



Celebrating the Bloom: National Tulip Day

ational Tulip Day, celebrated annually, marks the start of the tulip season and honours the beauty and charm of these vibrant flowers. Originating in the Netherlands, the day allows the public to enjoy thousands of tulips in special displays, often in city squares and gardens. Visitors can walk through fields of colourful blooms, pick their favourite flowers, and immerse themselves in the cheerful atmosphere. Beyond its visual appeal, the day promotes appreciation for horticulture, gardening, and floral art. National Tulip Day also inspires creativity, photography, and community engagement, spreading joy and the timeless allure of tulips worldwide.

#WHEN GODS DON'T MATTER

Heart Has Its Reasons

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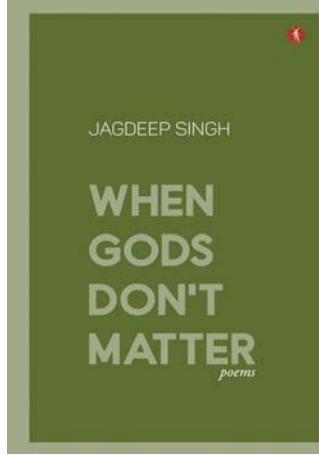


● Rakhee Roytalukdar

Jagdeep Singh, a thorough PR professional, straight-jacketed in his demeanour with impeccable etiquettes is a somewhat unlikely poet. But Singh has not only written one but two books on poetry, completely debunking the theory that poets must have certain characteristics and be stereotypical.

Jagdeep, however, emphasised that his poems are confessional and deal with reality. Speaking at a session at the Jaipur Literature Festival today, to release his new book of poems, called "When Gods Don't Matter", Singh said writing poems give him relief, is therapeutic and brings out the catharsis. The thought-provoking session was moderated by senior journalist and popular anchor Swati Vashishtha. The new collection of poems was unveiled by culturist and author Sundeeep Bhutoria along with Festival Co-Director Namita Gokhale and Managing Director, Teamwork Arts, Sanjay K. Roy.

His poems centre around pain, pandemic and mortality and even one on angioplasty. Talking of the unlikely hooks that reflect in his poetry, Singh says there is no red line in poetry, anything can be written about. "The angioplasty that I went through also became a poem but the end talks about heart and heart has its reasons. It is not just about the operative pro-



cedure but that heart is also about love, sunshine and heart-breaks."

Jagdeep's book has a versatile range of poems centering on social critique, to subjects of pain and ethos to love poems and poems with deep, philosophical undercurrents with layered meanings. But he is emphatic that "poems come when they come. One cannot plan to write a poem, you cannot schedule a poem. Various feelings when they strike me like love, unrequited love, pain, I pen them." But he also says it takes a lot of courage to write confessional, personal and subjective poems and that they are not easy to write.

Singh said that poetry, for him, is not about answers but about asking honest questions. He emphasised that "When Gods Don't Matter" is an attempt to articulate moments when human vulnerability, nostalgia, and compassion take precedence over ideology or belief systems.



H H Gaj Singh Maharaja of Jodhpur.

● Rakhee Roytalukdar

Khatu railway station is just 1 km away from Jodhpur, the seat of the ruler of Rathore dynasty. And it takes just about 15 minutes to reach the grandiloquent Umaid Bhawan Palace, the principal residence of the former Jodhpur royal family.

But Maharaja Gaj Singh, fondly called as Bapji by people of Marwar, could reach his home in 12 hours when he returned to Jodhpur from England in 1971. He looked like rock singer Elvis Presley, and had sideburns then. But he quickly changed into his traditional Rajasthani dress before alighting from the train. There was a sea of people to welcome him back into their fold.

They were erstwhile royals by then, but even then, the people were overjoyed. They had only love and respect for their young Maharaja. They lined the streets, jostled to catch a glimpse, showered petals, chanted his name and welcomed him back. Although his mother Krishna Kumari had wanted a small reception for him, the citizens took over the reception committee and the Maharaja had no other option but to drive around the Blue City, absorbing the enormous reception and the love and warmth of his people, before he could finally reach home.

That was the moment when Bapji realised his true calling. Although stripped off the royal title, he realised that he was conditioned to become a maharaja, and adhere to his traditional responsibilities that were clearly defined, becoming of a king towards his subjects.

But can a Maharaja so used to his position, so much idolization, flattery and regal lifestyle, ever become a man? There was ambiguity over whether a sovereign born to grandeur ever realise the need for contemporary changes with the responsibilities that went with the Marwar traditions.

