

Poetry Section

Unprotected

By-Dr Nunglekpm Premi Devi
Independent Scholar

That's very unusual; I never thought it would happen;
That incident, perhaps wasn't a mistake, still have to;
Dirty and dusty day it was; hot and weary unplanned;
There wasn't any I could go getting, still this dump one
Secluded and scary; I waited till crowd comes up gathering;
What on the earth! That's the only place I could visit
Far and narrow, unearth and uneven littering all over;
Dark and thick; those streaming waters running actively;
Oh! That smelling gutter, still I can't take my nose uncovered;
I tried and I tried habituating, I still being an alien
To that far off land, to that piece of area I put up.

Hot streaming waves after waves, blows the wind;
Those slum dwellers' souls, how practically brave! If I could
say
Dirty hairy and unwashed, tinted teeth adoring those
charitable smiles;
Damp and un cleaned, with those feeble and failing torn
sandals;
Sitting over those smelling gutters, selling fishes for the day;
When in 5 o'clock evening, riches hands reached out buying
out all;
Cars and scooters, rickshaws and motors, bicycles and
paddlers;
Ah! Can't take off my eyes seeing those rotten bodies;
Crows and stray dogs swamping over and around actively;
Scattering all over places, each one has to pass through
those;
Still dirty and dusty, torn clothes pieces flying in and out,
To that far off land, to that piece of area I put up.

Gentle Crowds gathered, clean shaven and clean clothe;
Sobering around, oh! What an air? Justifying and confirming;
Those senses, those ethics, those living and those priorities;
Standing by those stalls, I tried peeking through them;
I looked as I follow after my 'man' one stall after another;
Choosing and picking, pleasing and electing, selecting and
preferring;
Calculating over and pricing; standing tall by those stall,
Comforting safety, I tried never to rush into dashing;
Sensing around what may happen, I observe some still
unaware;
That hard 'thing' lingering and nagging around tightly;
'Up and down' it scratched harassing my possessing 'thigh',
What on earth! I could perceived that emotions sooner;
To that far off land, to that piece of area I put up.

Grasping those rhythms, I threw eyes discerning;
Half wide open chain, he was fleshly naked;
Quivering he was forsaken, Shivering as he leave;
"If you're willing, show your thing to everyone" I shouted
"Stop running! If you're ready, let everyone sees you" I yelled
Quicker the moment, 'he' instilled uneasy and sickening;
I throw up sentiments, thousands easing and unguarded;
"What happened"? He asked cleanly
Unnoticed by my 'man', unexpectedly and unattended awhile;
That was too unprotected for those securing moments;
That was too unprotected for those covered parts;
To that far off land, to that piece of area I put up.

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times'
can be sent to our e-mail : imphaltimes@gmail.com.
For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (0)

Fear & Worry : Please kindly read the message and not messenger

By Thangjam Yumjao Meitei

We pay the price of fear and worry to live the life of a human being. Our susceptibility to anxiety is the root cause of all our problems.

Fear and worry seem to be part and parcel of human life. One who is immersed in the mundane world is not free from these unpleasant mental stresses. What and why do people worry about? Their worries are due to various commitments and responsibilities they have. Their worries come in many various guises. They feel inadequate when they compare themselves with others. 'May be I'm not good enough to do that job' or 'I don't think that I'm clever enough to make an impact.' They may be afraid to be themselves as they really are in the presence of others, so they end up to themselves; 'I can't let people get to know me as I am really am. If I do so, they may lose confidence in me or belittle me.' So they act and pretend to be someone else when in fact they are not. People worry a lot about their

