

Good & Simple Therapy (GST)

S. K. Kulkarni



Association of Pharmaceutical
Teachers of India

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First Edition

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Published by:



Association of Pharmaceutical Teachers of India

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Bangalore - 560 035

Printed at:

M/s Miracle Media Prints

#14, 7th Cross, Sudhamanagar, Bengaluru - 560 027

Price Rs 250/-

To Vidya and Sandya
our sisters

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Preface

Good & Simple Therapy (GST) not necessarily refers to issues related to healthcare. There are many ways of resolving human issues of day to day life. The book covers many such events, individuals and incidents of our day to day happenings. Many small things in life can bring about change in our approaches and happiness. The author shares his wide experiences of seeing, interacting and visiting places that can bring about attitudinal changes.

Healthcare delivery and cost of it, unnecessary investigations and overuse of medicines are of great concerns. The book tries to address such issues in a lucid way. The expressions are strictly personal and not meant to offend anyone.

The author appreciates the continued support of Association of Pharmaceutical Teachers of India (APTI) in bringing out this

and earlier publications. The author also appreciates the cooperation of Dr Raman Dang, Secretary APTI and M/s Miracle Media Prints, Bengaluru for elegant and timely publication.

August 25, 2017

S.K. Kulkarni
Belgaum

1. A Jewel was born!

We were very small and did not understand much about the new addition to the family, whether male or female child but used to be excited about eating '*antinundi*' and having special '*bisi-bisi anna saru*' (used to be called ***bananthiyar oota***) with ladies who have given birth to babies. Since our father was a doctor and our mother was a symbol of love, care and large hearted lady, we used to see almost all our cousin sisters and other relatives delivering their first babies in our father's hospital. Medical aid and safe child birth used to be a serious concern (this is so even today in remote places in India) in those days to all in the family.

Our paternal grandmother, '*Avva*' (meaning mother and affectionately everyone addressed her like that) and one of our *atyas* (elders sister of our father, Sonatya) used to stay with us or visit us regularly. It used to be a great story time as our grandmother and *atyas*

would tell us stories or recall family incidences from their early days. Our uncle, Ramanna kaka (who was elder to our father) and Bagalkot Vainy (*Sitabai*, his wife) had first seven children who were daughters. In contrast, the first four of us (my siblings) were '*gandu-hudugaru*'. Our grandmother was very proud of it. But when our mother was carrying for the fifth time (we were in Badami, then) she told us a personal story. Whenever '*Sitabai*' (ie; Bagalkot Vainy) was in labor-pains, our granny would hold a one rupee coin (it used to be a silver coin and had great value in those days) in her hand and pray that if the new arrival would be a male child she would offer special prayers at Narasalagi temple, our family deity! For seven long times her prayers were not heard. She said, 'This time I am praying Radhabai (our mother) would give birth to a girl child'. Her prayers were heard and our sister 'Vidya' was born! She became pampered girl around in the family. Much before we realized Vidya was growing up; parents fixed her marriage to one of the

brightest eligible engineers! She had not completed her education as yet but soon to be in to household responsibilities. Looking back, Vidya has done very well; she imbibes the qualities of our mother, love and care. She is a proud mother of two bright accomplished daughters and equally accomplished husband in Mukundrao. She is more educated than many of us. An ardent lover of Kannada literature, drama and culture, she has found ways to fight her diabetes and ups-and downs in life by keeping herself occupied with so many of her activities. Even though she missed her college but she is re-living every moment with her family and bright grandson.

Our grandmother's prayers did not end with the arrival of Vidya. When our Bagalkot Vainy (*Sitabai*) was carrying for the eighth time, she still had the silver coin in her hand. This time her prayers were answered and the first male child (our cousin Raghu) was born. History repeated on the ninth occasion as our Vainy gave birth to another son (our cousin Anant)!!

In 1963 summer Gopi (our elder brother) was about to enter medical college and I was studying 11th standard (SSLC examination was held for the first time for the entire Karnataka state). I was also planning to join Karnataka College in Dharwar for the first year. One day a post card came from my moushi (Leelakka moushi, mother's eldest sister) and it was addressed to my mother. I was at home and my mother was cooking and asked me to read the contents. It read like this, '*Papa, Mukundana kalu muradant! Keli bahala santosh aatu*'. (Meaning, Mukund has broken his legs, I am very happy to know about it!). Mukund was our youngest brother who was playing outside and I could understand what the letter meant. I asked my mother what is the meaning, brother has broken the legs (which were not true) yet our moushi was happy! She just changed the topic and I was in a hurry to go to school. Soon I learnt that our mother was to have one more child!

We were lucky to have another sibling entering the family. In the summer of 1963 *Sandya* was born! She was two or three months old when I left for college. Both Gopi and I missed seeing her growing years. But Guru, Anand, Vidya and Mukund were still in school and grew-up together. In later years Gopi caught up with her activities when he was in Ilkal and then for many years in Gokak. When all of us went out of home for studies, (Vidya being married) every time I came home for vacation Sandya was at home. She was totally controlling the activities of our mother and nothing moved without consulting her. As parents were growing in age, Sandya was maturing fast and managing the whole affairs at home. She was master of everything from religious rituals to buying requirements to managing domestic help at home. Whenever our mother was not well she would take over the management. When parents moved to Bagewadi in 1984, Sandya was practically managing everything at home. Our father, more so our mother would say, '*All my sons are away but I have a real son in*

'Sandya' at home taking care'. In many sense it was true.

She is married to a talented Chartered Accountant, Diliprao who once worked for Govt Cooperative (Handlooms) Society. In mid career he moved to Gokak Mills in Gokak Falls. It was a huge advantage, Gokak Falls had good school, dear Gopi and family was just 5 Kms away and our parents were also in Gokak. It had all small town advantages and great facilities of the once British established cotton mill. More importantly Sandya's both the daughters made it one of the best professional colleges. Elder, Megha studied medicine (now a gynecologist) and the younger, Varsha, arguably the best law graduate one can think off from the prestigious National Law School in Bengaluru. After a long innings Sandya and Diliprao are settled in their home in Bengaluru. Recently I spent two days with them and enjoyed her caress and hospitality and saw how upcoming lawyer gets her way at home.

Over the years Sandya has become a reference point for any family affairs. She knows what our parents would have done in a given situation. Practically all of us consult her for any activities to be performed at home.
'A jewel was born' in the family!

2. Bike riders in the Family

"Traveling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller." – Ibn Battuta.

As we were growing up in interiors of north Karnataka we had hardly seen any private vehicles in our neighborhood. Our father used to go on bicycle for visiting patients. He had a typical doctor's bag which would fit in to carrier, he would wear his British hat, put leg clips to his dhoti or trousers to prevent them coming in the way and ride the bicycle. That was the picture with which we had grown. When I moved to Bangalore (now Bengaluru) for college I had a bicycle and we moved around on it (it would be impossible to do so today!). In Jaipur I saw couple of my colleagues having scooters. One of them Dr Anil Misra had an old Vasper scooter and he would allow us to ride without him sharing the back seat. That's how I learnt driving scooter.

In 1970 summer Rajpal my Punjabi

colleague got Vasper scooter, a rare commodity to possess in those days of permit raj. He was excited about the new vehicle and we decided to go on a tour of Rajasthan on his two wheeler. It was one of those wild expeditions without GPS, phones or proper road maps. But only solace was that the vehicle was brand new, we didn't expect any breakdowns and we had colleagues in two cities, Ajmer and Udaipur where new Medical Colleges had just started. Ajmer was our first stop. We halted in the tourist bungalow, visited Pushkar and the Hazarat Khawaja Gharib Dargah. Next day we left very early in the morning for Chittorgarh, to cover 200 km distance. By lunch time we were in the historic city of once a proud Rajput chivalry. Without wasting any time we straight away drove up the fort. One could feel the Rajput pride, romance and spirit when on the fort. Truly, it reverberated with Rajput heroism and sacrifice. Padmini palace reminded of the tales of history. We were on the hill top fort until sunset. We were tired and took a room in the city and rested for the night.

Our next stop was the city of palaces, Udaipur. When we started off from Chittorgarh it started raining but enjoyed the drive in the rains through the vindhyas (Rajasthan rains were like sprinklers), the two hour drive was very pleasant. Our colleague had booked our accommodation in Rajasthan tourism guest house. We stayed in Udaipur for two days and visited all historic places and palaces. Our next part of the journey was very difficult terrain, driving down the vindhyas to reach the famous Balaji temple of Nathdwara. We had our first breakdown in the middle of the forest road. We made it to Nathdwara in about three hours, only to discover that the temple town had no place for stay. Like Tirupati in the south, Nathdwara is the second richest temple in India. After the afternoon 'bhog' the temple was closed for the darshan. It was extremely difficult to see the 'aarti' in the evening. We managed to get two charpais (cots) in a dharmashala for the night. The caretaker told us that we need to get up by 4 am and stand in queue for the morning darshan at 5 am! Long

waited darshan was a great blessing of the Lord. Our return journey to Jaipur via Ajmer was very long (around 400 kms) and tiring one. This could not be covered in one day on a two wheeler. That day we managed to reach Ajmer by evening and rested for the night. Next day we leisurely started our journey and got back in the Pink city by late evening. In seven days we had covered more than 1200 kms. We had tanned to such an extent that both of us had turned dark beyond recognition! Think of it today after nearly 50 years, without helmet and connectivity it appears nightmarish! But as youth, it was a thrilling experience!!

In the winter of 2007, Setu and Amarantha had driven up from Pune to Chandigarh in their new Maruti Swift. It was a 10 day long peripatetic through Daman, Gujarat, Rajasthan, New Delhi and finally to Chandigarh. On the way back Mohini, Girish and I accompanied Setu and Amarantha until Udaipur. We had a brief overnight stop at Jaipur and paid a visit Professor PC Dandiya,

my Guru and mentor. During those two days car drive I regaled the family with a 36-year old story of my two wheeler expedition of Rajasthan.

Little did I know then that 6-months later Setu would surprise us in the middle of the sweltering Chandigarh summer? Setu and Venkat (his friend) were on a road-trip to Leh. They proceeded from Chandigarh to Kalka to Mandi to Kulu to Manali and then crossed Rohtang La (La is Pass) to reach Tandi, then Keylong to Jispa and then crossed Baralacha La to Sarchu and then crossed Lachulung La to Pang. After Pang, they hit the famous Moray plains – a 40 km stretch of flat land with the grand Himalayas as the backdrop. After crossing Tanglang La, they hit Upshi and Hemis before reaching Leh - full 7 days after they started from Chandigarh. The duo had done ample internet research and were fully prepared with spares in duplicates. The only time they had a problem was right in front of a mechanic shop in Manali!

The route to Leh then had no cell phone coverage and there was no one cell network that spanned Chandigarh, Punjab, Himachal and J&K. Setu carried 2 different SIM cards so that he could remain connected to us in Chandigarh and Amarantha in Pune. There was a point in their journey after which there was no cell-phone coverage or petrol availability (Tandi). Setu had asked a friendly adventurer (who was on his way back to Manali) that he met near Zingzingbar to call and inform us of their rendezvous and of Setu's and Venkat's ongoing expedition. When we received a call from an unknown caller to tell us about our son – we were a bit taken aback at first but then reassured that the adventure was on track.

Upon his return to Chandigarh, Setu was pretty worn out physically but was very enthusiastic about his usually-once-in-a-lifetime road trip to Leh on a motorbike. As family, we worried about the dangers of this motorbike trip. But all of us innately recognized the value of adventure and that too

one that is off the beaten path. So did Setu. There is a story behind this story.

As Setu and Venkat were planning for this trip, they performed hours of internet research, studied maps, invested in adventure appropriate apparel and learnt how to perform minor fixes and regular maintenance on their motorbikes. Their secret preparation had started in January of 2008. Towards the end of April 2008 – the trip preparations were solid. It was around that time that Setu's roommate of 4 years and one of his best friends met with a freak motorbike accident in the outskirts of Pune. His friend did not make it as the otherwise nominal fall from motorbike at 20 Km per hour ended up being fatal. Setu decided to pull out of the trip and told Venkat that the trip was off – given the "perilous" nature of the journey they had planned to undertake. It was a new perspective – how the proximity to the sad incident transformed a-once-in-a-lifetime adventure into a risk that one should not take. It took Setu a few weeks to reconcile with the loss of his dear friend. He

traveled to see his friend's family in Athani. Once back, he decided to rebuild the intestinal fortitude to commit to the adventure that he had spent months planning – this was a ride he was going to dedicate to his dear friend and roommate.

It was Sunday, the **18th December 2016**, my 70th birthday. Our telephone was constantly ringing and WhatsApp messages started pouring in but my mind was on another event that was going to take place on that day. Aparna, our niece was to complete her maiden bicycle ride from Goa to Mumbai, sum 610 Kms on that day! Through the week I was tracking her progress without understanding the distance and terrain to be covered in week's time. In between she messaged, 'Cool! Mama I will be back on Sunday'. I called her home and my sister replied that they will be going receive them at Alibaba station in the evening. I could imagine the group must have had a grand reception, family and friends would have overwhelmed the feat!

When she settled down from her exhaustive bike ride I called her to listen to her experiences, the pain and the jubilation. She said that it had not yet sunk. I told her to narrate the details to a correspondent and get the story published in some magazine or sport column. Such a big feat by a lone woman rider should become a talking or reference point for future bike riders to conquer. She concurred with me, 'Yes Mama'.

A couple of weeks later I sent her inquiry message to know where the story has come up. She responded after two days with the story of her trials and tribulations of bike ride from 'Goa to Mumbai'.

I was thrilled go over her adventurous story of bicycling 610 Kms from Goa to Mumbai. It was her sheer determination and will power that she could complete the ride of one of the difficult terrains of Western Ghats, as many even do not think of it. That too, she was the lone woman in the group of 25 bike riders! I reproduce some of the excerpts her writings which make so much meaning:

...a bicycling tour is never about the destination, it is the journey that holds you by the scruff. The villainous ghats so steep that you feel your lungs are going to give up, ..the relief the sheer joy of seeing downhill, the winding paths, the playful breeze in your hair, the changing colors on the horizon all make it memorable. ...during the long silent ride on the countryside for miles it is only you, there is a rhythmic pattern between your breath, the tyres and you connect to the universe and its universal energies.

...imagine for miles you are on your own, with the majestic Arabian sea at your left foot and the right were the coconut trees and Mango orchards filled with flowers!!!! Some of the beaches are virgin beauties

...an old man in the village stopped me and said "did you really need to do this lady??"" I didn't need to do it but I wanted to do it.

...12th December will always remain a special day as I bicycled for the first time

under the moon light, it was one of the most romantic 15kms of my life!

This expedition taught me some very valuable lessons for life. Sports, physical fitness brings about positivism in us, one learns to take minor flaws in the stride and look forward. In life at times one has to just peddle and move forward. There isn't anything much to be done!

Kudos to our champion cyclist, Aparna!

Her achievement reminded me of a similar motorbike 'peace rally' by her father dear **Mukundrao in 1984**. He was one of the participants of peace rally organized by Bajaj Motorbike Company at a time when the country was in emotional turmoil aftermath of Blue star operation in Amritsar and the assassination of our Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi. The peace motorbike ride started from Kanyakumari, the Southern tip of India and ended in Jammu crisscrossing the country, more so passing through the troubled state of Punjab.

When the rally reached Chandigarh, we went to receive the participants. The participants were in great spirits and after a night rest in the City they left for their last leg of one of the difficult drive.

Think of it, it is all in the genes but how often they express is a matter of conjecture!

Recently I was reading the biography of **Albert Einstein**, one of the greats of the 20th Century. He wrote to his son **Eduard in February 1930** and I quote, *'Life is like riding bicycle, to keep your balance you must keep moving!'*, unquote.

3. *Ramana maduve*

There was a TV-ad about a new Hindi serial to be telecasted soon. Mohini was excited and anxiously waiting for the serial to start. The TV-ad looked like some mythological serial, and I asked her, 'what is the title of the serial?' She said, 'Siya ke Ram!' I asked, 'what's about it?'

The storyline is 'Sita swayamvara' and her marriage to 'Ram', she said.

'Is there any new revelation?' I showed my inquisitiveness.

'Watch and find out', was the answer I got.

The serial timings clashed with my t20 matches and there was no way 'Siya ke Ram' could be watched on regular basis till the t20 World cup would get over.

Right about that time, my mobile started ringing and I picked it up, Guru was on the line. He said 'Ram's marriage dates are

finalized'. 'Wow!' what a coincidence, we were talking about 'Sita swayamvara' and our Ram's marriage is to be solemnized, there couldn't be any better telepathy!

Guru read out five day elaborate programme, beginning with 'dodda devar puja', 'devar oota', 'sodamunjavi', 'edirugombuvadu', and finally 'akshata!' He further said, 'Gondala' date and place are not finalized but to be done soon after the marriage'. He added that they would visit Shri Mantralaya before initiating the 'dodda devar puja'.

Packed programme!

I said to Mohini, 'Will Ram have time for five or these many days to go through the rituals?' He is coming from London for the marriage on 10 day leave and if we keep him occupied for five days with 'Panditji', when he will have private time for his 'Sita?' He (Ram) must have thought of 'destination' wedding and we will spoil his plans!'

'One more function we need to add', my

wife said. 'Five days are not enough? What is it?' I reacted.

'We have to do 'gadige neeru', said Mohini.

'Individually?', I asked.

'Actually yes, but he (Ram) doesn't have time, we can propose combined one in Bengaluru in a hotel' came the reply.

In jet-era, 'chat mangni Pat byah' thought crossed my mind. I shared my views with Anand.

He said, 'Guru is all upbeat, he has already penned down every detail. Karyalaya booked, Acharu fixed, cook and the menu for each event finalized, ornaments and sarees ordered, and cards will be printed soon. Next few weekends Cheti (Laxman) will chauffer them for shopping. No point in suggesting anything to him, Guru would not cut down any event in the programme'.

I agreed with Anand, it would be one of those family weddings to reckon.

