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SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



Dussehra's myriad hues

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COVER STORY



Stage artiste Reshmanjali's performance as an enslaved woman in recently released Odia cine play 'Sakharam Binder,' an adaptation of Vijay Tendulkar's classic of the same name, has garnered rave reviews from critics. The final year student of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalay, Bhubaneswar, loves to do painting to lay bare her inner self at her leisure.



Fun Day

Due to hectic work schedules, I hardly find quality time to spend with my family. So, I try not to miss out any opportunity to be with my kin and have unlimited fun.

Time to Reset

I work out regularly but not on Sundays since I want to reset and recharge myself to face the challenges of another week

Movie Buff

Being active in films and theatre, I often watch some select movies on the streaming platforms to improve my performance.



With actor Ashiit Kumar Patra



With cousins

Calming Nerves

Dancing always helps me unwind. Moreover, it is my favourite pastime. I join a few classmates in the evening for rehearsal and enjoy ourselves.

Tryst with Paintbrush

I love to draw faces. Each face tells an intriguing story regardless of age. I am a self-taught artist who makes face portraits by using a pencil only.

Nature Explorer

I am a nature lover. I love to explore unexplored places. I go to such place with my cousins on Sunday and enjoy the serene beauty.

RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

Send in your most interesting Whatsapp messages and memes received to: features.orissapost@gmail.com And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- I wish I could mute people in real life.
- Love may be blind, but marriage is a real eye-opener.
- WAIT! Do you have appointment to see my status.
- It's funny how when I'm loud, people tell me to be quiet. But when I'm quiet, people ask me what's wrong with me.



LAUDABLE EFFORT

Dear Sir, I would like to thank Sunday POST team for highlighting, in its last issue, the efforts of veterinarian Baram Sahoo who is working 24X7 to empower farmers on livestock rearing. It seems age is just a number for Sahoo who even after his superannuation continues to render his service for the betterment of the society. It is inspiring to learn that he wants to give back to society what he has got from it. I was surprised to know that the veterinarian has been documenting the traditional practices of healing the cattle since 2000. It's true that not many people are aware of such practices. We have plenty of traditional methods that can do wonder for the animal lives. His effort of creating awareness among the rural folks is laudable.

SANGHAMITRA DASH, BURLA

LETTERS



A WORD FOR READERS

Sunday POST is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Please send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to features.orissapost@gmail.com B-15, Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar - 751010, Orissa. Phone (0674) 2549982, 2549948



BUDDHADEV NANDI

Dussehra assuming different nomenclatures including Vijayadashami, Dasara, Dashain is the culmination of Navaratri, observed for nine days. It is considered one of the major festivals of the Hindus. Though the festival literally marks the victory of Lord Rama over the demon king Ravana, allegorically it is the triumph of good over evil, wisdom over ignorance and light over darkness.

Etymological Study: Etymologically, 'Dussehra' is a compound word in Sanskrit comprising 'Dus' signifying the number ten and 'Ahara' day. Another explanation connotes 'Dus' as Ravana's ten heads and 'hara' as defeat. Again, Vijayadashami popularly called in eastern parts of the country almost denotes the same meaning. According to the Hindu almanac, Dussehra is observed on the tenth day in the month of Ashvin that typically falls in the month of September or October in the Gregorian calendar.

Diverse faces of Durgotsav: In some parts of our country, Dussehra is observed

Dussehra's myriad hues

In Kanpur-based Dashanana temple in Uttar Pradesh, the idol of Ravana is offered the ceremonial milk bath and garlanded with marigold flowers on the occasion of Dussehra.

as a day of remorse. Bistrakh village situated near North Noida is believed to be the birthplace of the demon king Ravana. The village has been named after Vishrava, father of Ravana. Dussehra is observed here with a completely different theme with the performance of Yagnas (holy fire) craving for peace in Ravana's soul. Here, people worship a lingam in a temple on the day of Dussehra.

