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MILLENNIUM

28th ANNUAL CONVENTION
Houston, Texas / July 3 - 5, 1997

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**Journal of the
Orissa Society of the Americas
Souvenir Issue 1997**



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ମହତ୍ ଭାବନାରେ ଆମେ ଅନୁପ୍ରାଣିତ ହେଉ ।

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।
Let noble thoughts come to us from every side.
- Rigveda, I-89-i

Visions for the new Millennium

28th Annual Convention
Houston, TX, July 3-5, 1997

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Journal of the Orissa Society of the Americas

Souvenir Issue 1997

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invocation

a selection of prayers, taken from the scriptures of the world's religions

From the unreal lead me to the real.
From darkness lead me to light.
From death lead me to immortality.
OM. Peace. Peace. Peace.

- *Hinduism. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.3.28*

Homage to Him, the Exalted One, the Enlightened One.
To the Buddha I go for refuge.
To the Norm I go for refuge.
To the Order I go for refuge.

- *Buddhism. Khuddaka Patha*

He is the Sole Supreme Being; of eternal manifestation;
Creator, Immanent Reality; Without Fear, Without Rancor;
Timeless Form; Unincarnated; Self-existent;
Realized by the grace of the Holy Preceptor.

- *Sikhism. Adi Granth, Japuji p. 1: The Mul Mantra*

Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord,
my rock and my redeemer.

- *Judaism and Christianity. Bible, Psalm 19.14*

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds,
The Beneficent, the Merciful, Owner of the Day of Judgment.
Thee alone we worship; Thee alone we ask for help.
Show us the straight path: The path of those whom Thou hast favored;
Not of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.

- *Islam. Qur'an 1: Al-Fatihah*

Our Father, it is thy universe, it is thy will,
Let us be at peace, let the souls of the people be cool.
Thou art our Father; remove all evil from our path.

- *African Traditional Religions. Nuer Prayer (Sudan)*

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Front Cover

Our organization, OSA, is represented by its logo and the globe in the background highlighting North America. The 28th Annual Convention logo, designed by *Somdutt Behura*, is built around a bridge spanning East and West, which is symbolized by a joining of hands. The right pillar of the bridge represents the past glory of Orissa through its art and architecture. The pillar on the left depicts milestones of Orissa's technological progress. Our visions for the new millennium, as reflected in the Convention logo, are for industrial development of Orissa through environmentally-friendly economic growth - while keeping our rich heritage alive.

Credits

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Chief Minister



ORISSA STATE

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Date. 14. 6. 97.....

M E S S A G E

It gives me immense pleasure to know that the Orissa Society of the Americas is celebrating its 28th Annual Convention from 3rd to 5th July, 1997 at Houston, Texas, and bringing out a souvenir to mark the occasion.

Orissa has a glorious past and the Oriyas, as an ethnic group, represent a tradition which has transcended parochialism, and embraced international amity and brotherhood which are the basic tenets of Jagannath culture. In the past the Oriyas, as traders, moved far and wide, and propagated their art and culture in various parts of the world. The Oriya sculptors had created splendid pieces of architecture, the testimony of which is borne by innumerable temples. It is gratifying that in the present day also our men and women have excelled in various fields of human activities, particularly in science, technology and industries, and have brought laurels. The Oriyas living in America should always strive their best, drawing inspiration from the glorious past, and pursue excellence.

I congratulate the members of the Orissa Society of the Americas, and wish their endeavor all success.

(J. B. PATNAIK)



ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

THE 28th ANNUAL CONVENTION
HOUSTON, TEXAS. JULY 3-5, 1997

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Youth
Siddhartha Panda
Arabinda Pani

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the members of the Southwest Chapter, I would like to welcome you to the 28th. Orissa Society of the Americas Convention. In the past twenty eight years, the convention has never been hosted by the Southwest Chapter. We feel proud to be part of this historical event. We are glad you gave us the opportunity to host this convention. The theme for this year's convention is "Visions for the New Millennium".

Starting from the very beginning, we have planned the Convention with you in mind, meticulously putting together every intricate detail. I am sure you will enjoy the Wyndham Warwick Hotel and the Rice University auditorium. The breathtaking venue is located in the heart of Texas Medical Center and Hermann Park, which has as neighbors, the Museum of Natural Science, Contemporary Arts Museum, IMAX Theater and the Houston Zoo. This four diamond hotel is a premier site for all conventions. It is no surprise that the hotel has drawn such distinguished guests, such as Frank Sinatra, Helen Heyes, Aristotle Onassis, royalty from around the world and every American President who has held office in the last 20 years.

We are creating history this year by organizing the Invest Orissa Industrial Symposium. This symposium is jointly hosted by the Orissa Society of the Americas, the premier organization for American residents from the State of Orissa in India, and the Greater Houston Partnership, the nodal organization for development of national and international business in the city of Houston. This symposium will be held as a one day business forum to discuss investment opportunities for US and international companies, in the State of Orissa in India. A high level state delegation from Orissa, led by the Chief Minister (Head of the Government of Orissa) will be present in the symposium to discuss the business opportunities and future growth of the state.

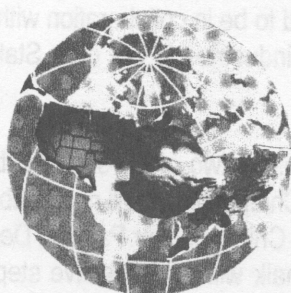
We have planned events for everyone. Starting with yoga and stress reduction to clowns, magic show and moonwalk, we have seminars on youth issues and family issues. We also have DJ's to help you do the Texas Two Step and all your favorite dances. We have baby-sitters to entertain the kids and allow parents to participate in some of the programs. We have exciting cultural programs specially designed to entertain you. In addition to our local artists, we have artists from Orissa.

The convention was possible due to the relentless dedication of a wonderful group of people, people who volunteered their time for the past twelve months, people who drove five to six hours to make it to a meeting and people who put their personal differences aside to work for the convention goals. We could not have made it without the help and dedication of the team. I sincerely thank each and everyone of them.

In Texas where everything is BIG, we welcome you with a BIG heart. Hope during your stay with us you will get a chance to enjoy the famous Southern Hospitality. For those of you who could not join us today, we wish you were here and we will miss you.

Sincerely,
Pradeep Rath
Pradeep Rath
Convener, 28th OSA Convention

*Message from
Co-convenor,
28th Annual
OSA Convention*



Dear Friends,

Welcome to Houston, TX. Texas is like a whole other country. But the scorching heat of the July 4 weekend will probably remind many of us about our home, sweet home, Orissa. As you know, this convention is being hosted by the Southwest Chapter of OSA, which is spread all over Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arkansas. Our convention committee consists of Oriyas from many cities in Texas and Louisiana. Coordinating all these activities at different places has been quite a challenge.

Our volunteers have worked very hard and have arranged for a variety of cultural and other events for your pleasure. The cuisine has been custom designed to suit Oriya taste in hot and humid weather. I thank all the volunteers for their devotion and hard work. Also, thanks to all of you for coming, from near and far, from North America and abroad. I am sure you will enjoy your stay in Houston. If we can do anything to make you stay more comfortable, please let us know.

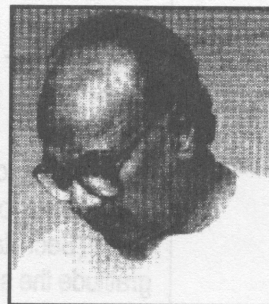
Sincerely,

Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan
Co-convenor

ବ୍ରଜାଞ୍ଜଳି

Shri Biju Patnaik (1916-1997)

Freedom fighter, aviator, industrialist, philanthropist, politician, twice Chief Minister of Orissa, a Minister in the Central Cabinet, and a charismatic visionary - Biju Babu was a towering figure in Orissa's political landscape. His persistent efforts to create an industrialized Orissa resulted in the Rourkela steel plant, the all-weather Paradeep port, and the Sunabeda MiG factory. He will be remembered for his daring acts of heroism, love of Orissa and its people, attempts to make "Kalinga" a name to respect in India and abroad, and bringing a rare touch of color to Indian politics.



Shrimati Sanjukta Panigrahi (1944-1997)

The doyen of Odissi dance, Sanjukta Panigrahi - together with Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra - was instrumental in reviving Odissi from a dying temple dance form and popularizing it worldwide. The leading Odissi dancer of her times, Sanjukta's grace and artistry brought to life the frozen sculptures of the temple walls of Orissa. She was superbly assisted by the musical talents of her husband, Raghunath. Her dedication, technical skills, artistic brilliance and innovative choreography will continue to inspire fans and students of Odissi for years to come.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 28th Convention of the OSA. The OSA family is grateful to our members of the South-West chapter for their wonderful hospitality in the great city of Houston, Texas. What is so unique about them is that they have been successful in putting together a gigantic industrial fair on the eve of the Convention. OSA is proud to be in collaboration with the Greater Houston Partnership to facilitate the transfer of high-tech industries to our dear State of Orissa.

It indeed is my distinct honor to welcome the Chief Minister of Orissa, two of his senior cabinet colleagues, aides, and industrial delegation. I understand that the Chief Minister will not be able to stay for the Convention because of Rath Jatra in Puri. We hope that Chief Minister Patnaik, Deputy Chief Minister Basant Biswal, and industry minister Niranjan Patnaik will take effective steps in building bridges between thousands of Oriyas in North America and their homeland of Orissa. Our children born here need to be proud of their ancestral roots, and help instill high self esteem in their counterparts back in Orissa. It is with some regret that I must say here that we have not had much efforts, if any, from the State government of Orissa in that regard.

It is with sorrow that we formally inform our membership of the death of Mr. Biju Patnaik, a doyen among Oriyas all over the world. He was the first official leader of Orissa who, during his visit to the United States in 1991, wanted us to meet him in the nation's capital. Later he sent a senior cabinet colleague to our Atlanta convention in 1992. We reciprocated his affection by honoring him in Bhubaneswar at the inaugural ceremony of the OSA Center. We know that our fellow Oriyas would like to join us to express our sincere condolences to his family.

Two years ago I assumed the presidency of the OSA with a commitment to solidify our social identity. I called for cooperation, and must say with humility that I received it. Sujata (Vice president), Parikshit Babu (Secretary), and Purna Babu (editor) were of immense help to me. I must acknowledge with gratitude the support of Digambar Babu. When I asked him to be the executive director of this august organization, he readily accepted my offer. We believe that, as usual, he has been innovative in building a sense of community. The tradition of organizing highly qualitative panels on Orissa's art, literature, and culture at the conventions bears testimony to his efforts to reinvent our OSA.

Before I close, I wish to congratulate our new office bearers: Mrs. Gopa Patnaik (President-elect), Mrs. Annapurna Pandey (Vice president), and Dr. Babru Samal (Secretary-Treasurer). I know our dear OSA is in good hands. I thank all of you for your trust in me. May Lord Jagannath bless us all.

Hemant Senapati

Highlights of the 28th Annual OSA Convention

❖ *Invest Orissa Symposium* ❖

The Southwest Chapter of OSA is hosting this Symposium on June 30, 1997, in conjunction with the 28th Annual OSA Convention, to discuss business opportunities and promote economic growth in the State of Orissa, and to provide American businessmen and Oriya NRIs a glimpse of the current economic state and openness in Orissa. The delegation from Orissa includes the following state officials:

Mr. Janaki Ballav Patnaik, Chief Minister of Orissa, is the lead delegate from Orissa participating in the Invest Orissa Symposium. Mr. Patnaik has served three other terms as Chief Minister of Orissa, and has also served as India's Minister of State for Defense, and Minister for Tourism, Civil Aviation & Labor.

Mr. Basanta Kumar Biswal, Deputy Chief Minister of Orissa, and Minister in charge of Finance, Water Resources & Parliamentary Affairs. He was Minister of State for Works, Housing & Urban Development, Mining & Geology and Sports during 1980-1985.

Mr. Niranjan Patnaik, Minister of Industries & Textiles, Handloom, and Handicrafts & Cottage Industries. He has also held the portfolios of Irrigation & Power, Revenue, Science, and Health & Family Welfare.

❖ *Looking Toward the New Millennium: Direction of Oriya Literature and Culture* ❖

How Oriyas synthesize their achievements in art and literature in this century, and even in this millennium; and what new directions have opened up for the Oriyas to explore in the coming century that will open a new millennium, is the theme of this discourse. Moderated by **Sura P. Rath**, Professor of English and Regents Professor of Indian Studies at Louisiana State University in Shreveport. Guest speakers for this forum are:

Mr. Manoj Das: Professor of English Literature at Sri Aurobindo International Center of Education. Widely acclaimed for his short-stories in Oriya and English. Winner of many national and regional literary awards.

Dr. Sudha Mishra: Secretary of Orissa Sangeet Natak Academy. An expert on the musical aspects of Upendra Bhanja's poems, and the influence of Jagannath temple rites on various cultural forms of Orissa.

Dr. Baidyanath Misra: Chairman of the Nabakrushna Chaudhury Center of Development Studies. Former Vice-Chancellor of OUAT. Eminent economist, and versatile speaker and writer in Oriya and English.

❖ *Women's Forum: Our Lives as Patchwork Quilts* ❖

The speakers' view of success and what helps or hinders their success, followed by a discussion on how we make improvisations in our lives when life takes turns. Moderated by **Mamata Misra**, a community volunteer and a Director of Board of the Center for Battered Women and *Saheli*, a non-profit organization helping Asian women in Austin. Guest speakers for this forum are:

Dr. Shantilata Mishra: a physicist, an active OSA member, lives in the New York area and owns a medical business with her husband, Dr. Umaballav Mishra.

Lakshmy Parameswaran: Director of Outreach Services at the Fort Bend County Women's Center in Houston, and a founding member of *Daya, Inc.*, a non-profit group helping Asian women.

Gopa Patnaik: a counselor, an Odissi dancer, an active OSA member, past Vice-President of OSA, and President-elect (1997-99) of OSA, lives in San Diego, California.

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*Our Land
and its
Many Facets*

Essays on our history,
artistic and literary
traditions, temples,
theatre, and music

A People Led By Their Lord

Manoj Das

"One hundred and fifty thousand were carried away captive; one hundred thousand were slain, and many times that number died."

Thus speaks the 3rd century BC edict of Emperor Ashoka, engraved on a hillock at the site of the great Kalinga War, on the outskirts of the city of Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa.

If Ashoka's grandfather, Chandragupta, founder of the Maurya dynasty and the Maurya empire, had refrained from any attempt at annexing Kalinga in the immediate neighbourhood of his native Magadha, and if Ashoka's father, Vindusar Amitraghat, had been equally prudent in this regard, it was probably because an expedition against Kalinga was likely to prove an extremely risky adventure.

But this prudence of his forefathers could have been the very factor to provoke the young and ambitious Ashoka to strike against the supposedly invincible kingdom.

Did he conquer it? His own admission implies that he could not, despite causing death and destruction unprecedented in their magnitudes, for the remorseful invader had no hesitation in declaring that the sword could never be a real conqueror and that a true conquest could be possible only through love and non-violence.

The intriguing question, however, is, who led the formidable resistance offered to the colossal Magadhan army by the people of Kalinga? Who was the king under whose command they faced the enemy like a human wall until they fell?

History is silent on the question.

Indeed, silence covers centuries and aeons in the history of Orissa that was Kalinga and Utkal. Against the name of one Chodagangadeva who began building the great temple of Sri Jagannath at Puri or one Narasimhadeva who transformed his dream of the mighty sun-god driving his powerful chariot into the marvel in stone that is

Konark, there are hundreds of shrines and monuments, caves, Stupas and Viharas strewn over the land - the makers of which have silently disappeared into oblivion.

Sometimes even a city or a mini-civilization seems to have been buried under heavy crusts of time. Anyone who visits the Ratnagiri complex of Buddhist settlement and monuments, emerging through a slow process of excavation, can only stare with disbelief. Could such large areas studded with a variety of astounding sculptures and Stupas (relics believed to be of the Buddha have been found from one of them) have lain forgotten for centuries?

Not to assert but to absorb seems to have been the dharma of Kalinga. Buddhism, no doubt, once flourished on its soil prominently. Why otherwise should the celebrated Bhikshu Kshemather, soon after the Buddha's passing away, bring the Master's tooth to King Brahmadutta of Kalinga? And why should the king alter the very name of his capital to Dantapura - Abode of the Holy Tooth? Only after eight centuries when his reign and life were coming to an end because of frequent attacks from his enemies, the then custodian of the Relic, King Grihasiva, entrusted it to his daughter Hemamala, who carried it to Simhala (Sri Lanka) with the help of her husband, Dantakumar, and ceremoniously handed it over to King Meghavarma of the island. That was in the AD 4th century.

But where was Dantapura? While many historians trace it to a couple of towns outside the present state of Orissa, some believe that Dantapura was none other than Puri itself, the seat of Lord Jagannath. In fact, they believe that the image of the deity contains some relics of the Buddha even though the holy tooth was dispatched to Simhala. When the old wooden image is changed for a new one, during the ceremony known as the Nava Kalevara (New Embodiment), these relics are transferred into the latter under rituals carried in strict secrecy.