Guru had long innings as technocrat in Government establishment, moved in the corridors of power, rubbed shoulders with bureaucrats, a connoisseur for good taste, dress, ambiance, and impeccable knowledge of worldly affairs including religious, almost a walking encyclopedia, attended several receptions, he (Guru) knew what it takes to perform eldest son's marriage in style. Rama (Parimala) undoubtedly matches him in every respect, her gourmet unbeatable, hospitality unquestioned, knowledge of madi-mailige (guidance of her elder sister!), Ram and Laxman are not only their left and right hands (as well as eyes), both (Ram & Laxman) respected parents (orders) unconditionally. I concurred with what Guru was up to.

25th February, the D-day was Thursday, middle of the week. I said we should go a weekend before and return on the following weekend, a full 10 day trip. My wife said it is too long and would check with others. Vidya, Gokak Vainy and most said they would reach a day before the marriage and return on the

evening of the marriage as main function would get over with gala wedding lunch! I disagreed, being eldest in the family I need to attend all the functions and moreover, I am retired person and have all the time for the family marriage, that too of Ram's. It was some time since the last marriage that had taken place in the family.

As planned we reached five days before the marriage. In the meanwhile Sandya took the responsibility of 'gadige neeru' function in their house. It was well done; with Vedant around, Ram beaming, our latest doctor Radhika all over, family lawyer (Varsha) attending the court, Diliprao and Sandya were as usual great hosts. We moved our luggage to marriage venue, Guru's place by that evening.

On the day of 'sodamunjavi', Acharu explained about 'Vanaprastha ashram' (even before the wedding) to Ram who was understandably reluctant to go on 'Kashi' yatra. He braved it! The remaining events, 'edurugombuvadu' and the marriage day were fully packed and colorful. Every item was

done as per checklist and captured on camera.

Ram was anxious and in a hurry to garland his 'priya', but Panditji made him to wait until 8.55 am GMT! 'Priyanka', was pretty, she and Ram made a cute 'jodi'. The next two hours, 'Acharu' kept them busy completing all rituals and everything was 'photo' finish. The hall was full for the second 'akshata' at 12.36 pm, soon guests lined up to wish the 'newly weds'.

Everyone from the invitation list graced the function, relatives, friends, colleagues of R & L and Guru's office, neighbors, walking friends, 'bhajana mandali', MLAs, and 'you name, they were there'. It was typical Bengaluru experience, come early, have 'tindi', meet people, attend 'akshata', 'wish the couple', enjoy marriage lunch and return with 'coconut and tambul!'

We saw some of our cousins and relatives after many decades, some gracefully aged and some otherwise but the joy of reminiscence was overwhelming.

Laxminarayana, who managed the food,

was cool and ever smiling, so was his team of young servers. As if he had 'akshayapatre', every guest was served with hot delicacies. When I complimented him, he said, 'Sir, I have done their first birthday party and I will be there for Laxman's also!'

Anand and I were the last to leave the karyalaya after the marriage. In the car I said, 'Guru would be most relieved and happy man, and Rama would be looking forward to 'sose' in the house'. Anand concurred and said, 'One thing I did not experience in Ram's marriage'. I said, 'what?' He said, 'I did not cry at the time of 'bidaai'. I remembered Gopi and his emotional outbursts, 'He would cry even at the idea of Sangeeta's marriage!' 'Yes! He would', said Anand.

After a relaxing evening at Anand's place we returned on the following weekend to Belgaum. It was an off-day for t20 match and I went out for my evening walk. On my return I saw Mohini was watching 'Siya ke Ram'. I asked, 'has the swayamvara taken place?' She

said, 'Sita is in Ayodhya now'. I watched the scene in which the Royal dinner being served and King Dashrath in happy mood. 'Maharaj!' said Kaikiye, the second queen, 'The Royal dinner is prepared under the guidance of Sita'.

Guru and Rama crossed my mind!!

4. Bindanna - *Our Cousin*

Our father served as Govt medical officer in Talikot, a remote place in Mudhebihal taluka of Bijapur district for seven long years (from 1945-46 to 1953 or so). He was very popular doctor (even today people remember him!). He would go in to interior villages in bullock cart, sometimes travelling overnight to attend to medical emergencies which included attending to child delivery. Imagine those days when electricity was not there in Bombay Karnataka! If 'doni' (tributary) was over flowing he would be stuck for more than a day. There were no Govt bus services to Talikot, one motor Kristappa used to run private buses from Talikot to Telagi railway station! Whenever father or we as family travelled, the private bus would come to Govt dispensary which was then housed in a rented premises owned by Shri Katti savakar (his relative was in Gokak). Our connection with Talikot continues till date as most of the

'jaataka' (horoscopes) of my siblings were prepared by revered late Shri Appannabhatt Joshi of Talikot. (Our sister Vidya knows some of his relations in Mumbai). I still remember several send-off tea parties, lunches and dinners given to parents when father was transferred to Badami (meals were served to each guest on full banana leaf!).

Many things happened when our parents were in Talikot. Gopi (our elder brother) was six and started going to school and I was four or so stayed at home (there were no pre-nursery or preparatory schools then, one would stay home till you are six). Guru and Anand were born there. Our mother had a Brahmin domestic help, Sitaram who came from Siddapur in Karwar district where father was posted earlier. (In Siddapur or Karwar, elderly in the family would be addressed as 'Rayaru'. That's how Gopi and I started addressing our father as 'Rayaru'. Our mother was called 'Kaku' because two of our cousin sisters used live in our house and they would call our mother 'Kaku' as she was their Kaku.

We also started addressing our mother as 'Kaku'. Later on our other brothers and sisters called father as 'Dada' and mother remained 'Kaku'). Sitaram was like a son to our mother; not only he did all the chores but even had access to valuables and money. Mother trusted him so much. I remember going with him to vegetable market in Talikot. Guru used to be in his arms and the lady fruit vender (bagwan) would give him fruits.

As a young kid I used to see regular visits of our relatives to our place in Talikot. Some of my cousins delivered their first babies in our home; both my uncles (Ramannakaka and Tammankaka) and atyas came for medical treatment. While our father was treating all near and dear ones, our mother was a great hostess to all who came to our home (this continued even after Talikot or in other places wherever father served). Our mother cared everyone and was a symbol of love and affection; she was adored by everyone in the family.

Talikota also saw one of the great tragedies in our family. Narasanna, as they called him, was Kusatya's (our father's youngest sister) husband. They lived in Bagewadi (now Basawan Bagewadi, some 20 kms away from Talikota). I had seen him couple of times visiting Talikota. Narasanna and Kusatya had eight children, four daughters and four sons. All I know and remember was, one day Narasanna passed away (presumably on an operating table before any procedure being done) leaving behind young family. My father, his mother (Avva, our ajji) and Sonatya (father's eldest sister) could not come out of the shock for long time. So were other relatives in the family. All eight children were very young; the eighth child had just born. Our grandmother and Sonatya were pillars of strength and held the family together. Two sons, Binda

Bindanna and Hanumanta came to stay with us, while the third son (Gopal) went to stay with another Atya, Gangakka in Mutagi. One daughter (Leelu) went to stay with

Sonatyia in Badami. Other three daughters (Setakka, Nalu and Srimati) and last son, Gururaj stayed in Bagewadi with our grandmother and their mother (Kusatya). Agriculture was essentially the only source of livelihood for the family but our parents never allowed them to feel the absence of their father or any shortage.

Thus Binda (Bindanna), three years elder to Gopi became one of us, grew up with us, so was his brother, Hanumanta. We went to school together. Binda held our parents in great esteem and reverence all his life. He was there to attend to parents all the time. Our father wanted to build a house in Bagewadi and also add some structures to Shri Narasalagi temple. Binda was there to complete both the tasks.

After matriculation he (Binda) joined Polytechnic in Bagalkot to get Diploma in Electrical Engineering. He stayed with Ramannakaka in Bagalkot. When he completed his diploma in early 1960s, our

father was posted in Mahalingpur, near Mudhol. Rural electrification, particularly providing connections to pump sets in agri-operations had just started. He came over to Mahalingpur. Our father spoke to one Government Engineer (Shri Narayana Rao) posted in Mahalingpur to give a job. He joined the services on daily-wages. When Binda got his first salary of Rs 80 or 100, he gave it in our mother's hand! Such was his affection and feeling for our parents. By 1964-65 he joined KSEB as junior engineer, a government job. After that there was no looking back. He took the responsibility of the family, mother, sisters and brothers. Setakka was already married to one of our second cousins (Shyamanna) and Binda performed not only the marriages of other sisters and brothers but also attended to their needs till the end.

His first posting was in Kaladgi near Bagalkot, Gopi and I spent one of our summer breaks with him. I remember attending his marriage in Bijapur. Most of his service was in Bijapur and Belgavi districts. When Gopi

settled in Gokak, he was there for all occasions, both shared many ups and downs of their life and he became elderly advisor to all of us.

Binda built a house in Bijapur near Sainik School. He wanted his house to be replica of the big house of Ramannakaka in Bagalkot. In many ways it resembled it. He kept his post-retirement life very simple; listening to purana, harikata, Bhagawata and Gita pravachanas (Bijapur was an ideal place for that); visiting Bagewadi, Shri Matralaya and children in Bengaluru and Pune. They had completed all the 'yatras' including Badri yatra. In fact, a couple months ago, one day he called me to tell that they were going to Kurkshetra in Haryana to listen to 'Bhagawat purana'. He wanted some local acquaintance in case of any emergency. His wife and he were made for each other; they had fulfilling and pious life.

He often said, 'Mama (our father) and Kaku (he also called our mother Kaku) so also Gopi should have settled in Bijapur; there is so

much of religious activities'. We are ordained; in spite of best intentions, life is not as we want it to be!

Mukund was close to him, he would invariably visit him every morning after pravachana. Binda was also close to our moushi, Prabhamoushi.

After we moved to Belgaum three years ago, he came to 'vastu' of our flat. For some reasons his next visit could not happen. But in these three years whenever I went to Bijapur I had the affection and love of having lunch in his house, he and his wife would wait till I come after my work. Sometimes he even called to know 'when was my next visit'.

Last two weeks of his life was sudden and unexpected. Two days after I called him in Pune, his sons had brought him to Bengaluru. Events moved faster than expected. Anand and I met him on 23rd of February in the hospital. He was fully conscious, enquired about all, and wanted two functions, marriage in Bengaluru and 'upanayana' in Belagavi to

be completed without any hindrance (perhaps he had sensed his end). I think he told both Vidya and Sandya, (both were very dear to him) when they visited him two days later that, 'these doctors don't know anything; they add medicine as well as food (glucose) in the same infusion set. Mama (our father) used to treat all kinds of illnesses without any investigations or gadgets'.

We all saw him for the last time on 27th of February afternoon. Guru told him about marriage and all rituals being completed. He expressed to meet the newlyweds. He was in deep pain, difficulty to breath, slurred voice; he became emotional, tears trickled, with folded hands he bid goodbye to all of us; he knew, 'he was on heavenly abode'

May his soul rest in peace!

Ps: Bindanna gave one golden 'Tulasi' leaf to everyone of us as return gift after his son, Sanjay's marriage which took place in Gokak. Every day when I offer this Tulasi leaf in puja, he is remembered!

5. *Khatti-meethi* memories of Bijapur

As far my memory goes, the first time we visited Bijapur (now Vijayapura) was in 1954-55 when our elder brother dear Gopi was admitted in the civil hospital (district hospital). At that time we were in Badami. One afternoon father received a telegram. In those days telegram(s) was the only urgent mode of communication. Telephone facility was not available at home and one had go to the local post office to book the call and wait for hours (sometimes for days!) to get connected. Even though our father was a Govt Medical Officer, there was no phone facility either in the hospital or at home! (Think of the present, babies are born with smart phones in hand!!). Telegram(s) meant some bad news or message. Before reading the message, our father would offer prayers, and our mother would be anxiously waiting to know the contents. The telegram had come from our maternal grandfather, Bhimanna from Dharwar. As anticipated, it was a bad news;

our elder brother Gopi had met with a serious road accident. Father immediately rushed to Dharwar to attend to him.

When our father was transferred to Badami, Gopi was in second or third standard. Badami did not have proper school and parents sent him to Dharwar (granny's house) for schooling. Dharwar was and even today, an education centre in this part of Karnataka. He joined Vidyaranya High School and would go to school with our 'mama', Pandumama. One day while returning from the school he was hit by an oncoming jeep. The impact was such that he was thrown up and had his thigh (femur) bone fractured. On reaching Dharwar our father decided to shift him to Bijapur civil hospital where a well-known surgeon, Dr. D.V. Nadkarni was the district surgeon. Two days later Gopi was taken to Bijapur civil hospital for the surgery. Our mother joined them at Badami railway station. We (Gururaj, Anand and I) were very young to understand the gravity of the accident. In the next few days Gopi was successfully operated by Dr

D.V. Nadkarni. We joined the parents and stayed in the doctor's guest house in the civil hospital while Gopi was in the hospital. Gopi was plastered up to his chest and was immobile. Dr Nadkarni had insisted to put Gopi in the general ward as there would be constant assistance. We used to go to see him during the visiting hours. I still have memories of visiting him in the hospital. Dear Gopi was in bed for almost six months.

Couple of years later (in 1956) our father was transferred to Bijapur civil hospital as Sub-charge (CMO) of the hospital. Gopi who was studying in Basel Mission High School Dharwar also joined us in Bijapur. First few months I attended the Government (No.3, Kawali gate) school located just opposite to Mulak maidan tope (Malik-e-Maidan gun), the biggest cannon in the world placed on the fort. In the next year Guru started his schooling there and Anand went Tilak Bal vidyalaya (pre-school). Subsequently, Gopi and I joined the famous PDJ (Pandurang Desai Jubilee) High School. We used to go to

school on bicycle; I used to be pillion rider. Next three years we attended the school and then our father was transferred to another place (Ranebennur in Dharwar district).

Many things happened in our family when we were in Bijapur. Mukund our youngest brother was born there; Prabhamoushi's marriage was fixed and she was married in to one of the leading advocate's family of the city, Pralhadrao Tankasali; our grandmother (Avva, father's mother who was about 80 year old) passed away. One of our cousin sisters got married with her distant cousin. Her father-in-law, Keshavrao Deshpande was very jolly person and we visited them in Solapur. It was a very pleasant trip which I fondly remember.

Our quarters had an adjoining house which was allotted to one lady doctor; Dr Suman Chandawarker. There were many young doctors who were undergoing training in the civil hospital. Among them was Dr Hanamantrao Shirur, an Ayurvedic doctor. Both Dr Suman and Dr Hanumantrao had an affair. Love-affairs and that too inter-cast

marriages were rare and their affair was talk of the hospital. Since we were young, our father would not discuss about it at home but we used to see Hanamantrao visiting the lady doctor! They subsequently got married and later settled in Bagalkot, a nearby town. Dr Suman Shirur (after marriage) became a popular doctor in the town while Dr Hanumantrao Shirur did mostly social work. Some two decades later my marriage was fixed in their house in Bagalkot.

Bijapur has many historic monuments. Taj bawadi, the onetime famous water reservoir (223 sq ft and 52 feet deep) was also the central bus stand of the city. One incident I vividly remember is that of 27th May 1964. That day morning I had come to Bijapur to get some articles for my brothers 'upanayana' ceremony to be held couple of days later in our home town of Bagewadi. It was marriage season and there was huge rush for the bus, I had reserved my seat by the afternoon bus. I got into the bus around 2 pm and the bus was fully occupied. But the driver and the

conductor did not come for almost one hour. The unbearable heat made it very uncomfortable to sit in the bus. The passengers started shouting and at last the conductor of the bus came and gave the shocking news that the Prime Minister Pandit Nehru had passed away! For a second nobody believed him but it was true that the most popular leader of the nation had died that morning of heart attack. Nation went in to state mourning and the next few days everyone was glued to the radio sets to know the turn of events that would take place with his death.

Taj bawadi is in dire state; it has dried and become a dumping yard of city's garbage. No one believes that it was the main source of water to the city for centuries. People used the water for irrigation, for washing and even swam regularly in the Taj bawadi. I remember in summer my elder brother Gopi and I went there to swim. Our uncle Ramannakaka (father's elder brother) in his school days would swim regularly and he would take

seven rounds, which was a feat in itself. During the month of June or so when the board examination results would be declared, the entrance to the bawadi used to be closed with the fear that failed students may commit suicide by jumping in the bawadi! (Recently the Taj bawadi has been reclaimed and its water-veins have been flushed, a heartening sight to visit!)

After I took assignment in Chandigarh, Solapur became our last railway station on broad gauge line where we disembarked to catch the meter gauge train to Bijapur. Solapur station was known for petty thieves. The 100 Kms rail journey to Bijapur in dingy train with small children and luggage used to be torturous. After Mukund settled in Bijapur we were going there for the first time. Anup and Girish were very young and excited about the tonga-ride. The two kilometer ride gave the glimpse of the city where once I had schooling some thirty years before. Dirt, filth, freely wandering pigs and acute shortage of water hadn't changed but what caught my eyes was the hording about the two private medical

colleges in the city, looked like two booming business ventures in otherwise sleeping agricultural town!

During my stint with Bombay College of Pharmacy (2009-13) Mumbai I visited the BLDE Medical University in Bijapur to participate in a seminar. The President (a state law maker for quarter of a century and now a minister in the present Karnataka government) of the Institute took pride of my connections with the city and invited me to join his University and settle down in Bijapur. In my first encounter I asked him, 'Why things have not changed, broken dusty roads, filth and poor state of affairs of the historic city?' That visit also took me to my old school (PDJHS), the management took pride and honored me. At one time a small school, today it has three shifts and more than 600 students (boys and girls, it used to be a boys school earlier) study in the school. That visit also made me feel proud about our younger brother Mukund who had established himself as an upcoming advocate in Bijapur, a dream our parents wanted to see in him. He was also the

Secretary of the bar, a rare for a Brahmin lawyer. I asked one of his colleagues who said, 'He is very intelligent and diligent lawyer we have on the bar and his simplicity has won the hearts of the bar'.

Even though I did not join BLDE organization, I continue to be on their advisory committee and Member of the Academic Council of the University. After coming to Belgaum, I periodically visit the institute. These visits also have given the opportunity to reconnect with our dear moushi and her family (Tankasalis), and our cousin Bindanna who was a leading meaningful retired life. I also regularly saw Mukund and his bright son growing up. They all looked forward to my visits and would ask, 'When is your next visit?'

