Sharma?”

By the time she said that we were near our point of depart.

“Uncle, I am sorry, it is time to leave. Uncle, this time it is not Bye. It's Good Bye” She deviated towards her house.

“Maaya! Maaya!” My shouting was not heard and I became totally blank and felt suffocated. I came to stand still and closed my eyes. After some time, I felt a push and slowly opened my eyes. My breathing became normal. My search for Maaya was in vain. Though I was prompted to go searching for her to her house I didn't dare do it. I was

slowly moving towards my house, and the sky was getting brighter indicating the rising of Sun to bring the world to light. The early morning breeze which was mild and fragrant turned wild at once to dusty wind. In the whirl of the wind a sheet of paper came flying and stuck to my face. I tried to read the matter in it with no avail due to the absence of spectacle and insufficient light. I kept it in my pocket and reached home.

I was sipping my second cup of morning coffee, and my mind was full of Maaya's thoughts. I was confused about revealing my meet with Maaya to Sudha. As I had the last sip, suddenly remembered the sheet of paper and took out from pocket.

Oh, God! The letter was of Maaya with glittering gold letters. It read "Uncle, you visit the following address, and you will know who I am" It contained

Belgaum address with no name of person.

"Sudha, come here fast and bring a cup of water too". My frightened voice made her to rush to the room. She was shocked to see me shivering with the paper in my hand.

"What happened? Whose letter is that? Drink water first please."

She made me to drink forcibly. I held her hands tight and showed that sheet of paper to her after a while. She could not understand anything about the address written in that letter. As I calmed down, I slowly narrated the spine-chilling experience of Maaya in the morning. I also told her

the strange experiences of Maya I had during her absence including her appearance on Adbhuta Poornima. Night.

“On that day itself I hinted her as Mohini. But you didn’t believe it.

Enough is enough. Now on, don’t even think of your morning walks” was her categorical ruling and that made me to keep on hold my morning walks from then on.

SEVEN

It was more than two weeks and life was becoming untenable with no morning strolls and no constructive work of any sort. I was in total emotional turmoil, always thinking about the address given by Maya and the mystery behind it. At the same time, I was not wanting to take unilateral decision to visit Belgaum against the wishes of Sudha. Amidst these emotional clashes I was sinking a bit by bit.

“Uncle, why you stopped your morning walks? Are you really afraid of seeing me?

Uncle, when are you visiting Belgaum to know my details. You were always asking me Who I am? Now I have given you the details, but you are not visiting.

Come on, uncle; I am back. Cheer up” the scintillating voice of Maaya awakened, and I got up in shock. It was 4.45 AM and Sudha was in deep sleep. I firmed up my mind to proceed for walk and when I stepped out with jogging shoes and batten in hand it was 5.15 AM. Thank God! Sudha was

not disturbed, and she was engrossed in her sleep. After a gap of almost 20 days, I was feeling jittery as I started moving. With my heart pounding and mind full of fear, I reached the meeting place. I expected Maya to be there, but she was not. I looked around for her presence, with no trace of her. In dilemma, whether to wait or to come back, I was restless. Finally, after a wait of twenty minutes, I turned to start back. Suddenly, there was a flash of energy in my body, and I was pushed forward. In full enthusiasm I resumed my walk with the feel of Maaya beside with her occasional piercing look; but no Maaya in existence.

When I reached home Sudha was sitting on door step anxiously waiting for my return. She was furious and the argument we entered into turned to virtual quarrel. With that unsavory happening, I decided to put an end to my morning walks.

My restlessness doubled with a feel of treachery, and I decided to discuss with Sudha to bring an end with a visit to Belgaum. It was Thursday morning, and an unusual thought of visiting Temple came to my mind. After my bath, I took my Aactiva and went straight to Srinidhi temple. I didn't inform Sudha as she was in bathroom. We were sitting face to face to have our lunch and straight away I raised the topic of visiting Belgaum to break the mystery of Maya and also to know the facts. The conversation went well, and consensus arrived without many problems. We both agreed to take Sujaya, our relative who has an uncle a resident of Belgaum.

When we arrived, it was 6.30 in the morning, and we were received with a big smile by Nagaraj (Sujaya's uncle) in the Bus station. We proceeded to his house in his car. As all three of us were exhausted due to bus journey, there was not much conversation. I was much more tired due to disturbed sleep arouse by the pop ups of Maaya's thoughts throughout the journey. Around nine all of us were at the dining table and I briefed the purpose of our fact-finding mission. In fact, Nagaraj was not ready to believe my experiences and ridiculed our purpose of visit in spite of my showing the paper containing the message. Suma, Nagaraj's wife served the sumptuous breakfast and only three of us decided to visit the "House of Unknown" leaving Sujaya and Suma at home. We left the house at 10.45 with Nagaraj at the steering. As the car was speeding up my heart was thumping with the blood gushing in the veins. Every beat of my heart was sounding Maya and every thought in my mind was a flash of mystic Maaya.

