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UTKARSA



ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS (OSA)
Quarterly Newsletter Utkarsa, December 2004
<http://www.orissasociety.org>

Continuing the Tradition

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Orissa Society of the Americas, I wish you very Happy Holidays and a prosperous New Year. I am currently visiting India for a couple of weeks. The main purpose of my visit is to attend the First Prabasi Utkal Divas being organized by the Non-Resident Oriya (NRO) Cell of the Government of Orissa on December 18, 2004 at Bhubaneswar. This is similar to the NRI Divas being held by the Government of India every year. The invitation was delayed because we insisted that Orissa Government must take the initiative this time and invite all the



If we ourselves cannot recognize the talents in our friends and children, how can others recognize them?

NROs worldwide, instead of making it an OSA gathering like last year. It has also been decided to open a Non-Resident Oriya Facilitation Center (NROFC) to facilitate various development projects

being carried out by the NROs. For more information on the NROFC and this year's Prabasi Utkal Divas, please visit the website www.nrofc.org.

While formation of NRO cell, NROFC and organization of the Prabasi Utkal divas has been one of the biggest achievements during my presidency, I hope this effort is continued year after year. Similarly, while we have tried to define/clarify the operations of OSA through many constitutional amendments, however, they can be meaningful only if we choose to follow them instead of ignoring them. I feel it is therefore essential that you nominate the very best people in our small Oriya community to continue all the work that has been done during the past one and half years. A call for nomination for the next OSA office bearers is contained in this newsletter with Feb 28 as the deadline. Please talk to your friends and send in your nominations early. Tell the potential nominees that the Oriya community needs their time and help. The past OSA office bearers are always there to help them when needed.

OSA recognizes many members and their children for their dedication to society, and Oriya arts and culture. If we ourselves cannot recognize the

talents in our friends/children, how can others recognize them? A call for nomination for OSA awards is sent in this newsletter. Please take time to nominate your friends and their children for next year's OSA awards by March 1. We moved the date earlier so that the awardees can plan to attend the convention and receive the awards in person.

Finally, next year's OSA convention will be held at Radisson Hotel in Newport Beach, California. The organizers are planning it to be a very different OSA convention making it a memorable event. It is not too early to start planning to attend the convention.

Thank you and God bless you.



Laxmi N. Bhuyan
OSA President



OSA Newsletter Utkarsa

The mission of The Orissa Society of Americas (OSA) is to provide a mutually supportive environment for the better interaction of Oriya immigrants of North American countries, and to enhance the awareness of Orissa and Oriya traditions in North America through cultural promotion, social events, and developmental activities.

OSA Officers:

Dr. Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan (President)
Dr. Nivedita Mohanty (Vice President)
Mr. Hari Arjun Patro (Secretary/Treasurer)
Dr. Bigyani Das (Editor)

Utkarsa is published quarterly by The Orissa Society of Americas.

Our OSA Theme: Working together is success

Are you in OSA mailing list? OSA announcements are regularly made electronically using the OSA mailing list created by Dr Joy Gopal Mohanty. If you are a member and you don't get any announcements electronically, please contact Dr Joy Gopal Mohanty (jgmohanty@yahoo.com).



OSA Welcomes You



Happy New Year Wishes to all of our OSA families

OSA National Officers - Executive Council (2003-2005)

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Vice-President	<u>Nivedita Mohanty</u>	VA	703-536-3837
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OSA Planning and Constitution	<u>Sitikantha Dash</u>	MN	952-931-9400
	<u>Amiya Mohanty</u>	KY	859-623-7146
Membership Drive	<u>Prasanna Panda</u>	CA	949-859-4044
	<u>Pratap Dash</u>	MD	301-528-7892
Orissa Development	<u>Devi Misra</u>	AL	256-883-5499
	<u>Gopal Mohapatra</u>	TX	281-807-6787
Women's issues	<u>Annapurna Pandey</u>	CA	831-427-1232
	<u>Lipishree Nayak</u>	MD	301-306-1995
Youth Activities	<u>Likun Mishra</u>	GA	404-321-7818
Educational Activities	<u>Sukant Mohapatra</u>	NJ	732-332-0235
	<u>Rabi Mahapatra</u>	TX	979-694-1060
OSA Seminar and Awards	<u>Niranjan Mishra</u>	ONT	705-522-3909
	<u>Birendra Jena</u>	OH	330-494-2618
Art and Culture	<u>Pratap Das</u>	MD	301-972-8059
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	<u>Purna Patnaik</u>	CA	760-436-8277
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	<u>Santanu Das</u>	OK	918-361-7472

Dear Friends

Namaskar. On behalf of OSA National Executives, I have painted this issue of Utkarsa for you using the colors of my imagination. However, this is an experimental step and the success of this experiment depends on your feedback. In 1998, then OSA Editor Gyana R. Patnaik under the presidency of Mrs Gopa Patnaik had taken this step before me. The tradition only survived for a year. I hope that does not happen again.



My heartfelt thanks are due to all the contributors for providing ornaments to decorate Utkarsa. Although, my imagination has not taken shape completely in this issue, I still believe Utkarsa's 2004 winter issue would be appreciated by the members and the tradition of an OSA winter publication would survive. May this New Year fulfill your wishes and bring new hopes in you! – Bigyani Das, Editor

Call for nominations for office bearers of the OSA for the period 2005-2007

The election commission of the OSA would like to invite nominations for the following office bearers of the OSA for the period 2005-2007. This year there will be **four** elected officials rather than three as in the previous elections.

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer.



Tenure, Eligibility and Responsibilities of candidates;

- The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for a term of two years.
- These four executive officials must be life members or patrons or benefactors of OSA in good standing and must be 21 years of age or over.
- The Vice President shall be a running mate of the President. A vote for the President shall mean a vote for his/her running mate.
- The Secretary and Treasurer will be separately elected, but will work as a team with the President for smooth operation of the OSA.

Please refer to the Constitution of OSA and recent amendments at the website www.orissasociety.org for more information on the election process, and powers and functions of these office bearers.

Nominations must reach any member of the election commission on or before Feb 28th, 2005.

Election Commission for the 2005 election of the OSA office bearers;

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Brown and Associates Inc. Professional Printers

Tom Sikorsky

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Columbia, MD 21046

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ନମସ୍କାର । ନୂଆବର୍ଷର ଅନେକ ଅନେକ ଶୁଭକାମନା । ମୋ କଳ୍ପନା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣାଳୀର ରଙ୍ଗରେ ରଙ୍ଗାଇ ଓସାର କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତାମାନଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ଭକ୍ତର ଓ ସଂଖ୍ୟାତିକୁ ମୁଁ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ନିମନ୍ତେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରିଛି । ତେବେ ଏ ଏକ ପରୀକ୍ଷାମୂଳକ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ଓ ଏ ପରୀକ୍ଷାର ସଫଳତା ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ମତାମତ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ । ଭକ୍ତର ଓ ସଂଖ୍ୟାତି ପାଇଁ ଅଙ୍ଗ ଆଭିଷେକ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେଇଥିବା ସମସ୍ତ ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ଯଦିଓ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପେ ମୋର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ରୂପାନ୍ତର ଘଟିନି, ତଥାପି ଆଶା ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ, ଭକ୍ତର ଓ ସଂଖ୍ୟାତି ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଆଦୃତ ହେବ ଓ ଓସାର ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତାମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଶୀଘ୍ରକାଳୀନ ପ୍ରକାଶନର ପ୍ରଥା ହୋଇ ବଞ୍ଚି ରହିବ । ତୁଟି ଥିଲେ ମାର୍ଜନା କରିବେ । ନୂଆବର୍ଷ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ସୁଖ, ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଭରିଦେଇ ନୂଆଆଶାର କିରଣ ବିସ୍ତାରିବେ । ଏହାହିଁ କାମନା । – ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, ସମ୍ପାଦକ

Every OSA Member an Ambassador of OSA (Editorial)

Bigyani Das

It was the Christmas Eve of 1998. I was a new employee at Goddard Space Flight Center, NASA. The day before Christmas Eve it had snowed heavily and although on Christmas Eve the snow had stopped, the roads were still icy. Irrespective of my husband's warnings, I started for work. It was my new job and I wanted to prove myself the best taking risks, sacrificing personal comfort and trying to exceed the expectations.

Oh! No! This cannot happen? My Mazda 626 had slid in the slope of the exit lane to Rt 295 from Rt 32 in Columbia. The engine was running and making violent noise. There were a few vehicles on the road and the passengers of the vehicles did not notice my helplessness. After sitting in shocked state for a while, I came outside and was terrified to discover piles of slippery ice patches all around my car. I tried to turn the steering wheel, but it only made things worse. The wheels circled crunching ice and the sound increased my heart beat. The life was not so convenient with cell phones then and so there was no way of communication. I just waited for some miracle to happen.

The miracle did happen. Just before my heart froze hundred percent, the warmth came from the friendly smiling faces of two gentlemen who noticed my problem and were coming for my rescue. One of the two strangers sat on the driver's seat and started turning the wheel while the other stranger poured sand around the front wheels and started giving instructions. Together they were able to bring my car up to the road. Suspicion came to my mind, "If they take away my car? Then what?" Soon the stranger on the driver's seat came outside and said, "Now everything is fine. Please drive carefully and slowly when there are ice patches." I was dumb found and I could not even ask their names. However, I thanked them. They wished me "Merry Christmas" and vanished in their car. Although I am Hindu and I believe in Hindu philosophy, I equally respect the people who believe in Christianity as true Christians. My belief became strong as rock solid because of

As OSA members,
you all are
ambassadors of OSA.



those two people, who were true ambassadors of Christ, the Holy Spirit, not just in talk, but in action.

Friends, as OSA members, you all are ambassadors of OSA. Irrespective of whether you are a National OSA executive or a local OSA chapter executive or not, you have a significant role. OSA is recognized through your voice, through your judgment and through your action. If OSA should be considered as a successful organization, it could be only through you all. If OSA should be considered as a nurturing, caring and strong social base, it could only be through you all. OSA is us. We constitute OSA. You all have the ability to be the ambassadors of OSA.

Be an OSA Ambassador.
Happy New Year 2005.
Bigyani Das



OSA Awards

Nivedita Mohanty, VP

Various OSA awards are given to members to recognize their contribution to OSA as well as to the Oriya name. These awards are: **Distinguished Oriya, Kalashree, Subrina Biswal, Youth Volunteer, Utkalamani Gopabandhu Das Memorial, and Yuva Kala Vikash Award.** We request that the members recognize their friends and fellow Oriyas by sending nominations.

The due date of nomination is February 28, 2005.

This date has been chosen to make sure that the award recipients get adequate time to plan to attend the convention and personally receive the award. For the description of the awards, nomination format and other questions, please refer to the award page at <http://www.orissasociety.org>.

Thank you for helping OSA.

Note: Award nomination forms will be available at our OSA web site by **January 8th, 2005.** We request the nominators to use the respective forms to nominate the candidates for different awards.

Teaching and Learning From Disorder

In teaching others, we teach ourselves.

Lalu Mansinha

Something strange was going on in a lecture in Rm135 of the Physics Building at the University of Western Ontario in Canada in the first week of October 1965. A brown

skinned gawky young man, with ill fitting and mismatched tie and jacket, was lecturing to a class of 60 or so mostly white male students on some aspect of second year mathematics. What was strange was the fact that the students in the class were paying no attention whatsoever to the lecturer.

The students chatted with each other, joked, laughed, ate breakfast, read the newspapers or doodled — everything but pay attention to the lecture and the lecturer.

That lecturer was me. I had finished my PhD, but had failed to get a position in India. I finally landed a temporary one year position as a replacement for someone going on a sabbatical leave. I was given a title of 'Visiting Lecturer' in the Dept. of Geophysics. My duties initially included teaching two

courses in Geophysics. Then one day the head of Applied Mathematics, John Blackwell, a crusty Australian, came looking for 'This new Mansinha chap'. He told me that there was a sudden vacancy and they desperately needed an instructor to teach math for a second year

engineering class. I told him that my background was in Geology, and that I did not know much math. He brushed aside my objections.



The author in a Seismic Exploration Truck, at IIT Khargpur in 1958

Engineering students had a campus reputation of rowdy behaviour. From the beginning the students were noisy in my class. But it simply had gone from

bad to worse. It was so noisy in the class that even the students who were interested could not hear anything. My requests for silence were simply ignored. If I could not restore order in my class, my academic career would be very short.

I could only speculate on the reasons for the disorder in my class. The students could have been just boisterous, part of growing up on the campus, or, it could be that they were reacting to the fact that I was a visible non-white. It was possible that the problem lay in me, in that I was born a subject of the British, felt uncomfortable in having the order of authority (white over brown) reversed. Or, perhaps, I was just diffident about not knowing enough in mathematics. Each or all of these factors could have been true.

There were very few non-whites in Canadian cities those days, and these kids had not seen a black or brown person ever, let alone one in authority. Their perception of non-whites came from TV and movies, and the brown or black skinned persons were invariably portrayed as inferior to whites. The attitude was reflected in Canadian immigration laws of the day, which allowed only 100 immigrants from India per year.

India was at that time portrayed in the western media as a country of starving millions, unable to feed itself, and dependant on shipments of food aid from Canada and US to avert famine. The wheat and milk powder was given free to India, but our country was so poor that we could not even pay for the shipping. They had to give the shipping as aid too. Even when the free ships arrived at Indian ports, we had no grain handling machinery. So the US and Canadian public saw video clips, not of a modern functioning democracy, but of this ant like activity at Indian ports of hundreds of port workers unloading the grains ever so slowly, headload by headload.

The students in my class must have wondered as to why was it that they had to be taught by someone from an impoverished third world country of no particular distinction except poverty.

These days a child growing up in India can see a galaxy of Indian names of international standing in virtually every field of endeavour: S.Chadrashankar in Astrophysics, Lakshmi Mittal in Steel, H. Khorana in Molecular Biology, Sabeer Bhatia in Hotmail, A.R. Rahman in pop music, Ravi Shankar in Sitar, Sekhar Kapur in movies; Rohinton Mistry in literature; and on and on. In my youth there were so few persons who were recognized outside for their achievements. Rabindranath Tagore, C.V. Raman, Srinivas Ramanujan, Mahatma Gandhi were part of a very short list.

In British India, a nation ruled by Britain, the choice well paid senior positions were for the British. From childhood we knew and were made aware of a ceiling on our ambitions. I wanted to be a scientist, with some vague notions of carrying out research, but with an ambition of becoming a lecturer in, perhaps, Ravenshaw College, and certainly with no illusions of achieving anything substantial. Growing up in Orissa, never in my dreams did I imagine that I would be good enough to be a scientist and a faculty member in a North American University. Days after I first arrived in Canada as a student, I was most astonished to be addressed as 'Sir' by waiters, sales people etc. In India I had never heard a white say 'Sir' to an Indian. The whites were the ruling class. The Indians were the ruled. There was no question of equality. Therefore I could not imagine that I, a member of the ruled class, would be teaching a group of white students, clearly of the ruling class. In my manner and bearing there may have been a differential attitude towards the white students.

I had no formal degree in mathematics. I had not taken any graduate or undergraduate course in mathematics in US or Canada. Whatever math I knew was from subsidiary courses in India. So my ignorance was vast. During that first year, 1965-66, I studied intensely, spending something like six hours for each hour of lecture. Most of the time I knew just enough to deliver the day's lecture and not much more. Most of that year, I was barely ahead of the class in knowledge. Students had a sense about these things and they perhaps guessed at the lack of depth of knowledge to my lectures.

Being a novice faculty member with no tenure, I was only too aware that failure to maintain class discipline could not be beneficial to my career. I could not turn to the Head of Dept. or the Dean for help. A senior faculty coming in and ordering the class to listen to me would have further diminished me in the eyes of the students.

I was on my own. How to gain control of the class? How do I teach a group of students to listen, to pay respect and learn?

Slowly a solution evolved in my mind. I had noticed that most of the unruly behaviour in the class

was caused by groups of friends who sat in clusters. If only I could find a way to break up the clusters permanently, most of the other problems would be easy to resolve. One day I decided to act. I started lecturing normally and as before, the students kept chatting away, scarcely pausing. After about 5 minutes, I stopped talking and banged loudly on the table with the duster. The noise made them pause and take notice, with surprised looks at this unexpected

Being a novice faculty member with no tenure, I was only too aware that failure to maintain class discipline could not be beneficial to my career.

intrusion. I spoke slowly, loudly and deliberately. I told them as to how furious I was with the behaviour of the class during my lectures. I told them that things have to

change, starting NOW. I stated my name (I had done this in the first lecture but doubted that anyone remembered). Then I requested each student to introduce him/herself. 'Please stand up and state your name, year and program, then sign on the sheet', I said loudly, and with all the sense of authority I could muster.

I had taken a big risk. The students did not respect me anyway. What if they did not listen to me, did not obey? But I had no alternative. This was the only path.

At first nothing happened, as the students tried to comprehend what I said. Then the first student, at the beginning of the first row, stood up and gave his name, year and program. Then the next one, and the next one. I heaved a sigh of relief. I passed around a sheet on which each signed in.

There was more to my plan. Next I told them — 'I will assign the seat at which each one will sit till the end of term, starting NOW'. Again, I heaved a sigh of relief as each one meekly moved to the seat that I pointed to. With the shock of the new development, and with the clusters of friends broken up, a pin-drop silence ensued. Each student sat meek and modest, looking demurely downwards. The silence was strange, unusual. Then I resumed lecturing.

To my pleasant surprise, several students stayed on after the class and thanked and congratulated me for taking charge and restoring order. From that day, I never had a discipline problem in that class or any other course in subsequent years in my long teaching career. With the normal class atmosphere established and my confidence in myself restored, the quality of my teaching improved. The students also enjoyed the lectures more and discovered that mathematics was interesting and useful.



With geophysics graduate students in a field course in Northern Ontario around 1970. The author is on the left.

One day, four years after the above episodes, students in the same course broke out into cheers and gave me a standing ovation as I walked into the class. There were congratulatory messages to me written on the board. They were so proud of me, and so proud to be taught by me. The perception of me in the student's eyes had changed around completely. From being a gawky brown skinned guy from a starving third world country, I became, in their eyes, a noted, famous scientist. What had happened was that one particular research by I and my coworker Doug Smylie was noticed by the media and we were on radio, TV and newspapers worldwide.

What the students did not realize was the contribution that they and all the past students in that course had made to my growth as a scientist. As I struggled during that first year to really understand the subject so that I could teach it properly, I was really laying for myself the foundations of calculus, algebra, vectors, Fourier series, matrices etc. As I tried to answer the questions of the students, I was clarifying the concepts for myself. My proficiency and skills in mathematics, physics and computation grew. Within a few years I became more and more confident in my ability to tackle the theoretical basis for many of the

unsolved geophysics problems. The quality of my research and my presentations at scientific meetings also improved. With the clarity of concepts in my mind, the quality of my teaching in other courses also improved. Perhaps the best compliments of my abilities came when I was invited by colleagues in the Dept. of Applied Mathematics to join as a Professor of Applied Mathematics.

There was an irony in that I was offered a faculty position in Canada in Mathematics, without a degree in that subject. Decades before, my father, Dr. Mayadhar Mansinha, who was already a well known published Oriya poet by the time he finished his B.A., was rejected for a faculty position in Oriya at Ravenshaw College, because he was judged as not qualified to teach Oriya, because he did not have post-graduate degree in Oriya, only in English literature.

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Lalu Mansinha is an Adjunct Research Professor in the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. His current research interests include S-transforms (a method of local spectral analysis of time series and images, similar to wavelet transforms); and Newtonian gravitational physics.

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ଦିଗମ୍ବର ମିଶ୍ର

ତାଙ୍କର ଯେ କେତେ ପ୍ରେମ ଥିଲା ଜଣା ନାହିଁ
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ମୋର ବା କଣ ଚାରା ?
 ଏକ ନିର୍ଭୀକ ପ୍ରେମିକର ଛଳନା ଛଡ଼ା
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 ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କ ଭାରୀ ଭାରୀ ଛାତିର ବୋଝକୁ



ଉତ୍ସାହର ଭରସା ଦିଏନା
 କିମ୍ବା ତାଙ୍କ ଅଭୁଲା ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ମୁଁ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ କରି ପରାସ୍ତ କରେନା

ଏମିତି ଅନେକ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା
 ଏବଂ ବହୁ ପ୍ରେମକଥା ପଛରେ ପକାଇ
 ପରେ ଶୁଣାଗଲା ଯେ ସବୁ ସମୁଦ୍ର ଡେଇଁ ସେ ଉଡ଼ିଗଲେ ତାଙ୍କ
 ପବନ ଘରକୁ ।

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ମା ପାଇଁ ଏକ କବିତା

ଅମରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଖଟୁଆ

୧ କିଛି ଟଂକା ଦେଇଛି

ଟଂକା ଉପରେ ମା'ର ଚିତ୍ର ଯଦି
ଆଙ୍କି ପାରିଥାନ୍ତି ରିଜର୍ଭ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କର
ଟଂକା ଛାପିବା କଳରେ

ବୋଧେ ମା'ର ରଣ କିଛି ସୁଝିପାରିଥାନ୍ତି
ଏଇ ଜନ୍ମରେ !

★

୨ କିନ୍ତୁ ଏମିତି

ବଞ୍ଚି ସଫଳତାର ବରଗଛ ବନେଇଦେଲିଣି
ନିଜକୁ । ନାଁ, ଯଶ ଓ ଠିକଣାର
ଓହ୍ଲ ସବୁ ଏବେ ଚାରିପାଖରେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ବାରଂବାର
ଜୀବନଯାପନର ରୁଟିନ୍ ସାରା
ଶୂନ୍ୟତା ଏକ
ବାଧ୍ୟକରେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ।

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଭିତରେ ମୁଁ ସବୁବେଳେ
ଫେରି ଯାଉଥାଏ ମା' ପାଖକୁ ।

★

୩ ପତ୍ନୀକୁ କହିଛି ।
ପ୍ରେମିକାକୁ ।

ପୁଅକୁ ଜଣାଇଛି ।
ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ।

ଅଥଚ ଏମିତି ବର୍ଷବର୍ଷର
ନିର୍ବାସନ ଭିତରୁ
ଯେମିତି ମା'କୁ ମୁଁ ନିର୍ବାସିତ କରି ଦେଇଛି ।

★

୪ ଏବେ ବୟସର ଶୀତରତ୍ନରେ
ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଅକ୍ଷାୟ ଆଡ଼ି
ଏତେ ଅପରିଚିତ ନଥାଏ
ଏବେ ଜୀବନର ସମସ୍ତ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ



ସଫଳତାକୁ ପାଖରେ ଆଣି
ନିଜକୁ ବାଃ ବାଃ କରିବା ସମୟରେ
କିଛି ପରିଚିତ ନଥାଏ ।

ମା'ର ଚିତ୍ର ଆଖିପତା ପଡ଼ିବା ଆଗରୁ
ଓ ଆଖିରେ ବିସ୍ମୟ ଖୋଲିବା ଆଗରୁ
ସେମିତି ଥାଏ ।

★

୫ ସମସ୍ତ ଚକ୍ରବ୍ୟୁହର ଦୁହ୍ନୁକୁ ତ
ତୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ଜାଣୁଥାଉ ଓ ସବୁ
ପତନର ଠିକ୍ ଆଗରୁ ଏମିତି
ତୋ ପଶତରେ ଉଠେଇନଉ ମୋ
ଅପତୟକୁ ଓ ପରାଜୟକୁ ।
ତୋ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗର ଅନୁକଂପାରେ ଝଲମଲ
କରୁ ମୋ ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ଓ ବରାଭୟକୁ ।

ବାରମ୍ବାର ଫେରିବି
ମୋ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଓ ମାର୍ମିକର
ଜେଲଘର ଭିତରୁ ତୋ ପାଖକୁ ମା
ଏଇ ଜୀବନରେ ।

★

୬ ଏତେ ନାଁ ଶୁଣିଲିଣି
ମା'ର । ସାରା ପୃଥିବୀରେ, ଏତେ ଡାକ
ଏତେ ନିର୍ଭୟା, ଏତେ ବରଦାନ ।

ମୁଁ ଏମିତି ମା ପାଖକୁ ଫେରିଯିବାର
ଶିଖାଗାନରେ
ଜନ୍ମେଜୟ, ଜାତିସ୍ମର ଓ ଏତେ ସାଧାରଣ !

★ ★ ★

Amarendra Khatua works at Indian Embassy, New York as the minister at the office of ambassador-at-large for non-resident Indians and people of Indian origin. He is an eminent Oriya poet with many publications to his credit.