Our moushi, Prabhamoushi with whom all our siblings connect very fondly and our uncle (her husband) Pralhadrao Tankasali are epitome of love and sheer affection. She was the youngest among the three sisters, my mother being the middle one. My mother was

addressed as 'Papa' in her parent's home. For many years I did not know her maiden name. I asked Prabhamoshi and she said, 'Ambakka'. When our mother was married, Prabhamoushi was not yet born! But she was always there whenever our mother needed. In their big 'Tankasali' clan everything revolves around her. At nearly 80, she occupies the central place in the big hall (like her mother-in-used to) and daily chores, visitors and telephones, automatically get attended. Pralhadrao is and always been a silent pleader. In his younger years we used to see lot of clients waiting to meet him. At 85 or so, he still attends court and I often ask him, 'How many cases are left to be argued?' He becomes emotional and explains how courts, judges and the justice system have changed. He further said, 'There is one more case, very complex, all concerned are no more (dead) and I am the only one who knows the truth!, waiting for the date to argue!!' I guess that is the secret of his longevity.

In 2011, one day I got a call informing that Mukund was not well. I rushed to Bijapur. He was already admitted in a nephrology

specialty hospital. Unfortunately things had moved faster than expected, his both the kidneys had given up. The doctor was waiting for me to start dialysis procedure. Innocence thy name, Mukund had ignored his diabetes and had reached 'no return' situation. He could not reconcile to the changing health circumstances, intense desire to see his son to complete professional education and ability to fight the time. Next two years were very tough and we lost a pious soul in his youth.

There is emptiness, nothing to look forward, and my visits to Bijapur have drastically reduced. Tragedy hit again! Suddenly our cousin Bindanna who was, sort of last family link in the hierarchy passed away in early February 2016. He was one of my stops I used to have while in Bijapur, alas! I do not know what is in store.

As negative thoughts gloom, Vedant appeared on the scene. Our niece Megha has joined for post graduation at BLDE Medical College and their cute son crosses my mind to say hello to him while in Bijapur. Her uncle

Pradeep Hittinhalli and his family were a great help while Mukund was in hospital. I make it a point to pay my respects to his 85 year old mother who always welcomes you with a smile in spite of her health restrictions. I generally have morning tea after the walk at their place. Their son Prasad who is now in first year of the medical college is a sports buff.

After almost 50 years later, in one of my recent visits to the city I visited the civil hospital, our house and the hospital where Gopi was admitted. The earlier civil hospital is now converted in to district health office but the entrance to the ward was closed. I was told that it is now children's ward and had some patients. Our house was closed as if it was an abandoned structure. During 2016, most part of the front of the hospital has been demolished in the process of road widening. You never know when the old structure would be brought down in the name of building something new!

6. Connoisseur!

My first encounter with Professor Pushkar Nath Kaul (PNK) was during the Indian Pharmacological Society's (IPS) conference held at SMS Medical College Jaipur in 1972 (some 45 years ago). PNK and E. Costa (EC) were the two US scientists who attended the meetings. A 'gore' Indian-American with impeccable accents, PNK was the centre of attraction. I remember he promised almost all women delegates in the meeting that he could offer them a fellowship or visiting assignment in his laboratory! Such was his 'charm!!'

During that conference, I was a volunteer looking after logistics and also assisting the scientific programme committee. Like many young aspirants I was contemplating of going abroad to do post-doctoral research. But still I had one more year of research left to complete my doctorate. PNK gave a lecture on chlorpromazine (CPZ) metabolism. CPZ was

the main drug used in treating psychosis (schizophrenia). It was sold in the name of 'Largactil', a drug having large number of actions. It was not known how one drug could have so many useful actions. Moreover, the exact mechanism of its action in schizophrenia was also not known. Different pharmacologists had their own theory to explain its action. But interesting enough, the drug (CPZ) was undergoing extensive metabolism in human liver. As many as 164 metabolites were speculated of which some were biologically active. One of the areas in which PNK's work had received attention was detection of some CPZ metabolites in small quantities in human plasma and urine. He talked about sensitive methods his lab had developed to correlate the metabolites with biological action, side effect etc of chlorpromazine. Chlorpromazine had changed the course of management of schizophrenia, from asylum to out-patient management. But its effectiveness was not without serious side effects, technically

known as 'extrapyramidal' effects, a devastating Parkinson's like effect. Our lab was engaged in studying the anti-stress effects of 'tranquilizers', CPZ was one of the reference drugs used in our investigation. Another group was engaged in evaluating the side effects of CPZ. It was but natural for all my colleagues to listen to the talk given by PNK.

One interesting thing happened during his visit to Jaipur (on that trip) of which nobody knows except Dr J.S. Bapna (JSB) and I. It has remained a guarded secret all these years! The organizers (Prof PCD) had made both Drs EC and PNK as official guests of Government of Rajasthan. They were staying in Governor's guest house and provided with chauffeur-driven government vehicles. The drivers maintained a log book and their movements were strictly monitored. One morning JSB was tense and on enquiring he said that EC and PNK had expressed their desire to see '*mujra*' in Jaipur. I was unaware of the '*mujra*' and asked him, 'What is the issue?' He said that

'*mujras*' were held in '*Chandpole*' area which was then a red-light zone. Foreigners, more so the official guests of Govt. were not allowed. Moreover, the drivers of the official vehicles were forbidden to take the foreigners to these areas and they were under watchful eyes of the police.

Dr Bapna did not want to displease EC as he (JSB) had earlier worked with him in Washington D.C. and he also did not want any shortfall in the '*Rajasthani hospitality*'. That evening both of us went quietly with EC and PNK into the walled-city and parked the vehicles some kilometers away from *Chandpole* area. All four of us walked through the narrow lanes of the restricted area in dim lights. Neither JSB nor I knew which the best '*mujra*' to watch was! Seeing the foreigners in the area one agent approached us and told that '*Munnibai's mujra*' (name changed) was the best in town! He guided us to the place and we watched the '*mujra*' for half-an-hour or so and returned safely to the venue!

JSB and I had a great sigh of relief!

Three years later I ended up accepting an assignment in PNK's laboratory in Oklahoma University, USA. In the summer of 1975 I landed in the University town Norman, Oklahoma. The University was a typical Midwest football loving place, academics was only next to the game! I had no idea of the American football which demanded high physical stamina. My assistant one day asked me whether I had played the game back home (in India). 'Yes, of course!' I said. He gave a wild look at my lean physique and said, 'You must be kidding'. Two months later when the fall-season started I understood what it makes to be a football player, six feet tall and weigh 200 pounds! By Friday evening the whole campus would turn festive and wait for Saturday, the big ballgame day. The tickets for the game would have sold out long before the season would begin. The spectators would start arriving way ahead of time and there would be pre-game shows and merry time. Actual 60 min (four quarters) game would run in to 3 hours. The following Monday morning

would go in postmortem of the game. Our secretary would come and collect one dollar on Friday afternoon from each one of us as betting money and distribute the earnings on Monday morning, as if it was official!

But PNK's lab was busy work place. Besides his CPZ work (carried out in another lab) the main activity was isolation of biologically active principles from marine animals. The programme was funded by the US Department of Commerce and we closely worked with a big marine chemistry group who would isolate active principles or molecules based on our bioassay reports. The work kept us busy and once in a while we would get exciting response and try to establish biological effect in higher animals. We were able to put together a comprehensive report on the work done so far.

PNK's other interests were in old cars. His garage would be like workshop. On weekends he would be either in the lab or fixing the cars! But his wife Leela was a lady on the move, full

of life, outdoor activities, parties and social get-together. That is true even today. PNK for best reasons known to him kept away from Indian community. They have three beautiful daughters, all well placed in life. Their last daughter Sonia was just born when I landed in Oklahoma. When my wife Mohini reached Norman in 1977, she jelled well with Leela and had good social life in otherwise small University town.

PNK had other talents which were known to only the few. He was a University blue in Banaras Hindu University and subsequently played hockey for US Olympic team. His talent as a footballer (soccer player) surfaced when soccer fever caught up in the USA with the arrival of Brazilian star Pele. New York Cosmos hired Pele on a huge contract (more than a million USD per season) to popularize the game in the country. He was to play 100 games across the country.

In those days America had good relationship with Shah of Iran, the rich ruler of

Iran. Iranian government used to give USD1000 monthly scholarships to students to go to USA to learn English, some even graduated with US degrees. There were two Universities which were designated to admit Iranian students for English course, one of them was Oklahoma. Oklahoma campus had many Iranian students who had experience of playing soccer back home. PNK took the initiative and formed soccer club in Norman, Oklahoma. He would coach them, and even bought a van to take the team to different places to play tournament.

PNK was an expert of many things. A gold medalist of Banaras Hindu University, a prestigious scholarship holder of the University of California, University blue both at BHU and UCSF California, having worked at many national and international laboratories and Universities across the globe, one who has delivered many invited lectures at international conferences, and so on. In one of his recent writings he writes about the game of hockey and the importance of possessing

not only the ball but also moving it with remarkable precision to get to the goal. One may wonder a man of this caliber and *connoisseur* of things why he did not make it to the top in science?

Ps. our son Girish was recently in Atlanta, Georgia where Kauls are now leading a retired life. I mentioned to him about them, and he remembered their visit to our place in Chandigarh. When he called them, Leela who picked up the phone and asked, "Are you the son who was in Pune?" Her memory is so sharp; she invited him for a visit. Girish spent the next morning visiting them and charmed by her and of course the 'Professor!'

7. Napping.....

It was Sunday afternoon, I was watching ODI match on TV and my wife said, 'You may take a nap, we are going to have people for dinner....' She meant that I should not sleep when the guests were in the house. This was a routine instruction.

I had a colleague, who used to take a brief nap during the course of duty time in the Department. He would shut the door of his chamber and put his head on the desk and doze-off. Just 15 min nap would keep him awake the whole night. In the beginning I did not understand why he needed to be awake whole night. As my acquaintance with him grew, one day he told me, 'Be ready, I will come to your hostel at 10 pm'. On dot he was there. I accompanied him on his scooter and we went to his friend's place where many of them were playing cards (it was Diwali time). The game went on till 5 am in the next morning, thousands of currency notes (pre-

demonetization period!) exchanged hands. He dropped me at my hostel and I hit the bed. He was back in the department at 9 am looking as fresh as ever! Amazing physiology, 15 min off and fresh whole night!

Dozing in the parliament is a usual saga. Our ex-PM Deve Gowda was known for that and now, RaGa. The TV cameras mischievously focus on these celebrity law makers. But their supporters argue that their leader(s) was in deep thinking (about the nation or the next vacation?). Sleeping while on duty or sleeping on the job is not only considered gross misconduct and often calls for disciplinary action (but not for our parliamentarians). It is also very risky; say for example a driver of the night bus dozing off may lead to serious accident causing casualties. Similarly dozing night watchman may call for disciplinary action or punishment. Kids sleeping during the school time are cause of concern for the teacher. Parents are to be informed and the kids are sent home, may be not keeping well.

In some Western Universities, particularly in European Universities the Professors chambers used to have relaxing chairs, obviously meant to stretch out or take a nap. At the University of Texas Health Centre I noticed a couch in the spacious wash room. I inquired with the secretary and she said, 'In case someone wants to rest for a while!' When I joined the Panjab University, senior teachers used have an easy chair in their room. It was kind of prestige issue. On my promotion to professorship, the administrative committee purchased a similar one for my room also. It still occupies a space in my (emeritus status) chamber but I had never used it for any purpose except for the guests.

As per the industrial acts sleeping on duty is a serious offense or considered failing in duty particularly if the duty meant operating heavy machinery or hazardous operations such as boilers or reactors etc. The employees work manual (employee's handbook) generally mentions about it. The fact remains that employees do sleep on duty. All over the

world about 30% of the people reported to have slept on duty. Still bigger percent of people have performance deficit while on duty due to poor sleep at night (due to various reasons). Many avoid taking challenging assignments due to sleep disorder or problems, but shy accepting the fact.

Night duty workers say nurses, shift workers, call centre employees and night watchmen are expected keep awake on duty during night. Their physiology is altered or reversed as compared to day-duty employees. Chronobiologists often suspect them to suffer from psychological disorders. Some may get fired from services for their erratic behavior.

Most of the security guards in our University used to be ex-service men. We used to have four, two persons during the day and two in the night shift. Interestingly they did not go for any rotations in their duty; perhaps they had a good understanding amongst them. One of the night duty watchmen used to come late and go early. Once I was staying late in the department and saw one watchmen was being

brought on a three wheeler by his son. He was unable to walk. He was in uniform. His son with the help of the other watchman on duty pulled out a folding cot and made bed for the sick person. I asked the watchman to take medical leave till got well. His son said that he would be fine to carryout night duty, instead of sleeping at home he will rest here (on duty!). Such was his commitment!!

In most countries 'sleeping on duty' is considered indiscipline, however, in some societies sleeping on duty is culturally accepted. Not only that, for example in Japan it is considered as sign of diligence, 'you must be working yourself to exhaustion'. This phenomenon is called 'inemuri', meaning 'sleeping on duty' or 'sleeping while present'. 'Inemuri' is more prevalent among the senior employees in white-collar jobs. It is not gender specific but only objectionable if the female employees nod off in an awkward position. People 'inemuri' in department stores, cafes, restaurants, parks, or cozy bench on a busy city sidewalk! Interestingly, the

analysts consider it as 'multi-tasking' behavior, ie; when the business is dull you are dreaming about the 'beach vacation!'

If given the option, in our society when there is so much of disparity one would like to do 'multi-tasking' such as 'sleeping on duty!'

On a serious note, lot of scientific research has gone in to understanding 'napping'. Nap is considered as short-sleep between 30 to 90 minutes. But it is distinctly shorter (more than 50%) than the regular sleep of 4 to 6 hours per day. Being observed as a universal phenomenon, sleep physiologists are debating on the pros and cons of it. The studies indicate that napping can reduce both subjective and objective sleepiness in individuals. It is also reported to improve mood and short-term memory besides improving psychological performances. Napping can definitely reduce the requirement of caffeine or any stimulant medication. Long distance drivers are advised to take a nap in between and followed by a cup of coffee that would enhance their alertness

and result in fewer accidents. One may ask how long the effect of nap would last. Well, it is directly related to the duration of nap, say for example a brief nap of 10 minutes would show improvements in psychomotor performance up to 3 hours.

Is there a biological switch that gets activated before naps and turned off once it is over? Sleep-scientists believe that there exists a 'sleep-switch' which is sensitive to sleep-active and wake-active neurons in the brain. When the balance is tilted in favor sleep, the sleep-switch neurons are activated and they suppress the wake-active neurons resulting in sleep or naps. Chronobiologists recommend brief naps for trans-meridian travel to allow the biological clock to adapt to local timings. Research evidences suggest that brief naps are beneficial to overcome sleepiness and regain alertness. It is further suggested that taking short naps several times a week can reduce risks of cardiovascular and cognitive dysfunction. People often mention about habitual and non-habitual nappers. Habitual nappers derive greater benefits from the nap.

They may be chronically sleep restricted if not deprived. They need to achieve acceptable level of alertness during the day. However, strategies need to be worked out with individual cases considering age, work schedule, life-styles to obtain maximum advantage from napping.

Even though my napping is not properly scheduled, but I see the advantage which my wife or children do not. On long distance travel I am frequently warned not to doze-off by sitting next to the driver. Dozing in the cinema halls is not uncommon, particularly when the movie is not engaging. But brief nap in the hall could keep me awake till the end of the movie! Thinking back, my colleague who had a brief nap of 15 min and indulged (almost always winning) in a game of cards all through the night!! Not so bad!

Recently our son was visiting and we were discussing something serious. I was listening to him but he said, 'Dad you are not attentive.' I suddenly responded to him, 'I am multi-tasking'.

I was in 'inemuri' state!

8. Government College of Pharmacy (GCP) - *My Alma Mater*

Almost 50 years ago I graduated from the Government College of Pharmacy, Bengaluru obtaining my first degree, Bachelors of Pharmacy (B. Pharm). Ours was the second batch of students that was admitted to the College.

In our times the pre-requisite for joining any professional course was 11 years of schooling (SSLC) and one year of College (FYSc) followed by one year of inter-science. Since I hailed from North Karnataka (Bijapur district), I did my FYSc from Karnataka Science College in Dharwar. Our FYSc course had PCMB subjects. After completing FYSc I had applied for admission to engineering, medicine and the new course of pharmacy. Originally I was admitted to the engineering college but sometimes later I received admission letter to Pharmacy and was asked to report at Mysore Medical College for the

course called PPC (pre-professional course which was equivalent to inter-science of Karnataka University) leading to Pharmacy. There were 30 students in my batch and we all were part of the PPC-course leading to Medicine and Dentistry. We had combined theory and practical classes. (After almost 54 years, a few months ago I paid a visit to the class rooms and laboratories of Mysore Medical College where our classes were held!).

For a boy coming from interior of Bijapur district (where there was no electricity and water supply), Mysore city and the Medical College environment were big changes. Moreover, eating only rice twice a day was a challenge in the beginning! But the course and the compulsory NCC(R) kept us fully occupied. I made new friends, some still remain connected.

Midway through the PPC course, ie; somewhere in the month of November-December the in-charge professor of PPC

course asked the pharmacy students to assemble in the lecture theatre that afternoon. We were told that the Drugs Controller of Mysore state would address. Shri K.N. Shanbhogue , the Drugs Controller (we saw him for the first time) addressed the group and gave a shocking news that the pharmacy curriculum has changed and original three year programme was converted in to four year course with immediate effect. We were told to attend the classes separately with subjects like mathematics, engineering mechanics and engineering drawing besides other basic subjects. The department had made arrangements for these classes. We had to go to polytechnic for engineering courses. After we successfully completed first year of pharmacy (I stood first to the Mysore University), the course was moved to Bangalore. We reported to our new premises, the old vaccine institute in Subbaiah circle (the present GCP). We met our counterpart of students who were admitted to Bangalore Medical College. The churning thus began!!

