

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Remembering Munin Barkakati's Friendship

This will refer to the very interesting and illuminating "talking head" on November 4, 1994, doing homage to the celebrated literary and art critic, the late Munin Barkakati, and his first death anniversary meeting on November 6.

I feel extremely happy that the wonderful literary critic, and to my mind, non-peril at least in the north-eastern States, has been paid a glowing tribute to his memory by a sizeable section of the 'literati' and of the eminent educationists of Guwahati. I only wish that doing homage to the rare talent would grow more and more.

I would have with great satisfaction attended the first anniversary meeting but I was neither invited to the meeting nor informed of it. Alas!

Maybe the organizers invited or informed only the members of the literati, and of the eminent educationists of Guwahati. As I do not belong to either group, I was simply left out

or

Maybe they do not know of my rather life-long friendship with

Munin and particularly at a later age since 1977, when we were hail-fellow-well-met together, each of us being a boon companion to the other

or
Maybe, as I have led a sequestered life for the last three years suffering from several ailments and being busy with a book for print, thus not being in the eye of the public the organizers thought that I have already been gathered to my fathers, though I am still in the land of the living and keeping track almost of all important facts and trends of events through the Press and the idiot box.

As I see some 'good' reasons for the organizers' not inviting or informing me, I should not go into a huff or take a pique against them. I only wish them well.

Our friendship and Munin's style of writing English:

His letter to me written on October 11, 1988 which is reproduced below will illustrate the extent to which our friendship deepened, and also the style of his English expressions — picturesque but short, snappy and succinct. This style of his I have tried to emulate as much as I can, and with some success too...
Praie to God.

Panchaboti, October 11, '88
My dear Gopal,

Your letter to the Editor in AT this morning provokes me to dash off this to you though not even by a barge pole writing on the merit or otherwise of the former.

What on earth has so abruptly and unexpectedly led you to totally shut off *hoka-pani* with me and our household ever since you visited us last, months ago? Have I or any of this menage fallen foul of you by some omission or commission? If 'yes' do please disabuse your mind of all sense of hurt or any kind of ire nursed unreasonably for so long.

Until I saw your name in cold print today after quite some time I had come to think you were off to Calcutta or Delhi in quest of some reputable publisher for your networthy mss. on Indian adaptation to English writing. By the way, the upshot in this matter you ought to have told me, but did not. Have you vouchsafed it to some respectable publisher or did you let it hibernate in your closet? How I wish you would care to enlighten me.

I would very much like you to come over some time. In case you are somehow unable to take the trouble of a bus ride do at least write to me without much delay.

Your letter to the Editor today was at once very thoughtful and incisive. Your writing style too seems to have passed through almost a sea change. It left absolutely nothing to be desired. It was delightful reading. Congrats, if I may use a slang.

I hope to hear from you early or see you in person at ours before long. Had my legs not come in the way I would have gone to you myself by now. Hope you are keeping your

spirits in trim and merrily going about your family life.

With kind regards and best wishes.

Sincerely yours,
Munin Barkakati.

What I propose now:

Let me contemplate writing about Munin's talents, gifts, idealism, liberalism etc., in extenso on the occasion of his next death anniversary, of course, if in the meantime I am not gathered to my fathers.

May God grant my humble and sincere wish!

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