

# SACH

South Asian Composite Heritage

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## Peace and Harmony in Times of Corona

In 2020, the global epidemic called Corona or Covid-19 has spread all around world. South Asia one of the most populous regions with fragile health, social welfare, communications and governance systems is also facing rapid rise in Covid-19 cases. To tackle the situation most of the South Asia countries have gone under lockdown. However, there is no definite end to the pandemic. It is already having a devastating effect on families, communities and economies, and we are still to see the full impact on the poorest countries. Its outbreak has aggravated pre-existing, various kinds of social stigmas, stereotyping and discrimination, misconception based on caste, gender, class and ethnicity. The term social distancing, instead of positive has shown devastating impact. People started treating each other like contagious disease based on their religion and ethnicity. They stigmatized, denied and isolate the medical staff. Poor migrant laborers in Indian and Nepal and refugees in Bangladesh lost their lives due to starvation. There was unfair treatment towards patients from poor and middle class groups and increase in domestic violence against on women in past few months. The hatred towards Muslim during pandemic where they have been accused of being “super spreaders” of corona virus has reached high.

However, this pandemic has shown us the positive side as well; it has shown that humanity and values are still prevalent in society. There is no doubt that COVID-19 is one of the direct threats the world has ever faced. Yet, amidst the confusion and anxiety, there are ever stronger signs of hope and solidarity, a sense of, and desire for, togetherness. During this pandemic/lockdown people have realised the values of family and friends, they have become more connected to humanity and are spreading love. Despite of negative things we have seen positive culture and heritage through which the world came together in ways that we have not seen for some time, and the examples are everywhere. In India Sikh community people and volunteers are serving food and ration without any discrimination, they even cleaned and sanitized the Delhi's Jama Masjid on Eid. Artist have come together to perform and raise fund for needy people. A group of Transgender in Chennai teamed up to feed the destitute until the lockdown is lifted. Farmlands are echoing with traditional folk songs. In Nepal, youth volunteers were building awareness through radio programmes, and volunteering in Hospitals where no one wants to work. People realized the importance of art and culture; they became nostalgic and connected through food.

Such examples have created a positive impact and have strengthened unity and brotherhood by eliminating tension and conflict. During this crisis, we have relived our culture values that have helped in revival of our Composite Heritage. This time has shown us that implementing the moral values and Composite Heritage that we have inherited from our great grandparents and generations before them can surely help us in spreading love and peace. It has shown that among all the negative forces there is always a positive aspect, a ray of hope that connects us to each other and helps us in saving humanity, trust and brotherhood.

# The Before Times

By **BONNIE SHAWOMA**, NEWYORK

Before we were living in a pandemic, we went to lunch with our friends in restaurants & slurped soup with crackers we crushed with our bare fingers, our ordinary fingers that did not ignite terror, that were not vectors of disease.

Before the days of self-isolation, shopping was just another chore, sometimes a pleasure, a stroll through Costco sampling from little paper cups protein bars & chocolate candies & popcorn & potato chips, strolling & sampling & buying big bags of broccoli & spinach & Asian cashew salad & giant containers of gourmet cheese & yes, toilet paper.

The Before Times have receded deep into memory as if all of that happened ten, no, twenty years ago when we lived in another land of freedom & movement & laughter & hugging & sitting in each other's living rooms, living, alive, chatting for hours without measuring the social distance, without wearing N95 surgical masks or nitrile gloves, without anxious fear.

Now we are living in another land, frightened & confused, our minds always tasked with remembering to wash our hands, not touch our faces, not touch packages or mail without gloves & Clorox wipes & yes, remembering to worry, as if anxious worry could create a high wall surrounded by a moat of reeking & fuming disinfectant to keep us safe in this new land of contamination & fever & suffocation & death.

We must not forget the Before Times, when we could touch doorknobs, doorbells, the mail, U.P.S. packages, restaurant tabletops, colleagues' keyboards, other people's hands, our own faces. We must not forget dinner parties, book groups, political rallies, concerts, movies, worship services, protests, weddings, funerals. In the Before Times we shared our joys & sorrows together. Will we ever live together again?

*Courtesy : nytimes.com*

# Dispatch From India : Tales of Hope Amid Coronavirus Crisis

By NOMA NAZISH, INDIA

IT'S 6 p.m. here right now, but the peace and quiet all around and the crisp, fresh air suggests that it could very well have been 6 in the morning. There's no traffic, no incessant whirring and clunking of machinery at the nearby



construction site. All shops—except for a handful that sell daily essentials—are shuttered down. The local park and playground are empty.

No kids are racing each other on bicycles, no groups of elderly people chatting and strolling, no momos (Indian dumpling) and ice cream stalls are lined near the sidewalk. Just a lone policeman patrolling the streets with his mask firmly in place.

The beautiful weather, young green leaves on trees and the oddly calming stillness all around almost make me think that there's nothing wrong with the world. Almost. Because my mind is quick to remind me of what I was doing just before I sat down with my laptop. Carefully wiping down bags after bags of cat food and litter that I had purchased this afternoon for our tripod tabby. My mom, at this very moment, is busy diligently disinfecting the ten and hundred

rupee bills with sanitizer wipes—it's the change she got from the local vegetable vendor. He's the only one who is allowed to enter our residential area now because of the 21-day nationwide lockdown.

All govern-

ment and private offices, commercial establishments, schools, colleges, transportation services, etc. are closed—barring few essential services (like hospitals, banks, gas stations and public utilities)—in an attempt to contain the scourge of novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that has infected over 2,000 people across the country till date.

Different states have implemented lockdown rules of varying degrees—some tighter than others. For instance, in the southernmost state of Tamil Nadu, essential goods shops are operational between 6 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. only. However, drug stores and eateries (only ones that offer takeaway) are allowed to remain open through the day. Similarly, in other states like Uttarakhand, Kerala and Punjab, shops selling essential commodities are allowed to function only for a few hours per day. Meanwhile, in Delhi as well as in Maharashtra—a west Indian state,

shops selling essential commodities (milk, dry ration, fruits and vegetables, meat, medicines, etc.) are allowed to open round the clock. Whereas in the northeastern state of Assam, only grocery and medical stores remain open, following reports of mass violation of social distancing guidelines at local vegetable, fish and meat markets. While both the central and state governments are actively working on implementing new measures to battle COVID-19, and fixing logistical glitches in existing lockdown procedures, it's the ordinary citizens and their extraordinary acts of kindness that have proven to be a bright spot in this dark and desolate time.

Heartwarming stories of altruism are surfacing across the country every day, feeding us with hope and strength.

Let's start with the southwestern state of Karnataka where marketing professional Mahita Nagaraj is tirelessly working, fielding over 400 calls a day, to help the elderly, disabled, chronically ill and anyone who has a child less than one-year-old. Inspired by the Canadian altruistic trend of 'caremongering', Nagarajan is spearheading a similar initiative called Caremongering India that now has over 6,500 volunteers dedicated to helping those who are most vulnerable.