But the devotees of Sri Jagannath as well as several mystics have a different theory. For them the deity is a representation of Vishnu. What it contains are the relics of Krishna. How did that come about? It is explained by a legend of hoary antiquity - sweet and significant.

King Indradyumna intuitively knew that somewhere not far from Puri lay hidden the Presence of Vishnu - and it was time for it to be revealed to all. He asked a young mystic, Vidyapati, to try and discover it. Vidyapati wandered on till he met Visvvasu, a Sabara chieftain, in a forest. He remained as the chieftain's guest and fell in love with his daughter, Lalita, and married her.

As days passed he observed that every daybreak Visvvasu went out carrying flowers to some secret destination. On his insistent query, Lalita had to confide to him that inside a cave was preserved their ancestral object of worship which her father must visit, daily.

Vidyapati was curious. At his ardent request one day Visvvasu led him there, but blindfolded. Once inside the cave, the mystic in Vidyapati knew that this was what he was looking for, worshipped by Visvvasu as Nilamadhav. The clever young man had carried a handful of mustard seeds which he had strewn along the way. They sprouted after a shower. Vidyapati found his way to the cave and, lifting the sacred object, headed for Puri.

King Indradyumna, a true devotee of the Lord, at once realised that he had what he sought. He was directed in his dream to bring ashore a log that was floating on the sea out of which was to be carved the new image of the Lord and was to contain the object Vidyapati had brought.

But the log could not be drawn ashore, however the king's men tried, until, at the king's request, Visvvasu himself came forward to lend his hands to it. (The descendants of Lalita and Vidyapati are among the priests of the Lord to this day, known as Daitapati.)

Now, the question before the king was, what form to give to the deity? He received no indication about it either in his dream or in his

vision, nor could his advisers show him any light. At last when a haggard stranger, stooping with age, but not without mystery in his eyes, appeared before him and offered to undertake the task, the king knew that the destined carpenter had arrived.

The stranger would work only under the condition that none should disturb him until he had done his job. The king agreed, and the craftsman enclosed himself in a makeshift workshop in the palace.

The curious consort of Indradyumna, Queen Gundicha, would press her ear on the doors and listen to the sound of the carpenter's hammer and chisel, day after day. But one morning all was quiet. As the silence continued till the next day, the queen thought it rather ominous and wondered if the old man had not taken leave of the world! She pushed open the doors. The stranger looked askance and lo, clean disappeared, leaving his work incomplete. The king and the queen took time to understand that he was none other than Viswakarma, the architect-sculptor of the Gods.

The king decided to install the image as it was. The relics Vidyapati had brought were lodged in the Navipadma, the navel of the image. Nilamadhava came to be known as Purushottama and later as Sri Jagannath. (Sri Balabhadra, Sri Subhadra and Sri Sudarsana were added later.)

It is possible (as some mystics believe) that Visvvasu was a descendant of Jara Savara who had unwittingly become the cause of Krishna's passing away at Prabhas. After the cremation of Krishna's body, he had collected some remains of it and had walked along the coast and had settled down at a new place. Nilamadhav means Krishna of the bluish colour - by no means the name of any traditional tribal deity. And Visvvasu was a Savara.

Strange was the boon King Indradyumna sought of the deity. "Grant that I should leave no heir to be proud of my achievement, for it will be difficult for them to remember that I worked only as your humble servant and instrument. And let me also pass into oblivion."

To this day, Indradyumna's humility is immortalised in the ceremonial sweeping of the chariot of Sri Jagannath by the kings of Kalinga at the commencement of the Car Festival.

This spirit of self-effacement was to be once again witnessed in Dharmapada, the teenage genius of the 13th century. Commissioned by the king, his father, Vishu Maharana, led a team of twelve hundred architects, sculptors and masons in constructing the Konark on the sea. Dharmapada was born a month after his father's departure, and twelve years had gone by. He proceeded to the site to meet his father and saw that the leading builders were beset with a certain problem. But then he disappeared. Legend says that he has been last seen atop the temple completed under his direction. It was a full moon night and the high tides had engulfed the monument, as it had been designed to be so.

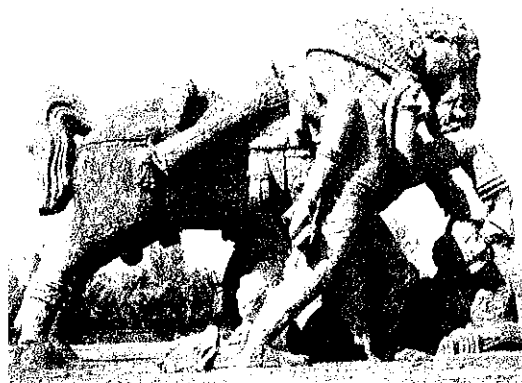
Had he suddenly come under the spell of an uncontrollable ecstasy and a desire to be lost in the infinite after having fulfilled his life's mission? The popular legend says that he shirked the possibility of posterity crediting him for an achievement which was truly due to his father and his kinsmen.

Every spiritual, religious, occult and mystic wave has swept over Orissa in its full swing. One of the Tirthankaras, Kalinga Jina, was born in Orissa and the last of them, Mahavira, traveled across the land. Kharavela, the monarch responsible for a glorious revival of the land after the devastating Kalinga War, spent the last phase of his life as a Jain saint in a cave of Udayagiri. Buddhism was popular even before Ashoka took up its cause.

Saivism and the Sakti cult and Tantra in all their complex manifestations had their heyday at different periods. (Successful efforts at a synthesis between Saivism and Vaishnavism are to be witnessed at the greatest Saiva institution of Orissa, the Linjaraj temple at Bhubaneswar, and at several other temples like that of Harishankar.) Sri Chaitanya's Bhakti movement found its fruition here.

What is remarkable, the greatest single institution of Orissa, the shrine of Sri Jagannath, has absorbed all these waves. No wonder that the illustrious patriot-poet, Gopabandhu Das, should assert that the leader of Utkal is one other than Jagannath.

Manoj Das is one of the few successful bilingual writers in India today, writing with equal felicity in Oriya and English. His stories have been translated into French, Russian, Italian, German, Portugese, and all major Indian languages. He is the recipient of several national and regional literary awards. He has been teaching English literature at Sri Aurobindo International Center of Education since 1963.



Tradition and Individual Talent

Prafulla Mohanti

I was born and brought up in the village of Nanpur on the banks of the river Birupa, then in the district of Cuttack, but now in Jajpur. It is a Hindu village with a way of life developed over centuries. Nobody knows its history. It grew and happened. The villagers are farmers and craftsmen. Each craft is the property of a particular caste. There are potters, weavers, stonemasons, carpenters, jewelers. Together they form the village community.

In my childhood the village was totally isolated. There were no proper roads, no electricity, no cinema, television or radio. There were no doctors and the villagers did not know about hospitals. Epidemics of smallpox and cholera were common. Mahlia Buddha, the village deity, a piece of stone covered in vermillion, was worshipped for protection. Many of my childhood friends died of cholera, typhoid, diphtheria and some were disfigured by smallpox. I do not know how I survived.

Now I am a painter and writer and live in the centre of London. My paintings have been internationally accepted as works of art and my writing in English as literature. As I sit in my studio and reflect on my development as an artist and writer I realise that my painting, writing and philosophy of life are rooted in my village art, culture and tradition.

As a child I never heard words like 'tradition' and 'culture'. For the villagers religion, art, crafts and agriculture were a way of life. It is only when I went to school that I came across concepts as 'kala', 'sanskriti', 'darshan', 'parampara', the Oriya equivalents of 'art', 'culture', 'philosophy', and 'tradition'. The traditional way of life in the village was accepted, never questioned.

When I was three years old I was helped by the teacher to draw three perfect circles. It was my initiation into the world of art and education at the village chatshali. I was taken there by my grandmother, who could not read or write

herself but was determined to educate her grandson. She was not a feminist although she controlled the men in the village by advising them while sitting hidden behind the door. She prevented my elder sister from going to school when she reached puberty by complaining that she might become a Christian. The traditional role of a woman was that of a mother who stayed at home to look after the family. If she brought prosperity she was compared to Laxmi, but if she destroyed the harmony of family she was compared to Kali.

I remember my first day in the chatshali. I carried a brass plate on which were arranged some rice, a coconut, a coin and a dhoti. I bowed down to pay respect to the teacher who blessed me by stroking my outstretched palm with his cane. Then he took my right hand and with a piece of clay chalk guided me to draw three circles on the mud floor while chanting Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswar. I practised the circles for several months and chanted the sacred names. As I look back I find how profound the system was. Oriya script is round and practising the circles helps a child to develop good handwriting. The chanting of the divine names evokes a sense of meditation in the child's subconscious mind. As he looks around he sees the presence of the divine energy everywhere - in people and in the landscape.

The villagers lived in houses built of mud walls and thatched roofs with a central courtyard which was private and provided shelter from the sun. There were inside and outside verandahs and the tulashi altar was placed just outside the house or inside the courtyard. At the back of the house there was a well, a cowshed and a vegetable garden where chillies, spinach, eggplants and bananas were grown.

Art was a part of daily life. The villagers decorated their walls and floors with rice paste for religious festivals and social ceremonies. At harvest festival the lotus was drawn in the shape of a mandala with stylized footprints to welcome Laxmi into the house.

The villagers saw their gods and goddesses both as abstract and as figures. While some villagers worshipped Durga with ten arms riding a demon, others saw her as a pot filled with water. The image of Laxmi was created with a bowl of paddy decorated with flowers and an orange sari. I watched the village women create the image of the goddess Mangala by digging a rectangular mound on the village path, with a round form in the center.

As the seasons changed, one festival followed another, bringing light, color and movement. For holy processions, painted figures of animals, birds and humans were made. The creation and celebration of the divine energies gave the villagers the opportunity to express their creative talent. My mother was a good painter and I followed her instinctively. By the age of eight I had already developed a style of my own which was liked by other villagers. They invited me to decorate their homes during ceremonies. I was encouraged by their acknowledgment.

Everything in the village was produced by craftsmen using simple tools and local materials. The objects they made were not only functional but beautiful. The villagers had a natural sense of color and design. I developed my own sense of appreciation by watching my mother select saris, pots and jewelry. There were no schools where arts and crafts were taught so the knowledge and techniques were passed on through the family.

During the month of Kartik I drew muruja around the tulashi altar using colored powder depicting the images of Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra in their temples. The influence of Jagannath in the village was very strong and we sang poems devoted to him. I saw Jagannath as my friend and was attracted by his round black eyes. The colors of black, white and yellow, associated with the images, were universally accepted. But now I realise it must have been a deliberate attempt to bring all the races together - the tribals, the Dravidians, the Aryans and the Mongolians - through religion.

Jogis and palas were an integral part of village culture. The jogis created an atmosphere of compassion through their songs and palas

brought literature through poetry, dance and storytelling to the villagers who could not read or write. I spent many late nights watching them and they got me interested in poetry and literature. I wrote poems, short stories and essays and edited the school magazine which I started myself. Without a printing press I had to handwrite two copies of the magazine, one for the school library and the other to be circulated among the students.

The village was my guru. I learnt about art and the way a space could be given life through creative talent by watching the villagers change ordinary objects into something special and diving by putting marks of sandalwood paste and vermilion on them. I learnt about life by listening to stories told to me by my mother, grandmother and other villagers.

In the school there was only one drawing class where we were made to draw tables, chairs, fruits, vegetables and flowerpots. But I enjoyed painting on the large mud walls which gave me the freedom to express myself. There were no ready-made painting materials and I made brushes with straw and colors from soil, dried leaves and flowers. With my friends I produced plays on the village path. We used ash and charcoal as makeup and also leaves and flowers.

In the school library I read about Santiniketan. When I told my mother I wanted to go there to study art she told me a story: "A young man went to a guru and said, 'Please teach me to paint.' The guru asked, 'Do you understand literature?' 'No' replied the young man. 'Go and study literature' said the guru. After studying literature the young man returned. The guru asked, 'Do you understand music.' 'No.' 'Go and learn music' said the guru. After learning music the young man returned again. 'Can you dance?' It was only after the young man had learnt all these disciplines that the guru accepted him as his disciple."

What my mother wanted to say was - 'Art is life'. The story has had a tremendous influence on me and I see all the art forms as interrelated and not fragmented. In the village I tried to learn all forms of art - music, dance, theater - and saw life in a holistic way.

Although most of the villagers could not read or write, their expression through words, thoughts, symbols, colors and images had a distinct quality with definite moral values - the result of thousands of years of living culture and tradition. They were good farmers, brilliant craftsmen, singers, dancers and storytellers. The language they used was colloquial and poetic, and their knowledge and sensibility were formed by stories from epics read to them by the priests. There is a saying in the village - 'dekha sikha Orissa', 'you learn Orissa through seeing.'

My own individual talent took me to Bombay when I got a scholarship to study architecture at Sir JJ College of Art. Western style of architecture was considered superior to the Indian style and when I designed a house with an inner courtyard and verandahs inspired by 'khanja ghar' of Orissa I was told it was not modern. To be modern I was forced to be western and I had no choice. The education had no relationship with my way of life. I referred to magazines published in the west and designed houses and flats with flush latrines and bathrooms. But when I went to my village during the vacations I slept on mud floors and bathed in the river.

But the village gave me a unique understanding of space. The roof over my head was not only the thatched roof of our house, it was the banyan tree or the blue sky which was studded with stars at night. The mud floor extended to become the village path, the river bed and the paddy fields. I was not confined within four walls and a ceiling, and my space spread to the horizon with glorious sunrises and sunsets.

At the college I was told that British architecture was the best. So soon after graduating as an architect in 1960 I went to England for further qualifications and experience. There I encountered a totally different culture.

While studying town planning in Leeds, a grey industrial city in northern England, I had difficulty in renting a room because I was an Indian. I did not find the village tradition of hospitality which accepted strangers as friends. After a long search I found a bed-sitting room near the university. It was part of an old

Victorian building, built at the end of the nineteenth century and the walls were covered with dirty dark wallpaper. I felt imprisoned within four walls and a ceiling and suspended in a city with different traditions where I had no friends. I suspect many first-generation Oriyas coming to the United States for the first time had similar experiences to mine. I missed my village culture and I drew village symbols of the lotus and Jagannath on large pieces of paper which I put on the walls. Immediately the character of the room changed and gave me a sense of security.

For the first time I was alone by myself and I had a need to express and communicate. That took the form of drawing and painting and the traditional village symbols became a means of self-expression.

The school of planning was part of the college of art where I came in contact with art students and teachers. They liked my paintings and invited me to paint with them and we exchanged works. I was not receiving any grant and thought of selling my paintings to pay for my studies and was invited by the university to have an exhibition. It was very well received and reviewed in the national newspapers. The university and the city of Leeds art gallery bought paintings for their collection. I found myself accepted as a painter.

My recognition as a writer came a few years later when my first book, 'My Village, My Life', was published in London. It was widely reviewed and translated into different languages and published in countries with very different traditions including Scandinavia and Japan. Writing the book made me more aware of the Orissa village tradition, its language and its visual images. I went on to re-tell the traditional stories I had heard in my childhood and published them under the title 'Indian Village Tales'.

Finding my own identity in another culture and tradition has created inner tensions and my painting and writing have become a process of self-realization. Works have definite meanings and associations but art produces more subjective responses. People are constantly

asking me what my paintings mean. It is amazing how different people interpret them in different ways relating to their own individual experiences whatever their traditions.

At my Leeds exhibition a visitor pointed to a drawing inspired by Jagannath and asked if I had been influenced by Klee. My knowledge of European art was limited then and I did not know who Klee was. I brought miniature figures of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra from my room and showed them to the visitor and asked, 'Who has been influenced by whom? Me by Klee or Klee by these figures which are at least a thousand years old?'

At one of my London exhibitions I overheard a conversation - 'Are they sexual symbols?' After that I saw sexual symbols in all my paintings. In Germany I was told that my paintings were like Brancusi's eggs. In Delhi a westernised Indian pointed at an oval painting with a bindu and said it looked like an embryo. A young boy saw the same painting as 'chandra mama', 'uncle moon', and a group of holy men saw it as meditative. To an art dealer it was a mandala. In 1969 when I showed my paintings to a gallery in Delhi the director said that they were perfect examples of tantra. I realised then that every aspect of life in my village was tantric and that the red bindu on my mother's forehead must have been a striking visual experience for me as a child.

The words, colors and forms of my village have become an integral part of my identity and keep on appearing naturally and unconsciously in my painting and writing. They keep on changing through the process of self-realisation. The basic forms of the bindu, the circle, the square, the triangle and the colours of the cosmos do not belong to any particular society. But the way they are used define different cultures. A circle in a materialistic culture is only a geometrical shape but in Orissa it has a spiritual dimension. I can draw a circle and say it is Jagannath like

the three circles of my childhood. I have been drawing and painting Jagannath in many different ways. He is all things to all people and nobody has the right to say he can only be visualised in one particular form.

