

ESSAY COMPETITION

LIFE IS A DREAM

**I have spread my dreams under your feet:
Tread softly, for you tread on my dreams.**

- W B Yeats

A man ceases to live the moment he stops dreaming. One can dream not only when asleep but also even when awake and he can make these dreams come true. One must build castles in the air if he intends to construct these castles on the ground with means either foul or fair. Thought is the prime mover of emotions, moves and action. Dreams when asleep are primarily the reflection of his thoughts and his visualization during his wakefulness. Dreams are indeed the precipitation.... Nay the dew drops on the leaves of thought, particularly in the wee hours or at dawn.

Banish all thoughts of despair if you don't want to have a nightmare. I was fully aware of the bad effects of negative thinking, but in April last year after three weeks of stay in the hospital following a heart attack I knew there was a sword above my head all the time. My angiogram had indicated three blocks in my blood vessels, but I was reluctant to get a bypass done.

I knew of the impending predicament and my mind was occupied by these dangerous thoughts all the time. I often had to resort to a sedative. On the early morning of April 27 I had a dream that I was on a stage where a famous magician was performing. He had made me lie down in front of a huge crowd and started cutting my body into pieces. He started off with the limbs and separated my legs from the rest of my body. The next step was cutting below my abdomen. This too was done. I could hear thunderous applause.

The magician then started cracking my ribs in order to separate my torso from the rest of my body. This is when I began to realize something was hurting me very badly. Just when he completed cutting across my chest, I screamed and shouted right there on the stage to the amazement of the entire crowd. Some people had stood up seeing my agony and the cruel act. That was when I woke up from my slumber to realize that I actually was experiencing a terrible pain in the heart more severe than my earlier attack a month ago. I knew that surprisingly my nightmare had actually coincided with a real heart attack.

The next moment of realisation came in the ICCU. I was brought back to life only to be operated for an emergency bypass the next evening. While entering the operation theatre I saw my son who had come all the way from USA. The operation went off all right and I knew a nightmare had turned into an excitingly beautiful dream.

All I could say was, "ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL"!



Among its varied activities, our Chai – Masti group had organized an essay competition for Dignitarians. This lucid portrayal of a real-life experience by Dilip Wagle won the First prize hands down.

In an effort to bring to you the 'spirit of life' itself and those who have lived it up in their own big, small ways, conquered fears and hardships with courage and determination—I met two such people who believe that life is not just about plain-sailing choices but about living against disparate odds too— Moni Bhushan.

READY TO GET UP AND GET GOING

— Meenakshi N Mehta

Life can be strange and it can manifest itself in your personality in various ways - good or bad. Meenakshi N Mehta is 65 and had lost her husband about a year back. He was a press photographer and died of a heart ailment at the age of 70, after 29 years of a happy marriage. She lost her zeal to live after he died and says she had a difficult time recovering. She started forgetting, spent her time crying and was afraid to dress up for fear of moral policing in her community.

Meenakshi had a very good time with her husband who loved her very much and "took her on holidays all around". She misses all that now. She recalls how her doctor advised her to visit Dignity Foundation where she "would find her friends". Meenakshi has found a new ray of hope, a new lease of life. Meeting people and talking to them is what she enjoys. Slowly, she is getting rid of all her fears and is happy to find new friends at Dignity Foundation. "Here they listen to me; I dance and do tai-chi and have started learning chess at Chai-Masti!" Meenakshi likes to dress up. She wishes that some day again she will be able to wear a 'nice 'sari, and a beautiful bindi on her forehead. She thanks her daughter profusely for having stood by her and for helping to get rid of her inhibitions. Having found a new dawn of 'Dignity' she is determined not to be afraid ever again.....

ON THE STAGE OF LIFE

— Haresh V. Thakkar

This is a man who swears beamingly all the time "I am happy with life". With ambitions of becoming an actor Thakkar was on the verge of joining the Puna Institute of Film Acting when he lost his father. Interestingly his father was a cosmetic manufacturer who can be credited as one of the earlier people to have brought 'nail polish awareness' in India, around 1952. However, after his demise Thakkar took up his responsibilities and took over the manufacturing unit. He also worked as a Dena bank official for 30 years and took a voluntary

retirement in 2001. He got married to Usha in 1973 and had three children. But out of all this the one thing that remained alive was his desire to act. He got involved in theatre and did a super hit play called 'Bambai ki Hawa Kar Gayi Tabah' that showcased for 24 nights! He went on to do a couple of other plays that did well too. Thakkar feels the importance of good health and says he suffers from BP, Diabetes and Hypertension that can come in the way of his entertainment career because the work is hectic. He has also featured in TV soaps like *Shehnai*, *Bicchu Dank* and others. Thakkar is also a singer and boasts of a mean cassette collection—about 700-800 in all! He plans to participate in the 'Passionate Collection' happening at Dignity on the 30th of August. Thakkar is satisfied with life, though money is no less important, says he.