In another example of solidarity, in the eastern state of Odisha, Sushila Bahadur and fellow residents of Ganesh Nagar, Sambalpur are helping daily wage laborers in their locality by providing them dry ration until the curfew is lifted. Each economically challenged household is provided with 11 pounds of rice and nearly three pounds of lentil beans along with soaps and hand sanitizers. They have also been asked to inform the volunteers when their supplies run out or if they need any medical assistance.

In Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra, animal rights activist and wildlife rescuer Lynette D'Souza has come forward to help the daily wage earners across the city by providing them free groceries. While, another good Samaritan in the same city, Afzal Jiva, has started his own initiative of serving tea

and snacks to the private security guards in his locality every day during the lockdown. Private security personnel are among the frontline heroes in India's battle against COVID-19. In Nashik, another city in Maharashtra, small-scale farmer Datta Ram Patil is helping the needy by distributing wheat harvest from one acre of his three-acre land—showing that kindness, indeed, has no bounds.

Meanwhile, in the northernmost state of Jammu and Kashmir, 87-year-old Khalida Begum who had saved up five lakh rupees (\$6,544 approx.) for the Hajj pilgrimage has donated the entire sum to a local community aid organization that's helping the poor amid the coronavirus threat. In a similar gesture of kindness, 16-year-old cricketer Richa Ghosh from West Bengal has donated an impressive sum of one lakh rupees (\$1,309 approx.), from her prize winnings, to Bengal Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the fight against COVID-19.

Even kids as young as six and seven years old have joined the forces against the deadly virus. For example, in the northeastern state of Mizoram, seven-year-old Rommel Lalmuansanga has given his entire pocket money, a total of 333 rupees (\$5 approx.), to the COVID-19 task force in his village. Similarly, seven-year-old Syed Anis from Tamil Nadu has donated his entire piggy bank savings of 845 rupees (\$11 approx.) to help the migrant daily wagers who have been hit the hardest by the lockdown.

The 21-day restriction on movement has spurred a mass exodus of migrants—which is now being deemed as the biggest exodus India has witnessed since the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. As all public transportation has been shut down, hundreds of thousands of rural migrant workers, who are now without a job or pay, are traveling on foot from across different cities and towns in a desperate attempt to return to their native villages.

While the central and state authorities are working on implementing various relief measures to help them, it's the common people

and their random acts of kindness that are reinforcing the idea that human compassion is just as contagious as any virus

For instance, in Bareilly and Prayagraj—two cities in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, transgender people are using their own savings to help the underprivileged during the crisis. A group of around 50 trans people in Bareilly have teamed up to feed the destitute every day until the lockdown is lifted. While in Prayagraj, 30 transgender people have banded together to provide food and water to the homeless as well as migrant daily wage earners who are returning to their native towns and villages.

Similarly, in Telangana—a state in southern India—District Principal and Sessions Judge K. Sai Rama Devi and Deputy Superintendent of Police P. Sridhar Reddy stepped up to help around 100 migrant laborers who had entered their city after walking for over 30 miles. The Judge provided them food at the District Court premises and arranged for transport to help them reach their destinations.

In Kerala, retired telephone operator Abdul Khader has taken over a hundred distraught migrant workers under his wing—providing accommodation and free meals to them until the stay-at-home order is lifted. While another good samaritan from the same state, CE Chakunny, has waived rent of over a hundred shops—bearing a massive loss of 12 lakh rupees (\$15,700 approx.)—as he realized most small business owners are financially struggling during this time and won't be able to pay the rent.

Meanwhile, in the southeastern state of Andhra Pradesh, a young dairy farmer named Jiddu Krishna is going the extra mile just to feed kids amid lockdown by continuing to deliver milk to more than 30 households that have children.

Even police officials across different states are pitching in to help the locals during these difficult times. For example, in Kokrajhar district of the northeastern state of Assam, local cops are winning hearts for feeding hundreds of migrant daily wagers who had

arrived in the state from different parts of the country, before putting them in quarantine. The police personnel are also assisting the elderly in the area by delivering essential goods, including medication, at their doorstep. In a similar compassionate gesture, policemen in Amritsar, a city in the northern state of Punjab, helped an elderly vegetable seller by buying his entire stock of fresh produce before sending him home for shelter in place. The cops later distributed those vegetables among the needy in the area. Yet another random act of kindness was reported from Chandigarh where the police officials distributed free pizzas and hand sanitizers to kids in various parts of the city to cheer them up amid coronavirus concerns.

What's more, some people are also pitching in for the furry, four-legged residents of the country. For instance, in Jaipur—the capital city of the western state of Rajasthan—civic authorities have partnered with local NGOs to feed around 15,000 Chapatis (Indian flatbread) to the stray animals and birds in the city every day during the lockdown. Some states like Delhi, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu are even issuing special passes to animal lovers who want to feed the strays and birds in their area. Even celebrities from around the country—from Bollywood actors and athletes to business tycoons—are pledging millions in donations toward combating the pandemic.

Some of you may wonder why I'm reporting about these seemingly small incidents when there's so much wrong happening in the country. Well, because these stories deserve to be in the spotlight too. Sometimes, finding the slightest glimmer of light is just what we need to get through the darkest of times. These stories are a moving reminder that at the end of the day, it's love and kindness that help us survive and thrive—both individually and collectively as humanity. I just hope that we don't forget this imperative truth when the dust settles and life gets back to normal; whatever that is.

*Courtesy: forbes.com*

# Movement Lockdown — A Ray of Hope For The Needy

By **ABHIRAMI RAO**, INDIA

**IN** this overwhelming situation of lockdown and social distancing, artistes have been keeping up the spirits with live performances on social media and conducting online classes. Amidst all this, they have not forgotten their social responsibility. A look at some of the fundraising initiatives taken up by artistes.

“Through a network of artistes and organisations engaged in performing art fields across Tamil Nadu, we identified people from about 20 different art forms, who are facing an economic impact,” says T.M. Krishna, who web-streamed the #ShutInConcert, to raise funds in association with the Sumanasa Foundation. He says that they have been able to support about 550 families. While mainstream or popular art forms have shifted course to a digital platform for the time being, he mentions how art performances in small towns, villages and temples have completely stopped. “There is no online audience for them, let alone market,” he exclaims. Adding that within the socio-culturally privileged art forms there are many, who live on the margins (for example, nagaswaram and thavil artistes in the Carnatic world) who do



not have this online stage. “Let us focus on these people,” he says.

Trance Effect, the Indie Pop Rock Band from Nagaland, brings together the seventh edition of Kerplunk, which will be live streamed along with 50 artistes from across the country. Qrated, in association with The Indian Music Diaries and Skill Box, is collaborating on the ‘Kerplunk 7 —

Live Stream — Pledge for Music’ to raise funds for artistes from local circuits around the country who have lost income due to the cancellation of scheduled gigs or performances. “This crowd funding campaign is one of the ways in which we plan to provide a platform to these artistes from where they can derive revenue. We will continue to find ways to help them sustain themselves, and will work towards providing them platforms to keep independent music alive,” says Kaushik Jai Barua, Qrated founder. He adds, “We urge you to pay for the art you consume online, even if it is a live stream, just as you would have paid to attend a live show. Every contribution goes a long way towards sustaining the live music industry at this point. All proceeds go directly

to the artistes.”

