

SURABHI

Journal of Arts and Literature

The Bi-annual Journal of Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

**Vol.9 No.1
(June 2018)**



Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology

Department of Space

Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram

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From the Editor's Desk

P. Radhakrishnan

Surabhi is delighted to be with you again.

Here's some news we are very proud about :

Dr. B. N. Suresh, Chancellor, IIST has been conferred with **2018 INCOSE Pioneer Award**, in recognition of his pioneering work in Space Systems Engineering.

Shri. Avinash Chandra, Prof. Satish Dhawan Scholar has received the Abdul Kalam Award for Exemplary Academic Performance in Aerospace Engineering Master's Program at Caltech.

Our workhorse, PSLV has re-established its trustworthiness after solitary failure in the recent past, when the C - 40 mission, on January 12, 2018, successfully orbited our 710kg Cartosat - 2 satellite along with 30 co-passengers.

And, most importantly, this year IIST has been placed 23rd among all Engineering Institutes in the ranking by NIRF.

As always, we are here before you with the usual fare.

Best wishes to all,

SURABHI

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THE CANDLE



The candle burnt
It had words to say.
It memorised well
for the day.

Curved itself
For the dreams in heart
Waited silent
In the dark.

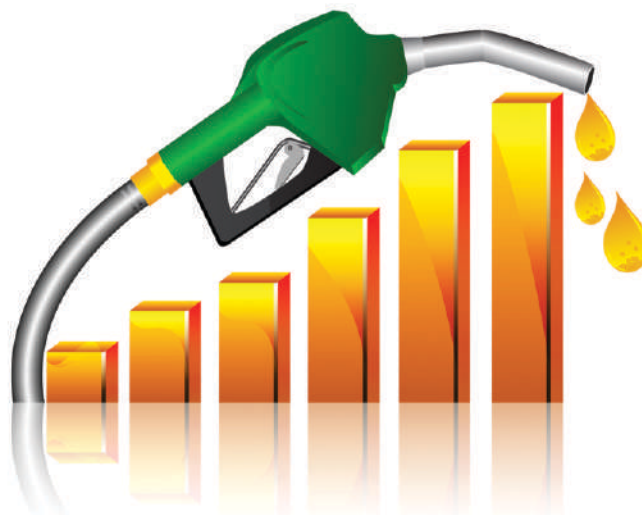
The spark came
Undone.
Violent storm
Or someone.

The words were spattered
In the gray
The candle had
Some words to say.



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Petroleum prices and GST

Introduction

Petroleum prices play a very important role in Indian economy as more than 95 per cent of the petroleum products consumed in the country is based on import, and the international market price of crude oil is highly volatile. The retail marketing of petroleum products in India is done by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) i.e. Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL), Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL), Bharat Oman Refineries Ltd (BORL) and private companies like Reliance, Essar & Shell. The OMCs take care of refining of crude oil into petrol, diesel, etc., and selling the refined petroleum products to the dealers. The three PSUs- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and Hindustan Private Corporate Limited (HPCL) control around 95% of this sector.

In 2000-01, net import of petroleum products constituted 75% of the total consumption in the country. This increased to 95% in 2017-18. This implies that any change in the global

prices of crude oil has a significant impact on the domestic price of petroleum products. When we compare the last five years, the global price of crude oil has come down from \$110 per barrel in the year 2013 to \$64 per barrel in March 2018. The price of crude oil in the international market has even touched a low of \$28 in January 2016. Interestingly, the price has been experienced a 42% drop in the global crude oil during the last five-year period, but the retail price of petrol in Indian market has actually increased by 8% and the price of diesel increased by 33%. This has happened mainly because the central government has not transformed the benefits of decline in international crude oil prices to the domestic consumers by sighting the reason to meet the high fiscal deficit of the economy. The government had raised excise duty nine times between November 2014 and January 2016 to shore up finances as global oil prices fell.

What happens to the crude oil after import?

Crude oil is purchased by the oil marketing companies, who pay freight and transportation charge in addition to crude oil price. This crude oil is then transferred

to refineries to be converted into various petroleum products as shown below. Here the OMCs pay refinery transfer price to refineries for their services, and the oil continues to be owned by the OMCs.

Products from one barrel*Crude oil	In litres
Petrol	72
Diesel	38
Jet Fuel	13
Coke	8
Residual Fuel oil	6
Liquefied Refinery gases	5
Still Gas	5
Asphalt and Road oil	5
Raw material for petrochemicals	4
Lubricants	2
Kerosene	1

* One barrel contains 159 Litres.

One barrel of crude oil is now priced at \$78 (as on 3rd June 2018) in the international market which is equivalent to Indian Rs 5245. Therefore the per litre cost of crude is Rs 33 and the basic refinery cost of petrol is Rs 38.39 and for diesel is Rs 41, which includes entry tax, refinery processing fee, landing cost, OMC margin, transportation, freight cost, etc.

	Petrol	Diesel
Basic cost of fuel after refining cost	Rs 38.39 per litre	Rs 41.08 per litre
Excise Duty and Road cess charged by Central govt.	Rs 19.48 per litre	Rs 15.33 per litre
Price to Dealers	Rs 57.87 per litre	Rs 56.41 per litre
Petrol Pump dealers commission	Rs 3.63 per litre	Rs 2.53 per litre
VAT by state governments (varies from state to state - 27% on Petrol and 16.75% on Diesel) and 25 paise as pollution cess with surcharge	Rs 16.61 per litre	Rs 10.17 per litre
Final Retail Price (as on 3rd June 2018 in Delhi)	Rs 78.11 per litre	Rs 69.11 per litre

In the year 2016-17, the central government's revenue from the petroleum sector was Rs 5.24 lakh crore, accounting for 3.5 percent of GDP. During the last four years, the present national government has mopped up Rs 16.57

lakh crore as tax revenue from petroleum product sales, mainly from petrol and diesel. Every rupee cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel will result in a revenue loss of Rs 13,000 crore for the central government.