ପୁରସ୍କାର

ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର

ଅଙ୍କ ଦଉଡ଼ାରେ ଅଙ୍କଟା ସିନା ଠିକ୍ କରି ଦେଲା, ମାତ୍ର ଦଉଡ଼ାରେ ପଛରେ ପଡ଼ି ସୁକାନ୍ତ ପୁରସ୍କାର ପାଇବାରୁ ବଂଚିତ ହେଲା । କାସ୍ତରେ ଗଣିତରେ ସବୁଠାରୁ ବେଶୀ ନମ୍ବର ରଖିଲେ ବି, ଅନେକ ତଳେ ଥିବା ସାଥୀ ବନମାଳୀ ଅଙ୍କଟା ଠିକ୍ କରିଥିଲା, ଜୋରରେ ଦଉଡ଼ିଥିଲା ଓ ପୁରସ୍କାର ପାଇଥିଲା ।

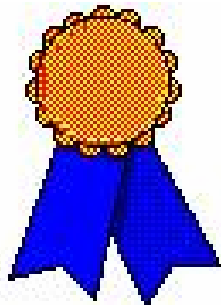
ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ସ୍କୁଲ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ଅପୁରସ୍କୃତ ସୁକାନ୍ତ ରାତିସାରା କାନ୍ଦିଥିଲା, ଷୋଭରେ, ଗ୍ଳାନିରେ ଓ ଅପମାନରେ । ହେଡ୍ ପଞ୍ଜିଡ଼େ ଜଗୁ ଦଳାଇ ତାକୁ ଚେତେଇ ଦେଲେ- ବାବୁରୋ! ଖାଲି ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିଲେ କଣ ହେବ- ସଂସାରରେ ଉପରକୁ ଉଠିବାକୁ ହେଲେ- ଜୋରରେ ଧାଇଁବାକୁ ହେବ । ଧାଁ ଦଉଡ଼ର ଏ ଜୀବନ ।

ଦଶ ବର୍ଷର ପିଲା ସୁକାନ୍ତ ବା ଏ କଥାର ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ କଣ ଜାଣନ୍ତା? ପଞ୍ଜିଡ଼େ ସଞ୍ଜୁକୁ କେଜାଣି କେତେଥର କହୁଥାନ୍ତି ସେଇ ଢଗ-ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବି, କାଳିଆ ଘୋଡ଼ାରେ ଚଢ଼ିବି, ମଧୁବାବୁ ସଂଗେ ଲଢ଼ିବି ।

କଣ ଜାଣିଛ ବଡ଼ ନୁହେଁ, କିଏ ତୁମକୁ ଜାଣିଛି ସେଇଟା ବଡ଼, ତୁମେ କାହାକୁ ଜାଣିଛ, ତହୁଁ ବଡ଼ ।

ପାଠ ପଢ଼ା- ଘୋଡ଼ା ଚଢ଼ା- ଆଉ- ଲଢ଼ିବାର ସଂସାରରେ କୋଉଟା ଆଗ ଆଉ କୋଉଟା ପଛ, ଭାବିଲା ବେଳକୁ ସୁକାନ୍ତ ନିଜେ ନିଜେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୁଏ, କୋଉଟା କେତେବେଳେ କେମିତିଭାବରେ ସଂପାଦନା କରିବ ।

ସୁକାନ୍ତ ମନଦେଇ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିଲା, କୃତିଛାତ୍ରର ସମ୍ମାନ ପାଇଲା; ଗୁକିରିରେ ପାଦ ଦେଲା ପରେ ଦେଖିଲା, ଅଙ୍କ ଠିକ୍ ଥିଲେ କଣ ହେବ - ଜୋରରେ ଦଉଡ଼ି ପାରୁନି ସେ । କଳା ଘୋଡ଼ା ବଦଳରେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ କଳା ସାଇକେଲରୁ ନୀଳ ଝୁଟର କିଣିଲା, ହେଲେ ଲଢ଼ାଇ କରିବ କାହା ସହିତ?



ସଜୋଟ, ସାଧୁ, କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ପରାୟଣ, ନୀତିବାନ୍ କର୍ମଗୁରୀ ହେଲେବି ପଦୋନ୍ନତି ପାଇପାରିଲାନି, ନିଜକୁ ନିଜେ କାରଣର ଅନୁଧ୍ୟାନ କଲା- ଏ ପରିଶତ ବୟସରେ ଦଉଡ଼ିବା ଦରକାର ନାହିଁ ।

ଧରାଧରି ଦରକାର, ଚୋଷାମଦ ଦରକାର, ପରିଚୟ ଓ ପ୍ରଗୁର ଦରକାର, ଏତକ ନକଲେ ପଦୋନ୍ନତିରୁ ବଂଚିତ ହେବ । କେତେଯେ କନିଷ୍ଠ, ଅପାରଗ ଅଥଚ ଧରାଧରିରେ ନିପୁଣ ଉଦ୍ୟୋଗୀ ସହକର୍ମୀ ପଦୋନ୍ନତି ପାଇଲେଣି ।

ପିଲା ଦିନର ଗପ ଲେଖା, କବିତା ଲେଖା ସେମିତି ରଖିଥିଲା ସୁକାନ୍ତ-ଛପାଏ କେବେ କେବେ ପତ୍ର ପତ୍ରିକାରେ, ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଦେଇଥିଲା ଛଦ୍ମନାମ ସାତ୍ୟକୀ, ପରେ ପରେ ଦେଲା ନିଜ ନାଁ । କେତେ ଯେ ବାର୍ଷିକ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଉତ୍ସବ ସରିଲାଣି- ସବୁଥରେ ସେ ଦେଖିଆସୁଛି, ଯିଏ ପୁରସ୍କାର ପାଇଛି, ସେ କିଛିନା କିଛି ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ପଦବୀରେ ରହିଛି । ହୁଏତ ଆଇ-ଏ-ଏସ୍, ଆଲାଏଡ୍, ରାଜନୀତିର ପ୍ରଖ୍ୟାତ ଖେଳାଳି ବା ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ପ୍ରାଧ୍ୟାପକ ଯାହା ସହିତ ରହିଛି ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏକାଡେମୀର ବିଗୁରକ ମାନଙ୍କ ସଂବଧ କିଛି ନା କିଛି ।

ଦେହ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ହୋଇଗଲା - ଏଇଟା ଚିହ୍ନାଚିହ୍ନିର ଯୁଗ । ପ୍ରଗୁରର ଯୁଗ । କଣ ଜାଣିଛ ବଡ଼ ନୁହେଁ, କିଏ ତୁମକୁ ଜାଣିଛି ସେଇଟା ବଡ଼, ତୁମେ କାହାକୁ ଜାଣିଛ, ତହୁଁ ବଡ଼ । ଯିଏ ରହିଗଲା ପଛରେ, ରହିଯାଏ; ଯିଏ ଆଗେଇଛି ଥରେ, ଆହୁରି ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଛି ।

ସତୀର୍ଥ ଶୁଭେନ୍ଦୁ ଯୋଉଦିନ ସରକାରୀ ଉଦ୍ୟୋଗର ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ ସ୍ଥାନ ପାଇଲା, ମୁଖ୍ୟ ପରିଗୁଳକ ହୋଲା, ଏବ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅକ୍ଷର ନ ଜାଣି 'ଓଡ଼ିଆ-ସାହିତ୍ୟ-ଗୌରବ' ପୁରସ୍କାର ପାଇଲା, ସୁକାନ୍ତ ବୁଝିପାରିଲା- ଏ ସବୁ ଉପାଧି ଏମିତି ବଜାରରେ ବିକିହୁଏ ।

ନିଜ ଦେଶ, ଆଉ ନିଜ ଜାତିରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରହିବାକୁ ଏକ ସ୍ଥିର ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ କରି ଯୋଉଦିନ ସୁକାନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଛାଡ଼ିଲା- ତାହା ଥିଲା ଏକ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ, ଷୋଭ ଓ ଗ୍ଳାନିର ବୃତ୍ତାନ୍ତ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ।

ସୁକାନ୍ତ ବିଦେଶରେ ଏକ ଛୋଟ ସହରରେ ନିଜର ଛୋଟ ସଂସାର ଗଢ଼ିବାକୁ ନିଷ୍ଠିତ କଲା ।

ବିଦେଶରେ ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ବସା କରିବା ଏତେ ସହଜ ନୁହେଁ । ବିଶେଷ କରି ମଧ୍ୟ ବୟସରେ, ନୂଆକରି ଗୃହିଣୀ କରି ଏକ ଛୋଟ ସହରରେ ଯେଉଁଠି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବୋଲି କହିଲେ ବିଦେଶୀ ମାନେ ପଚାରନ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଶା କେଉଁ ଦେଶରେ, ସେଇଠି ସେ ବସବାସ କଲା । ଅଣଓଡ଼ିଆ କେଲଜଣ ସେଇଠି ବାସିନ୍ଦା, ବେଶ୍ ସୁଦୃଢ଼ ସେମାନେ ।

ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆମି ବଂଚେଇ ରଖିବାକୁ, ସେଇ ଯୋଉ ଆବେଦନ ତାର- ସେସବୁ ଏତିହେଲାନି । ଯେତେଥର ଆସନ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନୃତ୍ୟକଳାର କୃତୀସଂପନ୍ନ କଳାକାର- ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି ସୁକାନ୍ତ ଆୟୋଜନ କରେ ମନୋରଂଜନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ । କେତେଯେ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଭାରତୀୟ ବିଖ୍ୟାତ କଳାକାର, ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତିକ ଖ୍ୟାତି ସଂପନ୍ନ ସେମାନେ । ଛୋଟ ସେଇ ସହରରେ ବେଶ୍ ଆଦୃତ ହେଲା ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କଳା ।

ଭଲ ହେଉ ବା ମନ୍ଦ ହେଉ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅଭିଶପ୍ତ ବାତ୍ୟାବେଳେ, ସେଇ ଛୋଟ ସହରରେ ସଭିଏଁ ଅଜାତି ଦେଲେ ସ୍ନେହଭରା ଦାନ -
- ରିଲିଫ୍ ସଂଗଠନ ଲାଗି ଛୋଟ ଏଇ ସହରର ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ ଆସିଲେ କେତେଜଣ ତରୁଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସ୍ନାତକୋତର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଲାଗି । ସଭିଙ୍କୁ ଘରେ ରଖି ଆତିଥ୍ୟ ଦେଖାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବଡ଼ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ଭଳି ସସ୍ଥୀକ ସ୍ନେହ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ସେଇମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚର ବେସମ୍ପର୍କରେ କରିଛନ୍ତି ବସନ୍ତପଞ୍ଚମୀ, ହୋଲି, ବିଷୁବମିଳନ, ରଜ, ଜୁମାର ପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା କେତେ କଣ ? ବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା ଭିତରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ବା ସମୟ ମିଳେ, କବିତା ଆଉ ଗପ ଲେଖି ପଠେଇଛନ୍ତି ଦୁରାନ୍ତକୁ- ପିଲାଦିନର ସାଙ୍ଗ ସୁଧାଂଶୁର ପଢ଼ିକାକୁ । ସବୁକୁ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରି ରଖନ୍ତି, ଦିନେ, ଅବସର ପରେ, ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିବେ ଓ ଲେଖିବେ ନିଜର ଜୀବନୀ । କେତେଯେ ଆଶା ।

ହଠାତ୍ ସେଦିନ ଫେମ୍ପରେ ବଂଧୁ ଅନିରୁଦ୍ଧ ଜଣାଇଲେ “ସିକାଗୋର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ତୁମକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପ୍ରତିଭା ପୁରସ୍କାର ମିଳିଛି । ତମେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଆସ- କାଲି ‘ଫଳକ’ ପ୍ରଦାନ ହେବ ।”

ସୁକାନ୍ତ ହସିଲେ- ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ମତେ କାହିଁକି ମିଳିଲା, ମୋଠୁଁ ତାମତା ଅଛନ୍ତି । କାଲି ବା କେମିତି ଯିବି ? ଏତେ ଦୂର ।

“ଆସିବେ ଯେମିତି ହେଲେ- ନଇଲେ ଆମେ ମନ ଦୁଃଖ କରିବୁ ।” ଯାଇପାରିଲେନି ସୁକାନ୍ତ । ବୋର୍ଡ଼ ମିଟିଂ- ଗୃହିଣୀ ତ ଏମିତି ଯାଉଛି, ଆସୁଛି ।

ପୁନଶ୍ଚ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇ ଆଶୁଷ୍ଟ ହେଲେ ସୁକାନ୍ତ । କେବେ କେବେ ସମୟ ମିଳିଲେ ସୁକାନ୍ତ ଖୋଲି ବସନ୍ତି ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ । ଭାବିଥିଲେ ଏ ସମ୍ମାନ, ପ୍ରତିଭା କଥା ନେଇ କେହିକେହି ସାଙ୍ଗ ସଂବର୍ଦ୍ଧନା

ଜଣାଇଥିବେ ।

ଦୁର୍ବଳ ମନତ !

ମାତ୍ର ଏ କଣ ?

ସମାଲୋଚନା- ବିଗୁରକ ମଣ୍ଡଳୀକୁ ଭର୍ତ୍ସନା । ସୁକାନ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଚିହ୍ନିନଥିବା କେତେଜଣ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ ଆଉ ସମାଲୋଚକଙ୍କ ଡିରଞ୍ଜର ଆଉ କରୁଛି । ସେଇମାନେ ତ ବିଦେଶରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଆଉ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଜନନୀୟକ ।

ଢିଙ୍କି ସ୍ୱର୍ଗକୁ ଗଲେ ବି ଧାନ କୁଟିବ । “ଅସୁୟାରେ ପ୍ରବୀର, ଖଳବୁଦ୍ଧିରେ ପ୍ରବୁଦ୍ଧ ଏଇ ଜନନୀୟକ ମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଯାହା କରିଥାନ୍ତେ, ଏଠିବି ସେଇଆ କରିବେ । ପ୍ରକୃତି ନୈବମୁର୍ୟତେ - ପାଲା ଗାୟକଙ୍କର ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭଗ ବଚନ……

ସୁକାନ୍ତଙ୍କ ମନ ଦବିଗଲା । ଭାବୁଥିଲେ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବେ- “ହେ ବଂଧୁ । ଏ ପୁରସ୍କାର ଅଯାଚିତ । କାହିଁକି ବା ମିଳିଲା ମୋତେ- କି ସୁଖ ଦେଲା ?” ଜୀବନର ଅପରାହ୍ଣରେ କିଏ ବା କେଉଁ କାରଣରୁ ତାଙ୍କର ପରିଚୟ ବିହୀନ ଜୀବନର ଅଧ୍ୟାୟତକ ଅନୁଧ୍ୟାନ କରି ଏ ଅନାଂକାକ୍ଷିତ ପୁରସ୍କାର କୋଳରେ ଥୋଇଦେଲା ।

ସୁକାନ୍ତ ମନକୁ ମନ ରୁପ୍ ରହିଲେ । ଭାବୁଥିଲେ ସେଇ ଗୁଣଗ୍ରାହୀ ବଂଧୁ, ସ୍କୁଲ ଜୀବନର ସୁଦୃଢ଼ ଅନିରୁଦ୍ଧକୁ ଜଣାଇ ଦେବେ-ପୁରସ୍କାର ବିବର୍ଜିତ, ନିନ୍ଦା-ପ୍ରଶଂସାକୁ ସମ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ରୂପ ଦେଇ ସମତଳ ପଥରେ ସାରାଜୀବନ ପଥକ ସାଜି ସେ ବରଂ ଖୁବ୍ ଆଶୁଷ୍ଟ ଥିଲେ । ହେଲେ ଖେଦ ରହିଲା - ଏ ଫଳକ, ଏ ପୁରସ୍କାରର ଅବମାନନା ଅକ୍ଷମଣୀୟ ।

ହେଲେ ସେ କିଛି କହିପାରିଲେନି, କି କିଛି କରିପାରିଲେନି । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପ୍ରତିଭା’ର ଫଳକକୁ ଧରି ସେ ସ୍ୱଗତୋକ୍ତି କଲେ

“ଅପୁରସ୍କୃତ ରହିବା ଶତଗୁଣେ ଭଲ” ।

Niranjan Mishra stays in Sudbury, Canada. He has received many awards including OSA's Kalashree Award for his life long effort in preserving Oriya/Indian culture in Canada.

Mirror

Sri Gopal Mohanty

The train had to carry me away from Balasore in June 1951, leaving behind my tear laden father almost alone in the platform. I was heading towards Delhi for studying Statistics and this became my involuntary beginning to renounce my connection with my village, parents, relatives, friends and what not that I dearly possessed since my day of birth. Yet my uncontrollable curiosity about the outside world beyond my limited surrounding and my Orissa was trying to tear away my nostalgic bondage.

It could have been my mother who would have grudged my departure. But she was different. I must study and do well – was her determined desire. During war time she would stay whole evening with an indigenous kerosene lamp (dibiri) or in darkness with my brother and sisters so that I could take the only lantern for my study. (My father Raghu Nath Mohanty, was a school teacher with a meager salary at American Baptist Mission School, Balasore.) During my high school study, she would not let me go to see late night village jattras or theatres, but she encouraged me to attend them inside the village when I was small. Later in my life, I was mesmerized to follow the beacon of her desire.

I took pride in seeing my only school bag, umbrella and lantern, still there even after many years of leaving school. Once I lost my umbrella in the school. My mother sent me many times to enquire about it and to my good luck I found it. The bag had to be repaired several times for my use. They remained my life long companion – I learnt the value of small things. Don't waste, there are others who are deprived of what is thrown away (even we were not allowed to drop a grain of rice from the plate)– was a constant reminder.

Small values and big ones were coming to me even unnoticed, from my parents, community and my dear teachers, often through direct experience and

many a times from stories and anecdotes. Some of my teachers were brilliant in their teaching, but most of them were my honest gurus guiding me how to be a good person. I remember of one teacher who rushed along with us to the outside to show us the

wartime planes and at the same time taught us about Gandhiji and freedom movement. Today I feel lucky to be born in that unique period of India.

Occasionally, I solved some mathematical exercises in my dream and I would immediately get up with excitement. At the high school level I used to help others in Mathematics and never studied myself. But I had a fantasy to be an artist, because I was considered to be good in drawing, painting and sketching in my village and the school. A decision had to be taken to painfully sacrifice my stubborn artistic expressions, because those days to learn more in arts one had to go to Calcutta which we could not afford. I could not study Science either, because there was no Science curriculum in Balasore College the year I joined nor could I have the finance to study at Cuttack.

My village days were a cautious mixture of study (hardly any interest in languages or outside text books, but certainly on puzzles and quizzes), involvement in folk art like chita on wall, muruja art, floor designs in lily flowers during Kumara Purnima time and other community activities during festivals and ceremonies. Nevertheless, drama was my passion.

Although I was shy (and more or less so today in a large audience), I and my village friends managed to stage dramas within the outside walls of someone's house,

thereby not allowing others to see us. But one day, I was caught by my uncle who himself was an accomplished dramatist. He was harsh probably not to allow me to be associated too much with other boys who were not serious in their studies. Remnants of such childhood imprints spurt up now and then to mould me to what I am today.

My decision to study Statistics in Delhi had both an adventurous as well as an embarrassing aspect. Embarrassing because I could not answer the only questions at the interview for receiving Orissa Government stipend: "What do you mean by Statistics" and "Name a famous statistician in India" – I was simply a village folk. The adventurous aspect was nothing but my naïve dream of moving to the

I learnt the value of small things. Don't waste, there are others who are deprived of what is thrown away.

capital city. It was naïve since by deciding to join the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Statistical Wing, New Delhi, I lost an opportunity to join the prestigious Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta (I did not know much about either).

In Delhi, the cocooning impact of my village, school, college and even Orissa, Ravenshaw College, football teams, super-brilliance of so-called heroes and models which provided me a comforting shelter was shattered to no ends. I became classmates of the first class first student from Benaras Hindu University and students old and young from all over India. Yet my life took shelter

in a small Oriya community of Delhi and gradually accepted the challenge of being part of a minority group. I became an active part of Oriya Samaj, Delhi, the socio-cultural organization for Oriyas. That life was exciting because it provided the opportunity for the first time in my life to get into contact with the upper echelon of Oriya community. I learnt a different culture, even within a broader Oriya cultural ethos. There the accidental meeting with Kishori Charan Das, the young Accounts Officer and his wife Kumari Das (Kuma Apa, daughter of the then oldest parliament member, B. Das) took a different turn in my life. I was treated as a part of their family. Kishori Babu is an eminent Oriya short story writer who passed away only a few months back. But the real pleasure was the privilege of my association with both middle class (I considered myself to belong to this class) and labour class Oriyas.

I was very close to two gardeners of Birla Bhaban, Suryamani Samal and Raghunath Nayak. Nayak is remembered even today, as the person who caught Mahatma Gandhi's assassin, Nathuram Godse. They were highly respected in the community. We all sang, played music, performed drama, pala, cooked at picnic and celebrated festivals together, all in the name of my heritage (and of course, in the name of myself and my existence away from the village). In my youthful enthusiasm, I used to bike often more than 20 miles a day and to run around in burning hot summer days and bitterly cold winter nights for Samaj related jobs.

Indeed, after my study I went back to Orissa for a job, but the Government could not provide one.

So I returned to Delhi not to find a job either. But a murmuring whisper was in the air - I was advised to do research. This was another moment of

embarrassment for me: I did not know what exactly "research" was, although I saw a few around me boasting themselves adorned in so-called "research" cloak. A new beginning was made; I charted a new path in an unknown territory, only guided by a few blinking light here and there. Unlike all

statisticians of those days, my course was somewhat away from classical

Statistics and I was put on a direction called "Combinatorics", a branch of Mathematics, not very well-known then and to apply it to probability. Well, perhaps I was destined to be always in a minority group, no matter what!

Sure enough, I was in minority when I came to Canada in 1959, of all places to Edmonton, Alberta for my Ph.D.

Forget of seeing an Oriya, there was only a handful of Indian students in the campus. But my survival instinct led me to join those handful of students to form India

Association and I was taking an active role in its cultural activities. Our

popularity grew so much that we participated on a

UN Day event. Suddenly I was asked to comment on Kashmir issue which I avoided, the real reason being I did not know much about it. Yet, there in Edmonton, a



With Akshaya Mohanty during his first visit to Canada and Pratap Das of Washington DC



Srjan members and musicians during their 1996 tour of North America

subdued romantic youth within me led me to finish the Oriya novel “Kuanri Kanya” which I started from my Delhi days.

I moved to Buffalo as a faculty member in 1962. For the first time, I was experiencing the American culture, its concept of liberty, individualism, adventures and compassion. Of course, it was Kennedy era and in India that was Nehru era. We were very lucky indeed. Again for the first time, I was experiencing opulence, lavishness, extravaganza and a life for only pleasure sake, in the back drop of my mind covered with scenes of hunger, suffering and my people whom I left. Occasionally I had difficulty to convey the inner feelings to my American friends. The duality brought constant conflict and readjustment – the perennial challenge of a minority member. In the meantime, a transformation took place inside the house to a lively Oriya environment after my marriage. Soon in 1964, I joined McMaster University, Canada since then I am here.

A new beginning was made in 1969. From their basement level existence, Oriyas, although a few in number, dared to start an organization

called Orissa Society of Americas (OSA). In 1971, those living in and around this area, joined together for the first time in a ‘pakhalas’ party at our place and formed its chapter. Then their spontaneity and effusive exuberance ran sky high. And we jumped together, together as a team.

Those days, I was guided by a few thoughts. While I was in Delhi and even in earlier days here, I felt that Orissa and Oriyas were hardly existed in Indians’ mind. It was sometimes a humiliating feeling. I realized that if Orissa were to be given some recognition, it could be through her temples and art forms. Then Odissi came to my mind. Although, Odissi dance by sixties was well recognized and Indrani Rahman performed it in Montreal in 1960, many Indians and even Oriyas were ignorant of this dance form. My challenge since sixties was to popularize it in this continent in my modest way.

Who could help us? Certainly my Indian friends and even our Oriya community. That became my next objective. In the process, I became part of the group who formed India Canada Society here and worked hard to bring Sanjukta Panigrahi in 1976 which did not materialize. Being a member of minority community, to work in harmony with others became natural on my part.

But Oriyas themselves should recognize and be proud of their rich heritage - language, literature, music, dance, food and everything else. Some skeptics who would shyly prefer to look the other way might be persuaded to get a ‘wow’ feeling of what they inherit. Again the team work has succeeded.

Later in eighties, I felt skeptics have a reason to be so as long as Orissa and her people are at the lowest end of the economic scale. This problem is more daunting than earlier ones. Soon I saw a team embracing me into their fold and we became part of Sustainable Economic and Educational Development Society (SEEDS) to bring a new concept – sustainability - of development in the interior parts of Orissa. Orissa’s education and research standard come to my mind too. I try to contribute whatever I could.

Why Orissa or Oriyas? It is like working for myself. I come

from a village where working together is a way of life. Yet, I am an Indian, Canadian and an entity in the whole world and must learn to live with others in harmony.

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N.B. In 2002 OSA Souvenir Journal, I published an article “Prabashi Bhabare Mun” in Oriya, the content of which is almost the same as this one except a bit more elaborated. I am thankful to Bigyani Das for this article. She as the editor of Utkarsa, is determined to give a new dimension to the art of communication among members of our community.

Sri Gopal Mohanty is a Professor of Statistics and stays in Canada.