Mr S.S. Kattishettar was the first Principal of the new college. He had the challenges of creating infrastructure, arranging classes and hiring teachers. We had make shift class rooms (sheds) and temporary laboratories to begin with. We attended anatomy physiology classes in Bangalore Medical College, practical classes in GAS (Govt Arts & Science) College and engineering courses in Women's polytechnic. Our second year University examination was held in GAS College. I still remember, in one of the theory papers, the question paper distributed was of different subject. That day being a holiday in the University, examination superintendent could not arrange for the correct question paper. After hours of waiting the examination was called off for the day! We would bicycle around to these colleges.

By the time we came to third year, we had new class rooms and laboratories (inaugurated by Dr Sushila Nayar, then Union Health Minister). We had laboratories for dispensing pharmacy, pharmaceuticals,

machine room, chemistry, and pharmacognosy. There was one special aseptic lab for injectables was created and we did prepare calcium gluconate ampoules for our final year examination. It was very tricky; one had to watch for charring while sealing the ampoule!

The pharmacology lab was make shift-type and we did not have much equipment. But our teacher Professor VB Desai was very enthusiastic and demonstrated simple experiments like frog heart perfusion and effects of drugs on isolated smooth muscle preparation (he had brought the organ bath chamber from the IISc). Once he took us to Medical College to show the dog experiment. It used to be a great feeling that our teacher used to ride bicycle with us while visiting other institutions, a rarity in modern times!!

Professor VB Desai was the first teacher with pharmacy background who joined the college. Subsequently, Shri Ganapati, Professor PP Thampi joined the College. In

the next few months to a year Professor SS Dhir, Professor Dharmarajan, Mrs Sarala Thampi and Late Shri NK Athanikar joined the College. All of them were young and very enthusiastic but had no experience of teaching and handling the students and their emotions. Initial years were testing time for both, them as teachers and we as students striving for better teaching-learning facilities. The library facility (Librarian Rohini coordinated with all of us) was also very limited and we used to reserve our turn to get the available books for overnight home reading. We also used to borrow books from British and USIS libraries.

We did not have any college hostel. Most of us stayed in different community hostels in town. All the hostels had great tradition and cultural entity. We used to have inter-hostel debates and sports events. We even invited the Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University, Professor VK Gokak for our cultural fest. In our hostel there were 8-10 pharmacy students. During the examination

time we all helped each other. Unlike present time we never had any gaps between the papers, in fact we had two papers per day! The whole schedule used to be over in one week or so!

In the meanwhile Bangalore University was carved out of Mysore University to cater to the needs of the local colleges. Karnataka did not have many pharmaceutical companies or experts and therefore, all our examiners used to come from far of places like BHU, Sagar, Jaipur, Bombay, Waltair, Madras and Pilani. First few years, both internal and external examiners used to be from other Universities.

When we came to final year (1967) Dr R.G. Battu joined as Principal of the College. He had long experience of working in American University (Rhode Island) and was an excellent communicator. Things started falling into places and perhaps later batches had better facilities and teaching-learning experiences.

Our final year class was small (20-22 students) and all of us got places for industrial training in Bombay and other places. Following which many of us went for higher studies in India and some made it US-universities. I moved to SMS Medical College in Jaipur for M. Pharm and Ph.D. courses. My six years in SMS were golden years of learning fundamentals in pharmacology, experimental pharmacology and higher research. The environment was so rich and vibrant that I made the best use of it. I also picked the art scientific writing and presentation, which have remained as great strength even today. I also learnt speaking Hindi and the importance of social interaction for personality growth. These are not taught in the classrooms, which is very much missing in the present context.

After joining Panjab University, Chandigarh in late 1970s, every time I visited the garden city (not anymore!) made it point to come to the college. Professor Battu invited me for M. Pharm examinations and that continued till the time Professor PP Thampi

was the Principal and Professor VB Desai was the Drugs Controller. I also gave couple of guest lecture whenever in town.

My association with Late KN Shabhogue and Late SS Kattishettar was very deep and personal. In later years Shri Shanbhogue used to write regularly expressing his deep dissatisfaction about the profession and its unplanned growth. Unfortunately Shri Kattishettar died early and Karnataka lost two visionary pharmacists who sow the seeds of pharmaceutical education and drug regulatory authority in the state. We remember them with great reverence and gratitude.

In recent years I have not visited the College or had any academic interactions either with the students or the faculty. My last visit to the college was during the concluding ceremony of the Golden Jubilee celebrations. I understand the college has grown big and I wish my *alma mater* all the best!

9. Hitler

For many years SMS Medical College had only two boy's hostels, Junior (Jr) and Senior (Sr) Boy's hostel. The undergraduate students were accommodated in the Jr-boy's hostel and the postgraduate and research students were accommodated in the Sr-boy's hostel. For avoiding ragging and maintaining peace on the campus both the hostels were separated by quite a distance. However, that did not deter such happenings. Dr JC Mehta, Professor of pediatric medicine was our warden. He was very disciplinarian and would sometimes visit the hostels in the middle of the night and take strict action if any resident was breaking the rules. By 1970 one exclusive postgraduate hostel was built and all rooms (about 40 rooms in the ground floor and about 20 rooms in the first floor) had single occupancy. Since majority of the doctors used to be on call (hospital duty) we had 24 x 7 attendants to receive the calls and convey the messages to duty doctors.

When we moved to the new hostel we had a new night duty attendant, 'Hitler!' In the beginning we thought it was his nickname, perhaps given to him by his earlier employer. Much contrary to the name which suggested 'authoritarian' (how could a call-attendant be Hitler, that too in doctor's hostel?) he was very polite and obedient, pleasantly answered all calls through the night. He had a tough job at hand besides attending to the calls, he would run around prepare tea for the exam-going residents, during summer put the '*charpai*' (cot or khat) of most the residents in the lawn during night and again put them back in respective rooms next morning. During the 1971 war we used to have 'blackout' drills and with the sound of the siren, lights would go off for an hour or so. He had to run through the hostel to see all windows were closed and no light was seen from outside. The good part was that he would carry out his job without any grumble. On Sundays he would stay for extended period in the morning attending to the weekly requirements such as bringing

stuffs from the market, giving cloths to dhobi and even ask some of us whether we needed tickets for the English and old movies which used to be screened in one of the theatres in the walled city where he worked at the ticketing office. During the three years that I stayed in the new hostel I never saw him on leave.

Whenever we asked about his real name, he would say 'Hitler!' He was married and had children. Like 'Pilot' many in Rajasthan have family names based where or what jobs they did. Someone in his family must have had fascist approach in the village and thus people addressed them, 'Hitler'. Many a times we wrongly associate the character or quality of a person by his or her name or attitude but on knowing the person one realizes that the name was a 'misnomer!'

It has become a common practice for the media to address people in public life with such authoritarian names. It is not just in our country; even the US-media is addressing the acts of the brand-new President Donald

Trump in similar way. It will take some time for the new President and the media to understand each other or come to terms. In a changed global scenario, perhaps the US-President is no more considered as the policing Chief of the free world.

10. Incomparable Comparison

For many in political circles in India it was indigestible to read that the world famous Time Magazine had two Indians from different walks of life in its list of 100 most influential people in the world in 2015. One of them happens to be our most popular Prime Minister Shri Narendrabhai Modi (NaMo). The other person was Mr Satya Nadella, Microsoft CEO.

For me unquestionably, **Prime Minister Modi's** rise was definitely higher and significant, one of the rare achievements of the decade. His humble background, political growth, and fighting it out single handedly the political establishment and his own party's the hierarchy are a monumental achievements. Unlike the CEOs of companies, NaMo has been and is, put to hard public scrutiny almost every day. History will judge him as India's leader who spoke from conviction and one who believed in economic growth as the key

in removing poverty, disease and ignorance. And also, one who was born after independence, not in Nehru-Gandhi 'pariwar' and not from Uttar Pradesh to become the premier of India! 'Modi era' as it may be called, will set the agenda for the next decade and change the political canvass of the nation.

The Indian lawmakers had written to US President not to issue VISA to NaMo and he was refused the visa for a decade. As a slap on the face of the Indian lawmakers and even to the policy of USA, the President Barack Obama himself wrote the profile for NaMo for the magazine. Describing him, 'As a boy, Narendra Modi helped his father sell tea to support their family. Today, he's the leader of the world's largest democracy, and his life story- from poverty to Prime Minister- reflects the dynamism and potential of India's rise.'

His write-up entitled, 'India's reformer-in-Chief', Obama also refers to Modi's visit to the US; 'When he came to Washington, Narendra (he addresses NaMo by his first name) and I

visited the memorial to Dr Martin Luther King Jr. We reflected on the teachings of King and Gandhi and how the diversity of backgrounds and faiths in our countries is strength we have to protect. Prime Minister Modi recognizes that more than one billion Indians living and succeeding together can be an inspiring model for the world.'

Prime Minister Modi's success depends on how his government delivers in the coming years and able to fulfill the aspirations of billion plus Indians. His Government has made an honest beginning and it is hoped that '*achhe din aanewale hain*'. The world would be watching at India's developmental path with inquisitiveness.

Yes, **Satya Nadella** is the CEO of one of the World's biggest software companies. He is the first Indian-American to step into the shoes of the founder, Bill Gates followed by Steve Ballmer. Microsoft is a well established company known for its innovation and leadership approach. Those who are familiar

with 'silicon valley' culture, there is something in the air that automatically brings out the best in committed and capable individuals. Satya Nadella is no exception. He is an engineering graduate from Manipal Institute of Technology, Manipal not an IITian, and has proved that hard work, ingenuity; business acumen would take one to the top. At a time when global economy is in flux, he has to fine tune the business priorities and model, bring in new energy to excel further. No doubt a challenging job but what is at risk for him and the company as compared to the future of a World's largest democracy? Nadella's success adds more success to already well-known company, and failure would show him the door. The company will look for another CEO. But Modi's failure to deliver will put the nation back to where we were many decades ago!!

11. Brave Heart

At the end of the day, it does boil down to pulling and pushing each other through the journey of life - helping one another navigate from one waypoint to the next. As I write this, I am compelled to make this analogy with flying an airplane. The pilots navigate the plane from one waypoint to the next known waypoint. They can't see the destination - they trust that someone has the grand plan, and that hitting each waypoint one after the other will get them to the destination. The pilots are merely reposing their trust in the grand plan and the machinery as they take the plane from one waypoint to the other. Any fleeting confidence that I have within me that I know it all and its going to be alright is quickly consumed by my subconscious reminds me that I have seen more in life to know better.

It was an early autumn afternoon in 2002, when my first cousin Santosh and I were in a famed pub on Bengaluru's MG Road -

"Underground". Aptly named after the London Tube system, the pub bore great similarity to the its namesake in London. Patrons identified and located the pub with the well known TFL symbol for a Tube Station. So much was the attempt to transport patrons to the Underground environ that the pub asked patrons to "Mind the Gap" as you entered. The mind is such a beautiful thing - I am reconstructing this as I sit watching my son Vikram take swimming lessons 15 years hence. Santosh and I were guzzling Bangalore's best draught - making the most of the happy hour.

My phone rang - a Nokia 3310 - a gift that Daddy had passed on to me a few weeks ago when I was in Chandigarh. As would have been the case in London, the reception Underground was poor. Those were the early days of mobile telephony in India when I would consciously choose to be frugal to keep my cell phone connection alive. That explains why we were in a pub during happy hours. On the other end of the phone was a friend -

Babalad (Bablya). I asked him to hold on as I made a beeline for the pub's exit and surfaced on to MG Road. Bablya was distressed. He had assumed responsibility for a friend who was unwell. The friend's parents just did not have the wherewithal to help their son out of what seemed like a prolonged illness. Bablya - all of 20 years old then - had decided to pilot the family's vessel to the next waypoint - Bengaluru Institute of Oncology (BIO) - for a detailed investigation. Bablya had just been told that the biopsy returned malignant. That phone call changed many a lives.

The mind is such a beautiful thing - it recovered from the many pints of beer I had in a flash. My conscious had kicked into top gear and I had decided to do what many had done for me - jump in with a friend who was in need. Babalad needed me to take charge. We were talking about next steps to help Bablya's friend and family navigate to the next waypoint. We did not know what the destination was - but we knew that someone had the grand plan and we needed to build the

machinery. That phone call, the next 6 months and India's dial-up Internet ended up creating a vast robust network of self-less friends, donors and doctors - a virtual team that saw the who was now the most important person in our lives through chemo after chemo and all the way up to CMC Vellore where he was to go through an allogenic bone marrow transplant. Alas! he did not make it. We closed that chapter of our lives by starting a new chapter for his family. We had created a fund that would see his sister through college, her marriage and his parents through the next few years of their journey here.

Life moved on for all of us, the team re-engaged in their own lives until the another waypoint had a couple of us converge again. This time it was personal. My family went through what was a surreal, heart-wrenching 2 year journey where we pulled a loved one through the only dimension that matters in life - time. My best friend, Raghu, made my family his own and time-shared the responsibilities that I had as a son and a

brother. That journey is another chapter in itself - a chapter I do not have the courage to author.

Fast-forward another 10 years. Circa 2016. All of us keep connected - all that binds us together is our friend's short journey that we shared in 2002/3. The mind is such a beautiful thing - there is certainly a part of our neural network that has been honed by repeatedly getting together during tough times - whether our own or others. I think we have built the muscle memory and the instincts to dig deep, be in the present, trust in the grand plan and build the machinery. It was July 24, 2016 - a Sunday. We were driving to Cupertino to wish a friend's wife, actually one of my best friend's wife, a belated happy birthday. As we got off the freeway closer to their place, I placed the customary courtesy call to notify my friend of our impending arrival. We wanted it to be a surprise for his wife, but not for him. Who I heard on the other end of the phone that day was certainly not the person I knew.

My friend, Vijay (name changed). Vijay is one of the most courageous free-radicals I have known. No one trusts in the grand plan and his own capabilities more than this guy. Tenacious first, intelligent next and optimistic always - that is Vijay. Fortune favors the brave they say and Vijay's life thus far is an epitome of bravery and fortune. He has had a humble start. One of three siblings, a son to devout brahmin parents. His father retired as a school teacher and his mother has been their family's spine. Vijay has inherited the best of qualities from his parents and has defied the odds that one would expect and often succumb to when one has such humble beginnings. Vijay thrives in a challenge. I have personally seen him dig deep and demonstrate such resolve over long hauls to not only support his parents, but his extended family and friends financially and emotionally. All this while he was taking risks on the professional front, jumping from employer to employer to find his landing. Once he landed, he persevered with his team - had a successful exit at a start-up that got

acquired by Microsoft. Microsoft moved him to the US. What a journey! It doesn't end there. He finds another start-up and quickly takes the risk. When I call him, I am tuned to hear a gregarious and forceful character.

But who I heard on the other end of the phone that day was certainly not the person I knew. The mind is such a beautiful thing - all I had to hear was a mellow hello. My heart was racing and I was thinking about getting to the next waypoint. While we were hearing about Vijay's son's massive seizure on the speakerphone in the car, we were frantically determining the quickest way back on to the freeway. We had to head to Stanford, to Lucile-Packard Children's Hospital (LPCH).

Vijay's son is a replica of Vijay. All of 7, he is a robust riot. He had suffered a massive seizure when he was playing with a friend at home a couple of hours ago. I called Santosh, with whom I have enjoyed many a beer including our first in a then upscale restaurant in Belgaum as teenagers. Something in me

told me that this is going to be a turbulent ride for Vijay. We needed to push and pull him to the next waypoint and to the next. We had to build the machinery and trust the grand plan.

Inside LPCH's ultra modern Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) lay Vijay's son. He had recently returned from a frolicking trip to India - visiting both sets of grandparents, having unadulterated fun that one can only have in one's motherland. The doctors, the parents and us - all were trying to piece the story together in our minds that led to the seizure. Obviously, the doctors were using symptoms to do so, the parents using karma and us using recent past events. Ultimately what mattered was when the PICU on-duty doctor declared that this seemed to be a straight forward case of meningitis. Ah! that made sense. He had been to India, he had an episode or two of fever and was febrile on the flight back. Google seemed to support the hypothesis - in hind-sight it appears like a classic case of confirmation bias.

On the other side of fear lies peace, they say. Our worst fear seemed to have come true. It was meningitis. We were all at peace - an unsettling calm. It was going to be rough ride, but it seemed like the next waypoint was insight. Typical medication, rigorous monitoring and measurement and world-class staff. It could only get better from here. Very quickly Vijay mobilized a few friends, he stood up a make-shift support system and we were in business. Vijay would stay the whole day in the hospital until his son was out of the PICU, a few of us would spend 12 hour shifts with Vijay giving him the respite and rest he needed. We had unknowingly become a part of the PICU fabric from Day 1. The hospital staff had enlisted the dad and dad's friends as a part of the care team - which was pretty awesome.

Monday morning, 9AM - the first standup. Vijay and I were waiting for Dr. C to arrive. He was the on-duty PICU specialist who had with his sheer calm and confidence allayed our worst fears the previous night. It

was meningitis, damn it. "We've seen enough of it, and all kinds of it - we've got you covered", he had said. Around 9 AM, just when the nurse shift changes, Dr C arrived. We all stood around Vijay's son and shared our learnings in the last 9 hours. The on-duty nurse went first providing her detailed update, the residents who were periodically checking in with the patient went next, and then Dr. C turned to dad and asked him for his observations over the last 9 hours. Dad and I fumbled our way through explaining what we saw the patient go through. Much of it was difficult to explain because we did not have the medical vernacular to be precise in our explanation of events. Dr C patiently heard us and helped us with the right terminology, something that we would eventually become experts at using. He turned to the pathologist and she gave her report. "OK, we are on the right track", Dr C said. He then rattled off instructions for the day, what to look out for and when to raise an alarm. The new nurse and the residents intently took notes. It was a wrap

to the stand-up meeting. This stand-up became a ritual, one we would never miss for the next 3 months.

A week into this ordeal and there was no sign of any improvement. In fact, the meningitis theory had started weakening as neurologists had joined the care team. Vijay's son was symptomatically suffering status epilepticus - a condition where one seizure begets another. The cause was no longer meningitis. The cause would remain unknown as it turned out. The brave 7 year old had to go through tests after tests. Each test more painful than the previous. Nurses would poke him for blood, to medicate him and eventually to administer barbiturates to induce comatose. The kid remained in PICU for over 80 days. With each passing day the make-shift support system was tested as was the resilience of the family. There were some really long days for the family and for the doctors. There were days when they'd spend hours getting a catheter in and nights staring at the EEG monitor for visually identifiable aberrations.

