

The Dice



M.K.Raina

Original in Kashmiri ~ English Translation by: T.N.Dhar 'Kundan'

Shyama was all eyes towards the main gate of the courtyard opening into the lane outside. It was well past eleven in the night and every one, young and old was back home but the only exception was her son Sunil. He was nowhere to be seen. Not that it was the first time for him to be late. Of late he had turned to be a vagabond and late homecoming was his usual routine. The people in the neighborhood too were annoyed with him. Every day he would pick up a quarrel with one or the other person. One day he would pluck flowers from someone's garden and the next day he would snatch a toy from the hands of some child. Sometime he would chase away a youngster and sometime he would deflate the wheels of some elder's cycle. Hardly a day would pass when none of the neighbors would complain to his mother against him. Every time she would apologize for his misdeeds and grieve over her lot.

Sunil was notorious. Every one had forbidden his children from playing with him. For his mother he was as good as non-existent. She had to do even marketing herself. Her relations were concerned over her plight. They would feel sorry for her and would realize that she is getting older and the age would not allow her to toil this way alone for long. They had all written off Sunil thinking that expecting anything from him would be futile. Often they would say that anything was possible for a boy like him who would pick the pocket of his own mother. Although Shyama also was disillusioned with him yet she would not take even a morsel till he returned and had his dinner. After all she was a mother and had a mother's heart.

Lately Sunil had become friends with Kamlawati's son Ashok and this had spoiled him further. It was about three years now that Kamlawati had come to live in this locality. She had sold off her house and land in the village and purchased a house here in the city. They were affluent. Her husband was a trader and would for most of the days remain away. Ashok would get pocket money from his mother daily and he would spend that as he liked. He had become addicted to smoking as well. Sunil was studying in eighth standard when Ashok joined his school. Soon they became chummy with each other. A bad boy as Sunil was this association added to his bad habits. He became disinterested equally with his studies and with his home. He had lost his father in his childhood itself. He would care a hoot for his mother and had nothing to stop him from his misdeeds.

It was now a good ten years that Shyama ji was struggling in her life. She had a meager family pension from her late husband and the rental of the top floor only to fall back upon. She was a matriculate herself and could help Sunil somewhat in his studies. He scored well up to seventh class but thereafter something went wrong and that upset the applecart of his studies. He was a ruffian all through from seventh to tenth class. If his mother or her brother objected he would pounce back upon them.

Sunil had yet another friend, Rashid. In studies both Rashid and Ashok were as good as Sunil but in riches Rashid was better off. His father Kamal Din was a forest lessee. Initially he too was financially moderate but for the last two or three years he earned a lot that changed the face of his household. The house was renovated and transformed into a bungalow. The Shingle roof was replaced by corrugated tin roof. The house was painted both internally and externally. The mats and floor coverings were changed to fine carpets. The cowshed was made into a bathroom fitted with geysers and the compound was made into a garden. This enhanced his prestige and in place of Kamaal Din he came to be known as Kamaal Sahib.

Kamal Sahib was very fond of Sunil. It is said that one day Sunil, Rashid and some of their classmates played truant from the school and went to the river for a bath. Rashid was not able to swim. When he dipped into the water he was carried away by the running water. The children raised a hue and cry and one of them went to his house to report the matter. Sunil showed his grit. He jumped into the river and swam up to the drowning Rashid. In the face of the speed of the waters it was a challenge for Sunil to rescue him. His own life was in danger. He knew swimming but was not an expert swimmer. Somehow he swam up to him, caught hold of his hair and tried to swim back to the bank but it was well nigh impossible to swim against the current. In the meantime many people gathered on the riverbank. One of them was a boatman. He undressed quickly and swam to help these two lads. He picked up Rashid in his lap. Sunil too was breathless. On reaching the bank he fell on the ground quite exhausted. The boatman put Rashid on the ground face downwards and made him throw out the water that he had swallowed. Presently came his parents crying for their son. Soon Rashid regained his consciousness and was in a position to walk back home. Kamaal Sahib heard the full account of what all had happened and hugged Sunil tightly, who was still panting.