EIGHT

At 11.30 the car stopped in front of a house looking to be big with huge compound but, with faded and discolored exterior indicating " Everything is not really well". The name plate was showing the name "Anantha Sharma" and the address written as No.17,Gandhi colony, the one we were looking for. With much hesitation and apprehension, I opened the gate and moved slowly towards the main door with Nagaraj and Sudha behind. After the third ring of

calling bell, the door was opened carefully by a person in late fifties. There was a simple “hello” for my introduction of myself as “Murthy from Bangalore”. As Nagaraj entered into the scene with his introduction as Asst. commissioner of Sales tax and a localities, there was a welcome into the house. There was silence and my mind was working actively for different alternatives to start the topic. Finally, I broke the pause

“Sir! Please don’t mistake me. Sir! You have daughter by name Maaya? When I said that in all hesitation, Anant looked at his wife Anjana. Suddenly, she got up from the sofa and went inside crying. Sudha, seeing that followed her to the room.

“Sir, I am so sorry. My idea of asking was not to hurt you.” I said apologetically and narrated in length my exhilarating experiences with Maya and the mystery of getting his address. Anant was shivering with Maaya’s letter in hand. With tears rolling down he shared the heart-rending tragedy of his life that is “the pathetic end of his only daughter Chaaya Sharma”

Anant Sharma is the Asst. Commissioner, Income tax from Belgaum, well to do with comfortable living. Anjana his very cooperative wife and Chaaya the only daughter, a girl very cute and charming. She being the only kid was brought up with lots of love and care. After completion of her schooling, she joined one of the best colleges of Belgaum and came out with a degree in Commerce. Her growing age in conjunction with her enhancing beauty turned her into

“Beladingala Baale”(as she used to be called in her college) by end of her teen. In Anant’s words “her growing beauty with her growing age was a matter of growing concern for parents”. She took up a job in a company very much against the wishes of parents. She, being jaunty ,jovial and zooming, became very popular in the company in a working span of six months. She was very fond of driving and used to go for long drives with her friends taking Papa’s car. Many times, there were virtual quarrels between father and daughter concerning Chaaya’s rash and Speedy driving. Among many of her friends, Udai was close and a family friend who used to visit her house often. Also, there was a friendship at family level.

It was Saturday and half a day at office for Chaaya. She came home and went straight to her room without proper response to Anjana’s offer for coffee which was unusual. The sound of shutting the doors was an indication of her disturbed mind. Chaaya joined Anant and Anjana at the dining table around 9PM .Ananta looking at her dull face sensed fishy and asked “ My dear. What is wrong? You are, OK?”

“Papa, I am alright. But there is one thing worrying me and I don’t know how to put it” was the reply.

“Beta don’t worry. Tell us what is in your mind.”

Chaaya, a bold and out spoken, immediately responded “ I want to marry Udai.”

Anant and Anjana were shaken, and they became speechless.

After a few minutes Chaaya breaking the silence “Papa, this is not the decision and only proposal and can happen only with your consent.”

“Dear daughter, you have put us in affray. Please give us some time to think. For heaven sake don’t do anything in haste and land in trouble. This is my request.”

Anant’s strained words put her into deep emotions. Chaaya got up from her chair and in the deep embrace of Anant said “Papa, I never do anything that hurts you”

Udai, a smart and handsome person with a descent family background. In other words, he was a good match to Chaaya in all respects except for his caste, a Lingayat. Anant though not very orthodox, a proud Brahmin. After long and prolonged discussions and consultations Anant and Anjana decided to meet the parents of Udai with regard to the marriage of Chaaya and Udai.

Thank God! Without major hurdles things went in favor of marriage and there was consent from both sides. The marriage took place in a fairly grand scale with the presence of majority of friends and relations from both sides. Though the marriage was one of compromise, Anant and Anjana were really happy as it was Chaaya’s choice of her life partner.

NINE

The wheel of time was rolling ahead and in the course of it, as an envy of destiny, a havoc was in offing for the

Anant's who were in the pinnacle of happiness. It was just about two months of her marriage; one evening Chaaya came home straight from office, giving a pleasant surprise to Anjana. She was looking dull, but Anjana felt that was due to her exhaustion in office. While having her cup of coffee Chaaya said "Amma, I want to stay back tonight here and go to office in the morning". In fact, that was Anjana's wishes also. Unlike other days, Chaaya was lying on the bed in her room ,who always used to be with Mom yapping, yapping . Anant got disturbed to see Chaaya dull and pale during dinner and asked Anjana to find the reason.

Chaaya's words "Amma, will you sleep with me tonight in my room, I am feeling very lonely" were really shocking to Anjana and Chaaya was awake with crying and sobbing the whole night. In the morning, suspecting some problem, both Ananta and Anjana tried hard to reason out with no avail. For all their questions, the answers from her was positive, but they smelt a rat about the strained relationship of Chaaya and Udai.

Gradually, Chaaya's staying at her parents' house was becoming frequent and also Udai's visit to Anant's house was very much reduced. With these developments the suspicion of Anant's about the deepening differences between Chaaya and Udai started surfacing out Anjana specially was a worried woman .It was a week day afternoon , Chaaya came home crying skipping the office putting Anjana to her shock of life. There was no proper answer for series of questions of her. Anant arrived in a hurry after hearing Chaaya's abrupt arrival, over the phone. When he

entered the room with Anjana , Chaaya was lying in her bed with her eyes full of tears. Both sitting on either side and with touching voice started enquiring about her problems. After a lot persuasion Chaaya put them in swirl by saying “Papa, I cannot live anymore with Udai and need separation” Her word of divorce was bolt from the blue for Anant & Anjana ,a couple known to be ideal and roll model in their family circle. With all their care and caution, they consoled and advised her not to jump into conclusions and think thoroughly on the drastic steps. Next morning she went back with heavy heart. For quite some time there was neither a phone call nor a visit from Chaaya which consoled them to some extent with a thought of patch up of relations between Chaaya and Udai.