### PLATES FOR A PURPOSE

Chitresh founded ‘The Plated Project’ as a way of using innovation to create societal impact. An attempt to use art to end hunger, the outfit works with global artistes and creates limited edition art-plates with them. “We launched ‘21 Days Of Hope’ to coincide with the 21-day nationwide lockdown to spread positivity and hope. Over the 21 days, we shared heart-warming acts of kindness every single day along with an artiste’s creation that depicts the gesture,” he says. Utilising art as a face for fund-raising causes, he adds, “We are also focussing on one charity a day and directing people to contribute to it. Usually we sell plates and the profits generated are donated to a charity, linked to the theme. We have collaborated with organisations such as ‘Save the children India,’ ‘Kranti,’ ‘Le5,’ ‘Marriott International,’ ‘Le15’ and more. In the case of ‘21 Days of Hope,’ we asked people to directly contribute to the charity.”

In an attempt to ease the state of anxiety and restlessness, Samarpana for Art and Wellbeing launched the ‘Art Heals’ campaign. A curated series of dance, music and live art sessions, hosted on their Instagram page (@samarpanaforartsandwellbeing), serves as the face of the fund-raising campaign. “With the lockdown in place, a couple of our dancer peers suggested trying fundraisers with donation links. It was actually quite overwhelming to see so many people coming forward and donating. The funds collected are split between us and the Ananya Trust (Bengaluru),” says founder, Gayathri Suryanarayanan. She explains how through the funds collected in Bengaluru they have given Rs. 10,000 to 40 artistes.

Along with a team of five volunteers, the team in Chennai reaches out to autorickshaw drivers, launderers (dhobi), plumbers, housemaids, security personnel, cooks, tender coconut sellers, etc. After identifying 50 people who have health issues

with limited access to medicines, funds between Rs. 2,500 and Rs. 7,500 have been transferred. This is said to have been of a great help to many. “We’ve also been trying to go through our contacts and reach out to 50 local folk artistes. Essential food supplies for 200 migrant daily wage labourers, who don’t have ration cards or provisions that may be extended by the government, have also been taken up,” she says.

Varshini Ramakrishnan reminisces how she created a novel series of illustrations last year. “It shows the life of daily workers and how they contribute to the smooth functioning of our society. Giving them visibility has been the focus of her art,” says Mahima Poddar, the woman behind The Kindness Foundation, which in association with the Chennai Task Force and Aram Porul have also set up donation links.

### POSITIVE ASPECTS OF LIFE

Varshini emphasises on the need to depict a positive image rather than their miserable plight. Those contributing above 200 also get a print of her illustrations. “We help the Chennai Corporation feed the migrant workers and beggars in shelters, and extend provisions via NGOs to old age homes. We’re also helping families in the slums and other settlements, who are low on supplies or have inadequate access to provisions,” says Mahima. “The response to Varshini’s artwork has been heartening, with many coming forward to contribute. That confirms my belief that art does play a role in being motivated to be a part of a cause. In the process, it feels therapeutic for all those involved,” she says.

### A CHALLENGE

All these initiatives not only bolster the efforts of the organised sector but also highlight some lacunae. For instance, the lack of a database of artistes and associations/institutions. This poses fund-raisers a huge challenge. Most of the daily wage workers connected to the arts sector or local artistes

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# COVID-19: J&K Artists Step in, Use Social Media For Songs And Awareness

By ISHFAQ-UL-HASSAN, INDIA

**FOR** once forget Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan, tune in to the heartwarming TikTok messages of the local Kashmiri artists to spread awareness about COVID 19.

From famous comedian Shabir Hakaak to noted Ladishah artist Ashraf Nagoo, from Mohammad Shafi Khan to Neha Lohotra, artists of different genres have uploaded their videos on social media to spread the message of love, care, precautions, and survival.

Nagoo has released a 2.38-minute video of Ladishah urging people to stay home to break the chain. Wearing waistcoat and turban, Nagoo sings: "Aslam a Aliqum bozew paigam...Coronavirusan tul tufaan; Ghare rozun chue waen behtar...Bhai mane maene tche kath maan".

Famous comedian Mohammad Shafi Khan, who has delivered some rib-tickling performances, sounded serious this time around cautioning people against any carelessness in tackling coronavirus pandemic.

"There is an English saying, 'prevention is better than cure'. I appeal to people to maintain hygiene, wash hands regularly and use masks and sanitizers. There is no treatment for this disease. But we should not lose heart. We should avoid crowded places and stay home", he said in his 55-second video.

Not only are Kashmiri artists at the forefront, Jammu actors too have chipped-in to aware people of the disease. "We can fight together. We are spending time with our

families. Some people with symptoms skip isolation. They are not only harming themselves but endangering people in the society", said Neha Lohotra, a famous actress from Jammu.

Famous poet and satirist Zareef Ahmad Zareef has penned a poem urging people to stay home to break the chain. On social media he read the opening lines of his poem "Khudawanda ye kaha hakemet ye toofaan... karut abad dunya kaze wareen...,"

This is perhaps for the first time when artists from both Kashmir and Jammu have kicked off a social media campaign urging people to stay at home in a bid to break the chain.

"New generation actors have realized their social responsibility. They are playing their role to bring about change and create awareness", said Zareef.

For Shabir Hakak, the artists have been always ready to discharge their social responsibility but business houses have always disappointed them.

"We have never shied away from our social responsibility. Outside actors are sponsored by business houses for social campaigns. It is their livelihood. Here business houses do not care about local artists", said Hakak.

*Courtesy:thekashmirmonitor*



# Sikhs are Risking Their Safety to Help People Across The World, During The COVID-19 Pandemic

By BHUPINDER SINGH, INDIA

**THE** deadly novel coronavirus has topped over one million cases across the world and affected more than 200 countries. Over 60,000 people have died due to the disease, and the number is only increasing. While many of us are staying safe at home, many are struggling to get access to basic necessities or are stuck at a place where help is far away. In these trying times, the Sikh community, known for their philanthropy, has once again stepped in to help people in dire need.

Members of the 'Sikh Verband Deutschland' also known as German Sikh

Association prepare vegetarian Indian meals for homeless people in the location of an Indian food delivery service, amid the spread of the coronavirus disease in Cologne, Germany

In a Gurdwara in Queens village, 30 cooks have made and served more than 145,000 free meals in just 10 weeks, The New York Times reported. They offered food to New York City hospital workers, people in poverty and anyone else in search of a hot meal. Gurdwaras like the Sikh Center of New York, in Queens Village, are mobilising their



large-scale cooking resources to meet the skyrocketing need for food aid outside the places of worship, adds the report.

The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee has reportedly organised a philanthropic initiative they called 'langar on wheels' to feed all those looking for a decent meal during in pandemic.