One day Kamaal Sahib purchased a new car and went to the shrine of Dastagir Sahib for thanksgiving. He took Sunil along and told him that for him he was as dear as Rashid. Even after that whenever they planned a trip to some place for picnic or sight seeing, they would take Sunil along. They had full sympathy for his being an orphan. They were particularly sad to know that he was mere five year's of age when he lost his father. His conviction was that God created every one the same but circumstances made them different from each other. Whenever the driver came to pick up Rashid from his school, Sunil too would board the car and enjoy the drive back home. He would feel elevated for those fifteen or twenty minutes of drive but this could not alter the fact that he was a boy of poor means. This realization would trouble him a lot and coming to think of it, this was one of the major reasons for his going astray but nobody appreciated this.

Shyama ji's next-door neighbor was one Baskar Nath. He was a Divisional Engineer. He and Sunil's father Moti Lal were employed simultaneously as Assistant Engineers. Moti Lal was honest and not given to bribery. Workwise also he was efficient. His seniors would respect him a lot but the contractors were not happy with him for obvious reasons. Chief

Engineer was especially happy with him. He would invite him to his office for every important meeting. His colleagues were envious of him but at their hearts, they were not against him. All of them acknowledged his competence and expected him to rise very high.

Sunil was born two years after Moti Lal's marriage. When he was five year old his father was transferred to Ladakh. Motilal felt bad to be separated from his toddler son. True every father is attached to his son but Motilal showed a higher degree of attachment for Sunil. He would imagine different schemes for this boy every day before changing them the next day. He would mutter, 'I will not make Sunil an engineer; He will be a doctor. No, I think I must see him becoming an IAS officer. Why not I ask him to take up law as a career?' Shyama ji would remind him that their son was too young yet and it was too early to think of his future course. He would not listen and would say to her that plans should be prepared before hand so that further action is taken accordingly in due time. Her parents too liked Moti Lal's far-sightedness.

Moti Lal felt it a great discomfiture to move to Ladakh but he had to obey the official orders. He did know some higher-ups and could easily get the transfer order cancelled but he never wanted to misuse his good offices with higher officers. He would say if every officer shirked from going to Ladakh, who would attend to works there. A month after receiving the orders he shifted to Ladakh. The atmosphere there was quite different. Most of the officers were from the Kashmir valley and it was a well-knit group, close to each other. There was no backbiting and all of them lived in harmony with each other sharing mutual grief and happiness. Yet Moti Lal was morose and gloomy, for he had for the first time to live away from his near and dear ones.

After about two months posting, Moti Lal got an opportunity to travel to Srinagar on an official assignment. He was overjoyed. He boarded the jeep and felt on top of the world. Besides the driver, there were four other passengers who were engrossed in fun and frolic. Moti Lal was deep in his thoughts. One of the passengers seated in the rear asked him, 'Sir what is the programme for the return journey?' Motilal hardly heard him; he was only thinking of when the jeep would reach Srinagar. But that was not to be. The jeep struck against an oil tanker while descending the narrow road and was thrown into a gorge five hundred yards deep. It is said that when the jeep and the passengers were retrieved by the military personnel, the condition was gruesome, such that no one could be recognized. They were identified by their clothes only.

Sunil and Baskar Nath's son Sahab ji were of same age. The real name of Sahab ji was Naresh but he was called in his home by his pet name only. He being a rich man's son, the neighbors also called him by his pet name. Both the boys were in the same class but they went to different schools. While Sunil studied in a government run school, Sahab ji attended a convent. Basker Nath had two children, Sahab ji and a daughter Babli, who was two year's younger. Basker Nath had a sizeable underhand income as well because of which their life was of a high standard. Babli was rather gentle and simple but Sahab ji was brought up like a prince. He would change his school uniform everyday. Whenever Sunil saw him in his dress, sky-blue shirt, dark blue half-pants with red tie, he would be awe stricken. A servant would carry his school bag and escort him up to the school bus and then return. Before Moti Lal's death, relations between the two families were very cordial. Afterwards when the financial condition of Shyama ji deteriorated, Basker Nath's family began keeping a distance from her. His wife Nirmala too distanced herself from her thinking that an evil eye is disastrous, may be she envies their status and riches.

For sometime Sahab ji would force Sunil to come to his house and show him his costly toys. One day he showed him a costly imported illustrated book and that angered his mother very much. She snatched the book from the hands of Sunil. Both the boys cried. Thereafter his parents disallowed Sahab Ji from having to do anything with him and thus the two innocent boys were separated from each other.