For each aberration we were asked to hit a button on a probe to mark the aberration. By the time the doctors came in for their standup, the neurology team would have analyzed the EEG from the last day and studied all the marked aberrations. For us, it gradually became a binary that decided how the next 24 hours would be - good or bad.

About two weeks into this ordeal, Vijay started two WhatsApp groups. One group where we would co-ordinate logistics, the other group being a network of doctors in India who once were Vijay's classmates in pre-university. Obviously, Vijay had done his bit in pushing and pulling his friends and their families through their downtimes. He had time and again, of his own volition volunteered time, advice and money to navigate friends to the next waypoint in their lives. I am reminded of a friend of his named Shivu. Shivu came from a very poor background and used to be Vijay's school mate - in the very school where Vijay's dad used to teach. Vijay and Shivu grew up in a small

town, and Vijay kept his promise of this small town friendship when he pulled Shivu out of the small town the day Vijay got his first paycheck. I have known Shivu now for 15 years - Shivu is now a business owner in Bengaluru with a family of his own, all because of the start that Vijay gave him when Vijay himself was living paycheck to paycheck. There were many such acts of random kindness that Vijay has performed. It was no wonder that there were a dozen doctors working with Vijay on that WhatsApp group to get Vijay information and second opinions on his son's progressing illness.

It was already 4 weeks and Dr C had rolled off his duty. The Meningitis hypothesis had also been dismissed - both by the Stanford doctors and the WhatsApp team of doctors. By now Vijay's son was in induced coma and his status epilepticus was not improving. The mind is a beautiful thing - there was this set of doctors @ Stanford who were working with first hand data and there was this other set of doctors who were working on a layman's

description of his son's condition. Either Vijay had become really adept at describing his son's condition in a medically accurate manner or the doctors in India were trained so well to diagnose remotely - to me either one of those explanations is just astounding since both the sets of doctors seemed to have arrived at the same conclusion. This was a class of epilepsy that does not have a known cause - idiopathic epilepsy. What was intriguing that based on medical studies, these epilepsies of unknown origin can actually be grouped together in a class for which the symptoms are well documented and treatments are available. So, while there was no known cause, potential treatments were available nevertheless. Both sets of doctors had unanimously but independently voted for a ketogenic diet to be a part of the primary line of treatment. They had also time and again voted for repeatedly inducing coma to control seizures - something which the parents and us found incredibly painful to witness and go through.

With the Meningitis theory debunked, there was new fear and no more peace. We were back to square 1. We needed a third opinion to help us get over our fears. Vijay secured an appointment to go meet another specialist at UCSF Benioff Medical Center. We had reams of data on Vijay's braveheart son - both digital and physical. I drove to Stanford to pick Vijay up around 2 PM and started driving towards the city. It was going to be a long drive and we got chatting. Vijay gave me an update on the day so far and we tried to make sense of his son's progress or the lack there of. I keep going back to the mind - and it being a beautiful thing. It is deep. Without any distractions of the hospital hustle bustle, Vijay and I were in the car insulated from everything else - even his son's predicament. The mind is deep. Vijay was verbally soul searching and in the process of finding logic to his current fate - he came up with a theory that his son was perhaps coping poorly with the lack of attention as his sibling was growing up. There was some truth to that -

Vijay's second son has grown up into a cute powerhouse of a toddler and garners much of the attention away from the 7 year old who is now beginning to understand life. I asked Vijay to box that thought and keep it aside for inspection later. We've never opened that box again.

Vijay was grappling for choices not with. He and his wife were living life hour to hour. Where the grand plan was and why it was so elusive, he asked. In their moments of helplessness, life had bludgeoned them with another family illness - his brother-in-law had developed a serious kidney condition. Things could have gotten worse, and they did in an unexpected way. His parents remained oblivious to their grandson's illness and the struggles of their beloved son. They were in Pune with their daughter who had recently been told about her conception. Here is a man who has fended for all in his family and more - and he can not share his grief and helplessness with his father whom he so admires. As Vijay spoke that day in the car, I could see the

cracks. Life had painted him in a corner and then thrown up on him. As Vijay got all of this out of his system, he started to do some first principles thinking. So far, he was and we were reasoning by analogy. For the first time, Vijay was boiling it down to the fundamental truths and reasoning up from there. He spoke about how his son was his first priority and wanted to go back to India where he could get some respite from battling this alone. In the same vein he spoke about how his parents will not be able to emotionally or physically come to terms with the grimace life had thrown at his son. His son was in the best medical care possible in the Mecca of medicine - but it came at a cost - over a million dollars already. Vijay had to keep his job, else he would not have insurance. He could go back but would have to support his family and his son at the same time. Suddenly, there was choice. The choice was stark. Stay here or go back to India.

Now we were both reasoning up from the fundamental truths - his son was in the best medical care and that his extended family

could not be his support system. Going back to India meant starting afresh with treatment, it meant subjecting his son to long drawn mental agony as he tries to integrate with the social fabric with his new reality, it also meant that over-time they could get help at home and eventually the much needed relief from keeping the household running. Staying here meant that he has to dig deep and find the resolve to cope with the pressures of treatment, recuperation, home and work. It was becoming clear to him that he felt isolated and he was starting to realize that he had not done justice to himself by not seeking a confidante and a partner in his wife. Now, Vijay comes from a very patriarchal setting and had so far taken it upon himself to fend for his family. It was now that as he saw his own cracks he started realizing that he had totally missed out on bringing his wife on as a equal partner in the enterprise of family. All along, Vijay has been an admirable son, husband and father but in also being the leader of the pack for the last 15 years, he had not been able to

share his vulnerabilities with anyone in his family. He felt he could not well up amidst his own. The only time I had seen Vijay cry was when his youngest sister got married and he was sending her off. And then again in the PICU.

As we were chatting and I was driving, his phone rang. I think back and feel it was an important punctuation to our conversation. The phone call was from the school district. It had been over 6 weeks that Vijay's son had not been to school and the school district had called Vijay to plan next steps. The school district empathized with Vijay and proposed that he contact them once his son is able to come back to school. They ended the conversation but not before telling Vijay that they'd be happy to provide home tutoring and a full-time aid if required when his son is able to attend school. We had also reached our destination.

We met the super specialist who specialized in Pediatric Epilepsy and had a

super specialty in Idiopathic Epilepsy. He reviewed the plethora of data we had taken for him. After two hours of carefully parsing the medical data and anecdotal recitations from the both of us about the last many tumultuous weeks, the doctor concluded that the treatment was progressing on the right path. He corroborated the suggestion to incorporate a ketogenic diet in the primary line of treatment. Finally there was no fear. The doctor's opinion was the third opinion we needed to triangulate on the path forward - keep the induced coma in place and switch to a fully ketogenic diet. Vijay and I walked out of UCSF with our confidence barometer trending up. The phone call from the school district and the detailed conversation with doctors are a great backdrop to our continuing conversation on our way back to Stanford.

Buoyed by new found confidence, as short-lived it may end up being, Vijay was now actively reframing the solution to the problem at hand. He said that he was now leaning towards staying back and seeing his

son through the treatment. The mind is a beautiful thing - it processes new information and incorporates it into the neural network so quickly. With the information relayed by the school district and the specialist doctor's opinion, Vijay was already projecting an altered outcome if he decided to stay back. In addition, he was honing in on something that he had expressed on his way to UCSF - he has to make his wife a partner. I am sure this was not a sudden realization, but it was culmination of prolonged thought that lead him to assert to his patriarchal self that it is perfectly OK to express his vulnerabilities to his better half. We spoke about how he is going to be transparent with his wife about what the doctors said rather than offering an optimistic veneer every day. He realized that by sharing it as it is with his wife - he had less heavy lifting to do. It turned out that his wife did an admirable job in the next many months of their struggle as they overcame many more major and minor hurdles.

Vijay's son had been in the PICU for over

2 months now. The make-shift support system was crumbling with everyone having to prioritize their own lives. We were far from the finish line and we knew it. We had been in it for enough to know that things were not going to magically improve overnight. This was going to be a marathon and we needed second wind. The second wind came in the form of a serendipitous work trip that Babalad had to make to Palo Alto. As he does always, he called me a few days after his arrival. As I spoke to him over the phone I was transported back to 2002 when Babalad had called me to jump in. It was a similar situation 15 years hence. I asked Babalad to jump in. For the next 4 weeks we had Babalad and some of his friend network provides the support that was till then unraveling. Here is a guy - traveling to the US for work - and spending his nights at Stanford's LPCH PICU. I have broken bread with Babalad many times over many years and each time we have added a page to our story from the year 2000 till now. We added a few more this time around.

After over 80 days in the PICU, Vijay's son was moved to a ward and from the ward to home. Each step forward in the brave 7 year old's journey was met with half a step back. As he lay in the PICU in induced comatose, we could not see his pain and I pray that he wasn't able to too. His journey over the last 4 months has not been any less arduous. He left the wards with CVI (Cortical Visual Impairment) - this was completely unexpected. As he was brought out of comatose with his status epilepticus in control, he opened his eyes only not to be able to see. With all that Vijay and his wife had been through so far, they took this in their stride. Onward to the next waypoint, they said. What ensued was a rigorous rehabilitation program to help the brave heart to regain speech, balance, memory and sight. The mind is a beautiful thing - it came back from what appeared was its self-imposed hibernation as the brain went through what could have been the spartan arctic winter. The brain had fought and won - while the mind rested. The brave heart is now in school,

coping with the demands of curricula, playing with friends and embracing his new reality with open arms. He knows of many constraints that one wished a 7 year old didn't know of. There are odd seizures here and there; the mother expertly administers CPR while the support system calls 911. Vijay drives from work to the Emergency Room. They take things as they come. They know it's just a waypoint. They know there is a grand plan. They know that they can mobilize a support system as needed.

I would be remiss if ended without accounting for my recent rendezvous with Dr. C. We had our second child at LPCH, the OR was right next to PICU. You can imagine a very well known setting for me. As I was getting breakfast in the LPCH cafeteria after our daughter was born and my wife was still recuperating in the hospital, I spotted Dr. C. This was almost 6 months after I had initially met him. I approached him and said hello. He did not recognize me. I reminded him that I am the brave heart's uncle and he not only

recognized me but worryingly enquired about him. He thought I was in the hospital because of the brave heart again. After I told him about the development in my family, he was relieved albeit only slightly. He asked about the brave heart's situation and upon hearing this story, he cried. He hugged and held on to me in the corridors of Stanford's LPCH. The mind is such a beautiful thing - my story cured a doctor's pain of a mis-diagnosis - his much required professional stoicism gave way to sparkling tears of joy.

(We met the boy on our recent visit to San Jose; he was playing with younger brother. His parents said that he knows his limitations at this tender age and taken the challenge bravely. It is a passing time till his he reaches his adulthood when the episodes would be less likely, hopefully. We wished him and his caring parents in their fight against the adversary)

(Contributed by our elder son, Setumadhav Kulkarni)

12. California Diary

In the last five years we have visited the United States as many times. This year (2017) it was special, we had a new addition to the family, cute little one, *Vrinda*, our granddaughter! In male children dominated family Vrinda's arrival brought lot of excitement and happiness. It is a different experience of seeing little angel to grow by the day, her movements, reactions and expressions kept everyone glued to her. Her mesmerizing smile was captive. In fact after returning from there we are longing to seeing her through Skype at least once a day. Her playful expressions and giggles are addictive. She has become darling of the family.

Vikram is a big brother to her. At seven he is more responsible, swim and red-belt Taekwondo freak. I accompanied Anup (Setu) or Amarantha to drop him at the school every day morning. Attended their morning

assembly, which was much similar to what we have in our schools, announcements, recognizing achievers of the week followed by prayer for allegiance to American flag. Assembly looked so casual yet symbolic, all participated including all class teachers, parents and grandparents. What drew my attention was the way in which senior class students guided the traffic at the entrance of the school. Unlike Indian school curriculum, schooling is lot of fun; the emphasis is on making those children self sufficient and responsive. They learn how to use library and develop reading habit, which is missing in our school education. And of course, no pressure of home works!

Anup and Amarantha had planned for the naming ceremony of Vrinda. Back in India in traditional Brahmin family the naming ceremony is called 'cradling' function which is generally done within one month of baby's birth. But in the Western world one has to give the proposed name at the time of the birth of the baby. Since the gender or sex of the baby is

known in advance, parents chose the name in advance. So, Vrinda's name was registered before she left the hospital. But it was an occasion to celebrate the arrival of the baby, the function was well planned, panditji was to perform the religious act etc. They invited all their friends. By that time Amarantha's parents also arrived. Vrinda was lucky to have the blessings of both grandparents, paternal and maternal. It turned out to be a warm day and for most, it was like picnic cum attending the function on a Sunday morning.

Unlike our previous visits, this time we were visiting California in spring. The weather though was comfortable (temperatures ranged from 12-15°C during day time and 5-7°C in the nights), one needed to wear a light jacket to go out. We could experience the arrival spring and change of colors of trees. It was pleasing to eyes. Towards the end of our stay, suddenly everyone at home got spring allergy which is a common phenomenon. It is common to take flu shots (vaccination), including children as a

preventive measure. Back home we do not take any such preventive measures related to seasonal changes, for that matter we do not observe any preventive health measures. My son asked whether I would like to get flu shot. I said, 'we have natural immunity!' It crossed my mind as to how American healthcare industry and the Insurance companies play on the minds of people!

We, my wife and I also had mild spring allergy; cold and cough. We got over the cold part of the allergy but I experienced one of the worst attacks of dry cough, particularly at night. All home remedies and some medicines that I had carried got exhausted but the cough was not budging! One day our daughter in law took me to an 'Urgent care' clinic in the neighborhood. The 'Urgent cares' are emergency medical help. Generally a physician trained in emergency medicine would attend to the patients and prescribe medicines for emergency symptomatic relief. In case of need the patient would be referred to specialist. So, I saw the physician on duty. He

looked in to the history sheet prepared by the nurse and said, 'Generally patients of your age would have pneumonia. You will have to get few investigations done.' I said, 'Doctor, I just have dry cough without any fever and I would need some bronchodilator with expectorant'. The doctor was little taken aback when I said the exact medicine (salbutamol or terbutaline) that I wanted. However, he insisted that I should get chest X-ray done the least! The visit to the 'Urgent care' was covered by travel insurance but the cost of chest X-ray wasn't.

There are two public libraries in San Jose. The nearest one was at walking distance from home. I started visiting the library every day. People of all age group visit the library. There is children section and recreation zone for senior citizens who play table tennis and poker. Carrels are exclusive places for serious reading and some work on their personal computers. In the news paper and magazine section one can see some Hindi magazines like 'Sarika and Filmfare'. California has people of Chinese and Vietnamese origin.

Chinese and Vietnamese news papers and magazines were also on display. One could spend 3-4 hours easily reading and even watching videos.

Ever since the new President has been sworn in, the American media, both electronic and print are very critical of Donald Trump's acts and the coterie of advisers. Time magazine brought a special cover (black) story, 'Is truth dead' (April 3, 2017) and compared it to its 61 year earlier cover story (that was also black), 'Is God dead' (April 8, 1966). In 1966 the American streets were crime ridden, and it was fighting a war in the far Southeast, with 'godless communists'. To the question of 'Is God dead', 97% of American had responded that they believed in God. In the face of the new President who treats 'Truth' as a toy, the social scientists opine that repetition of a false statement, even in the course disputing it, people start believing it! In course of 6 months in office now he has fired one half of his coterie of advisers. It must have happened for the first

time in the long history of American White House. The free world looks and follows what happens in America and its political discourse. Next four years will be critically viewed by the global leaders.

Another touching story that caught my attention was the story, 'The stunning inequality in world water use' published in the April 2017 issue of National Geographic. The article (pictorial) starts with a statement, 'From India to Bolivia, it was always the women who knew exactly how much water their family needed'. The article goes on to describe how the massive differences existed in water consumption in different parts of the world. Women and children around the world spend a collective 125 million hours gathering water on daily basis. The inequality was of staggering number, in New York a family of 3 consumed nearly 1000 litres of water as against a family of 8 in a suburb of Mumbai survived on 220 litres per day! It is especially important that we are conscious of how much water we use, because clean fresh water is a

critical resource even if it is easily available for us. Particularly in our country majority of the diseases are water-borne.

It is an everyday story back in India. We live in a brand new apartment complex, 70 dwellings in Belagavi/Belgaum designated as one of the first 20 smart cities to be developed in the first phase. The builder claims that he had provided enough water sources in the form of 3 tube wells, but all have become dry in this short span of less than 5 years. The residents are not willing to conserve the use, even on the measure(s) of preventing wastage of water!

Every year the Scripps National Spelling Bee competition is held in the United States. It is a well fought competition among the kids. It is live telecasted in the USA and even in other countries. Lot of Prize money in the form college scholarship is offered to the winner. In the last 17 years (2001 to 2017), 15 of the 17 winners are of Indian-American origin. Similarly, The Regeneron Science Talent

Search (STS) (considered to be a pre-qualifier for Nobel Prize) is another most prestigious science research competition for high school seniors. The country's best and brightest young scientists present their original research to a scientific body that adjudges the best amongst them. When President Donald Trump is calling for America First slogan, 83% of the finalists in recent years are children of immigrants. In this year's 40 finalists 14 are children of Indian-American origin. Many of the winners of this talent search have gone on to win Nobel Prize in various categories. The editorial in Wall Street Journal posed a question why children of immigrants outperform Native Americans? It was observed that immigrant parents more likely to cultivate values such as perseverance, independence, a love of learning and interest in innovation. It will not be an overstatement if ones observe that American science to a large extent depended on talented immigrants.

I had carried couple of books with me on this trip. The famous Kannada writer SL Bhyrappa at 82 continues to write on a wide range of topics. As a student I had read some of his earlier novels like *Vamshavruksha*, *Tabbaliyu ninade magane*. After moving to north India I had not had the opportunity to read his works, though following his literary acclaims. After coming to Belgaum I read his book, *Mandra* which is much different. Recently there was news that his latest book, 'Uttar kand' has been released and also it is already out of print! I requested my brother Anand to get a copy of the book whenever it was available in Bengaluru and he managed to get it.