Pakahala Party at author’s house that formed Canada Chapter of OSA in summer 1971



The check dam built in 2002 by the people of Chauldia village, Balangir (SEEDS Project)

ବ୍ୟୟତ ବିହୀନ

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ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କର ଆଜି ଉଠୁଠୁ ଡେରି ହୋଇଗଲା । ଶନିବାର ହେଲେବି ସକାଳ ଛ'ଟାରେ ହିଁ ଉଠି ସପ୍ତାହର ଅନ୍ୟ ଦିନ ମାନଙ୍କ ଭଳି । ଏଇ ନିରୋଳା ସମୟ ଟିକକ ପାଇଁ ସେ ସାରା ସପ୍ତାହ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଶୁଭ୍ରା କଲେଜରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର । ସପ୍ତାହକ ପାଇଁ ପାଠ ପୁସ୍ତକ କରି ରଖନ୍ତି । ଛାତ୍ର ଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କର ଖାତା ଦେଖନ୍ତି । ଦୁଃଖ, ଭାରତରେ ଥିବା ନିଜ ଭଉଣୀ, ଭାଇ ବା ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ବନ୍ଧୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ଚିଠି ଲେଖନ୍ତି ବା ଅଧା ଲେଖା ଉପନ୍ୟାସଟିକୁ କିଛି ଆଗେଇ ନିଅନ୍ତି । ଶନିବାର ଓ ରବିବାର ସକାଳ ଛ'ରୁ ନଅଟା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଏ ସମୟ ତାଙ୍କର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନିଜସ୍ୱ । ତା'ପରେ, ସଞ୍ଚୟ ଓ ସୁଜୀତା ଜଣକ ପରେ ଜଣେ ଉଠି ଘରକୁ ଗହଳ କୋଳାହଳରେ ଭରନ୍ତି । ଶୁଭ୍ରା କାଗଜ କଲମ ବନ୍ଦ କରନ୍ତି । ସକାଳ ଜଳଖିଆ ଡିଆରି କରିବାକୁ ରୋଷେଇ ଘରକୁ ଉଠନ୍ତି । ସପ୍ତାହରେ ଏଇ ଦୁଇଦିନ ମାତ୍ର ସଞ୍ଚୟ ଓ ସୁଜୀତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଇଚ୍ଛାମତେ ଜଳଖିଆ ଡିଆରି କରନ୍ତି । ସରୁ ସରୁ ପିଆଜ କାଟି ସୁଜୀତାର ଅଣ୍ଡା ଆମ୍ଲେଟ୍ରେ ପକାନ୍ତି ଓ ସଞ୍ଚୟଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଚୁନି ଚୁନି କଟା ଚମାଚୋ, କଞ୍ଚା ଲଙ୍କା ଓ ସବୁଜ ମଟର ଦେଇ ଆମ୍ଲେଟ୍ କରନ୍ତି । ପାଉଁରୁଟି ଗୋଷ୍ଠି କରି ସତେଜ କମଳା ଚିପୁଡ଼ି ଝୁଲଜରରେ ରସ ବାହର କରନ୍ତି । କ୍ଷୀର ଗ୍ଲାସ୍ରେ ରଖି ସୁଜୀତା ପଛରେ ଲାଗନ୍ତି । ବାଧୁମ୍ରେ ସୁଜୀତା ଘଣ୍ଟା ଲଗାଇବ ଯଦି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ତାକୁ ନ ଦେଖିବେ । ପାଣିକୁ କଳରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ଆଙ୍ଗୁଠି ଦେଇ ଚାପିବ । ଦାନ୍ତ ଘସା ବସ୍ତରେ ଖେଳିବ । ଆଗରୁ ଏ-ବି-ସି-ଡି ଗୀତ ବୋଲୁ ଥିଲା । ଏବେ କ୍ରୀସ୍ନାସ୍ ଆସିଲାଣି, ଜିଙ୍ଗଲ୍ ବେଲ୍, ଜିଙ୍ଗଲ୍ ବେଲ୍ ..., ଜିଙ୍ଗଲ୍ ଅଲ୍ ଦି ଓୟେ ..., ଗୀତ ବୋଲି କଂପାଉଛି । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବା ସଞ୍ଚୟ ଭିତିଲେ ହିଁ ଖାଇବା ଟେବୁଲ୍‌କୁ ଆସିବ । ସୀମାହୀନ ଚଞ୍ଚଳ ଚପଳତାରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କର ନୀରବ ସକାଳକୁ ମୁଖରିତ କରିବ । ସଞ୍ଚୟ ବେକ୍‌ଫାଷ୍ଟ ଖାଇ ଲେଦର୍ ସୋଫାରେ ବସି ଖବର କାଗଜ ପଢ଼ିବେ । ଶନିବାର ରବିବାର ସକାଳର ନୀତି ଆରମ୍ଭ ଏଇଠୁ ହେବ ।

ପ୍ରାୟ ସାଢ଼େ ଦଶଟା ବାଜିବ । ଫେନ୍ ବାଜିଲା । ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ବଶତଃ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଉଠିଗଲେ, ତାଙ୍କ ଭଉଣୀ ଶ୍ରୀୟା ମିସିଗାନରୁ ଫେନ୍ କରିଥିବ ଭାବି । ତା'ବି ପ୍ରତି ଶନିବାରର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ପ୍ରାୟ ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷର, ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କର ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବା ପରଠାରୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଫେନ୍‌ରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅତିହୀନ ସ୍ୱର ... “ନାନୀ ମୁଁ ରୀନା କହୁଛି, ମୋତେ ଆପଣ ଜାଣି ନାହାନ୍ତି, ଦେଖି ବି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ମୀତା ନାନୀଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଫେନ୍ ନମ୍ବର ପାଇଲି । ଆପଣଙ୍କ କଥା

ଶୁଣିଲି । ମୋ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ଏଠା କମ୍ୟୁନିଟି କଲେଜରେ କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର ସାଇନ୍‌ସ୍‌ରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର । ଆମେ ନୂଆ ଆସିଛୁ ଏ ସହରକୁ । ଏଇ ଆସନ୍ତା ଶନିବାର ଦିନ ମୀତା ନାନୀଙ୍କୁ ଓ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଡିନର୍ ପାଇଁ ଡାକୁଛି, ଆସିବେ” । କଣ୍ଠରୁ ଜଣା ଯାଉଥିଲା, ଝିଅଟିର ବୟସ ପଚାଶରୁ ଡିରିଶ ଭିତରେ । କେଜାଣି କେମିତି ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଥିଲା ତା' ନରମ କଣ୍ଠର ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ । ରୀନାର ଘର ଠିକଣାର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ମାଗିଲେ ଓ କହିଲେ ସଞ୍ଚୟଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗରେ କଥାହୋଇ ସଞ୍ଚୟଙ୍କୁ ଜଣେଇବେ । ସଞ୍ଚୟେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ରୀନାକୁ ଡାକି ଜଣେଇଦେଲେ ଯିବା ପାଇଁ । ଏଠିତ ବେଶି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବା ବଙ୍ଗଳା ପରିବାର ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଗୁଜୁରାଟୀ ଓ ସାଉଥ୍ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍ ପରିବାର ଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ବିଛାଇ ହୋଇ ରହିଛନ୍ତି । ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କର ସମୟ ଅଭାବରୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ ରଖିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ହୁଏନା କେବେ । ତେବେ ରୀନା ମାତ୍ର ତିନି ମାଲଲ ଦୂରରେ, ତାଙ୍କ ନିତି ଦିନିଆ କଲେଜକୁ ଯିବା ଆସିବା ରାସ୍ତା କାଲିଡ଼ମୋରିସ୍‌ଠୁ ଡାହାଣ ପଟେ ବିଗ୍‌ଟି ରାସ୍ତା ଧରିଲେ ବାମକୁ ସମରଲ୍‌ଲେଙ୍କୁ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ । ପାଖ ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ ପରି ଆମେରିକାରେ ।



ସପ୍ତାହ କଟିଗଲା କେଉଁ ଛଟକରେ । ଶୁକ୍ରବାରଦିନ ରୀନା ପୁଣି ଡାକି ମନେ ପକାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା, “ନାନୀ, ଝିଅ ଓ ଭାଇନାଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ସଞ୍ଚୟ ଛଅଟା ବେଳକୁ ଆସି ଯିବେ କାଲି” । ଭଲ ଲାଗିଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ରୀନାର ଜୋର୍ । ସୁଜୀତା'କୁ ଡେସ୍ ବଦଳାଇବାକୁ ଗଲେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ଶନିବାର ସଞ୍ଚୟ ପାଞ୍ଚଟାରୁ ତା' ପଛରେ । ସୁଜୀତା ଛ' ସାତ ବର୍ଷର ହେଲେ ବି ନିଜ ପସନ୍ଦର ଡେସ୍ ପିନ୍ଧିବାକୁ ଜିଦ୍ କରେ । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଇଚ୍ଛା ପାଇଁ ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ସୁଜୀତା ସଙ୍ଗେ ସାଲିସ୍ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼େ । ରୀନା ମାତ୍ର ୨ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ବାହା ହୋଇଛି । ପିଲାପିଲି ହୋଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି ଏ ଯାଏ । ଦୁଃଖ ନୂଆ ବାହା ପରେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ଏକାନ୍ତ ମନୋମତ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ପାଇବାର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତାକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କର ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ସେ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା, ସୁଜୀତାର ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନକୁ ଆସିବା ପୂର୍ବ ସମୟ । ସଞ୍ଚୟଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଇଟାଲି, ଇଂଲଣ୍ଡ, ଜର୍ମାନୀ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଯାତ୍ରା ଓ ଉପଭୋଗର ଦିନ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ । ତେବେ ସୁଜୀତା ଆସିଥିଲା ମଧ୍ୟ ଅପ୍ପରନ୍ତ ଆନନ୍ଦର ସମ୍ଭାର ନେଇ ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନକୁ । ପଛକୁ ଫେରି ଚାହିଁବା ପାଇଁ କେବେ ସୁଯୋଗ ଦେଇନି ସୁଜୀତା । ସୁଜୀତାକୁ ନୂଆ କ୍ରେୟନ୍ ବାକ୍ସ ଓ କଲର୍ ବହି ଜୁବେଇ ଦେଇ ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ଆମେ ନୂଆ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଯାଉଛେ ସୁଜୀ, ଦୁଃଖୀମୀ କରିବୁନି ସେଠି” । ନୂଆ କ୍ରେୟନ୍ ବାକ୍ସ ଦେଖି ସୁଜୀତା ଖୁସି ହେଲା

। ତାର ପାଣି ଫେଟକା ଭଳି ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞାକୁ ଶୁଣେଇ କହିଲା, “ଆଇ ପ୍ରମିସ୍ ମମି” । ଭାରତୀୟ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ଖାଏନି ବୋଲି ତା’ ପାଇଁ ପାଞ୍ଚା, ଚିକେନ୍ ଓ ଚକୋଲେଟ୍ ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞା ଧରି ନେଇଗଲେ ସଙ୍ଗରେ । ବେବି ସିଟର୍ ସରଲି ପାଖରେ ଜନ୍ମରୁ ରହି ଖରାପ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରି ନେଇଛି । ସରଲି ସବୁବେଳେ ଫିସ୍‌ଫିକ୍, ଚିକେନ୍, ନଗେଟ୍, ଫ୍ରେଞ୍ଚ୍‌ଫାଇଜ୍ ଦେଇ ତାକୁ ‘ଫିଙ୍ଗର୍ ପୁଡ୍’ ଖାଇବା ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରେଇ ଦେଇଛି । ସକାଳ ସାଢ଼େ ସାତରୁ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ସାଢ଼େ ପାଞ୍ଚ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସରଲି ପାଖେ ରହି ରହି ତା’ର ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ବଳବତ୍ତର ହୋଇଛି ସିନା କିନ୍ତୁ କମିନି । ତଥାପି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ସୁଜୀତାର ଏଇ ବଦଭ୍ୟାସ ଭାଙ୍ଗିବା ପାଇଁ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ବ୍ରକୋଲି ଓ ସବୁଜ ମଟରକୁ କତା ତେଲରେ ଭାଜି ଭାତ ତାଲିରେ ‘ବଟର୍’ ଦେଇ ଚକଟି ଶୁଣ୍ଠାଏ ଦିଗୁଣ୍ଠା ଖୁଆଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛନ୍ତି । କେମିତି କେଜାଣି ପାଂପତ ଭାଜି ଦେଲେ ସେ ଭାତ ତାଲି ଶୁଣ୍ଠାଏ ଦିଗୁଣ୍ଠା ଶୀଘ୍ର ଖାଇ ଦିଏ ବୋଲି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଏବେ ପାଂପତ କିଣି ରଖୁଛନ୍ତି ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର୍ରୁ । କିଛି ନ ହେବା ଠାରୁ ଏତକ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଭାବି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ତା’ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ବଦଳେଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ସମରଲେଞ୍ଚୁ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ୍ କଂପ୍ଲେକ୍ସରେ ରୀନା ଘର ପାଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ବେଳକୁ ସଞ୍ଜ ପ୍ରାୟ ଗତି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଦ୍ଵାରରେ ‘ନକ୍’ କଲେ । ରୀନା କବାଟ ଖୋଲିଲା । ପୁରା ଗୋରା ରଙ୍ଗ ନୁହେଁ । କେମିତି ଗହମ ରଂଗର ଚେହେରା । ପାନ ପତ୍ର ଭଳି ମୁହଁ । ମିଠା ମିଠା ଚେହେରାରେ କେମିତି ଭୟର ଅହଞ୍ଚିତ ହାସ୍ୟ । ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ମନେ ହେଲା ହୁଏତ ନୁଆ ବୋଲି । ପଚେଇଶରୁ ସତେଇଶ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ରୀନାର ବୟସ ହେବ ବୋଲି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଅନୁମାନ କଲେ । ସବୁଜ ରଂଗର ଜରିଦିଆ ମ୍ୟାଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ବାଉଜ୍ ପିନ୍ଧିଛି । ସ୍ଵାମୀ ତା’ର ହସି ହସି ଆମକୁ ସ୍ଵାଗତ କଲେ । ସୁଜୀତାକୁ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଚକୋଲେଟ୍ ପ୍ୟାକେଟ୍‌ଟା ବଢାଇଦେଲେ । ରୀନା ଦୁଇଟା ହେଆର୍ କ୍ୟାପ୍ ଆଣି ସୁଜୀତାର ବାଳରେ ଲଗାଇ ଦେଲା । ସୁଜୀତା ଖୁସିରେ କହିଲା, “ବନି ହେଆର୍ କ୍ୟାପ୍ ! ଲୁକ୍ ମମି” । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଅଭିନୟନର ସୁଯୋଗ ନେଇ ନନ୍‌ଝପ୍ କଥା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଲା ତା’ ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞାକୁ ପାଣି ଫେଟକା ଭଳି ଉଡେଇ ଦେଇ ସବୁଥର ଭଳି । ତା’ କଥା ବନ୍ଦ କରିବାକୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନେଇଥିବା କ୍ରେୟନ୍ ବାଞ୍ଛୁଟିକୁ ବଢେଇଦେଇ ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ରୀନା ଆଣ୍ଟିଙ୍କୁ ଚିତ୍ର ଆଙ୍କି ଦେଖା ସୁଜୀ” ।

ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ରୀନା ଭଲ ଲାଗିଥିଲା । ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ବନ୍ଧୁପ୍ରିୟ ମନେ ହେଲା । ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କ ବୟସ ପଇଁଟିରିଶ ଛତିଶ ଆଡକୁ ମନେ ହେଲା । ସୁଗଠିତ ପୁରୁଷ ଚେହେରା, କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡର ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଚନ୍ଦା ହେବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଛି । ଦଶ ମିନିଟ୍ ଭିତରେ ମୀତା ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲା ସ୍ଵାମୀ ବିବେକ ଓ ତା’ର ଦୁଇ ପୁଅ ସରୋଜ ଓ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଧରି । ରୀନାର ଛୋଟ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ୍‌ଟି ସରଗରମ ଗହଳିରେ ଭରିଗଲା । ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ଓଧାଇନ୍ ସଜାଡି ମୀତାର ସ୍ଵାମୀ ବିବେକ, ସଞ୍ଜୟ ଓ ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ଅପର୍ କଲେ । ସଞ୍ଜୟ ଆଲକୋହଲ୍‌ରେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ।

ଆମେରିକାରେ କୋଟିଏ ବର୍ଷ ରହି ସୁଖା ମଦ ସିଗାରେଟ୍ ଛୁଇଁ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ପାର୍ଟିମାନଙ୍କରେ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଓଧାଇନ୍ ନିଅନ୍ତି ହୋଷ୍ଟମାନଙ୍କ ଖୁସିରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ । ସଞ୍ଜୟଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଏତେ ରିଜିଡ୍ ନୁହନ୍ତି ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ସାରା ସଞ୍ଜକୁ ସାରନ୍ତି ଗାୟରୁ ମାତ୍ର ଦୁଇ ଡିନି ସିପ୍ ଶେଷ କରି ।

ରୀନା ଅନେକ କିଛି ରାନ୍ଧିଥିଲା । କମ୍ ବୟସର ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଏ ରନ୍ଧାବଢା ଆଶା କରାଯାଏନା ସବୁବେଳେ । ନତିଆ ରସ ଦେଇ ଚିକ୍ଲଟି ମାଛ, ଚିକେନ୍ କୋଫ୍‌ଟା, ଘୁଗୁନି, ପାଲକ୍ ପନୀର, ବନ୍ଧାକୋବି ଚପ୍ ଓ ଖାଇବା ପଛକୁ ହାତଗଢା ଭାନିଲା ସେଣ୍ଡର୍ ସରେଶ । ଭଲ ପିଆଜି ବି ଗରମ ଗରମ ଭାଜି ଓଧାଇନ୍ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ମନେ ହେଲା ଖୁବ୍ ତୀକ୍ଷଣ ଓ ବେଶ୍ କାମ କରିପାରିବାର ଝିଅଟିଏ ରୀନା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ରୀନା ଓ ମୀତା ଗପିଲେ ଅନେକ ଇୟାତୁ ସିୟାତୁ । ମୀତା କହିଲା, “ନାନୀ, ମୁଁ ରୀନାକୁ ତୁମ କଥା ସବୁ ଆଗରୁ ଗପି ଦେଇଛି । ତୁମେ ଆମ ବଡ ଭଉଣୀ ଭଳି ଏଠି । ଆମେ ତିନି ପରିବାର ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଏକାଠି ହେବା ।” ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ପରେ ତାରିଖଟିଏ ଦେଇ କହିଲା ତା’ ଘରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକାଠି ହେବା ପାଇଁ । ତା’ର ଦୁଇ ପୁଅ ଓ ସୁଜୀତା ସେତେବେଳେ ଚଉକି ଟଣାଟଣିରେ ଲାଗି ଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଉଠିଲେ । କାଲି ସକାଳ ଆଠରେ କ୍ୟାପ୍ । ସାଢ଼େ ସାତରୁ ଘରୁ ବାହାରିଯିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ସୁଜୀତାକୁ ରେଢ଼ି କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ସଞ୍ଜୟ ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇ ସୁଜୀତାର ହାତ ଧରିଲେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପଛରୁ କହିଲେ, ମୀତା’ ପରେ କେତେବେଳେ ଆମଘରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକାଠି ହେବା । ମୀତା ଭାରି ହସଖୁସିଆ । ପଛରୁ ଠୋ ଠୋ ହୋଇ ହସି କହିଲା, “ଦାଟ୍ ସାଉଣ୍ଡ୍‌ସ୍ ଲାଇକ୍ ଏ ପାନ୍” ।

ରୀନାର ନରମ ସ୍ଵଭାବ ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଥିଲା । ତା’ ନିରୀହ ନିର୍ମାୟା ଚେହେରାରେ କେମିତି ନିଜର ନିଜର ଭାବ । ମୀତା ଘରେ ଦେଖା ହେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ରୀନା ସଙ୍ଗରେ ଆଉଥରେ କଥା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଫେନ୍‌ରେ । ରୀନା ଘର ପୁରୀରେ । ତା’ ବାପା ପୁରୀ କଲେଜରେ ଫିଜିକ୍ସ୍ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ଥିଲେ । ଏବେ ଅବସର ନେଇଛନ୍ତି ଚାକିରିରୁ । ଦୁଇ ଭଉଣୀ ଓ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଇ ସେମାନେ । ଭାଇ ଅକ୍ସେଲିଆର ସିଡ୍‌ନୀ ସହରରେ ଏମ୍.ବି.ଏ. କରୁଛି ଏବଂ ଭଉଣୀ ଗୋଟିଏ ଷ୍ଟେଟ୍‌ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍ ପି.ଓ.କୁ ବାହା ହୋଇ ଛୋଟ ଡିନି ବର୍ଷ ପୁଅ ସହିତ ରହୁଛି କଟକରେ । ବାପା, ମା’ଙ୍କ ଗେହୁ ଝିଅ ରୀନା ଏମ୍.ଏ. ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଶେଷ ପରେ ପରେ ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କୁ ବାହା ହୋଇ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଛି । ଆଉ କଟକ ରାଣିହାଟର ଧନୀକ ବାପା, ମା’ଙ୍କ ଏକମାତ୍ର ସନ୍ତାନ ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଲାଣି ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ୍ ପରେ ପରେ । ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ଜନ୍ମରୁ କାର୍‌ରେ ବସିଛି । ବିଜିନେସ୍ ପରିବାର । ଆର୍‌ଲାକ୍ଷରୁ ଇନ୍‌ଫର୍ମେସନ୍ ସାଇନ୍‌ସ୍‌ରେ ମାଞ୍ଜୁରସ୍ କରି ଗତ ଜୁଲାଇ ମାସରେ ଏଠା କମ୍ୟୁନିଟି କଲେଜ୍‌ରେ ଜଏନ୍ କରୁଛି ।

ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ପରେ ମୀତା ଘରେ ପୁଣି ଦେଖା ହୋଇଥିଲା ରୀନା ସଙ୍ଗେ । ମୃଗୁୟ, ବିବେକ ଓ ସଞ୍ଜୟ ବସି ବସି ରାଜନୀତି ବର୍ତ୍ତା କରୁଥାଆନ୍ତି । କାହିଁକି ତେମୋକ୍ରାଟ୍ ହାରିଲେ, ରିପବିକାନ୍ ପାର୍ଟି ଜିତିଲେ, ଇକନୋମିକ୍ ଇଂପାକ୍ଟ ଓ ଇରାକ୍ ଯୁଦ୍ଧକୁ ନେଇ ସଞ୍ଚିକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥାଆନ୍ତି ସେମାନେ । ଖିଆପିଆ, ହସଖୁସିରେ କେଉଁ ଛଟକରେ ସେଦିନ ସଞ୍ଚି ମୀତାଘରେ କଟିଗଲା ।

ଏ ଭିତରେ କିଛିଦିନ ବିତିଗଲାଣି । ସେଦିନ, କଲେଜରେ ପଢ଼ିବା ପଛ ତିନିଟା କାସ୍ ପଢ଼େଇବାପରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ହାଲିଆ ଲାଗୁଥାଏ । ତଥାପି ବିଜିନେସ୍ ବିଲ୍ଡିଙ୍ଗ୍ସ୍ ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଥାଏ ତା'ପରେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଆଉ ନିଜ ଅପିସ୍ କୁ ନ ଫେରି ସିଧା କାମ୍ପେଟ୍ରିଆରୁ ଟର୍କି ସାଣ୍ଡ୍ରିଲ୍, ଛୋଟ ପଟାଟୋ ଟିପ୍ପସ୍ ପ୍ୟାକେଟ୍ ଓ ତାଏଟ୍ କୋକ୍ ଧରି ବିଜିନେସ୍ ବିଲ୍ଡିଙ୍ଗ୍ସ୍ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲିଟି ମ୍ୟାନେଜମେଣ୍ଟ୍ ଲାଓଂଜ୍ କୁ ଚାଲି ଆସିଲେ । ହାଲିଆ ମାରି ସେଇଠି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ ଶେଷ କରି ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ପାଇଁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବେ । କଲେଜର ଦୁଇଜଣ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଆଳାପରେ ଦଶ ମିନିଟ୍ କଟିଗଲା ମଧ୍ୟ । ତଥାପି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆହୁରି ପ୍ରାୟ ଚାଳିଶ ମିନିଟ୍ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ବସି ବସି କୋକ୍ଟିକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଛନ୍ତି, ଭାବିଲେ କାହାକୁ ଫେନକରି କଥା ହେଲେ ସମୟ କିଛି କଟିଯିବ । ମୀତା ଚାକିରୀ କରେ, ଘରେ ନ ଥିବ । ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ରୀନା କଥା । ସେ ଏକୃଷିଆ ଘରେ ଥିବ । ନୂଆ ଝିଅଟି ଶାନ୍ତ ସ୍ୱଭାବର ।

ଶୁଭ୍ରା ସେଲ୍ ଫେନରେ ଡାକିଲେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବା ସମୟକୁ ବିତେଇଦେବା ପାଇଁ । ରୀନା ଧରିଲା । ପାଞ୍ଚ ମିନିଟ୍ ଇୟାଡୁ ସିୟାଡୁ ଗପି କହିଲେ, ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଅପେକ୍ଷାରେ ବସି କଲେଜରୁ ଡାକୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏତକ କହି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ରୀନାକୁ ପଚାରିଲେ ମୃଗୁୟ ଘରକୁ କେବେ ଫେରିବ କାସ୍ ସାରି । କାରଣ, ଏକୃଷିଆ ହୋଇ ବିଚାରୀକୁ ଭାରି ଖରାପ ଲାଗୁଥିବ ଭାବି । ରୀନାର ଉତ୍ତର, “ମୁଁ ଜାଣେନା ନାନୀ । ସଠିକ୍ ସମୟ କହି ପାରିବି ନାହିଁ । ତେବେ ଏତିକି ଜାଣେ, ସେ ଫେରିବେ ରାତିରେ । ମୃଗୁୟ ମୋତେ ତାଙ୍କ ଷ୍ଟେଡୁଲ୍ ଜଣାନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ।” “ମାନେ ? ତାଙ୍କର କାସ୍ ସରିବ କେବେ?” - ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ । “ମୁଁ ଜାଣେନା । ମୋତେ ସେ କିଛି ଜଣାନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ।” - ରୀନାର ଉତ୍ତର । ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ଆବସର୍ତ୍ତ ଲାଗିଲା କେମିତି । ଦ୍ୱିଧା ସହିତ ପୁଣି ପଚାରିଲେ, “ତୁ ପଚାରିନୁ ମୃଗୁୟଙ୍କୁ?” ଏଠି ହୁଏତ କହିବେ ‘ନୋଜି’ ବୋଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ ନୂଆ ଓଡିଆ ଝିଅଟିଏ ଭାବି ଆଗେଇଲେ । ତା'କୁ ‘ତୁ’ ବୋଲି ସଂବୋଧନ କଲେ ଭଲ ଲାଗିବ ବୋଲି ରୀନା ସେଦିନ କହିଥିଲା । ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ କେମିତି ସହଜ ଲାଗିଛି ପ୍ରଥମରୁ “ତୁ” ସଂବୋଧନରେ ରୀନାକୁ ନିଜର ଛୋଟ ଭଉଣୀଟିଏ ଭଳି । ରୀନା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲା, “ନାନୀ, ତୁମକୁ ଦେଖିବା ଦିନଠୁ ଖୁବ୍ ନିଜର ଲାଗିଛି । ଜାଣେନା କାହିଁକି । ସବୁ କହିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଛି ମୁକୁ । ମୋ ଜୀବନ ମୋ ବୟସର ସବୁ ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କ ଭଳି ହୁଏତ ନୁହେଁ ବା ମୁଁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କ ଭଳି

ସେତେ ଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ ନୁହେଁ । ମୃଗୁୟଙ୍କର ଓ ମୋର ସଂପର୍କ ସାଧାରଣ ସ୍ୱାମୀ କ୍ଷୀଙ୍କ ଜୀବନର ସଂପର୍କ ନୁହେଁ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା କେମିତି ଧକ୍କା ଖାଇଲେ । ପୁଣି ପଚାରିଲେ, “କାହିଁକି, କାରଣ କ’ଣ ?” । ରୀନାର ସ୍ୱରରେ ପ୍ରକ୍ଷନ୍ନ ଅସହାୟତା । ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲା, “ଜାଣେନା ନାନୀ - ସେ ବିରାଟ୍ ଉପନ୍ୟାସ” । ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ରୀନା, ତୁମର ମାତ୍ର ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷର ବିବାହିତ ଜୀବନ ... ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ?”