When I painted a picture of Jagannath as a child skipping with a rope expressing the joy of life for the UNICEF greeting card it was appreciated all over the world. But when I chose the theme to represent Oriya identity for the design of a poster to promote tourism to Orissa for the ITDC it was rejected by the Orissa Chief Minister who said that my painting would offend the Oriya sensibility.

I think I am lucky that I do not have to depend on government patronage and on the whims of politicians and bureaucrats who are the self-appointed guardians of tradition in Orissa. I am lucky too that I was born at the right time. Orissa has changed greatly and my village with it and many traditions have disappeared.

Living in England and traveling to other parts of the world has enabled me to compare my village traditions with other traditions and to think freely and express myself freely. Art forms considered fashionable in the west have existed for centuries in our Orissa villages. If the village deity, Mahlia Buddha, covered with vermillion and hibiscus flowers was taken to an art gallery in New York or Washington it would be considered a piece of sculpture. If I reproduced here my initiation into the world of education in the chatshali it would be an example of performance art. The painted figures used in the processions are perfect examples of pop art. The green rice fields or the dry river bed with my footprints might become environmental art. In Orissa they exist as a natural expression of village life. But it is important to have the ability to see and appreciate our traditional forms. Because, it is only by the understanding of our past can we shape our future.

Prafulla Mohanti is a well-known painter and writer. Exhibitions of his art have been held worldwide. He is the author of four books, "My Village, My Life", "Indian Village Tales", "Through Brown Eyes", and "Changing Village, Changing Life". This article is based on a speech given by the author at the 27th Annual OSA Convention in Washington DC in July 1996.

My Literary Experimentation

Gourahari Das

I am neither a scholar nor a critic. Nor do I claim to have any impressive achievement behind me. Yet, I am a writer who builds his world with words and lives in it - a world in many ways bigger, better and kinder than the world we inhabit. This is where I see my relevance, at least I would like to see it that way. I am not sure if I can answer your queries and clarify your doubts. I can only try to be honest about my limitations.

The full import of the subject of our discussion would depend on the way we interpret the key words. We need not be unduly bogged down by the Eliotic strain. A simpler, non-didactic creative understanding is possible. In simpler terms, modernity can not be viewed in isolation. It should be viewed in the context of tradition. Similarly, individual talent can be viewed in the context of the collective experiences of the society in a historical continuum.

Experiment in literature is often misconstrued as innovation. As a matter of fact, literary experiment is at best a rediscovery when a certain order of primacy of theme or form is re-established. For example, Sachi Routray writing a poem in the language of *Madala Panji* or a new generation fiction writer writing stories in the style of Brajanath Badajena is a rediscovery. Here the directness, the simplicity and the tension of creative expression is rediscovered like discovery of a forgotten weapon from the buried arsenal. It is readjustment when both theme and language are modified to cater to its contemporary outlook of life.

For example, a love story written in the sixties was a story where events in the life of two persons progressed invariably from union to separation or from separation to union. A love story today could be an expression of a static situation where there is neither a beginning nor an end. The idea is that the theme of love has acquired a new style of expression as if the evolution of the life experience is creating its own equivalence in literature.

As a writer of fiction I have been specifically concerned with two aspects of my social tradition and the experience of my community. Firstly, I am concerned with that part of tradition which has remained unchanged in me despite dramatic changes, that has come about in the form and structure of my life experience. Secondly, I am concerned with the tradition which must change, but its replacement has not been found yet. I would like to share with you my literary experimentation and experience of writing a series of vignettes titled "*Reflection of Life*" (Jibanara Jalachhabi). Before I come to any theoretical exposition I would like to tell you briefly about some of the stories - which form part of a larger framework of life which I have tried to portray.

The story of *Raicharan*, the small town book vendor. His old mother is sick in the village lying on her death-bed. The wish the old mother ever had is to test 'Rasagola' and that is what Raicharan is taking with him, presumably for the last time to see his mother. A young boy who accompanies Raicharan is a school student. He helps Raicharan carry his bag. It makes him compassionate when he comes across the startling truth that a mere Rasogola and a bunch of grapes could be the most luxurious desire of a woman. This is a story of a bond of compassion that links together three generations. The material want is of marginal importance. What is more important is how the event of fulfillment of that meager wish is dramatized.

Now the story of *Arjuna Babaji*, or Saint Arjun. Saint Arjun is the village saint. Sainthood of Arjuna is not a penance, but a vocation accepted in good faith by the villagers. He guards the water of the village pond, lends money to needy people and uses the Bhagavata, the holiest scripture of Oriya Hindus, to ply his money lending trade with the serenity of a saint. He places currency notes at different page folds of the scripture and the supplicant is asked to pick up the money that is ordained by God. The loan is always returned as no villager of simple belief

could ever commit the sacrilege of defying the scripture. Thus, in this story the traditional society of village accepts religious 'make belief' not so much because it is inevitable, but because it is convenient. Saint Arjuna wears the garb of a saint not because he is divinely motivated but because he finds the safety of faith supremely acceptable. Nor is the saint Arjuna a villain or exploiter. He uses divinity as a strategy to deliver the simplest security without greed, remorse or rancour. He becomes a legend. The satire here is not bitter, it is almost like a playful acceptance of the simple deceptions of life.

The story of the village school teacher *Nityananda*. He is a strict disciplinarian. He would not allow children to splash about in the village pond. But I discover him watching the playful children behind the cover of the woods, as if to enjoy that unruly behaviour, a pleasure that he has persistently denied himself. The dichotomy between the real pleasure loving individual inside and the disciplinarian role model outside is obvious. The subtle presence of a lost childhood in a duty bound adult is an exciting discovery.

The story of *Muthisaga* and the Mango Blossom is a commentary on the rural-urban divide, a commentary on the clash of cultures. The protagonist of the story who has fond memories of Muthisaga, is now in a city. His father has brought from his village a gift of a bunch of Muthisaga. His wife decides to preserve it in the refrigerator like any other vegetable. But the protagonist knows that this bunch of spinach leaves is not really vegetable. It is his own living childhood. If at all the spinach is to be kept overnight, it should not be frozen, it should be kept spread out on the roof of the house exposed to air and moisture. So is the memory of the childhood, it is preserved by nature and not by an utilitarian contraption.

Now about the Harijan drama maestro *Sanatan*. His services are used for the rural drama troupe, his skill as a swimmer is used for collecting water lilies for Kumar Purnima. But he remains an outcaste when the celebrations are held. The man who is used by the rural society for his ability, is discarded when it comes to the celebration at festivities. This is a sad

commentary on a caste ridden society that very much dominates the life of rural India, particularly rural Orissa.

Sabita Swain of Parbatipura would have remained a playful adolescent, but for a sudden imposition of Godhood upon her - she is looked upon as the Devi, the incarnation of a rural deity. She becomes the victim of bad faith, a victim of the hypocritical mass obsession. Her childhood is destroyed under the weight of compulsive religiosity. Rituals govern the village life experience.

The story of 'Planning and the Village Priest' is a metaphorical comment on the Indian planning process. *Kasinana*, the village priest takes a shortcut while reading the scripture in the commotion of conch blowing and beating of cymbals. So does Indian planning, it skips the essential elements in the euphoria of celebration.

Lastly the story of 'Celebration of Poverty'. It is a story where a poor mother force feeds her sleepy child with goodies of a feast. She argues that there are many nights to sleep but occasions to eat like this is rare.

Through all these stories, I have experimented in three specific ways with the fictional mode of my life experience:

- I have rediscovered my childhood from the vantage position of a self-satisfied pompous brute.
- I have watched with compassion the destruction of the basis of faith in rural life.
- I have, while setting out to criticize, parody and lampoon the hollowness of a transitional society, found the pain of the loss of my own superficial identity.

In this way I have grieved the loss of tradition and yet have lived in hope. As an Oriya writer, I could not have found a more satisfying mode of self realisation.

Having said all this, now I would like to tell you what have been the major factors that have moulded my creative mind this way. I would like to tell you that part of my story in my mother tongue Oriya.

ବନ୍ଧୁଗଣ, ମଣିଷ ଜୀବନରେ ଘଟୁଥିବା ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ଘଟଣା ଭିତରୁ କିଛି କିଛି ଘଟଣା ତା' ଭିତରେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଚିହ୍ନ ସବୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଯାଆନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ଚିହ୍ନଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମିଶିମାଶି ତା ସତ୍ୟର ଗୋଟାଏ ଆକୃତି ଗଢ଼ିଦିଅନ୍ତି । ମୋର ପିଲାଦିନ ଗୋଟାଏ ନିରାପତ୍ତାଶୂନ୍ୟ ପରିବେଶ ଭିତରେ କଟିଥିଲା । ଗୋଟାଏ ବୁନିଆଦୀ ଯୌଥ ପରିବାର ଚାହୁଁ ଚାହୁଁ ଭାଙ୍ଗିରୁଜି ଗଲା ଓ ଗୋଟିଏ ଘରର ଅଗଣାରେ ପାଞ୍ଚ ପାଞ୍ଚଟି ପାଚେରୀ ଛିଡ଼ା ହେଇଗଲା । ସେଇ ସାତ/ଆଠ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ମୋତେ ମୋର ବାପା ମା' ସାନଭାଇ ରହୁଥିବା ଘର ଓ ଏମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ରହୁଥିବା ଗାଁ ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ଦୂର ଗାଁରେ ଯାଇ ଅତିହ୍ନା ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଚିହ୍ନା ହେବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁ କରୁ ମୋର ସମୁଦାୟ କୈଶୋର ବିତିଗଲା । ମୋର ଏ ପିଲାଦିନର ଜୀବନ ମୋର ଲେଖକୀୟ ସତ୍ୟ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ସମସ୍ୟା ଆଣି ଛିଡ଼ା କରେଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା ଓ ତାହା ହେଲା ଶୈଶବର ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ।

ମୋର ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଗଛରେ ଓ 'ଜୀବନର ଜଳଛବି'ରେ ମୁଁ ସାନ ସାନ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରୁ ଟିକିଏ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା, ଚିରୁଡ଼ାଏ ଅବସର, ଜଣେ ଦିକଣ ଖେଳସାଥୀ ଓ ଏତେ ଟିକିଏ ଉଷ ଆତ୍ମୀୟତା ଭିକ୍ଷା କରିଛି । ମୋ ଜୀବନରେ ଆମ ଗାଁ, ମାମୁଁଘର ଓ ଖେଳସାଥୀମାନଙ୍କ ସୁଖ ଯାହା ଯେମିତି ପାଇବାର କଥା ସେମିତି ପାଇନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ମୋ ଗପର ଚରିତ୍ରମାନେ ସେସବୁ ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଆଉଟି ପାଉଟି ହେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏମିତି ସମ୍ପର୍କହୀନ ଓ ନିରାପତ୍ତାଶୂନ୍ୟ ଭଙ୍ଗରେ ଆଉ କାହାର ଜୀବନ ନ ବିତୁ ବୋଲି ସେମାନେ କାୟମନୋବାକ୍ୟରେ କାମନା କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରାଇମେରୀ ପାଠ ସାରି ହାଇସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢୁଥିବା ଦିନମାନଙ୍କରେ ପାଠ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ନାଚ ଓ ଗୀତ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ମୁଁ ବେଶି ଆଗ୍ରହ ରଖୁଥିଲି; ଅନୁଶାସନ ଓ ଧରାବକ୍ଷା ନିୟମର ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ ଭାବେ ହୁଏତ ଏସବୁ ନିମନ୍ତେ ମନରେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଉଥିଲା । ସବୁରୀ ଦଶକରେ ଆମ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ନାଟକରେ ମିଶିବା ପାଇଁ ଗାଁଝିଅମାନେ ସାହସ କରୁନଥିଲେ । ମନେଅଛି, ସେ ବର୍ଷ ଆମ ଗାଁ ନାଟକରେ ଝିଅଟିଏ ସୁଲତାନା ରେଜିଆ ଅଭିନୟ କରିଥିଲା । ତା'ର ଅଭିନୟ ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ହୋଇଥିଲା ଯେ ଦର୍ଶକମାନେ କରତାଳି ଦେଇ ଦେଇ ଲାଞ୍ଜ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲେ । ମାତ୍ର ରାତିର ଅଭିନୟ ଯାହାକୁ ଅଜସ୍ର ସ୍ଵୀକୃତି ଓ ପ୍ରଶଂସା ଉପହାର ଦେଇଥିଲା ପରଦିନର ପ୍ରଭାତ ତାକୁ ସେତିକି ନିନ୍ଦା ଓ ଅପବାଦ ଆଣିଦେଲା । ବିନା ଦୋଷରେ ବିଚାରୀକୁ ଚରିତ୍ରହୀନାର ଅପବାଦ ମୁଣ୍ଡେଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା ।

ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ ପରେ ରେଭେନ୍ସା କଲେଜକୁ ଆସିଲି । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଚିତ୍ରଟିଆଲ କ୍ଲବ୍ । ନିରାହ କୌତୂହଳରେ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକାଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଲି - ଆପଣ ବାହାହେଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି କାହିଁକି ? ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଶେତା ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ମୋତେ ଲାଗିଲା ଭୟଙ୍କର ଅପରାଧଟିଏ ମୁଁ କରି ପକେଇଛି । ହୁଏତ ଏମିତି ଗୋଟାଏ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ମୋର ପଚାରିବାର ନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଉତ୍ତରରେ ଯାହା ମାତ୍ରାମ୍ କହିଲେ ତାହା ମୋର ବିସ୍ମୟକୁ ଅସହାୟତାରେ ପରିଣତ କରିଦେଲା । ଅମାବାସ୍ୟାରେ ଜନ୍ମ ହେଇଥିବାରୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଉଆଁସୀ କନ୍ୟା କହୁଛନ୍ତି; ଆଉ ଉଆଁସୀ କନ୍ୟା ଯାହାକୁ ବାହାହବ ସେ ବରଟିର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଅବଧାରିତ ହେଇଥିବାରୁ ସେ ବାହାହୋଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି ।

ରେଭେନ୍ସା ଛାଡ଼ିବାର ଅନେକ ଦିନ ପରେ ପୁରୀ ଶ୍ରୀମନ୍ଦିରର ଆନନ୍ଦ ବଜାରରେ ମୁଁ ମୋର ସେଇ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକାଙ୍କୁ ସେମିତି ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ଠିଆହୋଇ ଗୋଟେ କୁଡୁଆରୁ ତାଲି ଚାଟିଚାଟି ଖାଇବାର ଦେଖୁଛି । ଉଷ୍ମ ମୁହଁ ଦିଶେବା ଭିନ୍ନ ଆଉ କିଛି ଭେଟି ଦେଇପାରିନି ତାଙ୍କୁ । ମୁହଁ ଲୁଚେଇ ଫେରିଆସିଛି ।

ରେଜିଆ ସୁଲତାନା ଅଭିନୟ କରିଥିବା ସେଇ ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ କିଶୋରୀ, ଅମାବାସ୍ୟାରେ ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇଥିବା ଇଂରାଜୀ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକାଙ୍କ ପରି ଶହଶହ ନାରୀଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟିବାର ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟ ମୋର ହୋଇଛି । ବିନା ଦୋଷରେ ସେମାନେ ଲାଞ୍ଜନା ଓ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନାର ବୋଝକୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡେଇ ଚାଲିଥାନ୍ତି । ଅନ୍ଧାରୀ କୋଣରେ ପଡ଼ିଥିବା ଆଇନାର ଭାଗ୍ୟପରି ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସକଳ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଓ ସମ୍ଭାବନା ବିଡ଼ିଯିତ ହେଉଥାଏ । ମୋ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଦ୍ରୌପଦୀଙ୍କର ସେଇ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ନାରୀ ଗୋଟାଏ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ନା ବସ୍ତୁ - ତଥାପି ଅନୁଭବିତ ହୋଇ ଝୁଲି ରହିଥାଏ । ମୁଁ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇପାରେ ନାହିଁ । ମୋର ଗାନ୍ଧିକ ସତ୍ୟ ଆଗରେ ପୁଣି ଗୋଟାଏ ଆଦର୍ଶ ରୂପ ନିଏ ଯେଉଁଠି ନାରୀ କେବଳ ଉପଭୋଗ କି

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ଉପଯୋଗର ବସ୍ତୁ ହେଉ ରହନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ - ଗାଈ କି ବାହୁରୀ ପରି ବାହା ବଜାରରେ ତାର ଦର ମୂଲ୍ୟାମୂଲି ଚାଲନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ - ହୋମ ନିଆଁର ବାସ୍ନା ତାର ସ୍ମୃତିକୋଷରୁ ଦୂରହେବା ଆଗରୁ ପେଟୋଲ କି କିରୋସିନି ନିଆଁରେ ସେ ଜଳି ପୋଡ଼ନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ - ଫେରୁନଥିବା ଫେରାର ସ୍ବାମୀର ବାଟକୁ ଓ ଭଲ ହେଉନଥିବା ରୋଗିଣୀ ଛୁଆର ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଆସିଲୁହରେ ରାତିର ଆକାଶ ଓ ଦିନର ପୃଥିବୀକୁ ବହୁରେଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ ।