India has the highest retail prices of petrol and diesel among South Asian nations as taxes account for half of the pump rates. Nearly 40 percent of the price of petrol is made up of taxes by the centre and the states. Yet neither side wants to change that situation fundamentally. State governments levy sales tax/VAT on petrol ranging from 15 per cent in Puducherry to 33 per cent in Andhra Pradesh, making it a major source of their income.



Petroleum taxes under GST

The Central government has the power to tax the production of petroleum products and the states have the power to tax their sale. Ever since the introduction of GST on July 1, 2017, there have been discussions about including petroleum products under the new system of taxes. As explained earlier, the basic cost of fuel after it comes out of refinery is Rs 38.39 per litre for petrol. Add 28 per cent (14 per cent CGST and 14 per cent SGST) of GST in it and also the dealer commission of Rs 3.6, the price comes out to be around Rs 53. On diesel, the basic cost of fuel after it comes out of the refinery is Rs 41.08 per litre. Add 28 per cent GST, combining both CGST and SGST, to it plus

Rs 2.5 per litre as dealer commission, the price comes out to be around Rs 55. If the government includes petroleum fuel under the GST, and applies the highest tax slab of 28 per cent, the petrol and diesel price would be reduced by Rs 25.1 and Rs 14.1, respectively. Following table shows the trends in taxes on petrol and diesel prices.

	Tax in November 2014	Tax in August 2017	Tax in June 2018
Excise Duty on Petrol	Rs 9.20 per Litre	Rs 21.48 per Litre	Rs 19.48 per Litre
Excise Duty on Diesel	Rs 3.46 per Litre	Rs 17.33 per Litre	Rs 15.33 per Litre
VAT on Basic Price on Petrol	20% on Basic Price	27% on Basic Price	27% on Basic Price
VAT on Basic Price on Diesel	12.5% on Basic Price	16.75% on Diesel + 25p Cess	16.75% on Diesel + 25p Cess

The tax on petrol in Indian is around 46% of the price per litre and diesel is around 36%. The maximum slab of GST is now only 28%. It is clear that bringing petrol and diesel under GST will definitely benefit the consumers. The consumer will save Rs 22 in Delhi when fuel is brought under the GST. Likewise, the consumer in Mumbai will save Rs 32 per litre of petrol as current value added tax (VAT) is much higher at 39 percent compared with 28 percent GST. Bringing petrol and diesel under the ambit of GST would help provide an immediate and big relief of about Rs 20 per litre to consumers reeling under sky-high prices. But at the same time, the centre and

state governments might lose their large chunk of revenue through the introduction of GST. This argument from the government is not true in the long run. Centre and state governments will benefit from the reduction of prices of petroleum products in the form of larger sales of petrol and diesel, increase in sales of majority of other products through the reduction in prices by the result of decline in transportation costs, increase in central share of taxes to states, etc. The major hurdle for including petroleum taxes under GST is that the effective sales tax on fuel varies wildly from state to state. For example, Maharashtra charges 40% as tax on petrol while Andaman and Nicobar charges just 6% ad valorem. The effective sales tax on diesel ranges from 6% to 29%. This means that each hike in crude oil price brings more revenue to the states. Once subsumed in GST, fuel will cost the same across the country. The impacts on states revenue could be around Rs 50,000 crore annually and will be more for states such as Maharashtra, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telengana that levy high VAT of over 30 per cent on petrol.





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DON'T QUIT!

You're a star, not the shooting one
But the brightest one.
Always twinkling in the sky
Showering on others, the feel of joy.

Don't dim your light
Or never feel like fed up
All you have ... is to fight
Somehow manage to get up

Life is never so easy
Just be a warrior, you've the sword
Life is never so complex
Just don't lose faith, try hard

If a problem comes to you
It comes for you ... to lift up
Because nature has chosen you
Its your time ... to show up

Problems are not there to weaken you
They will make you stronger
Problems are not there to shaken you
They are there ... being your supporter

But dear, if you fail this time
Remember, there's no more fame, no more shine
You've lost that wonderful fine
You've lost your faith in divine

You may be in trouble, you may have some
problems,
But never feel like, It's over ...
As problems may come and problems may go,
But time heals it forever ...



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Painting





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My Experiences in ISRO

Having spent more than three decades in one of the prestigious organizations of the nation, I would like to make one point very loud and clear. That is, ISRO has given me everything as per the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Today I am quite contented and extremely happy about a satisfying career.

It was in the year 1987, I joined the erstwhile ISRO satellite centre and I was posted to Sensor systems division. I had joined as Technical Assistant-B (Mechanical) with a diploma qualification after three years of experience in M/s Kirloskar electric.

I reported to Shri. R K Gupta who was the Head of Mechanical Systems. Gradually I learnt that Shri Gupta had a Master's degree from Indian Institute of Science and was Scientist "SE" in ISRO. In subsequent days I came across number of engineers who were either holding master's degree or graduates from reputed institutes. In those days there was also a rampant craze among the

graduates to quit ISRO and pursue masters at American universities.