With every year getting added to his age, Sunil became more and more conscious of his poverty. Since he was too small when his father died he had scant memories of his but seeing Basker Nath he could imagine how his father would look like had he been alive today. He would fantasize that his father would also be getting him all the toys and reading material. Sunil wept bitterly on that day when Sahab ji was given a new cycle and he drove it with the help of his servant. Alas! his agony was observed by none, neither by Basker Nath, nor by Nirmala ji and not even by his mother Shyama ji. That was the day he sat under a Chinar tree for a long time, weeping, crying and lamenting the absence of his father.

Sahab ji and Babli had a private tutor to teach them at home. When the results were out, there would be celebrations in their house. They would get new clothes and the neighbors would get sweets. Babli was not treated that specially by her parents but Sahab ji was pampered all the time. Even his birthday was special for the family. On that day Nirmala would give away one kilo of rice and five rupees to each of the beggars calling on them. Sahab ji would be carried on their shoulders by the servants and taken around in the garden. The balcony would get decorated in the evening with buntings and lights and relatives and Sahab ji's friends would be invited to a sumptuous feast. As soon as the cake was cut, there would be prolonged clapping and singing of 'Happy Birthday To You'. Sunil would hear all this and watch this gaiety from his room. His mother Shyama ji too would hear the noise of these celebrations and heave a deep sigh. On her part she would prepare customary yellow-rice on Sunil's birthday and after usual ritual put away some little portion for birds to eat. Sunil would not sleep that night thinking, 'Had my Pa been alive today, how big a cake he would bring for me.' The first question that he would ask his mother the next morning would be, 'Who had sent my father to Ladakh?'

Rashid's father Kamaal Sahib was a noble man. He was vividly aware that Sunil did not possess adequate means of livelihood. He wanted to be of some help to his family but his wife would not allow. Not that his wife Rafiqua was a bad woman but she was thinking that 'times are bad; people may misunderstand and start some uncalled for gossip'. She suggested to her husband, 'Better still you take Sunil in your company after he matriculates. That way he will earn some money and his mother Shyama ji also will get tangible help. God willing, responsibility may bring some reform in him.' Kamaal Sahib appreciated this suggestion but he thought that before taking any decision, his mother Shyama ji should also be taken into confidence; may be she has some other plans in view. It was a foregone conclusion that neither Rashid nor Sunil will study further beyond matriculation. Otherwise also Rashid was to join the family business only.

Shyama ji was aware of the qualities of Kamaal Sahib. She knew that he would treat Sunil like his own son. Matriculation results were out, Rashid had failed but Sunil had passed in second division. Rafiqua knew already that her son was going to fail yet she was happy for Sunil. When she went to talk over the matter with Shyama ji, she gave consent to the proposal. She was happy that early in life Sunil will start feeling responsibility. Besides, he will be under the direct supervision of Kamaal Sahib. She felt obliged to him and

thought, 'even if Sunil keeps all his earnings to himself, still it is better. After all how long shall I live to provide for him?' She was apprehensive and, therefore, addressed Rafiqua thus, 'I hope you are aware that my son is a vagabond. So far he has had no responsibility. If he is not helpful at home, how shall he be helpful outside? I am afraid he may not be a source of some nuisance to you.' But Rafiqua was satisfied. She replied, 'Do not you worry. He is as good a son to me as he is to you. I do not see him and Rashid differently. If he does some mischief I shall take care of it. I just want your consent. Rest you leave to us. Kamaal Sahib is of firm belief that he is intrinsically a good boy but circumstances have spoiled him.' Shyama ji had no answer and felt ashamed before her.

Sunil eventually joined Kamaal Sahib's business, where the work was distributed. Rashid was asked to attend to the work at the forests and Sunil was asked to work in the office. Separate cars were provided for both of them. Sunil was elated to see the new car that was at his disposal. It was for him a dream come true. The clerk of the concern taught him all about keeping the accounts of the transactions. Sharp as he was, Sunil mastered the entire procedure in a short period of six months. The clerk felt reassured that in due course, Sunil would be able to handle the work all by himself. He apprised Kamaal Sahib too of the same fact, who was very happy to know that and observe that Rashid had also picked up the work well and that the two had a good understanding between them. Kamaal Sahib made sure that he gave half his salary to his mother. The rest he would spend on his personal errands. Still Shyama ji was satisfied because little had she thought that one day Sunil would start earning. Kamaal Sahib was not in favour of being strict with the children. He believed that time would bring about a change in them. He was proved right as Sunil matured with the passage of time.