In another temple named Dashanana temple in Kanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, the idol of Ravana is offered the ceremonial milk bath and garlanded with marigold flowers on the occasion of Dussehra. When the effigy of Ravana is burnt in the Ramlila grounds, the gates of the temple are closed till another Dussehra next year.

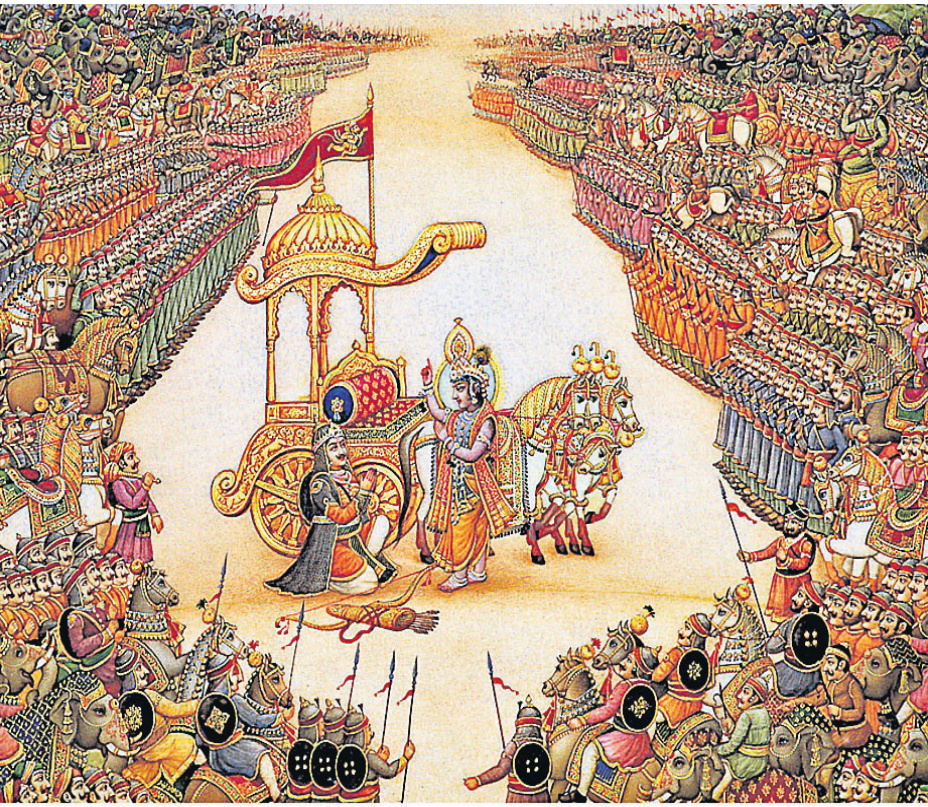
A sect, who claims themselves as the descendants of Ravana in the small town Mandore named after Ravana's wife Mandodari, in Rajasthan rent the air with the clamour of "Jai Lankesh" (hail Lankesh) on the eve of Dussehra. Even post funeral ceremonies like Shradhda and Pinda Dannam are observed wishing Ravana's soul rest in peace. Besides, in Baijnath temple in Uttarakhand, the Ravanagram temple in Madhya Pradesh and in some Gond villages in Maharashtra Dussehra is observed remorsefully.

Defeat of Ravana: The origin of the festival is replete with a number of mythological stories. One of the most popular legends has its roots in

the Ramayana. According to this Hindu scripture, the festival commemorates the defeat and death of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. Rama, the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu, along with his consort Sita and his brother Lakshmana spent the 14-year period of exile in the forest to keep his father's promise to Kaikeyi. In the meantime Ravana in retaliation for her sister's humiliation abducted Sita and held her captive in his kingdom. On the day of Dussehra i.e. the 10th day, Rama after waging a devastating battle for nine days, vanquished and killed Ravana to rescue Sita. Since then Dussehra is observed in admiration of the victory of Lord Rama, the Purusottam, over Ravana.