At this point I should make a few comments about my family. My mother was a home maker and my father worked in Karnataka state police department. I had five siblings. I had taken up diploma essentially to support my family. I used to bring big books from our college library and this made my parents to think that I am doing something big.

Once it so happened that my father and I went to a wedding. My father asked a person standing nearby about the qualification of the bridegroom to which he replied, "The boy has done M Tech". My father innocently asked him whether M Tech is a prerequisite to diploma. My father always thought his son was doing a very great course. Though this incident happened about 35 years back, it is fresh in my memory. It brings to my mind how much my father had trusted and loved me.

In fact I am really at loss and beyond words to narrate this incident. Today after finishing a masters degree waiting ten years after my undergraduate studies, I do not have my father by my side to witness my accomplishment.

Coming from a factory background to a research organization the experience was quite different. A factory like M/s Kirloskar producing electric motors, generators where the sun rays rarely entered the high bay workshops and continuous noise of huge vertical turret lathes and planing machines and an office-cum-clean rooms with laboratories was an altogether poles apart.

Very soon after joining ISRO I learnt that my education was nothing. There was a tremendous inferiority complex developing inside me. There were some engineers taking up higher studies leading to Master's degree at Indian Institute of Science. I always felt there is a long way I have to go in terms of acquiring higher education. In the process I made few unsuccessful attempts to do AMIE.

In those days a large earth disc or a simulator with hot water circulation was being developed for INSAT missions. Frequently engineers used the terms like Stefan-Boltzman constant and radiation laws. During my diploma studies I had not come across this and I was curious to learn these things. There was also a problem about what books to refer. Whenever I met some of my colleagues who were with same qualification like me and I understood that many of them were either doing undergraduate studies part time or some other courses.

Once there was a blower of the clean room table to be replaced and I made a request letter. I wrote 'Lamina air flow table' and my boss corrected this to 'laminar flow table.' These tables are used in the clean room to carry out precision assembly of flight hardware. The knowledge of laminar and turbulent fluid flow regimes was something too much for a person like me with limited educational background though I could study the same elaborately in my Master's.

All I am trying to say is that there was a burning desire in me which developed over a number of years to pursue academic interests. The presence of a galaxy of engineers in ISRO with bright academic background and the technical discussions in which a number of new terminologies I came across gave me a platform to orient myself in the direction of academics. I am quite sure this would not have happened had I worked in any of the multinationals or an industry because of the high thrust given to academics in ISRO; and such is not the case with private companies.

The real breakthrough in my career came after my marriage and having a son. I enrolled in BMS College of Engineering, for pursuing Bachelor's degree in Mechanical engineering under 10 years' quota. Though I was 29 years old I had vigorous enthusiasm, indomitable spirit and was always in great spirits to attend college in the evening after my office work. I loved going to college and attend classes. I am highly indebted to ISRO for the congenial work atmosphere and small time gaps during job could be used to study some of new subjects like engineering mathematics, Fortran programming, etc.

After getting a bachelors degree, the immediate idea that came to my mind was to pursue Master's degree, at the Indian Institute of Science because by that time to my young mind the role model was my boss who was a product of the Institute.

Though I had to wait for ten long years after acquiring degree to pursue Master's I could nevertheless achieve this after qualifying GATE and get admission at National Institute of Technology, Karnataka, Suratkal. (NITK).

At NITK there was another pleasant surprise in store for me. That was the grand swimming pool. I loved swimming in my childhood but couldn't do it because I did not have Rs 2/- to pay for each swimming session.

Finally to conclude this article, once our HOD of mechanical department said Master's and Phd's are outcomes of burning desire, a thought just came to my mind that the professor says this in particular reference to me and I just thought "I have done it".





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THE AGED MAN AND HIS SON

When I relocated to Trivandrum, the first thing that struck me as very odd about the place was the absence of the proverbial milkman who religiously delivers the milk packets first thing in the morning. Fortunately, the daily delivery of newspaper to home thankfully was still prevalent.

My house owner informed me of the presence of a milk booth less than 50 meters from the house. Furthermore, I was informed that the milk booth opens by 5:30 AM every day. To make a long story short, I became the proverbial milk man for my house, getting the milk packets every day in the morning without fail.

The milk booth was mostly manned by a grumpy, ill-mannered and arrogant old man. Right from day one, I was put off by the surly

and ill-tempered behaviour of the old man. He would invariably forget the exact amount of money I had given him and would repeatedly ask me the same 2 to 3 times. Whenever he returned the balance amount, he would invariably count, recount and count again for the third time before returning the balance amount. I used to find this extremely exasperating. At times, some of the notes that he returned would be soiled or torn in the middle. If I politely requested him to replace such notes, he would get extremely angry and would bombard me with expletives. It goes without saying that I would never be able to replace the bad notes anywhere else. This made me approach the milk booth every day with trepidation and I began to take with me the exact amount of money needed to buy the milk packets from the old man.

One fine day when I stood up in front of the milk booth, I was pleasantly surprised to see a strapping young man, courteous, efficient and very well behaved. I learnt that the young man was the son of the aged man and the young man has returned once for all to his native place to be with his parents. I thanked my good fortune that I do not have to face a cranky and surly old man devoid of courtesy first thing in the morning, day in and day out. I started enjoying the company of the young man who happened to be up to date with the affairs of the State. I also was pleasantly surprised to find the young man apologizing profusely whenever I pointed out any stained note that was returned to me. The above behaviour was very much at variance with his aged father.