ଶୁଖିଲର ଶୈଶବ, ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନାର ନାରୀତ୍ବ ପରେ ଆଉ ଯୋଉ ବିଦ୍ରୁମନାଟି ମୋର କଥାବର୍ଣ୍ଣକୁ ଗଢ଼ିଛି ସିଏ ମଣିଷର ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ । ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟକୁ ଯୋଉମାନେ ଈଶ୍ବରଙ୍କ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ବୋଲି କହିବସନ୍ତି, କ୍ଷମା କରିବେ, ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ ନାହିଁ । ଯୋଉ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ କବି କାଳିଦାସଙ୍କୁ ଦିନକୁ ଗୋଟାଏ ଶ୍ଳୋକ ଲେଖିବା ପାଇଁ ବାଧ୍ୟବାଧକତାର ରାଜଦରବାରରେ ନେଇ ପହଞ୍ଚେଇଦିଏ, ଯୋଉ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରୁ ରସ ଓ ଯଦୁମଣିଙ୍କ ଓଠରୁ ହସ ପୋଛିନିଏ ସେ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ସମଗ୍ର ମଣିଷ ଜାତିର ଅଭିଶାପ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଯୋଉ କୋଣକୁ ଗଲେ କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋତେ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟର ଭୂତ ଏବେ ବି ଗୋଡ଼ାଏ । ପ୍ରାଚୁର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମାକୁ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟର କଳାମେଘ ଢାଳି ବସିବା ପରି ମୋତେ ଦିଶିଯାଏ । ମାନସିକ, ମନସ୍ତାତ୍ତ୍ବିକ, ଦାର୍ଶନିକ ଓ ବୌଦ୍ଧିକ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ କି ବିକୃତି ତ ପଛକଥା, ଯୋଉଠି ମଥା ଉପରର ଛପର, ପିଠି ପାଇଁ ଲୁଗା କି ଜାମା, ପେଟ ପାଇଁ ପୋଷେ ଖୁଦ କି ଅଟା ସାତସ୍ବପ୍ନ ହୋଇପଡ଼େ ସେଠି ମଣିଷ କି ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁ ? ମୁଁ ନଗଣ୍ୟ ଲେଖକଟିଏ, ଅସହାୟ ମଣିଷ ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହଟୋପାତକ ପୋଛିଦେବାର ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟ ମୋର ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ ଆଶା କରେ - ଏମିତି ଗପଟିଏ ଲେଖି ଯାହାକୁ ପଢ଼ି କି ଶୁଣି ସାଧାରଣ ଲୋକଟି ଭିତରେ ବି ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ବାସ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ନିନ୍ଦି ବସି ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି ପରାତମୁଖ ହୁଅନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ, ରାଜନୀତିର ପଣାପାଲିରେ ଗୋଟି ହେବାକୁ ସେ ରାଜି ହୁଅନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ କି ନିଜକୁ ପୃଥିବୀର ସବୁଠୁ ଅଲୋଡ଼ା, ସବୁଠୁ ହତଭାଗ୍ୟ ବିଚାରି ହାନମଣ୍ୟତାର ଗ୍ଳାନିରେ ସଜନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ ।

ମୁଁ ଏଇଆ ସବୁ ଲେଖିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ଦିନେ ଆସିଥିଲି, ଆଉ ଦିନେ ଚାଲିଯିବି । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ ଯିବା ଆଉ ଆସିବା ସମୟ ଭିତରେ ଏଇସବୁ ଘଟଣା ଘଟିଥିଲା, ସେସବୁ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଏଇ ଥିଲା ମୋର ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା, ଏଇ ସବୁ ଥିଲା ସେହି ସମୟରେ ଘଟିଥିବା ଘଟଣା ଓ ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା, ତାର କ୍ରିୟା-ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା, ପ୍ରତିକୂଳ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସେଇ ସମୟର ମଣିଷଙ୍କ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ, ତାଙ୍କର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ-ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟ, ଏସବୁ କିଛି ମୋ ଗପରେ ମୁଁ ଲିପିବଦ୍ଧ କରିଯିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ମୋ ଗପରେ ମୁଁ ଭୂଗୋଳ, ରାଜନୀତି, ମଠ-ମନ୍ଦିର, ଧର୍ମ ଓ ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ନିରପେକ୍ଷ ସାଧାରଣ ମଣିଷର ଅସାଧାରଣ ମଣିଷପଣିଆର କଥା କହିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ମୁଁ ଚାହେଁ ମୋ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ହୁଅନ୍ତା ମୋ ସମୟର ସମାଜରାଜ ଇତିହାସ । ସେ ଇତିହାସରେ ରାଜା, ମହାରାଜା, ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଓ ମହାମନ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କର ସିଂହାସନ ଆରୋହଣ, ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଓ ଜୟ-ପରାଜୟର କାହାଣୀ ରହୁ କି ନରହୁ; ସାରିଆ, ଭଗିଆ, ମାଗୁଣି ଓ ନୀଳ ମାଷରାଣୀ ପରି ମାମୁଲି ମଣିଷଙ୍କ କଥା ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ରହନ୍ତା ।

କାରୁଣ୍ୟ, ବିଷାଦ, କୋହ, ଗ୍ଳାନି, ପରାଜୟ, କ୍ଷୋଭ, ଶୋକ, ସନ୍ତାପ ଓ ମଣିଷର ଅସରନ୍ତି ଅସହାୟତା ମୋ ପାଇଁ ସବୁଠୁ ବଡ଼ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ହୋଇ ଉଭା ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ଯୁଆଡ଼କୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ ମୋତେ ମଣିଷର ସୀମାବଦ୍ଧତା ଜଳଜଳ ହୋଇ ଦିଶିଯାଏ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଚାହେଁ, ମୋ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏଭଳି ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା ରଖନ୍ତା - ଯାହା କେବଳ ସମ୍ବୋଗର କପିଳବାସ୍ତୁରୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ନିରଂଜନା ଚଟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚେଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ, ଅବହେଳାର ଅରଣ୍ୟ ଭିତରେ ସବୁଥିବା ପାଷାଣୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟାମାନଙ୍କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଫେରେଇଦିଅନ୍ତା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଜୀବନ ଓ ଯୌବନ ।

୧୯୭୬ରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଗପଟି ମୋର 'କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ' ପତ୍ରିକାରେ ବାହାରିଥିଲା । ଏବେ ଚାଲିଛି ୧୯୯୬ । ଏହା ଭିତରେ କୋଡ଼ିଏ ବର୍ଷ ବିତିଗଲାଣି, ଜଣାପଡ଼ୁନାହିଁ । ଏଇ କୋଡ଼ିଏ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ଆହାର, ନିଦ୍ରା ଓ ମୈଥୁନ ପରି ଜାନ୍ତବ ଚିନ୍ତା ଭିନ୍ନ ଆଉ ଯଦି କୌଣସି ବିଷୟରେ ସବୁଠୁ ମୁଁ ବେଶି ଭାବିଥିବି ସେ ହେଉଛି ମୋର ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ମୋ ସମୟର ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ସ୍ଥାନ, କାଳ ଓ ସମୟ ନିରପେକ୍ଷ ସାହିତ୍ୟ । ତଥାପି ଲାଗେ ଗୃହୀ ଜୀବନ ଓ ଜୀବିକା ମୋତେ ମୋ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପାଖରୁ ଭିଡ଼ି ଧରୁଛି । କାରଣ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏକ ସାମୟିକ ବିଳାସ ନୁହେଁ, ଏକ ତପସ୍ୟା । ଚତୁର୍ବର୍ଗ ଫଳ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର ଅଭିଳାଷରୁ ସାହିତ୍ୟ-ମନସ୍କ ହୋଇ ଜୀବନ ବିତେଇଦେବାରେ ମୋର ଆନନ୍ଦ । ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପାଖରୁ ମୁଁ ଫେରିଆସିଲେ ତା'ର କିଛି ଯାଏ ଆସେ ନାହିଁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ମୋ ପାଖରୁ

ଦୂରରେଗଲେ ହୁଏତ ମୋ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଅର୍ଥ କି ଅବଲମ୍ବନ କିଛି ରହିବ ନାହିଁ ।

ଯାଉ ଯାଉ ମୋର କଥାବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଆଉ ପଦେ କହିଦେଇଯାଏ । ଅନେକ ଦିନ ତଳେ ଗପଟିଏ ଶୁଣିଥିଲି । ସେ ଗପଟି ଏହିପରି -

ଗୋଟେ ଗାଁରେ ମା ଟିଏ ତା'ର ଦିଉଟି ସାନ ସାନ ପୁଅକୁ ନେଇ ରହୁଥାଏ । ଗରିବ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକ, ପରଘରେ ପାଇଟି କରି ଚଳେ । ବଡ଼ ପୁଅ ତାର ଜନ୍ମ ହେଲାବେଳକୁ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଏତେ ଶୋଚନୀୟ ହୋଇନଥିଲା । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମୀ ବଞ୍ଚୁଥିଲା । ଦିହେଁ କାମବରି ଚଳୁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମୀ ମରିଗଲା, ପିଲା ଗୋଟିଏରୁ ଦୁଇଟି ହେଇ ସାରିଥିଲେ । ଘରର ଗାଈଟି ହିଁ ଏକମାତ୍ର ଅବଲମ୍ବନ । ମା କାମ କରିଯାଏ, ବଡ଼ ପୁଅଟି ଗାଈ ଦୁହିଁ କ୍ଷୀରତକ ଗାଁ ସେମୁଣ୍ଡର ମହାଜନ ଘରେ ନେଇ ଦେଇଥାଏ । ଗଲାବେଳେ ସାନଭାଇ - ଯାହାର ବୟସ ଚାରିବର୍ଷ, ତାକୁ ବି ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନେଇଯାଏ ।

କ୍ଷୀର ନେଇ ମହାଜନ ଘରକୁ ଯିବା ବାଟରେ ଆଦୌ ଗାଈକ୍ଷୀର ପାଟିରେ ଦେଇନଥିବା ସାନଛୁଆଟି ପଚାରେ, 'ଭାଇ, ଗାଈ କ୍ଷୀର କେମିତି ଲାଗେ ?'

ବଡ଼ଭାଇ କହେ, 'ଭାରି ମିଠା । ବାପା ବଞ୍ଚୁଥିଲାବେଳେ ମୁଁ କେତେଥର ପିଇଛି । ତୁ କିନ୍ତୁ କେବେ ପିଇନୁ ।'

ସାନ ଭାଇ କହେ, 'ମୁଁ ଟିକେ ଚାଖଟି ।'

ବଡ଼ଭାଇ କଥା ଟାଳିଦିଏ, 'ହଉ, ହଉ, ତୋତେ ଥରେ ଚାଖଟାକୁ ଦେବି ।'

ଏମିତି ଦିନ ବିତେ । ଦିନେ କିନ୍ତୁ ସାନ ଭାଇ ଜିଦ୍ କରେ । ଆଜି ସେ ଗାଈକ୍ଷୀର ଚାଖଟି । ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ଧୂଳିତେଣେ ଚାହେଁ । ରାସ୍ତା ନିର୍ଜନ । ତୁମ୍ଭ କରି ସାନଭାଇର ଆଖିଲାରେ ଚଳାଏ କ୍ଷୀର ଡାଳିଦିଏ । ସାନଭାଇ ଡକ୍‌ଡକ୍ କରି ସେତକ ପିଇଦିଏ । ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ତା'ର ମୁହଁଟି ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳି ଉଠେ ।

ତେଣିକି ଲାଗଲାଗ ତିନିଚାରିଦିନ ସେଇପରି ଘଟେ । ଉପାସିଆ ସାନଭାଇର ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁ ବଡ଼ଭାଇଟି ମୁହେ ମୁହେ କ୍ଷୀର ଦିଏ ଓ ପେଖରୀପାଣି ମିଶେଇ ମହାଜନ ଘରେ ଦେଇଥାଏ । ଦିନେ କିନ୍ତୁ ମହାଜନ କ୍ଷୀରେ ପାଣି ମିଶୁଥିବା ଜାଣିପାରିଲା । ଗରିବ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକଟିକୁ ଆସି ଧମକେଇଲା, 'ଆଉ ଥରେ ପାଣି ମିଶେଇଲେ କ୍ଷୀର ନେବା ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦବ' ।

ପିଲାଏ କ୍ଷୀର ନେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ, ଫେରିଆସିଲେ । ମାଆ ପଚାରିଲା, 'କ୍ଷୀରରେ କେମିତି ପାଣି ମିଶିଲା ?' ବଡ଼ଭାଇ କିଛି କହିବା ଆଗରୁ ମା'ର ଆଖି ସାନପୁଅର ଓଠରେ ପଡ଼ିଲା । କଳର ଦୁଇଧାରରେ ଦିଟୋପା କ୍ଷୀର ତଥାପି ଲାଗିଛି । ମା ଅ କରି ଛିଡ଼ା ହୋଇଗଲା । ତା' ପାଟିରୁ ଆଉ ଶବ୍ଦଟେ ବି ବାହାରିଲା ନାହିଁ ।

ଗପଟି ଏଇଠି ସରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପାଠକର ଆତୁରତା ସରେନାହିଁ । ମାଆର ଅସହାୟତା, ବଡ଼ଭାଇର ଉଦାର ଦୁଃସାହସିକତା, ସାନ ପିଲାଟିର କ୍ଷୀର ଟୋପେ ପିଇବାର ବ୍ୟାକୁଳତା ଓ ସର୍ବୋପରି ଭୋକିଲା ଛୁଆରୁ ଆହାର ଛଡ଼େଇ ତାଆରି ହାତରେ ମହାଜନର ମଣୋହି ପାଇଁ କ୍ଷୀରତକ ପଠେଇଦେବାର ବାଧ୍ୟବାଧକତା ମିଶିମାଶି ପାଠକକୁ ବିବଶ କରିଦିଏ ।

ପାଠକକୁ ବିବଶ କରିଦେବା ପରି ଅଭିମାନ ପୋଷଣ କରିବା ଓ ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ପ୍ରୟାସରେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ବିଫଳ ହେବାର ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ଆଦରି ନେବା ମଧ୍ୟ ମୋର କଥାବର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ।

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Temples of India: Reflections of a Society

Shibani Patnaik

As per a popular legend in the state of Orissa, India, King Indradyumna of Puri had a divine dream. He heard a voice asking him to make the image of God in the form of Vishnu. He was told that he would find three logs of wood laying on the sea beach, which would have the engravings of a conch, a wheel, a mace and a lotus which are the symbols of Lord Vishnu. The next morning, the King looked and found the logs embarked on the sea shore. He brought them back to the palace and searched for a carpenter to build the icon. Vishwakarma, the carpenter God appeared before the King in the guise of an old man. He promised to undertake the job under the condition that he would execute the work in a house where the doors must remain closed and no one should disturb him for twenty-one days.

After fifteen days, the Queen became very concerned about the frail old man and opened the door upon which Vishwakarma disappeared. He had carved three statues of Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra. Jagannath is called the Lord of the Universe, Subhadra is His sister and Balabhadra His brother, the only instance in India where a God is worshipped with his brother and sister. All three statues were left with unfinished hands and legs. Subsequently in the 11th century, King Chodagangadeva according to recorded history built the great temple of Puri to house the deities. This temple remains one of the biggest and greatest temples of India to this day. From these deities evolved the art of Odissi dance and the culmination of *Jagannath Dharma* (the religion of Jagannath), which is the fusion of more than twenty religions and cultures. Temples are the embodiment of religious, social and cultural norms of society that then existed in Orissa. The three deities symbolize the three races of the world. Jagannath is black, Subhadra is yellow and Balabhadra is white. In general, temples in India depict the spiritual, cultural, and social evolution of a society. They started as a reflection of the society in the past, but continue to influence the present.

My romance with temples began ever since I started learning dance as a little girl. During my frequent travels to India, I spent much time visiting various temples in my state of Orissa. I was always fascinated and enthralled with the sculptures and friezes engraved on the temple walls. My grandparents often related to me tales of Lord Jagannath and of Konark temple. I enjoyed listening to those legends without correlating them to people or society of the time. But as I grew up it became clear to me that the stories had some elements of historical, literary, moral and social value.