Victory over Mahishasura: After a long and austere penance, Mahishasura, a buffalo-demon, though prayed for immortality, was showered with an alternative boon granted by Lord Brahma that no man or god would be able to kill him. Mahishasura unleashed a reign of terror on Earth and Heaven. Then Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the Hindu Trinity Gods, coalesced their energy and anger to create Devi Durga with ten hands. Goddess Durga riding on a lion gifted by Himavan, the lord of Himalayas, was equipped with weapons given by devas. She fought with the demon king for nine days and nine nights ceaselessly till she emerged victorious on the tenth day slaying him with the trident gifted by Lord Shiva. Thus the Goddess Durga earned the title Mahishasura Mardini, the assassinator of Mahishasura. Therefore, in many places the day of Dussehra is literally observed as Devi Durga's victory over Mahishasura, the symbol of evil power.





An idol of demon king Ravan being worshipped in a temple in Uttar Pradesh

Mahabharata Association: There is another lesser known association of the day with the scripture Mahabharata. The Pandavas during their one year incognito exile in disguise hid their divine and distinctive weapons they possessed in a 'Shami' (Prosopis Spicigera) tree near their incognito residence in the kingdom of Virat. On the auspicious day of Dussehra the year of their incognito exile ended and the Pandavas returned to the spot. There they worshipped both the Shami tree and the Goddess Durga, presiding deity of strength and victory. In the meantime, they were forced to be entangled in a battle as the Kauravas invaded there to expose the identity of the disguised Pandava brothers.



However, Arjuna alone defeated the Kauravas and the day is recognized as 'Vijayadashami' or the day of victory. Since then Shami trees and weapons have been worshipped. It is popularly known as Shami or Jammi Puja and the exchange of the leaves of the tree symbolizes good will and victory as well.

Day of Preceptor's Fee: Another legend related to the day of Dussehra is of Kausta, a Brahmin boy who was the son of Devadatta. After the completion of his education under the guidance of his Guru Sage Varatantu, Kausta insisted on him to accept the preceptor's fee. Then the preceptor wanted 140 million gold coins at the rate of 10 million for each of the 14 sciences that he had taught Kausta. Kausta went to King Raghu, an ancestor of Lord Rama and famous for his generosity, to pay the preceptor's fee. King Raghu pleaded to Devraj Indra who directed Kuber, the god of wealth, to shower a rain

of gold coins as many as the number of leaves in all the Aapati (Bauhinia racemosa) trees commonly known as bidi leaf trees. Kubera made a rain of Gold coins to enable Kausta to pay the preceptor's fee. Therefore, there is a custom of exchanging the leaves of Apati tree popularly known as Sonpatta (leaves of gold) among people on the day of Dussehra.

Multifarious Celebrations: The Hindu festival of Dussehra or Vijayadashami is celebrated in different ways in different parts of India. The most popular celebration is that on the tenth day of the waxing moon the huge ef-

figs of burning torches at the explosive-stuffed effigies of Meghnada, Kumbhakarna and Ravana respectively. The crowd bursts out in cheer clamouring "Ramchandra ki jai" (Victory to Ramachandra). Thus the effigies are ablaze signifying the victory of good over evil.

Celebrations in Eastern India: In Odisha and Bengal the day is observed almost in the same way. Bisarjan (immersion) is the important ritual of the day. Aparajita (a kind of white shrub) puja is performed on the day. It is followed by 'Sindur Khela' (playing with vermilion) which is popular especially in Bengal. Devi Durga in Bengal is equated with the married daughter visiting her father's home with her children for a few days. So the day is observed with remorse symbolizing the return to her husband's house in Kailas. In the evening, people hug and exchange goodwill and entertain one another by serving sweets.



figs of ten-headed Ravana, his demon brother Kumbhkarna and son Meghnada implanted insides with firecrackers and explosives are set in vast open grounds. Persons attired with the dresses of Rama and Lakshmana enact the battle depicted in the Ramayana. After sunset, the person playing the role of Rama targets and shoots ar-

Coronasur: In the present pandemic situation it is believed by many that Goddess Durga this year will not be slaying Mahishasura but Coronasura on the day of Dussehra to save the earth from virulent breath of the virus. Therefore, many artisans are shaping the demon's head with the spikes of the virus.