Shortly, thereafter I heard that the young man was getting married. I hoped that his marriage would not keep him away from the milk booth. I was immensely relieved that marriage did not alter his availability at the milk booth. However, I started noticing one undesirable trait in the young man which did not necessarily manifest after his marriage. This was his lack of upright financial integrity as far as returning small change is concerned.

Whenever he had to return three or four rupees, he used to return only a one or at best a two rupee coin claiming lack of adequate change. The above situation persisted even when he had to return small change of the order of one or two rupees. While I had initially believed his claim of 'no change', I started wondering whether his jovial chatter and affable service were a convenient ploy to make a tidy sum at the end of the month for

his personal use. On this matter, I will have to concede that his aged father, despite his uncouth and irritable behaviour was incredibly unblemished when it came to his personal financial integrity. In fact the aged father, when not in a position to return a sum as small as fifty paise would invariably provide for a toffee in lieu of the sum (50 paise) unreturned. I was surprised with myself for not appreciating earlier the positive aspects of the aged father's personality, it is true that his inefficient and discourteous service often overshadowed his positives.

I decided rightly to confront the bull by its horns; hence the next time when the young man pleaded his helplessness at not being able to return the change due to lack of it, I started arguing that his father in the same circumstances would provide the buyer toffees in lieu of the unreturned change. The young man clearly did not expect the retort; that too he least expected the same from me. In a moment's time, his famed courteous and suave debonair got radically changed to crass and ill-tempered behaviour that was so reminiscent of his aged father.

I cursed myself for bringing the situation to its present plight. Looking back, I feel that I had needlessly spoiled my friendly and affable relationship with the young man by bothering and making a big issue of my unreturned small change. To conclude I was reckless to prove right the well known saying of William Wordsworth, "The child (young man) is the father of the (aged) man".



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The Illusion



8 o'clock. The harsh sound of the alarm filling the ears like poison, the tethering back to reality, the smell of fresh daisies overrun by the staleness of concrete, Jason woke up with a headache. Monday mornings are always the worst: the hangovers, the late nights, the girls but the worst of it all: the dreams. They were always the same. But it was 8:15 and he had to get to work. Five years of hostel life had taught him all that he needed to know and hence, he was ready within 20 minutes. Living close to his office meant that he could commute to and from his office within 10 minutes. He liked this small 'morning walk' of his, the one where he doesn't need to get up early.

Jason never understood why while most people would slag on Mondays, Fridays and pretty much everyday of the week, his boss managed to stay in top form whenever he needed to reprimand his employees. Be it for submitting a report late by even so much as a minute, or for getting his job done by them when he could have fun, he always made it look like it was someone else's fault and that someone had to pay the price for it. Jason knew his day was going to be way worse than hell when he poached his egg. 'If you can't

poach your egg, then someone's going to poach you," was what he always used to say. Boy, was he right!

'Where's my report, Jason?' asked Stan. 'I've got almost half of it done, Sir,' replied Jason, recounting the woman he brought home on Saturday night. 'Well, half isn't going to cover it, boy,' yelled Stan, 'What do I tell my boss? Sorry, but I could only complete half of it. Please do the other half yourselves!' 'I'll be on it sir,' murmured Jason. 'I should find it on my desk before I leave today,' threatened Stan as he left.

He set to work, drifting in and out of it, thinking of last Saturday night. It had been a wonderful night, the weather was perfect, the setting was perfect and the woman, oh! the woman. That's bound to be close to the real deal. Yes, he was a ladies man: they loved him and he loved them. Maybe it is true after all that you don't appreciate it if you have a lot of it. Jason never fell in love, ever! He didn't know what love was, to begin with. Born to highly toxic parents who got divorced (maybe because of him being born, who knows!), beaten by an addict, molested by her mother's

lover, sent to a foster home where more molestation and beating followed, you can hardly expect someone like that to appreciate love. Love for numbers was the only thing that saved him: the scholarship, those years spent at college, they were his true parents, the ones who loved him, nurtured him. It was there at the college one day, that a girl asked for his number and he, being immature, took it to be just an ordinary thing, until later that night, she went home with him.

However, last Saturday didn't remind him only of his debaucheries. It also reminded him of something else, something that hadn't happened to him for a long time, something that shouldn't have happened!

The first day of his college. Arguably, one of the happiest days of his life. The lectures, the professors, the food, the dorms, the people, the place: everything appealed to him. They had a sort of warm welcoming aura around them, something he had never ever experienced in his life before. And he loved it all. But he experienced something strange too. Time had slowed down for him. It was as if everything else was moving at almost half the speed it was supposed to. The cars seemed to take forever to pass a signal, the pedestrians seemed to take forever to cross the road (ah! but they always do!!), the cyclists, even the kids seemed to walk slowly. Was he the only one who knew how to walk and talk normally? The lectures seemed gibberish, with the pace of the lecturers decreasing by the "minute".

However, this didn't last long and next day, he found that everyone was at the same pace as himself and he felt relieved. 'It was just a silly

thing,' he thought and put it away. And he would have kept it that way, had it not been occurring again and again and on the most important of days: his first encounter with a girl, his graduation day speech (he was the topper, after all), his interview, the night he lost his mother and his step father to a bunch of high teenagers behind the wheel of an RV. But it had not happened for a long while, many years to be exact. He had forgotten all about it-out of sight, out of mind, they say- until he felt it again, lying beside his boss' wife, all thoughts of the work that his boss had 'asked' him to do wiped from his memory.