The sound of calling bell made Anjana to wake up from her afternoon nap. The appearance of Chaaya with two suitcases when she opened the door was no less than the strike of thunderbolt. Chaaya entered silently and walked straight to her room. This time there were no tears in her eyes but look of a determined decision. After freshening up, she joined mother in kitchen and with a cup of coffee in her hand “Amma! I am back into my house totally liberated. I will never go back to that butchery. I hope, you people won’t mind”.

The stream of rolling tears from her radiant eyes was an indication of the depth of agony she was undergoing.

“Papa, I change my favorite slogan of my life **“I hate tears”** to **“I like tears”**. Do you know why? Papa.

Here on tears are the solace for my aching heart.”

The heart-rending words of Chaaya at dinner time shattered Anant totally and he hugged her tightly. The sound of his cry was resounding echoing the whole house.

TEN

Initially, the role of Prabhudev and Manjula, the parents of Udai, was suspected behind Chaaya’s decision. But their sincere efforts to prevent the disaster was a clear indication of their noninvolvement of any sort. Also, there was no grouse of any kind against them either, by Chaaya. The repeated attempts and countless counseling both by her and Udai’s parents yielded no positive results. Though Udai showed some inclination for compromise, Chaaya was firm in her decision to go for the ultimate and never heeded to pressures of any sort. .She went to the extent of telling Anjana that she would go away and live separately if they try to persuade the matter further. The shocking thing for both the families was that none of the reasons given by Chaaya was justified for such extreme step. Whatever, the truth behind Chaaya’s diabolic decision remained as a mystery for everyone but for Udai and Chaaya. Finally, what should not have happened, happened and Chaaya’s “Love marriage”. turned into contrast. Her relationship with Udai ended ultimately with a legal Divorce. and came to an end.

Chaaya switched over to another company mainly to avoid Udai. Her new office was quite far from Anant’s house,

which made her to use Papa's car for commuting .As the days and months were passing on the agonizing memories of her past were fading gradually. At the same time, Anant and Anjana were getting worried about her future. Many of their attempts to convince Chaaya for her re- marriage turned futile with her categorical rejection. The jaunty jovial girl turned to a shaky, morose and lifeless lady in a year's time. The visible descent of Beladingala Baale" to a lack luster appearance was the depiction of the deep-rooted damage caused due to the devastating event of her life. She was in total dark about her future with no idea whatsoever .But destiny had already planned a dirty game against her.

It was Saturday and Chaaya got ready to go to office. Somehow, she was dull and sluggish with a sick look.

"Chaaya, you are looking to be not well. Why don't you apply leave and take rest

at home" were the words of Anjana.

"No, Amma, I am OK. Anyway, today is Saturday and I will be coming early.

Amma, let us go to a movie in the evening and will have dinner out. Don't prepare any Khana for the night. Also tell Papa about this program." She replied and started the car. With a long wave, she zoomed towards the office. Alas! Neither of them thought that would be the last wave and Good bye to life by Chaaya.

Anant was back home early by 5 PM after knowing the evening program from Anjana but surprised to see the

absence of daughter. In fact, he was very happy about her decision of outing as he wanted her to be as happy as possible and come out of the emotional malaise. The continued delay of Chaaya's arrival was causing too much of anxiety and Anjana was cursing her for not communicating the delay. With the dark sky outside and no response to their phone call, both of them became restless and were worried. It was 7.30 and the ringing sound of phone made Anant to rush for it.

"Is this Chaaya's residence please" the unfamiliar voice surprised him.

"Yes, who is speaking" was his reply

"This is Inspector Ashok and want to speak to Chaaya's father or any other senior person". The word Inspector made Anant jittery and asked "What is the matter inspector? is everything OK with Chaaya? I am her father" he said.

"Sir, you come immediately to KR Hospital without delay. I will tell the details later" the words of Ashok made him to shout "Anju! Come fast, let us go". As they reached the hospital in half an hour, the eagerly waiting Ashok rushed them to ICU. When both entered, Chaaya was gasping for breath. The shivering voice of her mother "Chaaya, Chaaya, this is your Amma. Please open your eyes" made her to open her eyes. But that was only for a minute and closed after seeing Anjana and Anant. Chaaya closed her eyes once and for all making the eyes of Anant and Anjana wet forever.

Chaaya had a ghastly accident of crashing her car against a tree while overtaking a truck.

She bid “Adieu” to this materialistic world at the peak of her youth at twenty-four, in the year 2002. Of course, the ordeal of Chaaya ended, but her natural desires and ambitions remained unfulfilled.

ELEVEN

All of us were in the world of Chaaya hearing her tragic travel of shortened life with dried eyes and no tears left to shed. The call of Anant from the stair case made us conscious and we joined him in the first floor .He opened the lock of a room mentioning it Chaaya’s and took us inside showing various articles of her including some toys of her childhood. Suddenly, my attention was drawn to a photo hanging on the wall.

Gosh! That was my Maaya!