I had read both the books 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' retold by C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) long back. Both were publications of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. These were originally written in Tamil by the well known author but translated in to English. Many have written discourse on the epic 'Ramayana'. Both Ramayana and Mahabharata occupy a

special place in the ethos of India. In modern India more so after the invasion of television in our homes, Ramanand Sagar's telly serial 'Ramayan' rekindled the interest in one and all. People glued to the box when the episodes were telecasted in 1987-88. Many of us have not read the original works of Sage Valmiki. These serials depicted different aspects of the Ramayana and kept the audience engaged. Even after 30 years both the serials continue to be telecasted by private channels round the year. Their stories and the characters are relevant to modern day life.

Sage Valmiki's 'Uttar Kand' is the story of Lord Rama banishing Sita from Ayodhya and then the birth of their sons, 'Luv and Kush'. I was keen to read SL Bhyrappa's version of 'Uttar Kand'. Bhyrappa has re-written the entire Ramayana, unfolding of the events as Sita's version. Sita, while in exile in the hermitage of Sage Valmiki after Lord Rama abandoned her, is narrating her life events as daughter of mother earth and adopted by King Janaka of Mithali and queen Sunaina. As she

breast feeds her twin sons, her thoughts go back to her childhood in the palace of Janaka. She recollects how she was deprived of this natural instinct or act of suckling of mother's breasts. She remembers her sister Urmila suckling mother's breast. For no sin of her Rama has banished her. She raised her two sons as a single mother as valiant warriors. She does not regret even though for no sin of hers Rama has banished her, Luv and Kush are accepted by their father. She refuges to go back to Ayodhya and seeks refuge into the mother earth to get free from the unjust world and life that has been rarely happy.

Even though Sita is the story teller, the writings have not eroded the image of Rama as the godly figure, or one who kept his word, '*raghukul reet sada chali aayi, pran jaye par vachan na jaye*'. The ending is very heart rendering, Sita exclaims, 'a lady left by her husband can survive but for a husband discarded by wife, it is difficult to survive'. I was reading Kannada novel after many years but the writings kept me engrossed till I

finished the book (325 pages) in couple of sittings. Hats off to the acclaimed literary giant SL Bhyrappa, the entire Sita's version of 'Uttar Kand' has been written in just three months, according to the author!

The other book, 'My Gita' by Devdutt Pattanaik, an acclaimed mythologist is a demystified version of the 'Bhagavad Gita' for the present day reader through illustrations and diagrams.. He (Devdutt) now regularly appears on 'Epic' TV channel in an interactive mode to explain various characters in both 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata'. Unlike other discourses on the epic, 'Bhagavad Gita' Devdutt explains Lord Krishna's approach in resolving Arjuna's dilemma in a simplistic way. In a world of constant conflicts, he tries to tell that we live in an ecosystem of others, where we can learn so much from each other's love and even in war.

Atul Gowande's book, 'Being mortal' was on display in the library which attracted my attention. Dr Gowande is a second generation

Indian American and by profession a surgeon. He is a regular columnist in the New Yorker. He writes his own experiences on aging, death and the mishandling by his own profession. When I started reading the book, felt depressed to know what old age can do to you, your parents, relatives, people, or unknown; loneliness, broken hips, dementia and shrinking bank balances. Being a first generation immigrant, he narrates the contrasting events of final years of his own grandfather in India and his wife's grandmother in the USA. It tells the crux or the paradox of 'Being mortal'. His wife's granny goes through the typical Western way, loneliness and illness and spending more time in hospitals; old age being treated as medical problem. Whereas his grandfather back in India, lived in his farm surrounded by family, friends, and visitors until his death. Currently, the new administration in the USA is struggling to replace so called 'Obama care' and Gowande is critical of 'futile intervention' which makes patients and their loved ones

miserable. He calls such approaches actually shorten the lives instead of improving them. He tries to address the question most ask, how we can make our last days more comfortable, meaningful, and affordable. It is important to desire to live longer but it is equally important to live better. The concepts of hospices is not so common in our country, he argues the ultimate goal is not just good death but a good life-all the way to the very end. It was a serious reading material!

After staying for three months we were planning on our return journey. Vrinda had started recognizing people and Vikram, was quick enough to realize that he has to share the space. We had a marriage in the family to attend. Our return journey was long and all through we were rewinding the memories with grandchildren.

13. Quota Patients!

While in service at the Panjab University I used to get my annual health check-up done at our Health Centre on the campus. The check-up included blood and urine analysis and seeing the physician in the evening clinic. This became more rigorous once I was detected to be a 'border-line diabetic'. Since I had family history of the disease I became very cautious about it. My regular evening walks coupled with aerobic exercises and controlled diet has kept me going so long. Another advantage we had in Chandigarh, for any health issue one could easily consult specialist(s) in the Postgraduate Medical Institute (PGIMER) located just across the road. For some time I became member of 'Diabetic' clinic in PGIMER, that made me to visit them once in 3 months on regular basis.

In early 2009 I accepted a post superannuation (retirement) assignment with the Bombay University as Director of one of

the prestigious Colleges located in Kalina, a suburb of Mumbai. Luckily we were staying on the college campus and I continued with my morning and evening walks. When it was time for my annual health check-up, I learnt that the institute did not have arrangement or provision for addressing the health needs of the students or the faculty. I asked my secretary to fix an appointment for health check in the private hospitals. It was pretty expensive. I realized that it would be ideal to get health check at Chandigarh in my next visit to the city. Subsequently I have started getting my annual health check (and also of wife's) in one of the corporate hospitals in Bengaluru. The package was affordable and most importantly my niece Sangeeta works there as one of the consultant doctors. Also, one gets to see one general physician and in case of any additional consultation needed experts is available. For the first time I was advised to get a complete check to have a baseline information on all parameters. I was happy that everything was found normal or

within the expected range at my age.

Last December I turned 70 and my niece advised to have a complete check which included cardiac functions and abdominal scan etc besides the routine tests. It made sense to set new baseline with respect to age. I went through the entire routine. When I was in cardiology department, the duty nurse asked me whether I would prefer echo- or thread mill stress test. I told that this has to be guided by the cardiologist looking at the condition of the patient. But the nurse insisted that it would be my choice. I reacted telling, 'it is not choosing a candy, which one I like the most'. I met the cardiologist and he advised me to undergo thread mill stress test. I went through the full 9 min test. The nurse said that I did well.

After the lunch break the reports of all tests were available and I had to see the general physician for advice. The doctor was happy that my general health was fine but advised me to meet the cardiologist. I was eager to know the reason to meet the

cardiologist. The cardiologist looked at my stress test and said that I was a candidate for sudden heart attack! I asked the cardiologist, 'Doctor, I have no blood pressure or cholesterol problem, and I am non-smoker and cool guy, how would I suddenly get an attack?' The doctor was not able to convince me. But all he said that I should get admitted immediately and undergo angiographic procedure. I said, 'I need time and I will come back'. He called my niece, Sangeeta who is a consultant doctor and asked her to admit me immediately so that he would take me in as the first patient next morning for the cardiac procedure.

I was to travel to USA in the next four days on a long trip of 3 months and I did not want to call off the trip. I left the hospital with my younger brother Anand, who was with me and told my niece that I would think over it and come back. My family was already in the USA and I did not share the outcome of the health check and what cardiologist had advised. I requested my niece to keep the information to

herself. My brother Anand and I mulled over the issue and decided to visit the cardiologist next morning. We saw him around 11 am next day. The cardiologist was furious that I did not get admitted a day before. I told him that I was not convinced with the idea of undergoing the angio procedure without any symptom or the history. I also told him that I would be flying to USA in about four days and I could not cancel the trip. He posed me a pointed question, 'your survival is more important or the trip?' He again called my niece and asked her to get me admitted and he would do the procedure once he was free from out-patient clinic. I had no option and got the admission slip after paying the dues. I was told to go to cardiac ICU to get admitted.

My brother and I walked in to the cardiac ICU with admission slip. The duty doctor asked, 'where is the patient?' I replied, 'standing before you, doctor!' He and the duty nurse who was to prepare me for the procedure were stunned and expressed, 'angio patients generally come in wheel chair or on trolley

and you are not supposed to exert.' I was allotted a bed and the duty doctor and the nurse prepared me for the procedure. More than me both of them were surprised and wondering whether a wrong patient has been admitted. In the next 20 minutes I was rolled in to cardiac lab for angiography. The duty doctor told me that they would inject a mild sedative but I will be conscious during the procedure. The cardiologist walked in and briefed me about the procedure. After about 20 min or so he came in to the cardiac lab and congratulated me and said, 'your heart is perfect and you could travel to the USA as scheduled!'

I was rolled back in to the ICU. My other younger brother Guru had come by that time and both (brothers) were happy to know that my heart was as young as ever! In one voice they said, 'doctor completed his quota for the day!'

I took my travel as per schedule. Our son had come to receive me at the San Francisco

airport. We got in to the car and my son asked, 'what for did you undergo angiography?' The news had travelled faster than the jet I took from Bengaluru to USA. After settling down I started going to public library in San Jose. I read interesting news in the health section of New York Times which quoted from Oxford and Harvard medical observations. It read like this, 'The Oxford study of real placebo, even in pain relief, the Harvard study of senior cardiologists going for their annual conference leaving seriously ill patients in their ICUs, resulting in better outcomes compared to when they were doing all kinds of interventions in such patients when they were present; death and disability rates falling when doctors went on strike in Israel and, finally, Japan with the lowest doctor-patient ratio among the 14 industrialized countries having the best health standards, lowest death and disability rates and highest longevity compared to the USA with too many doctors and specialists, should have warned us that we are barking up the wrong tree'. Further, 'The

RCT (randomized control trial) study of coronary revascularization using laser beam did show that there were similar results, with or without surgery (patients were told that the operation went off very well). We did not take these serious studies into consideration to find out that the mind eventually heals and not the drugs and surgery that we use, except as an emergency quick-fix'.

There is a big debate going on in the West on the role that healthcare providers play in delivering potentially unnecessary care. The term often used 'futile care' defined as excessive or unnecessary care for which the burden (financial) is several fold greater than benefit. In our country also the awareness is slowly increasing about the excessive financial burden on the families of the patients who are at the receiving end. Besides, the private practitioners continue to prescribe expensive or unnecessary medications, even though cheaper alternatives are available. Each practitioner has his own clinical laboratory and pharmacy or an arrangement

for lab investigations and filling his or her prescriptions. This is rampant. The nexus between prescribers and drug manufacturers; and generic medicines versus FDCs (fixed dose combinations) has become an unending debate. Educating all concerned is the only solution.

14. Intuitive Thinking

Amarantha, our daughter in law one day suggested that I should have 'twitter' handle and join the new age communication. My wife almost immediately disagreed to the idea and made her observation, 'he would get in to lot problems as he is blunt in his remarks and that would create many misunderstandings'. I also felt that it was good to wait for making opinions on issues, individuals and for that matter any event in life.

The new President of America Donald Trump who most often tweets at 4 am and almost on every tweet he gets in to problems. Unlike President Trump our beloved Prime Minister (NaMo), who also tweets regularly but his tweets are apt and timely.

So, I do not have twitter account and I am at peace with myself.

Girish was visiting San Jose and we were discussing on mundane issues of what was happening back home. He asked me, 'Dad, do you experience confirmation bias?' I said, 'I do and I sometimes wait for drawing conclusions.' This was true during my professional life as well. We would repeat some experiments or use alternate approach to derive conclusion. Then he (Girish) mentioned about the concept propagated by Daniel Kahneman, an Israeli psychologist who won the Nobel Prize in economics in 2002.

A couple of days later I was with Anup (Setu) in one of the popular bookshops, Barnes and Noble booksellers on Almaden express way. It is an unbelievable place for literary enthusiasts of all ages. One can scan the books; read a

few pages a day, purchase and order books. They have a coffee shop, people sit there and work on their laptops; an amazing place to be there. Anup bought two books, '*Thinking, fast and slow*' and '*The undoing project*'. The titles looked interesting. He asked whether I wanted to buy any book. I said that I was reading a book and once done with I would go through these two books.

Thinking, fast and slow by Daniel Kahneman is a groundbreaking analysis of the human mind and how it operates. His analysis tells that our mind operates in two steps, one fast, which is intuitive and emotional; the second path or step is slow, more deliberative applying logic. In fast thinking we are governed by persistent influence of intuitive impressions (perceived) on our thoughts and behavior. Whereas slow thinking gives logical analysis of the thought processes before

we act. He extensively deliberates on both the steps giving experimental evidences and argues how this impacts on corporate strategies, difficulties in predicting what will make happy in the future, challenging risks at work and at home. His concepts of intuitive and emotional thinking as against more deliberative and logical have far reaching impact on economics to personal planning, as simple as next vacation. Engaging the reader in a lively conversation about how we think, Kahneman reveals where we can and cannot trust our intuitions and how we can tap into the benefits of slow thinking. He further gives examples as to how we can guard against the mental glitches that often get us into trouble. Looking in to far reaching application of human mind from securing our borders to economic investment and planning for one's personal life, Daniel Kahneman was

awarded Nobel Prize in economics in 2002. He and his Israeli colleague and former student Amos Tversky experimented with psychology of cognitive bias. He wanted to share the Prize with Amos but he (Amos Tversky) died much before the award was announced. *Thinking, Fast and Slow* will transform the way we think about thinking.

The undoing project: A friendship that changed our minds by Michael Lewis is a biography of the above mentioned two Israeli psychologists, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. Their work produced a new concept called behavioral economics, more precisely psychology of judgment and decision-making. Two psychologists were instrumental in revealing the sheer vulnerability of human mind to error. The two psychologists started their careers at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in

1968. Their fondness for each other was like two true lovers, one cannot live without the other. They laughed loudly, walked together, locked up in the room for hours together and pondered over the vulnerability of the mind. Two distinctly different personalities, Amos brilliant and confident, and Daniel a connoisseur of error and with no humor, yet they collaborated and produced path breaking concept of cognitive biases and heuristics (problem-solving approach) in decision making, particularly in economics which won Daniel the Noble Prize in 2002.

The title '*Undoing project*' attracted me to read the book. When I started reading this book it was about the biography of two Israeli psychologists who changed the game rules in economics. Moreover, I love reading biographies. Michael Lewis is a well known author and some of his earlier

books (I have not read them) like *Moneyball* are said to be about sports teams which can turnaround using analytics. Here also the book starts with a story on baseball. In fact I read this book before I started reading Daniel Kahneman's work, *Thinking, fast and slow*. One is always carried away by preconceived ideas. But I did not know that there is a definition and value attached to this 'cognitive bias'. 'Confirmation bias' which describes one's preexisting beliefs or perceived ideas which we display every day, and often make errors in our judgment on issues, individuals and situations. This is more so when issues are emotionally charged. *Thinking slow* on rational and logical approach would help in avoiding risks, losses including in business and embracement. Confirmation biases lead to over confidence and forces one to believe in the

face of opposite evidence. This is so common in our day to day experience. The works of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky tell us that we are not the ideals of reason we assume ourselves to be.

15. Forgiveness....

Rajasthan is one of the few states where Jain sect constitutes roughly 1% of the population. We had half a dozen colleagues (including our mentor) in the department (SMS Medical College) who were Jains. But I had not observed anything different in their day to day activities until I became close to Dr Shashi Kumar Patni (Shashi, as he was popularly known). Shashi was a bright medical graduate who could have excelled in clinical sciences but his health restricted him to become a teacher in non-clinical departments like pharmacology. A very soft spoken, Shashi could win over any argument with his articulations. His mother, Ammaji (that's how everyone addressed her in the family) was an authoritarian head of the family and her husband, Shashi's father was retired tahashildar of old times. Seven children, six sons and a daughter, and grand children around, in the specious house

Ammaji had her way in everything that happened in their family. A staunch Jain, she would not allow anyone to enter her kitchen unless one has performed all his daily morning chores. She would eat once a day and as per strict Jain practices dinner would be served before sunset. During the holy month of chaturmas, *Paryushana* (August-September) she would observe a month of fasting, go to temple, listen to discourses and recite scriptural texts.

Shashi was third among the siblings. He had an extraordinary or sixth sense for playing cards, all he had to do was to shuffle the pack once, the game would be almost always his unless he surrendered. He played cards for enjoying the game. Once I became close to his family more so to his revered mother, Ammaji I realized the game of 'cards' was in his genes. Interesting enough Ammaji would indulge in the game of cards between; say 6 pm to 10 pm (after dinner) with her children (of course all of them were grown up by then) and neighbors. They would play with minimum

stakes to make the game involving. If Shashi was at home, he was not allowed to play but would take side of his sister if not Ammaji's side.

Ammaji was keen that Shashi got married like her other children. Shashi had his own argument about his marriage. Every time any of Shashi's friends visited his house, Ammaji would raise the issue of his marriage. Once she asked me to accompany him to a Jain pilgrimage place, Shri Mahavirji in Rajasthan, located 140 kms from Jaipur. A 200 year old temple is a sacred place for Digambar sect Jains. The iconic idol of Lord Mahavira is the principal deity and many Jains visited the place all through the year. It was a small place then (1969-70) but now a fully developed pilgrimage place.

Think of it, there are so many similarities between various religious practices in our country. Back here in Karnataka and southern India, the religious heads of various mathas (particularly in Brahmins) of Hindus observe

chaturmas in Shravan and Bhadrapada (rainy season) during which the religious heads stay at one place and perform religious activities such as puja, religious discourses and pravachan etc. The followers of the sect visit them (Gurus or Swamijis) to participate in the activities and also to seek blessings. This practice is also observed by Jain monks. During chaturmas period the Jain monks settle at one place and give discourses, and recite scriptural texts. Strict followers of Jainism offer prayers, meditation, introspection, penance and fasting. This period of the year is considered to be holy time.

Paryushana (coming together), Jains seek forgiveness from each other for any mistake or fault committed knowingly or unknowingly. **Kshamavani** (kshama, a Sanskrit word meaning forgive) or "Forgiveness Day" is a day of forgiving and seeking forgiveness for the followers of Jain religion. Jains seek forgiveness from almost all the creatures of the world whom they may have harmed knowingly or unknowingly by uttering the

phrase—*micchāmi dukkaḍaṃ* meaning 'may all the evil that has been done be fruitless'.

