

## **Under these 6 yards of sari..**

My name is Pooja Satish; Pooja is my name, and Satish is my husband's name, which I took after my marriage. It was not necessary, but I took it; I liked to do it at that time. I am the 8<sup>th</sup> child of my parents; we were 10 Children, 6 sisters and 3 brothers. My parents were freedom fighters, and Gandhians. They believed in freedom of everything for a person to be free and to do what one believed in. And they brought us up in exactly the same way.

When I was doing my post graduation, I sent a poem to a popular magazine and it was published. It was the 1<sup>st</sup> poem that came to me and became very popular. It said that we girls are like this.

Suddenly it was there for everybody to see what I had to say; what I was thinking. Simultaneously it made me realize that writing what you feel gives you strength as well as support. You can't escape from what you have written; people will identify you with what you have said. It was a very liberating experience for me. I have often wondered about the kind of euphoria you feel when you write especially a poem; you can't compare it with anything else in the world. It is total, it is divine, sometimes you feel the thrill, the blood rushing when you write something that you read.

I am not a rebel because I did not have to fight against anything. Even separating from my husband was a matter of taking a decision. Its was always whether to buy this or buy that, whether to live here or get out. So the minute I said I feel suffocated in this relationship and I am getting out, I quit, and it was not a big struggle. I did not achieve anything so you can't call me a rebel; people have accepted me, my parents have accepted me.

But how far can a woman live without a man? Is separation a kind solution sometimes? Maybe. I have seen so many women who live alone and who feel loneliness gripping them continually; it happens to men also - so many men who are living alone feel very lonely. I didn't feel lonely because I quit after 15 years of marriage and my children were there for me. My children and my work were a very good substitute. I didn't miss a man in my life.

In fact to tell you frankly, I have celebrated since the time I left my husband. I have not desired a man even physically. I never felt that I need a man; I am alone and I am very happy with it.

If you think you can live alone, you can live alone. I have never regretted even a minute. I have never indulged in self-pity. I was all alone, struggling to get my two children through college. To have two children at college is a very big responsibility and I had to work 24 hours. I had to do this work, do that extra work to earn that money and somehow things turned out all right. I didn't want to give a second class life for my children. So I made their life very comfortable. I was earning, I was making money and I never felt even for a minute, didn't regret that I don't have a man to take care of me when I was sick. I can take care of myself.

Of course, one experiences certain feelings when one is very weak emotionally. There have been moments in my life when I have mentally, emotionally liked a person. Most of them were writers. If I liked a writer who was very good I may take a liking for his writing. I have never however had the need to have an affair with him, for him to love me. I have loved so many people and I have never felt that they have to love me back or come and hug me, kiss me, or come have a physical relationship. I have not had any physical relationship for say 14 years. I have not been kissed or hugged by anybody for the last 14 years. That is why I said it is in your mind. If you feel that you should be hugged or kissed by somebody or you need a man to hold you, you need a shoulder to cry on, it is all in your mind. Not even once have I felt that I miss it, because I made a resolution that I want to be alone.

But we are very strong women. I have never broken down because of lack of a companion, never. I have loved different men. After that also I have lived alone for I have fallen in love with their ideology, their talent, their personality, I have never been so close to one to feel that that person should also love me. I have likes that person for what he is, but not for him to love me.

You know if I find the man I love, if he is ready to sleep with me, I would do it. I would not care less. I don't think I have that fear. It didn't work out may be because I didn't find the man whom I loved enough or who loves me, who wants to be with me. I don't think that I found that kind of a man.

But let me tell you: it is men who make life very interesting. I love men because I would be totally bored with women. I like men's company because it excites me. A man woman relationship has magnetism and romance. So in fact the chase is the fun part of it. I have chased, I need not say I have not chased, but it didn't lead to anything. I don't think there is an end to any relationship. Most of the time you live that life in your mind, so half our lives, we lead another life in our mind, in our head. You may call it fantasizing. So you fantasize, or think that I wish I could be with this man. But even in my most intense moments, I have never wanted to completely give up and be his. I always think, ok, this is where the limit is. Even now I am not saying that I don't get attracted, it's cerebral. Even on my own sometimes I used to wonder why is it that I don't need sex. I have not missed sex. The excitement is there, the nuances of the romance, the meeting, the looking and the attraction - all that is there, I have never thought that it is going to end in sex. I have not missed sex. I don't know maybe it would have been different if there had been an occasion.

Men are scared of very strong women. I don't think I have met a man who is strong enough to take me the way I am. Men are scared of strong women and I was very strong so they were very scared of me of course.

I am sure that's why I never had a man who said, "Ok, come be my girl." But I'd rather be strong than weak.

If you go back to the act of writing, why do you write something? I say that writing is a relationship of love; one has to put energy into the act of writing, because when you write you show your heart to your readers. If I did not have the talent to write I would have felt suffocated or I would have been incomplete, or I would have felt dissatisfaction and frustration at having loving and not expressed it. You have to take

in a lot of tension. I think that my writing helped me to maintain my sanity because I would put express it in writing. I can very confidently tell you that things would have been different if I had not written. I would have been a frustrated woman. So, yes, writing has replaced something.

Let us take a hypothetical situation. I like a person and he also likes me and the minute he takes charge, he says, "Don't do this, don't do that, don't talk to that person, don't sit like this, don't stand like this, why did you say that?" Tell me, who wants to give up freedom for the sake of sex? See if he is a man who can just have sex and get lost it's ok with me, I can sleep with him. But it doesn't happen that way; the emotions come in and he will start controlling me, and men are control freaks. They are possessive; they think the woman is a possession. Yes, that's why I think you don't get caught in such a situation. Not because of society, but because of the controlling that happens.

This is the 21<sup>st</sup> century - the age where every body is doing everything. This is the age of satellites, this the age when information is distributed in the shortest time. Still we have instances like whether to allow women or some castes to enter the temple. But we are a very violent society. We think that death or a killing is an answer for everything. You have a daughter who is not listening you and she wants to marry somebody against your wishes, so you kill her. If you know a Hindu or a Muslim who is posing threats to you, kill him. We are also sexually oppressed. We have all kinds of mob violence for extremely silly reasons. We are mentally and intellectually frustrated and a violent society; we were not like this. What happened to our Indian philosophy? This is the 21<sup>st</sup> century and we are still regressing, when it comes to our mental makeup. Instead, we should be going forward and saying, that's ok, let us get rid of all these small boundaries and let us live peacefully.

Under these 6 yards of sari all the grosses get covered up. You wear a nice sari and a nice smile. We think that you are a happily married daughter in law. They never know that under the silk sari there are so many grosses and black marks which are hurting, the pain of everything is covered in six yards of silk.