I didn’t know what happened to me. When I opened my eyes, I was lying on Chaaya’s bed with all the people surrounding with anxiety. I slowly got up shouted “” Chaaya is my Maaya, Chaaya is my Maaya” and hug Anant tightly. With heavy heart we left Chaaya’s house around 3 PM and reached Nagaraj’s house. I was carrying my Maaya in disguise of Chaaya’s photo which I took from Anant before I left his house.

We were back in Bangalore immediately, very much against the wishes of Mrs.&Mr. Nagaraj who wanted us to be there

for few more days. Though we were back home, we were finding it difficult to come out of shock created by Chaaya/Maaya episode .It was more than a month or so, I never stepped out of house at odd hours let alone the morning walks. This was mainly for two reasons; the first being the fear of appearance of Maaya and its consequences and the other being the strict instructions of Sudha for not taking any chance .Also ,there were no instances of any Strange happenings or experiences of Maaya.

“Uncle! Why did you stop your morning walk? Is it because you have come to know who I am .Uncle, Without your company I am feeling lonely for the past month and a half. Please join me at our meeting place.” The call of Maaya after a considerable gap made me to jump up from bed. I was shivering and sweating. This made Sudha to get up. She switched on the main light rushed, to get me a cup of water. I told her about Maaya’s call for walk and insisted that I should meet her. She was very much angry and was very much against me going out... After a lengthy argument she accepted with a condition that she would join me for the walk. Both of us moved out of the house at 5.15 after freshening up I was carrying the baton and also the big torch and Sudha an idol of Lord Hanuman. She was totally scared and was continuously chanting Mantras We reached our usual meeting place to find no Maaya there. We were waiting with anxiety and fear and Sudha shivering violently in spite her thick shawl. In fact, she was standing with her eyes closed and chanting of Mantras was getting louder. I was looking around with the torch on. My watch was

showing ten minutes to Six and returned home in disgust. Sudha was completely shaken and was in total silence till we reached home.

“Uncle, why you brought Auntie? Are you really scared me or what? Am I looking so scary for you? Come alone.

With a pause she continued “Don’t worry, Auntie will not get up. Don’t disturb her, It is getting late.” This time the voice was a bit harsh. I woke up and saw Sudha in deep sleep snoring. I came out and was feeling energetic and confident.

“Oh God! Maaya in her white track suit with her flashing eyes was sighted at the meeting place. I became dumb founded and stood staring at her. The tears of joy was rolling out from my eyes and was confused to understand the figure in front me was whether Maaya or Chaaya.

“Uncle, what happened? Come on, it is getting late. Let us move”

This time I was behind Maaya moving slowly instead side by side. I was silent and enjoying her heavenly smile she was giving now and then on the way.

“Uncle, I am getting bored. Why are you not speaking? I always liked your manly voice “

I was not able to speak though I wanted, as the look of Maaya after a gap of almost two months created a sort of emotional swirl in my mind.

“Uncle” the raised voice of her. Shook me up and I came to stand still.

“Uncle, it is getting late. I have to go. My request to you is please join me at 4.30 AM tomorrow. Uncle, please note, alone. I have to share some secret of my life, which I couldn’t, even do with my mother.

Uncle, after that I will not meet forever and will never trouble any more” Her movements became faster. Suddenly, I got spirited

“Maaya, Please stop. Don’t run away. I have a question for you. Tell me Maaya,

You are from Belgaum, and you had never seen me before. You want to share the secret which you have not revealed to your parents even .Why is that so and what is so special about me?”

She started laughing and gave a sarcastic look and said,” You get answer for all your doubts tomorrow. Uncle, 4.30, tomorrow, alone” In a flash of a moment she vanished. I kept on shouting “Maaya, Maaya.” It was 6 when I came home. Sudha was waiting at the door, and I had mouthful from her.

Thank God! I managed to keep her away from questioning about Maaya.

TWELVE

The whole day I was lying on the bed thinking about next day’s meeting with Maaya and its after effects. With great difficulty I went into sleep by midnight. Unusually, Sudha was fast asleep by eleven. I opened my eyes in shock, and it

was 3.30AM.I got ready with my walking dress with baton and an idol of Lord Hanuman. Sudha was in deep sleep which I was not able to understand whether it was natural or Maaya's effect. Also, I made it a point to carry the door key. When I came out at 4.15 AM the sky was bright with moon light though it was not Poornima(Full moon day).The pleasant morning breeze made me enthusiastic and energetic. As I was approaching our meeting point my mind was turning to hallucinogenic with strange and fearful thoughts. I suddenly got spirited and I was in front of Maaya .The Maaya I was witnessing was Maaya of Adbhuta Poornima with divinely beauty with a difference in dress. She was with white track suit instead of the traditional heavenly saree.

“Thank you, Uncle, for having honored my words. I am very happy to see you at this hour” The time was exactly 4.30 AM. We started moving slowly in our usual route. After a silence of few minutes, Maya broke the silence with her sweet voice.

“Uncle, first let me apologize for having lied that my husband is in USA. At that time, it was required. And which you understand very well. Now you know everything about me, my marriage and so-called husband. What I am telling now is the bare truth behind my broken marriage with Udai, which I kept as secret for obvious reasons. Uncle, my request to you is to keep that secret as secret and let it remain as eternal secret.