“ହଁ ନାନୀ, ଛୋଟ ଗନ୍ଧ ନୁହେଁ, ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ହିଁ । ମୀତା ନାନୀଙ୍କୁ କହିନି । କେଜାଣି କାହିଁକି, ତୁମକୁ ଦେଖିଲା ଦିନଠୁ ମନେ ହୁଏ ତୁମ ସାଥୀରେ ହୃଦୟ ଖୋଲି କଥା ହେବା ପାଇଁ - ମଥା ଫଟେଇ କାନ୍ଦିବା ପାଇଁ - ମନ ଖୋଲି ଲୁହରେ ଭାସିଯିବା ପାଇଁ ।” ସ୍ୱର ଆଉ ଶୁଣା ଗଲାନି ରୀନାର । ହାବୁକା କୋହର ଚାପା କାନ୍ଦ ... । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ନିଅର ହୋଇ କହିଲେ, “ରୀନା, ମୋ ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ସରି ଯିବ ପ୍ରାୟ ସାଢ଼େ ୩ଟାରେ । ଘରକୁ ଯିବା ବାଟରେ ତୋତେ ଦେଖା କରିବି । ମନ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରନା ।” ରୀନାର କାନ୍ଦମିଶା ସ୍ୱର, “ଆସିବେ ନାନୀ ?” - ଯେମିତି କୁଟାଖିଅକୁ ଧରିଛି ଉଜୁଡା କୁଆରରେ ।

ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ସର ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କ ମନ ଲାଗୁ ନଥିଲା । ରୀନାର ନିରୀହ ଆଖିଭରା କୋହର ଉଜାଣି ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ଠେଲୁଥିଲା - ଆନମନା କରୁଥିଲା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଗାଡିରେ ବସିଲେ । ପ୍ରାୟ ୪ଟା ବାଜିବ । ପନ୍ଦର ମିନିଟ୍ରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । କବାଟ ଖୋଲିଲା ରୀନା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ତା'କୁ ଜତେଇ ଧରିଲେ । ‘ନାନୀ’ କହି ରୀନା ଯେମିତି ଲୋଟିଗଲା କାନ୍ଦରେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ତା'କୁ ଆନମନା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ପଚାରିଲେ, “ତୁମେମାନେ ତା’ ଖାଅ ରୀନା ?” ରୀନା କାନ୍ଦ ବନ୍ଦ କରି କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ ତୁମ ପାଇଁ ଓ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଚା କରିବି ।” ପାଞ୍ଚ ମିନିଟ୍ ଭିତରେ ଚା’ ଦୁଇ କପ୍ ଓ ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ଲେଟ୍ରେ ମୁଢ଼ି ମିଞ୍ଚଟର୍ ଆଚାର ତେଲରେ ଗୋଳାଇ ଆଣି ରଖିଲା ଟେବୁଲ୍ ଉପରେ । “ତୋ’ର କାଲ୍ ପ୍ଲେଟ୍ ?” - ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପଚାରିଲେ । “ମୋର ଆଜି ଶୁକ୍ରବାର । ଖାଲି ଚା’ ଖାଇବି । ସନ୍ତୋଷୀ ମା’ ବୁତ” - ରୀନାର ଉତ୍ତର ।

“ଶୁକ୍ରବାର ? ସନ୍ତୋଷୀ ମା’ ବୁତ ?” ପଚାରି ନୀରବ ହୋଇ ଶୁଭ୍ରା କ୍ଷଣକ ପାଇଁ ଭାବିଲେ ଅସହାୟ ରୀନାର ଆପ୍ତାଣ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟ । ଏ ବୁତ ଉପବାସ ହୁଏତ ବଦେଲେଇ ପାରିବ ମୃଗୁୟଙ୍କୁ । ଚିକେ ନୀରବତା ପରେ କେମିତି କେଉଁଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବେ ଭାବି ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ଏ ଆଚାର ତେଲରେ ମୁଢ଼ି ମିଞ୍ଚଟର୍ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଛି ରୀନା । ଅନେକ ଦିନୁ ମୁଢ଼ି ମିଞ୍ଚଟର୍ ଖାଇ ନ ଥିଲି । ତେବେ ତୋ’ ହାତଯୋଗୁ ବୋଲି ବୋଧେ ବେଶି ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଛି ।” ରୀନା ଶୁଖିଲା ହସଟିଏ ହସିଲା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବୁଝି ପାରିଲେନି, ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ମୁହଁରେ କାହା ଅଭିଶାପର ଏ ଛାପ ? ରୀନାର ହାତକୁ ଧରିଲେ । ରୀନା ଆଖିରେ ଆଖିଏ ଲୁହ ଭରି କହିଲା, “ମୃଗୁୟ ମୋତେ ଡିଭୋର୍ସ କରିବେ” । ଏ ଅପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଶିତ ବାକ୍ୟକୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ନ ଥିଲେ ବା ଚିନ୍ତା ମଧ୍ୟ କରି ନ ଥିଲେ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ କ୍ଷୀର ଗଣ୍ଡଗୋଳ । ତୁଟିଯିବ ସମୟରେ । ପଚାରିଲେ, “କାରଣ କ’ଣ ? କ’ଣ ପାଇଁ

ଏ କଥା ଭାବୁଛୁ ରୀନା ?” “ନାନୀ, ମୁଁ ସୁନ୍ଦର ନୁହେଁ ।” “କ’ଣ କହୁଛୁ ରୀନା, ତୁ ଯଦି ସୁନ୍ଦର ନୁହେଁ, କିଏ ତା’ହେଲେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ?” “ନାଁ, ନାନୀ, ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ମୁଁ କିଛି ନୁହେଁ”, ରୀନାର ଉତ୍ତର । “ତୋ’ର କ’ଣ ଆଖି ନାହିଁ ? ଦର୍ପଣରେ ମୁହଁ ଦେଖିବୁ ତୋ’ ନିଜର ?” ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲା ପୁଣି ରୀନା, “ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କର ମୁଁ ପସନ୍ଦ ନୁହେଁ ନାନୀ । ମୋର ଭଲ ପିନ୍ଧାବି ନାହିଁ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ତୁ ପତଳା, ତେଜା, ସୁନ୍ଦର . . . ।”

ରୀନା କଥା ଛତେଇ ନେଇ କହିଲା, “ମୋର ବୟୋଜ ପସନ୍ଦ ନୁହେଁ ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କର । ସୁଉଜ ନିତୋଳ ବୟୋଜ, ସରୁ କଟି, ଚଂପା ଗୋରା ରଂଗ, ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ରଙ୍ଗ ଢଙ୍ଗ, ସାବଲୀଳ ଇଂରାଜୀ କଥା କହିବା ଶୈଳୀ ସବୁଥିରେ ମୁଁ ଫେଲ୍ୟୁଅର୍ ନାନୀ . . .” । ରୀନାର କଥା କାନକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହେଉନି ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କର । “ମୃଣ୍ମୟ କ’ଣ ପରଫେକ୍ଟ ? ସେ ନିଜକୁ କ’ଣ ଭାବନ୍ତି ?” “ସେ ଭାବନ୍ତି ନିଜକୁ ହ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟସମ୍ ଏବଂ ସେହି ”। ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କ ପାଟିରୁ ବାହାରି ପଡିଲା, “ତାଙ୍କର ଏଇ ବୟସରୁ ବାଳ ମଧ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ! ଚନ୍ଦା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ . . . ?” “ସେ ଭାବନ୍ତି ଓ କହନ୍ତି - ଚନ୍ଦା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ସେ ବେଶୀ ସେହି ଦେଖା ଯାଆନ୍ତି ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ସେ ସିନା ଭାବନ୍ତି । ତୁ କ’ଣ ଭାବୁ ? ତୋ’ର କିଛି ଭାବିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ଅଛି ନା ନାହିଁ ?” “ମୋର ସବୁ ଭାବନା ଲୋପ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଛି ବାହା ହେବା ପର ଠାରୁ । ସେ ମୋତେ ଯାହା ଭାବନ୍ତି, ମୁଁ ସେଇୟାହିଁ ଭାବେ ନିଜକୁ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛି ଭାବି ପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ କ’ଣ କହି ବୁଝେଇବେ ରୀନାକୁ । କହିଲେ, “ତୋ ଭଳି ଝିଅ ପାଇବାକୁ ହେଲେ ତପସ୍ୟା ଦରକାର । ରୂପରେ ଗୁଣରେ . . . ।” ରୀନା କଥା ଭାଙ୍ଗି କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ କୁଆଡେ ଯିବି ନାନୀ ? ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷ ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କର ଗ୍ରୀନ୍ କାର୍ଡ ନାହିଁ ଏଯାଏ ।” କାରଣ ରୀନା ଜାଣେନା ବା ବୁଝେନା । ବୁଝେଇ ପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ - କହିଲା, “ଓକିଲ କ’ଣ କାମ କରୁଛି ଗ୍ରୀନ୍ କାର୍ଡ ପାଇଁ । ମୋର ବାପା, ମା ମୋ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଜାଣି ଦିନରାତି ଦୁଃଖିତ । ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ଘରେ ନ ଥିବା ସମୟରେ ସେମାନେ ଆତୁର ହୋଇ ସେପଟୁ ଫେନ୍ କରନ୍ତି, ମୁଁ କରିପାରେନି ବୋଲି । ମୁଁ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ଫେରିଗଲେ ସେମାନେ କାହାକୁ ମୁହଁ ଦେଖାଇ ପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ନାନୀ, ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ନେବାକୁ ମୁଁ ନାନା ପ୍ରକାର ରୋଷେଇ କରୁଛି । ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ତେସ୍ ପିନ୍ଧୁଛି । ସାବଲୀଳ ଭାବେ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ କଥା କହିବା ପାଇ ମୋତେ ସମୟ ଲାଗିବ । ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆପ୍ରାଣ ରେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛି । ଘର ଭିତରେ ଏକାଠି ରହି ବି ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ କେବେ କଥା ହୁଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ନିହାତି ଦରକାର ନ ଥିଲେ । ଲଙ୍ଗଳା ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କର ଛବି ଦେଖନ୍ତି କବାଟ ଦେଇ । ବନ୍ଧୁ ମାନଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଘଣ୍ଟା ଧରି କଥା ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଫେନରେ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଇ-ମେଲ୍ରେ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି, “ତୋତେ ଯଦି ଭଲ ନ ଲାଗୁଛି, ଛାଡିଦେ, ତିଭୋର୍ସ କର ।” ଇ-ମେଲ୍କୁ ଧରେ ଦିଅର ମୁଁ ପଢି ଦେଇ ଥିବାରୁ ପାସ୍‌ପୋର୍ଟ ବଦଳେଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଆର୍ଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡରେ ରହୁଥିଲା ବେଳେ ଯାହା ଘରେ ପେଇଙ୍ଗ୍ ଗେଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ

ରହୁଥିଲେ, ସେ ହେଲେ ‘ମୋନା ବଉଦୀ’ । ତାଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ତାଙ୍କର ସଂପର୍କ ଥିଲା ବୋଧେ । ଆମେରିକାକୁ ମୁଁ ଆସିଲା ପରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ମୋତେ ଦେଖି କହିଲେ, “ଦେଖି, କି ବିୟେ କରେଛ ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ? କୋନ୍ ଗାମେର ମେୟେଟି ?” ରୀନା ପୁଣି କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥିଲି, ଯେତେବେଳେ କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ସେ ତେଟୋନା ବିବ୍ରେ ଚାକିରି ପାଇଲେ । ଅଳ୍ପ ଦିନ ପରେ ମୋନା ବଉଦୀଙ୍କ ଘର ଛାଡି ଆମେ ଏଠାକୁ ଆସିଲୁ । ଭାବିଥିଲି ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେବେ । ମୋ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ବଦଳିବ ।”

ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପଚାରିଲେ, “ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ଯାଇ ତୋତେ ନିଜେ ଦେଖି ପସନ୍ଦ କରିଥିଲେ ?” “ହଁ ନାନୀ, ସେ, ତାଙ୍କ ବାପା, ମା’, ସମସ୍ତେ ଦେଖି ପସନ୍ଦ କରିଥିଲେ । ନ ହେଲେ ବାହାଘର ହୋଇ ଥାଆନ୍ତା କିପରି ? ଅବଶ୍ୟ ମୋ’ ବାପାଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ରିଟାୟାରମେଣ୍ଟ ଟଙ୍କାଟା ଯୋତୁକରେ ଯାଇଥିଲା । ବାପା, ମା’ ଭାବିଥିଲେ ଝିଅ ଆମେରିକାରେ ସୁଖରେ ରହିବ । ସେମାନେ ପସନ୍ଦ କରିବା ପରେ ଟଙ୍କା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅଟକେଇ ନ ଥିଲା ।” ରୀନା ପୁଣି କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ ଯଦି ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କୁ ସେୟା କହେ ଯେ ଦେଖି ଚାହିଁ ତ ପସନ୍ଦ କରିଥିଲ ମୋ ଚେହେରାକୁ । କହନ୍ତି, ଶାଢ଼ୀ ତଳେ ତୁମ ବୟୋଜର ସାଇଜକୁ ମୁଁ ଅନୁମାନ କରିପାରିନି ସେତେବେଳେ । ଆଇ ଆମ୍ ସର୍ରୀ । ତା’ ଛଡା ତୁମେ ନିହାତି ଗୋଆର୍ ଗାମୀଣୀ ।” ହଠାତ୍ ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କ ପାଟିରୁ ବାହାରି ପଡିଲା, “ତଜ୍ ହି ସିପ୍ ଉଇଥ୍ ଇୟୁ ?” ରୀନା ତଳକୁ ମୁହଁ କରି ଆସ୍ତେ କହିଲା, “ହଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେ ଚାହାନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ପାଶବିକ ଇଛା ପାଇଁ ମୋତେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତି । ଘରର ଚାକରାଣୀ ଭଳି ଯେତେବେଳେ ଇଛା ସେତେବେଳେ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ, “ହ୍ମାଇ ତୁ ଇୟୁ ଗିଭ୍ ଇୟୋରସେଲ୍ସ୍ ?” ରୀନାର ଉତ୍ତର, “ନ ହେଲେ ସେ ଅନ୍ୟ କ୍ଷୀ ଦେଖିବେ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟ ସେ ନେଉଛନ୍ତି ।” “ହ୍ମାୟରେ ରୀନା, ତୋ’ର ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ।” ରୀନାର ହାତକୁ ଚାପି ଧରି ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ତୁ ନିଜର ସର୍ବନାଶ କରୁଛୁ ରୀନା । ତୋ’ ଆତ୍ମମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କ ଗୋଡ ତଳେ ଚାପିବାକୁ ତୁ ନିଜେହିଁ ପ୍ରଣୟ ଦେଉଛୁ । ତୁ ନିଜକୁ ଭିକ୍ଷିମ୍ ଭାବି ଅର୍ପଣ କରିଛୁ । ଯଦି ତୁ ଚାହୁଁ ତୁ ବାହାରି ପାରିବୁ ଏ ଭିତରୁ ବା ପରିସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ବଦଳେଇ ପାରିବୁ । ସାରା ଜୀବନ ଏମିତି କାଟିବୁ କିପରି ?” ରୀନା କାନ୍ଦୁଥାଏ ଏବଂ କହୁଥାଏ, “ନାନୀ ମୁଁ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ଫେରି କାହାକୁ ମୁହଁ ଦେଖାଇ ପାରିବି ନାହିଁ । ସମାଜ ଆଖିରେ ମୋ’ ବାପା, ମା ଓ ମୁଁ କେହି ବସି ପାରିବୁ ନାହିଁ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା ସ୍ୱରରେ ଚିକିଏ କଠିନତା ଆଣି କହିଲେ, “ତୁମେମାନେ କିଛି ଦୋଷ କରିନାହିଁ । ଅସୁବିଧାରେ ପଡି ଯାଇଛ କେବଳ ।” ରୀନା ପୁଣି କହିବାରେ ଲାଗିଲା, “ମୁଁ ଯଦି ଫେରିଯାଏ, ତାଙ୍କ ପରିବାରର ସମସ୍ତେ ଖୁସି ହେବେ । ମୋ ବାପାଙ୍କ ସମସ୍ତ ରିଟାୟାରମେଣ୍ଟ ଟଙ୍କା ପାଣି ଫେଟକା ଭଳି ଉଭେଇ ଯିବ । ସେମାନେ ଜିତି ଯିବେ ନାନୀ . . . ।”

ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ତୁ ଯଦି ଜିତିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁ, ଏ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଗଲେ ଜିତି ପାରିବୁ ନାହିଁ ବରଂ ହାରିବୁ ଆହୁରି ବେଶୀ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବୁଝି ପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ ରୀନାକୁ କ’ଣ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେବେ ଓ କିପରି ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବେ । ପଚାରିଲେ, “ମୀତା ଜାଣେ ଏ ସବୁ ?” “ନା’ ନାନୀ, କେବଳ ତୁମକୁ ଦେଖି ଏତେ ନିଜର ଲାଗିଲା ବୋଲି ମୋ ମନ କଥା ଆଉ ରୋକି ପାରିଲି ନାହିଁ । ଯଦି ଜାଣିବେ, ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ କଥା କହିଛି କାହାକୁ, ମୋତେ ଆଉ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତେ ଘରେ ରଖିବେ ନାହିଁ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ତୁ ଯଦି ଚାହୁଁ, ସଞ୍ଜ ଓ ମୁଁ ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କ ସାଥୀରେ କଥା ବାର୍ତ୍ତା ହେବୁ ।” “ନା’ ନାନୀ, ଯେତେଦିନ ବଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ ଯିବ ମୁଁ ବଞ୍ଚିବି- ମୋତେ ବାହାର କରିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଏ ଘରୁ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ଏ ଦେଶରେ ସବୁ କଥା ପାଇଁ ନିୟମ କାନୁନ୍ ଭିତରେ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ଏତେ ସହଜରେ କିଛି କରିପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । କାରଣ ସେ ଅସୁବିଧାରେ ପଡ଼ିଯିବ ତା’ର ଗ୍ରୀନ୍ କାର୍ଡ ଯୋସେଫିଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ । ଅପେକ୍ଷା କର ଗ୍ରୀନ୍ କାର୍ଡ ହୋଇ ଯିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ତା’ ପରେ ତୁ ଚାକିରି କରିପାରିବୁ । ଏକା ବି ରହିପାରିବୁ । ଆମେ ‘ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ଆବୁଡ୍’ ରେ ଯିବା ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବସବୁ ଦେଖିବା । ତୋ’ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ କେହି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ବସି ରହିଥିବ ତୋତେ ରାଣୀ ଭଳି ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ରଖିବାକୁ ଓ ତୋ’ ମୁହଁରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ହସ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ସବୁ ଅଜାତି ଦେବ ତୋ’ ପାଦ ତଳେ । ପଞ୍ଜିକାର କେଉଁ ଅଭିଶପ୍ତ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ମୃଣ୍ମୟର ଓ ତୋ’ର ଯୋଗ ଭୁଲ୍ ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବ ଏବଂ ଆଗାମୀ ଜୀବନର ସାଂସାରିକ କୋଳାହଳରେ ଏ ଭୁଲକୁ ପଛରେ ପକାଇ ଆଗାମୀ ଜୀବନକୁ ଅଭିନୟନ ଜଣାଇବୁ । ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କର ସମୟ ହୋଇଗଲା ସୁଜୀତାକୁ ମଞ୍ଜେସୋରୀ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ଡେ-କେଆରରୁ ଯିବ୍ ଅପ୍ କରିବାକୁ । ଗାଡ଼ିକୁ ଆସିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ରୀନାକୁ କହିଲେ, “ସବୁ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେ । ଯାହା ତାଙ୍କର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ, ତାହାହିଁ ହେବ । ତୋତେ ଗୋଟ କଢାଇବ ।”

ବାହା ହେବା ପରଠାରୁ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ବୋଲି ନିଃସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର ଭାବେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ଭଲ ପାଇଛି । ଜାଣେନା କିପରି ?

ଏ ଭିତରେ ପୁଣି ବ୍ୟତିବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଜୀବନର କିଛି ଦିନ କଟି ଗଲାଣି । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଫେନ୍ କଲେ ରୀନାକୁ କଲେଜ ଫେରିବା ବାଟରେ । ଶୁକ୍ରବାର ସେଦିନ । ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଲା ରୀନାକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ଏକାକୀ ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ପୃଥିବୀରେ । ରୀନାକୁ ପଚାରିଲେ, “କେମିତି ଅଛୁ ରୀନା ?” ରୀନା କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ ଭଲ ନାହିଁ ନାନୀ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଆଉ କିଛି ନ କହି କହିଲେ, “ମୁଁ ପଇସା ମିନିଷ୍ଟ୍ ଭିତରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଯାଉଛି ।” ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚୁ ପହଞ୍ଚୁ ରୀନା ଦୁଃଖ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥିଲା । ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ କବାଟ ଖୋଲିଲା ଗାଡ଼ି ଶବ୍ଦ ଶୁଣି । କବାଟ ଖୋଲୁ ଖୋଲୁ କହିଲା, “ନାନୀ, ସେ ଦୁଃଖ ତାଙ୍କ ପୁରୁଣା କ୍ଲସ୍ମେଟ୍ ରୀତାକୁ ବିବାହ କରିବେ । ସବୁବେଳେ ତା’ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଫେନ୍ରେ କଥା ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ରେ ‘ଚାଟ’ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । କେତେଟା ‘ଓଲଡ୍’ ଇ-ମେଲ୍ସ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ବନ୍ଧୁ

ସମରେଶଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଆଳାପରୁ, ମୁଁ ଯାହା ଅନୁମାନ କଲି । କିଛି ଗୋଟେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଘଟିବ । ମୁଁ ବଞ୍ଚିବି କେମିତି ନାନୀ ?” ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲେ, “ସେ ଯଦି ତୋତେ ଖାତିର୍ କରୁନି, ତୁ କାହିଁକି ତା’କୁ ଖାତିର୍ କରୁଛୁ ? ଅପେକ୍ଷା କର । ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେ ତୋତେ କହିବ, ତୁ ସେତେବେଳେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବୁ - ବା ପର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟର ପ୍ଲାନ୍ କରିବା ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ।” ହଠାତ୍ ରୀନା କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ ଭଲ ପାଏ ତା’ଙ୍କୁ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଅବାକ୍ ହେଲେ । ଅବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଭରା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନିକ ଚକ୍ଷୁରେ ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଲେ ରୀନାକୁ । ମନରେ ଅଜସ୍ର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ‘ରୀନା ଭଲ ପାଏ ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କୁ ?’ ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କର ହଠାତ୍ ମନେ ହେଲା, ପ୍ରେମ, ପ୍ରୀତି ଓ ଭଲ ପାଇବାର ସଜ୍ଞା ଯାହା ଜାଣିଥିଲେ, ତାହା ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ଭୁଲ୍ ହୋଇଗଲା । ରୀନା କହିଲା, “ବାହା ହେବା ପରଠାରୁ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ବୋଲି ନିଃସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର ଭାବେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ଭଲ ପାଇଛି । ଜାଣେନା କିପରି ?”