This was a feeling like no other, a feeling that all was on the path to destruction, that it wasn't real, that he needed to make it right, maybe go shake things up a bit. But Jason couldn't do anything: just lie there and wait for it to stop.

Being the genius that he was, he completed all his reports before Stan left that day. And Jason was in a rush. Maybe today was the day. But sadly, that was not to be. The cool, impersonal nature of the hospital reminded him of his past and hence, he hated it. But he wouldn't dare to miss it. For today was his weekly visit to his friend, one he had lost to a coma exactly 12 years, 4 months and 6 days ago. This was the only human on Earth who could understand him, whom he could open his heart to and yet, Charlie had been in a coma for so long, he could hardly remember his face. Strange, isn't it, that a person whom you visit every week strikes up no picture in your mind?

But the truth is, he hadn't seen his friend all this while! He was never allowed inside the room, he stayed there outside waiting for his

turn but it never arrived. Either the doctors had to see to him, or his parents or some other sort of formality always crept in. And it was the same today. Sitting on the bench outside the ICU, he imagined all sorts of conversations that could have been and could be taking place inside that forbidden kingdom. "I'm sorry but he's no more!", "These next 48 hours are extremely crucial," "Be prepared for the worst," were some phrases he had grown accustomed to, along with the loud wail or silent sobbing of the addressees.

Coming back home, he lay on his back and imagined being in a better place, a field full of daisies, a shining sun, the sound of soft laughter until he was dreaming that same dream again. Charlie was beside him, they were playing in the open field and they would have been, until they heard a familiar sound that made both their throats dry. "Having fun, kids", asked John, with a smirk. They were too scared to answer or move even as they saw him moving towards them with lust trickling from his eyes. "I just want to give you a little gift," he went on, "you'll like it, both of you. It's like chocolate!" Jason and Charlie both knew what gift he was referring to, so they kept moving back, as John lessened the distance between them. "Oh come on now," he was saying, "Just one more time for Papa," until ...

Jason woke up with a start feeling himself wet and burning with sweat. He felt he had a fever. Every time, John's hands seemed nearer than before, about to choke them with his huge hands. But he never reached them. And Jason never knew what happened next. But he knew something horrible must have happened to Charlie and that's why he was there in the

hospital. But then why wasn't he?? Did Charlie save him? Was he too scared to remember? He could never find out. Back to the old routine. Office, Stan, girls, sleep, dream, and so on.

It was the next Monday when it all happened. Rushing to the hospital, he discovered that Charlie, whom he had thought about every day for the past 12 years had a heart attack, one that he may not survive.

Every one was saying his last wishes. He hoped that today, he will get to bid goodbye to his long lost friend. He did get glimpses, once of his legs, white as snow, or his hands, still as a lake. He thought he could even hear his voice sometimes, though that would have been highly improbable.

After everyone was done, everyone looked at Jason. It was *his* turn, to finally see his friend and try to recollect the huge debt that he owed to him. It was with some hesitation that the doctor allowed Jason inside the ICU where he felt that the walls were more rigid than anywhere else in the world. And he felt time slowing again. Maybe it was normal this time. But he realized it wasn't until he saw Charlie. With brown hair, the same blue eyes, those red lips which were now pale, that wide brow, that sharp nose, that perfect body, Charlie was the exact mirror image of him, same in all respects. And then he realized what had happened. Time had come to a standstill: the nurses weren't moving anymore, people weren't talking anymore, the ECG didn't beep anymore, everything was still.

The bird that had set in flight remained flapping its wings, a perfect picture. The cars,

the cyclists with their feet on the pedal in exactly the same position as they were 10 minutes ago. Time was still and Jason had no idea how to make things normal again! It was the end now. Charlie was him. He was Charlie. But then what about 12 years ago?? Had it not happened??

12 years ago

Another sleepless night. Another report. Another work. Just the usual stuff. The wolf always preys on the sheep, never on the lion. He knew he was the sheep, the day he joined, the day he submitted his first report and the day his credit was consumed by his greedy boss who managed to keep a cool charade over his wickedly dark and cunning mind. Master of tennis, squash and badminton, he

was supposedly an all-rounder. But none knew that the reason for his last 3 awards and incentives was one of his less attractive employees. And none ever will.

At first, the pain was mild but then it got more severe until one day he heard the words "Cancer, terminal stage" out of his doctor's mouth. And then one day, as he collapsed and saw the world spin, he fell into a coma.

Jason, who had been in a coma for 12 years now, had had several near-death experiences when all was lost. But he always came back. Until today. The ECG beeped once and then remained still. He had always wanted to be a ladies man: all those hopes of getting married, getting a promotion, having kids, all lay bare. Only he was stuck in a time loop forever. And he had no idea how to get out of it.