Shashi was a very jolly person. He often reminded me of the character role of Rajesh Khanna in the famous film, 'Anand'. Shahsi never made it known to anyone about the congenital heart disease that he was suffering from. In fact one summer we both went to Srinagar (Kashmir) to attend our colleague's marriage. It was a peaceful time and we travelled extensively in the valley. He married Vimala a pathologist (who knew about his illness). She was not Jain by birth, more than Ammaji accepted her; Vimala accepted Jainism to the core. In one of my visits to their home in Delhi she also did not allow me to enter her kitchen and to my surprise she would not drink tea in Chinaware, particularly bone china! She was into practicing 'das lakshan' as per religion; removing the ones impurities- anger, pride, and trying to build self-restraint and forgiveness. Unfortunately, Shahsi passed away in the peak of his academic career due to ill health.

In the mid seventies Shashi and Vimala joined the new medical institute, University College of Medical Sciences and for long time they stayed in South extension area of New Delhi before they had their own apartment in other upcoming area. After moving to Chandigarh I visited them whenever in Delhi. A few months before his sudden death I saw him in ICU in the hospital; he was as jolly as ever. I never thought that it would be my last rendezvous. He passed away when I was out of country and learnt about the tragedy on my return. We visited Vimala and their children; felt bad that I could not meet him in his last days or share the difficult last days of his life.

It is such a beautiful feeling of relief when one asks someone to forgive him for any mistake or fault committed knowingly or unknowingly. As *Paryushana* ends in September according to Jain calendar, seeking 'forgiveness' for the mistakes or fault committed unknowingly is solace!

16. Gender bias!

Sometimes back I had written about fostering creativity. The argument, whether creativity is inborn or acquired has taken different turn now. From nature to nurture, it has moved to gender bias in creativity. Recently the Cambridge University advised a word of caution to examiners to avoid words like 'genius' or 'brilliant' because they exclude women! We invariably name maths wizard Ramanujan or Albert Einstein as genius of the 20th century. Of late we talk of Steve Jobs who created apple computers. Somehow no name of a lady comes to our mind to associate with the word 'genius'. How easily we forget or fail to remember the name of Madame Marie Curie, the first and the only woman who won the Nobel Prize twice that too in two different science subjects, physics and chemistry. Her contributions to medical sciences (radiation therapy) are immense and unmatched yet our minds always search for a 'man' as genius. We have forgotten Florence Nightingale as well.

Unlike the struggles that Marie Curie went through in discovering radium and subsequently its application in the treatment of cancer we do not find many women in science today, particularly in natural sciences. Do perseverance and hard work or even expression of genius genes are gender specific? If one reads the family traits of Marie Curie, it defies all the arguments. Marie Curie's immediate family won a total of **Five Nobel Prizes**, she herself won two, her husband, Pierre Curie won one, and her daughter, Irène Joliot-Curie, won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry with her husband. Not only that, her second daughter won the Nobel Peace Prize as the director of UNICEF in 1965!

Few years ago Professor Harold Skeels, a psychologist at the University of Iowa, while working with the State orphanage found that the orphanage was sending babies born of feeble-minded parents to highly intelligent families for adoption. Horrified by the fact, Dr. Skeels wanted to examine how these

adopted children performed in the IQ (intelligence quotient) tests. To his utter surprise, their average IQ (115) was well above normal (100). Not one was a dull kid. Therefore, raw intelligence alone could not be the yardstick of genius. Besides intelligence, perseverance, social environment and good fortune play an important role in the making of a creative mind. While Charles Darwin who gave the most important scientific theory of inheritance was an average child but his creative observation in later life was an example of nurturing his intuitive thought. Marie Curie's family tree could tell the involvement of 'DNA' in their extraordinary scientific achievements. But passion and perseverance could not be ruled out, psychologists argue. Of course the environment in which they were growing up was equally important.

As we look back at history, contributions of Aryabhata and our ancient higher learning institutions like Nalanda and Takshashila provided rich culture, environment and

support for creative thinking which represented golden age of India's heritage. It is not just nature or nurture but both in making of a creative mind which we often experiences in modern times in Silicon Valley where something in the air that turns out innovations.

17. Ninety and going Strong

My mobile was ringing; I looked at the clock it was 7.30 in the morning. My guess was right Professor Dandiya was on the phone. He generally returns from his morning walk around this time and enjoys his morning tea in his tastefully done garden. This is also the time when he talks to people and/or also the right time to call him. In his typical way he asked, 'Kya ho raha hai?' I said, 'Nothing much, just returned from morning walk and having a cup of tea'. After initial usual exchange of casual thoughts he came to the point. He asked how I was placed in the coming 3-4 months. I briefed him about my academic commitments. He said 'You will be able to take out time; I want you to get involved in some serious writing work'. I did not understand as to what was in his mind but he had already made the commitment from my side!

As a matter of fact if something is

brewing in his mind regarding professional matters he talks to me at length, discusses pros and cons and asks for opinion. A couple of years ago in one of his morning discussions he mentioned about publishing a 'coffee-table' book. I was familiar with the word 'coffee-table' chat or discussion but frankly not aware of the book. He narrated the idea of 'coffee-table' book that he wanted to write. My guess was right that it would be a handy and elegant book which could be displayed on the coffee-table in the living room which can draw the attention of visitors to home. He explained his thought process and further said that he would do all the ground work and wanted me to proof read the manuscripts. It was a monumental task of selecting 100 distinguished alumni of SMS Medical College from its inception in 1947 to 2014 (67 long years and choosing from more than 10,000 graduates and postgraduates). I thought that he (Professor PC Dandiya) could only do it because he is the only living teacher of SMS who has taught the first and the 67th batch of students! When the

book (more than 200 pages) came out I was amazed to see the top 100 alumni, who have immensely contributed to medical sciences and the society not only in India but across the globe (almost who's who of the globe in medical sciences). The book, 'Memoirs-Distinguishes alumni of SMS' is published in art paper containing professional and personal profiles of individuals along with family photos! Rohit Dandiya, Dr Dandiya's son is the co-author/editor to the classic publication. There is no other institution that I know of in India which has such collection of their distinguished alumni.

Hardly a year has passed in one of our morning conversations he mentioned about his next project, a 'coffee-table' publication on his family, 'My Family' (Mera parivar). Normally at his age (89 years in 2015) one would take life as it comes or easy but Professor Dandiya was defying the doctrine. I was roped in to proof read some of the contributions from his immediate family. I considered it to be an honor to learn more

about 'Dandiyas of Jaipur'. But the family of Dr Dandiya did not restrict to his 'DNA' alone but he had his extended family with whom his professional and personal life was intimately connected. His extended family is blessed by his love, care and guidance. Within a year the 'coffee-table' publication on 'My family' was published. It is as elegant as the first 'coffee-table' book. I proudly possess both the books.

Last year ie; 2016 was a special year. The students and well wisher were looking forward to celebrate 90th birthday of Dr Dandiya. Professor JS Bapna, one of his long associates and former colleagues does things in style. The local pharmaceutical association took the lead to organize a national conference and invite Who's who in pharmacy and celebrate the occasion in grand style in Hotel Amer, Jaipur. It was decided to hold the 25th oration of Professor Prem Chand Dandiya Endowment Trust as part of the celebrations.

The participants came from all over Rajasthan and even from far off places. Some

of Dr Dandiya's colleagues travelled long distances to attend his 90th birthday celebrations. The two day celebrations were a memorable event.

The Professor Prem Chand Dandiya Endowment Trust was created in 1987 when some of professor's former students met at Bangalore (now Bengaluru) on the sidelines of the Annual conference of the Indian Pharmacological Society to celebrate the 60th birthday of Dr PC Dandiya. That year he (PCD) was also honored by his election as President of Indian Pharmacological Society. It is rare that an Endowment Trust is created when the man is still alive. Former students, research colleagues, well wishers and Professor Dandiya's immediate family contributed to create a corpus fund. With Professor JS Bapna as President of the trust and me as its Secretary, we got the trust registered as charitable trust. The main objective of the trust was to propagate the spirit of the *Man* in spreading the scientific temper and to hold annual orations by inviting

men of eminence to deliver these orations. In these 30 years the PCDE Trust has organized 25 orations at many places but of late most of the orations are held at Jaipur. Besides conducting orations, the Trust also encourages young scientists for their research publications. The PCDE Trust awards or recognitions have become national recognitions.

Soon after the publication of 'My family' book, Dr Dandiya called me to seek my opinion on a professional subject. Based on my long experience of assessing the outcome of science research in the country I told him (PCD) that he should not take this exercise as it was just futile and at his age it would be taxing. But he held different opinion and decided to get wider view on the matter. So he sent out couple of emails to whom he thought would give an honest opinion on the subject. When I received the email I stuck to my earlier view and expressed accordingly. Not many responded to his inquiry and whoever replied they also expressed that it was not worth the

exercise. The subject was on writing a book on 'Pharmacologists of India'. He called me to tell that my assessment was right that a few responded also felt the same way. I thought that he would give up the idea but to my surprise a couple of months later I received an invitation to write about my journey in pharmacology with full editorial instructions on length of the article, number of photos and tables and even references. I also noticed that he was assisted by an author about whom I had not heard before. After a few weeks I got a reminder to comply with the deadline. I became serious about it and started thinking about the contents.

A couple of months later one morning he called specifically to discuss about his new project 'Pharmacologists of India'. From the conversation I felt that there was something amiss. Knowing the present scientific temper of our current generation of pharmacologists, the project was not taking the shape that he (PCD) wanted with timelines. He narrated the problem and the inexperience of the associate

editor/author and wanted me to get involved in the project 24/7 for the next 3-4 months. He sent me all the correspondence related to the project and linked me to the site. In the following weeks we discussed the issues everyday and he authorized me to take decisions even on sensitive human issues. I edited almost all manuscripts, some I re-wrote, and some even I rejected. Things started falling in place and the project moved as per expected timelines. I made two trips to Jaipur and spent couple of days to fine tune the writing work.

At 90, his enthusiasm and energy to complete the work was just unbelievable, we worked like graduate students as if to meet the deadline to submit the project work! The entire manuscript was getting ready for print and he said, 'Shrinivas, you should be one of the authors to the book'. In all humility, I declined as it was his (PCD's) brain child and I was only doing my duty for the revered teacher. But he prevailed and made me a co-author to the book. I again visited Jaipur when

the book was finally getting printed. I spent long hours in the press, so also Professor Dandiya to oversee the project comes to a logical end. One cannot imagine the joy and the excitement and equally the satisfaction of achievement on the face of Professor Dandiya when the book was in his hand. Next day I left for home.

A few days later Dr Dandiya called to tell about the release of the book. So much effort had gone in publishing the book, naturally he wanted to organize a big function to felicitate the contributors and release the book. It was organized in the national capital New Delhi at a glittering ceremony in the newly created Delhi Pharmaceutical Research University. It was a befitting finale to a yearlong effort which I immensely cherished.

Ninety is just a number; you're only as old as you feel. We salute the '*Man*' for his energy, enthusiasm, attitude and endless creativity.

18. *Panchagavya*

I was 17 years of age when I stepped out of home for collegiate education. I had not imagined that next 12 years I will be spending in hostels at various places both in India and abroad. In the beginning, ie; until I completed my graduation I used to visit home on every festival holiday or vacations. Once I moved to far off place in pursuit of higher degree it was difficult to travel quite often, my visits restricted to summer vacations only. It used to take at least 48-60 hrs of train journey to reach home. First one or two days I would just sleep and recover from the long journey. Many a times my vacation timings used to be different from my other brothers who were studying in different professional colleges. Besides parents only other person would at home was our youngest sister Sandya. She was still in school.

My parents were very religious in their day-to-day life. Our father in spite of being a

busy doctor he would observe all religious practices. On special occasions one panditji would come to perform puja at our home. Since I had my 'upanayan' (sacred thread 'janivaar' ceremony signifying the entry in to brahmcharya ashrama as it was practiced in earlier times) done at very young age and learnt the rituals, I would follow the practices once at home. This was true with my other brothers as well. Two things used to happen without fail in the first few days of our vacation. Firstly, changing the sacred thread (janivaar) and the secondly the 'shudhikaran' (purification) by taking 'panchagavya'. Our father would ask the panditiji to get the panchagavya and give it to all of us at home! It is a normal practice in madhva Brahmins of Karnataka to take panchagavya at least once a year at the time of changing the sacred thread in the month of Shravan (Hindu calendar). Traditionally panchagavya (five constituents) is a mixture of cow dung, urine and milk. The other two ingredients are curd and ghee prepared from cow milk.

Today the 'holy cow' is in the midst of political storm. But panchagavya has made it to international market place. In the last few years the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), an autonomous Ayurvedic research organization of Government of India, has initiated studies to evaluate medicinal value of panchagavya. As stated before, Panchagavya consists of five products obtained from cow namely cow dung, urine, milk, curd and ghee. Attempts are being made to standardize the preparation, particularly the exact proportion of all the five ingredients in the panchagavya. Medicinal uses of Panchagavya, especially cow urine has been claimed to have many medicinal properties. Ayurvedic text books mention about the medicinal uses of panchagavya in many clinical conditions such as Krimi Roga, Kushtha, Kandu, Shoola, Gulma, Udara Roga, Anaha, Shotha, Pandu, Kamala, Vasti Roga, Kasa, Shavasa, Atisara, Mutraroga and many others. Cow urine per se is one of the ingredients of several Ayurvedic

formulations. With renewed interest in cow urine therapy and panchagavya many research publications have started appearing in the literature. A large number of claims have been made of cow urine therapy. Some of these conditions include diabetes, blood pressure, asthma, psoriasis, eczema, heart attack and blockage in arteries, fits, cancer, AIDS, piles, prostrate, arthritis, migraine, thyroid, ulcer, acidity, constipation, gynecological problems and more. According to Ayurvedic texts cow urine has innumerable properties but it needed scientific evidences.

Numerous recent studies claim that panchagavya as bio-enhancer, increases the nitrogen content of the soil in agriculture. It is natural, eco-friendly, economical and easily available, hence can be harnessed for its potential applications. Realizing the applications of panchagavya, the Ayurvedic council has recommended Panchagavya and its ingredients as part of the course curricula of Ayurvedic studies at degree and post-graduation levels. Extramural research funds

are made available for postgraduate and postdoctoral research work. Of late, the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences is taking lot initiative to promote awareness about the value of panchagavya in medicine and agriculture through seminars and publications. The published research work is available on the 'AYUSH Research Portal' for ready access to the public.

Ancient wisdom and modern approach may well unfold the mystery of panchagavya therapy.

19. Fearless Girl

On the eve of International Women's day on March 7th, 2017 a bronze statue of young Latina girl looking at the well-known 'Charging bull' (also called 'Wall Street bull') was installed near Wall Street Business Avenue of New York. It was the work of woman sculptor, Kristen Visbal. The purpose was to convey to the business world that there was a dearth of women on the boards of the largest US corporations.

The statue named 'Fearless girl' was intended to send a message about gender diversity and the plaque below the statue read *'know the power of women leadership. She makes the difference'*. The girl is staring at the huge bull with hands on her hips. The creator of the 'bull' Arturo Di Modica objected to the presence of 'Fearless girl' staring at his bull sculpture which represented the America's financial resilience. The 'charging bull' was installed after stock market crash in 1987.

Today, the 'Fearless girl' statue has become tourist attraction; many relate themselves with the girl, and even future of their kids in her. 'Arguably, women see something relatable about the little girl', they say. Whatever may be the argument and counter argument, the statue of 'Fearless girl' has become instant icon and it was a master stroke of placing it there on the eve of International Women's Day.

When I read about the 'Fearless girl' in the New York Times, two things came to mind. Firstly, gender inequality is a global phenomenon. Not only in the corporate world, even in hiring women teachers, there was discrimination in emoluments in American Universities. America failed to elect a woman President, whatever might have been the reason. Secondly, I was reminded of the popular slogan of our present Prime Minister, '*beti bachao and beti padhao*'. Gender inequality in our society is a constant reminder of feudal approach of selective elimination of girl child, and also the senseless

crime against women in general and girls in particular. We symbolically observe National Girl Child Day and International Day of Girl Child every year. The purpose starts and ends on the day. We need to change our mindset, and change it fast.

On reading about the 'fearless girl' I remembered two bright girl achievers in the family. Harsha a globetrotter has made it to the top through sheer hard work in one of the biggest corporate companies of India. I asked her to see the 'Fearless girl' next time she was in New York. Varsha a corporate lawyer is the other achiever in the family. It is not surprising to know that in the long legal history of Indian Supreme Court only six women had made it to the august bench. Both of them (Harsha and Varsha) are not in the mainstream of doctors and engineers, otherwise in the family.

20. Off-label Drugs

In early 1980s I was attending a University Grants Commission sponsored seminar on curriculum development at Sagar University in Madhya Pradesh. It was a two day brain storming meeting attended by senior subject experts and exerts in curriculum development. My qualification for the invitation was that I was a young professor with exposure to Western University education system. I was the first speaker on the second day of deliberations. In my opening statement I said, 'Curriculum development is a very easy task in our country. All one has to do is to copy the contents of the latest editions of foreign text books and the syllabus is ready! But the issue is how many of us are trained to deliver the content?' No consensus was reached on what and how much to teach and what was essential and what was redundant.

In Western Universities curriculum

development is hardly a subject for debate, particularly when it comes to offering courses at master's level. The stakeholders decide on what is to be offered and what is redundant. An expert scientist or teacher offers a course in his or her expertise and interested students either enroll for the course or audit it. The student advisors guide the candidates. Even after 70 years of independence we have not come out of our colonial mind set, I continue to hear that 'Regulatory Council' is preparing uniform syllabus for the entire profession. If that is so what is the role of Universities?

In 1985 at the Panjab University we moved from three year degree course to four year course just to fall in line with national guidelines of Engineering and Technology which mandated four year undergraduate courses. So we had one extra year to offer some new courses at undergraduate pharmaceutical curriculum. We started teaching 'Toxicology' as a special paper. Until then toxicology was not taught as a full discipline at undergraduate course, it was part

of pharmacology. I started teaching 'Basic principles of toxicology'.