“ରୀନା ! - କହି ତୁମ୍ ହୋଇଗଲେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା । କିଛି ନୀରବ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ପରେ କହିଲେ, “ତୁ ମୃଣ୍ମୟଙ୍କ ଦୟାକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ଅନିଚ୍ଛିତ ଜୀବନ ପଥରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅନୁଗାମୀ ହେବୁ ଏ ମାନସିକ ନୀର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ?- ସେଇଟା କ’ଣ ତୋର ପସନ୍ଦ ?- ତୋର ଇଚ୍ଛା ?” ରୀନା କହିଲା, “ରହିଥିବି ତା’ଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ସେ ଡିଭୋର୍ସ କରି ଗୋଡରେ ଆତେଇ ଦେଲା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଜାଣିଲେ, ପଥ ଭୁଲିଛି ରୀନା । କିଛି କହିବାର ନାହିଁ ବା କିଛି ଦେବାର ନାହିଁ ଏଠି । ପ୍ରେମ, ପ୍ରୀତି, ପୁରୁଷ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ଭଲ ପାଇବାର କାହାଣୀ ସବୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଆଖିରେ ଅଝର ଝର ରୀନାର । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କ ମୁଖରେ ଭାଷା ନାହିଁ । ରୀନାର ବ୍ୟଥାର ଉପଶମ ନାହିଁ । ରୀନାର ହାତ ଧରି କହିଲେ, “ମୁଁ ଦୁଃଖୀତ, ତୋତେ କିଛି ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରି ପାରୁନି ।” ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ବସିଲେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଭାରାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହୃଦୟରେ ଅସହାୟ ରୀନାକୁ ତା’ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ଛାଡ଼ି । ରୋମିଓ-ଜୁଲିଏଟ୍ ଓ କେଦାର-ଗୌରୀ ଗନ୍ଧ ମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରୀତିର ସଜ୍ଞା ସବୁ ଭୁଲ୍ ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଲା । କୋହାତୁର ରୀନାର ‘ପ୍ରେମ’ ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ଓଲଟପାଲଟ କରିଦେଲା । ପଛକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା କାତ ଉଇଣ୍ଡୋ ଭିତରୁ । ତେଣାକଟା ବ୍ୟୟତ ବିହୀନ ଭଳି ଅସହାୟ ରୀନା ଆକାଶରେ ପଥ ଭୁଲିଛି । ତା’ର ନିରୀହ ଓ ନିରୋଳା ମନର ପରିଧିରେ ଚକ୍ରକର୍ କାଟୁଛି ଲୋଗିଯିବା ପାଇଁ ତା’ର ବ୍ୟୟତ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ।

Sulakshana Patnaik is a mathematics professor in Daytona Beach, Florida. She lives with her husband Dr. Shukdeb Sen and 7 year old daughter Susan in Port Orange.

The Most Beautiful Sight

Swadha Rath

I opened the drapes of my hotel window
Behind the mountains I could see your glow
Little by little the bright orange
I could see peep out of the mountain range

I could not believe my eyes
This was indeed the
most beautiful sight!



The snow-capped mountains
miles away
Your beauty took my
breath away
I stood there hypnotized by the sight
With pounding heart and transfixed eyes

Unable to move from your enchanting hold
I watched you emerge like a pot of gold
A perfect circle of bright yellow
Your wonderful glare enhanced the snow

Right before my very eyes
You rose into the clear blue skies
I could not gaze you in the eye
Your dazzle was about to make me blind

As evening came you changed again
From yellow to orange to bright red
You went back to your hiding place
Leaving us all in sublime darkness

The mountains on the opposite side
Kept you hidden throughout the night?

I sat there wondering where you were
Why I could not see your flare
I was sure you moved during the night
You always appeared on the opposite side

Help me open my heart's window
I want to see you wherever you go
With open or with closed eyes
In darkness or in bright daylight

Swadha and her husband, Pradeep, were long time residents of Houston, Texas. They now live in Las Vegas,

Nevada. Swadha is the daughter of famous writers Durga Madhab Misra and Shoilarani Misra. This poem was written during one of her assignments in Portland, Oregon when she witnessed the beautiful and unforgettable sunrise at 5:00 AM – it truly was a spiritual moment.
swadharath@hotmail.com

To you, my mother

Nirbachita Dash

Thinking of you in thousand words,
not one to describe you in your entirety.
The night and its obscure depths,
resides within your somber eyes.
Yet there are tales to tell,
Of the vagaries of life, an unbidden guest.
Echoes of a distant dream,
resounding in every shard of broken emotions.
But faith was ever so strong,
a life force indomitable in you.
And when hope burst in flames,
the fiery flames never scorched you.
You gathered the ashes in your hands,
and let life roll by.
Braiding love in every twist & turn,
of the frayed fabric of our lives.
Far from you, I carry your presence
soaked in each bit of my existence.
Longing to grasp the hand,
that lead me always.

Nirbachita Dash lives in Shakopee, Minnesota with her husband Sudipta Tripathy, and loves to read and write poetry.



From Scientist to Entrepreneur

Can researchers become successful entrepreneurs? I always had second thoughts about scientists becoming entrepreneurs. One profession needs silence, deep thinking, and devoted time while the other profession needs people management skills, alertness and demand on personal time. However, in the recent age some scientists have shown interest in entrepreneurship and some have really become very successful. Before I interacted with Dr Sitakantha Dash, I knew him just as a rich Oriya businessman who supports OSA and Oriya causes and I did not have any special interest to know what type of business he does. Business world was always far away from my world of mathematical modeling. My interest increased while I was preparing a proposal and suddenly with my internet search on peptic ulcers, his article caught my attention. I developed curiosity and asked him to share the story behind his decision to become a businessman from being a scientist.



He was not sure what to write and he sent me some references on the history of his decision to start UAS laboratories. Although our readers may refer to UAS laboratories web page at www.uaslabs.com and read the articles to know more about UAS laboratories and its products Acidophilus and Bifidus, I have chosen to present some interesting scientific facts while relating to Dr Dash's transitional step of becoming an entrepreneur.

While working as the director of the Food and Drug Administration for South Dakota, from 1973 to 1979, Dr. Dash discovered that a probiotic product was approved as a drug in the 1950's by the U.S. Government. He also found that probiotics lost ground to antibiotics, the miracle drug of the time.

There are many benefits of probiotic products. Probiotic - Digests foods and alleviates digestive disorders; enhances synthesis of B vitamins and improves absorption of calcium; protects against E. coli infection; improves lactose tolerance and digestibility of milk products; reduces vaginal infection and yeast infection; improves immune function; promotes anticarcinogenic activity; helps



prevent peptic ulcer caused by H. pylori; prevents acne; and reduces cholesterol.

After leaving government work, Dr. Dash began to work closely with researchers at the University of Nebraska. There, scientists had isolated a strain of *Lactobacillus acidophilus* now called DDSÂ®-1. DDSÂ®-1 *L. acidophilus* was being extensively researched with published papers showing its health benefits. It had been found that this specially isolated and cultured strain possessed properties significant to digestion and nutritional health. For example, it produced enzymes (such as proteases and lipases) to aid the body's digestion of proteins and fats, respectively. Other documented benefits, perhaps of even greater significance, were the strain's antibacterial actions, which were essentially equivalent to those of antibiotics.

And thus Dr. S.K. Dash's brain child UAS Laboratories was born in 1979. UAS Laboratories is a leading probiotic company. For more, please visit www.uaslabs.com.

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This special article is presented with the intention that this may accelerate the thoughts of scientists and engineers who wish to become entrepreneurs. – Bigyani Das.

ମହାୟାତ୍ରା

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, କଲମ୍ବିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ମହାୟାତ୍ରାକୁ ମୁଁ ଯେତେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲି, ସେତେଟା ବିଷଣ୍ଣତା ବୋଧ ମୋର ହୃଦୟକୁ ମହିତ କରୁଥିଲା । ମୋ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଗଢ଼ିଥିବା ଦେବୀମୂର୍ତ୍ତି, କନକ ରଙ୍ଗର ରୂପମୟୀ, ସ୍ନେହମୟୀ, ଶକ୍ତିଶାଳିନୀ ନାରୀମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ବଦଳରେ ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଥିଲି ଏକ ଦୁର୍ବଳା, ଲୋଳିତବର୍ମା, ଶ୍ୟାମଳ ରଙ୍ଗର ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବୀଙ୍କୁ । ମହାୟାତ୍ରାକୁ ହୁଏତ ନ ଭେଟିଥିଲେ କି ନ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ଭଲ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା । ମୋ ମନଭିତରେ ତାଙ୍କର ସେ ଦେବୀମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ମୋର ଜନ୍ମଅନ୍ତ ଯାଏ ବିରାଜୁଥାନ୍ତା ଓ ମୋ ମନର ଭକ୍ତିପୁଷ୍ପରେ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସଦା ପୂଜା କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ କ୍ଷଣତନ୍ତୁ ବୃକ୍ଷାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ମୋ ଅନ୍ତର ଆର୍ତ୍ତନାଦ କରୁଥିଲା । ଯେଉଁ ମହାୟାତ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟିବା ପାଇଁ ଯୋଜନା ଉପରେ ଯୋଜନା କରି ଚାଲୁଥିଲି, ଭେଟିବାଟାକୁ ଏକ ନାଟକୀୟ ରୂପ ଦେବାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିଲି, ସବୁ ଯୋଜନା, ସବୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସେହିଠାରେ ହିଁ ଅନ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲା ଭଳି ଅନୁଭବ କଲି । “ଇଏ କଣ ସତରେ ସେଇ ଦେବୀ? ଯାହାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ମୋ ଜୀବନର ଶୁଖି ଆଶା ତୃଣ ପଲବିତ ହୋଇ ଆଜି ଶାଖା, ପ୍ରଶାଖା ମେଲିଛି, ସେ ମହାୟାତ୍ରା ସତରେ ଏତେ ନିଃସହାୟ !”



ଆହା ! ଜମା ଷାଠିଏ ବର୍ଷର ହେଲେ ବି ହାତବିକ୍ଷା ରୋଗ ପାଇଁ ସିଏ ସତୁରୀ, ଅଣୀ ବର୍ଷର ବୃକ୍ଷାଙ୍କ ପରି ଦିଶୁଥିଲେ । ବର୍ଷକ ପୂର୍ବେ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କର ଦେହାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଓ ଠିକ୍ ଛଅ ମାସ ତଳେ ତାଙ୍କର ଏକମାତ୍ର ଯୁବକ ପୁତ୍ର ଗାତି ଆକ୍ସିଡେଣ୍ଟରେ ପ୍ରାଣହାନି ଘଟିଥିଲା । ତାଙ୍କର ଦୁଇଟି ଝିଅ ଯୁରୋପରେ ରହୁଥିଲେ ଓ ଏତେ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ନିଜର ବୋଲି ମାନି ଆସିଥିବା ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଯାଇ ରହିବା ତାଙ୍କର ପସନ୍ଦ ନଥିଲା । ଲେଖାଯୋଖାରେ ଝିଆରୀଟିଏ ତାଙ୍କର ନୁଆବାହା ହୋଇ ନିଜ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ସହିତ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଥିଲା । ସେଇ ଝିଆରୀଟି ମହାୟାତ୍ରାଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ଆସିଥିଲା କୁଆଁର ପୁନେଇଁକୁ ।

ଦଶବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବେ ମୁଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଥିଲି, ସେତେମେଳେ ମହାୟାତ୍ରା ସୁଖଦା ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟିବା ପାଇଁ ଅନେକ ଚାହିଁଛି ଓ ପ୍ରଥମ ଭେଟରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଚରଣ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରି ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ନେବାକୁ ଯୋଜନା କରିଛି । ତେବେ ଭାଗ୍ୟଚକ୍ର ବିତମ୍ବନା, କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଓ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାର ଘୋଡ଼ାଦୌଡ଼ରେ ସେ ଚାହିଁବା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ରହିଥିଲା । ଆଜି ତାହା ବାସ୍ତବ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ବି ମୋର ଶରୀର ଶିଥିଳ, ଓ କଣ୍ଠ ରୁକ୍ଷ ହେବା ଭଳି ଲାଗିଥିଲା । ମୁଁ

ସୁଖଦା ଦେବୀଙ୍କର ଚରଣ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିପାରି ନଥିଲି । କେବଳ ହାତଯୋଡ଼ି ନମସ୍କାର ଜଣାଇଲି । ତାଙ୍କର ଶୋକାତୁର, ବିଧିରା ମୁହଁକୁ ଦେଖି ମତେ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ କାନ୍ଦ ମାଡୁଥିଲା ଓ ନିଜର ଦୁର୍ବଳତାକୁ ଆୟତରେ ରଖିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅତିକ୍ରମ କରି ଅନ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରିଚୟ ଆଦାନପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବାରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହିଗଲି ।

ଏବର୍ଷର କୁଆଁରେ ପୁନେଇଁରେ ମୋ ଜୀବନର ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳତା ଝଟି ବାରି ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା । ମୁଁ, ଶ୍ୟାମଳେୟ ମହାନ୍ତି, ନେସ୍‌ନାଲ୍ ଇନଫରମେସନ୍ ଅଫ୍ ହେଲଥରେ (ଏନ୍‌ଆଇ‌ଏଚ୍) ଏକ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ପଦବୀରେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଥିଲି । ମୋର ପତ୍ନୀ ସୁମନା ଇନ୍‌ଫରମେସନ୍ ଟେକ୍‌ନୋଲୋଜିରେ ମାଷ୍ଟରସ୍ ସାରି ଏକ କମ୍ପାନୀର ମ୍ୟାନେଜର୍ ରୂପେ କାମ କରୁଥିଲା ଓ ଆଜିର କୁମାର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣମୀ ଉତ୍ସବର ଏମ୍‌ସି-ଏ ଥିଲା । ମୋର ବାର ବର୍ଷର ଝିଅ ଶ୍ରେତା ନାଟକର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଶଂସାର ପାତ୍ରୀ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଓ ମୋର ଦଶବର୍ଷର ପୁଅ ସାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ଗାଇ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଚମକାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ତେବେ ଏ ସବୁ ସେହି ମହାୟାତ୍ରାଙ୍କର କୃପାର ଫଳ । ନହେଲେ ମୋ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ କେଉଁ ମୋତ ନେଇଥାନ୍ତା, କିଏ ଜାଣେ ?

ଠିକ୍ ସତର ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ଏମିତି ଏକ କୁଆଁର ପୁନେଇଁ ରାତିରେ ମୁଁ ଆମ ଗାଁ ପୋଖରୀକୁଳ ଚାନ୍ଦିନୀରେ ଏକୃଟିଆ ବସିଥିଲି । ଜନ୍ମ ଆଲୁଅ ଜିକିଜିକି ବିଛାଡ଼ି ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା ଯଦିଓ ମୋ ଜୀବନରେ ଭରିଥିଲା ଅମାବାସ୍ୟାର ନିରନ୍ଧ ଅନ୍ଧକାର । ପୋଖରୀ ପାଣିରେ ପ୍ରତିଫଳିତ ହେଉଥିଲା ପୁନେଇଁ ଜହର ଶୁଭ୍ର ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନା । ପୋଖରୀର ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଓ ପଶ୍ଚିମ ପଟେ ହସୁଥିଲା ଧାନ କ୍ଷେତ ନୁଆ କେଶର ମେଲେଇ । ପୂର୍ବରେ ହସିହସି ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଫଟାଉଥିଲେ ଗାଁର ଝିଅମାନେ । ଉତ୍ତର ପଟରୁ ଭାସି ଆସୁଥିଲା ଯାତ୍ରୀର ସଂଳାପ । ମୁଁ ଯଦି ଛୋଟ ଥାନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ହୁଏତ ଏ ସମୟରେ ତୁନି ଓ ରୁନି ଅପାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବୋଉ ପାଖରୁ ମଣ୍ଡାପିଠା ଥାଳିରେ ଧରି କୁନାଦାଦାଙ୍କ ଛାତ ଉପରକୁ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ସେଠି ହୁଏତ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ତାସ ଖେଳୁଥାନ୍ତି କିମ୍ବା ତାଙ୍କ ଛକାର ଠିକଣା ରଖୁଥାନ୍ତି । ନହେଲେ ବୁନା ଓ ରାମାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଧାରପୁର ଯାତ୍ରା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ତେବେ ଏମ୍‌ସି-ଏ ପାସ୍ କରି ଘରେ ବେକାର ହୋଇ ରହିବାର ଏକ ଭୟଙ୍କର ଅନୁଭୂତି ମୋ ମନର ସମସ୍ତ ଚପଳତାକୁ ମାରିଦେଇଥିଲା । ଛକରେ ଯାତ୍ରୀ



ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମୋର ସମସ୍ତ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଯାଇଥିବା ବେଳେ, ମୁଁ ଏକୃଷିଆ ବିଲପାଖ ପୋଖରୀ ଚାନ୍ଦିନୀ ଉପରେ ବସି ନିଜ ଜୀବନର ବିଫଳତାକୁ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରୁଥିଲି । ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ରାତି ବଜୁଥିଲା । ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡର ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କର ହସର ଶବ୍ଦ କମିଆସିଲା ।

“କିଏ! ଶାମା କିରେ ?”

“ହୁଁ ଦାଦା ।”

“ଏତେ ରାତିରେ କାହିଁକି ଏକୃଷିଆ ପୋଖରୀକୁଳଟାରେ ବସିଛୁ ? ତୋ ଭଳି ପିଲା କେମିତି ଯାତ୍ରା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ନଯାଇ ରହିଛି? ସବୁ ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ଅଛି ତ?”

“ହୁଁ ଦାଦା ।”

“ଆଉ ଚାକିରି ବାକିରି କିଛି ଜୁଟିଲାଣି?”

“ବହୁତ ଜାଗାକୁ ଦରଖାସ୍ତ ତ ପଠେଇଛି । ତେବେ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଖୋଲିନି ।”

“ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ତାହେଲେ ମନ ମାରି ବସିଛୁ ଏଠି । ଆଜି ନହେଲେ କାଲି ଚାକିରି ହେବ । ମନେମନେ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କୁ ଧ୍ୟାନ କର । ଆ, ଘରକୁ ଆ ।”

କୁନାଦାଦା ପୋଖରୀରେ ଛତ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ନପାରି ମୁଁ ଘରକୁ ଆସିଲି । ଯାତ୍ରାର ସଂଳାପ ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଶୁଭୁଥାଏ ଓ ଏତେ ରାତିରେ ବି ଜନ୍ମ ଆଲୁଅରେ ବସି ତାସ୍ ଖେଳୁଥିବା ଝିଅ ଦଳଙ୍କର କଥାବାଣୀ କାନରେ ବାଜୁଥାଏ । ଶୋଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ ବି ବେରୋଜଗାରୀ, ବେକାର ଜୀବନର ଚିନ୍ତା ମୋର ନିଦ୍ରା ମାରିଦେଇଥିଲା । ଏକ ହତାଶାମୟ, ଅନ୍ଧକାର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ମତେ ଭୟଭୀତ କରୁଥିଲା ।

ତେବେ କୁନାଦାଦାଙ୍କ କଥା ସତ ହେଲା । ପରଦିନ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ଚୌଧୁରୀଙ୍କର ଚିଠି ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଥିଲା । ଚିଠିରେ ସିଏ ଲେଖିଥିଲେ ଯେ ସୁଖଦା ଫଷ୍ଟ ଡିନିଟି ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଆସିଷ୍ଟାଣ୍ଟ ପୋଜିସନ୍ ପାଇଁ ଆମ ଡିପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟକୁ ଅର୍ଥଦାନ କରିଛି । ସେଥିରେ ମାର୍କ ବେସିସ୍‌ରେ ମତେ ସିଲେକ୍ଟ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଚାରିବର୍ଷ ପାଇଁ ଷ୍ଟାଇପେଣ୍ଡ ମିଳିବ ଯଦିଓ ପ୍ରଥମ ବର୍ଷର ଷ୍ଟାଇପେଣ୍ଡ ଛତା ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷର ଷ୍ଟାଇପେଣ୍ଡ ତା’ ପୂର୍ବବର୍ଷର ସଫଳତା ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରିବ । ଜାନୁୟାରୀ ପହିଲାରେ ଜଏନ୍ କରିବାର ସର୍ତ୍ତ ଥିଲା ।

ସେଇ ଦିନରୁ ସୁଖଦା ଦେବୀ ମୋ ଜୀବନର ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ହେଲେ । ପରେ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ବୁଝିଥିଲି । ନିଜ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଯୋଜନା କରି ସେ ଏ ଫଷ୍ଟ ଖୋଲିଥିଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେ ପ୍ରତି ଯୁନିଭରସିଟିର ପଦାର୍ଥ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ବିଭାଗକୁ ବହିପତ ଯୋଗାଇବା, ଗବେଷଣାଗାରପାଇଁ ଆଧୁନିକ ପ୍ରଣାଳୀର ଯନ୍ତ୍ରପାତି ଯୋଗାଇବା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ପାଇଁ ଅର୍ଥ ଦାନ କରୁଥିଲେ । ତେବେ ସେ ବର୍ଷ ପ୍ରଥମ କରି ସେମାନେ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଆସିଷ୍ଟାଣ୍ଟସିପ୍ ପାଇଁ ଅର୍ଥଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ ।

କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ସି·ଏସ୍·ଆଇ·ଆର୍ ଓ ୟୁ·ଜି·ସି·ଏନ·ଟ୍ରାନ୍ସ୍ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ମୁଁ ସେତେତା ଭଲ କରିପାରିନଥିଲି । ତାର କାରଣ ଥିଲା ଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି କରି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ କି ଗାଇଡାନ୍ସ୍ ମତେ ମିଳିପାରିନଥିଲା । ମୋର ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଏମ୍·ଏସ୍·ସି ପ୍ରଥମ ବର୍ଷରୁ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍, ପୋଷ୍ଟାଲ୍, ସିଭିଲ୍ ସର୍ଭିସ୍ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଚାକିରି ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି କରୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ମୁଁ ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ହେବାର ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ନେଇ ପଦାର୍ଥ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ହିଁ ଖାଲି ପଢୁଥିଲି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୋର ଅନେକ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଚାକିରିରେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ପାଇ ସୁଖମୟ ଜୀବନ ଅତିବାହିତ କରୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ମୁଁ ବେକାର ଜୀବନରେ ବ୍ୟର୍ଥତାର ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ଵାସ ନେଉଥିଲି । ମନରେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଆସିଥିଲା, “ପଦାର୍ଥ ବିଜ୍ଞାନକୁ ଏତେତା ଭଲ ପାଇ ମୁଁ ଭୁଲ୍ କରୁନି ତ?” ଯେଉଁଦିନ ଜ୍ଞାନଭାଇ ମତେ ରୋକଠୋକ୍ ଭାବେ ଜୀବନର ବାସ୍ତବତା ବିଷୟରେ ଅପ୍ରିୟ ସତ୍ୟ କହିଥିଲା, ସେଦିନ ମୁଁ ନିଜର ଇଚ୍ଛା ଉପରେ ସନ୍ଦେହ କରିଥିଲି ।

“ବୁଝିଲୁ ଶାମା, ତୋ ଭଳି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ପାଗଳା କରି ମୁଁ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ବେକାର ରହିଲି । ପ୍ରାଇଭେଟ୍ କଲେଜରେ ପାଠ ପଢ଼େଇଲି ବିନା ଦରମାରେ । ଶେଷରେ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍ ପାଇଁ ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି କରି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଦେବାରୁ ଆଜି ବସୁଛି । ତୁ ଯେ ଫିଜିକ୍ସ୍‌କୁ ଜାବୁତି ଧରି କିଛି ଭୁଲ୍ କରୁଛୁ ବୋଲି ମୁଁ କହୁନି । ତେବେ ଦେଇବର୍ଷ ହେଲାଣି ତୁ ବେକାର ବସିଲୁଣି କହିଲେ ତଳେ । ପୁଣି ମଣିଷର ମୌଳିକ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ବିଷୟ ଚିନ୍ତା ତ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ନା ?”

