

TO CONQUER CORONAVIRUS (A SHORT STORY)

By Stephen Gill

Gopal picked up his coffee and Reghu's special tea from the window, because Tim Hortons was closed to contain Covid-19. It was the month of March. Nations were getting lost in the perplexing wilderness of the pandemic. Days and months emerged to strengthen the base of some illusions about its appearance and disappearance. Country after country thought that 2020 would pass in the bed of the blind brutality of its virus. Theories and counter-theories about its weird origin and appalling crimes began to float freely. Some powers took the opportunity to exploit the chaos to bully weaker powers to grab their lands. New alliances and understandings among nations became a new trend. The carpet of H.G. Well's unity outlined in *The War of the Worlds* began to shake. There did not seem to be any relief from the anguishing nights of the painful trauma. Laboratories all over the world got busy in developing a vaccine to make money and also to dissolve the fog of its wilful delusion.

Handing the tea to Reghu who was standing alone in the sun, Gopal said, "around this chaotic time, the head of the main organization of the Hindus in India has come up with an easy and inexpensive solution to combat Covid-19,

"What a ..."

Before Reghu could complete his sentence, Gopal, adjusting his black mask, shouted, "It is not what you think. This therapy is based on a centuries--old dogma that the wastes of cow have spiritual power. The dogma was debated in the parliament of India that triggers the fancy of the media."

"Really? They did not have anything else to discuss. Indian physicians are known for their skills and integrity. Covid-19 is the outcome of a virus and virus cannot be destroyed. You have to develop antibody with vaccine or no vaccine," Reghu said with a firm conviction, sipping his tea mixed with half hot chocolate. He began to look at the traffic on the bridge of Pitt Street.

"It is believed that Covid-19 is not spread by a virus. This is what top leaders of the nationalist party of India say, " Gopal argued, also sipping.

Reghu asked in a calm tone, “India has produced also world’s most respectable scientists. They are capable of handling this domain. I do not understand why politicians get involved in a situation of the spiritual nature. To the best of my knowledge Indian virologists and even traditional medicine researchers, including Debprasad Chattopadhyay, do not find ingredients in cow wastes which can defeat covids. Who was that person who came up with this idea of cow waste?”

“He is the head of a respectable organization called the Hindu Mahasabha, and his name is Chakrapani Maharaj. This organization has arranged events to promote cow urine.” Gopal answered.

“How about parliamentarians? They are not stupid.” Reghu asked.

“This issue was debated in the parliament on March 6 or 7 by Venkaiah Naidu. He stated that leaders should not claim that cow-dung and urine have the abilities to cure Covid-19. Vandana Chavan, a member of parliament, asked lawmakers to make their views clear. She brought the attention of the members’ to a discussion to eradicate Covid-19, suggesting to do some scientific research.” After a short pause, Gopal continued,

“Here is another opinion of an MLA from Assam. Suman Haripriya is of the opinion that cow dung is very useful.”

“They think the scientists of the world have done nothing. It is because the findings of the scientists are contrary to their dogma. Security of India is a serious issue. To wound both humans and non-humans the birds of evil are at the doors of freedom and security of the nation, but some lawmakers drug the populace with a potion that is more than five thousand years old when science was in its infancy. They suggest openly to make the cow beverage available at every store and have festivals, and the cow beverage should be sold in restaurants.”

Reghu took a pause, looked into the eyes of Gopal and continued, “Cow urine and cow dung are used as fertilizers, but to use them to cure certain deadly diseases is dangerous. Studies by scientists have produced no positive results. For some politicians cow wastes may have an

irresistible aroma of spiritual significance. I have no problem there because these are personal issues. I have nothing against personal issues as long as they do not preach hatred of any kind.

“Let me share that suggestions based on imaginary claims derived from mythologies disgrace the work of the award-winning Indian scientists and pharmacological companies, particularly when they are busy day and night in finding a cure. Nation’s army is being modernized as well as the air force and navy, but not the thoughts of some lawmakers from religious groups. India has produced Nobel Laureates in every area of science. These lawmakers should leave this work to the scientists. Obviously, these lawmakers are opening more banks for more power and...”