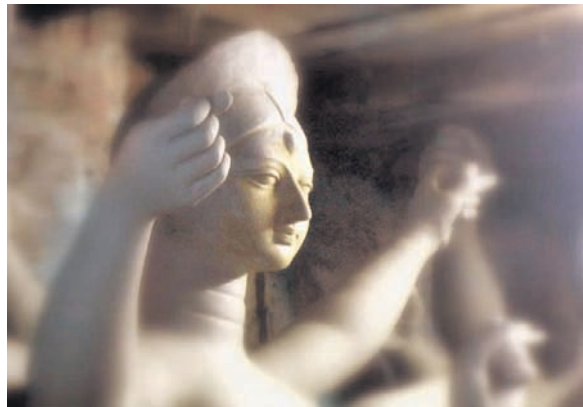




A Festival of Immense Spiritual Importance

FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME, THE WORLD HAS SEEN A BATTLE BETWEEN GODS AND DEMONS. THE GODS' POWER REFLECTS OUR DESIRE TO DO DHARMIKA ACTION AS PRESCRIBED BY THE SHASTRAS, WHILE THE DEMONS' POWER REPRESENTS OUR DESIRE FOR ANTI-DHARMIKA PLEASURE

The Hindu festival of Navratri, also known as Durga Puja, is a festival of great importance and we're sure all of us will be celebrating it with zeal. We might be well-versed on Goddess Durga's nine manifestations and the different methods



to commemorate the event, including food and dance in the forms of Dandiya and Garba. But do we realise the spiritual significance of the nine-day festival? Let us throw some light on that important aspect.

form of Kaali. Mahakala has a consort named Kali. Kala or Mahakala is the special aspect of God that he assumed for the destruction of the world. The influence of time, or Kala, destroys all objects in the world.

Shri Krishna showed Arjuna his terrible all-destroying form in the Bhagavad-Gita and declared, "I am Time (Kaala), the destroyer of everything. "God's Kaali is the power by which he destroys all objects in the universe. As a result, Kaali's appearance is terrifying. She lives on a cremation ground and wears a necklace made up of human heads. In one hand, she wields an axe, while in the other, she wields a human head. Kaali's other two hands are in the position of dispensing boons and rescuing people from fear.

The Divine Mother's smile lights up the cremation ground as if She is beaming and saying, "Foolish child, why fear death?" The body can be destroyed by death, but not the soul. The soul receives a new body when one is destroyed."

...and the Legends

Durga was born twice, once as Sati, Daksha's daughter, and again as Parvati, Himavan's daughter. The word 'Daksha' signifies 'action skill.' When good or Shiva is combined with the force that comes from skill in action, it becomes complete.

Sati, Daksha's daughter, found happiness in her union with Shiva. Daksha desired Shiva to bow down to him likewise a man of action desires the world's good to be submissive to him. Daksha's attempt, however, was unsuccessful. This infuriated him. He insulted Shiva and was destroyed as a result. Finally, Shiva restored Daksha after the supplication of

Daksha's wife; however, the head of a goat was glued to his body, indicating that activity without Shiva is an indication of the beastly nature. Sati renounced the body she had inherited from Daksha (the anti-Shiva) and was reborn as the daughter of Himavan, the monarch of the gods' resting places.

Parvati was unable to entice Shiva with her physical charms. She practised austerities to achieve mental beauty, and as a result, Shiva became her spouse.

In the ten hands, there are ten distinct weapons. Durga takes on the task of killing demons using these weapons. Durga sits atop a lion, a symbol of power and aggression focused against the forces of the devils. From the beginning of time, the world has seen a battle between gods and demons. The gods' power reflects our desire to do Dharmika action as prescribed by the Shastras, while the demons' power represents our desire for anti-Dharmika pleasure.