physical appearances. Men worry when they become bold headed while women worry when wrinkles start to appear on their faces, or when they are too thin or too fat, too dark or too fair, too tall or too short and so on and so forth. They are afraid of being criticized, attack by others or censured by their superiors. They are afraid to present their ideas before a crowd for fear of being ridiculed, but feel angry with themselves, whenever someone else presents the same idea and gets credit for it. They feel they are being hampered by criticisms, even when they know that such criticisms are undeserved and unsatisfied. They are worried about their families. 'Maybe I'm not such a good father/mother/daughter after all.' Some husband worry that their pretty young wives may go out with other men. At the same time some wives may worry that their young handsome husbands may leave them or spent their time with other girls. Unmarried people worry about how to get married while some married couples may

worry about how lonely they are without children. On the other hand, those who have many children, constantly worry how best to bring them up; 'Maybe my wife/husband no longer loves me and may desert me' or 'I wonder how my children will take care of me in my old age.' Some parents worry unnecessarily over the safety of their children, having enough money for their daily household expenses, the security in their home and the health of their love ones. In their work place, they may have to face problems in carrying out assignments and have difficulties in making decision. 'What if my decision proves to be wrong?' 'Should I sell my stocks and share now or later?' 'Can my workers be trusted with money or will they cheat the company during my absence? Some are worried about possible losses, of not getting a promotion or being entrusted with too many responsibilities. Some others worry thinking that their office mates are jealous of them. In fact, the list of worries people

face daily would be endless. Human existence is full of worries and fear which lurk within the dark inner corners of the mind. Man has so many fears – fear arising from insecurity, fear from enemies, fear from hunger, fear of sickness, fear of loss of wealth and possessions, fear of old age, fear of death and fear of the next existence. Not only does he worry and fear whenever things go wrong, he or she becomes worried even when things go on smoothly! He conjures vague sense of fear in his mind that suddenly something may go wrong and that the happiness he or she now enjoys might turn to sorrow. Although some people say, no news means good news, people worry when there is no news. Such unfounded worries fill their life with undue fear. Such form of wretchedness befalls all mankind. And none are free from this except those who are perfect or pure in their minds. (The writer a vocalist of a Rock Band called 'KARUNA', a lay Buddhist and a Social Activist of People Who Use Drugs (PUDs))

How the BJP – Master of Mixing Religion and Politics – Is Taking India for a Ride

I had never imagined in the wildest of my dreams that a day would come when I would swoon over Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah's pronouncements. But this is exactly what happened when I heard him saying that nobody should galvanise political support on the basis of religion and religion should not be used to polarise people. It is common knowledge that the absolute domination of the BJP by the two-member team of prime minister Narendra Modi and party president Amit Shah had rendered L.K. Advani absolutely irrelevant and he had come to represent the epic obsolescence of Bhisma Pitamah of the *Mahabharata*. However I did not know that his definition of who was "secular" and who was "pseudo-secular" too had become obsolete.

This facile distinction seemed to have collapsed and everybody had turned secular as the ruling party president was saying exactly the same thing that the "pseudo-secular" did not tire to repeat. So, I experienced a strange kind of euphoria and got almost convinced that the promised era of '*achhe din*' had finally arrived. But sadly, good things have a very short life. When I paid attention to the context of Amit Shah's *jumla*, I realised that I had been taken for a ride. What he actually meant was that no religion other than Hinduism should be used to galvanise political support and to polarise people to achieve political objectives. After all, whatever the irrelevant constitution might say, India happens to be a Hindu *rashtra* where politics have to be conducted only on the basis of the religion of the majority community. It shows Hinduism's spirit of tolerance that other religions can also co-exist with it in the country. But they should know their place. This was the real import of Amit Shah's *jumla* as he was reacting to a letter written by Delhi Archbishop Anil Couto and addressed to all parish priests and religious institutions in the Archdiocese of Delhi. In the letter, Archbishop Couto committed the crime of saying that "we are witnessing a turbulent political atmosphere which poses a threat to the democratic principles enshrined in our constitution and the secular fabric of the nation" and exhorting