Even though the lockdown restrictions have been relaxed, lack of income and dwindling finances have pushed people into a state of deep despair and distress. To ensure that no one sleeps on an empty stomach, estimated fifteen thousand people living on the streets, railways stations, bus stands, rain shelters and pavements will be served food daily.

Baba Karnail Singh Khaira who runs 'Guru ka langar' where one can cherish a meal absolutely free of cost. Known as Khaira Babaji, the 81-year-old functions on a remote Maharashtra highway where he is the only source of food for many truckers and other people crossing through on a stretch of 450 km.

Anyone passing near Karanji on National Highway-7 makes it a point to make a pit stop at Baba Khaira's 'Guru ka langar' in order to get a free meal before heading on to a journey without any other dhaba or restaurant for hundreds of kilometres.

Last month members of the Sikh community stepped up to carry sanitisation work in Jama Masjid ahead of Eid celebrations.

An Instagram page named Puranidilliwaley shared pictures with the following details: "United Sikh group contacted Masjid committee to sanitise the mosque, to promote universal brotherhood and peace, old delhi known for its ganga jamuni tehzeeb."

In New York, 25-year-old Japneet Singh worked as a field supervisor, is delivering pizzas to under-resourced hospitals and overworked, minimum wage employees.

In the South Ozone Park neighborhood of Queens, Singh saw staff at Elmhurst

Hospital Center struggling and other hospitals overwhelmed by COVID-19 too.

"I figured you know what, I'm sitting home. Food always makes things better, so I asked one of my friends who works at Elmhurst Hospital, what can we do? He was like, pizza would be great. Ever since then, we haven't looked back," AP quoted him as saying.

A woman migrant worker who was travelling on foot from Nashik in Maharashtra to Satna in Madhya Pradesh, gave birth to a baby on the roadside on May 12 while.

Shakuntala's husband Rakesh Koul told TOI that the journey was extremely laborious but they witnessed extreme kindness on the way. "A Sikh family gave clothes and essentials for the newborn baby at Dhule," he said. He and the others lost their jobs as industries shut down in Nashik in the Covid-19 lockdown.

Sikh volunteers preparing food deliveries; Gurudwaras across Melbourne have become centres for support, for both medical workers and those self-isolating.

Volunteers from the Sikh community prepare food to be distributed during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 coronavirus, in Mumbai.

A Sikh volunteer prepares food at the Bangla Sahib Gurudwara for people in need during the lockdown.

Two volunteers preparing food as groups are delivering food at doorsteps of those who need help, in and around Chandigarh, during the lockdown.

A Sikh woman offers free food at a petrol pump in Indiana, United States.

After coronavirus hit Malaysia, a Sikh Gurdwara in SS13, Subang Jaya Kuala Lumpur has opened its doors to the needy, by preparing healthy meals during the two-week restricted movement order (MCO). According to a Facebook post by SJ Echo, devotees prepare meals and deliver them to the needy within Subang Jaya and Petaling Jaya.

A group of Sikh volunteers cooking and packaging meals to serve the hungry in Gurudwara Sahib Craigieburn in Australia.

As a gesture of communal harmony by the Sikh community, volunteers sanitized Jama Masjid in Ludhiana, Punjab.

Amid covid-19 crisis, several non-governmental organisations, social outfits and good Samaritans have joined hands to help those in need. More recently, gurdwara Haa Da Naara Sahib in Malerkotla, Punjab, took the onus to feed students of a nearby Madarsa, who were stuck there after the lockdown.

Deep Singh risking his health to feed the homeless and the needy in Kuala Lumpur, who have been left without food due to COVID-19.

A group of Sikh volunteers have started a free home delivery service amid the coronavirus crisis. The volunteers announced that they would be delivering free food to self-isolated people in Melbourne's south-east area for the next two weeks.

The Sikh community purchased and distributed an entire semi-trailer-truck-load

of free groceries to people facing economic uncertainty and layoff because of coronavirus. This food was handed out in South Regina and they have more on the way in Canada.

A Sikh volunteer distributes food to poor families during the lockdown in Jalandhar, Punjab.

The Aboriginal community in Cobargo, that was already recovering from the recent devastating bush fire is now impacted again due to coronavirus crisis. A group of Sikh community traveled from Melbourne to Cobargo/Bega to help this aboriginal community.

The Sikh community in the UK has decided to help elderly people with free nutritious food and are delivering it to their houses.

Since the lockdown was announced by the government of India, the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee has offered the 'Serai' (inn) at the Gurdwara Majnu Ka Tilla to set up isolation wards and quarantine facilities to treat those affected by coronavirus.

*Courtesy : indiaindian.com*

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## Movement Lockdown

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are reached through contacts and NGOs. "What we need are associations for these art forms that give the artistes collective strength to demand changes. We should remember that this digital platform as an economic model only benefits the socio-cultural and economically privileged. Probably 98 per cent of art forms do not come within this ambit and those artistes do not have the luxury of even having this discussion," T.M. Krishna weighs in, adding, "It upsets me that we have these conversations only at times of

crises. We need to help artistes (especially of marginalised art forms) come together and organise themselves so that they can demand what is rightfully theirs from the Government." Also a number of artistes live in economic distress and do not have access to digital technology or social media platforms. These are anomalies to be addressed. Perhaps, the crisis underlines the importance of young artistes being aware of the ecosystem they choose to be part of, to rise to the occasion when needed.

*Courtesy : The Hindu*

# Bhaktapur's COVID-19 Heroes

By MONIKA DEUPALA, NEPAL

**WHEN** a 29-year-old woman died at Dhulikhel Hospital on Saturday, fear spread through the hospital, among her family and neighbours in her home town of Barabise, Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu where she had delivered a baby a week previously. No one wanted to touch her body in the hospital ward for the whole day.

Fanned by alarming reports of the spread of COVID-19 in the media, hospitals in Nepal are facing the problem of stigma of medical staff as well as patients. Now, with the first two fatalities from the disease there is also the added problem of handling of bodies and funerals.

For the whole day Saturday in Dhulikhel Hospital the problem was to organise the cremation of the young mother. The Ministry of Health got involved, but crucial help came from a group of volunteers in Bhaktapur who have been active since the 2015 earthquake in search and rescue after training from the Nepal Police and the Army.

The real frontliners in Nepal's coronavirus fight are people like Arun Sainju, Rajesh Gainju of the volunteer group RNA-16 who have been helping out for the past two months at Bhaktapur Hospital because no one else would.

Since when the lockdown began on 24 March, the thirty-something Sainju and Gainju with other members of the team have been living in a tent inside the Bhaktapur Hospital premises in case they themselves are carriers of the virus.

They have been helping people coming in for tests, and transferring their swab samples to Kathmandu. They spend most days in their personal protection gowns and masks, transporting patients to hospital or disinfecting their homes.

"I was inspired to become a volunteer after I failed to save a 11-year-old girl who had drowned," recalls Arun Sainju. "From that day on, I decided to be trained to work in emergency situations."

