

Angel Dust

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By : **Juggernaut**

'Hing' or 'Asafetida', an Indian spice with characteristic aroma with many health benefits; liked by some and hated by many for its strong smell was baptised by Sister Christena with a new name 'Angel Dust' on Juggernaut's request.



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Subba Rao

â Yes, I born in India and came here some years ago,â replied Juggernaut politely to the woman encountered in the apartment corridor. Juggernaut just moved into a nice apartment on east side of Cleveland in an area walking distance to a small Catholic University.

â I am Sister Christina; I live next to your unit, I work at the University as a Financial Controller,â Sister Christina introduced herself. â Several years ago I spent over a year at Mother Theresaâ s place in Calcutta serving poor.â

â It was noble of you to spend time among the poorest of the poor.â

â Serving humanity is serving God,â Sister Christina looked serene and peaceful. She shared her apartment with another Sister also working at the University Campus, both wore regular clothes nothing to signify that they were Sisters of some Order in Catholic Church. Both ladies in late fifties, short and somewhat on heavy side walked slowly in the corridors to and from the underground car garage, sometimes carrying heavy loads of groceries with both hands.

On occasions Sister Christina chatted briefly her experiences living and travelling in India. â I always want to ask you about an Indian dish â Sambar,â (spicy split-pea soup) I tasted several times while travelling in India,â â you see, the â Sambar served in Indian restaurants here in the United States do not have that special aroma I tasted in restaurants in South India.â

â Well, in that case, I invite you to taste â Sambarâ I just made,â Juggernaut instantly invited Sister Christina into his apartment to taste â Sambarâ he made along with warm Idli (steamed rice cakes).

â You believe in Angels, donâ t you?â

â Of Course; I believe in Angels, I am a devout Catholic.â Sister Christina looked serious pouring boiling â Sambarâ on small pieces of warm Idli in shallow porcelain dish. â Yes, I can taste the characteristic aroma of South Indian â Sambarâ now,â Sister Christina looked pleasantly surprised.

â Well, then the Angels came to bless â Sambarâ with the characteristic aroma you were longing to taste,â Juggernaut looked mysterious.

â How the Angels bless Sambar?â Sister Christina looked puzzled.

â I added a pinch of â Hingâ to Sambar to get that special flavor you missed in Sambar served in Indian Restaurants here in the United States.â

â Hing?â â Whatâ s that?â

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â Indians, particularly from South India use â Hingâ , a spice if one calls it a spice to soup dishes particularly flavoring â Sambar.â Hing is also unfairly called â Devilâ s Dungâ for its pungent odor.

â You mean, the spice â Hingâ gives all that special flavor to the Sambar?â Sister Christina looked surprised.

â Yes, â Asafetidaâ or â Hingâ is a plant resin containing some strong sulfur compounds that give that pungent aroma liked by some and a stink for many others not used to the product.â

â How â Hingâ is made?â Sister was curious.

â Hing plants make strong smelling sap and is collected by cutting the stem just above the roots; the dried sap or crystals of amber colored resin is sold in the market as â Hing.â â Additives such as rice-flour and other plant gums are added to the pure â Hingâ crystals to stretch it for commercial purpose but it decreases its purity and quality.â Juggernaut gave a detailed explanation.

â You know, all these years after I left India, I could not figure it out what was missing in the flavor of â Sambarâ served in Indian restaurants here in the United States, but now I know it was â Hingâ as you said.

â Since you love the special flavor of â Hingâ and also a Sister of Catholic Order, I sincerely request you to christen the name â Angel Dustâ to â Hingâ so Americans of all walks of life use the word â Angel Dustâ rather than â Hingâ a foreign sounding name or worst â Devilâ s Dungâ a name unfairly attached to this wonderful spice with lots of health benefits despite its strong odor,â Juggernaut begged.

â Sure I now baptize â Hingâ with the new name â Angel Dustâ and henceforth be called â Angel Dustâ in all public pronouncements and recorded as such,â thus Sister Christina made it official the new name â Angel Dustâ for â Hing.â

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