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एहसास

चलना है दूर तक, संग को साथी नहीं।
सूरत सिवा तेरे कोई अब हमें भाती नहीं ॥
इश्क के ख्वाब में हुए हैं ये सिलसिले।
तुम्हें आती हैं मगर नींद हमें आती नहीं ॥

अब फिर कुछ कर जाने को जी करता है।
फिर थक कर घर जाने को जी करता है॥
ज़िंदा रहते तो हासिल न हुआ कुछ भी।
तेरे इश्क में मर जाने को जी करता हैं॥

ये करके मेरा दिल भी नहीं तोड़ा उसने।
उसकी ना का लहजा ज़रा नरम था ॥

मोहब्बत तुझे बताऊँ तो बस इतनी ही है मुझको।
जो पूछे कोई नाम तेरा तो हिचकिचा जाता हूँ मैं ॥





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മണ്ണിനെ പ്രണയിച്ച മഞ്ഞുതുള്ളി

ഹാ:നമ്മൾ വിധിയുടെ വെറും കളിപ്പാവകൾ. എങ്കിലും നീയെന്തേ എന്നെ മറന്നു? ഒരു താങ്ങായി എന്നെ സംരക്ഷിക്കേണ്ട നീയെന്തേ ഇങ്ങിനെ നിർജീവമായി? എന്ന് തുടങ്ങിയ അവളുടെ വ്യാകുല ഭാഷണം കേട്ട് അവൻ പരിഭ്രാന്തനായി. അവൻ ചോദിച്ചു നിനക്ക് ഇനിയും എന്നെ മനസ്സിലാ യില്ലാ എന്നുണ്ടോ? ഉവ്വ്; മനസ്സിലാകുന്നുണ്ട് എന്നുള്ള മരവിച്ച മറുപടി നൽകി അവൾ തുടർന്നു. നിനക്കറിയില്ലേ നിന്നോടൊപ്പമെ ഞാൻ ഞാൻ സഹിച്ച ദുർഘട സന്ധികൾ. ദിനങ്ങളോളം എന്നെ ഉരുവാക്കുവാൻ കഷ്ടതയനുഭവിച്ചവരെ വിട്ട് പിരിയാൻ എന്ത് പ്രയാസമായിരുന്നു. എന്ത് ദുഃഖമായി രുന്നു. പക്ഷേ അപ്പോഴും എന്റെ പ്രതീക്ഷ നിന്നിലെ മരിക്കാത്ത മനസ്സും നിന്റെ അസ്തിത്വമായ സർവ്വ ഐശ്വര്യങ്ങളും ഒക്കെ ആയിരുന്നു.

ഞാൻ നിന്നിലേക്ക് സഞ്ചരിച്ച് തുടങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ മനസ്സിലാക്കി തുടങ്ങി, എന്നെ മുഴുവ നായും വിഴുങ്ങുന്ന ഈ ഭൂമിയും തങ്ങളുടെ തൂലികത്തുമ്പിൽ പൊൻകണമാകുന്ന സാഹിത്യഭാവനകളെക്കുറിച്ചുമൊക്കെ.

എന്തേ നീ ഇത്ര വൈകി? നീ ഞങ്ങളെ മറന്നോ? തുടങ്ങിയ സ്നേഹസ്മൃണമാർന്ന വാക്കുകളും അല്ലെങ്കിലും നീ ഇങ്ങനെയൊക്കെ ക്ഷണിക്കാത്ത അതിഥിയായി വെറുമൊരു പ്രശ്നക്കാരിയായി കടന്ന് വരുന്നുവെന്നുള്ള പരിഭവം കലർന്ന ആത്മഗതങ്ങളും. പക്ഷേ ഞാനതൊന്നും ഗണ്യമാക്കുന്നില്ല കേട്ടോ. ഇതൊക്കെ നിന്റെ അടുത്ത് എത്തു വോളമുള്ള മാർഗ്ഗതടസ്സങ്ങളായേ ഞാൻ കാണുന്നുവുള്ളൂ.

ഒരിക്കൽ ഞാൻ വിചാരിച്ചു തിരികെ മടങ്ങി യാലോ എന്ന്. ഇല്ല എനിക്ക് ഇനി അതിന് സാധിക്കില്ല. പക്ഷേ ഈ വിധ ചിന്തകളാൽ വ്യാകുലയാണെങ്കിലും ഞാൻ നിന്റെ അടുത്തത്തിരിക്കേണ്ടിയിരുന്നു. ഞാൻ കണ്ടു നീ എന്നെയും കാത്ത് ഇരിക്കുന്നത്.

എനിക്ക് അതിയായ സന്തോഷം തോന്നി. എത്രയും വേഗം നിന്റെ സാമീപ്യം അനുഭവി ക്കാമെന്നുള്ള താരയോടുകൂടി അവസാനം നിന്നെയും എന്നെയും ഒന്നിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ആ പുൽക്കൊടി തുമ്പിൽ ഞാൻ എത്തി. അപ്പോൾ ഞാൻ ഒന്നു മനസ്സിലാക്കി, സർവ്വ വിധ മാരകവിഷങ്ങളാലും നീച പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളാലും നീ എനിക്ക് നഷ്ടപ്പെടാൻ പോകു ന്നു. എന്നെ തഴുകി ആശ്വസിപ്പിക്കേണ്ട നിന്റെ പൊൻകരങ്ങൾ തളർന്ന് പോയിരിക്കു ന്നു. എന്നെ വഹിക്കേണ്ട നിന്റെ മേനിയും സാന്ത്വനിപ്പിക്കേണ്ട സത്വചനങ്ങളും മര വിച്ച് നശിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു.

