

Thinking of Babuji

He has been dead for thirty-five years but yet he is the most beloved of the Kauls. The foundation of this magic lay in his personality. He was intense, emotional, and intelligent. He captured people's hearts by his sympathy for them and his humility. Unlike his more famous brother, Papaji, he talked with people at their level. He was a people's person rather than an "I" person. He considered friends to be more important than his family. When he would be in low spirits, and therefore uncommunicative with his family members, the visit of a friend would rocket-fire his mood.

He was born on May 8, 1917, in a middle class family. His father was the highest level Kashmiri police officer in Kashmir Valley. The death of his mother when he was at a young age must have created subtle emotional deficiencies in him, at least during his childhood. He never talked about his parents, which is abnormal. How far did he look in his past is unknown. But I believe strongly that he did not look too deeply. This is because he wanted to be a practical man and not be burned by it. But those who live their lives solely on practical basis lose something of their soul.

Babuji planned to have a PhD in history but it did not come to that. He had done M.A. L.L.B. from Lucknow University and had registered for PhD. His subject was Kashmir under Moghuls. After starting his thesis in Srinagar at some point he had to go to Lucknow, perhaps to meet his adviser. On his way to Lucknow he stopped at Delhi. His friends there told him that the newly created Kashmiri section in All India Radio was looking for a newscaster in Kashmiri. He went for the interview and was selected for the job. The PhD fell by the wayside, as he thought the economic support of his family was more important at that time. He also thought that Ph.D could be restarted later, which he never did.

During the early years in Delhi Babuji was disenchanted and disconnected with the immediate scene. He missed his life in Kashmir. It was a cruel stroke of

destiny that he was catapulted in that situation. He would come home from work and sit on a chair immobilized and speechless, drifted deep in thought, perhaps hitting the shores of his distant past.

He was sanguine about and savvy with the world. He was an optimist but without an architecture of thought behind it. He did not have any goals in life, he just followed its flow. It was the same with his thinking: he followed an instinctive sense of things, there was not much intellectual architecture to it.

In his about thirteen years of Foreign Service employment I do not think he did any extraordinary work but to go along with the flow of what was being done in the department he was in. He lacked the gumption to trying new things and dreaming of things that were within his grasp of achievement.

In 1972 a calamitous event occurred which changed Babuji's life till the rest of his life. His favorite child, Babu, suffered an automobile accident so severe that he never worked and married. Babuji's misery was immense.

Babuji's image burns high in Kaul clan, even after thirty-five years of his death, because of his emotions for his family and friends. People remember his empathy for them. His more famous brother, Papaji, missed on that frontier and, therefore, is not a cult figure as Babuji is.

Suffern, New York, April 5, 2014; Revised: May 17, 2017

www.kaulcorner.com

maharaj.kaul@yahoo.com