Man's drive for pleasure is both natural and intense and the urge to undertake the Shastric /Dharmic actions is surprisingly weak. The Markandeya Purana, tells the story of Durga's worship. There are three parts to the story. The second section describes Durga's appearance. The gods went to Shiva and Vishnu after being defeated by the demons. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and all the other gods' bodies emitted haloes of light. These haloes of light came together and formed a woman. Durga was represented by this figure.

Durga was given weapons by the gods. Durga defeated the demons and went on to battle Mahisasura, the devils' commander. Durga stomped on the demon's back and slashed him in the throat with a lance. As a result, the devil emerged from the buffalo's body. Durga sliced off the demon's head with her sword as soon as half of his figure emerged. The demon wept bitterly. The gods were overjoyed, and they began to praise Durga.

Desire, anger, covetousness and many more demons live in us, our inclination to follow the Shastras or the path of Dharma represents the gods. Desire, anger, ego etc., are strong impediments in the way of our God-realisation. If we worship God, desire, anger, ego etc., are destroyed by his power. Then we can attain success in our spiritual journey.

So this Durga Puja let us all pray to Maa that she blesses us with the power to combat and come out victorious having defeated all spiritual and material forces that challenge us in life.



PARITI. GAYATHRI

Prabhas collaborates with *Kabir Singh* director



Prabhas recently took to his Instagram handle to announce his 25th film, titled *Spirit*. This project marks the coming together of the Telugu actor with a pan-India following and acclaimed director.

The film will be released in eight languages — Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Mandarin, Japanese and Korean. The filmmaker has delivered the box-office blockbusters like *Arjun Reddy* in Telugu and *Kabir Singh* in Hindi. The producers of *Spirit* said Sandeep has penned a never-before-seen story for Prabhas and the project will be mounted on a massive scale.

According to the makers, *Spirit* will be released worldwide in multiple regional and international languages including Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Japanese, Mandarin and Korean.

“Working with Bhushan Kumar has always been easy and comforting and he is one of the best producers we have, who I share a great rapport. It’s an amazing storyline and I can’t wait to start working on *Spirit* as my fans are eagerly waiting to see me in this avatar for a long time,” said the actor.

AGENCIES



MANA MO NEIGALU RE SET FOR PUJA RELEASE

Bhoomika Dash-starrer *Mana Mo Neigalu Re* is set for a Dussehra release.

Talking about the storyline, Bhoomika says, “Though the title of the movie indicates to be a romantic flick, it has elements to draw the family audience to the theatres. The plot revolves around the youths and how they get distracted from their goals once they enter the colleges. But at the end of the day, they realise that college days are not meant for having fun only. I believe

the students can identify themselves with the storyline. So, it is a must watch for them.”

Directed by Sanjay Nayak, the film also has Premanjan Parida, Ashru Mochan, Biju Badjena, Jiban Panda, Guddu and Gyana in central characters.

Post-production works of the movie are in full swing and it is set for a Dussehra release.

PNN



Asit Pati makes directorial debut

Veteran actor Asit Pati known mostly for playing baddies in Odia movies is all set to direct his first movie. Titled *Bhabe Sina Kabhipareni*, the film is being made under the banner of Debolina Productions.

Produced by Pankaj Rout, the film has Avieskh Rath, Archita Mohanty, Dushmanta Panda, Asit Pati, Sushil Mishra, Pradyumna Lenka, Manisha Rath, Pupun and Preeti in stellar roles. Script and music of the movie are being taken care of by Chinmay Das Patnaik while Babu Da will be assisting Pati in direction.

About the plot, Avieskh says, “I am playing the responsible son of a strict army official. Though I have great respect for my parents and elder brother, I always stand against the wrongs. I fall in love with a girl but my family does not approve of it. How I convince my parents and in-laws for the marriage forms the crux of the movie.”

Shooting is in full swing and the film is slated for a Kali Puja release.

PNN

Nora serves Morocco on a plate!

Actress Nora Fatehi, who is from Morocco, dishes out two well-known Moroccan dishes — Chicken Tagine and Lamb Harira — as part of a food show and feeds two of her close friends, rapper Badshah and her make-up artist Marcelo Pedrozo.