“Are you referring to their ill-gotten monies they have been depositing in foreign banks? Some top religious gurus have said enough about those deposits.” Gopal added.

“Sorry, I am not talking about those banks and deposits. I am referring to vote banks that these leaders are building for re-elections and for more powers.”

As Reghu paused, Gopal said, “You talk about mythological sources. How about other cultures and inter-planetary travels in Indian mythology?”

“Indigenous peoples of Canada also have myths about travels to other planets. Egypt has flying carpets. I don’t have problems with such myths as long as they do not hurt anyone. I think of the Arabs who have stories of religious nature about the urine of camel.”

“Arabs claim to have older culture than India has. What are those stories of the Arabs? ” Gopal was curious.

“That is about urine of the camel.” Reghu replied, adjusting his home-made face-cover above his nose.

“What is it?”

“They maintain that camel urine was consumed for centuries for medicinal and religious reasons. According to some of their religious texts their Prophet suggested to a tribe of his followers to drink camel urine. According to *Arab News* of April 21, 2020 a prominent Iranian

who professes to be a specialist in Islamic medicine, has suggested to drink camel urine because it is best remedy for coronavirus. He claims it to be a remedy also for cancer. The urine of a virgin camel is considered better. Arabs mix urine also with milk. As per *Wikipedia*, the World Health Organization says that “Camels are the source of the Middle East respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus.”

Staring at the empty chairs inside Tim Hortons, Reghu continued, “Let us take the case of Zoroastrians. For them a bull’s urine has the effect of purification whereas Hindu pundits use the urine of a cow for purification. Let us also go back to the hoary past when the modern sanitizers were not available. People used whatever limited sources were available. Today several scientifically proven alternatives are available.

“Religion, age, distractions and misuse of time and money do not work when the health of citizens are involved. The best is to provide solid evidences. Those who want to work on religious beliefs may ask the politicians to bring at least a part of their ill-gotten wealth back in the country for research to find a cure with cow wastes.” Reghu smiled, and continued,

“Gopal, you are a supporter of the RSS that is Rashtriya Sewak Sangh. It is the largest and the strongest religious organization of the majority which is ruling India today. I fully support present government’s ties with the US and Israel which were considered unfavourably by other political parties. Further progress and safety of India would be the result of these ties. But I don’t understand close ties of the government with the India of five thousand years old mythology. The more I try to unveil the hidden gem of this romance, the more I discern a manipulative method in the madness.”

Gopal replied, “Infectious diseases remain a serious threat to human health, in spite of the fact that medical science has progressed beyond imagination. The Western system of medicine has failed to cure certain diseases. Therefore traditional medicines offer a hope. Some Ayurvedic text praise cow urine. Indian traditional medicine has almost 2500 years old history. I am talking about Ayurveda system.”

“Any belief that advocates the use of the urine, whether of camel, cow or of human, to eradicate covid-19 is without empirical evidences. World is puzzled when it notices that on the one hand, India is in the nuclear age and has clever Ambassadors; on the other, it is living in the hoary past. Ok, tell me something about the origin of this belief in cow wastes. I know that the cow urine is 95 per cent just water, and the other five per cent has some minerals, hormones, enzymes, iron, etc.

“Moreover, cow urine is not different from the urine of any human. Both have the same properties. The nationalist government of India has been propagating the use of cow urine in spite of the fact there is no scientific evidence to prove its usefulness to human health. Science is based on evidences which are the outcome of studies in laboratories and in real day to day life. No scientific information is available to prove that cow urine is better than the human or camel urine. Contrary to this, its toxic nature have been reported. Just raw cow urine or any urine is detrimental to human health.

“I read in *Wikipedia* that in Nigeria several children died from respirator depression because they were given a connotation prepared tobacco leaves, lemon juice, and garlic and cow urine to cure convulsions in children. It is a disgusting suggestion of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha without any scientific base. It becomes more disgusting when an organization that has unbreakable ties with the ruling party of India, supports its use.