Sahab ji wanted to go in for Ph.D but his father wanted him to be a doctor. So he did his M.B.B.S. Basker Nath had no dearth of money. He spent a lot and sent his son to London for higher studies. They did not divulge how much money it had cost them but would say that their son had got an offer on his own from abroad. Basker Nath spent a lot of money on his son. He would send him whatever he wanted. He thought, after all his daughter will eventually get married and join a different family. He had Sahab ji as his only son on whom to spend his entire wealth. He expected him to return as a reputed doctor who would be in demand for consultation from all the big hospitals. After all there is a difference between the degree obtained from London and that acquired in India. He had planned to purchase a brand new car for him before he returned from London. On hearing all this, Nirmala ji was delighted, yet she queried, 'You said you had spent all that you had on Sunil's studies, wherefrom will you get finances for the new car?' Baskernath replied, 'You are right, where is the money? These days the work also is so so. That is why I have applied for withdrawal from my General Provident Fund. I expect the sanction within a few days.' Nirmala ji wanted to say something but he interrupted her saying, 'What use is the money in my G.P.Fund afterwards. Sahab ji will earn thousand times more than what I have earned. This is the time when people should know whose son he is.'

Again that was not to be. The dazzling car remained parked outside their sprawling house waiting for Sahab ji to return but he never came. He sent a word that he had got a job in one of the well-known hospitals in London and so he would not return to India for the present. Nirmala ji was crestfallen. In semi-coherent way she asked for water from her daughter. After taking a sip she gazed towards her husband whose eyes were shining. Proudly he said, 'This is having a son worth the name. I was all along apprehensive that the

people there would not let him return. I am sure he is in much demand there as well. Get ready now and we shall soon join him there and then you will see...' While Baskernath was talking all this, Nirmala ji was already imagining herself to be in London. She said, 'May be we too shall get rid of the miserable life of this place.'

God was kind to Kamaal Sahib that within a short span of six to seven years, he earned a fortune and was counted among very rich elite of the town. He was impressed from the beginning by Sunil's efficiency and commitment but an incident brought a metamorphosis in the young man's career. Tenders were called for by the army for the supply of firewood for the whole year. It was a job worth crores of rupees. All the top contractors came into the fray but they were all wary about Kamaal Sahib. They knew he was an expert in this field. They asked him to form a cartel but he did not agree. He said, 'Let the fortunate one get his tender passed.' One of the contenders was one Mr. Lal Din. He wanted to grab the tender by any means. He offered money to various contractors including Kamaal Sahib to leave the work for him. All the rest agreed but not Kamaal Sahib. They were not able to stand up to these two. The matter rested there.

Lal Din was a crafty clever crook. He knew Sunil was looking after the correspondence work for Kamal. He was sure the tender also would be filled in by him only. That verily happened. Kamaal Sahib got the tender filled up by Sunil and it was sealed. The next day Lal Din called on Sunil at his house along with a companion of his. Sunil answered the call. He did not know him. But Lal Din tricked him into sitting with him in his car and took him to a restaurant. Lal Din had brought one Lakh of rupees in a handbag. There he offered it to Sunil and told him, 'Look here, this is for you from us. Nobody will come to know. All that you have to do is to tell us the rates quoted by Kamal Sahib.' Sunil was taken by surprise. He was thinking when Lal Din added, 'By God, we will not open our mouth. You have only to trust us.' Sunil agreed and said, 'I do not remember the rates but one hour before the due time of tendering, I shall give you the details of the rates quoted.' Lal Din was overjoyed. It was decided that at a stated time and place, Sunil would hand over a slip to them giving the desired information.

At the appointed time Sunil reached the agreed spot and handed over a slip to Lal Din. He glanced through the paper and felt on the top of the world. Sunil went back.