ഉച്ചത്തിലുള്ള ഒരു വിലാപത്തോടെ അവൻ പറഞ്ഞു. ഇല്ല! എന്നിൽ നിന്ന് നിന്നെ ഞാൻ അകറ്റില്ല. നീ എന്റേതാണ്. ചിലപ്പോൾ ഈ ലോകം അത് മാറ്റിമറിക്കും. ആത്മാർത്ഥമായ സ്നേഹപാരമ്പര്യത്തോടെയുള്ള ആ വാക്കുകൾ കേട്ടതും ഒരു ജീവച്ഛവമായി പുൽക്കൊടിതുമ്പിൽ ഇരുന്ന അവൾ സർവ്വശക്തിയുമെടുത്ത് അവന്റെ അടുത്തേക്ക് ചാടി. അവളെ ആരും പിന്നീട് കണ്ടില്ല.

മാലിന്യങ്ങളുടെ കുമ്പാരമായ ശവക്കോട്ടയായി മാറിയ വെറും മണ്ണായി അവനും അവ നിൽ ലയിച്ച് പോയ മഞ്ഞുതുള്ളിയായി അവളും ഇന്നും എന്നും ഓർമ്മയിൽ ജീവി ക്കുന്നു.



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അടുകളയിലെ വിപ്ലവകല

‘നീ ഞങ്ങളെ മുറിവേൽപ്പിക്കാതെ ഈറനണിയിപ്പിക്കുന്നു
അസ്ഥിത്വമുള്ളതെല്ലാത്തിനെയും ഞാൻ കീർത്തിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.
പക്ഷേ, എന്റെ പ്രിയപ്പെട്ട ഉള്ളി, നീ എനിക്ക്
കണ്ണഞ്ചിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ചിറകുകളുള്ള കിളിയേക്കാളും സുന്ദരിയാണ്
സ്വർഗ്ഗീയ ഗോളം, വെള്ളപ്പൊൻ ചഷകം
ഹിമശുദ്ധമായ കടൽച്ചൊരിയുടെ
ചലിക്കാത്ത നൂത്തം
ഭൂമിയുടെ സൗന്ദര്യം നിന്റെ പളുകുടലിൽ നിറയുന്നു’

ചിലിയൻ കവിയായ പാബ്ലോ നെരൂദയുടെ
‘ഉള്ളിക്ക് ഒരു സങ്കീർത്തനം’ എന്ന കവിത
യിലെ ചില വരികളാണിവ.

അതേ, എത്രമാത്രം കണ്ണുനീരാണ് ഒരു
ചെറിയ ഉള്ളി അതിന്റെ ഉള്ളിൽ അടക്കി വച്ചി
രിക്കുന്നത്. നമ്മുടെ കടുവറക്കലും, താളി
ക്കലും, സാലഡും, കുറുമയും, ഉള്ളിക്ക
റിയും ഒന്നും തന്നെ ഈ ഉള്ളിക്കുഞ്ഞുങ്ങളി
ല്ലാതെ സാധിക്കില്ല. അവയെ ഇക്കിളിയിട്ടു
ണർത്തി അവയുടെ കടലാസുടുപ്പുകൾ
ഉരിഞ്ഞ് കത്തിയെടുത്ത് അവയെ കിരുകിരാ
എന്ന് വട്ടത്തിൽ അരിയുമ്പോൾ നാം കര
യും. എണ്ണയിൽ കിടന്ന് അവയും കരയും.
പക്ഷേ ഈ കരച്ചിലും വിങ്ങലും ഇല്ലെങ്കിൽ
എന്തു കവി? എന്ത് സ്വാദ്? ഇത് ഉള്ളിയുടെ
മാത്രം കാര്യം. ഇങ്ങനെയാണ് ഓരോ ചേരു
വകളും, ഓരോ കഷണങ്ങളും, ഓരോ

കറിക്കുട്ടുകളും. പരസ്പരവിരുദ്ധമായ രുചി
ഭേദങ്ങളുള്ള എത്രയോ കറിക്കുട്ടുകൾ
ചേർന്നാണ് ഒരു നല്ല കറി ഉണ്ടാകുന്നത്.
ഇതിന്റെ പിന്നിലെ ഭാവനാവിലാസം
അപാരം തന്നെയാണ്. ഇന്ന് നമ്മുടെ അടുക
ളയിൽ നിന്നും തീൻമേശയിൽ നിന്നും അപ്ര
ത്യക്ഷമായിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന അനേകം രുചി
കൾ പുരാതനമായ ഒരു പുസ്തകശേഖരം
പോലെയാണ്.

‘സ്ത്രീകൾ അടുകളെ ഉപേക്ഷിക്കരുത്’ എന്ന
തലക്കെട്ടോടെ ഒരു ലേഖനം 1108 (1933) ഇടവ
മാസം “സ്ത്രീ” എന്ന മാസികയിൽ ശ്രീമതി
നരിക്കുത്രി ദേവകി അന്തർജ്ജനം എഴുതുക
യുണ്ടായി. സ്ത്രീകൾ എല്ലാ മേഖലയിലും
സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം അനുഭവിക്കുന്നവരും, വ്യക്തി
മുദ്ര പതിപ്പിക്കുന്നവരും ആകണമെങ്കിൽ
ആദ്യം അവർ അടുകളയിലെ സ്വന്തം

സ്ഥാനം ഉറപ്പിക്കണമെന്ന് അവർ പറയുന്നു. അടുക്കളയെ ഒരു പരീക്ഷണശാലയും ഭാവനാകേന്ദ്രവുമായി സ്ഥാപിക്കുവാൻ സാധിക്കണം. അടുക്കളയിൽ വേരോടാത്ത ഒരു നവീകരണവും ദീർഘായുസ്സോടിരിക്കില്ല എന്നും അവർ പറഞ്ഞു വയ്ക്കുന്നു.