“Let me quote The American Association for the Advancement of Science. It has asked the Government of India to withdraw a call for research on Indian cow’s urine because it is unscientific and misdirection of public money.”

“Do you Know Mr. Reghu that one important personality of India used to drink urine daily. He died at the age of 99.”

“You are referring to Prime Minister Morarji Disai. He used to drink his own. He did not drink cow urine. To say that his longevity was due to his habit of drinking this beverage is open for challenge. He suffered also from severe ailments. If urine were nourishing then everyone who

drinks it in India must be blessed with health and longevity. Urine whether of any human or cow is 95 percent just water.”

“What do you think of the Prime Minister of today?” Gopal tried to change the subject.

“You are referring to Prime Minister Modi. He is from the same province of Morarji Desai, and also from the same political party, and same religion. Both are nationalists and both are vegetarians. However, Modi is facing a challenge from a tiny, invisible and most dangerous virus, as well as several other visible and invisible. He is piloting the destiny of India properly. It is hugely encouraging that he knows how, and when to put his feet at the right place. To know my stand further, please go to YouTube and watch *Stephen Gill Prophecy 2020 India*.

“The most citizens of the nation he leads breathes the musty and heavy scent of legends. He came to power with their votes and will remain in power as long as they will vote for his political party. He does not need votes of non-Hindus as long as his voters believe in the curative powers of mythological sources.”

“You are not taking Brahmins into account when you make such statements?”

“Brahmins of India are smart, highly educated and know ways to deal with the masses.”

“You did not say anything about Christ and his followers.” Gopal posed this question reluctantly.

“I knew you will bring Christ in the picture. In Christianity, God is love and peace. He came down to earth in the form of Jesus to show how humans can practice love and peace. Christianity is not concerned with any ritual or dogma that has nothing to do directly with love without conditions.”

Gopal interrupted to say, “That is what I hear about Christ and his followers. But...”

“I am not finished yet, Gopal. I do not want to interpret what people say. Let me quote what Jesus himself says. His life was to put love into action in different ways. He is not concerned with what to eat and what not to eat, and what to wear and what not to wear, and what language to use and what language not to use. He is concerned only with love without condition and nothing else.

“If you have nothing to say, I would like to add that I read somewhere that cow urine has been forbidden for women and people of lower castes, particularly for the untouchables?” Reghu paused for a while as if he was in a thinking mood. He scratched his head and then continued,

“RSS has developed a soft drink based on cow urine, called *Gomutra Ark*. It is alternative to Coca-Cola. The RSS has developed also *Gau Jal* that can be translated as *Cow Water*. It is claimed that both these beverages can heal even cancer. I have a suggestion that may sound hilarious. I would like politicians to work to gain the political power for the good of India. My suggestion is not based on hatred and violence. Just think for a while.” Reghu was calm.

“What is your suggestion? You have left nothing to think about.”

“The developers should come up with a beverage, especially for women and the untouchables, because they also get sick, and cow urine is forbidden for them. The developers who have come up with this idea of the cow waste should cooperate with Canadian farmers. In Canada, cows are much healthier. They produce more milk and more waste.”

“Listen Reghu, when Indian politicians talk of a cure for Covid-19 and cancer, they talk of the wastes of Indian cows, not the cows from Canada and elsewhere.”

Reghu was quick to say, “but the Hindus in Canada have the same holy attitude for Canadian cows as they have for the cows of the country of their birth. This attitude is obvious when non-vegetarian Hindus refrain from eating Canadian beef. I am certain that there is a specific word for the persons who practice two standards. Gopal my legs are getting tired now”, Reghu said looking inside the restaurant where tables and chairs appeared lonely. “We will continue over the phone some other day.”

Bio

Self-exiled Stephen Gill is a multiple award winning Indo/Canadian poet, fiction-writer, literary critic and essayist. He has authored more than thirty books, including novels, literary criticism, and collections of poems, and is the subject of doctoral dissertations, and research papers. Thirteen books of critical studies have been released by book publishers on his works and more

are on the way. The focus of his writing is love and peace, based on his ideology of live and let live.

EPISTEME