Uncle, you have heard the details of me and my marriage from my Dad. Udai is real smart man and trapped me in his love. The love what I used to dream used to be extraordinarily romantic and the sex that would follow would be the seventh heaven. For my shocking surprise, it turned to be one of torture and suffering from the day one. Udai, who was looking lovable, and romantic, was beastly and sadistic. In the nights his acts in the bed used to be barbaric and inhuman. He was a perverse and a molester and not a lover. I finally understood that Udai was a psychopath with no empathy of any sort. My efforts to take him to psychiatrist went unheeded. In one word, I was a spouse of a wife batterer.

Uncle, you can't even imagine what my plight was. I was like a fish out of water, neither keep it to myself nor share with others, my pain of agonizing conjugal relationship with Udai.

Uncle, you can even see some of the marks on my body of his inhuman acts.

Finally, I decided to come out of the hell created by him and took divorce."

I was moving with her silently side by side looking at her glowing face now and then.

"Uncle. my dream of love and fantasies of marital life all turned nightmarish. Chaaya remained alone starving for true love."

"Maaya, I am getting tired, I want to rest for some time"

“No Uncle, You can’t do that. I got to go. Don’t worry. You will be alright.” As she said that, I had a peculiar feeling in my body, and I was energized and became fresh.

“Are you OK Uncle? Shall I answer the questions you had asked, now?” She asked and continued.

“Uncle, Destiny played a cruel role both during living and also after. Now you know everything about my life and the end. After death, my destiny turned me to Mohini keeping all humanly desires alive, evocating me to look for a good human to fulfill my desires and denying the eternal peace to my soul.”

There was a pause and Mohini stared at me with a smile.

Oh, God! What a smile? It was a mark of Divine beauty. My eyes were filled with tears of joy.

“Uncle, why are looking like that? Hear me. I Will answer your questions.

You asked me multiple questions like ‘ I am from Belgaum , I had never seen you earlier ,What is so special about me etc. Here is my answer.

“Murthy Uncle” When she said, I was puzzled as Maaya had never called me by name

Uncle, I am Mohini and You must have understood my realm and realities by this time. You know, I am Omni present with my existence everywhere with no limits and bounds. I am also omniscient knowing everything and much more.

Regarding my choice of yours, I was looking for certain qualities in a person to move with and to share with. I was misconceived by his looks and made the wrong choice... I chose Udai and suffered. The virtues, features and fondle feelings which were missing in Udai , am finding in you. Also, Murthy Uncle, you are physically fit and mentally strong, and I am sure you would dissolve my desires and make way for my Soul to proceed for eternal.

This time I am in no way wrong, and you are the best and the right choice. I have decided to be in you and with you forever “

I suddenly stopped and was shivering.

“Murthy Uncle don’t be scared. I am no evil spirit. I am your Chaaya and do no harm to you. I will be in you as a driving spirit boosting your energy and morale.”

By the time she concluded, we were at our point of depart and She disappeared.

Suddenly I felt a shove as if somebody pushed me forward. For a moment I became blind and breathless and experienced all the pangs of suffocation. A few minutes later I felt the tender touch of broad palm upon my back and mystic voice resounded in my ears “Uncle, Good Bye. You will not see me anymore. But I am with you and with you always.” A queer feeling set in my body and my mind making me extremely joyous; the joy I had experienced on Adbhuta Poornima day after seeing Maya. I started moving forward rigorously with high energy level, in an atmosphere filled with air sweet to breathe and the sky bright with

moon light of full moon day associated with a feeling of Maya by the side with her occasional smiles.

When I reached home fresh and cheerful it was 6AM. The main door was still closed. When the door was opened it was strange to see Sudha still sleeping. Immediately, I realized that was Maaya's effect. I was anxiously waiting for her to get up and narrated in detail Maaya's eternal depart. She started cursing herself for her bad sleep .and her inability to stop me from that morning walk. I kept laughing to myself at Maaya's magical trick on her.

We decided to perform Satyanarayana Pooja and invite Anant & Anjana and Nagaraj & Suma. The pooja went well with pomp and pious. The presence of those people from Belgaum gave a lot of satisfaction to both of us. The unique thing I noticed during pooja was a sort of expression of happiness and gratitude from the face of Chaaya in the photo which I had kept by the side of God's idol. The photo I had collected from Anant and kept in my cupboard and never taken out till that day.

"Murthy Uncle, thanks for the pooja which will give me eternal peace and special thanks for having invited my parents" The tearful and emotional voice of Maaya made me to get up. I proceeded for walk with the expectation of meeting Maaya again. She was not there, but the feel of her presence and lit of her celestial voice was there all along my walk.

My morning walk continued without much interruption, but, with a change then on. That is, with neither Maaya by

the side nor her mysterious musings, instead, an imbuing spirit inside.

THIRTEEN

After a gap of almost two years Swaroop came down to India during his Semester break to stay with us for a month. We had never spoken to him about my experience of Maya or our visit to Belgaum. The reason was obvious. It was almost two weeks after his arrival and both me and Sudha were in a dilemma and undecided about informing him about Maya's episode. It was around 8PM, Sudha was making ready for Dinner, and I was sitting in front of TV. Swaroop came down in a hurry with a photo in hand and went straight to Sudha and asked "Whose photo is this? So beautiful and I had never seen this before. Are you planning for my marriage or What?". She was shocked to see Chaaya's photo and directed him to me hesitantly. After a thorough thought I felt apt and narrated my hair-raising experiences of Chaaya/Maya, starting to finish from Maya's first meet to the episode of depart. He was terrified and was not prepared to believe. He repeatedly asked "Papa! Whatever you have told is it true?" Next morning, I could not go for walk as it was too late when we went to bed.