The training came handy immediately when the earthquake struck five years ago, destroying a large part of Bhaktapur, killing at least 300 residents and destroying many homes. Arun and Rajesh worked shoulder to shoulder with the Nepal Army teams to dig survivors out of the rubble and take them to hospital.

This time, it was not a natural disaster, but a protracted humanitarian crisis. Most days, they are just helping where necessary, but Saturday's call from the Nepal Army base was different: they were asked to go to Dhulikhel to collect the first COVID-19 fatality and bring it to Pashupati to the electric crematorium.

The authorities in Dhulikhel had asked Bhaktapur for help because no ambulance driver was willing to take her to the crematorium. The team was confident they were taking necessary precautions because they had been trained to handle infected patients, and headed out to Dhulikhel.

"It was like the hospital was in a

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# CU Student Sells Photographs to Help Indigenous Community in Need

By MD ABBAS, BANGLADESH

*Dharmaraj Tanchangya, moved by the state of some indigenous communities hit-hard by the coronavirus outbreak, put up some of his photograph for sale on his Facebook account.*

**THE** final year student of the dramatics department of Chittagong University had decided to donate the proceeds from the sales to those in need. Social media users then came forward and all ten of the photographs he wanted to sell were sold out for a total of Tk 10,500.

He gave the entire amount to an organisation named "Love for Banaful from Jummah Youths", which used the money to purchase food and distribute those among indigenous people in need.

Dharmaraj had gone to his native village Rajasthali in Rangmati when the government first announced the countrywide shutdown in March.

Experiencing the hardship of the people of his community, he came up with the idea to offer whatever help he could.

The photograph sales were, however, only one part of his initiative. He had also personally raised funds from his classmates, seniors and influential people and provided



financial aid to 47 students. The students would offer tuition to run their families, but could no longer do so amid the outbreak of the virus.

Apart from this, Dharmaraj is also an active volunteer of Singapore-based "Magical Light Foundation", which distributed food assistance to 1,000 families who are suffering for food in the time of coronavirus.

While talking to The Daily Star, Dharmaraj said most of the low-income earners, especially day labourers, were struggling to food on the table due to the lockdown.

"I initiated the plan just to stand beside the needy as I personally believe that unified effort is needed for the ongoing fight against the virus," he said.

He said he is now selecting some ten more of his best photographs and hopes to sell those too to help more people

*Courtesy : The daily star*

# Of Adaptation And Love For Food: Story of The Indo-Chinese Cuisine

By RITUPARNA PATGIRI, INDIA

**THE** world is facing a major health crisis at the moment. COVID-19 has stalled a majority of our everyday activities. The perils of this global pandemic — economic, political, or social — has been well-documented by both journalists and academicians. Amid this crisis, India and China are at war. However, war does not just kill lives, but it also has several unintended consequences. Recently, the Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment of India, Ramdas Athawale made a controversial statement that as a retaliation for Chinese atrocities on Indian soldiers, all hotels and restaurants selling "Chinese food" in India be shut down.

Social media was soon buzzing with commentaries, opinions, memes, and jokes about the statement and its meaning. Many called it "thoughtless", because those cooking and selling "Chinese food" in India were Indian and that this would only lead to them losing their source of income. Others were quick to point out that what is sold in the name of "Chinese food" in the country is much more Indian than it is Chinese.



"Chinese food" happens to be one the most popular cuisines served in restaurants and hotels across the country. Many Indians, especially from the North East,

who travel to cities for employment, also end up running small eateries and stalls that sell this kind of food.

Athawale's casual remark has invited great attention towards "Chinese food", but food is not a biological process alone, but a social one too. Cuisines of a land are extremely connected to existing socio-cultural practices in that society. In fact, one of the reasons behind its popularity is localisation.

Food is one of the best sites to understand how the local and the global can come together. For instance, the menu at McDonald's is localised and adapted to each country's tastes. In northern India, it offers unique vegetable burgers that aren't available elsewhere — like aloo tikki and paneer burgers — to cater to its vegetarian consumer market. There is no beef or pork on their menu in this region, as they are considered too "sensitive" and "political" to get involved in. In fact,

during Navaratri in North India, many of the McDonald's outlets serve vegetarian food alone, including special fasting platters. The idea is to integrate the local with the global, naturally in order to attract more customers.

In India, "Chinese food" too has been localised and adapted to suit our taste buds — which makes the term "Chinese food" itself a misnomer, since in reality, it is "Indian Chinese" or "Indo-Chinese". The use of red hot sauces, spices, and the various vegetarian adaptations of the dishes make it suitable for Indian consumption. The very popular Indo-Chinese food items like chilly paneer, vegetarian manchurian, gobi manchurian, and vegetarian momos and the like are the results of local innovations and interpretations. While original Chinese cuisine is mostly meat-oriented, these dishes are a way to satiate the taste buds of Indian consumers, a large number of which happens to be vegetarians, though not all. The development of cuisines across the world is a continuously evolving process that involves a myriad tastes and cultures, rather than a fixed one.

It is this process of localised adaptation that has helped in raising the popularity of Indo-Chinese cuisine in India. In fact, when the Indian Tobacco Company (ITC) entered the hotel business market, they wanted to develop a traditional and authentic Indian menu as most high-profile restaurants concentrated only on Chinese or Continental cuisine, and offered a very limited Indian menu. Such is the popularity of Indo-Chinese food. Food is intricately connected to both memory and identity. The story of Chinese food in India began with the arrival of immigrants from China to India way back in the 18th century under British rule. Chinese food was soon Indianised in the process. It soon became intricately connected to the socio-cultural practices of the country it travelled to. Due to its immense popularity, "Chinese cuisine" began to be included even in the menus of Udupi hotels, the chain of South Indian eateries. For many years, most of their cooks have been brahmins.

India is strictly governed by rules of caste in almost every sphere of life, and food is no different. There are many conventions that govern the sharing of food among Hindus. For instance, the "upper" castes in most parts of the country do not eat food cooked by those ranked lower to them in the caste hierarchy. This could be one of the reasons by public dining or the culture of eating out has always been discouraged in many Indian cultures. Even when restaurants and eating joints began gaining popularity, it is not surprising that most of the cooks in these places were brahmins. This was particularly true of vegetarian restaurants, including the Udupi chain of hotels.

With the expansion of their menus in India, however, a chef was required to cook all kinds of dishes, including Chinese cuisine. Thus there was a change in the recruitment process of cooks, as there was a rising demand for versatile chefs who could cook different cuisines. A new skill was soon needed — the ability to cook "Chinese food," which was not necessarily possessed by the brahmins. Positions previously only reserved for the brahmins were thus filled in by others. Because of how popular "Chinese cuisine" was, the food served in Indian restaurants was able to break free to some extent from caste-based prejudices. The so-called and in focus "Chinese food" thus has a specific place in Indian history, rooted in its socio-cultural practices.