അടുക്കളയിൽ അരങ്ങേറുന്ന വിപ്ലവങ്ങൾ അനവധിയാണ്. നിനച്ചതുപോലെ തന്നെ രൂപിയായി അരങ്ങേറുന്ന കറികൾ ഒരു വശത്ത്, മറുവശത്ത് അബദ്ധത്തിൽ നായകസ്ഥാനത്തേക്ക് കയറിപ്പോകുന്ന കറികൾ. അമ്മയുടെ വിരലുകൾക്കൊന്നോ നമ്മുടെ നാവിനൊന്നോ രൂപിയോടടുപ്പം എന്നു തോന്നിപ്പോകുന്ന എത്രയെത്ര വിഭവങ്ങൾ. പണ്ടത്തെ രൂപിസ്മരണകൾ എത്ര പെട്ടെന്നാണ് ഓർമ്മകളിൽ നിന്നും ഓടിക്കയറി വന്ന് നാവിൻ തുമ്പിൽ രസമുകുളങ്ങൾ വാരി വിതറുന്നത്. ഈ ഓർമ്മകളേറെയും നമ്മുടെ അമ്മമാരെ ചുറ്റിപ്പറ്റിയുള്ളതല്ലെ.

“അടുക്കളയിൽ നിന്നും കിച്ചണിലേക്ക്” എന്ന പുസ്തകത്തിൽ ശ്രീമതി മേരിക്കുട്ടി, അടുക്കള ഓർമ്മകളിലൂടെ നാം നടത്തിയ മാറ്റത്തിന്റെ മുന്നേറ്റം പ്രതിപാദിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. സ്ത്രീകളുടെ കൂട്ടായ്മയും സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യവും നിലനിന്നിരുന്ന അടുക്കളകളും മുറ്റങ്ങളും മാറ്റങ്ങൾ പിന്നിട്ട് ഡ്രൈ കിച്ചണിലേക്ക് വഴിമാറിക്കൊടുക്കുന്നു. കഞ്ഞിയും പയറും മറന്ന മലയാളി ഓടും ബ്രെഡ് ടോസ്റ്റും കൂടുതൽ ഇഷ്ടപ്പെടാൻ തുടങ്ങി. നാവിന്റെ രൂപി കളെ അച്ചടക്കം ശീലിപ്പിക്കാൻ നാം പഠിച്ചു.

ഇതിന് ഒരു അപവാദമെന്നോണം അടുക്കളയിൽ നിന്നും ട്രഷ്ട് കൽപിക്കപ്പെട്ട പഴങ്കഞ്ഞി, മുളകുടച്ചത്, തലേന്നത്തെ മീൻകറി, കഞ്ഞി, പയർ, പപ്പടം, ചമ്മന്തി, ഉണക്കമീൻ എന്നിവർ പ്രത്യേക സഖ്യം രൂപീകരിച്ച് കേരളത്തിലെ പ്രമുഖ നഗരങ്ങളിൽ ശാഖകൾ ആരംഭിച്ചു. ഊബർ, ഓല ഡ്രൈവർമാർക്കും, പ്രത്യേക സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിൽ അമ്മച്ചിയേയും, ഉമ്മമ്മയേയും, മുത്തശ്ശിയേയും ഓർമ്മ വരുത്തുവാൻ പുതിയ കഞ്ഞിക്കടകളും, പഴങ്കഞ്ഞിക്കടകളും ആശ്വാസമാണ്.

അടുക്കളയിൽ നിന്നും തുടങ്ങുന്ന ഒരു വിപ്ലവവും എരിഞ്ഞടങ്ങുകയില്ല. അതുകൊണ്ടാണ് മലയാളി ഇന്നും വാഴക്കുന്ന് തോരൻ ഇഷ്ടപ്പെടുന്നതും (ബി. മുരളിയുടെ ‘വാഴക്കുന്ന്’ എന്ന കഥയോട് കടപ്പാട്)

മലബാർ രൂപി വിപ്ലവത്തിന്റെ ഉപജ്ഞാതാവും, സാക്ഷാൽ വൈക്കം മുഹമ്മദ് ബഷീർ ‘പാചക കലയിലെ പദ്മശ്രീ’ എന്നു വിശേഷിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളവരുമായ ശ്രീമതി ഉമ്മി അബ്ദുള്ള പറയുന്നുണ്ട്; മനസ്സിന് അസ്വസ്ഥത തോന്നുമ്പോൾ അടുക്കളയിൽ കയറി എന്തെങ്കിലുമൊക്കെ ഉണ്ടാക്കുമെന്നും, അപ്പോൾ ഒരു ആശ്വാസം തോന്നുമെന്നും. വളരെ മനോഹരമായ ചിന്ത. ഭാവനയുള്ളിടത്തോളം കാലം കറിക്കുട്ടുകൾ ചേർത്തും, പേർത്തും, അരിഞ്ഞും, അരച്ചും, കൊത്തിയും, നുറുക്കിയും, കൂട്ടിയും, ഇളക്കിയും, താളിച്ചും, മുപ്പിച്ചും, ഉലർത്തിയും നാം വിപ്ലവം സൃഷ്ടിച്ചുകൊണ്ടേയിരിക്കും.





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