“ହେଲେ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଭାଇ, ଫିଜିକ୍ସ୍ ଛତା ମୋର ଅନ୍ୟ କୌଣସି ବିଷୟରେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ କଣ କରିବି ବୁଝିପାରୁନି ।”

“ଘରେ ବସି ତୋ ବାପାଙ୍କର ଅର୍ଥଶାନ୍ଧ କରିବାକୁ ତତେ ଭଲଲାଗୁଛି ତ ବସି ଖାଲି ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖେ । ତୋ ବାପା ତେଣେ ତୋ ଚୁନି ଅପାର ବାହାଘର ପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିକରି ବାରଦ୍ଵାର ଶୁଣିପିଣ୍ଡା ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ ।”

ସେଦିନ ମୁଁ ନିଜ ଉପରେ ରାଗିଥିଲି । ଫିଜିକ୍ସ୍ ଉପରେ ବି ରାଗିଥିଲି । ନୂଆବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଯଦି ଶିକ୍ଷାବିଭାଗରେ ଚାକିରି ନପାଏ, ତେବେ ଫିଜିକ୍ସ୍‌କୁ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଭୁଲିଯିବି ବୋଲି ଶପଥ କରିଥିଲି । ଯାହା ବି ହେଉ, ସୁଖଦା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଫିଜିକ୍ସ୍‌ର ଓ ମୋର ଚିର ସମ୍ପନ୍ନ ବାନ୍ଧି ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ।

ମୋର ପ୍ରଥମମାସର ଷ୍ଟାଇପେଣ୍ଡରେ ମୁଁ ସୁଖଦାଦେବୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ଛୋଟ ଦେବୀମନ୍ତ୍ରଣା କିଣିଥିଲି । ତମ୍ବାର ଏକ ତାରା କରି ସେଥିରେ ସୁଖଦା ନାମ ଖଚିତ କରାଇ ସେଥିରେ ମୁଁ ଫୁଲ ଚଢ଼ାଉଥିଲି । ଏକଥା ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରି ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟତମା ସୁମନା ବହୁତ ହସିଥିଲା । ମୋ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିବାର ତୃତୀୟବର୍ଷରେ ମୁଁ ସୁମନାକୁ ଜାଣିଥିଲି । ସିଏ ମୋର ସାଙ୍ଗ ଶୁଭେନ୍ଦୁର ଭଉଣୀ ଥିଲା ଓ ଶୁଭେନ୍ଦୁ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ମୋ ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ଦେଖିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ

ପାଇଥିଲା । ମତେ ସେ “ବହୁତ ଇମୋସନାଲ୍” ଓ “ପୁଅ ପିଲା ଏତେଟା ଇମୋସନାଲ୍ ନହୋଇ ଝୁଙ୍କ ରହିବା ଉଚିତ” ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଇଥିଲା ଯଦିଓ, ତେବେ ସେଇ କାରଣ ପାଇଁ ସେ ମୋର ପ୍ରେମିକା ହୋଇଗଲା । ମୋର ସ୍ନେହ, ଶୁଣା, ଭକ୍ତି ଯେ ଚିରସ୍ଥାୟୀ ଓ ମୁଁ ଯେ ସାହାଜାହାନଙ୍କ ଭଳି ପ୍ରତି ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ସୌଧ ରଚନା କରିବାକୁ ପଣ କରେ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୋ ଉପରେ ତା’ର ପ୍ରଗାଢ଼ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଆସିଥିଲା ।

“ତମର ତ କେତେ ଭଲ ଭଲ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଆସୁଛି, ମୋ ଠାରୁ ଧନଶାଳୀ, ପ୍ରଭାବଶାଳୀ ଓ ଆଭିଜାତ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପନ୍ନ । ଶୁଭାକାଂକ୍ଷୀ ଭାବେ ମୁଁ ତମକୁ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେବି ଯେ, ତମେ ସେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବରୁ ଗୋଟିଏକୁ ସ୍ୱୀକାର କର ।” – ମୁଁ ସୁମନାକୁ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଇଥିଲି । “ଯଦି ନକରେ ?”

“ନକଲେ ତମେ ଭୋଗିବ । ପଢ଼ିପଢ଼ି ଶେଷକୁ ମୁଁ ପ୍ରଫେସରଟିଏ ହେବି । ହେଲେ ବି ଆଇ.ଏ.ଏ.ଏ. ଅଫିସର କି ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ଦରମା ସହିତ ପ୍ରତିଦୃଷ୍ଟି କରିପାରିବିନି ।”

“ତମେ କଣ ଭାବ ମଣିଷର ଦରମା ହିଁ ତାର ବଡ଼ପଣର ପରିଚୟ ।”

“ସମସ୍ତେ ତ ସେଇଆ ଭାବନ୍ତି । ଧନୀଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ବଡ଼ଲୋକ କହନ୍ତି । ତମେ କଣ ଅଲଗା ଭାବ ?”

“ମୋ ମତରେ ମଣିଷ ମନର ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବନା ହିଁ ତାର ବଡ଼ପଣ ।”

ସେଇ ସୁମନା ସତରେ ଭୋଗିଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଥମେ ମୁଁ ତ ପୋଷ୍ଟକର୍ତ୍ତାଲ୍ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ପାଇଁ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଥିଲି, କିନ୍ତୁ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ପରେ ପୁଣି ବେକାର ହୋଇ ଭିକା ରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଆଉଥରେ ଗ୍ରାଜୁଏଟ୍ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ରେ ଜଣନ୍ କରିଥିଲି, ବହୁତ ଭୋଗିଥିଲା ସିଏ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ମୋର ବଡ଼ଝିଅ ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇସାରିଥିଲା । ବହୁତ କଟାକଟି କରି ଆମକୁ ଚଳିବାକୁ ପଡୁଥିଲା । ସାତବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯାଇପାରିନଥିଲୁ । ବେଳେବେଳେ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ବିଲ୍ ପାଇଁ ଆମର ଝଗଡ଼ା ହେଉଥିଲା । ତେବେ ସିଏ ମତେ ବିବାହ କରି ନିଜେ ଭୁଲ୍ କରିଛି ବୋଲି କହି ମୁଁ ମୋର ଶେଷ ବାକ୍ୟବାଣ ଛାଡୁଥିଲି ଓ ସୁମନାର ରାଗ ସେଇଠି ସରୁଥିଲା । ହେଲେବି ଝଗଡ଼ା ସବୁବେଳେ ସେମିତି ସହଜରେ ଛିଡ଼ୁନଥିଲା । ଅଭାବେ ସ୍ୱଭାବ ନଷ୍ଟ । ଅର୍ଥାଭାବ ଓ କାମର ଚାପ ବେଳେବେଳେ ମୋ ସୁନ୍ଦର ମନଟିକୁ ମଳିନ କରି କର୍କଶ ଓ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୟ ସ୍ୱରରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ କରୁଥିଲା । ଏମିତିକି ଜୀବନକୁ ଏତେ ଅଧିକ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିବା ସୁମନା ଓ ମତେ ଏତେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରୁଥିବା ସୁମନା ଦିନେ ରାଗିକରି ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରିବାକୁ ବାହାରି ଯାଇଥିଲା ରାସ୍ତାକୁ । ପରେ ସିଏ ନିଜର ଭୁଲ୍ ବୁଝୁଥିଲା ଯଦିଓ, ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଘଟଣା ପାଇଁ ବହୁତ ଦିନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ନିଜକୁ କ୍ଷମା କରିପାରିନଥିଲି ।

ଏତେ ସବୁ ଜୀବନର ଦୂର୍ଘଟଣା ଭିତରେ ବି ମୁଁ ମହାତ୍ମ୍ୟୀଙ୍କୁ ଭୁଲିନଥିଲି । ସବୁବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କ ନାଁ ଉପରେ ଫୁଲ ତ କିଣି ପକାଇ ପାରୁନଥିଲି, ତେବେ ତାଙ୍କ ନାମ ସ୍ମରଣ କରି ନମସ୍କାର କରୁଥିଲି ଓ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ମାଗୁଥିଲି ।

“ସିଏ ତ ଆମରିକାରେ କେଉଁଠି ହେଲେ ଥିବେ । ଆଜିକାଲି ଇ-ମେଲ୍ ସୁବିଧା ହେଲାଣି । ତମେ ତାଙ୍କ ଠିକଣା ଖୋଜି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟୁନ କାହିଁକି ?” ସୁମନା ପଚାରିଥିଲା, ଧରେ ନୁହେଁ, ଅନେକଥର ।

“ମୁଁ ତ ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେଇ ଅଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଝଟସ୍ରେ ହିଁ ରହିଛି । ପ୍ରଥମେ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ହେଲେ ସିନା ତାଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ୱେଷଣରେ ତାଙ୍କ ପୂଜା ପାଇଁ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଉପହାର ଧରି ଭେଟିବି । ଏମିତି ଅସମ୍ଭବତାର ଶୂନ୍ୟଥାଳି ଧରି ଭିକାରୀ ଭଳି ପରିଚୟ ଦେବାକୁ ତ ଯିବିନି ।”

ହେଲେ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ହେବାପାଇଁ ମତେ ବହୁତ ସମୟ ଲାଗିଗଲା । ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଥର ପି.ଏଚ୍.ଡି. ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ମତେ ଲାଗିଗଲା ପୁଣି ସାଢ଼େ ଚାରିବର୍ଷ । ଦୁଇ, ଦୁଇଟା ପି.ଏଚ୍.ଡି. ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ଥାଇ ବି ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଚାକିରି ମିଳି ନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ବଶତଃ ମିଳିଥିଲା ପୋଷ୍ଟକର୍ତ୍ତାଲ୍ ପୋଜିସନ୍ ଏନ୍-ଆଇ-ଏଚ୍ (ନେସନାଲ୍ ଇନଞ୍ଜିନିୟର୍ ଅଫ୍ ହେଲ୍ଥ୍)ରେ । ସେଠାରେ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ପୋଷ୍ଟକର୍ତ୍ତାଲ୍ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ କଲାପରେ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଖୋଲିଥିଲା । ମୁଁ ସରକାରୀ ଚାକିରିରେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଥିଲି । ମହାତ୍ମ୍ୟୀଙ୍କୁ ଅନ୍ୱେଷଣ କରିବା ତାର ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କାମ ଥିଲା । ତେବେ ଜୀବନ ଜଞ୍ଜଳର ଅନ୍ୟ ସବୁ କାମ ବି ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଏକଠୁଳ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଆମର ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ସନ୍ତାନର ଆଗମନ ହୋଇସାରିଥିଲା । ନିଜ ଜୀବନର ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ପୂରଣ କରୁକରୁ ପିତୃତ୍ୱର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଅନୁଭୂତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ତାପରେ ଜୀବନ ଚାଲିଥିଲା ଘୋଡ଼ାଘୋଡ଼ରେ । ଝିଅ ନାଚ ଶିଖିବାକୁ ଯିବ, ପୁଅ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଯିବ, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କର ଜନ୍ମଦିନ, ସ୍କୁଲର ଅର୍କେଷ୍ଟ୍ରା, ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଗୋଟିକ ପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଖଞ୍ଜି ହୋଇ ରହିଥିଲା ଯେମିତି । ସେଠି ପଛକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ବି ବେଳ ମିଳୁନଥିଲା । ଆମେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଘର କିଣିଲୁ । ଆଠ-ନଅ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଘର କିଣିବାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିଲୁ । ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ରହି ରହି ମୋ ଝିଅ ବହୁତ ମନସ୍ତାପ କରୁଥିଲା । ତାର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଖେଳଘର ଥିବା ବେଳେ, ମୋ ଝିଅର ସବୁ କିଛି ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ରୁମ୍ରେ । ଏତେ ସବୁ ଯେଉଁ ଜଞ୍ଜଳ ଆସିଲା, ମହାତ୍ମ୍ୟୀଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟିବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ସେମିତି ଭାବନାରେ ରହିଗଲା ।

ଆଜି ମହାତ୍ମ୍ୟୀ ମତେ ନିଜେ ନିଜେ ଦର୍ଶନ ଦେଇଗଲେ । ମତେ ଅନୁଭୂତ କରାଇଦେଇ ଗଲେ କି ମୁଁ ଏକ କୃତଜ୍ଞ । ନିଜ ପିଲାଛୁଆଙ୍କ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଓ ଜୀବନର ସଂଘର୍ଷ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସେମାନେ ବି

ତ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ଭାବିଥିଲେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆବାସୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଉନ୍ନତି ବିଷୟ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିଥିଲେ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଶିକ୍ଷାପ୍ରଣାଳୀ ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ ପାଇଁ ସୂତ୍ର ଖୋଜିଥିଲେ । ତେବେ ମୁଁ କାହିଁକି ଏତେ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର ହେଲି ? ନିଜ ଚାକିରି, ନିଜ ପରିବାର, କେବଳ ନିଜ ନିଜ ହୋଇ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଅନ୍ୟ କିଛି ବିଷୟରେ ଭାବି ବି ନଥିଲି । ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଦେଶ ପାଇଁ, ଜାତି ପାଇଁ ଓ ସମାଜ ପାଇଁ ଭାବନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ କଣ ସବୁବେଳେ ସୁଖୀ ?

ସେମିତି ଦେଖିଲେ ଏ ଦୁନିଆରେ କେହି ତ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରୂପେ ସୁଖୀ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି। ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ କିଛି ନା କିଛି ଦୁଃଖ ଅଛି; କାହାର ଶାରୀରିକ ଦୁଃଖ ତ କାହାର ମାନସିକ ଦୁଃଖ, କାହାର ଧନ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ ତ କାହାର ଜନ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ, କାହାର ରୂପ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ ତ କାହାର ଗୁଣ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ । କେହି କେହି ପଦମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ଅପାତ୍ରିତ ଦୁଃଖରେ ଘାଣ୍ଟି ହୋଇ ରହିଛନ୍ତି ତ କେହି କେହି

ସେମିତି ଦେଖିଲେ ଏ ଦୁନିଆରେ କେହି ତ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରୂପେ ସୁଖୀ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି। ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ କିଛି ନା କିଛି ଦୁଃଖ ଅଛି; କାହାର ଶାରୀରିକ ଦୁଃଖ ତ କାହାର ମାନସିକ ଦୁଃଖ, କାହାର ଧନ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ ତ କାହାର ଜନ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ, କାହାର ରୂପ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ ତ କାହାର ଗୁଣ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ ।

ପଦବୀର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱର ଜଞ୍ଜଳରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ, ବିବଚ୍ଚ ହୋଇ ଜୀବନ ବିତାଉଛନ୍ତି । ତେବେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ କିଛି ସହୃଦୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ମାନବିକତାର ଉଦାହରଣ ଦେଖାଉଛନ୍ତି । ନିଜର ଦୁଃଖ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ୟର ସୁଖ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବାରେ ଅବହେଳା କରୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ନହେଲେ ନିଜ ଜୀବନର ଦୁଃଖର ତ କେବେ ଅନ୍ତ ହେବ ନାହିଁ । ଯେତେ ଦିନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମନରେ ଲଜ୍ଜା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଉଥିବ ସେତେ ଦିନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଦୁଃଖ ରହିଥିବ । ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପେ କେବେ ସୁଖୀ ହେଲେ ସମାଜ ପାଇଁ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ଲଜ୍ଜା କରୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି କେବେ ବି ସମାଜସେବା କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇବନି ।

କୁଆଁର ପୁନେଇଁ ଫକ୍ସନ୍‌ରୁ ଆମେ ରାତି ସାଢ଼େ ଏଗାରଟା ବେଳେ ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବା ବାଟରେ ମୁଁ ଏହି ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଥିଲି ଓ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ହୋଇ ଗାଡ଼ି ଚଳାଇ ଚଳାଇ ଆଗ ଗାଡ଼ି ସହିତ ଧକ୍କା ଲଗାଇବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଅନ୍ଧରେ ବଞ୍ଚିଗଲି ।

“ତମେ କଣ ଭୋଲେଇ ପଡ଼ିଛ ନା କଣ?”
 “ସରି ।”
 “ସାରା ପରିବାର ତ ଏବେ ଆକସ୍ମିତେଶ୍ୱରେ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତେ । ଫୁଁ ଉତ୍ତରେ ଏମିତି ଭୋଲେଇକି ଗାଡ଼ି ଚଳାଇବା ପୁରା ମୁର୍ଖାମୀ ।”

ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ମୋ ନିଜର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପରତା ଓ କୃତମୃତା ବିଷୟ ଭାବି ମୁଁ କାନ୍ଦିଲି । ମୁଁ ଯେ ଜଣେ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର, ଭାବନା ବିହୀନ, ଯନ୍ତ୍ରମାନବ ପାଲଟିଯାଇଛି, ସେ କଥା ଭାବି ମତେ ବଡ଼ ଅସହାୟ

ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଓ ମୋ ନିଜ ଉପରେ ରାଗ ଆସୁଥିଲା । ସୁମନା ମୋ କାନ୍ଦ ଶୁଣିପାରି ଉଠି ବସିଲା ଓ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ “ପୁଅ ପିଲା ହୋଇ ମାଲଟିଆଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଏମିତି କାନ୍ଦୁଛ କଣ?” ଭାଷଣ ଦେବା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ତୁମା ଦେଇ ସେ ମୋ ଆଖିର ଲୁହ ଯୋଛିଦେଲା ଓ ଦୁଃଖର କୌଶସି ଘଟଣା ନଥାଇ ହଠାତ୍ ମୁଁ କାହିଁକି କାନ୍ଦିଲି ବୋଲି ପଚାରିଲା ।

“ଆଜି ମୁଁ ମହୀୟସୀ ସୁଖଦା ଦେବୀଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟିଲି ।”
 “ସତରେ! କେଉଁଠି ଭେଟିଲ ? ସିଏ କଣ ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ରହନ୍ତି ? ସିଏ କଣ କୁଆର ପୁନେଇଁ ଫକ୍ସନ୍‌କୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ?”
 “ହଁ ।”

“ତମେ ମତେ କେମିତି ତାକି ପରିଚୟ କରାଇଦେଲନି ?”

“ତମେ ତ ଏତେ ବିଜି ଥିଲ । ତେବେ ମହୀୟସୀ ମୋ କଳ୍ପନାର ହାସ୍ୟମୟୀ, ଲାସ୍ୟମୟୀ, ଦେବୀମୁର୍ତ୍ତି ନଥିଲେ । ସିଏ ବହୁତ ଦୁଃଖୀ ।”

ତାପରେ ମୁଁ ସୁମନାକୁ ମହୀୟସୀଙ୍କର ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ବିଷୟରେ ଜଣାଇଲି । ସବୁ ଶୁଣି ସୁମନା ମତେ ପ୍ରବୋଧନା ଦେଲା ଓ ଆମେ ମହୀୟସୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ କିଛି କରିବା ଉଚିତ ବୋଲି କହି ମୋ ପିଠି ଥାପୁଡ଼ାଇ ଶୁଆଇଦେଲା ।

ମୋ ଝିଅର ଆଜି ଜନ୍ମଦିନ ପାଳନ କରାଯାଉଥିଲା । ତାର ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଦଶ ଜଣ ସାଙ୍ଗ ସିମ୍ପ୍ ଓଭର କରିବାକୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ବିଟ୍‌ନି ଝିଅର୍ସର ଗୀତ ଲଗାଇ ସେମାନେ ନାଚୁଥିଲେ ଓ ବେସ୍‌ମେଣ୍ଟ୍ କମ୍ପାଉଥିଲେ । ପୁଅ ସାର୍ଥକ ତାର ଦୁଇଟି ସାଙ୍ଗଙ୍କୁ ଡାକିଥିଲା ଓ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଗେମ୍‌ରୁମ୍‌ରେ ଭିଡ଼ି ଗେମ୍ ଖେଳୁଥିଲା । ସୁମନା ଆଜି ମହୀୟସୀଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଆରୀ, ଝିଆରୀଜୋଇଁଙ୍କ ସହିତ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଥିଲା । ଏ ଛଅ ମାସ ଭିତରେ ମହୀୟସୀ ଆମ ଘରକୁ ଏହା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଦୁଇଥର ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ହୋଇ ଆସିଥିଲେ, ଥ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍‌ସ୍‌ଗିଭିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଦିନ ଓ ନୁଆବର୍ଷ ଦିନ । ନୁଆବର୍ଷ ଦିନ ସୁମନା ସୁଖଦା ଫକ୍ସ ବିଷୟରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରିଥିଲା ଓ ମହୀୟସୀ କାନ୍ଦି ପକାଇ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ପ୍ରତିମାସରେ ନିଜ ଦରମାରୁ ସୁଖଦା ଫକ୍ସ ପାଇଁ କାଟି ରଖୁଥିଲେ । ଏବେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଫକ୍ସର ସମ୍ପଦ ବଢ଼ିନି ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଅଧାରେ ରହିଯାଇଛି ।

“ଆମେ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ଆମ ପ୍ରତି ମାସର ଦରମାରୁ ଅଢେଇ ଶହ ଡଲାର୍ ତ ସୁଖଦା ଫକ୍ସକୁ ଦେଇପାରନ୍ତେ ।”

ସୁମନା ମତେ ନୂଆବର୍ଷ ପରଦିନ ଏହି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଟି ପଚାରିଥିଲା । ମୁଁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇଥିଲି । ଯୁରୋପ ଯାଇ ବୁଲିବାକୁ ସୁମନା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିଲା ଓ ବାହାମାସ କୁଡ଼ରେ ଯିବାପାଇଁ ଟିକେଟ୍ କିଣିବାକୁ ଯୋଜନା କରୁଥିଲା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସେ ପ୍ରତିମାସରେ ଏକ ଅଲଗା ଏକାଡ଼କ୍ସ ଖୋଲି ସେଥିରେ କିଛି ପଇସା ସଞ୍ଚୟ କରୁଥିଲା ।

“ଆଉ ଯୁରୋପ, ବାହାମାସ ଯାତ୍ରା ପାଇଁ ଅର୍ଥ କେଉଁଠୁ ଆସିବ ? କଣ ଲଟେରୀ ପାଇଲ କି?”

ଯଦିଓ ସୁମନାର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ମତେ ଆନନ୍ଦିତ କରିଥିଲା, ତେବେ ତା ମନ ପରଖିବାକୁ ମୁଁ ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କଲି ।

“ପଥମେ ରଣ ପରିଶୋଧ, ତାପରେ ପାର୍ଥିବ ଆନନ୍ଦ । ରଣ ପରିଶୋଧ କଲେ ଆମେ ମାନସିକ ଆନନ୍ଦ ପାଇବା । ସୁଖଦା ଫକ୍ସର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ତମକୁ ଯେମିତି ହତାଶାରୁ ଆଶାର ଆଲୁଅ ଦେଖେଇଥିଲା, ସେମିତି ଆମର ଏ ଦାନ ଆଉ କାହା ଜୀବନରେ ତ ଆଶା ଆଲୁଅ ଟିକେ ଦେଖାଇ ପାରିବ ? ”

ସୁମନାର ପାଦ ଛୁଇଁବାକୁ ସେଦିନ ମୋର ମନ ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

“କ୍ରୋଧେ ଦାସୀ, ରତେ ବେଶ୍ୟା, ଭୋଜନେ ଜନନୀ ସମା
ସମରେ ମନ୍ଦିଶା ବୁଦ୍ଧି ସା ନାରୀ ପ୍ରାଣବଲ୍ଲଭା ।”

ସୁମନା ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କର ସର୍ବଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ଉପହାର ଥିଲା । ମୋର ମାନସିକ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦୟତାରେ ବିଜୟ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର ଉତ୍ତମ ପଥ ଦେଖାଇଥିଲା ସୁମନା । ଆଜି ସେଇ ପଥରେ ଆମେ ଯାତ୍ରା ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲୁ ।

“ଆମେ ବାହୁଁଛୁ ଯେ ସୁଖଦା ଫକ୍ସରେ ପ୍ରତିମାସ କିଛି ତଲାର୍ସ୍ ଡିପୋଜିଟ୍ କରିବୁ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ରେକ୍ ପଠେଇବୁ କି ଯେଉଁ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କରେ ଆପଣ ଫକ୍ସ ଖୋଲିଛନ୍ତି, ସେଠିକୁ ସିଧା ରେକ୍ ପଠେଇଲେ ଚଳିବ ?”

ସୁମନାର ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନରେ ସୁଖଦା ଦେବୀଙ୍କର ମୁହଁରେ ହସର ଫୁଲଟିଏ ଫୁଟି ମହକିଗଲା ଯେମିତି । ମହାୟମୀଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ସେ ହସର ଆଭା ମୋ ମନର କଳ୍ପିତ ଦେବୀମୂର୍ତ୍ତିଙ୍କର ମୁଖର ଆଭାଠାରୁ ଶତଗୁଣରେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଥିଲା ଓ ମୋ ହୃଦୟର ପ୍ରତିକୋଶରେ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦର ଅମୃତ ସିଞ୍ଚ ମମତାର ପରାଗ ବିସ୍ତ୍ରଦେଲା ।

Dr Bigyani Das lives in Columbia, MD with her husband Naresh Das and three daughters Bagmi, Mrunali and Shashwati. She is a Mathematician by profession and a writer by passion.

Winter Alok Mohanty

Winter began and autumn has set.
We know snow will fall,
Kids will make snowballs,
I think that is a bet,
Definitely, we will get wet.
Kids make snowmen that are tall,
And make snow angels that are small,
Now we know what we can get.
Kids and adults are bundled inside,
So that the coldness will disappear,
Knowing that we will not freeze for long.
Winter is just a ride,
For this past year,
Waiting for this poem to be wrong.

Alok Mohanty is a ninth grader in Long Reach High School, Columbia, MD. He is the son of Dr Joy Gopal and Sulochana Mohanty.

TALE OF TWO SHADOWS

Pratibha Ray



Going down the memory lane, I respectfully owe my humble achievement to the forefathers of my mother language Oriya, an ancient language with rich literary heritage, Adikavi Sarala

Das, Ativadi Jagannath Das, the Great Sudra Saint Poet Bhima Bhoi, Fakirmohan Senapati, the father of modern prose, the Great Novelist of our time Gopinath Mohanty, Kanhu Charan Mohanty, Surendra Mohanty and others who left behind for us a luminous path to go ahead. With love and respect, I also remember my late parents Parasuram Das and Manorama Devi, my school teachers Late Abhilash Nayak and Late Narrotam Mohanty and others who had constantly encouraged me to be identified as what I am today.