Temples are where art and devotion meet. It is here that the human mind seeks peace and solace while the senses delight in the exquisite artistry. The walls of many temples portray various dance and music forms. For example Odissi, the classical dance form from Orissa is preserved on the walls of the Sun Temple, Konark. The *mandapas*, or platforms, of temples were filled with the sound of religious music and deep chanting of sacred verses. Here *devadasis* (dancers dedicated to ritual worships in temples) danced for God. These dancers engraved in the temple walls are seen adorning themselves with fine ornaments and elaborate make-up. An inscription from Ananta Vasudeva Temple describes the dancer as one "whose eye-lashes constitute the very essence of captivating the whole world, whose very gait brings about a complete stillness in the activities of the three worlds, whose bangles bejeweled with precious stones serve as un-arranged candles during the dance, those deer eyed maidens are offered in devotion to Him" (Patnaik, 1990). Many maidens aid the dancers providing them with the needed accessories. Temples during this period depict a prosperous society flourishing in the arts, literature, and craftsmanship.

As a dancer, I have always been inspired and intrigued by the Sun Temple of Konark in Orissa. Buried in the sand and gnawed by the salty winds of the bay, this temple was discovered in a ruined state. The walls and

pillars of the temple are profusely decorated with sculptures of women in various dance poses and remain a testimony to the traditional dance of Orissa. Sitting on the cool stone steps of this ancient ruin, I am enthralled with the stories of the carvings. As the sun rises, it splashes the sky with a *vermillion* glow, darting its fierce rays and piercing the statues with life. The caressing warmth of the sun awakens the temple from its slumber and engulfs me with its radiance.

The unique architectural design of Konark is created in such a way that the first and last rays of the sun rest on the colossal statue of the Sun deity, Surya. This is a proof of achievements in engineering and construction technology at that time. "It gladdens the heart to view these three immaculate depictions of Surya-the morning, midday and evening sun-which personify Brahma, Maheshwara, and Vishnu of the *Brahmanical* trinity. The icon changes its expression from the active and young rising sun to its tired stage at day's end when it sets, while the midday sun shines in all its power and glory" (Mahapatra, 1987). The temple is constructed in the form of an immense chariot. Affixed to the temple are twelve pairs of gigantic wheels. Seven horses face the east and are frozen in the act of taking flight to the heavens. From very ancient times, the wheel has symbolized the movement of life. There are eight spokes on each wheel and each spoke represents three hours of a twenty-four hour day. Different life styles are portrayed in detail from dawn to dusk on the twelve wheels. This gives a realistic picture of the lives of people engaged in varied professions. It gives insight into for example, the life of a common peasant cultivating his fields, a housewife tending to her children and to her chores, of mighty kings engaged in war, to name a few life styles people had in the twelfth century. These depictions enable us to paint a vivid picture in our minds of various societal conditions during the time.

The same sultry wind that has ripped apart the temple with its rough, destructive fingers, now blows through my long, black hair and echoes through the temple walls. The early morning breeze carries with it fragrances of the jasmines and summer blossoms from the temple gardens blazing its surroundings with a provocative

perfume. I have spent hours studying these poses and admiring their beauty. I am mesmerized by their charm and I am trapped in many layers of time-the mythic, the historical, and the present. I listen to the silent tales of the statues as "life is laid bare in all its variety, in the real world and the imagined, in its accelerations and rhythms" (Mahapatra, 1987). The panels of the temple depict several scenes such as hunting vignettes, cultivation scenes, and pilgrims on a bullock cart. There are portrayals of husking rice and cooking by the roadside. A particular touching scene is of an old woman, departing for pilgrimage while she bids farewell to her son, her daughter in-law kneels at her feet and her grandchild clings desperately to her. There are also scenes of trade and commerce between India, Africa, and Indonesia. Otherwise, how else can one explain the portrayal of a giraffe, a purely African animal on the walls of Konark?

The middle rows of the temple walls have figures of fantasy such as half human and half animal combinations. As light breaks over life size images of couples in romance, one should not have prejudice on the morality of the sculptures. Konark "presents a rich repertoire of the dance of life, and through the earthy detail, one sees oneself rise into the sublime" (Mahapatra, 1987).

I can feel the dancers' movements, hear the jingling of their bells while their feet strike the cold stone. As the dancers unfold their performance, the sounds of the *veena*, *mardal* and *manjira* vibrate the atmosphere in ecstasy. As I look more closely into the sculptures, I actually feel what the dancer is expressing. She tells me of her pain, sorrow, and happiness in life as a dancer. Like the dancer in the frieze, I communicate to the audience the *nabaraasa* (nine emotions of happiness, love, anger, sadness, jealousy, wonder, disgust, valor and adoration) when I relate a story through my dance or express a prayer or song. All these emotions have been inscribed on the statues and reflect that dance was not only an important part of the religious rituals of the time, but also it was a means of expressing human nature. It also signified that one could attain salvation by perfecting the arts which was considered pleasing to the gods and goddesses. The dancer

in the frieze is also seen tying up her hair, putting on intricate ornaments and elaborate make-up in preparation for a dance performance. Today I go through the same preparation that the dancer in the temple did eight hundred years ago.

Indian architecture can be traced down to the distant past of the Harappan civilization from 1700-1500 BC. In the early days, temples must have been a simple platform open to the sky with perhaps an iconographical representation of the deity to which the worshipers paid homage and offered sacrifices. Earliest gods and goddesses symbolized nature deities such as Yakshas and Yakshinis (male and female tree spirits), Prithvi (earth goddess), fertility spirits and tools of cultivation which were essential for the sustenance of mankind. The next stage might have been the construction of a simple railing around the open platform. Evidence of such railings can be seen at Bharhut in 2nd Century BC, and at Sanchi a century later. Later Buddhists and Jains borrowed these ideas and built *stupas* punctuated by highly ornate and beautifully carved gateways (Mehta, 1974). Gradually temples developed into complex architectural structures with heavily ornate work reflecting the growing spiritual and artistic awareness of the people.

The temple as seen today evolved during the Imperial Gupta Period from 4th to 6th Century AD (Mehta, 1974). The temple construction went through many evolutionary phases and gradually the *mandapas* or platform like structures were added. These *mandapas* were used for specific purposes. The Gupta Period is marked by creativity and definite architectural composition which replaced the unskilled construction of the past. This period is characterized by the use of dressed stone. This shows an evolution of building construction. "With the development of stone masonry came the conception of the Hindu 'House of God'. Similar movements were taking place in different parts of the country such as the Chalukyas in the Deccan area during the 6th Century AD," (Mehta, 1974). These movements symbolized the power of the ruling dynasty and their artistic development.

Not only being a place of spirituality and worship, temples slowly became a social and civic theater. Hence, it provided sheltered accommodation for many needy people. Even today, temples provide a shelter to the many homeless people in India where food is also served. Interwoven with temple rituals are social functions such as marriages, birthdays and funerals. Thus temples are not used solely for religious purposes, but are used also to satisfy the practical needs of people.

The walls of temples often depict a story in stone. As is seen on the rock edicts inscribed by Ashoka after his *dharma-vijaya* (victory of righteousness), "All men are as my children. As, on behalf of my own children, I desire that they may be provided with complete welfare and happiness both in this world and the next, the same I desire for all men," (Kanwar Lal, 1970). The mighty emperor Ashoka was repelled by the slaughter, death and deportation of people during his conquest of Kalinga in 261 BC. After his victory, he denounced his sword and embraced Buddhism and enforced the principle of *ahimsa* or non-violence. Buddhism was a reaction against the atrocities of human beings towards each other. Henceforth the values of compassion, benevolence and respect for all living things emerged with a sense of urgency. From this period vegetarianism was extensively practiced. Even today a large population of India remains vegetarian.

A Hindu temple symbolizes a place where gods descend to earth and receive human offerings and also where humans can be with the gods. Therefore extreme care was taken on the selection site of a temple. Importance was given to the natural surroundings upon which the temple would be built. The builders also had a deep reverence for nature and chose sites such as river banks, sea shores, hill tops or shady groves which they considered to be conducive to spirituality. As written in the Brihad Samhita, "The gods always play where the lakes are, where the sun's rays are warded off by umbrellas of lotus leaf clusters, and where clear water paths are made by swans whose breasts toss the white lotuses hither and thither...The gods always play where groves are near, rivers, mountains and springs, and in towns with

pleasure gardens." This reflects the spirit of the people of ancient India who sought harmony with God and nature and had a passionate need to worship. Thus temples portray the primal yearning of human beings to communicate with a Higher Power. This spiritual essence is reflected in the temples of India and continues to be a part of today's society.

A temple becomes so important in people's everyday life that great kings have always left their mark by building a magnificent temple. To mark his brilliant victory over the Mohammedans, King Narsingh built the great Sun Temple of Konark in 12th century A. D. to give him long lasting fame. Often these temple walls depict the exploits and the glories that glorious kings experienced.

Common people might live in hovels and lowly habitations, but would not compromise either expenditure or labor when they built their House for God. Hindus showed their love for their gods by lavishing their wealth and labor on their temples. In the name of religion, both the royal and the commoners freely offered their labor and wealth. This reflects the sacrificial readiness on the part of the people of that particular era. This is epitomized in the story of Dharma Pada. "All efforts by the 1200 artisans who had worked on the temple for twelve long years to fix the circular, crowning slab on the top had been fruitless. It was only the twelve year old son of the chief architect, Bisu Maharana, who finally fixed the *kalasa* in its proper place. This act however, cast a pall of gloom over the artisans because they feared what the king would do to them when he heard that a mere boy had achieved what they had failed to accomplish. Seeing no other way out, and in order to save his father's name and honor, the boy leaped from the completed temple to his death," (Mahapatra, 1987). People perfected

their artistic achievements along with their passionate devotion to religion. They commemorated their time, energy, money and often their entire life's work to the divine gods trusting them to reward their worshippers profusely. This emphasizes the importance of religion in ancient India.

Monuments reflect several aspects of a civilization all over the world. Throughout history ancient civilizations constructed monuments to commemorate their golden periods. These monuments reflected the artistic, literary, and scientific achievements during the era. India remains unparalleled in terms of the number of temples constructed since very early times. In ancient India, temples were the heart of the society. Today temples remain the hub of Indian society and play an important role in the religious, cultural, and social, lives of people.

Deriving my heritage from Orissa and being an Odissi dancer by choice, my analysis concentrated on temples of Orissa and the wealth of information that these temple walls had on Odissi. But, such interpretation are generally valid in temples all over India. The relationship between temples and society has no regional dependance.

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The Oriya Theatre

Madhusmita Acharya

Modern Oriya culture in its different facets that we see today i.e., music, dance, drama, *jatra*, festivals, etc. owes its origins to religious influences of past centuries. The history of Orissa possesses genuine documentary records of histrionic arts such as dance, music, combats, and plays. The earliest recorded evidence of the ancient arts of Utkala in 2nd century BC, a period best known for Kharavela's patronage of *Gandharva Vidya*, believed to have been handed over to the people by *gandharvas* and *apsaras*, is still to be found in the caves of Hathigumpha at Udayagiri in Bhubaneswar.

The genealogy of modern folk dance and music attests to a strong interconnection between culture and religion. Over a period of time, however, they have evolved through both favorable and unfavorable social, economic, and political conditions of the region. This is inevitable: no culture, for that matter, has or can remain essentially the same through ages. In the process of this change, however, certain aspects of a culture remain immutable, those which we may call its chief markers. One of the chief markers of Oriya culture is its folk theatre comprising *Jatra*, *Mughal Tamasha*, *Dasakathia*, *Pala*, *Chhau Nata*, *Danda Nata*, *Kandhei Nata*, *Ramaleela*, *Rasaleela*, and many others. As it will not be possible to discuss all the forms of our folk culture, in what follows, I will only briefly discuss the ones that I mention above as these have a direct bearing on popular Oriya theatre.

Jatra is a wholesome play with a full cast comprising of all elements such as dance, drama, music, conflictual histrionics, all interwoven together. Very popular in rural Orissa, this form is also known as *Samaja*, *Nata*, *Tamasha*, *Jata*, and *Suanga*. Thematically, *jatras* dwell on religion, mythology, history, and contemporary social issues and problems. *Suanga* is closer to *jatra*. Being an extension of Oriya folk drama, *Suanga* is derived from 'swanga' (Sanskrit) which means graceful acting. In earlier times a chief characteristic of

this form of *jatra* was the self-introduction that the artists gave of themselves on the stage. *Suargas* usually relate to social issues and may convey moral messages. *Gitinatya* or *Gitabhinaya* could be some of the other forms that *Suargas* adopt. These were popularized by the works of two famous writers, Balarama Das and Baishnab Pani.

In northern Orissa a typical form of theatre developed after the Mughals came to Orissa, called *Mughal Tamasha*. The pattern of Mughal Tamasha is the same as *jatra* or *Suanga* with one major difference. In the dialogues and songs of *Mughal Tamasha* both Urdu and Oriya languages are used. This form of theatre was patronized by the Mughal nawabs and feudal chiefs. Initially this art form was meant to be a purveyor of Hindu-Muslim amity; in later times, however, this was used as a satire directed against Mughal feudalism.

In *Dasakathia* the main story proceeds in the form of a rhythmic commentary wherein some sequences are dramatized. It is usually performed by two artists. The main singer is *Gayaka* and his partner is called *palia*. Both the artists dress themselves in royal attire. *Gayaka* plays on a pair of wooden *Ekaphali* or *Ramatali*; and the *palia* too uses wooden *Ramakathi* or *Dasakathi*. *Dasakathia* draws its themes from mythology, love, romance, and chivalry. One of the chief features of *Dasakathia* is the skill with which it uses humorous anecdotes and songs as interludes between serious discourses. The show usually lasts for three or four hours. This form of theatre continues to be patronized to date by village elders, ex-zamindars, and the rich.

There are two forms of *Pala*, both associated with the worship of Lord *Satyanarayana*. They are *Baithaki* (sitting) and *Thia* (standing). *Pala* is usually performed by five or six artists. The costumes used in this are identical to the ones used for *Dasakathia*. It is unique due in part to its use of rich literary sources. The main actor, *Gayaka*, holds the *Chamara* and other artists,

palias, use musical instruments such as *khola* and *karatala*. The major storyline runs in the form of a commentary and the *gayaka* periodically explicates the difficult passages or the Sanskrit version to the audience. *Pala* too, like *Dasakathia*, has its own quota of humor rendered by the jester boy. This play usually runs upto three or four hours.

Chhau Nata is a special form of dance drama. It is a part of the folk culture of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, and Seraikala. *Chhau nata* is unique because it is a very colorful and stylized dance. Its themes are generally derived from mythology and folk tales and it has its own distinctive choreographic framework. Originally it used to be performed in a king's *chhauni*, or the military camps. The artists dance with swords and shields. Although highlighting the military preparedness and fitness of the soldiers, the musical instruments used in the dance such as drums, *nagara*, *dhola*, and *mahuri* render loud and melodious tunes. This *nata* is usually performed during the *Chaitra* festival.

Danda Nata is considered to be the most ancient and indigenous form of folk drama of Orissa. Associated with rituals this *nata* pays obeisance to Lord Shiva, who is represented by the *danda* or the adorned flag staff carried by the artist. *Danda nata* does not have a complete story but is woven together around certain episodes in sequences, or phases carried from day through night, where various characters appear and after introducing themselves convey messages that repose faith in Shiva. The main characters in this *nata* are a couple, *Patara Saura* (male) and the *Patara Sauruni* (female). The main accompanying musical instruments are *Dhola* and *Mohuri*. Veritably a part of Orissa's popular religious culture, this is performed generally during the *Chaitra* festival.

Kandhei Nata is Orissa's puppet theatre. Puppet making in Orissa has developed as a family art through centuries. Puppets are usually made out of wood. Puppet theatre has its own distinctive status and style. Before the commencement of the play the puppets are dressed in color and

stitched with silken threads. The silken threads are used backstage by artists to keep the puppets dangling on stage and maneuvering their movements to the accompaniment of music and dialogues. This *nata* does not require too many persons to perform, one or two skilled artists often belonging to the same family can stage it. *Kandhei nata* does not require a big and expensive stage but requires skills as the artist has to simultaneously control the puppets' movements while introducing and singing on behalf of the characters (puppets) from the backstage. *Andiripua Udhaba* is a humorous and popular character in any puppet show.

Ramaleela is a popular form of entertainment for Oriyas. The theme of *Ramaleela* is taken from *Ramayana*. Starting on *Ramanavami* and continuing for several nights, this popular theatre engages the performance of hundreds of actors wearing colorful costumes and masks. This is usually a mega-event in the host villages.

Rasaleela, associated with the life, love and pranks of Krishna, is yet another popular theatre. This form is believed to have begun in medieval Orissa, inspired by the works of Achyutananda. While staging this drama in modern times there are instances whereby a life-size *Kadamba* tree is carved out of a huge log complete with artificial leaves and flowers for use in the sets.

The various forms of Oriya theatre that we briefly discussed above do not exhaust the complete picture but give us a glimpse of the more important ones. To our claim that these have remained relatively immutable as a chief marker of popular culture something more needs to be said. In spite of the state patronage that popular Oriya folk theatre has received in recent times and the various attempts that have been made to revive them, the encroachment of electronic mass media such as television and cable networks has been responsible in eroding their bases in both rural and urban settings. Ironically, regional programs in television have appropriated and reduced these forms of theatre to mere thirty minute time-slot events!

