ARBiT
it happens here...



It is National Cranberry Relish Day!

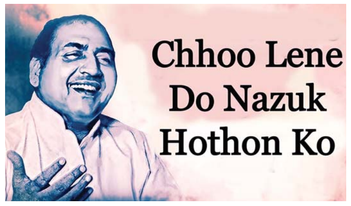
National Cranberry Relish Day, celebrated every November 22, is a delightful occasion that honours one of America's favourite Thanksgiving condiments: cranberry relish. This day shines a spotlight on the tangy, spicy relish, offering a tasty twist to the holiday season. People are encouraged to explore and share their unique cranberry relish recipes, turning an ordinary meal into something extraordinary. The significance of this day lies in its celebration of cranberry relish, a dish that adds a pop of colour and flavour to Thanksgiving tables. Originating from the early 1900s in New England, cranberry relish has become a staple in American Thanksgiving dinners. The relish stands out for its unique combination of tart cranberries and spicy horseradish.

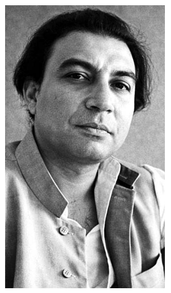
राष्ट्रदूत
SUNDAY
22 November 2026
A-B

#THE SONG

From Two Shers To A Complete Song

The result was "Jama Hai Ye Chhoo Lene Do Nazuk Hothon Ko," a song that went beyond the requirements of the original scene and acquired a life of its own







Some songs become unforgettable because of their melody. Others stay with listeners because of the emotion in a singer's voice. "Chhoo Lene Do Nazuk Hothon Ko," rendered by the legendary Mohammed Rafi, belongs to both categories. But the story behind the song is just as fascinating as the song itself.

The song was not originally planned as a complete romantic number. It reportedly began with a much smaller requirement on the sets of the film. Director Ram Maheshwari wanted only two lines of shayari for a particular scene in which Raj Kumar offers alcohol to Meena Kumari.

For the scene, lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi was approached to provide the required poetry. Sahir came up with beautiful lines, but something about those lines changed the direction of the sequence. What was supposed to remain a couple of lines of dialogue suddenly began to look like the foundation of a song.

Meanwhile, music director Ravi was preparing a background tune for the scene. The requirement, however, had now changed. Instead of merely using two lines of poetry, there was a demand for a complete song.

There was another complication. Raj Kumar's screen persona did not naturally lend itself to a conventional romantic song. The makers therefore decided to keep the composition restrained. The condition was simple: take the two shers and build the song around them, without making it an elaborate romantic number. Then came the recording.

Mohammed Rafi was standing at the microphone on the day of the recording. When he began singing, everyone in the studio was reportedly struck by the emotion in his voice. There was tenderness, but there was also an unmistakable sense of pain. Rafi had transformed what had begun as a few lines of poetry into something far more emotionally expansive.

When the recording ended, those present gathered around him. Their reaction was that the piece should not remain limited to the original two shers. It deserved to be heard as a complete song.

There was, however, a practical problem. Sahir Ludhianvi could not be located at that moment. With the lyricist unavailable, the song took an unusual turn, with the available material being carried forward in Rafi's own expressive style.

The result was "Jama Hai Ye Chhoo Lene Do Nazuk Hothon Ko," a song that went beyond the requirements of the original scene and acquired a life of its own.

The irony surrounding the song is equally striking. The performance revolves around an atmosphere of intoxication and alcohol, yet, Rafi Sahab himself was known for never consuming alcohol. His ability to convey the mood without personally indulging in it reflected one of the defining qualities of his artistry: he could inhabit emotions entirely through his voice.

What began as a request for two shers ultimately became a song remembered for its romance, restraint and underlying melancholy. And once again, Mohammed Rafi demonstrated why his voice could turn even a seemingly small cinematic moment into something timeless.







The lanes I once ran through are lined with padlocks now. The houses are painted, the kund is full, the chulha is ready. Only the people are missing.



The Habit of Enough

PART:2

#THE VILLAGE REMEMBERS





Shailaza Singh
Published Author, Poet and a YouTuber

Today, the village has electricity. Every house has a meter on its wall.

Many of them also have a padlock.

The Lanes That Kept Quiet

The next morning I walked through the lanes, the same lanes where we used to chase each other.

The first thing I noticed was the locks. Big iron padlocks, on door after door. I started counting without meaning to, and then stopped, because it was easier to count the doors that were open. By my count, on that walk, roughly one house in four still had people living in it.

Some of the locked houses were freshly painted, a bright blue that looked almost too cheerful for the silence around it. Somebody had come all the way from Mumbai or Delhi or Noida, got the house painted, locked it again and gone back. People in Leelki still build houses. New ones too, white and square, out in the fields along the road. They just don't live in them.