One of the common toxicity we encounter is food poisoning. Every now and then we read in the lay press about children affected by food poisoning due to mid-day meal so also food poisoning due to consuming stale or contaminated food. *Clostridium botulinum* a bacteria which grows on contaminated or stale food produces a toxin called botulinum. On consuming contaminated food, the toxin causes paralysis of important muscles of the body, and may cause death. The phenomenon is called 'botulism'. The toxin now popularly called 'Botox' blocks conduction between nerves and muscles (neurotoxin) causing them to relax or paralysis. This is highly potent toxin. A tiny amount of the toxin when injected around the wrinkled facial muscles, they are immobilized and smoothed out. Thus the wrinkles become unnoticeable. Considering this property the toxin was first approved by the USFDA in 1970s to correct facial wrinkles. This property of the toxin was

considered useful in managing overactive bladder also. Botox could prevent involuntary muscle contractions (of bladder) that can cause people to feel urgency to pee even though they don't. USFDA has approved the use of Botox for this purpose as well.

The wrinkle removal property of Botox has become a cultural phenomenon and a medical triumph. The toxin is now investigated far beyond its cosmetic success. The industry is exploring its medical applications in more than one indication such as mental depression, migraine, premature ejaculation, excessive sweating, neck spasms, cold-hands and even in atrial fibrillation. The pharmaceutical company, Allergan primarily an ocular-care company made fortunes in selling Botox for wrinkle care. By 2013 company's revenue had crossed USD 2 billion by selling Botox!

Any prescription drug approved for a particular indication when used for other indications for which USFDA has not approved is called 'off-label' use. The 'off-

label' use is a new concept for exploring the medical avenues for the approved drugs for other indications. Botox use fitted the label 'off-label', from wrinkle smoother to mental depression. The unique characteristic of Botox and the pharmaceutical company's ingenuity of market strategy, the toxin have assumed the status of a blockbuster drug. As its medical applications increase, Allergan is legally required to disclose severe or potential side effects due to Botox use. It being a neurotoxin, USFDA has asked for the product to carry black-box warning indicating serious types of side effects. Botox could produce effects at the site of injection and even to other parts of the body, causing muscle weakness, double vision and drooping eyelids. It is mostly administered in the clinic; the patient is less likely to see the black-box label. The onus would be on the physician to inform about the potential side effects due to Botox.

I was reminded of the old definition of toxicology as described by the father of toxicology, Paracelsus, a 16th century German

physician. I quote his statement, 'all substances are poisons, and there is none that is not a poison. The right dose differentiates a poison from the remedy', unquote. It is true with Botox, the dose that determines its toxicity. In medicine it is used in such a small amounts that most experts deem it safe!

It is not for the first time that drugs are used for 'off-label' indications. Minoxidil and finasteride are good examples of off-label drugs. They are more popular for treating hair loss than their primary approved use. Many CNS drugs are used as 'off-label' drugs. The list is long. For example many anti-seizure drugs like tiagabine and gabapentin are used in depression and diabetic neuropathy, respectively. Risperidone, anti psychotic drug is used in Alzheimer's disease, dementia, eating disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorders. Blockbuster cholesterol lowering drugs statins, atorvastatin and simvastatin are indicated in Rheumatoid arthritis, to lower cholesterol in children who lack the inherited condition. The antihypertensive drug

clonidine is used for smoking cessation. The list is endless. The irony is USFDA regulates drug approval but not prescribing, doctors are free to prescribe a drug for any other indication for which they think medically appropriate. These practices are not without lawsuits and settlements through courts and otherwise.

Such use is often referred to 'serendipity' (chance observation).

Back here in our country where drugs including antibiotics are sold without prescription and there is so much nexus between drug manufacturers, physicians and druggists and chemists everything looks like 'off-label' practice.

21. Blissfully ours!

1974 was a year of great political turmoil in the USA. Watergate scandal had dealt heavy blows to American confidence in public life more so to its Presidency. There was an outrage among the people about the dishonesty in their Presidency and abuse of power. The President had to resign to avoid impeachment and the incoming President (not elected one) had to summarily pardon him putting an end to the chaos in Washington DC. It also marked the end of two decades of American involvement in Vietnam War, and the arrival of refugees from the Far East in to the country. The same year, living in Paris, France, I had seen many refugees from Vietnam. In fact one of my favorite eating places was Vietnamese restaurant where rice and curry was available.

1974 also saw the emergence of American tennis greats like Jimmy Connors, Chris Evert and John McEnroe as one of the best, ending

the Australian dominance in World tennis. It also saw Mohamed Ali the greatest heavy weight fighter to win the world title.

Even as America ended Vietnam War and recovering aftermath of Watergate scandal, it was confronted yet another internal war, the War on drugs. There was a huge debate on the social costs versus the benefits of marijuana use; and its prohibition. The National Commission on Marijuana and Drug abuse (1972) reported that nearly 26 million Americans had tried the drug and half of them were periodic users. The Commission called for more scientific research on the substance of abuse. People holding public offices including teachers in the schools and Universities were asked to swear that they had never tried the 'pot' (pot smokers meaning marijuana smokers). America was witnessing a major policy towards drug abuse particularly marijuana in the backdrop of growing support for relaxing marijuana laws. Aftermath of Watergate scandal, 1976 Presidential election saw heated debate on the

candidate's medical history of marijuana abuse as well.

In the midst of all this was happening, I landed in USA for the first time.

Cannabis is consumed in our country from time immemorial. In fact the *Atharveva* (science of charms), revered Hindu text described Cannabis as 'sacred grass', one of the five sacred plants ritually offered to Lord Shiva. The ancient texts though do not mention Cannabis as addicting or psychoactive, people consumed it for psychedelic properties for millennia. Many think that the so called 'soma rasa' as described in ancient scriptures was an elixir of life or 'amrita' supposed to be a plant extract or juice considered to be an intoxicant-which purified all sins, provided enlightenment and eradicated darkness (Rigveda). One is not sure whether 'soma rasa' contained cannabis.

The Indian plant *Cannabis sativa* is characterized as male and female, the female plant being more potent. Various parts of the

plant are used to consume. *Bhang*, is a preparation made of dried leaves. It is mostly consumed as beverage in the form of Thandai, Lassi and sometimes as halwa. It is popularly consumed during Holi festival in many part of North India. It produces sleep after its consumption. *Ganja* is made from the top leaves and unfertilized flowers of young female plant. The leaves and the unfertilized flowers are dried and used as a smoke. It can be brewed like a tea and consumed as masala chai. *Ganja* is supposed to be more potent than *bhang*. *Charas* (also called *hashish*) is the hand extracted resin from the top leaves and unfertilized flowers of young female plant. The resin stuck to the hand is collected.

The active principle of the plant, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), is found in varying degrees of potency in different parts of the plant resin, flowers and leaves. The sticky substance present on the leaves, stem and the flowers contain the active principle. The male plant produces less of it as compared to female plant. Generally the flowers contain

more of THC, partly water soluble but mostly fat soluble. Therefore, it is extracted in milk or milk containing vehicles. Conventional users cook the entire plant in ghee to obtain maximum potency.

There was no legislation against Cannabis consumption during British India. The Indian Hemp Drugs Commission Report of 1894 was an opinion generated based on discussion across the country to assess its impact on economy and health hazards. The report concluded that the ban on consumption of bhang was unjustified, prohibition would cause loss in revenue in provinces like Madras and Himalayan states where it was grown. In fact, the first legislation against Cannabis use came in 1986 when it was realized that cross-border terrorism was linked to drug (Cannabis and opium) trafficking. But it hasn't deterred cult users to brew beverages with Cannabis to aid their meditation or to achieve high. Bhang beverages and sweets are still sold by vendors in certain parts of the country. It continues to be used in festivals like 'holi' in many parts of north India.

Last thirty years have seen intense research on Cannabis and its human use. The new research has shown that the active principles of Cannabis called cannabinoids exerted their effect by interacting with specific endogenous cannabinoid receptors. It is intriguing to know that nature has provided specific sites for Cannabis to produce its action in human brain. These sites are now known as cannabinoid receptors, CB₁ and CB₂ receptors, respectively. CB₁ receptors are widely distributed in rat, guinea pig, dog, monkey, pig and human brains, also in peripheral nerve endings. A second set of cannabinoid receptors called CB₂ receptors which are present in the spleen and other immune cells. The brain CB₁ receptors are predominantly distributed in cerebral cortex, limbic areas (including hippocampus and amygdala), basal ganglia, cerebellum, thalamus and brainstem. In other words in those areas of the brain which control human emotions, cognition, behavior and movements.

Even one has never been exposed to Cannabis yet his body has specific sites for cannabinoids (active principles). This led to the search of body's own chemical substances (endogenous legends) to act on these receptors. Such a substance was isolated from the pig brain in 1992. It was found to be chemically different from plant derived active principle (say THC). Chemically it is a derivative of the fatty acid arachidonic acid (arachidonyl ethanolamide) related to the prostaglandins (another tissue factors). This endogenous substance (endocannabinoid) was named *anandamide* after the Sanskrit word '*ananda*' meaning eternal bliss. It (anandamide) acts on brain CB₁ receptors and has most of the actions of THC.

Thus it reiterated that ancient (Vedic scriptures) wisdom was grounded on sound science!

It is now known that Cannabis affects almost every body system. It has anti-anxiety, sedative, analgesic, psychedelic actions. It is known to stimulate appetite, impair cognition

and affects psychomotor performance. It has been consumed by people for centuries and no deaths due to its intoxication ever reported. For a long time there has been a demand in the USA to legalize the use of marijuana. In the 1970 the US Congress passed Controlled Substances Act which classified drugs on their perceived medical usefulness and abuse. Substances like LSD, heroin and cannabis were grouped together as most restricted category. Because of the federal prohibition and medical skepticism, marijuana could not be developed as a medicine in the modern sense of drug testing but the impetus to legalizing medical marijuana largely came from citizen support, through lobbying, activism and ballot initiatives. From 1970 onwards, state after state has legalized the medical marijuana use. By April 2017 29 States in the USA have legalized medical marijuana. Various states have notified the conditions for which medical marijuana could be used. Some of the indications included are cancer, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, ALS, Tourette's syndrome, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, PTSD, severe arthritis,

fibromyalgia, Alzheimer's disease, and more.

Many years ago, the *New England Journal of Medicine* published an editorial titled "Federal Foolishness and Marijuana." The editorial said, "Federal authorities should rescind their prohibition of the medicinal use of marijuana for seriously ill patients and allow physicians to decide which patients to treat. The government should change marijuana's status from potentially addictive and with no current medical use (Schedule 1) to that of potentially addictive but with some accepted medical use (Schedule 2) and regulate it accordingly."

The consumption of Cannabis is known in this country from Vedic times and it was only after the 'war on drugs' and its links to cross-border terrorism that prohibition was declared. As more and more Western societies (even some noise in our political establishment) approve medical marijuana India celebrates its cultural use of Cannabis blissfully. Come 'Holi', the prejudices melt as rich and poor savor the joyous high of bhang.

22. Good & Simple Therapy (GST)

I was living in 'Maison de L'Inde' on the campus of Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris, France. Maison de L'Inde, (House of India) was residential place for Indian students, visiting scientists and short-term visitors of Government officials. During President Charles de Gaulle's time an International campus was created for students coming from different countries. As many as 40 hostels or residential homes were built by the friendly countries for their students and visiting scientists. Each house admitted few foreign nationals to make it International commune, and truly made it a pleasant experience for the visitors.

'Bon jour monsieur!' was what people used to say when I crossed them on my way to the nearest metro station in the morning in Paris. It was a strange feeling in the beginning but soon I started reciprocating the greeting. When I moved to USA in early 1975 I learnt

another greeting 'Hi' and 'howdy' as we crossed each other whether in the corridor of the University, mall or anywhere. These were friendly and casual expression of greetings. It was not necessary to know each other to express either 'hi' or 'bon jour'; you just say these words, possibly with a smile on your face. It is such a good feeling. This does not happen in our work places or on our streets, perhaps too many people we come across on the road!

'Say cheese' is another common expression that has become global irrespective geographic or language barriers while taking photos of children, the group, or family. It automatically gives an expression of smile on the face of all who are going to be in the picture. When one says 'cheese', mouth takes smile-like shape. In other words, all those who will appear in the photo are shown in positive frame of mind. In modern times 'say...' has become cultural phenomenon with no language barrier. Smile is a facial expression of emotion, sensory pleasure,

pride of achievement etc. 'Smile, you will feel better' parents say to their children so are doctors tell to their patients. Psychologists say, 'smile' is also a form of polite way of expressing disapproval, displeasure or negative expression!

In modern times, people or contestants pay to learn mannerisms or even to smile if one is taking part in beauty pageants. For that matter the sales clerks (boys and girls) are trained to smile when they talk to customers. Recently we noticed in the shopping malls security people say 'namaskar' and then swipe or check with metal detector. It appears that the whole phenomenon of facial expression has come from the West more particularly from USA. It is believed that the early settlers came from different ethnic and linguistic background and the only way to communicate with each other was facial expression in the form of smile. Psychological studies have shown that emotional expressiveness is correlated with diversity. In a heterogeneous society, when there are more immigrants

around, one might have to smile more to build trust and cooperation. Moreover, you do not speak the same language. That has continued even today by saying 'hi' with smile. Interestingly, Chinese have expressionless (Parkinsonian) face, may be hardly anybody migrates to China as against people striving to go to America. Chinese are a homogenous society, no expression and no smiles! Some studies have compared the facial expressions of American and Chinese delegations both business and diplomatic, in the official photographs. Americans had smiles on their face (a sign of high emotional or happy feeling) whereas Chinese expressionless. The study goes on to analyze the movement of facial muscles and their organization. The study revealed that smile can speak volumes where stranger cannot speak the language. A genuine smile transcends everything religion, political affiliation, and even the nationality. A sudden burst of an unexpected smile or laughter could be stress reliever.

Unlike the conservative society in south

India, in north when you meet someone you say 'namaskar'. In 40 odd years that we spent in north India we have developed this habit of even receiving the telephone call with expression 'namaskar!' Some say 'om shanti' or 'jai sri Krishna'. My wife and I often feel the absence of this gesture in our neighborhood in our home state of Karnataka. It is an odd (even offended) feeling that when we meet our neighbors in the lift, nobody says anything not even smiles. We mutely go to the basement to find our own ways.

Why 'smile' on the face is important, one may ask. Sometimes we discourage particularly girls about unnecessary giggle, it may send wrong signals. But truth of the matter is that smile sends 'happiness' signals, provides comfort and makes a stranger to return response. In the act of smile the facial muscles particularly the circular muscles around the mouth are pulled upwards. These muscles are innervated by the facial nerve (different branches of VIIth cranial nerve) which gets stimulated. The facial nerve in turn

stimulates the hypothalamus in the brain to release an endogenous 'feel good' hormone (in response to the act of smile). This hormone called 'Endorphins', bodies own anti-stress or feel-good hormone surge through our system and makes us feel happy and relaxed. It is an inner feeling of happiness, confidence, altered mood and satisfaction. It is a nature's own in-built mechanism. Several clinical studies of 'keep your chin up' attitude have shown reduced risk of strokes, lower heart rates or stress levels. Then, why avoid?

Our neighborhood became very enlightened when Professor Jayprakash (JP) moved in to one of the vacant bungalows. When we first time heard the loud laughter from the neighboring house, we thought something amusing must have happened but soon we realized the new professor (JP) was a jolly fellow, laughter was his way of life! In no time he joined our walking group in the evening and made our one hour walk most enjoyable and relaxing exercise. We eagerly looked forward to 6 pm to leave for the

ground. Unlike most of us in our walking group, we had one very serious looking and expressionless professor in our neighborhood. He was nice person but never believed in exchanging greetings or even a smile! Society is always a mix, one had to accept it. One day on a lighter mood our walking group challenged the professor (JP) to bring a smile on our otherwise serious-looking neighbor. It was a tough task.

When I was to take up the administrative assignment (Dean University Instruction equivalent Pro-Vice Chancellor) in the University many of my colleagues and well wishers advised me not to accept the assignment as it would take away the smile on my face. Many said I will be bogged down by the so called vested interested people in the University and I would lose my cool. More concerned ones said I will not have time for my academic routine (teaching and research). But I had made up my mind to take the challenge. Interesting enough, many came to wish me in my new office and some even

came to see how I was managing or affected by the pressure of the administration. For both, it was a surprise that I received them with pleasant smile! My commitment to academics as well as to the position that I had accepted continued unaffected until I completed the tenure. There is always a silver line behind the dark clouds.

We live in globalized world and everything is measured in terms of global index, 'Happiness' is no exception. So, in 2011 United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution to measure the 'happiness' of the citizens of member countries. In a country like India where basic amenities such as access to food, cleanliness, healthcare and education are everyday challenge for majority of the people, how could one measure the 'happiness' in individuals. It would be far from reality. But one thing could be easily assessed is the innocent smile on the face of people of our country. If 'smile' could be an index of happiness, it would be in abundance, billion smiles everyday!

Where economics is the measure of everything, recently the World famous Harvard school has started a course on 'learn to be happier'. The so called positive psychology course has an enrollment of 1400 students for the semester and almost 20% Harvard graduates take this course. The 'happiness Guru' teaches about self esteem, motivation and tells how to face life with positive attitude. Of course one has to pay through the nose. Back here in India, everyday struggle is an open school which teaches how to face it without any charge!

The 18th century poet John Paul Moore wrote his famous lines, '**Drinking from the saucer**'

I've never made a fortune,
And I'll never make one now
But it really doesn't matter
'Cause I'm happy anyhow.

As I go along my journey
I'm reaping better than I've sowed

I'm drinking from the saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I don't have a lot of riches,
And the going's sometimes tough
But with kin and friends to love me
I think I'm rich enough.

I thank God for the blessings
That His mercy has bestowed
I'm drinking from the saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

He gives me strength and courage
When the way grows steep and rough
I'll not ask for other blessings
For I'm already blessed enough.

May we never be too busy
To help bear another's load
Then we'll all be drinking from the saucer
When our cups have overflowed.

As the old saying goes 'it takes 43 muscles to
frown, and just 17 to smile!' Why not smile

and smile more often? Laughter is the best medicine- a powerful antidote to stress, pain, and conflict.