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Sunya Pothi

Manamohan Mahapatra

Before the invention of printing press, palm leaf was used for writing in Orissa. A special stylus made of iron (Lekhan) was used for writing on the palm leaf. The daily events of Sri Jagannath Temple, of royal households, the royal proclamations etc. were written on palm leaf. The chronicle of Sri Jagannath temple in Orissa were maintained on palm leaves which were preserved in the temple, tied together in bundles, in the custody of the Temple scribe (Deula Karan). The Jagannath temple chronicle is locally known as the "Madala Panji". It is called as such, because the bundles of palm leaf looked like "Madala" (drum, a musical instrument of Orissa). Purana, Sastras etc., were also written on palm leaf. Even today, in remote villages we find such palm leaf books (pothi) in the Bhagabat Ghar, where they are read out to the villagers every evening.

In 1986, I heard about one such palm leaf pothi, which was presented to a brahmin by a Sadhu, from a friend of mine. I was further told that this pothi forecasts several things as per the desire of the inquirer. I was very much interested to see this divine pothi and consult it.

The place is a small village near Bhubaneswar and is situated about 8 Kilometers from the famous bell metal village Balakati. The village is called "Jhinti Sasan". Within a couple of days, I went to this village where I found four such pothis kept on a wooden pedestal inside a temporary hut. Like the other visitors, I registered my name to open the pothi. When my turn came, I opened the pothi and its custodian read out several things which were about me. The pothi also directed me to perform several things to get rid off my some problems I was facing at that time. I acted as per the direction of the pothi and got better result.

My curiosity was aroused and I wanted to know more and more about it. I regularly visited Jhinti Sasan this place to know the secrets of this sacred pothi. I inquired about this pothi

from the persons associated with it but nobody gave me a satisfactory reply.

Next year, I was invited to go to the University of Chicago as a visiting Research Associate. Hence, I was interested in videotaping this sacred pothi so that I could discuss it with my colleagues in the United States. One day while opening the pothi, it came out, "Oh, inquirer (Prasna Karta), you will go to America, because of which you want to make a videotape (chhaya chhabi) of the Pothi. You are permitted to do so. Let your desire be fulfilled." Whatever questions I had, I put those in writing in an envelope and kept the envelope near the pothi. To my greatest astonishment, all my questions were answered in the pothi.

From these questions, I came to know that it is a divine pothi which was written by Achyuta Golaknath, 2603 years ago. The pages of pothi are blank and nothing is written except two numbers on both sides of the leaf. When an inquirer (Prasna Karta) opens the pothi, script appears and is erased after it is read out and the pothi is closed. According to the pothi, script appears in the pothi for three reasons.

1) Force of the Number (Sankhya Prabhaba): The numbers on both side of the pages of the leaf remain constantly and are never erased.

2) Divine Force (Daiva Prabhaba): Achyuta Golaknath himself writes this pothi in Golakadham (Abode of Vishnu). The message of the pothi originates at Golakpuri, then is transmitted to the Himalayas, then to the Jagannath temple at Puri and at last to the pothi, due to the force of the number and the force of the wind, about which we shall discuss below.

3) Force of the Wind (Bata Prabhaba): The message comes to the pothi from Golakapura by the force of the wind. According to the pothi, there are two kinds of bata (wind), e.g. Subata (Good wind) and Kubata (Bad wind). Good

words are carried in subata (Good wind) and bad words are transmitted in kubata (bad wind).

When the pothi is opened for the inquirer, first of all, a description of the royal court of Raja Bhoja adorned by the Nabaratna Pandit (Nine gems of the royal court) comes. Then the Raja asks the Pandits about the difficulties of the inquirer. If the inquirer is suffering from any disease, Dhanwantari (Royal physician) immediately describes the disease and then prescribes medicine. The medicines are all Ayurvedic, prepared from roots, fruits, flowers, leaves etc. Whatever may be the difficulty or suffering of the inquirer, the expert pandit immediately gives his prescription.

When the videotaping of the pothi was going on, it directed me to videotape the blank pages of the pothi to show how script comes and is erased. I have also recorded these on videotape.

The author of this pothi, in his next birth, was born in Orissa in a small village, Nemalo, in the Cuttack district. He was then known as Achyutananda Das. Not only Achyuta but also four others were born during this period in Orissa who were popularly called as the 'Panchasakhas'. These five friends (Achyuta, Jagannath, Balaram, Jasobanta and Sisu Ananta) brought a socio-religious revolution in the then Orissa. The Panchasakhas bore the surname "Das" (servant of the people).

The birth of Achyuta is a mystery as described in his book "Sunya Samhita". His parents who were great devotees of Lord Jagannath, were issueless. Once, Jagannath appeared before them in dream and directed them to go to the Jagannath Temple. In the temple precinct, after the morning offering (Bala dhupa), they would see a small child playing on the third step of Baisi Pahacha (Flight of 22 steps) and that boy would be their son. After that, Padmavati

(mother of Achyuta) conceived and gave birth to a child. This child was latter named as Achyutnanda Das. Hence, Achyutananda is called "Sunyapurusha".

During his life time he wrote a number of books and had innumerable disciples both from among Hindus and Muslims. When he wanted to leave his mortal body, he instructed all his disciples to cover his body in a white silken cloth. He sat in the Samadhi on the 11th day of the bright half of Jyestha and on the 15th day his mortal body disappeared. On the 15th day, when the white silken cloth was removed, there was no trace of his mortal body. According to the pothi, Mahapurusha Achyutananda lived on this earth for 120 years 3 months. 25 days and 13 hours.

Such pothis, written by Achyuta, have been found in Saratsasan, Kakatpur, Sakhigopal, Chandanpur, Amporo etc. All these villages are situated in Puri district. I had the opportunity to visit Kakatpur to see the pothi. This pothi written by Achyuta is of copper plate (Tamra patra pothi). The method of opening this pothi is completely different from the Jhinti pothi. This copper plate pothi is kept on another copper plate on which a tantrik diagram (Jantra) has been engraved. After the custodian of the pothi utters some mantras, he opens the pothi for consultation.

Each pothi of Achyutananda found in a different place of Puri district has a specialty of its own. People visit these pothis for consultation regarding the marriage of their sons and daughters, treatment of diseases, recovery of lost wealth, advice for employment, winning in the election, construction of house, purification of homestead land, and such other purposes. When such a valuable gift of God is now in Orissa, it is high time for scientists and interested people to start a scientific inquiry and utilize it for the development of the society.

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ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟତା ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ବିତର୍କ କାହିଁକି ?

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଆରତୀ ମିଶ୍ର

ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ କହିଲେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଲିଖିତ ପଦ୍ଧତି ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଗାୟନ ବା ବାଦନକୁ ବୁଝାଇଥାଏ । ବେଦପାଠ ଓ ଦେବସ୍ତୁତିରୁ ହିଁ ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି । ତେବେ ବୈଦିକ ଯୁଗରେ କୌଣସି ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରର ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ନାହିଁ । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଯୁଗର ମହାମୁନି ଭରତଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଦ୍ରୌପଦୀ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଶାରଙ୍ଗଦେବ (ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ରତ୍ନାକରର ରଚୟିତା)ଙ୍କ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଯେତେ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରକାର ଭାରତୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ରଚନା କରିଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ କେହି ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଭେଦରେ ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ ବା କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକୀ ପଦ୍ଧତିର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରିନାହାନ୍ତି । ଭାରତୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ମୌଳିକ ଉପାଦାନ ଯଥା ନାଦ, ଶ୍ରୁତି, ସ୍ୱର, ସପ୍ତକ, ଗ୍ରାମ, ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା, ଯମକ ଓ ଅଳଙ୍କାର ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ପ୍ରାୟ ସମାନ । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରକାରମାନେ ରାଗ ଗାୟନର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟତା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ କେତେକ ନିୟମ ପ୍ରଣୟନ କରିଛନ୍ତି - ଯଥା ଗ୍ରହ, ଅଂଶ, ନ୍ୟାସ, ଅପନ୍ୟାସ, ଅକ୍ତୁତ୍, ବହୁତ୍, ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ନ ହେଲେ ରାଗ ଅସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରହିଯାଏ ।

ପଞ୍ଚଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରୁ ଅଷ୍ଟାଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବହୁ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ରଚିତ ହୋଇଛି । ପଞ୍ଚଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଲୋଚନକୃତ 'ରାଗ ତରଙ୍ଗିଣୀ', ସପ୍ତଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ସୋମନାଥକୃତ 'ରାଗ ବିବୋଧ', ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଦାମୋଦରକୃତ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ 'ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଦର୍ପଣ' ଓ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଅହୋବଳକୃତ 'ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପାରିଜାତ'ରେ ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ସମ୍ୟକ ଆଲୋଚନା ହୋଇଛି । ଷୋଡ଼ଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ରାମାମାତ୍ୟକୃତ 'ସ୍ୱରମେଳ କଳାନିଧି' ଓ ପୁଣ୍ଡରିକ ବିଠଳକୃତ ଗୁରୁଟି ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ଏବଂ ସପ୍ତଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଭେଙ୍କଟମଣ୍ଡକୃତ 'ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଧା ପ୍ରକାଶିକା' ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ପଦ୍ଧତିର ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥର ଉଦାହରଣ । ଉତ୍ତର ଓ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପଦ୍ଧତିର ମୂଳଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ବହୁ ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆଦି ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ପ୍ରଭୃତ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ଉଭୟ ପଦ୍ଧତି ନିଜ ନିଜର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ତାଳ ଉଦ୍ଭାବନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ସ୍ୱର ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣ ଓ ଧ୍ୱନି ସଂଯୋଗ ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତୀୟ ପଦ୍ଧତିଠାରୁ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଭିନ୍ନ । କେତେକ ରାଗ ଉଭୟ ଉତ୍ତର ଓ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଗାୟନ ଶୈଳୀ ଭିନ୍ନ । ଉନବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ପ୍ରଥମ ଭାଗରେ କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକୀ ଓ ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ

ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ସ୍ୱର ସପ୍ତକରେ ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଆସିଛି । କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ସ୍ୱର ସପ୍ତକ କନକାଙ୍ଗୀ ମେଳ ଓ ସେହିପରି ଶ୍ରୁତିର ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ତର ଦ୍ୱାରା ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ ପଦ୍ଧତିର ବିଲାବଳ ଆଦର ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି ହୋଇଛି ।

ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଉତ୍କଳୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥକାରମାନଙ୍କ ରଚିତ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କୃଷ୍ଣଦାସ ବଡ଼ଜେନା ମହାପାତ୍ରଙ୍କ ରଚିତ 'ଗୀତ ପ୍ରକାଶ', ହଳଧର ମିଶ୍ରକୃତ 'ସଙ୍ଗୀତ କଳ୍ପଲତିକା', ଶ୍ରୀହରିଚନ୍ଦନକୃତ 'ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ମୁକ୍ତାବଳୀ', ପଣ୍ଡିତ ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କ 'ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ନାରାୟଣ' ଉଲ୍ଲେଖନୀୟ । ପାଠକ ଏହି ସବୁ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥମାନଙ୍କରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ରୂପ ଖୋଜିବାକୁ ଉତ୍ସୁକ ହୋଇପାରେ । କାରଣ ଏହି ସମସ୍ତ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥକାର ଉତ୍କଳବାସୀ ଓ ଅଧିକାଂଶ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୋଣରେ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ନଥିବାର ପରିଲକ୍ଷିତ ହୁଏ । ତେବେ ଏ ସମସ୍ତ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରେ କେବଳ ଭାରତୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ମୌଳିକ ତଥ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ, କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକୀ ବା ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଆଦି ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ନାମକରଣ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ନାହିଁ ।

ଅହୋବଳଙ୍କ ରଚିତ 'ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପାରିଜାତ' ଓ ଭେଙ୍କଟମଣ୍ଡଙ୍କ ରଚିତ 'ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଧା ପ୍ରକାଶିକା' ଅନୁରୂପ କୃଷ୍ଣଦାସ ବଡ଼ଜେନା ମହାପାତ୍ରଙ୍କ ରଚନା ମଧ୍ୟ ଗ୍ରାମ, ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ଆଧାରିତ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର ସପ୍ତକ ଷଡ୍ଜ ଗ୍ରାମର ପ୍ରଥମ ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ଯୁକ୍ତ - ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର କୋମଳ ଗ୍ରା ନି ଯୁକ୍ତ ସାରେ ଗ୍ରା ମା ପା ଧା ନି ଯଦିଓ ଏହା ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ ପଦ୍ଧତିର କାଫି ଆଦର, କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକୀର ଖରହରପ୍ରିୟା ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀର ଧନଶ୍ରୀ ମେଳର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ । ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରେ ସ୍ୱର ସ୍ଥୁତି ବିଭାଜନ ରହିଛି । ଆଳାପ (ରାଗାଳାପ), ସ୍ଥାୟୀ, ଅନ୍ତରା, ଅଭୋଗ ସଂଗୁରୀ, ଅଂଶ, ନ୍ୟାସ ସ୍ୱର ସମସ୍ତ ରହିଛି ।

କୃଷ୍ଣଦାସ ବଡ଼ଜେନା ମହାପାତ୍ରଙ୍କ ରଚିତ 'ଗୀତ ପ୍ରକାଶ' ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଉପରେ ଆଧାରିତ ଏକ ସାରଗର୍ଭକ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ । ଲେଖକ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଷୋଡ଼ଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ମୋଗଲ ସମ୍ରାଟ ଆକବରଙ୍କ ରାଜସଭାରେ ରହି ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରୁଥିଲେ । ତେଣୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ଏବଂ ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗର ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଅନେକ ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ଅଛି । ତେବେ ତାଙ୍କ ମତରେ ଗୀତର ଅର୍ଥ ଶ୍ରୁତିମଧୁର ବୈଚିତ୍ୟପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରଚନା

(‘रंजक स्वर संदभो गीतम्’) । କୃଷ୍ଣଦାସଙ୍କ ମତରେ ଗାନ୍ଧର୍ବ ‘ସ୍ଵରତାଳ ପଦ୍ମମଳମ୍’ ହେବା ସ୍ଥଳେ ଗାନ ଜନରଞ୍ଜନ ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ । ତେବେ ରଞ୍ଜକ ଶବ୍ଦର ଅର୍ଥ କେବଳ ମନୋରଞ୍ଜକ ସ୍ଵର (notes)ର ସମାବେଶ ନୁହେଁ, ତହିଁରେ ଓଜ (weight), ପ୍ରସାଦ (clarity), ଅଳଙ୍କାର (beautification) ଓ ରସ (sentiment) ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ରଚନା ରହିବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଏହି ରଚନା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ରଚନା ପ୍ରଧାନ ବୋଲି ଏଇଥିରୁ ଅନୁମେୟ । ଏହା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଗୀତ ପ୍ରକାଶରେ କେତେକ ତାଳର ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ଅଛି, ଯଥା ‘ଆଦି’, ‘ଯତି’, ‘କୁଡୁଳ’ ଆଦି ଯାହାକି ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ ବା କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକୀ ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ସ୍ଥାନ ପାଇନାହିଁ । ତେଣୁ ଏ ତାଳ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ତାଳ ବୋଲି ଧରାଯାଇପାରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ଗାୟନ ଶୈଳୀ - ଧ୍ଵନି ସଂଯୋଗ, ପଡ଼ି, ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ଯମକ ଆଦିର ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ଏ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରେ ନାହିଁ ।

ଆକବରଙ୍କ ସମୟରେ ଅର୍ଥାତ ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗ (ଅଷ୍ଟମରୁ ଅଷ୍ଟାଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ)ର ଶେଷ ଭାଗରେ ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ରୂପ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ଭେଦରେ (ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତ ଓ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତରେ) ବଦଳିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଅହୋବଳକୃତ ‘ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପାରିଜାତ’ ଉପରେ ଆଧାରିତ ହେବାସ୍ଥଳେ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଭେଙ୍ଗଟମଖୁଙ୍କ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ଉପରେ ଆଧାରିତ ହେଲା ।

ହୁଏତ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକତା ଅଭାବରୁ ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ରଚିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର କୌଣସି ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ଦେଖାଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ରାଗ ଲକ୍ଷଣ ଓ ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ପଦ୍ଧତି ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ନିଜର ରୂପରେଖ ବଜାୟ ରଖିଛି, ଯଦିଓ ଏହା ରଚନା ପ୍ରଧାନ, ରସଯୁକ୍ତ ଗାୟକୀ, ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ତାଳ ଓ ଗାୟନ ଶୈଳୀ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ।

