

THE GLOOMY OSTRACIZED

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Abstract: This article which appeared in Samakalika Malayalam Weekly in July 2005, offers a glimpse into the world of men who were ostracized and is a different take on the Thathri effect in their lives. The author well known for her novel Yajnam which deals with Smarthavicharam is brutally honest when she confesses that she doesn't think much of what Thathri is said to have accomplished.

As we look at an incident that occurred a hundred years ago, there could be a huge change in its hues. However, we have to judge the virtues and vices as per the present state of mind.

Apparently, Kuriyedathu Thathri has received an epic status after the publication of the novel *Bhrashtaby Madambu* who has beautifully portrayed in the novel that Thathri is not a mere object and the thought of revenge had come about as a result of the intense emotions and bitter experiences that she had to go through. Later, Alankodu Leelakrishnan wrote a book after doing research on this subject, which has enshrined Thathri in the minds of the readers.

Even so, I have been thinking of those innocent human beings whose lives were encumbered because of the heroic deeds of Thathri. There could be differences on the opinions regarding how Thathri had ventured into such a path of life or the advantages that the society has enjoyed as a result of it. However, it is an indisputable reality that certain people had to wander hopelessly for no mistake of their own, leaving no trace of their existence. My heart burned for those who were excommunicated even while in the womb. I have seen and talked to elderly Antharjanams who knew Thathri directly. They have described her as someone who possessed ravishing beauty, who used to talk humorously, an exemplary singer and dancer, who also showed the ability to grasp anything effortlessly. Somebody pointed that she had been extraordinarily sexy from her tender age. At a time

when the women of the Namboothiri families did not even dare to step out of their chambers, Thathri used to go out and stand near where the men thronged, doing something or the other to entice them, which the other Antharjanams detested. This is what I have understood- Kuryedathu Thathri was highly talented and smart by all means. She was intelligent and entertaining- indeed yet another Cleopatra. But what value does it have when the society could not accept the abilities of an Antharjanam? That could be what she had been driven by at the outset in choosing such a path of a creative urge. She had a desire to know people and let people know of her. Later on, there were many aristocrats to take advantage of it and then to wash their hands clean of it.

Come to think of it, the then king has also cunningly orchestrated it. Or was it Thathri herself who had cleverly befriended the king? There is indeed a collusion. It is heard that some of the Namboothiri men whom the king did not like were purposely trapped into it and among them were people who were innocent. KuroorUnniNamboothirippadu was the only person who was there to question the monarchy. He was banished too. V.K. Narayana Bhattathiri had gone to Tripunithura to learn Sanskrit and English. He was intelligent, meticulous and diligent. The king however had a dislike for him. For the Bhattathiri, the thirst for knowledge did not diminish even while he was in banishment. He did not want to sit idle in his land and hence he went to Thrissinappalli for his studies. He worked as a coolie to aid his education. But the king sent a warrant to the authorities saying that as he has been banished should not hence be accepted. After many trials and tribulations, he went to the University of Banaras to continue his studies. While he was enthusiastically engaged in his studies, the king's warrant reached there too. Unable to stay there, he had to return. He was able to reach Kerala only after the reign was completed. It is fortunate that at least a smaller part of the knowledge that a proficient man like him could acquire is now available to the Malayalees.

I have never felt what Thathri had accomplished to be great. Has there been a decrease in men's perversion because of that? However, I felt sympathy for Thathri. Nobody tried to enhance her intelligence and smartness to get her to a higher position. Even the king who reigned the land had to bear that burden. Perhaps the king wanted to relegate her to a *sadhanam*. What infuriated and hurt me the most was the punishment imposed by the caste on the wife of the banished man, his kids and his family. Deceased M.N.Chakyar had written to me about a shocking experience that his father had. Fifty years ago, there was an *Antarjanam* amongst us who wept profusely over her husband who was banished even though he was innocent. Hadn't their sorrows been sorrows? How and against whom would they take their revenge?

Yesterday, today and forever, all the laws are there to render the human life smooth. That should not be accomplished only through intelligence and power. It becomes so only when the heart is also involved. Otherwise, it should not be called a law at all. There is no obligation to follow it. Isn't that what is happening nowadays? The cruel rave of power.

It is such thoughts and knowledge that inspired me to write the novel *Yajnam*. It is a direct view of sorrow (to those who are in sorrow). When the attempt to turn *Yajnam* into a television serial commenced, director Anil Banerji compelled me to write the script and be there during the time of shooting and dubbing. Hence I stood with them. Rekha Mohan, who enacted the role of Nangema once told me: "Teacher, it has become difficult to bear the sadness. We did not even take glycerin". I do not know why, but out of some trickery, it has never been telecast. I have not learnt the *Dharmashastras*. But I feel sad and desperate how the Namboothiri community, enlightened up to a point of time, indulged in such vulgar and meaningless farces. It creates stress and displeasure that the very same dramas are being enacted right here with far greater cruelty and violence.

Certain things are never finished though it seems otherwise. It resurfaces even after a hundred years, apparently professing their existence always. Kuriyedathu Thathri is also like that. That will remain here even after five hundred years.

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