When the tenders were opened at the declared hour, Kamaal Sahib's tender was the lowest and, therefore, accepted by the authorities. All the contractors encircled him and congratulated him for his success. Lal Din was not among them. He had fainted and some of his companions had made him lie down on a bench outside. One person was fanning him and the other was making him sip some water to regain his consciousness. Lal Din was furious. If he had his way, he would suck Sunil's blood. In the evening he rushed to Kamaal Sahib's house and narrated the whole story to him about Sunil accepting a Lakh of rupees from him for disclosing the rates. Kamaal Sahib was all attentive. As soon as Lal Din stopped he called Sunil, who brought the bag full of money and placed in front of him. Lal Din was bewildered not understanding all this. Kamaal Sahib clarified, 'I am aware of all this. Sunil had apprised me of what had transpired between you and him. The slip he handed over to you was given by me to him. Had he so wished, he could have grabbed the money and I had no means to know the truth, but he desisted from that because he comes from a cultured family. By showing this exemplary honesty, he not only enhanced the prestige of his parents but honoured me as well. All along I was aware that he is a jewel and spoiled by the circumstances. His actions have proved me right. I am proud of him and

from now onwards I know I have two good sons, Rashid and Sunil.' Kamaal Sahib became emotional while narrating all this. Lal Din apologized for his actions and looking towards Sunil sighed and said, 'Alas! I should also have a person like you to work for me.'

Kamaal Sahib kept his word. Rashid, as his son was already owner of the business but by a deed he assigned forty percent share of the business to Sunil as well. The name of the company was changed to 'Kamal and Associates - Forest Lessees'. Shyama ji could not believe. Her dice had turned favourable today. She was rubbing her eyes to make sure that it was a reality and not a dream. She put a new garland on the photograph of her husband and said, 'Your son has enhanced your prestige today.' Sunil began to be called Sunil Ji now. The new job proved to be very profitable. In just one year's time Sunil purchased his own car. He sold his old house and got a new bungalow constructed at Barzalla. His mother became a rich woman now, who had no unfulfilled desires or wants. She was grateful to Kamaal Sahib who had reformed his vagabond son. The refrain on her lips was, 'How can I repay Kamsal Sahib?'

After a year's job in London, Sahab ji came home on leave. He was not prepared to live in Kashmir. He loved living in London. He convinced his parents that after the retirement of Basker Nath, they too would join him at London. Both Basker Nath and Nirmala were happy because he had only four more years to go before reaching superannuation. He told his wife, 'These four years will fly like anything. By that time we shall get Babli also married. Good for us. What have we to do in this wretched place after retirement? This is no place to live in.' Ever since he had seen the photographs of London Bridge, Thames and other places on a calendar, he longed to visit the place. Nirmala ji replied, 'Lord Ganesha has granted your wishes.' She pledged to propitiate Ganesha by offering him sweet bread on an auspicious day.'

After fifteen day's stay, Sahab ji left for London. He implored to his parents, 'Why not you come to London next year and spend a couple of months there with me? I will send you the tickets.' Basker Nath did not agree. He said, 'Why waste money. After all we will be joining you after my retirement just four years away. Sahab ji had to concede but his mother made it clear that in another two years they would find a suitable match for him. She told him that she would send him photographs of prospective brides. She wanted to know what qualification he wanted his wife to have. Sahab ji dodged the issue but said, 'Why ask me. I leave everything to you. I dare not override you.' Nirmala was glad. She thought her son was a jewel and God should save him from evil eye.

Jewel, no doubt he was. He refused to marry until and unless his sister was not married. In the meantime Babli had passed M.Sc. and was working as a lecturer in a local college. She was married to Mohan Krishen, who was a doctor. This marriage was solemnized by her father after duly matching their horoscopes. Mohan Krishen was soft at heart and against the practice of dowry. His parents too were extremely good. They did not put forward any demands to Basker Nath although they were told that he had earned a lot of money during his service. Now his son was also earning and, therefore his being quite affluent was natural. They would, however, say, 'Let God be kind on us so that we enjoy on the earnings of our own son. Why should we eye the earnings of a third person?' Babli and Mohan Krishen had a good understanding with each other and they were quite happy. Basker Nath was not financially that sound these days, yet he did all that he could at the marriage of his daughter. He got very little assistance from Sahab ji, who said, 'I intend purchasing a house of my own and my expenses too are very heavy.'