When I came out at 5.15AM, I was not in my usual mood and started moving with Swaroop by the side. As we were on the go, I was explaining the strange experiences I used to have with Maya and showing certain eventful spots like

our meeting place, the spot where I had strange feelings before the disappearance of Maya etc. .By the time we were back home, the sky was bright, and time was 6.30 AM. Also, I showed him the paper containing Chaaya's address which came to me flying, when we reached home.Swaroop was in total confusion and after a cup of coffee he threw himself on the bed. Also, there was no discussion on the matter, further, during his stay.

It was the D-Day of departure of Swaroop back to US. His route to Atlanta was via Paris. The Air France flight was in the early morning to Paris .The taxi arrived at midnight and three of us were in Airport by 1.30 AM. All the three were outside Departure lounge as there was sufficient time for Swaroop to proceed due to his tele check- in.

We were highly emotional and were keeping mum. Swaroop broke the silence "Papa, why don't you write the story of your Maaya like Harry Potter of J.K Rowling? Your Maaya may outshine Harry Potter". This was sounding like joke but was his suppression of emotions in reality.

"Papa, Jokes apart, Pl. take care. Don't go for adventures .You better change your route and timing of walk" was the fraternal advice from son.

With a big hug to both and uncontrollable tears, Swaroop entered the departure lounge. His parting wave made us to feel as orphans. It was a difficult task for me to console Sudha. When we were back home it was 4.30 AM. For the next few days, I avoided my morning walk as I never felt like going.

The barking noise made me to wake up and the time was 4.30. With desistance I got up and got ready in my usual way for the morning walk. Sudha was fast asleep. In total dilemma of whether to follow my regular route or to take a different route, I stepped out of the house. Suddenly, I became spirited with high energy level and started moving briskly. After a few minutes I realized that I was on my original track of morning walk. Simultaneously, came to my mind the Maya's words ". I will be in you as a driving spirit boosting your energy and morale ".as a flash. My spirited walk continued with the feeling of Maaya leading me. I was feeling bad for having forgotten Maya's promise.

Ultimately, I would say Maaya nestled in my Long-term memory to call back whenever I feel like.

"The only thing that can hallow Marriage is Love and the only genuine marriage is that which is hallowed by Love"

Leo Tolstoy

2.Maala The Mohini

After a gap of 3years, we arrived at my son's place Westford about 30 Miles from Boston downtown. It took almost 2 weeks to come out jet lag and discomfort. I decided to start my walk in a small way. As suggested by Swaroop I started going round the periphery either in the morning or evening depending on the weather condition. It was

nearing a month after the arrival and I decided to take walk track outside the house, of course with the consent of Swaroop. The house is on the concord road and after a few yards there is Robinson Road to the right. At the corner of the junction these roads there is Robinson school with a big playground. In the evenings and on holidays number of people some with their spouses, some with their pets come for walk. The first day of my walk on track I went up to school and had a walk on the ground for about half an hour and returned.

TWO

On that day when came out of the house to track, a lady on the other side of the road waived and with my reciprocation. It is not new in America to wish Hai or waiving at the person coming across irrespective of the person is known or a stranger. I made a practice to start around 8AM and walk around on the school ground and

return after about 40 minutes. Invariably, I see that lady with her waive every day.

When I came out it was a few minutes more than 8 AM and didn't see that lady on the other side of the road. I started moving towards. When I entered the grounds, a sweet voice calling "Hello Uncle, why are you late" made me to turn back. That was no other than that lady. Before I could reply "Uncle, Today I am in a hurry. I will talk to you in detail some other time" she said and disappeared. For almost a week I didn't see her.

Usually, Americans never use the word "Uncle" to address somebody and that made me to guess that lady to be of Indian American. But the dress she wears for jogging/walk was typical American. Also, she had more of American features than Indian except black hairs. Later, I came to know that Italian ladies also will have black hairs.

THREE

As usual I came out of the at 8AM and didn't expect that lady as she had not appeared for a week. When I was about to turn towards school, I saw that lady coming from Robinson Road instead of her usual Concord Road making a sign to stop. She joined me after a few minutes and both of us started moving together towards the ground. Surprisingly, there was movement of a handful of people. I broke the silence 'Are you an Indian American'

"No uncle! I am Indian American Christian" she said.

“What do you mean by that” was my question

“Uncle ,I am Indian born settled in America and married to a Christian and my name Maala Joseph then and am only Maala now”. I was not able to understand clearly what she said due to her American accent of English and asked “what do you mean then and now?

“Uncle don’t put too many questions. You just call me Maala. When the time comes, you will come to know everything.

“OK” I said and started introducing myself.

She interrupted “I know your credentials uncle “.

I was surprised and got irritated with her words. “My dear young lady don’t try to fool me. How can that be possible? This is our first meeting, and we have just started talking to each other.” I said.

“Uncle! It is getting late to me. I will tell you all the details when we meet next.” She said, swiftly moved and disappeared leaving me behind. Our meeting and walking together continued with no chat but, with only a heavenly smile of Maala now and then. As the days were advancing the episodes of Maaya of Konanakunte started trickling in my mind.