Food is a site to understand a nation's history and socio-cultural evolution. The popularity of this particular cuisine in India is a sign of India's tryst with the rest of the world, while retaining many of its local features at the same time. It is a delicious amalgamation of meat, vegetables, sauces, and spices. It is also a source of employment for millions of Indians. Banning or boycotting "Chinese food" for the political situation that India and China are involved in at the moment is deeply misplaced and indeed thoughtless.

*Courtesy : Indian Cultural Forum*

# Kashmir Fields Echo With Folk Songs as Farming Season Begins

By SHABIR IBN YUSUF, INDIA

**WITH** farming season picking up in Kashmir, the fields are echoing with the traditional folk songs amid the plantation of paddy saplings.

Over the past one week, the farming community has been busy with plantation of the paddy saplings in the fields.

As the paddy season begins in Kashmir, people actively participate in the plantation of the saplings. During this activity which last for more than a week, the tradition of singing folk song returns to the paddy fields which is actively participated by the women.

The paddy sowing starts before the arrival of the monsoons in June-July. Most of the traditional crops are photosensitive and thus the sowing time is the most important variable in determining the yield.

"The songs are sung to ease out hectic job of planting paddy saplings," said Ghulam Hassan Khan of Shaloor Kupwara. "The tradition was fading away, but this season it has made a comeback as people can be seen actively participating in the tradition while sowing the saplings."

Sixty-year old Khan said for the last some years, labourers from other states used to plant saplings. "This year non- local labour is not available," he said adding that nowadays paddy saplings were being carried out by the families



and relatives together.

"Since lockdown everybody, be it a government employee, shopkeeper or a student, are home," said Muhammad Ayub Dar of Bategam "Now, all of them have stepped into the fields,

amid excitement."

Recalling the tradition, Dar said the activity was done on community basis and all relatives and neighbours would happily join each other and plant paddy in their fields.

"The dominating feature of this hard task of farming remains the folk singing which one can hear coming out from every field these days."

Taja Begum said her family feels pride to sing folk songs during plating of paddy saplings.

"It gives peace of mind and helps in finishing the work within short span of time," said 60-year old Begum.

Amid the planting activity, those engaged in the laborious job, including women take a break to relish Kashmiri namkeen chai (salt tea) and other dishes, cooked specifically for the day. "Today, all our family members and relatives including cousins are here to help in planting the saplings," said Shaista Bagum of Shumnag village. "It is joyous atmosphere after seven long years."

*Continued to page 18*



# COVID-19: Fighting Social Exclusion And Now a Lockdown, Transgender Community Extends Help to Stranded Migrants

By NEELAMBARAN. A., INDIA

**MEMBERS** of the transgender community were left stunned when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a sudden lockdown to contain COVID-19 on March 24. A significant number from the community are dependent on daily income to help them get by. The lockdown and the resultant social boycott that came their way has only increased a sense of fear among the community. Relief measures undertaken by the state government and support of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and political parties have ensured that they have managed to survive the lockdown.

The community has received praise for extending relief to the members of their neighbourhood who are struggling for food. Their strong networks played a vital role in ensuring the availability of relief measures for the disadvantaged.

## **'SUDDEN LOCKDOWN LEFT US STRANDED'**

Sowmiya, a member of the community who lives in Porur near Chennai, was shocked when the nationwide lockdown was announced.

"We all were shocked when the lockdown was announced. Everyone, including members of the community were unprepared for it. The government did not give anyone

time to buy essentials for survival. All of us were left dumbfounded with the sudden announcement," recalled Sowmiya.

Sowmiya and hundreds of fellow transgenders from Porur, Mangadu and Poonamallee in the outskirts of Chennai, collect money from shops in the neighbourhood for their living. She lives in a rented house with a friend and they pay a rent of Rs 8,000 per month. Sowmiya is also a performer with the Kattiyakari drama troupe.

## **'COMMUNITY NETWORK HELPED RELIEF WORK'**

"We managed to pay rent for April by borrowing money and due to contributions from well-wishers. Our next task is to find money to pay rent for the month of May. As our survival depends only on relief from NGOs, it is tough to make rents," Sowmiya added.

The government of Tamil Nadu announced relief of Rs 1,000 to transgender persons through welfare boards. "Members of the community possessing identity cards issued by the government were assisted with cash and rations. It helped them in overcoming the lockdown. The ID cards issued by the government came in handy for accessing relief measures", said Srijith

Sundaram, an LGBTQ activist. However, relief was much lesser than what the community required. "I am a diabetic and I could not afford medicines during the lockdown. Many senior members of the community continue to struggle as they cannot meet their medical needs at the moment. The government needs to do more in such a crisis. We cannot die of starvation and due to the lack of medical attention," said Sowmiya.

#### 'SOCIAL EXCLUSION CONTINUES'

The number of transgender persons infected by the novel coronavirus is less than a handful, but the community continues to face social stigma. "When we visit shops for medicines or other essentials, people feel awkward. It seems as if they believe that transgender persons are responsible for spreading the disease, whereas the truth is the exact opposite," Sowmiya added.

Those that had undergone sexual reassignment surgery are also affected due to a lack of healthy food. "People who have undergone the surgery need nutritious food for at least 40 days. With the lockdown coming out of the blue and choking their sources of income, they are suffering a lot and it may affect their health in the future as well," said Srijith.

In spite of their own suffering, the community has stood up in extending relief to the affected people in their neighbourhood.

They even shared relief materials that they received with people left with no income during the lockdown.

#### 'COMMUNITY EXTENDS RELIEF'

Eleven Muslim families from Andhra Pradesh had been stranded in the Porur region. Called 'Fakirs', they earn their living from visiting shops and performing puja. Close to 40 members of these families, who did not have identity cards to receive relief measures, received help from the community.

Keerthana, a transgender person who works as sanitary supervisor in Puducherry, has been doing her bit to feed the sanitation workers. "Transgender persons from Porur asked us to help the stranded people in their neighbourhood. With the help of patrons we managed to distribute rations and other essentials to them," added Srijith.

The marginalised section of the society struggles to survive the lockdown while continuing to face social stigma. Trans-men, in a minority within the community, need more attention from the government on welfare measures. The expansion of training for self-employment, reservations in employment by the government and changing the public perception of the community are the need of the hour to help the community cope with the unprecedented situation.

*Courtesy : newsclick.com*

## Kashmir Fields Echo With Folk Songs

*Continued from page 16*

Muhammad Jasib, an engineer from the village was also part of the group plating paddy fields.

"For the last three days, I am working with the family in field," he said, adding that he enjoys taking a break from the regular work to work in the fields.

His father, Muhammad Shaban said last year the produce was not so good. "We hope this year we will have a good crop," he said, adding till harvesting in September, they will be working regularly in the fields.

"In September, we will hopefully harvest a good crop," said Shaban.

*Courtesy : greaterkashmir.com*

# Chhatak's Unwavering Youths Stand by Community

By DWOHA CHOWDHURY, BANGLADESH

**THEY** do not get much acknowledgement for what they have been doing for the community, but they are true heroes of the time.