ଉତ୍ତରୀୟ ନାଟ୍ୟଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ଅନୁସାରେ କଳା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ଅବକ୍ତି, ଉତ୍ତମାଗଧ୍ୟା, ପାଞ୍ଚାଳୀ ଏବଂ ଦାକ୍ଷିଣାତ୍ୟ ଭାଗରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରା ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏଥିରୁ ପ୍ରତିପାଦିତ ହେଉଛି ଯେ ମଗଧ ଓ ଉତ୍କଳ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ଯଥା ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳର ସଙ୍ଗୀତକୁ ଯେହେତୁ ଉତ୍ତମାଗଧ୍ୟା ସଙ୍ଗୀତ କୁହାଯାଉଥିଲା, ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ରୂପ ଓ ଇତିହାସ ଏହି ଶୈଳୀ ଉପରେ ଆଧାରିତ ।

ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଯଥା ଧ୍ରୁବପଦ ବା ତରଙ୍ଗତ ଧ୍ରୁପଦ୍ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ତଥା ଅମାର ଖସୁଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ନୃତନ ଖେୟାଳ ଗାୟକୀର ରାଗ ଓ ତାଳ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଭାତଖଣ୍ଡେ ଓ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ଦିଗମ୍ବର ପଲ୍ଲସ୍ଵକର ହିଁ ଏହାର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ସମ୍ମତ ଓ ବିଧିବଦ୍ଧ ସ୍ଵରଲିପି କରିବା ଦିଗରେ

ଯତ୍ନବାନ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ସେହିପରି ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଭେଙ୍ଗଟମଖୁଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ପଦ୍ଧତି ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ନାମରେ ପରିଚିତି ହେଲା ଓ ତ୍ୟାଗରାଜ ହିଁ ଏହାକୁ ଲୋକ ଲୋଚନକୁ ଆଣି ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣରେ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ କରାଇଲେ ।

ଷୋଡ଼ଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଲେଖକ କୃଷ୍ଣଦାସ ବଡ଼ଜେନା ମହାପାତ୍ରଙ୍କର ‘ଗୀତ ପ୍ରକାଶ’ ବା ଶ୍ରୀ ହରିଚନ୍ଦନଙ୍କର ‘ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ମୁକ୍ତାବଳୀ’, ପଣ୍ଡିତ ରଘୁନାଥଙ୍କ ରଚିତ ‘ନାଟ୍ୟ ମନୋରମା’ ବା ପଣ୍ଡିତ ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ରଚିତ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରୁ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସଙ୍କେତ ପାଇଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉକ୍ତ ମାଗଧ୍ୟା ଶୈଳୀ ବା ଭରତ ମୁନିଙ୍କର ନାଟ୍ୟଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ଉକ୍ତ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତା ଗାନ ପ୍ରକାରର କୌଣସି ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ ନାହିଁ । ତେଣୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଶୈଳୀର କ୍ରମ ବିକାଶ, ସ୍ଵରଲିପି ବା ସ୍ଵାତନ୍ତ୍ର୍ୟର ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟିକରଣ ଏସବୁ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରୁ ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ । ଏହା ହିଁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ବିବାଦର କାରଣ ହୋଇଛି । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଶୈଳୀ ଉପରଲିଖିତ ଉକ୍ତମାଗଧ୍ୟା ଶୈଳୀରୁ ଉତ୍ପନ୍ନ ବୋଲି ଅନୁମାନ କରାଯାଇପାରେ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତୀୟ ଓ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ଉଭୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଅନୁକରଣ ନହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଭୟ ଶୈଳୀରେ ଅନେକ ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତର ଗୋବରହରି ବାଣୀର ଧ୍ରୁପଦ ସହିତ ପୁରାତନ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀର ବହୁ ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ରହିଛି । ଆଳାପ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହି ଶୈଳୀରେ ହେଉଥିବାର ଦୃଷ୍ଟାନ୍ତ ରହିଛି । ମାଦଳ (ମର୍ଦ୍ଦଳ) ବା ପଖାବଜ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଓ ଧ୍ରୁପଦ ଉଭୟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୁଏ । ମାତ୍ର ଧ୍ରୁପଦର ପ୍ରଚଳନର ବହୁ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଖ୍ରୀ:ପୂ: ୨ୟ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ଖାରବେଳଙ୍କ ନିର୍ମିତ ଖଣ୍ଡଗିରି ଉଦୟଗିରି ଏବଂ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ସମୟରେ ନିର୍ମିତ ବହୁ ମନ୍ଦିର ଗାତ୍ରରେ ମର୍ଦ୍ଦଳଧାରୀ ନୃତ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗନାମାନଙ୍କର ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ତେଣୁ ‘ଉତ୍ତମାଗଧ୍ୟା’ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି ବା ଶୈଳୀରୁ ହିଁ ମର୍ଦ୍ଦଳ ବା ପଖାବଜ ଆସି ଧ୍ରୁପଦରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୋଇଛି ବୋଲି ଧରିବାକୁ ହେବ ।

ସେହିପରି ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତରେ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ରାଜାଙ୍କର ଦାକ୍ଷିଣାତ୍ୟ ବିଜୟ, କାଞ୍ଚି ରାଜକନ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବିବାହ, ଦାକ୍ଷିଣାତ୍ୟ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ମାନଙ୍କର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ରାଜସଭାରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ହୁଏତ ଏପରି ପରିବେଶ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିଲା । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ପୂର୍ବ ଓ ଦାକ୍ଷିଣାତ୍ୟ ଶୈଳୀର ଏକ ମିଳନସ୍ଥଳ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଜୟଦେବଙ୍କ ରଚନା ଗାୟନର ଶୈଳୀ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତର ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଶୈଳୀ ଦ୍ଵାରା ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ଵରୂପ ‘ପଲ୍ଲବୀ’ ଶବ୍ଦଟି ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ଶୈଳୀର ‘ପଦମ୍, ଲୟମ୍, ବିନ୍ୟାସମ୍’ ରୁ ହିଁ ଉତ୍ପନ୍ନ । ଏହା ଯେ କୌଣସି ରାଗ ଓ ତାଳରେ ହୋଇପାରେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ

ସଙ୍ଗୀତରେ ଏହାର ପ୍ରଚଳନ ଦକ୍ଷିଣାତ୍ୟ ପଦ୍ଧତିର ପ୍ରଭାବ ବୋଲି ହିଁ ଧରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଆବାହକ ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜ, କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଗୋପାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ, ଗୌରହରି ପରିଜ୍ଞା, ଧନଞ୍ଜୟ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଦକ୍ଷିଣାତ୍ୟର ଅଧିବାସୀ ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଏଥିରେ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ହୋଇଥିବାର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ରହିଛି ।

ତେବେ ଯେଉଁ ସଂସ୍କୃତି, କଳା, ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଓ ନୃତ୍ୟର ଗତିଶୀଳତା ନାହିଁ, ତାହାର ଉଦ୍ଭବ ନାହିଁ । ଅନ୍ତଃପ୍ରବାହ ନଥିଲେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ନାହିଁ । ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ରଚନା ପ୍ରଧାନ ନୁହେଁ । ଏହା ସ୍ୱରର ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ଗୁଡୁରା ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ । ମାତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ରଚନା ପ୍ରଧାନ । ଏହା ରାଧାକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ଶୃଙ୍ଗାର, ବିରହ, ପ୍ରକୃତି ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଓ ଉପାସନାମୂଳକ । ଏଥିରେ ଆଳାପ, ତାନ ଡ୍ରାମା ରଚନାର ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ ନଷ୍ଟ କରା ନଯାଇ ଏହାକୁ କେବଳ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ରସର ପରିପୂରକ ଭାବେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଯାଇପାରେ । ତେଣୁ ଯେଉଁ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଯେତେ ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଶୈଳୀ ରହିଛି । ତେବେ ଏହାର ଉତ୍ତର ଓ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ପଦ୍ଧତିଠାରୁ ଭିନ୍ନତା ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ଅଧିକ ସନ୍ଧାନ ନେବାକୁ ହେବ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ମାର୍ଗ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଶ୍ରେଣୀଭୁକ୍ତ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଚଉପଦୀ, ଚଉତିଶା, ଛାନ୍ଦ, ଅଷ୍ଟପଦୀ ଭଳି ବହୁତ ରଚନା ପ୍ରଧାନ ଗୀତ ରହିଛି ଯାହାକୁ ଦେଖା ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ହିଁ ଧରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ବୃତ୍ତରେ ଗାୟନ କରାଗଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ନିୟମ ବନ୍ଦନ ମୁକ୍ତ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟତା ପ୍ରତିପାଦନ କରିବାର ଅଧାରତା ଆଜି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ରୂପ ବଦଳାଇବାକୁ ଯାଉଛି । ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଶୈଳୀରେ ଏଥିରେ ଆଳାପ, ତାନ, ବୋଲତାନ ଆଦିର ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ଆଣିଲେ ଏହାକୁ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରମାଣ କରି ପାରିବା କି ?

ନାନା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ନାନା କଥା ଲେଖା ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଏକ ଗୁରୁ ପରମ୍ପରା ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଅଟେ । ଏହା ଗୁରୁଙ୍କରଠାରୁ କ୍ରମାଗତ ଭାବେ ଗୁଲି ଆସିଥିବାରୁ ଏବଂ ଏହାର ସ୍ୱରଲିପି ବା ବହୁ ଆଲୋଚିତ ଉତ୍ତମାଗଧୀ ଶୈଳୀ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଆନୁମାନିକ ଧାରଣା ବାହାରେ ଆଉ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରମାଣ ନଥିବାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ରୂପ ଆଜି ଯେଉଁ ଆଧାର ବା ପାତ୍ରରେ ଯିଏ ଢାଳୁଛି, ତାହା ସେପରି ରୂପ ନେବାକୁ ଲାଗିଛି । ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଶ୍ୟାମ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଧାରଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭକରି ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗବେଷଣା କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଯେଉଁ ସ୍ୱରଲିପି ପ୍ରଚଳନର ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରିଛନ୍ତି, ତାହା ପ୍ରଶଂସନୀୟ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାହାକୁ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ, ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ଓ ପ୍ରସାରିତ କରିବା କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ବାଧା ଓ ବିବାଦ ଉପୁଜୁଛି । କାରଣ ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ର ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପରି ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜ, କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି

ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ରଚନାର ସ୍ୱରଲିପି କରିଯାଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଏହା ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ମୁଖରୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରୂପ ନେଇଛି ।

ସଙ୍ଗୀତ, ନୃତ୍ୟ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସୃଜନଶୀଳ ଓ ଗତିଶୀଳ କଳା । ଗାୟକୀ ଶୈଳୀ ଏକ ସ୍ଥିର ଓ ଅପରିବର୍ତ୍ତିତ ଧାରା ହେଲେ, ତାହା କଳାର ବିକାଶ ପଥରେ ବାଧା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରେ । ଯଦି ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୃତ୍ୟର ଆଧୁନିକ ଇତିହାସ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଲେଖନା କରିବା, ତେବେ ଦେଖିବା ଯେ ଗୋଟିପୁଅ ଓ ମାହାରୀ ନୃତ୍ୟରୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୃତ୍ୟର ଶୈଳୀରେ ପ୍ରଭୁତ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଘଟିଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୃତ୍ୟକୁ ସମ୍ବର୍ଦ୍ଧିତ ଓ ଆକୃତ କରିବାପାଇଁ ତାହାର ମୂଳ ଧାରା ବା ଶୈଳୀ ଅପରିବର୍ତ୍ତିତ ରଖି ତହିଁରେ ଅଧିକ ମନୋରଞ୍ଜକ ନୃତନ ରଚନାକୁ ପରିପୂରକ ଭାବେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ଏହାକୁ ଉଚିତ ଓ ଅଧିକ ସର୍ବାଙ୍ଗ ସୁନ୍ଦର କରାଯାଇଛି । ସେହିପରି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତକୁ ତାହାର ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଶୈଳୀର ଭିନ୍ନ ଉପରେ ଅଧିକ ମନୋରଞ୍ଜକ ରଚନା ଓ ଗାୟକୀ ଡ୍ରାମା ସର୍ବାଙ୍ଗ ସୁନ୍ଦର କରିବାରେ ବାଧା ଦେବା ଉଚିତ କି ?

ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତରେ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଅନେକ ରାଗ ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନୀ (ଯଥା - କଲ୍ୟାଣ, କାଫି, ଖମ୍ବଜ, ବାଗେଶ୍ୱୀ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି) ଓ କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକୀ (ଯଥା - ମୋହନୀ, ସାବେରୀ, କଳହଂସ, କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି) ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ସହ ମିଳୁଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏବଂ କେତେକ ତାଳ (ମଠା, ତ୍ରିପଟା, ରୂପକ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି) କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ସହ ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ପରିଚୟ ବା ପ୍ରମାଣ ପାଇଁ ତାହା ବାଧାସୂଚକ ନୁହେଁ ବା ପରିପୂରକ ନୁହେଁ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତର କିଛି ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ନିଜସ୍ୱ ରାଗ ଅଛି । ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଶୈଳୀ ସହିତ କିଛି ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରସମ୍ମତ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ରାଗ ଓ ତାଳ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟତା ପ୍ରତିପାଦନରେ ସହାୟକ ହେବ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତକୁ ରଚନା ପ୍ରଧାନ କରି, ଭାବ ଓ ଛନ୍ଦ ବଜାୟ ରଖି ଗାୟକ ଯେଉଁ ରାଗ ଓ ତାଳରେ ତାହାର ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଢ଼ାଇ ପାରିବ, ତାହାହିଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ହିସାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣୀୟ ହେବା ଉଚିତ । ନିଜ ନିଜ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ବିଶ୍ୱରରେ ଅତି ନବସି ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିହାନ ଓ ମଧୁର ଗାୟନ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଅନୁମୋଦନ କରିବା ଉଚିତ ।

ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ସୁଧାକର ବାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାଶ ଅନେକ ଗୀତରେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତିତ ସ୍ୱର ଦେଇଥିଲେ । କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କାଳୀଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ପୁରାତନ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗୀତରେ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରି ତାହାକୁ ଅଧିକ ଚିତ୍ରାକର୍ଷକ ଓ ମନୋରଞ୍ଜକ କରିଥିଲେ । ତାହା କଣ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗୀତ ନୁହେଁ ବା ତା ଡ୍ରାମା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟତା କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ହୋଇଛି କି ? ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହିଁ ପ୍ରଗତିର ଲକ୍ଷଣ । ତେବେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ପଶ୍ଚାତ୍ତାପୀ ନ ହୋଇ ଅଗ୍ରଗାମୀ ହେବା ଉଚିତ ।



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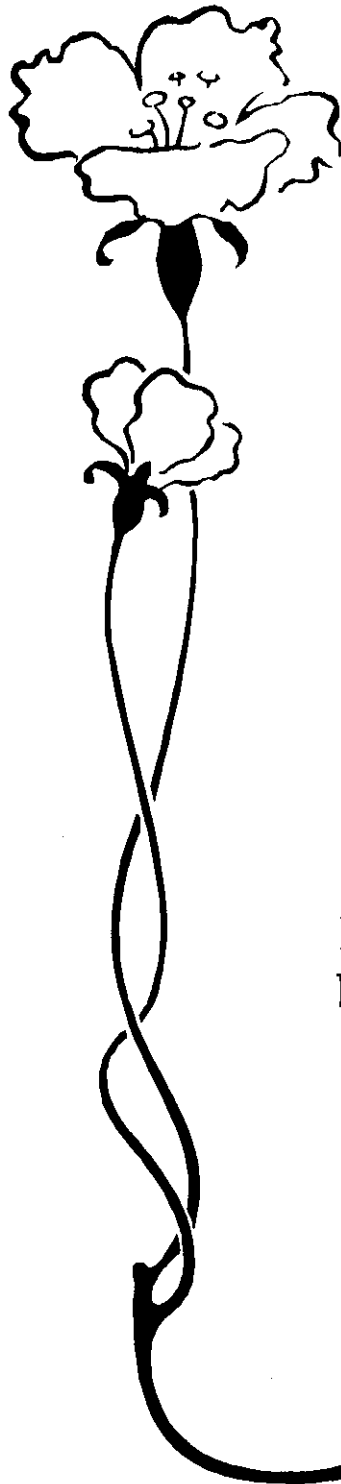
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The Journey of An American Girl into Hindu Marriage

Julianne Misra

On 11 January 1996, with the sun rising over the Taj Mahal, the "Tomb of Eternal Love", Tunu Misra got down on his knee and asked me to be his wife. It does sound like a scene right out of an American movie or a romance novel, but it is true. It is my story, the story of an "all-American girl" whose journey through life took her all the way to India to be forever tied to the man of her dreams.

When I got on the plane to India two weeks earlier to meet Tunu and his family, I was filled with anticipation and excitement. I pondered what lay ahead... a new world... a new culture... meeting Tunu's grandfather and family. What would they think of me, would I be accepted? In my wildest dreams I could not have imagined the events that were about to unfold.