Looking back, I nostalgically reminisce my small village on the banks of river Alka, the mystic smell of Punnag flower in gentle summer breeze, the timid blue Lily, completely drenched in rain in the small village pond, the liquid diamond dropping down on the dew bathed petals of winter flowers in our small garden in the rising sun and the glowing vermilion mark on the golden forehead of my Goddess like mother in the evening Arati flame. They all were instrumental for making me love everything around me. I feel, it all started with love. I fell in love with the virgin nature in the very childhood. But love here was not to be blind. It must have a third eye, wide open to observe the half clad, half fed poor Muslim boys and girls and children of Scheduled Castes who were leading a life which no human child should have lived. They were my childhood bosom friends. My father being a freedom fighter, poet and Gandhian in attitude, had practiced no discrimination irrespective of caste, creed, religion or sex. It had

great impact on me. Hence, the discrimination I observed around me forced me to encounter with my creative self at that tender age – why there should be so much discrimination? Who would answer my questioning mind? Love was the answer. Love sacrifices, Love makes you bold and fearless, Love liberates you from smaller, meaner “I” and raises you to the greater, broader “We”. Here, the personal agony and anguish is transformed into universal concern. The beauty of nature and the ugliness of the dogma-ridden society, both instigated my creative self to say something, which ultimately resulted in poetry. My maiden poetry was published in the children corner of a reputed journal. I was 11 years then. My journey from poetry to fiction has grown into a bond since then.

For me, writing is freedom from self to selflessness and hence a never ending, never satisfying quest

The saintly heritage of Oriya literature and Jagannath cult, where all faiths, all religions have assimilated, taught me to believe in social equanimity in a multi stream Indian background. I attribute the boldness and revolt in my literature to my family religion “Baishnavism” which preaches no caste, no class and to the teaching of my Gandhian headmaster father.

After all, why and how does one write ? Writers often are asked to answer these questions. I don't think I know the answers. For me, writing is an urge, strong and irresistible as urge for life. Can the bud be stopped from opening the petals? Can the stream be stopped from flowing down, can the cloud be denied of raining? Ultimately, the answer may be, can living beings stop breathing? I write because I strongly feel that something is to be said which remains unsaid by some for which the mankind suffers. The pain, the anguish, the helplessness of human being disturbs my creative subconscious and I cannot but write. Problems of human survival are same as past. Technology and Scientific progress have no way reduced the struggle for survival of mankind. For me, writing is freedom from self to selflessness and hence a never ending, never satisfying quest . The search is from a seen world to an unseen horizon which binds man, nature and universe.

And, how do I write? I am not sure if I still understand the process. As a novelist and a short story writer, I have made use of my experience even many years after the occurrence of the event. The events once occurred occur again and again in my creative sub-consciousness, until it takes the shape of a story or a novel. The events which disturb the writer, pains, questions, and challenges and when not mature enough to be re-created, take even many years to be transformed into what is called a fiction. Here art can be more truthful than truth but preserving essential sense of the humanity and human values inspite of the ugliness and crudity of the events. Here personal injury and anguish transforms into universal concern. Unless the writer's inner self internalizes every bit of the event, suffers and celebrates with the event being an indivisible part of it, writing fails to generate the essential grandeur of universality. Hence writing is emancipation from all selfish bondage, all fear, all dogma leading to humanity.

It may be better expressed through the tale of two shadow :

Forenoon; with the rising sun the event occurs and creates a deep impression in the sensitive screen of the writer's creative self. Instantly, the shadow appears, clings and follows you. When you look back you see the large shadow in-separable, but separate, hauntingly following you. "Why do you follow me, have you any thing to speak ? What do you want from me ?" It is determined to remain obstinately mute. You are disturbed, restless and anguished. But you are also determined to walk and walk imprisoned by the hunting shadow. Both you and the shadow are equally helpless at a point but internally you are fearless and a fighter. Afternoon approaches, slowly the shadow comes close and suddenly the brilliant sun comes up your head. In a moment, the shadow merges in you. The shadow and you become one and the same. Now, the shadow walks ahead of you and you follow it till it vanishes with the setting sun, no, till the burning bright sun transforms into soothing, shining, touching and loving

moon – your Creation. A moment of relaxation and delight till the new sun rises with new pain and new challenges and you are again imprisoned between two hunting shadows which tests your patience and truthfulness as a writer. The journey continues.

Thus, for me writing is a pilgrimage from one sun rise to another sun rise, embraced by his own formidable shadows. It is a craving to voice the voiceless, a selfless craving like a woman to mother a child. It is the universal craving of all writers. Hence not salvation, but re-birth is the dream and destiny of a writer. In my humble effort to visualize things, events and problems, I have never been unaware of my limitations. I know the inadequacy of words, to speak for those who remain mute for some reason or other. Even then, I cannot but write.

Significant indeed, the role of writers at the crucial point of humanity today. I conclude with what the 19th century Sudra Saint Poet of Orissa Bhima Bhoi declared

"Let my life languish in the hell, but let the world be redeemed."

Hence all writers sing the same song of humanity irrespective of caste, creed, religion, gender and geography all over the world. This is the spirit of my culture, this also is the spirit of Indian culture from which we, writers draw necessary nourishment.

Dr. Pratibha Ray
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Dr Pratibha Ray is known throughout the world by her creative writing. She has won many awards including Sahitya Akademi Award, Saptarshi Award and Moortidevi Award by Bharatiya Jnanpith in 1991.

Utkarsa will be published quarterly. Current issue: No. 6 - December, 2004 Publication.
Questions, comments, corrections, suggestions: bigyanidas@orissasociety.org

Note: Next issue of Utkarsa will be published in March 2004. Articles for this publication should reach the editorial staff before March 10, 2004.



Your Boisterous Laughter, Grandpa

Sitakant Mahapatra

It is a long time now
father left you here
along Chitrotpala's flowing stream
the vast open fields and sunshine,
just as I left him here
alone, the other day.

Now and then I have come here
and found everything as before
except a few young trees
grown-up and bending
with flowers and fruits.

Perhaps in the beginning
you did not like it here, alone.
perhaps that is why
you frequented our dreams
particularly, grandma's.

But I am sure after a while
you must have got used
to everything and like me,
truant from school
plucking wild berries,
pou too roamed
the wilds of the river island

Today, after many years
I am here,
everything as before-
the river, the fields, the sunshine-
except a few trees
now grown old.

Suddenly I hear
your boisterous, heart-felt laughter

and see your bearded face
lurking behind them,
dear grandfather.

*Dr Sitakant Mahapatra is an eminent
writer of Orissa. He is the recipient
of many awards including the
Jnanpith Award, 1993; Sarala
Award, 1985; Orissa Sahitya
Akademi Award, 1971 and 1984;
and Sahitya Akademi Award, 1974
and Award of the Highest Honour'
by Soka University of Tokyo, 2001.*



The Dancing Spirit

Meera Das

For centuries, from the
banks of the river Mahanadi that
joins the Bay of Bengal and the
sallow waters of Gopalpur on the sea,
the Oriya Merchants (Sadhaba pua) used to start for
their adventurous journey through the sea in boats
guided by winds in search of fortune. They were the
daring businessmen carrying rice, lentils, betel leaf
and other consumables to Java, Sumatra, Borneo (now
Thailand and Indonesia) and come back with spices,
money and gold. The saddened wife with tears in
eyes, anxiety in heart, but making a brave face used
bid adieu to her husband during the month of Kartik
when the North wind starts.

To immortalize the age old tradition the ritual
is symbolically performed on Kartik Purnima day at
the same place where situated today is the sprawling
Paradeep Port. It was my fortune that in 1992 under
the then Chief Minister Late Biju Patnaik the Indian
Navy did an actual journey by wind boat and I was

privileged to present Orissi Dance in Indonesia
reliving the age old memory. This year when my



dance school was invited to participate in Paradeep
Beach Festival as well as Gopalpur Beach Festival it
was a challenge and excitement.

Both Paradeep Beach and Gopalpur Beach were wearing a festive look. Lines and lines of typical shops selling various merchandise items starting from clothes to household goods. It gave us a feeling as if the market place was ready to sell the merchandise to the sea fearing Oriya businessman may start his journey. When one thinks of the sad flight of the Oriya Bohu (daughter in law) whose husband has gone and her expectant eyes awaiting return of her husband, tears come to our eyes. At the same time respect develops for those strong women who gave that strong support and encouragement for the men to travel while they took care of the family. The merchants normally return by change of wind in the month of Phalgun around the festival of holi.

While planning our performance of Odissi, we decided to present our traditional dance of Mangalacharan, Pallavi, Abhinaya and Mokhsya. We choreographed a new item Basant Raas. The stage was set on the beach with open sky and the sea in one side. The sound of sea waves, the moonlight and the befitting music made it nostalgic for the audience.

It had wonderful acceptance by the audience as well as critics. It was a satisfaction for us to take the audience back to ages and make them remember Oriya history, culture, tradition and festivities.

Meera Das is a sought after Odissi dancer and teacher. She teaches Odissi at her dance school Gunjan Dance Academy in Dolamundai, Cuttack. She has received numerous awards for her unique talent. She is the recipient of Mahari Award 2002. This year Meera Das along with her students participated in Puri Beach Festival, Dhauli Festival, Gopalpur Beach Festival, Nalco Annual Day where over 110 Members of Parliament were guests, Cuttack Balijatra where it was held in tribute to late Akshay Mohanty and Late Guru Kelu Mohapatra (the two dance schools participated were Gunjan Dance Academy and Srjan Dance School as both of the schools follow Kelu Charan Mahapatra's dance style). They also participated in Paradeep Boita Bandana on Kartik Purnima.

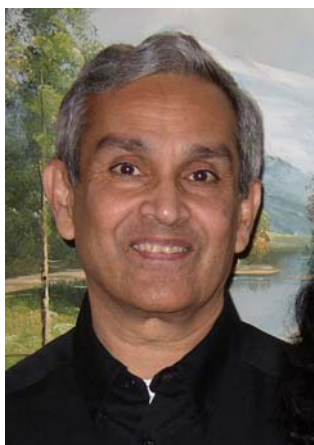
Recently she was awarded "Dr Sanjukta Panigrahi Sanman 2004" by the Governor of Orissa and "Shreekshetra Mahodadhi Maryada Sanman" during Puri Beach Festival. She was also nominated by Government of Madhya Pradesh as a Jury Member for the Kalidas Sanman Award.

In Memoriam

Professor Bijan K. Rao

January 25, 1943 – May 7, 2004
 By Munmaya Mishra – Richmond, VA

Recently the Physics Department of *Virginia Commonwealth University*, Richmond organized a memorial symposium for Professor Bijan K. Rao. Dr. Rao had served as a professor of physics at the Virginia Commonwealth University for about 20 years. The memorial symposium was attended by his friends and colleagues from around the world. This one day event reflected his contributions to the physics and his love to the community, his friends, and family. Prof. Rao, along with his VCU colleagues, pioneered the field of "atomic clusters." He was the author of numerous



books, journal articles and lectured extensively throughout his career.

Prof. Rao was born in Sambalpur. He received his B. S. and M. S. from Utkal University and his Ph. D. in Physics from the University of California, Riverside in 1971. After his post-doctoral training at Louisiana State University he joined the Institute of Physics at Bhubaneswar where he remained until he joined Virginia Commonwealth University, Department of Physics in 1984. Prof. Rao is survived by his wife, Laxmi, two daughters, Ratna and Sulagna, son-in-law, Bassem, and two grandsons, Siraj and Ameer.

OSA CHAPTERS

OSA as an organization has now spread into fourteen regional Chapters, which operate as a social umbrella for different regions in USA and Canada. The chapters arrange religious festivals, social get together, cultural events and participate in the cultural life of the local community as representatives of Oriya culture.

A particular chapter is delegated to host the convention of the year. The chapter chooses volunteers, leaders from its community to coordinate various tasks related to the convention. The chapters are administered by locally elected officials. The national Governing Body and the Presidents of the chapters form the OSA Executive Council, which acts as a policy-making body.

Chapter Name	Chapter Head	Phone
Canada	Gagan Panigrahi	416-223-2756
Chicago	Ipsita Satapathy	630-416-6259
Florida	Ramnarayan Mohapatra (tentative)	407-657-6423
Maryland - Virginia	Lipishree Nayak	301-306-1995
Michigan	Chandana (Rina) Mahapatra	734-429-1771
Minnesota	Sudipta Tripathy	952-445-7989
New England	Pradeep Dhal	978-392-9680
New Jersey	Nageswar Prusty	609-275-0749
New York	Pradip Tripathy	917-399-5426
Ohio	Birendra Jena	330-494-2618
Ozark (central)	Jeetu Nanda	636-273-4144
South East	Sivabrata Das	919-954-9740
Southern	Anoop Mishra	205-941-1925
South-West	Niranjan Tripathy	940-382-7305
Washington, DC	Parameeta Kanungo	703-591-5099

To become a chapter member, please contact the respective chapter presidents. There is a misconception that the chapter members automatically are considered members of OSA National. This is not true. Although the chapters are completely independent in carrying out local activities and involving local community members, there are official conditions between the chapters and OSA National that are established by the constitution. The chapter officials are thus requested to be aware of the following article on chapters and read the constitution of OSA which is available from OSA web page at <http://www.orissasociety.org> and help OSA in performing its activities following the rules.

ARTICLE VIII: LOCAL CHAPTERS

Section 1: A minimum of 10 families with at least 20 members from a particular area is required to petition for establishing a chapter.

Section 2: A petition to form a chapter must be made to the Secretary of OSA for approval by the Executive Committee at least two months prior to the targeted date of its establishment.

Section 3: The President of a chapter or an elected representative shall become a member of the OSA Executive Committee for a term of two years. A notification to that effect shall be submitted to the Secretary of OSA on or before the June 30th of the OSA election year.

Section 4: The President of a chapter shall provide a membership list of the chapter to the Secretary of

OSA at the beginning of each fiscal year and he/she will collect the OSA membership dues from the members of his/her chapter.

Section 5: Any donation and membership dues collected by a chapter in the name of OSA shall be deposited with the Secretary-Treasurer of the OSA. A chapter shall, however, be free to raise its own membership fees and other donations for local activities.

Section 6: Local chapters raising funds in the name of OSA and using the OSA Federal Identification Number shall follow the OSA rules and be accountable for the IRS audit. A copy of the annual financial report shall be submitted to the Secretary-Treasurer of OSA at the end of each fiscal year.

Chapter History

We have collected the history of several chapters in our previous publications. In the present publication we publish history of Canada chapter and Washington DC chapter.

CanOSA: The Canada Chapter of the Orissa Society of the Americas

Glimpses of the history of the Association featuring its 33-years of eventful life in Canada

Dr. Gagan Panigrahi

Early days

Summer 1971: Oriyas living in Toronto, Hamilton and vicinity gathered at a “PakhAla” party in the residence of Dr. Sri Gopala Mohanty; put together their thoughts to form the OSA Chapter in Canada. In the fall of the same year, the small group of Oriyas celebrated the first Kumara Purnima featuring folk dances and Odissi dance. Eminent Odissi Dancer Chitralekha Patnaik made her premiere performance in North America. *Winter, 1972:* Canadian Oriyas celebrated Saraswati Puja. *Summer 1972:* A memorable get-together in a Canadian three-day Cottage picnic was so exciting that it became an annual event in due course. It attracted participants from far way states in the US. The format of OSA convention is very much like that of the picnic. The picnic was in many ways a precursor to the three-day OSA convention that was initiated by the Washington chapter in 1983. Except for a period of break, the tradition continues and the event is very exciting and well attended. *Summer 1973:* Baishakhi celebration featured the one-act play: Pahadara Atma Katha: by Suren Mohanty (AIR), presumably this is the first time an Oriya one-act play was staged in North America. *Summer 1975:* A half-day OSA convention was hosted, a full-length Odissi repertoire by eminent Indian Classical Dancer Menaka Thaker was presented for the first time in the history of the OSA. Jnana Ranjan Dash was the convener.

As we grew older....

Summer 1986: With Ashok Das as convener, the Canada Chapter hosted the OSA convention. The unique feature of the convention was a three-hour stage presentation on (Late) Dr. Mayadhar Mansinha’s “the Saga of the land of Jagannatha” through music, dance, skit and recitation. Jayashree Mohapatra presented a folk dance, late Promod Patnaik took an impressive role as MC. Cultural program by youth and adults many featuring Oriya folk dance and Odissi dance dominated the cultural

component. It commemorated the 50th anniversary of the formation of the state of Orissa. Sixty participants were in attendance from all over North America. Inaugural ceremony was introduced as an important component of the OSA convention; the tradition continues. The present-day format of the Souvenir journal started by Lalu Mansinha as the editor. *Summer 1994:* The Canada chapter presented “Chha Mana Atha guntha”, based on the classic novel of Vyasa Kabi Fakir Mohan Senapati, dramatized and directed by Sri Gopala Mohanty. The troupe made a presentation in Hamilton and captivated the audience in the 25th Anniversary (Silver Jubilee) OSA Convention in New Jersey hosted by OSANY Chapter. *Summer 1999:* CanOSA hosted the 29th OSA convention in Toronto with Lalu Mansinha as the convener, Loreena Patnaik as President, and Sushmita Behera as vice-president. A stage presentation of “Ama Odiya Bhasara Kinchita Abhasa” based on “A Glimpse into Oriya Literature” by Chitta Ranjan Das was a literary accomplishment. Devaraj Patnaik gave a splendid performance of Odissi dance.

The tradition continues.....

We continued our events like three-day picnic, one-day picnic, Bishuba Milan and Kumara Purnima. We are delighted to see our old friends like Manoranjan Patnaik, Minati Patnaik, Suniti Behera and Saroj Behera visiting us and joining the Cottage picnic, Kula Mishra making a surprise appearance in our Bishuba Milan. Current year events have reached high standards, and the team, composed of the members, is very enthusiastic to keep up Oriya tradition culture and heritage. *Summer 2004:* CanOSA organised Bishuba Milan that featured many things from Oriya poetry reading to a hilarious skit “Shesha Bichara”. Later on, the fun-filled one day picnic was held at G. Ross Lord Park, in Toronto. In the months of July and August, many took part in the four-day cottage picnic, held at Rice Lake, Ontario. *Fall 2004:* Superb presentation of Geeti Natya “Karna Arjuna and childrens Oriya drama Bhakta Prahalad became master piece production. Both were directed by Prafulla Pujapanda.

The CanOSA chapter is proud that the following members were the recipients of prestigious OSA awards during the past many years:

Distinguished Utkaliya awards: Lalu Mansinha (1997), Sri Gopal Mohanty (1998), Jagannath Prasad Das (2004)

Kalashree Awards: Chitralkha Patnaik (1992), Sri Gopal Mohanty (1995), Ellora Patnaik (1999), Niranjana Mishra (2001)

Yuva Kala Vikasha Award: Priyanka Patnaik (2004)

Mr. Asok Das and Mr. Pratap Patnaik took responsibility of OSA as president and vice-president, respectively, during the years of 1987 and 1988. Lalu Mansinha, Gagan Panigrahi, Sabita Panigrahi and Ashok Acharya were responsible for an outstanding publication of the OSA Souvenir Journal at several points in time. Hara Padhi has been diligently compiling and composing OSA directory over the past few years: it has been of great help to all of us. We appreciate his perseverance and commitment. Two distinguished members of CanOSA, Sri Gopala Mohanty and Niranjana Mishra are currently on the OSA Coordinating Committee serving as stalwarts of Cultural Affairs and Awards, and Seminars, respectively, relating to OSA Conventions.

And as we move on, Our Legacy is Our Future....

At present, Gagan Panigrahi, President, Amit Nayak, Vice President and Mahnaz Sen as Secretary-Treasurer, have taken responsibility on their shoulders to build CanOSA for promoting Oriya culture and heritage in Canada.

OSA Washington DC: The Washington DC Chapter of the Orissa Society of the Americas

By Pratap Das, Poolesville, MD - Member

Washington Chapter is one of the premier chapters of the Orissa Society of Americas (OSA). This is a chapter that has offered leadership to OSA. More than 100 families live in the metropolitan Washington area and participate in various activities of the chapter. The chapter holds its election every two years for President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. There are four major programs - Saraswati Puja, Ganesh Puja, Picnic/Raja, and Kumar Purnima. Some of the past presidents are Surendra Nath Roy, Anu Biswal, Arun Das, Sudip Patnaik, Gita Mohanty, Srikanta Nayak, Sukumar Nayak,

Alpana Das etc. Parmeeta Kanungo has been the current President for 2004-06.

Members of this chapter work for both private and public sector such as federal government agencies. This chapter is privileged to have its members in past including Honorable Lalit Mansingh, former Ambassador of India, and other career diplomats.

Dr. Rabindra Nath Patnaik and Pratap Das were elected as the President and the Secretary of the OSA in 1983-85. Dr. Babru Samal was Vice President of OSA in the past and Dr. Nivedita Mohanty, is the current Vice President of OSA.

Washington Chapter is a pioneer chapter that brings new ideas of organizing successful OSA conventions such as hosting the OSA convention at Bowie State College, Maryland for two days in the college dorms. It started a mehfil (informal session), youth activities, introduced the new logo for OSA, mass cooking etc etc. In 1990, tragedy hit with the loss of Subrina Biswal, a young talented member and the OSA convention was held at the Quince Orchard High School for two days dedicating the convention to the memory of Subrina Biswal by awarding a scholastic award and a performing art award sponsored by Indo-American Friendship Foundation. In 1996, the chapter hosted the convention for three days extravaganza under the convenor Anu Biswal adding so many cultural features such mela, Pramod Patnaik Inter Chapter competition, poetry and literary sessions, youth activities, Oriya film show, art appreciation by Prafulla Mohanty of UK, formal sit-down banquet, a special inaugural program titled "Baar Maase Tera Jatra", fashion show, spiritual address by Guru Sachidananda, woman forum, multiple seminars about development in Orissa etc.

Four of its members have been awarded OSA's Kalashree Award - Pratap Das, Anu Biswal, Surendra Ray, and Arun Das. This chapter won the Pramod Patnaik Inter-Chapter award in 2002. Dr. Bhakta Rath was awarded Special Recognized Oriya Award in 1996. Ashutosh Sahu was awarded the Subrina Biswal Scholarship for best academic achievement in 2000. Pallavi Das got second prize for performing in 2003 OSA convention at New Jersey. This chapter always participates in the cultural programs during OSA conventions and other local events. The chapter also organizes programs for the visiting artists. In the past, artists such as Late Akhaya Mohanty, Prafulla Kar, Pranab Patnaik, Sikander Alam etc were presented by the chapter.

One of the outstanding features of this chapter is that some of its members are involved in various cultural and social activities promoting

Orissan art and culture by organizing seminars, workshops, cultural programs. To name a few -

1. Pratap Das, Arun Das, Anu Biswal, and Ajay Agrawalla formed India Performing Arts Promotions Inc. (IPAP) organized two International Odissi Festivals in 1990 and 1993.

2. Braja Mishra, Indu Mishra, Binod Nayak, Prafulla Mishra, Dharitri Mishra, Sushant Mohanty, Anu Biswal, Sudip Patnaik, Suresh Kodolika etc. formed Orissa Village Trust (OVT) to build houses in Orissa after cyclone.

3. Naresh Das, Bigyani Das, Nrusingha Mishra, Surendra Roy, Mahaskati Dash etc. organize Bhajan programs every month at the Jagannath Temple, Baltimore, MD.

4. Both Bigyani Das, Naresh Das and their friends have been organizing Holi program for the past six years.

Chapter News

Canada Chapter

Gagan Panigrahi – President



The Canadian Chapter of OSA had a very successful year. They celebrated the Bisuba Milan on the 15th of May, in the Hillcrest Public Library in Toronto. Approx. 110 people participated in the programme. The one day picnic was held on the 10th of July at the G. Ross Lord Park in Toronto. Over 90 people attended the picnic.

The big event of the chapter was the 3-day cottage picnic at Sandercocks Tourist Resort of Rice Lake, Ontario from the 30th of July to the 2nd of August 2004. Nearly 70 people joined the fun filled picnic.



Finally, the Kumara Purnima was celebrated on the 30th of October, in the Mimico Public library in Toronto. Approx. 135 people participated in the programme. The programme started with traditional song of *Kuanra Punei Janha Go*. The high

lights of the programme were drama **Bhakta Prahallada** presented in Oriya by the children. Prof. Purohit wrote that the children spoke better Oriya than him.

The adults presented the **Geeti Natya Karna Arjuna** by **Gana Kabi Biashnaba Pani**. It was a commemorative presentation in honour of the

Gana Kabi (Poet of the Folks) to celebrate his 122nd Birth Anniversary on Kumara Purnima.

Gana Kabi was born on Kumara Purnima on 1882 in village Kota pada, Mahanga, District Cuttack. The episode presented in a blended form containing narrative music, abhinaya, dialogue and acting conformed to the Pani style of Geeti Natya of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in rural Orissa. According to Prof. Sri Gopal Mohanty "*Toronto presentation of a Baishnaba Pani's play could be the first time in North America. It was superb and professional*". It was a presentation of team work and demonstration of solid commitment.



According to Prof. Lalu Mansinha "*But striking about the Saturday drama on stage was the high quality, and beauty, of set design and direction, of the music, the dazzling costumes, and the absolute professional level of acting*". Both the dramas, 'Bhakta Prahllada' and 'Karna – Arjuna' were directed by Prafulla Pujapanda. Kalashree Niranjana Mishra wrote "*It was a splendid performance; it looked like a master piece production: not a piece of cultural item for casual audience, it is for those who wish to witness an authentic Oriya Yatra and Geeti Natya.*"

The programme ended with sumptuous dinner prepared by the volunteers. It was a moment of happiness and community spirit to witness and enjoy.