These unsung heroes have been working relentlessly to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus outbreak in rural villages of Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj.

The village volunteers have been working hand in hand with the upazila administration in their fight against the pandemic since early April.

They are monitoring the whereabouts of infected and suspected Covid-19 patients and assisting people in receiving necessary medical treatment. When close relatives are not even willing to witness the burial of a person who died of the disease, these volunteers are there to give the person a proper burial.

Most importantly, they have been working with their community to create awareness about how the virus spreads from person to person and what preventive measures are necessary to contain it.

Since April, a total of 194 volunteers including five women have been working as volunteers in Chhatak upazila.

Till date, five of them have been infected with Covid-19. One of them, Mohammad J Alam, from Ganeshpur Noagaon village in the upazila, has already expressed his willingness to rejoin the work as he has made full recovery

recently.

He was tested positive for Covid-19 on May 25 and his second test report came out negative on June 11.

"After seeing a Facebook post made by the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), and after seeing numerous [news] reports that people [infected with the virus] are being victims of neglect in many ways, while some of them are not even getting proper burial after death, I decided to become a volunteer to serve my community," Alam said.

"I helped bury the body of the first Covid-19 victim in the upazila. I went to the farthest village in the upazila on the border and brought from there a number of suspected patients to the hospital. Since I've been tested negative, I would like to start my voluntary work again."

Volunteers Kamrul Ahmed and his brother Fayez Marzan, from Jauwa village of the upazila, were also infected with the virus during their work.

"My college-going brother and I started volunteering for the upazila administration following a short training in early April," Kamrul said.

suspected patients. They are even burying the dead.

"After the pandemic, they may not get fitting appreciation for their work. But they are playing a very important role during the fight of government authorities and local representatives against the

pandemic," the UNO added."After I took part in the burial of a person who died of Covid-19,

I got myself tested out of suspicion and tested positive on June 1. My brother also tested positive on June 4.

"We both are now in isolation. We hope to recover soon and resume our volunteering," the youth said with confidence.

Chhatak is the worst virus-hit upazila in Sunamganj and till Sunday, 145 persons were found to be infected with Covid-19 there.

Chhatak UNO Golam Kabir said, "Rural people are mostly unaware of such pandemic situation. Misconceptions as well as virus spread here easily. So, we needed volunteers to help us fight the spread of the virus. After my call for volunteers, I was overwhelmed with the huge response."

"People from other districts swarmed the upazila after the nationwide shutdown. The volunteers here are helping build awareness, ensure quarantine and isolation, and locate

*Courtesy: dailystar.com*

## Bhaktapur's COVID-19 Heroes

*Continued from page 12*

curfew, not even the media was there," Arun recalls. "At the morgue we saw blood dripping out of the body, and we wrapped her in plastic, and disinfected the morgue."

The body was loaded into the team's private SUV and escorted by army and police along the highway from Dhulikhel to Pashupati. The woman's husband followed and kept a safe distance throughout.

"We are here to help people in need but we believe that even a dead person needs to be treated with dignity, and has the right to have a proper funeral," says Rajesh.

Members of RNA-16 are often asked by friends and relatives why they do what they do, and if they are not scared. They admit that the hardest part is to be away from their families for so long for fear of taking the virus home. Arun has a 62-year-old mother, and Rajesh's family has been living in a temporary shelter for five

years after the earthquake destroyed their home.

Says Arun: "We do what we have to do, not helping would invite a bigger disaster for the community in future. That is what keeps us going and gives us a sense of fulfilment."

At the electric crematorium, the woman's family kept a distance, and only a member of the crematorium staff was in the switch room. There were no religious rituals, and finally Arun, Rajesh and his team lifted the body and placed it in the furnace.

They then incinerated their PPEs, disinfected their car and other material and have placed themselves in quarantine in Suryabinayak from where they spoke to Nepali Times on the phone.

The husband and relatives of the women were taken to the isolation ward of Dhulikhel Hospital. Other members of the RNA-16 are carrying on the COVID-19 work at Dhulikhel Hospital for now.

*Courtesy : nepaltimes.com*

# POETRY'S DREAM WORK

By CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL

*...Continued from previous Issue*



**YET** all art is subjective. All art is emotional and therefore concerned with the instincts whose adaptation to social life produces emotional consciousness. Hence art cannot escape its close relation with the genotype

whose secret desires link in one endless series all human culture.

Now this genotype can be considered from two aspects; the timeless and the timeful, the changeless and changeful, the general and the particular.

(a) Timeless, changeless, general in that on the whole the genotype is substantially constant in all societies and all men. There is a substratum of likeness. Man does not change from Athenian to Ancient Briton and then to Londoner by innate differences stamped in by natural selection, but by acquired changes derived from social evolution. Poetry expresses this constant instinctive factor.

(b) Yet beneath this likeness the genotypes, because they are bundles of genes, reveal individual differences. These genes are perpetually shuffled to reveal new personalities. Because men differ in this way among themselves they cannot be satisfied with the simple tribal life of collective civilisation. They demand "luxuries," freedom, special products which cannot be

satisfied within the ambit of such a primitive economy. This leads to an economic differentiation of society which, as we have already explained, is not the means of suppressing individuality but of realising it. Hence these individual genetic differences produce change in time and also the realisation of characters, of man's social "norm." Thus the very technique of the novel makes it interested in the way characters strive to realise in existing society their individual differences.

Poetry expresses the freedom which inheres in man's general timeless unity in society; it is interested in society as the sum and guardian of common instinctive tendencies; it speaks of death, love, hope, sorrow and despair as all men experience them. The novel is the expression of that freedom which men seek, not in their unity in society but in their differences, of their search for freedom in the pores of society, and therefore of their repulsions from, clashes with and concrete motions against other individuals different from themselves.

The novel was bound to develop therefore under capitalism, whose increase in the productive forces brought about by the division of labour not only vastly increased the differentiation of society but also, by continually revolutionising its own basis, produced an endless flux and change in life. Equally, as capitalism decayed, the novel was bound to voice the experience of men that economic differentiation had changed from a means of freedom to a rubber-stamp

crushing individuality (the ossification of classes), and that the productive forces, by being held back from developing further, had choked the free movement of life (the general economic crisis). Necessarily therefore in such a period the decay of the novel occurs together with a general revolutionary turmoil.

Thus we see in the technical differences of poetry and the novel the difference between changelessness and change, pace and time, and it is clear that these are not mutually exclusive opposites but are opposites which interpenetrate, and as they fly apart, continually generate an enriching reality.

This was the same kind of difference as that between the evolutionary and classificatory sciences. And just as the technique of poetry demands an immediate concentration on the word, so the classificatory sciences, such as geometry and mathematics, demand an immediate concentration on the symbol. The novel demands that we pass from the symbol to reality, and only then to the affective organisation; biology demands that we go first to the concrete objects, and only then to their rational organisation. Poetry passes straight from the word to the affective organisation, careless of the reality whose relation it accepts as already given in the word. Mathematics passes straight from the symbol to the perceptual organisation, careless of the concrete object, whose important qualities (to it) are already accepted as crystallised in the symbol. Hence the vital importance of precise speech – of the absolutely correct word or correct symbol – both to poet and mathematician, contrasted with the looser speech permitted to the biologist or novelist.