One old house with kangura battlements along its roof had dry grass growing between its gateposts, taller than a child. Further down, two elephants painted over a blue door, each with a mahout on its back, still raised their trunks, as if a baraat was expected any moment. Sand had drifted up to the step. The dunes, it seems, are still allowed into the village. It is the people who stay away.

I stood outside one of the houses where I had once marched in and demanded food. It was locked too.

Whenever I visited my village, after settling in, my first stop would always be the small village shop. That shop really showed me the power of a two-rupee or ten-rupee note. I would buy kanchas, 100 for 10 rupees, much to the delight of my village friends, or orange sweet golis, small toys, local namkeen, anything that caught my fancy. These days, the shop sells Maggi, Bikaji or Haldiram's namkeen and everything else that you can find in a Jaipur kirana... Now, even a hundred-rupee note is ordinary.

Some things have changed at the chaupal too. There are fewer old men sitting and talking now. The few who are left scroll through reels on their phones. There is nobody else to talk to.

The Kund Today

The kund in our house is still there, with its heavy lid and its small dark mouth. And the bucket still goes in. No motor, no pump, no switch. Just a rope, a bucket and a pair of hands.

In a country that now gets its groceries delivered in ten minutes, this one thing in our courtyard refuses to hurry. It gives water at the speed of a rope.

I am not going to romanticise it. Ask the women who still pull that rope every day whether they would like a motor, and they will probably say yes, and ask why you have not bought them one yet.

The kund still fills up and still holds the water for the summers, faithfully. There are just far fewer hands on the rope now.

If anything in Leelki deserves a medal for waiting, it is the kund.

The Chulha in Our Courtyard

In the courtyard of our own house, the chulha is still there. It sits on a raised platform, round and grey, with old ash inside it. A few dry sticks lean in the corner. On the wall above it runs a long black streak of soot, laid down by years and years of smoke.

I ran my finger over it. It came away black.

I tried to picture the fire in it again, Janki dadi bent over the degchi, the smoke that stayed in my hair till the next morning. It was easier than I expected.

It is lit only on special occasions now. Many families in Leelki still cook on chulhas, and not because they are sentimental. Gas cylinders are expensive and dry wood from the jungle costs nothing. For the village, the chulha is not nostalgia. It is necessity.

But ours does not burn for necessity anymore. It waits for the family to come home. It waits, like everything else here.

The Ones Who Stayed

Not everyone has left, of course. From a rooftop, I watched a woman in a red odhni moving about her courtyard, past a small fenced patch of vegetables and a neat stack of drying dung cakes, doing the hundred small things that keep a house alive. Some families have opened poultry farms. Someone has planted jangli jalebi trees, which tells you they intend to be around long enough to eat the fruit.

And the jaanti trees are still everywhere, green and stubborn, feeding the goats and asking for nothing. The trees never left.

The ones who stayed are not sentimental about it. They have cattle to feed, fields to plough, rain to wait for. They do not have time to miss anybody. But they keep an eye on the locked houses all the same. They know whose house is whose, whose son is in which city, and whose daughter has not visited in three years. A village does not need CCTV. It has neighbours.

They are also the ones who unlock a house when a family suddenly calls from Mumbai to say they are coming, who sweep out the sand, air the rooms and light the chulha so that the house smells lived-in again by the time the car arrives.

The relatives I met, who stayed, seemed happy to me. They grow their own food, plough their own small fields and walk through the village as if they own it, because they do.

Three times a year, the PM Kisan money lands in their accounts, two thousand rupees at a time. Six thousand rupees a year. They talk about it the way people once talked about a money order from a son in the army, with real gladness.

And I understand why. In the village, the bajra comes from their own field, the milk from their own cow, the ghee from their own churning. Money is for the few things the land cannot give. In the city, nothing comes from anywhere except a shop. The vegetables, the milk, the water, the petrol to go and buy them. Every single day, before I have done anything at all, the city has already sent me a bill.

There have been times when I have earned more than six thousand in a week and complained that it was not enough. They know how to be grateful for what comes. I am still learning.

Yes, I know it is very easy to admire the simple life through the window of a car that is going back to Jaipur.

Somewhere between Leelki and Jaipur, we lost the habit of enough.

Maybe, that is the real difference between the ones who stayed and the ones who left. The ones who stayed made peace with what the land could give. The ones who left could not, or would not. I am not sure which of them is wiser. I only know that the ones who stayed seemed lighter to me than the ones who left, me included.

