

Serenity and Sorrow : Tribute to Gorajigri Kaul



When Gorajigri greeted you you felt a flush of affection, nostalgia, and excitement. For her people were everything that was supreme in life.

She was long-suffering, serene, and, generally, uncomplaining. She thought that there was not much choice human beings had in the way they lived life. One had to go with its flow, persevere through its inherent and unavoidable sorrow. Her strength came from this understanding of life.

She migrated to Delhi with her husband, Prem Nath Kaul (Dulloo), in 50's. This was the period of creativity in her life. She set up a home, gave birth to her three sons, and raised them good. It entailed a lot of effort, especially in Delhi's heat and dust, where the relatives were few and far away - a life vastly different from the salubrious and dreamy Kashmir she had left behind.

As life moved on she felt more settled. Her children were educated and got married and more of her relatives settled in Delhi, giving her opportunity to mingle with them - although it was still a far cry from the intense family life at Malikyar, Srinagar.

Behind her stoic acceptance of life there was a veneer of sorrow. One of her favorite expressions was:

Gaya bohoth, raha thoda, which meant that much of value in life has gone past and what is remaining is meagre. This was her philosophical outlook on life: that life is inherently sorrowful. She always intensely missed the heydays of Kaul clan at Malikyar, and also her dead brothers, Baitoth and Papaji.

But time left its inexorable marks on her life. The biggest cut it unleashed on her was the taking away of her beloved Bhaisahib (Dulloo Sahib) in 2007. Things started going downhill from then onward, especially her health. Shuttling between Delhi and Indore, where two of her sons were located, she saw a whole chunk of her life fall down. But she still persevered. The sight of a relative still lit her face up.

With me Gorajigri had a special kinship. It went to my days at Banaras, where I was studying engineering. I used to come to Delhi during breaks and Gorajigri's

home was my fervently sought destination. I knew I had a beloved aunt there who seemed to appreciate me more than my inner family did. What was it that she found in me which others had failed to see? I decided a long time ago not to probe that but be happy with my bond with her. A small Buddha statue that I brought for the family during one of my visits from Banaras created an additional link between us. It survived for a long time.

What Gorajigri leaves behind cannot be counted in material terms. She leaves behind her the aura of serenity and the love for her relatives.

A reluctant traveler she was
But never a baggage shirker,
She thought God serves those too
Who miss front-lines
And blossom in anonymity.
Beloved, your departure was merciful
But, alas, the difference to me.

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