The book, Bapji: Maharaja of Marwar-Jodhpur, The King Who Would Be Man, authored by Delhi-based writer Yogi Vaid and hotelier-

conservationist Aman Nath, tries to decode this assumption that the richie rich royals fail to understand the difficulties of the common man. "We have tried to contemporise the king that Bapji is. Marwar is a huge, barren land, which while working on the book, we realised how he has turned it around as a common citizen of India. He has done things at the level of the city and the whole area," Aman Nath, said.

The book narrates a story of a man escalating from within history to a place in posterity, as well as descending into democratic, contemporary times to be one among his people.

Yogi said, "After two years of studying the archives, we did not want to bring out a mundane, statistical kind of book on one of India's most famous royals. We noticed the warmth, respect and adulation that people have for him. We wanted to bring out the man in him and what

His mother Krishna Kumari, who was a resilient and a remarkable woman, having faced tragedy early in life after losing her husband, taught him what Marwar should mean to him and what people of Marwar expect of him.

makes him tick?" An intimate and richly illustrated chronicle of Gaj Singh, the book traces the life of a ruler who has made public service his mission, especially his work on water in the driest region of India. The book offers a rare insider's view of royalty adapting to democracy. Rather than nostalgia or spectacle, it foregrounds humility, restraint and ethical leadership positioning Bapji as "a king of conscience" whose relevance endures beyond inherited power.

At a crowded session at Jaipur Literature Festival today, Bapji echoed the same thoughts when he said that circumstances may have changed after abolition of privy purses and derecognition of rulers. "But we understand and value our responsibilities as leaders of our society within our own territories and we work towards that. We have worked in the education field and

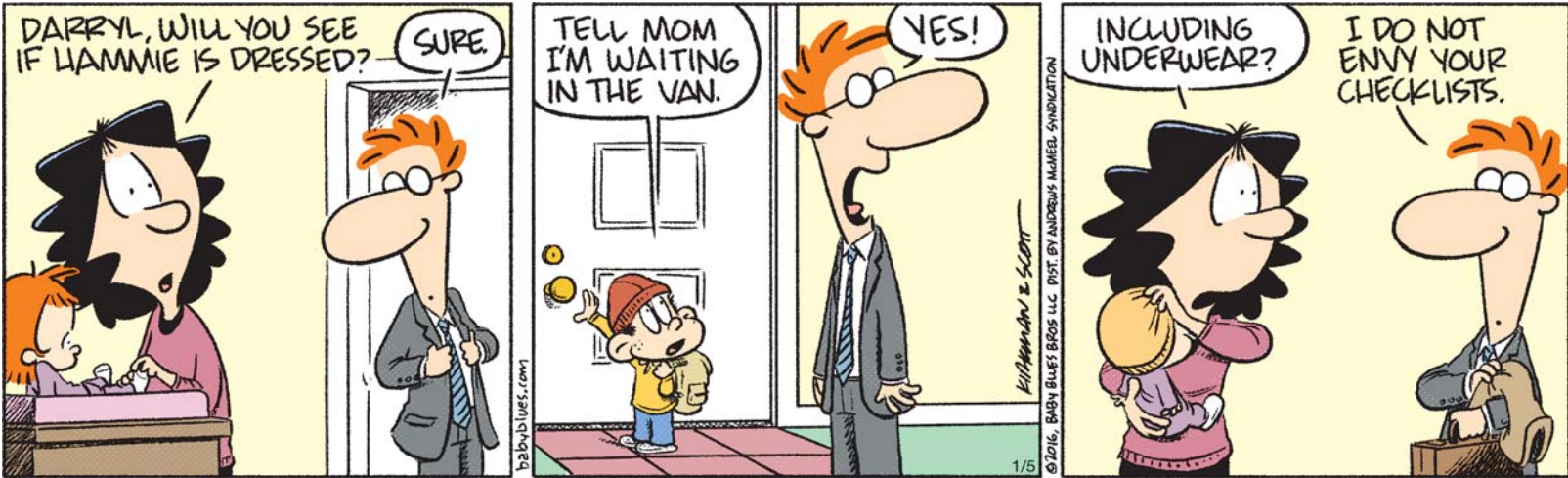
#BAPJI: THE MAHARAJA OF MARWAR JODHPUR



him. Bapji said his grandmother, being the family matriarch, taught him about his role in life and who he actually was and what it meant.

And his mother Krishna Kumari, who was a resilient and a remarkable woman, having faced tragedy early in life after losing her husband, taught him what Marwar should mean to him and what people of Marwar expect of him.

BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

THE WALL

