

Reminiscence thru the eyes of a spouse- Phoola Jagmohan Kaul

Yeh un dinon ki baat hai

Jo, har pal dil key saath hai!!

Once upon a time, fifty four years ago, in the year 1964, young aspirants from various parts of India-Kashmir to Plains, desirous of serving the Nation as ENGINEERS... with faith in God, faith in Humanity and above all, faith in themselves, set sail for a journey to the esteemed Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology (TIET) in the former princely state of Patiala (Punjab), to the unknown frontiers of technical training in various branches of Engineering-Civil, Electrical and Mechanical.

68 of them, most civil and courteous, passed out civil engineers. 29 electrically charged with high energy passed out as Electrical Engineers and 35 passed out as the Movers & Shakers in Designing Tools, Machines and systems in this 'Kalyug', as Mechanical Engineers.

Out of this grand group of enthusiasts 40 to 60 dwelled in the hostel and the rest were day scholars. They all were full of life and harmless mischief- always looking for challenges in life. At the time of joining in 1964, they even anticipated or rather waited for some mild ragging from their seniors. But no luck- eventually the affectionate and elder brotherly warmth from the seniors compelled them to address the seniors as Bhaiyas.

One could swear by the love and affection showered by the families of day scholars on hostel boys- they were thoroughly pampered and spoiled silly- with Lassis, Stuffed Parathas, Mithais and Rabdis and above all the homely love by the parents of the hosting day scholars!! There were several reminiscences described to the writer but, it is hard to pen everything down in detail...it would suffice to say that the Class of 1968 had the best of camaraderie and personal friendship.

They never believed in '**Take it Easy**'. College was a perfect enactment of roller-coaster ride- If one had a quiet life for a week then one would be restless to go back to routine. So, the class of 1968 was a great blend of studious "Professors and diligent workaholic go-getters!!"

Boys---Boys and Boys, there was no trace of girls in the college other than the 'Anand Sisters'--- the two daughters of Prof. Anand. Looking at them, even once, was a sure short recipe for getting checked out of the college and besides, no one had an appetite for getting 'Patialivi Parande ki Thappad and Patialivi Juti ki Maar'!!

Other than studies their "pass time" was going to Baradhari Garden, Phool theatre roundabout and at the cinema chowk, while sipping 'Kulhad ki Chai', gaze at the pretty girls walking around and get struck by their charm! Alcoholic drinks were a luxury to a few and for the rest it was a taboo!! Jaggi, often recalls that he would faint at the sight or smell of even beer!! However, now the things are different!!

During college industrial tours like a visit to Bakhra Nangal Dam and other All India Industrial tours, were always looked forward to. Many in the class chose their places of work based on such tours. JMK fell in love with Pune during the industrial tour, at the first sight!! Cycling to Shimla, the popular competition who ate maximum Chapattis, Parathas or Bananas- was a ritual...as I hear.

So the years went by, and before they could blink and say 'oye teri' it was time to graduate. Then came the last day at the college, a very sober affair; no pomp and show, no ceremonies!!

Last minute certificates, formals and resumes and in hot weather to look for jobs and secure their future: most importantly, to get ready to face the 'Real Life'.

With lot of uncertainties and a lurking fear of the unknown, the friends parted ways un-masked- carrying no baggage promising one another that "we should get together in 5 years" and singing

Those were the days my friend,
We thought they would never end
We would sing and dance forever
And live the life we chose'

Those 5 years really never came and all that I got as a spouse was to see a few of Jaggi's friends like, Manmohan, Raj, Narender, Bholi at our wedding and then Manmohan and Bholi in Pune and Raj in Karnal.

With this, the magnificent group of engineers from different faculties started off with their 'Settlement Journey' in India and Overseas. Some landed up becoming Entrepreneurs, few joined corporate sector and few joined Multinational companies, thus creating a niche for themselves, other shook up the mundane public sector life!! Some held the Indian National Flag high by joining Indian Army. Where ever they were, they kept connections alive, one way or the other and flame of friendship glowing.

Then came the eventful year 2016- Raj and Jaggi met in Karnal, and the seed of reunion/golden jubilee was sown. The untiring efforts put in by Raj and many more friends culminated into today's Grand Event and Joy of "Home Coming".

So, the Reunion and meeting not only with the old brethren but, also their spouses, is a real reason to Rejoice. Who knows the future- let us live for the day and enjoy and engrave each moment into our collection of memories!!

The students and the member of faculty of any institution may come and go but, great values of Integrity, Honesty, Respect, Courage and Resilience instilled by an institution in its wars, leaves behind an immortal legacy for the future generations. **It is now for the institution to let the class of 1968 know how they could help the Alma Mater!!**

Love you all friends-best wishes to the families and to the Thapar University!!