Being one of the participants of the food show *Star Vs Food Season 2*, Nora cooked two dishes and shared her best memories of Moroccan food and culture and her love for Indian cinema. She cooked under the guidance of engineer-turned-chef, Rahul Desai, who is the Executive Chef at Blah! Mumbai.

Nora said, “When it comes to Moroccan culture our women really take hosting seriously, it’s part of our culture to feed, feed, feed and people should eat, eat, eat when they come to our house. And it was an emotional moment because I got to feed my friends and they reacted so well, and I felt good... it was nice.”

Born and brought up in a Moroccan household living in Canada, she then moved to Saudi Arabia before entering Hindi film industry, Nora shared how she eventually learnt Hindi.

IAN S



JAYSHREE MISRA TRIPATHI

Janaki brooded over this sudden turn for the worse. The excruciating pain from the cancer gnawing away at her life made her flinch. It was too late now to regret all the betel nut paans she had chewed over the years. She longed for one even now. Wait, the important thing was to muster up enough will power to beat the odds. She had to see her son again. Sunita, her daughter, had called him, saying it was necessary. Cruel, perhaps, but a necessary cruelty. The jataka had said that once her son left for a foreign city, he would never see her again. That was three years ago. If only she could thwart that prediction, even if her beliefs about karma were deeply ingrained.

Sunita and Sumant. Her two children. Both in their twenties. They had not been civil to each other for three years now. "Why? Why, Prabhu?" "Where do we parents go wrong? Why do our children go their separate ways despite of all the love we shower on them? Despite all that we try to do for them?" Janaki thought of the years she had struggled to bring them up. Married at sixteen, widowed at twenty, with two babies. Life, with all its unpredictability, had struck her in the gut. And now she could barely recall her dear husband's face – it was all so long ago. The few photographs there were offered some comfort. It had been a good thing that the extended family was well off. She, however, planned to do something for herself, much to the indignant disdain of the other members of their joint family. Where did she get such notions from? An unkind hint at her upbringing. Somehow Janaki's determination saw her through all their cutting remarks.

Janaki's mother had taught her how to sew and embroider. Nimble with her fingers, she began sewing frocks for the daughters in the family, embroidering them, with smocking, then asking her relatives for a modest token amount. She reasoned it was better they paid her, rather than the local durzi. It had shocked them at first. With a certain degree of calculated modesty, she made them believe it would make her feel useful, as her husband was no longer there to be her provider. She did not want to be a burden on them. Oh, the vanity of man!! It had worked! Then she stitched saree blouses, similar to those she had seen in a magazine that a relative had brought home from the city. Janaki had a quick eye and nimble fingers. She experimented and soon made comfortable, yet stylish blouses that fitted

Mother

To leave the sanctity of a home is difficult anywhere in the world. In India, there is no question of a widow returning to her parents' home. It is hard to imagine a young widow asserting her independence in the present-day rural context. Fifty years ago, it would have resulted in being excommunicated from the clan.

well and proved very popular. It was a short-lived victory. Her family and the village men folk made it impossible for her, with their sneers and demeaning remarks. It was then she decided to leave. This would be the trial by fire. Afraid of her relatives and their tempers, Janaki decided to bow her head and just listen to their threats. They raved and ranted. She bit back any retorts, tears streaming from her face, fear in her breast, but, somehow, she stood firm. They finally yielded. But she would not be welcomed back ever again. Ever. She was revolting against the very essence of their tradition. Her defiance could not be condoned. Janaki would be excommunicated from their clan and forfeit any claim to them or their property. The ancient stoic faces convulsed around her in anger, but some tiny ray of hope flickered deep inside her, kept her from fainting.