Where They All Went

I asked about the children I had played with. Their names came back slowly, one by one, each followed by a city. Mumbai. Delhi. Noida. Many of the boys work in logistics now, in trucking, in packers and movers, packing up other people's homes and carrying them safely across cities to a new address. Some have become soldiers, keeping the whole country safe, far from home.

Their own homes stay here, behind a padlock.

They do come back. For a wedding, for a death, for a vote. For a few days, the lanes fill up again and the village remembers what it used to sound like. Then, the cars take the lovely new roads back to the cities.

And the ones who left are not villains in this story. They send money home. They paint the houses. They miss it too, in their small flats with their balconies full of potted plants, trying to grow a little bit of the village on the fourteenth floor.

A few days after I came back to Jaipur, I called a man to clean my house. He said that he had just returned from his village, where he had gone to vote. I asked him if his village also had padlocks.

'Kya karein didi,' he said. 'Pet ke liye sheher jana hi padta hai.'

So, it is not just Leelki. It is every village that ever sent its sons to feed a city.

I could not blame them. A village can feed a visiting child with love. Feeding a family for a lifetime needs rain, and in Leelki, the rain has never been in a hurry.

The Keys in the Drawer

If you belong to a village, you probably have a key like this somewhere. Big, old, heavier than any key in your city flat. It lives in a drawer, or on a nail behind a door, and you hardly ever use it. But you have never thrown it away either.

That key is the village too. It is the promise we keep making and keep postponing. Next summer. After the children's exams. Once things settle down. Things never settle down. The key stays in the drawer. And somewhere, a padlock waits for it.

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We have a whole bunch of them. Every six months, at Navratri, we go and open the house, and politely ask the sand, which has occupied it in our absence despite the rubber stoppers under the doors, to leave. When we go, the furniture, the beds and the dining table are all covered with cloth to keep them clean till the next time. And the sand laughs.

What the Village Remembers

The strangest thing about the village is not how much it has changed. It is how much it remembers. I may have become a stranger to the lanes, but the lanes have not become strangers to me. Old women I could not name knew my name. They knew which year I had come last, what I had eaten, and how much. They asked after my daughter as if they had seen her yesterday. The city forgets you the moment you change your phone number. The village keeps your file open forever.

Patli Ho Gayi

One evening, one of my kakas came over to our house. He is a man of generous proportions. He stood in the courtyard, looked me up and down with great seriousness and shook his head.

'Cheenu to patli ho gayi,' he announced. 'Bachchi si lag rahi hai.'

I did not have the heart to point out that he was hardly the person to judge anyone's weight. In Leelki, elders are allowed to comment, and children are expected to eat more.

Somewhere in the city, I am a mother, a writer, a woman with deadlines. In Leelki, I am still Cheenu Baisa, still a child who needs feeding.

The village has grown old. It just hasn't noticed that I have too.

To be continued...

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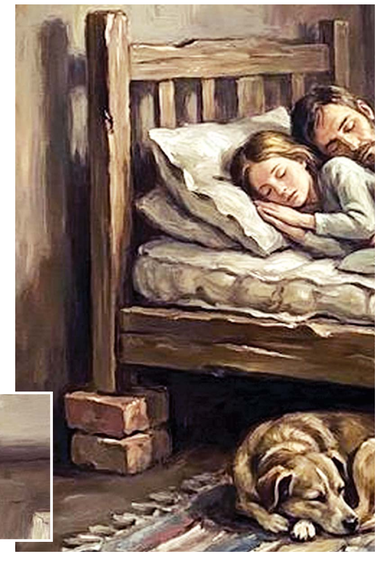


#TRUTH

What is happiness?

Happiness is being grateful, finding comfort in what you have, seeing light despite cracks, and letting go of sorrow over things beyond your control





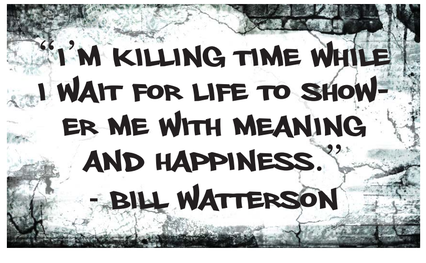
A famous Turkish poet once asked his painter friend to capture happiness on canvas. The painter chose an unexpected scene: a family sleeping peacefully on a creaking bed. One leg of the bed was broken, supported by two bricks. The roof of their modest home leaked. Even, the family dog slept calmly beside them.

That painting became immortal because it revealed a powerful truth: happiness is not the absence of problems. It is the ability to rest your heart even when life is imperfect. It is acceptance, gratitude, and inner peace amid uncertainty.

Happiness is being grateful, finding comfort in what you have, seeing light despite cracks, and letting go of sorrow over things beyond your control. Whenever your heart feels heavy, remember this painting.

Be content, be grateful, and stay blessed forever.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