New York / New

Jersey Chapter

Pradip Tripathy and Nageswar Prusty



Ganesh Puja was celebrated at the grounds of Guruvayurappan temple in Morganville, NJ. This temple is the proposed future home of Lord Shree Jagannath in NJ. Puja was conducted inside a huge tent, erected on the grounds of the temple. Tent reminded us the typical pujas in villages of Orissa. It was beautifully decorated with patakas, sarees and lights. The tent echoed with the slokas of the priests, who performed the pooja. To follow the traditions: Kids broke coconuts, recited slokas and Bhajans. The Prasad and lunch was excellent, cooked and



volunteered by our participants. More than fifty families attended this year's Ganesh puja.



Kumar Purnima / Annual Function was

celebrated in a very grand scale. It was held at Bridgewater temple on 30th October. The temple's large auditorium felt like small for the hundred or more families attended this year's Kumar purnima. Program started with song "Kumar Punei Jahna go" with little girls doing the pooja in front of "Tulsi tree", followed by chorus song "Swargadapi Gariyasi", which inspired the patriotism in everybody. Evening was colorful with Odissi dance, Karaoke program-first time on Oriya songs, several kids programs, including a Sambalpuri group dance-Superb performance by little girls who were looking cute in their costumes. There were adult cultural programs, including most appreciated item "Bharat Darshan", which showcased different Indian states. We had the privilege of having Sri Ramani Ranjan Panda, who has done more than 100 dramas in his life. He directed our very important item of the night, Drama: "Swarga re Chala Hala", where all participants worked very hard and did a wonderful performance on the stage.

Ohio Chapter
Dr Birendra Jena, President



Summer Picnic

This year's summer picnic was held at Alum Creek State Park near Columbus on Saturday, August 21, 2004. The venue of the picnic was in the recreational area situated against the backdrop of scenic Alum Creek dam. The whole day was filled with a lot of fun activities for children of all ages and

adults which included talent show for children, various races for children and adults, quiz competition for older kids. The food was delicious and quantity was more than sufficient, thanks to the ladies of Columbus area .

The credit for organizing this year's picnic goes to Mr. Saswat Mohapatra, the picnic co-ordinator and his group of dedicated volunteers. We would like to thank them for their untiring efforts in making this event a grand success.

Kumar Purnima



Kumar Purnima was celebrated on October 30, 2004 at Parma, Ohio. The turnout was very good and we even had guests from Michigan and Indiana.

The major highlight of this year's Kumar purnima was the observation of "Chanda Osa". Young children, both boys and girls participated in the Chanda Puja. Niki Pradhan read an article on the significance of Kumar Purnima.

The potluck dinner included several Oriya delicacies. The food was delicious and plenty. The dinner was followed by a light entertainment program which included a skit by Birendra Jena and Basant Mohapatra, vocal music by Prasanna Rout, Arun Pradhan and Ritanjali Patnaik. Drs. Prasanta Raj and Basant Mohapatra entertained the audience with their jokes. Finally the program was concluded with "Antakshari".

Congratulations!

Sutanu Misra, son of Dr. Santosh and Margaret Misra has successfully completed his residency program and started his practice as an Anesthesiologist in Providence, Rhode Island since July 2004.

Clair Misra, also the daughter of Santosh and Margaret Misra graduated from Kent State University with a B.S. in Biology in May 2004. Madhuri Nayak, daughter of Hemanta and Sagarika Nayak graduated from George Washington University with International Business Major in May 2004.

Anshuman Swain, son of Ashok and Kalpana Swain graduated from Wright state University School of Medicine in May 2004 and is currently doing his residency at Ohio State University Medical Center, Columbus, Ohio.

Our congratulations to Sutanu, Clair and Madhuri and Anshuman for their success and we wish them all the best in their future endeavours.



Washington DC Chapter
Dr Bigyani Das - Member

On November 6th, 2004 OSA DC chapter celebrated Kumar Purnima. The day was bright and the temperature was right for the celebration. After the chanda puja and snacks, the stage program started with announcement of new office bearers by Brahmapiya Sen and Arun Ojha.

Outgoing president Alpana Das and secretary/treasurer Munmun Patnaik along with the chapter members welcomed the new office bearers

- Mrs Parameeta Kanungo (President)
- Mrs Sangeeta Dey (Vice President - Continuing)
- Mrs Jayashree Samal (Secretary-Treasurer)

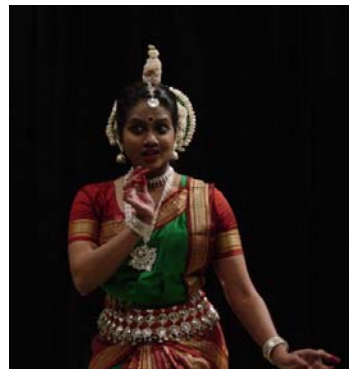
The cultural program started with the traditional "Kuanra Punei Jahna Go Phula Baula Beni". MC Deepa Parija then announced the program sequence of the children. Among the children performers, Divya and Devashish Das presented classical music pieces, Tej and Prem Patnaik presented instrumental music, Bagmi Das danced to the song "Deva ho deva Ganapati deva" from the movie Dev, Sriya Chhotray presented Odissi dance Batu, Shashwati Das performed an odia dance "Mate Chandana Panire Gadhoi Dialo mu Kalia Pakhaku



Jauchhi". The childrens' program ended with a Hindi sequence presented by Pallabi Das. The last part of



the cultural program was Odissi performance by Sonali Mishra.



Sonali Mishra (Lara) began her dance training in Bharatanatyam at the age of five under Smt. Uma Suresh and later, under Smt. Sudha Chandrasekhar. She was initiated into Odissi dance at the age of fourteen under the Chitrlekha Dance

Academy. Since 1995, she has traveled to India on several occasions for further training and refinement from Guru Sri Bichitrananda Swain and Sri Ramesh Chandra Jena at the Orissa Dance Academy under the supervision of Guru Sri Gangadhar Pradhan. Her training includes one year of rigorous and sustained training in Orissa, India from 1999-2000 with her Gurus.

Odia dinner items are always plenty. Everybody enjoyed the vegetarian dinner and live chat and gossip with friends. Everybody also participated in the clean up and brought back sweet memories of Kumar Purnami while driving back home.

The chapter is getting ready for the celebrations for the year ahead. President, Mrs Parameeta Kanungo has taken initiative to create an email group for easy communication among members. Washington DC chapter members are looking forward for exciting chapter activities.

For Kids

Saraswati Puja (February 13, 2005)

Saraswati Puja falls on Shukla Pakhsya Panchami (fifth day of fullmoon lunar cycle) of Oriya Magha month. The day marked for the propitiation of Saraswati, the Goddess of learning is known as Sripanchami or Basanta Panchami. 'Sree' is beauty and the other name of 'Saraswati' and Basanta is spring season which brings beauty and pleasure to the Earth. Therefore it is a festival to welcome beauty through worship of the Goddess



Saraswati puja is celebrated in all schools and colleges. Very rarely it is celebrated as a community event. Schools, colleges and educational institutes are closed for two days, the day of Saraswati Puja and next day for bisarjana. The students get up early in the morning, collect flowers and decorate the school's puja place. By 10 am, everybody takes complete bath and they gather in the puja place in new garments. After the puja there are feasts arranged in schools with vegetarian meals. At times drama and other cultural activities are arranged for the Saraswati puja day. Students take break from their studies for the day to pay their respect to Goddess Saraswati.

What to do?

On the puja day, take a complete bath. Put on new or washed cloths. Collect flowers and make a garland for the mother. Join the puja celebration with your family either making arrangements at home or go to the temple to perform the puja. Recite the slokas for Mother Saraswati that are discussed below. Organize some of your favorite books and keep it near the puja place for mother's blessings. If you learn any musical instrument, please take blessings of Mother Saraswati putting your instrument in the puja place. Eat vegetarian food.

If your local Oriya or Bengali communities organize Saraswati Puja, then join the puja and perform the rituals. Puja place is not a place for gossip. Please concentrate and listen to the mantras and do not talk while puja is being performed.

Mythology

Saraswati is described as the water deity in Vedas. She is also described as the goddess of all the creative arts and in particular of poetry and music, learning and science. She embodies wisdom, fortune, intelligence, nourishment, brilliance, contentment, splendor and devotion. With book and veena, Lordess Saraswati is known as the symbols of literature and music.

Knowledge is power. Goddess Saraswati is regarded as the giver of wisdom. She is also referred as Vak devi (Goddess of speech) and Sakala kaladhishtatri (goddess bestowing all the art forms.)

Saraswati is appropriately described as spotless white in complexion, riding on a white swan, wearing white silk, bearing the Vina (lute-variety), the book, the rosary and the symbol of protection in her four hands, and having a crescent moon on her head.

Celebration in Orissa

Prayer

Literally, Saraswati means SARAH - Knowledge, STHANAMYASYAH ASTITI. Thus, Saraswati is the goddess who rules all kinds of knowledge. In scriptures appearance of Saraswati is thus described as:

Shukalaam Brahma Vichaar Saar

Parama Adhyaan Jagadvyaapeeneem

Veenaa Pusthaka Dhaarineem

Abhayadaam Jaadyaandhakaaraapahham

Haste Sphaatikamaalikaam Vidadhateem

Padmaasane Sansthitaam

Vande Taam Parameshwareem

Bhagavatheem Buddheepradaam Shaaradaam

Saraswati is all pure with white clothes and her arms bear the veenaa (a string musical instrument), the book of knowledge. Saraswati is the bestower of fearlessness, and Remover of the darkness of ignorance. She (also) bears a crystal maala (rosary). Mother's form is brilliant and is firmly established in her position on the lotus flower, who is a graceful bestower of intellect. I offer my prostrations to that Goddess (also known as Shaarada).

yA kundendu tushAra hAra dhavaLA

yA subhravastrAv.rta

yA vINa vara daNDa maNDitakarA

yA sweta padmAsana

yA brahmAccuhta saN^kara prabh.rtibhir-
devaiH sadA pUjitA

sA maM pAtu sarasvatI bhagavatI
nisshesha jADyApahA

Meaning: She is the embodiment of all beauty and the abode of all learning, the consort of Brahma, and is worshipped by Gods like Indra, and sages like Suka, Sanaka and Narada. She is kindness incarnate and generous in her gifts to her devotees.

Saraswati Namasthubhyam
Varade Kamaroopini
Vidya Aarambam Karishyami
Siddhir Bhavatum Sada

Meaning: O Goddess Saraswati! I pray to you, who is the fulfiller of my wishes. I start on the path of learning with the request that Thou will bestow Thy blessings on me.

Odia Prayer

bidyA-dAyinI namah Saraswati,
 jaya bINApANi bhAratI |pada|
biNA, pus-tk beni pANi, beda,
bedAnta samrATa rANI
chha rAga Au chhatisha rAgini,

TankAre to bINA sArA sruSTi |1|
shwetabasanI, mAtA padmAsanI,
bidyA-bhaNDara tripuramohinI
namah, namah, namah, namah shArade
namah mAgO baradAyinI |2|
brahmA pATarANI, jagata-jananI,
krupApradAyinI, dukkhahAriNI
surendrapUjitA bhagabatI bande,
bande taba charaNa beni |3|

Meaning My salute to you mother Saraswati, the giver of the knowledge. All glory to you mother Binapani, Bharati. You hold veena (bINA, a string instrument) and books in your both hands and you are the empress of all vedas and vedantas. Your string echoes the whole creation with the six rAgas and thirty-six rAginiS. You are clad in the white saree, and seated on the lotus. You are the prettiest in the three worlds and also the source of all knowledge. I salute you several times mother Sharada, I salute you mother, the fulfiller of all desires. You are the wife of Lord Brahma and you are mother of the whole world, you are also very graceful and remover of all misery. Mother Bhagabati, who is worshiped by the king of Gods, I salute your both feet.

Non-Resident Oriya Facilitation Center (NROFC)

A venture of the NRO Cell of Government of Orissa

Call for action and participation by Mr Tuhin Pandey - October 17th 2004

To

All Non-Resident Oriyas

Re: First Prabasi Utkal Divas and Annual OSA Symposium on Orissa Development

Over the years, members of the Non-Resident Oriya Community have contributed to various development projects in Orissa. The purpose of this event and the symposium is to highlight the present contributions by NRO community, to involve local organizations in their efforts, to seek Orissa Government participation in these projects, and to develop plans for future projects in Orissa through Government collaborations facilitated by the NRO cell and the NROFC. We would like to invite you to visit our website at www.nrofc.org to learn more about the proposed society and the event. Your personal presence at the event will encourage the endeavor of the NRO Cell and the NROFC to carry out further development work in Orissa, and will ensure successful collaborations with the Government in future. By your participation in the discussions and deliberations, we hope that new ideas for future development of the state in collaboration with the NRO communities can be formulated. In closing, we once again request you to accept our invitation to participate in the symposium. We are attaching a copy of the draft program for the day for your information. We also seek your contribution related to Orissa's Development for a proceeding to be printed on the occasion. The same may be presented in the appropriate session of the Orissa Development Symposium.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. With our best regards,

Mr. Tuhin Pandey, Spl. Secretary, GA Department, Govt. of Orissa, Officer-in-charge – NRO Cell

Mr. Sahadev Sahu, Local Coordinator, NROFC

Dr. Dhanada Mishra, Local Organising Chair



Oriya Cakes and Sweets (Pitha and Mitha)



In Oriya/Odia, the term for the cake is “piThA” and the term for a sweet dish is “miThA”. Described below are the preparation methods of some cakes and sweets. The ingredients are approximate in nature and preparation methods are also the generalized methods.

Pithas (piThAs) or Cakes

In most of the cake preparation, filling (pura) preparation and flour dough (jantA dough) preparation are two most important elements. We first describe the ingredients and preparation methods for these two items.

Filling (Pura): Pura can be made with coconut, cheese, mung dal or khoa. For coconut pura, one should first grate the coconut. For mung dal pura, one should first boil the dal to make it soft. Then mix with black pepper (optional), and jiggery (guDa) or sugar and fry it for 5 minutes. Then cool it.

Flour Dough (JantA Dough): Dough can be prepared with rice powder, semolina (suji), all purpose flour, wheat flour and refined wheat flour (maida). Then for about 1 pound of the flour, boil 1 ltr of water in a wide mouth pan, add salt, cinnamon powder (optional) and 1 tsp ghee (optional). Pour the flour slowly and stir continuously. Reduce the flame and cook till it absorbs the water completely (to the consistency of chappati). Let it cool.

Poda Pitha (Baked Cake) :
(From the kitchen of Maushumi Pattanaik, Silver Spring, MD)

Poda Pitha can be prepared with rice or black gram dal (Urad Dal or biri DALi). Other ingredients remain the same. This is a special item for the Raja festival in Summer.

Ingredients: 2 cups rice, 1 cup Sugar, ½ Coconut, 1cup Ghee, 1/8 cup Cashew nut, 1/8 cup Cardamom, 1/8 cup Raisin, 3 to 4 bay leaves

Method:

1) Soak the rice overnight. Grate the Coconut and mix with rice. Grind the rice with water until it becomes a smooth batter. 2) Bring water and sugar to boil to make a syrup. Add the above prepared batter to the

syrup and stir properly and care for not letting the mix to burn. Add ghee, cashewnut, raisins, cardamom and bay leaves to it. Turn the heat low and stir the mix till it turns to a dough. Remove from heat and let it cool. 3) Bring a baking tray put ghee nicely inside it and slowly spread the dough to the tray, pat with ghee again. Cover the tray with aluminum foil and bake with 350 degree centigrade and till the top turns brown. 4) Cut the cake when it is cool and serve. Generally in Orissa this is baked inside the fire whole night with charcoal and banana leaves.

Kakara Pitha (kAkarA piThA or Fried Cake):
(From the kitchen of Maushumi Pattanaik, Silver Spring, MD)

Kakara Pitha is a dish that goes with different festivals such as Raja, Kumar Purnami etc. It's also used as an item in “bhAra”. Kakara can be prepared with rice flour, all purpose flour, wheat flour, refined wheat flour (maida) or semolina/Suji. The preparation process and other ingredients remain the same. Again the kAkarA pithA is also recognized by its stuffing (pura) such as “chhenA kAkarA” if the stuffing is cheese, “naDiA kAkarA” if the stuffing is coconut. When there is no stuffing, kAkarA is called “seka”.

Ingredients: 4 Cups maida, 2 Cups khoa, 20 Pieces cashew nuts, 2 Cups sugar, 20 Raisins, 8 Cardamom, 1 tsp Baking Powder, Oil for frying

Method:

1) For filling: Mix khoa, cashew nuts, raisins, ground cardamom and sugar. Make 50 parts of this mix. Other types of fillings (pura) can also be used 2) For dough: Mix the flour, baking powder and oil properly. Add required amount of water and knit to make a nice dough. Make 50 parts of this dough and prepare 50 small round ball spread each ball to and make puri and put the filling mix to each puri and close it with water. Close the puris to your style and shape but remember to close it with water. Close the puris to your style and shape but remember to close the sides properly. Repeat the same process rest of

the balls. Keep it aside. 3) For frying : Heat oil and deep fry those prepared Kakara. 4) Serve it cool.

Mithas (miThAs) or Sweets

Rasagolla and Rasamullai

From the Kitchen of Ila Ojha, Columbia, MD

Taste : Sweet

Time : 2 hours to 2 ½ hours

Serving : 40 pieces From the Kitchen of Ila

Ingredients for Rasagolla: 1 Gallon Milk, 1 cup Lemon Juice, 1 cup Sugar, Plain flour (all purpose flour)

Method:

1. Prepare Chhena: a) Bring the milk to a boil. b) When boiling add either whiter vinegar or lemon juice and turn off the gas. c) Milk will separate into whey and curd. d) Pour into a vessel through a strainer, leaving only the Chhena in strainer. e) Add the cold water to Chhena to stop cooking process. f) Squeeze excess water to make it dry (NOT complete dry).
2. Add 1 table spoon of all purpose flour to Chhena
3. Smooth curd in a mixer for one minute (till it becomes soft and not sticky). If you do it manually it will take more minutes.
4. Prepare even sized small balls from the curd. About 30 – 40 rasagollas would be formed.
5. Prepare Syrup: Add 3 cups of water to 1 cup of sugar and bring to boil .
6. Place the Rasa ollas in syrup.
7. Boil the Rasa ollas for 40 minutes.
8. Remove the Rasagollas and let them cool.

Ingredients for Rasamallai

1. Rasagolla as described above
2. Full Cream Milk - 1 liter
3. Cardamom Powder - 1/2 tsp
4. Almonds & Pistachios - 2 tsp (thinly sliced)

Method

1. Boil milk to 2/3rd, add cardamom, sliced nuts and saffron, well dissolved.
2. Put Rasagollas into the boiling milk and boil for 5 minutes
3. Remove from fire, cool to room temperature.
4. Chill for 3-4 hours before serving.

TIPS: Do not tie the CHHENA in a cloth and press for Rasagollas and Rasmullai. Just hold under running water, press out extra water and knead gently with fingers not palms. Always use freshly made CHHENA from imported cow's milk (from India, Orissa) for best results.

Chhena Poda (Cheese Cake):

Ingredients: 2 lbs part-skim Ricotta cheese, 3 tbs Sooji , 1 cup of sugar , 1/4 tsp of vanilla essence (optional), Kajun and Khismis (optional), 10 Cardamom, 1 cup water, Butter /Ghee

Method:

1. Pour all ingredients in a container and mix it properly using a spoon or a hand blender. 2) Put some butter/ghee in a baking pan to make its surface greasy. Transfer the batter into the baking pan leaving about 1 inch from the top empty. 3) Pre-heat oven at 400 F and bake it for 25-30 minutes. Then reduce it to 350 F and bake it for 45-50 minutes till the top turns to light brown. 5) Cool it after taking out from the oven. 6) Then cut it into pieces like cakes and serve.

Golapa Jamun (Gulab Jamun):

Ingredients: Carnation Dry (Non fat), Milk Powder, 3 Cups Self Rising Flour, 1 Cup Heavy Whipping Cream, 1 Cup Sugar , Vegetable Oil/Corn Oil to fry

Method:

1) Mix the milk powder, flour and cream into a smooth dough. 2) Divide and prepare the dough into small balls 3) Heat oil in a pan 4) Deep fry the balls in slow heat. 5) Heat another pan in medium heat and put some water with sugar until it becomes a thick syrup. 6) Put the fried balls to the syrup.

Kalakand:

Ingredients: 2 lbs Ricotta Cheese, Milk Powder, 1 Cup Butter, 1/2 Cube Sugar, 10-15 Almonds grated

Process: 1) Heat a frying pan on medium heat. 2) Add Ricotta cheese, Butter, Sugar, Milk Powder into it. 3) Stir it continuously till the mixture is little thick, 4) When it starts getting golden brown remove the pan from the stove. 5) Then spread it on a greased surface. 6) Let it cool down for a few minutes and then cut it into 1/1.5 inch square pieces and put it in the refrigerator. 7) When it becomes cold and ready to serve garnish it with grated almonds.

**OSA Convention , 2004 at DALLAS
Income Expense Statement**

Revenue	Item	Amount
	Saree Sale	\$2,810.00
	Registration - Outside SW Chapter	\$7,000.00
	Registration - Local SW Chapter	\$4,425.00
	Registration - Local DFW Area	\$3,985.00
	Misc	\$3,663.37
	Food Collection	\$13,595.00
	Sponsors - Souvenir	\$1,625.00
	Donations - From Oriyas	\$13,807.00
	Donations- Corporate	\$2,750.00
	OSA Membership collected	\$2,090.00
	OSA Registration Fee collected	\$2,230.00
	Total	\$57,980.37

Expenses

Youth Expenses	\$1,120.89
Stage Expenses	\$6,553.25
Souvenir	\$6,280.50
Registration Exp	\$7,311.14
Saree and Other Exp	\$3,587.00
Food Exp	\$14,731.12
Bank Charges	\$184.65
Artist and Guest	\$12,159.04
OSA Membership Paid	\$2,090.00
OSA Registration Fee Paid	\$2,230.00
Total	\$56,247.59

Total Surplus **\$1,732.78**

Transferred to OSA Main Account **\$866.39**

Transferred to SW Chapter **\$866.39**

(Loknath Patro)
Finance , OSA Convention 2004)

(Niranjan Tripathy)
(Convener, OSA Convention 2004)

REQUEST FOR MEMERSHIP /UPGRADE MEMBERSHIP

OSA's membership is open to any person eighteen years of age or more, interested in Orissa and Oriya cultural heritage. Membership fee is the primary source of income and membership is the most important asset for OSA. Membership has been broadly categorized as benefactors, patrons, life members and annual members. The present dues for various categories are: **Benefactor: \$1000; Patron: \$600; Life Member: \$300; Annual Membership (July 1 to June 30) Family - \$25, Single - \$10, Student Family - \$10, Student Single - \$5. Please mail your check to OSA c/o: Hari Arjun Patro, 2216 Harrisburg Lane, Plano, TX 75025 and specify "OSA Membership" in memo.**



California...Here We Come!

Orissa Society of the Americas 36th Convention

Welcome to Newport Beach, California
for the OSA Convention
July 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 2005



Visit one of the most diverse convention location sites and
major tourist attractions for people of all ages
Convention Venue: Radisson Hotel, Newport Beach, Orange County
...California Odiya Jatra...

10 Commandments of attending The California OSA Convention 2005

1. Thou shalt have great fun in the sun.
2. Thou shalt meet with thy old friends and make many new ones.
3. Thou shalt enjoy three incredible days in a festive, lively atmosphere.
4. Thou shalt experience a memorable vacation in beautiful California or have an enjoyable visit on your way to India.
5. Thou shalt consider visiting a wealth of exceptional attractions:
 - Hollywood
 - Disneyland
 - Beaches
 - San Diego Zoo
 - Universal Studios
 - Knott's Berry Farm
 - Balboa
 - Sea World
 - Magic Mountain
 - Little India
 - Fashion Island
 - and Many More
6. Thou shalt enjoy cultural and entertainment programs performed by our odiya community and invited artists – in a Jatra setting.
7. Thou shalt participate in a number of seminars on topics of interest to our community.
8. Thou shalt participate in technology symposiums promoting potential entrepreneurs.
9. Thou shalt enjoy Italian and Mexican lunches and Indian dinners and snacks – in a formal setting served by the hotel
10. Thou shalt witness the leadership of our youth as organizers of a substantial part of the convention.

Please plan now to attend the convention. Your host families from Northern California and Southern California are waiting wholeheartedly to welcome you and to enjoy the convention with you. Only with your participation will we be able to make the OSA 2005 Convention a memorable event and grand success.

With best regards

Kirtan Behera
Convener

Twisampati Mitra
Co-Convener

Nivedita Mohanty
Co-Convener

Mukta Mohapatra
Youth Convener

&

The OSA Convention 2005 Organizing Committee Chairs and Members

N.B.:

**Why not just pickup the phone to reserve your airline tickets right now to get the best discounts. Orange County John Wayne Airport: Few blocks away from the hotel. Los Angeles Airport: An hour away from the hotel. Please visit the Convention website: www.osa2005.org
Hotel website: www.radissonnewportbeach.com**

Light A Lamp for A Prosperous Future Orissa



Keep the Flame Glowing



ଯୋତାକୁ ଯୋତା ସରି ନୁହେଁ Union is Strength

Working Together is Success