FOUR

It was Saturday and weekend holiday for Swaroop. I joined him to library in the Robinson Road. Swaroop was in the

first floor looking for some books and I was at the ground floor.

“HI, uncle. how is that you are here. Have you come alone or what” was the voice of female. I turned back to see Maala.

” How come you are here”

“I keep coming here often. If you have finished and alone, I can drop you uncle” she said.

“No, Maala. My son is with me and is upstairs looking for some books.”

“Ok, uncle. I make a move.”

“Maala, please wait. I will introduce my son.”

“No uncle, I am in a hurry” she said and about to move.

By reflex, I moved to hold her hand.

“No uncle don’t try to hold me. You can’t do that “she said and moved out. By the time I came out she got into her white car and sped off. Deliberately, I hid this hap from Swaroop, and both returned home after coffee at Duncan’s Doughnut.

It was more than a month and the acts of hide and seek of Maala was going on. This deepened my suspicion towards her very existence itself. A sort of fear psychosis started setting in.

FIVE

Like other days, Maala joined me in our usual meeting point, and both started moving together. A person who was on jogging came from behind and overtook me from left where Maala was there. Neither she nor he felt the obstruction. This led to suspicion and asked Maala “how come that chap overtook without pushing you”.

“Uncle! What is this, I made him way by moving that side. How come you have not noticed” was her reply “This led to confusion and enhanced my suspicion towards Maala’s paranormal acts. Immediately, my memory went to similar acts of Maya at Konanakunte of Bangalore. When we reached the junction of Concord Road and Robinson Road she said, “Bye uncle, I am going home” and entered Robinson Road. My repeated calls to stop went unheard and she vanished. In fact, I felt belittled and became angry. After reaching home, my brain changed itself and started comparing the incidents of Maaya at Konanakunte with Maala’s scary acts.

From next day I changed my route and also the timing of walk. This change in routine gave me a semblance of peace, though the lingering thoughts of Maala's enigmatic presence refused to fade. Days turned into weeks, yet the shadows of her eerie demeanour haunted my mind. I began to question not just her existence but my own sanity. Was I imagining things? Or was Maala truly an entity not bound by ordinary rules?

SIX

It was Sunday. Swaroop and Reena were on outing. They were not happy with my denial of joining. It was touching 12 noon and Zelda the pet dog started barking continuously. Thinking that must be Swaroop and Reena I rushed and opened door. To my shocking surprise, nobody was outside. Unusually, Zelda ran back and hid behind the back wall of the room. I was about to close the door and Maala appeared calling "Don't close, I want to talk in detail about myself to clarify apprehensions about me"

Her voice was steady, yet carried an undertone of something unearthly, something that sent a chill down my spine. "Uncle," she began, stepping just inside the doorway but keeping a curious distance, "you've noticed things about me, haven't you? Things that don't seem... ordinary."

I nodded hesitantly, my hands gripping the edge of the door to steady myself. Zelda growled softly from her hiding spot, an unusual reaction for the normally friendly dog.

"There's a reason for it all," Maala continued, her eyes holding an intensity that was both mesmerizing and unsettling. "But to understand, you will have to let go of what you think you know about the world." Her words were cryptic, but they resonated with a strange clarity.

"Explain," I managed to say, my voice shaky. "What are you trying to tell me, Maala? Who—what are you?"

She tilted her head slightly, as if weighing how much to reveal. "I exist... between realms," she said finally, her voice

barely above a whisper. "Neither fully here nor entirely elsewhere. For those who notice, it can create confusion, even fear. I never intended to cause you distress, uncle. But now, I think you deserve to know the truth."

I was dumb founded and just staring at her. After a few minutes her voice "uncle, what happened" shook me and made me conscious. She stepped closer, barely a breath away and said "Uncle, I don't have much time, Please meet me at our usual meeting place tomorrow without fail. You may get answers for your questions." With that, she turned and disappeared into the day light leaving me in a mix of awe and apprehension. To make sense of this turmoil, I decided to confide in Swaroop. Later, I felt that could lead to tension and Swaroop may stop me going there, also stop my walk once and for all. So, I decided to keep the matter secret and face the consequences boldly. That night, sleep was elusive as I grappled with the weight of Maala's words and the enigmatic promise of answers awaiting me at Robinson Road.

SEVEN

That was Tuesday and day of Amavasya. I came out for walk as usual but with strange imaginations about meeting Maala. Throughout my walk I was chanting different mantras to boost my fortitude. When I reached the designated place, I didn't find Maaya instead found the atmosphere heavy and charged with an eerie silence. I stood

there, heart thumping, attempting to make sense of the inexplicable sensations that enveloped me.

I waited, glancing at my watch and then back toward the empty road. Just as I began to turn away, thinking that Maala might not appear, an odd shimmer caught my eye—a distortion in the air, faint yet undeniable. I froze, breathless. The shimmer coalesced into a form, and there she was—Maala, standing as though she had materialized out of heaven.

"You're here," I whispered, though it felt less like a question and more like a statement to myself. Her gaze met mine, steady and unblinking, and for a brief moment, the world around us seemed to pause, holding its breath. In the silence, fragments of past encounters with Maala played over in my mind. I felt inexplicably drawn to her, a mix of fear and fascination that I couldn't shake.

"Uncle! what happened? Why are you looking at me like that?"

I am sorry. I made you to wait. Do you know why, I wanted look different today. You are seeing me daily with my drab jogging dress. Uncle, tell me honestly, how I look today? Am I not looking beautiful?