Janaki took leave of her elders with sincere respect and decorum, touching their feet, for the last time, as they had insisted, asking for their blessings. Each one of them remained impassive. It broke her spirit, but there could be no turning back. Janaki knew this meant she had become unworthy, still, she must go, for the sake of her children. Sunita and Sumant smiled valiantly, holding on to her, as they rattled down, away from the safety of their home, on a bullock-cart. The main road, where the buses plyed to the city, was half-an-hour's journey away. It took almost two hours to board a bus and another six, to reach the city. Janaki hid her face within her saree pallu, then calmly decided she should not. She stood up straight and spoke directly to the man at the door of a house that had been pointed out to them, as being open to lodgers.

His wife stood behind him; her mouth wide open in astonishment at this fearless act of defiance. Janaki softly explained her situation. Soon, they were ensconced in a small room. Their home. Their very own home. The first step forward. The years had been hard ones. Janaki struggled daily, even if her fingers were often raw with all the needlework, to meet deadlines and complete her housework. She was determined to carve a livelihood for herself and a good life for her children.

Payments in the city were good.

Orders piled up. She enrolled the children in a nearby school where they settled in quickly, pleasing her weary heart with their chatter and

progress. It was only when they reached adolescence that Janaki realised the extent to which her children had drifted apart. Sumant was a year older, but they had been enrolled in the same class. It was Sunita who shone at school, bringing home prizes and certificates. She was very popular too. Sumant was a loner. In college they went their separate ways. The pain intensified suddenly. Janaki willed herself to continue with her reminiscences, but the years passed in hazy confusion. She tried to piece the threads together and struggled with Yama, the god of death, for more time, a little more time, to remember. Sunita was soon teaching at her college. Then her wedding was arranged, with her approval, to a pleasant young man, a lecturer too, at the same university. Janaki was content. Till the day Sumant came home and revealed his imminent departure for the U.S., on a doctoral scholarship. His words, she remembered, came out in a torrent of self-defense. Janaki had smiled and blessed him, regardless of the panic that gripped her. That was that. The family astrologer, however, forebode the outcome of his choice – he would never see his mother again if he left. Janaki had dismissed this uneasily, as Sumant was determined to leave. Sunita stopped talking to him. They parted like that. This broke Janaki's heart, but she held her peace. Janaki winced as another deep attack of pain assailed her, confronting her with the knowledge that it would end now. She could feel it, breathe it, this sense of death. She wanted to say something to comfort her daughter, but she could only silently despair. The spasms of pain increased in intensity. Janaki glanced at her daughter. Whispered her son's name. "Prabhu, Prabhu... God!" Sunita heard the whisper and was filled with uncontrollable rage.

Mother was gone and the sudden void choked her with fright. This wrath against her brother, a culmination of all that he had been able to do, his going abroad, his detachment from her, squeezed her heart, or was she imagining it? She could barely breathe as the nurses began to ease her onto the bed. Sumant arrived a few hours later to find his mother gone and his sister asleep. She had fainted, the loyal helpers whispered. He cried for the first time in many years. He prayed, also for the first time in many years, for his sister, as images of their childhood flashed before him... his classmates taunting him... Sunita, shielding him from the bullies, helping him with his homework, giving him extra biscuits. Little things. How he had resented her over the years, how bitter she made him feel. And yet... Sunita awoke and found her brother slouched in a chair, his face in his arms. She could not hate him. But she hurt inside, for all the affection she had craved and never received. Some inner force prompted her to reach out for his hand. Probably Ma, she thought. Startled, he looked up, grasped her hand in his, crying openly for all their sorrows, all the time lost. If only Ma had seen them like this. There was always tomorrow to resolve today's misfortune.

Sunita closed her eyes, praying it was not too late to be friends, stifling the sudden anger that swelled unbidden to her mind's eye. Why couldn't Ma have seen them like this? Tomorrow. They would talk tomorrow. She did not know whether she could forgive him. Tomorrow. She would think about it tomorrow.

Illustration by Manamayee DashRath

(THE FICTION IS SET BETWEEN 1950-60. THE WRITER HAS BEEN A CONSULTANT, EDUCATOR AND EXAMINER IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE)



Trishna



PHOTO: KUMAR SHARAI, OP