them to "pray for the nation". "all the more so when we approach the general election". What is so objectionable in it that several TV news channels have been crying foul and BJP president Amit Shah and Union home minister Rajnath Singh have chosen to react against it? Is it not a fact that ever since the Modi government came into power, attacks on minorities have stepped up? And, has the Archbishop asked the laity to vote for a particular political party? Where is the political mobilisation on the basis of religion in his letter that is accompanied by the draft of a prayer? And is it not really rich for a political party whose guiding philosophy is named Hinduva, which means the essence of Hinduism or Hinduness, thus making its inextricable relationship with the majority community's religion explicit? Is it not true that Swami Karapatriji Maharaj formed his Ramrajya Parishad soon after Independence on the plank of Hinduism? Is it not true that in 1966, Hindu *sadhus* had launched the cow-protection movement that later culminated into surrounding and attacking parliament and turned into a confrontation with the law and order machinery? Is it not true that the BJP and VHP played a pivotal role in forming Dharma Sansad where Hindu *sadhus* and *mahants* deliberated on various political issues, particularly the issue of building a Rama temple in place of

Babri Masjid in Ayodhya? Is it not true that many religious leaders such as Mahant Avaidhyanath, Yogi Adityanath, Uma Bharti and Sakshi Maharaj contested elections as BJP candidates? And, is it not true that many of them indulged in hate speech against minority communities – Vishwa Hindu parishad leader Acharya Dharmendra was convicted for it – and the videos of their public speeches can still be viewed as they continue to be circulated in public domain? Was Advani's 'Rath Yatra' not a blatant attempt to mobilise Hindu masses on the basis of religion? And, was not the Ayodhya movement a textbook example of using religion to achieve political goals? Is not the BJP's spectacular rise as a result of this movement proof enough? Recently, the Gujarat government sought divine intervention for good rainfall. After digging the state's water bodies deeper, the Vijay Rupani-led BJP government decided to hold 41 'parjanya yagnas' on May 31 at each of the 33 districts and eight major cities in the state to appease Lord Indra and Varun for good monsoon in the state. Yogi Adityanath, head of the Gorakhpur peeth in Gorakhpur, is the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh while Hindu *sanyasin* Uma Bharti is a minister in the Narendra Modi government. While campaigning for the BJP candidate in Kairana Lok Sabha by-poll, Yogi Adityanath is openly stoking communal fires by

taking the names of two Hindu boys who were killed before the Muzaffarnagar riots began on a full scale. In recent years, the RSS clan launched several campaigns like 'love jihad' and 'ghar wapas' that were clearly aimed at using strong arm tactics against the Muslim and Christian minorities.

The violent campaign against the film *Padmaavat* had full support of the Hindutva forces and was anti-Muslim in nature. The ongoing campaign in Aligarh Muslim University against the portrait of Jinnah is also aimed at the Muslims because it is being instilled in the minds of the common Hindus that Muslims' loyalties lie with Pakistan and its founder M. A. Jinnah. Smear campaigns are regularly being launched on the internet and social media platforms using fake information and photo-shopped pictures to attack political-ideological opponents like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the latter being projected as a descendant of a Muslim grandfather, while the former as the well-wisher of Muslims and enemy of Hindu interests. This was the accusation used by Nathuram Godse against Gandhi to justify his act of assassination.

All the RSS organisations including the BJP resort to communal polarisation and regularly mobilise the Hindu masses on religious basis. *Sadhus*, *sants*, *mahants*, *god men* and *god women* and other assorted Hindu religious leaders actively help them in this communal project. When Dera Sachcha Sauda chief Ram Rahim appealed to his followers to vote for a particular political party, BJP leaders did not object. When a woman BJP leader appealed Hindu voters to choose between "Ramazade and haramzade", Amit Shah's secular conscience did not prick him nor did Rajnath Singh raise a finger. Therefore, it is more than amusing to see these worthies invoking secularism and fuming against mixing religion with politics.

However, I am willing to again swoon over Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh if they stick to their words and refrain from using Hinduism for political gains.

Kuldeep Kumar is a senior journalist who writes on politics and culture.

Courtesy The Wire