On the marriage of his sister Babli, Sahab ji came just for eight days only. He had changed his service from the previous hospital to a new one. So he did not have longer period of vacation to be spent at his home. When Nirmala ji brought up the issue of his marriage in the presence of her daughter and son-in-law, he flatly refused saying, 'I will not marry until I am settled fully in my career.' Nirmala did not relish his answer. She sensed some change in his attitude this time. Soon after his departure, she raised the matter with her husband but he said, 'You must realize that he is still a child. He has joined a new service and his being tense is understandable. Who is there at that alien city for him to help? He must have to do everything by himself. He will be hard-pressed till we do not join him there.' Nirmala heaved a sigh. She felt somewhat relieved by what her husband had to say, but some anxiety persisted. How she wished that her son married before long so that she had her daughter-in-law in the house. She had selected a girl for him, beautiful and good mannered. She was sure that if she would be her daughter-in-law, she would get a good service and attention from her. She was thinking, 'After all, Sahab ji will not take her along right now. He will have to wait for a year or two till his father retires. Thereafter all of us will travel together.'

But Nirmala ji's dream never came true. For next one year Sahab ji wrote just three letters. Leave alone anything about his own marriage, he would write sketchily even about his welfare. Then suddenly there was a break in getting letters from him. Both of them were upset. The retirement date for Basker Nath was drawing near. He was at a loss to decide whether to start preparations for moving over to their son at London. After all it was a major event, which needed full preparation. He had not to wait for long. Just before his superannuating he got a letter from his son. Nirmala ji was taken aback. Baskernath opened the envelope and began reading the letter. His face turned pale and the letter dropped from his hands. Nirmala was gazing like a statue. He was speechless. All that he did was to look at the photograph of his son without a wink. Nirmala ji mustered enough courage to lift the letter and read it through.

It was the birthday of Basker Nath. He had retired about one year back. He was chatting with Mohan Krishen in the sitting hall and Babli was helping her mother in the kitchen. Mohan ji was saying, 'Please forget the past. It will serve no purpose to talk about the past events. May be Sahab ji had some compulsions of his own. He may have doubts that you may not give permission.' What actually had happened was that Sahab ji had married a lady doctor Padma, who was working along with him in the same hospital. Padma belonged to a rich family but she had no brother to take care of her parents. She had, therefore, put a pre-condition to her marriage that Sahab ji will have to live with her in her parents' house. He had agreed because for one he liked Padma and secondly he was aware that the marriage would enable him to own a treasure of riches. Padma's mother did not keep a good health. She wanted to see her daughter married and settled in her lifetime. Sahab ji did not like any interference from his parents in his marriage. He knew they would like him to marry in Kashmir only, which he did not want. Sahab ji had seen the world at large. He knew that there was a sea of difference between a lady doctor in London and a simple girl at Kashmir. After all one has to advance in life and not to go backwards. He kept his marriage a secret and got married even before his sister. That is why he was in a hurry to return to London at the time of her marriage. The story about purchasing a house also was concocted. Actually he had spent all his savings on his own marriage.

Basker Nath replied to Mohan Lal, 'I do not mind why he married without informing us. I do not feel bad about his not taking us there either. I know our joining him would have entailed a lot of expenditure to him. Moreover how could he accommodate us in the house of his in-laws? The only thing I feel bad about is that his wife did think about her parents but he did not think about his parents. Why did he not tell her who is there to look after his parents. In fact he valued money more than his own parents. I did not need his money but he should have remembered how we brought him up. Did it behove of him to tell me why I cannot manage with my pension when all others do so.' This brought tears in his eyes. Mohan ji replied, 'This is not proper. Please do not grieve over such a trifle. Am I not your son? Basker Nath held his hand and said, ' You are a great support. But for you two, God knows what would have happened to us. We both are indebted to you greatly. I was under the impression that a son is the real treasure for parents. But no, it is the daughter who serves her parents and cares for them.' Basker Nath was right because after his retirement, it was his daughter, who looked after them and made them forget that their son had abandoned them.

Shyama ji came to Baskar Nath's place to give them the invitation card of the marriage of her son Sunil. As she entered the lane, she spotted Nirmala ji. She alighted from her car and hugged her tight. Nirmala ji could not believe her eyes. It was for the first time after shifting to their new house that Shyama ji had come to this locality. Basker Nath too gave her due regards. He told her, 'It is the marriage of our own son; we shall certainly attend.' Nirmala ji saw her off and the driver opened the car door for her. While taking her seat in the car, Shyama ji asked Nirmala ji, 'I was told that you are planning to go abroad. Please let it not coincide with our function.' Nirmala ji replied, 'Yes, Sahab ji is insisting that we visit him but my husband is not agreeable to live in a foreign country. He is reluctant to leave our motherland and our own kith and kin and go to an alien place.'