There was no answer from me as I was like a statue with my eyes and mouth open. Her hand reached out brushing lightly against my arm and turned me conscious. I was flabbergasted as Maala was just like Maaya of Adbhuta Poornima with divine beauty. Her beauty, which seemed imbued with an unearthly glow, only deepened the mystery

surrounding her. With the mental aberration I asked her with trembling voice “you are Maaya or Maala”

“Uncle” she began, her voice soft and melodic, yet carrying an urgency, “why are you asking like that? This is Maala. Of course, Maaya is my friend and both of us are from the same planet. Sorry, Sorry, we are from the same place.

Uncle, I have to go, before I disappear, I want to answer all your questions and clear doubts. Please hear me.” She made me to move to the nearby bench.

“Uncle, the answer for your first question “How do you know my credential ?”

The answer is simple. I am friend of Maaya who is resting in you. She has told all the details about you and her choice to absorption in you etc.”

The next question “what the meaning of my name Maala Joseph is—now and then.

The story of mine is also tragic like Maaya’s! the difference is Maaya’s unfulfilled end happened in India and mine in this country America.”

She was looking highly emotional, and I felt her beautiful eyes were full of tears.

Uncle, I was born and brought up in Hyderabad and was the only daughter of my highly respected family. I did my engineering from Andhra university and MTech from IIT-Madras. Very much against the wishes of parents, I came to USA and did my doctorate at MIT. I got a good job I Boston. Then, I got trapped in the love of Joseph which was

not accepted by parents. That's how I became Maala Joseph. For my bad luck the marriage short lived hardly for few months. It was inevitable because of his affairs with other ladies. I remained single with all my bodily needs unfulfilled. I was in no mood for remarriage. I aloof conscience for more than a year and I neither went to India to see my parents nor they came here. Finally, with disgust in life, I decided to go back to India and live with my parents. I never dreamt even that I was such a cursed human. On that ill-fated day when I was on the way to Hyderabad, there was a midair crash of Air France flight, and no one survived. That was the end of my life at the age of 32. Further, as you know, like Maaya I also joined the universe of Mohini's as Maala the Mohini. I am yet to find a person like you to win down as a positive force."

All that was happening was like a dream and sudden disappearance Maala made me to come out of dreamland. I started looking all around with no trace of Maala. I simply leaned on the back rest of bench and closed my eyes in shock. After few minutes the voice of Maala made me to open my eyes.

"Uncle" she said softly, her luminous eyes looking on to mine, "you must understand that both Maaya and I—our existence as Mohini—is neither a blessing nor a curse. It is a passage, a bridge between realms. We are the threads woven into the fabric of destiny, connecting worlds and tying together lives. Uncle don't be scared of me. I don't do any harm to you. I pass from your sight and will never come

into your view.” Her parting words made me to close my eyes, and I leaned back.

EIGHT

“Papa! what happened to you. Are you not feeling well? We are very much scared. You are away from home for more than an hour” The worried words of Swaroop awakened and made me to open the eyes. I slowly got up with his support and followed him to the house along with Zelda.

As I followed Swaroop and Zelda back home, my mind remained caught in the intricate web of Maala’s revelations. Her parting words echoed within me, stirring countless questions and awakening emotions I hadn't known existed. Was this all a vivid illusion conjured by my restless thoughts, or had I truly glimpsed something extraordinary—a realm beyond comprehension?

It was a heart-rending farewell with Swaroop, Reena and Angshu at Boston airport. With an affectionate hug to all, I moved to check in counter. The gushing sound of Boeing 747 take-off made me to bid adieu to Swaroop and family, America too. After a flying hour almost 20, I was back to my home sweet of Bangalore and joined ever loving wife Sudha.

It took some time to come back to my routines and was in no mood to start my morning walk. After almost a week, on the wee hours of the day, I heard the voice saying “Uncle, why you have stopped the morning walk? Are you

under apprehension that I would appear and scare you. Uncle don't even dream such things. My promise of that day is "Maala's promise" which will never be untrue. Please resume. That is a must for your good health."

Those astounding words made me to jump up on the bed and made me to take the spontaneous decision to resume the walk. The time was 6AM. I got up in a hurry and moved with shoe on. I ignored the words of Sudha and stepped out for morning walk. .

When I returned home, Sudha greeted me with her warm smile, her presence grounding me. The coffee she handed me was like an anchor, and as I held the cup, I silently made a vow—to step into each day with courage, to seek beauty in the veiled intricacies of existence, just as Maala had taught me in her own otherworldly way.

To conclude I would say Maala also snuggled into my Long-term memory like Maaya and reminisce whenever I crave.

From The Same Author

1. Peeping at the pop-ups
2. Thoughts from the outer edge of my mind
3. Can love happen again and again
4. Should the story have been untold
5. What Next
6. Dreams, Desires & Decisions

About The Author



About the Author **Sreenivasa Murthy Vattam** is Mechanical Engineer by profession. He worked for 43 years after his graduation in different Engineering industries in middle and senior level management. His passion for writing started when he was an engineer in one of the industries, with technical papers. He has published a couple of technical papers in national conventions on "Quality and Reliability". After his retirement from active service his passion for the written word changed to fiction and fact-based fiction. He has to his credit six published books with agname **"VEESEM"**

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