We have seen that music is an extreme kind of poetry, that just as mathematics escapes almost altogether from the subjective qualities of matter, so music (unlike poetry)

escapes almost altogether from the objective references of sounds. Therefore the musician is even preciser in his language than the poet, and the affective laws of music's symbols are as careful and minute as are the perceptual laws of mathematical symbols.

We can now understand more clearly why poetry resembles dream in its technique. The characteristic of dreams is that the dreamer always plays the leading part in it. He is always present in it, sometimes (as analysis shows) in many disguises. The same egocentricity is characteristic of poetry. Quite naively the poet records directly all his impressions, experiences, thoughts, images. Hence the apparent egoism of poetry, for everything is seen and experienced directly. Poetry is a relationship of memory-images mediated by only two words "I" and "like."

But this is not the egoism of dream; it is a social egoism. The particular emotional organisation of the poet is condensed into words, and the words are read, and the psyche of the reader experiences the same emotional reorganisation. The reader puts himself, for the duration of the poem, in the place of the poet, and sees with his eyes. He is the poet.

In a poem by Shelley, we are Shelley. As we read Shakespeare, we see with his profound shimmering vision. Hence the unexpected individuality of the poet. Though it is the common human creature, the genotype, and not the "character" who looks out in poetry on the common contemporary scene, he looks at it through the eyes of one man, through the windows of the poet's psyche.

How is this done? That is the peculiar secret of poetic technique. Just as poetry can be equated with dream, poetic technique is similar to dream technique. The nature of dream technique has been explored by analysts under the general name of "the dream-work."

A dream consists of two layers.

Obvious is the manifest content. We are walking by the seaside, a ship comes alongside, we step on it, we land in France, certain adventures befall us, and so on. This is the manifest content of the dream as we tell it at breakfast next morning to our bored family, who cannot understand our interest in it. But our interest in it was due to the fact that the illusion was perfect. While they lasted, these things really seemed to be happening to us. And this vividness must spring from some affective cause. But we felt little real emotion in the dream, however surprising the adventures that befall us. If we felt emotion, it was out of all real proportion to our adventures. Surprising things happened and we were not surprised. Trifling things happened and we were appalled. The affects were displaced in relation to reality. If we are asked to give our associations to these various component images just as they spring to our mind, a whole undergrowth of displaced affective life is revealed. Each symbol is associated with memories in our life, not by association of ideas but by affective associations.

The characteristic of "dream-work" is that every dream-symbol is over-determined and has a multitude of different emotional significances. This we also saw was the characteristic of poetic words, and springs from the same cause, that dream-symbols are valued directly for their affective content and not as symbols of a consistent mock world in which we first orientate ourselves. Hence the inconsequence of dream matches the "illogical" rhythm and assonance of poetry.

The organisation of the psyche is such that in sleep all the conscious wishes, hopes, fears and loves of the instinctive are replaced by apparently arbitrary memory-images, but which really are associated by the affective ties of simple unconscious wishes. They are organised by the appetitive activity of the instinctive and therefore unsleeping part of the psyche which, because it is archaic

phylogenetically, is unmodified and therefore anti-social, or rather non-social. This affective substratum does not normally appear in dream. It is "repressed." Only the arbitrary symbols, apparently unconnected, appear in the consciousness. But this affective basis is the "reasoning" of the dream, and directs its course. It is the latent content. But the affects also have a "reason" for their relation to the memory-images of the dream. Thus there is a double distortion – a distortion of reality and of emotion – a double shift of subject and object.

Why cannot we achieve in sleep complete unconsciousness to any stimuli? For the simple reason that sleep is not death or complete unconsciousness but something in which part of our attention is still awake. In sleep attention, though turned from the outside world, is not completely asleep, otherwise external stimuli would never wake us at all. The attention of a sleeper can be attracted by a sufficiently loud noise. Obviously it is dangerous for animals to sleep too profoundly. All stimuli below the threshold, e.g. gentle outside noises, sunlight falling on the face, pressure on the limbs, internal digestive disturbances, are switched, not into their proper neurone paths, but into other paths dictated by the "sets" of the unconscious instincts.

The reality of an unconscious wish can be tested in practice. If a sleeper resolves before sleeping to hold a certain object in his hand, he will still be clutching it when he wakes, showing that throughout his sleep some unsleeping neurones continued to will unconsciously, and to send a continual stream of continuous impulses down the efferent nerves to the fingers to maintain a muscular tetany. If the affects were to be wakened by such stimuli, sleep would end. Therefore the instinctive paths from the associative unconscious neurones to the affective patterns are in some way side-tracked and the stimuli are switched instead

into the patterns associated at one remove, i.e. the memory-images. These are connected with these side tracked affective patterns by association, but are not themselves soaked with affects. These memory-images appear in the dream and thus give the flicker of attention something to focus on, which otherwise would be focused on the stimuli and so would wake the sleeper. It is no accident that sleep appears only in higher animals – those whose life is full of acquired adaptations which therefore require “working out” physiologically in sleep. Insects, with their elaborate innate adaptations, do not sleep. Or when they do “sleep,” as in the chrysalis, it is a final and far more thoroughgoing adaptation, in which every cell in the body is re-orientated.

The emotional organisation of the memory-images – their latent content – is therefore given by the process of their generation. If a certain threshold value is exceeded by the stimuli or anything goes wrong with the switching, too powerful affects are released; the sleeper, becoming more conscious, at once wakes. The lack of affective reality accounts for the ease with which dreams are forgotten, whereas nightmares, which the sleeper wakes or almost wakes owing to the powerful affects, are generally clearly remembered. We wake because the affects were on the point of becoming realised and therefore of leading to action.

Dreams, then, contain a manifest and a latent content. The manifest content is

imagic phantasy, the latent content is affective reality. Both have a double connection with a phantastic affectivity manifest in dream and an imagic reality connected with the latent content. Psychoanalysts have not made his distinction because the analysis of dreams is done verbally. They have not seen that in translating images and affects into language there is an epistemological leak. In language images and affects live simultaneously and cannot be separated: both are social and conscious. Ignoring this, the psycho-analyst meets a contradiction: in probing the latent content of dreams he can never be given by the dreamer a bundle of “unconscious” affects as associations, for the dreamer can only communicate by language, and in language affect is always attached to an image, to a symbol of external reality, and is itself a conscious feeling-tone. Therefore the analyst gets as the latent content of the dream-images – still more images with conscious affects attached. For this reason, not only does the psycho-analyst tend to equate unconscious affects with their social translations, but he overlooks the gap between dream, in which the affective organisation is unconscious and therefore personal, and art, in which the affective organisation is conscious and therefore social. It is the difference between free association and directed feeling.

*to be continued...*

*Courtesy : Illusion and Reality*

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