I fell in love with India the minute I got off the plane the beauty of it's nature, the smell, the kindness of its people. Our first stop after Bombay was in Jaipur, the City of Kings. We spent several days touring the temples, palaces, and all the fine textile and jewelry shops. It was there we met up with his family and that Tunu secretly had my engagement ring made, a beautiful emerald cut with diamonds on either side. The next night, we took an overnight bus to make it to the Taj Mahal in time for sunrise. The trip was a story in itself, but we made it and the rest still seems like a dream to me. Of course, I accepted Tunu's proposal. He was everything I ever wanted in a partner and more.

After that, our travel plans changed and the next week was spent traveling to meet all of Tunu's family while plans were being made for our *Nirbandha* that Friday; It was quite an experience, the traveling, the different food, and doing my best to communicate, to fit in, and not offend anyone. The *Nirbandha* was held on the *Barunei* Mountainside where Tunu's thread ceremony was held. Because my family was not there, Tunu's grandfather played their role. It was beautiful. Thinking about it brings back the feelings of warmth and love I felt that day. I

received so many beautiful gifts, and it was difficult for me to even thank the women because I don't speak much Oriya, so the young girls translated for us so we could talk. I remember standing on the mountainside that day reflecting how God's path managed to take me so far from my upbringing in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to a mountainside in Eastern India to be joined with the man I would share my life with.

The few, remaining days were spent at the Misra's new home in Bhubaneswar and with Tunu's *Aja* in Godipoda. I was sad to leave India knowing it would be years before we would see everyone again.

It is impossible to sum up in a few words all the feelings and emotions I felt and all the lessons I learned during my visit. It was a dream come true for me to travel out of my world and my reality and experience another part of life. It changed me. It opened my eyes to the beauty of simplicity and reaffirmed my beliefs that money doesn't buy happiness. Love is all that really matters in this world. I kept a journal of my visit, and when things get crazy I pick it up and put things back in perspective.

Once back at home, a September wedding date was set. Because I did not want to take away from Tunu's mother's dream of a traditional Hindu wedding ceremony, but also didn't want to give up on my dream of a seaside union, we decided to have two separate ceremonies a week apart. Tunu's mother, sister, father and brother spent months planning the big day. I was amazed at how much help they got from the Indian Community. I remember getting phone calls from my "Bou" during the planning. She was so excited. The house filled with people cooking, singing and dancing. She was so happy. It made us happy.

I finally got to experience all the fun for myself the week before the wedding. It was so wonderful to meet so many nice people, and

hear all the stories about Tunu growing up and about the family's experiences coming to America and all the struggles they faced. I have so much admiration and respect for them all. There were lots of laughs and happy memories made with people from Blacksburg and friends who traveled from as far as California and India.

It was also interesting for me to meet Pragati and Arati, two good friends of the family - who the families always hoped would be arranged to marry Tunu or his brother Bhaba. As you can imagine, I was a bit apprehensive, but they are great girls and we quickly became friends.

A *Sangeet* was held the night before the wedding. It was a wonderful experience for me and my family. The singing and dancing were wonderful. My mother especially loved seeing all the beautiful sarees. The highlight of the night was a skit produced by Tunu's sister, Anoo. It poked fun at the differences between the Hindu and American culture and traditions, and told the story of Tunu telling his parents he wanted to marry an American girl. It was quite humorous as you can imagine!

The wedding ceremony took place the next day at a gazebo on Mountain Lake. It was a magnificent setting to say the least. I didn't know much about what to expect. Tunu's family told me I would be made to feel like a Princess, and I sure did. Tunu's sister and friends spent hours getting me ready. I wore a beautiful red saree and was draped in gold from head to toe. Had it not been for my blond hair and light skin, there would be no telling me apart from an Indian bride. My whole family wore traditional Indian attire and participated in the ceremony. They were so excited to share the pictures and their experiences with friends. I was raised a Lutheran, but was also brought up to have an open mind and believe, like the Hindu philosophy, that all religions are good and merely take different paths to the same God. I

embraced the significance of the seven steps and thought the ceremony was very spiritual and meaningful. It was a day Tunu and I and our families will remember for years to come.

During my trip to India and visits to Blacksburg, people often remarked how well I adjusted and fit in with the Indian community. Some even joked, asking me if I was sure I wasn't Indian in a previous life! All I can say is that your community made it easy for me by reaching out to me, and making me feel loved and accepted.

Overall, I embrace the Hindu culture... its philosophy and emphasis on family. I have learned a lot from it and think other Americans could also. If you were to ask me what aspects of the culture I struggle with, I would say I grapple with the emphasis on materialism which seems contrary to the principles of the Hindu philosophy. I also find the division between men and women to be overly stringent, and have difficulty understanding why men and women show each other so little affection. Although I certainly think there should be obvious limits on public affection between the sexes, I think it is healthy for children to grow up witnessing an open, loving relationship between their parents.

I would be lying if I said there weren't misunderstandings and trying times for Tunu and I along the way, there were many, but we learned from them and our union grew stronger. The best advice I could give anyone is to do your best to be compassionate and to try to put yourself in the other person's shoes, and treat them how you would want to be treated.

I don't believe anything in life happens by accident. I know God brought Tunu to me, and me to him, and our families to each other. We plan to strive to give our children the best of both worlds. It is our hope that in doing so, we will help bridge the gap between cultures, and do our part to help heal the world.

*Julianne Misra is an Emmy Award Winning Television News Producer.
She and her husband, Tunu Misra, live and work in Boston, MA.*

What Does It Mean To Be An Oriya-American?

Somesh Dash

Gujarati-Americans, Punjabi-Americans, Tamil-Americans,...Oriya-Americans? The title itself seems a bit foreign. When a fourth-generation Indian American describes the way his ancestors first came to North America to work on building railroads across British Columbia, I feel a bit baffled. Most of our parents arrived here in the late sixties and early seventies to pursue their education. I do not have very much to say about the way my parents came to the United States. It is similar to most other Oriya parents. There is something, however, that separates the Oriyas from the rest of the Indians. To be honest, most of the Oriya-Americans are not able to pinpoint what separates the culture of their ancestors from any other Indian group. I too am part of this faction. The quest for our uniqueness ultimately boils down to the every day aspects of our lives that we take for granted.

Part of the problem in being recognized as an Oriya-American is the ignorance presented by other groups, especially Indians, towards the existence of Orissa. It takes time to explain that Orissa is a state, not a city, and has a distinct language. When I was younger, I knew nothing about the history of Orissa and would feel ashamed when I could not tell other people about it. My explanations to curious inquisitors are now two fold. I first explain that the art, music, and dance are unique. I then extol the virtues of the sea merchants of Orissa who traveled as far as Malaysia and Indonesia and developed a unique culture there that even today fascinates me. The Bali Yatra is evidence of merchants leaving Orissa and their relatives

wishing them a safe journey. Nowadays, I find other Oriya children being as fascinated by this phenomenon as the other children in my school. My personal goal is to convince other Oriya children that their heritage is not outshone by any other culture and to take pride in the bravery of their ancestors.

Recently, I went through an experience that reiterated my connection with Orissa. My history teacher was listing off common English words and their roots. When he mentioned the word Juggernaut, something came over me. He defined the word as, "One who wields an immense power". He also remarked that the word's origin was "Jagannatha, from Sanskrit". The image of Ratha Yatra (the Car Festival), which I had witnessed only a few months before in Puri, came to my mind. I saw the huge Lord Jagannath, mounted onto a chariot, and thousands of people flocking near him to receive his *darshan*. It was this power that made Ratha Yatra unique. Nowhere else in the world do 700,000 people congregate to witness an ancient idol being displayed. This is the true magic of Lord Jagannath. His silent call is powerful enough to bring people from everywhere in the world to his side.

Culture is not something you suddenly learn or acquire from outside. It is a way of life, a set of values you grow up with, and a continuous observation of its unique characteristics and subtleties. As someone said, "What lies behind you or ahead of you is nothing compared to what is inside you".

Somesh Dash, son of Jnana Ranjan and Sweta Padma Dash, is a high school senior in San Jose, CA. This essay was awarded the first prize in the national essay contest for high-school students at the 27th Annual OSA convention in Washington, DC, in July, 1996.



The Indian in Me

Sukanya Misra

I was asked by Srikanta uncle to write an article on "What does it mean to be an Indian?" "I guess it's just being me," I said. That answer just wasn't good enough for my mother, so she made me give up some of my precious reading time to write an article. "Sheesh-Kabab!" I said to myself, "Elena's mom would never make her write an essay in the summer!" Still, I wanted to please my mother (is this part of being an Indian?), so I pondered over the question. Nothing good, however, came to my mind.

A few days later, as I was complaining to my mother about having to do dance practice, it occurred to me, "Isn't this a part of being a second-generation Indian growing up in America?" I do many things solely because of my Indian heritage. I learn *Bharata Natyam*, *Hindusthani* music, eat *Bhata*, *Dali*, and *Tarkari*, go to the temple, to India.

I don't like going to the temple regularly - it takes too much precious time away from reading. Still, when I do go, I marvel at the beauty. I like doing *puja* - it fills me with a sense of peace. Still, when I am in the midst of a long phone conversation with Elena or Aundrea, it is rather trying when my mother says, "Do your *puja* NOW!" But then, I can do my *puja* anytime and anyplace. My American friends have to go to church every Sunday.

A big part of my life is not having enough time. I would like to learn more Oriya, a little Bengali, some Hindi, and definitely conversational French and Spanish. There are plenty of people to teach me, but where is the

time? I was also hoping to indulge in ice skating, writing, and, of course, reading, and slumber parties this summer. I can't do much of these because I am on a swim team that takes some of the time and I'm taking a summer course that takes all the rest of my time. The summer course is extremely intense. It is for six hours every work day for eight weeks. No one forced me to go to this. In fact, I admit a bit shame-faced that I am excited about learning engineering, logic, and computer language in this camp. My mom says, "That's the Indian in you." Some of my non-Indian friends also keep very busy, and their parents have high expectations of them. We aren't that different. I just do things from two cultures, that's all.

A fun (and educational!) part of being an Indian is an overseas vacation every year. I love going to India. Almost all of my relatives live there. I have enjoyed attending functions like *brata ghara* and *baha ghara* that are so elaborate. Among the festivities I like are *prathamastami*, which is a celebration for the oldest child, and *kumar purnima*, which is a function for unmarried girls only.

I feel that the Oriya culture is unique and I am proud to be an Oriya. I hear about "striking a balance" between two cultures. I don't know why, for I am really more Indian in many ways than some of my cousins who are growing up in India. I don't get confused going back and forth between my two cultures - it's just part of my life. To me, being a second-generation Indian growing up here in America, being Indian just means being me.

*Sukanya is the daughter of Lalatendu and Tapasi Misra from San Antonio, TX.
She is going to be in the 7th grade in Coke Stevenson Middle School in the fall of 1997.*



Letter to Aai

Joya Sahu

January 13, 1997

Aai,

I can't believe this. This is my worst nightmare. I've always known this day would come, but never so soon. I always thought that it would be many years from now. You were so full of life. You were the most beautiful person and the most photogenic. Oh, how I loved dressing you up and taking pictures of you.

I'm sorry about the first month that you came, and I didn't sleep with you. I'm sorry how I took you for granted during those last months before you went back to India. I'm sorry I never mailed the pictures that I knew you were eager to see. I'm sorry I never mailed the little purse that you told me you wanted because the other one I gave you was too big and bulky for India. I'm sorry I didn't paint your nails more or '*cheepi your goda*' one more time. I'll never forget how Priya and I used to put ben-gay on your legs and tickle you until you ran for the bathroom. I'm sorry the '*chad*' was too '*pania*' or had too much '*dudha*' in it. I'm sorry for all those times that I got mad at you. I'm sorry I never finished the letters I had started and didn't mail the ones that I had already written.

I remember how I always used to talk about my '*bahaghara*' and you'd always say, "*Aga patha padha, tapare bahaghara katha chinta karibu!*" I remember all those nights you woke me up because your leg cramps. I remember how you never minded if I stretched my legs onto your side of the bed. I remember encouraging you to wear your sari like all young people did, and so you did because I asked you to.

I remember telling you about all the boys and movie stars I had crushes on. I remember you always had a different recipe for me and Sony to put on our faces for our '*branas*'. I remember the first time I put mousse on your hair because you always had this one patch of hair that absolutely refused to stay down. You were refusing to put it

on, but when the miraculous effects of the mousse became clear, you complained no more.

I loved taking pictures of you. You were the most photogenic person I knew. Every picture turned out to be a great picture. It was so much fun putting makeup on you and then making you pose like a movie star - outside, inside, in my room, with a peacock feather, by the flowers... Last summer when we were in India, you were always playfully complaining that I took too many pictures of you. Now all I have left are those pictures and the memories of the time we spent together.

This time in India, now that I think about it, you talked as if you knew. You always talked about death before, but everybody always dismissed it as one of your hang-ups. But this time, as we said our heartbreaking good-byes, you really meant it! And though I tried to convince you otherwise and tried to tell you that I would see you next summer, you knew it wasn't going to happen. That picture of you and me as we said good-bye is on my dresser. I look at it and think back to that moment when I realized that you weren't coming to the airport with us. I had thought you were coming because you always came. Always... Maybe that was a sign. I made you get up, and I gave you a big hug as the tears streamed down both of our faces. Did you know that was good-bye?

I remember the softness of your skin, the sweet smile, and the strong spirit that was so gentle and loving. I remember laughing over how the jeweler, despite my many instructions, ended up making me old-fashioned ear chains exactly like yours. I wish I could say, "I love you" just one more time. I wish I could tell you that you meant everything to me. If I could hold you, '*cheepi your goda*', or even make '*chad*' for you. The fact that I'm never going to see you again is something that is constantly on my mind. I love you so, so much. I look through the photo albums every chance I get. Last night I couldn't study, so I took two of your pictures and put

them in my wallet, so that during my exams, I could look at your beautiful, loving face and have you near me.

Now, six months later, the small purse still sits in my closet, waiting for you. The pictures still wait to be looked at. Every now and then, I start to tell Ma to call India so I can talk to you, but then I remember that you're not there. There was this picture of you and Ma that I gave to her for

Mother's Day. She started crying, and I did too. If you came this summer like we had all planned, then you could've seen it too. It's still the little things that upset me now. It's hard losing your most favorite person in the whole wide world because each time it hurts just the same as it did the first time. I just wanted to let you know that I love you, and I always will.

Joya

Joya Sahu, an eleventh grader from Athens, AL, is the daughter of Bhagabat and Pushpalakshmi Sahu. She wrote this letter shortly after the untimely death of her maternal grandmother, Shrimati Jitanmani Sahu.



"IT IS WELL TO GIVE WHEN ASKED BUT IT IS
BETTER TO GIVE UNASKED THROUGH
UNDERSTANDING," ...*Kahlil Gibran*

Our Heartfelt gratitude and thanks for all the support
from OSA members.

BASUNDHARA
Bidanasi, CUTTACK.

My New Job

Neela Misra

"Because I said so, and I'm the mother!" Those were the final words in an argument that began with "Why do I have to take a computer class?". Mom was convinced that not only would I need computer experience, but that I'd actually like computers. I disagreed, but Mom held her ground. So the first day of my junior year of high school I found myself sitting in a Fortran class counting the long minutes until lunch.

If someone would have told me that computers were going to be a major part of my life for the next fourteen years, I never would have believed them. And if they would have told me that I would also give up a challenging and financially rewarding career with computers to take a job with longer hours, lower pay, and sometimes impossible demands, I would have thought they were crazy.

Although the first few weeks of that Fortran class were difficult, I ended up enjoying my computer classes in high school and I spent four years at Indiana University of Pennsylvania majoring in computer science. I also took a six-month internship at Allegheny Power Services in Greensburg. After I graduated from college, I accepted a position in the information services department at Allegheny Power.

I had thought my job would involve mostly programming, but, as the years went by, I seemed to spend more time running meetings, organizing projects, and delegating assignments to other people and less time actually programming. Although I sometimes enjoyed that work and knew that it was part of the fast track to the top, I realized that I missed programming. So I moved to a new department. In this new department, I had the opportunity to program as well as write manuals, teach classes, and even create my own software product. But this department was disbanded during a 'reorganization' a few years later and I found myself back in the information services department. When I returned to information services, something strange happened. First of

all, I felt sick a lot of the time. Secondly, I was gaining weight at a rapid pace. And thirdly, I realized that being a programmer analyst in the information services department at Allegheny Power Service Corporation was not my ideal job. So I spent the next nine months preparing for a major career change.

On April 23rd of this year, my career change was made official in my mind because that was the day my son, Andrew, was born. I think that I always knew I would stay home to raise my child. What I didn't know was how demanding and exhausting this job would be.

I work long hours and I'm on call during the day and at night. My boss uses negative reinforcement to make his point - if things don't go his way, he yells, screams and even cries. Yet he doesn't even speak the language, so I can't always be sure what my assignment is or what the problem is. And nowadays, even when he knows what the problem is, he doesn't necessarily want to be involved in the solution. For instance, he'll be so tired he can hardly keep his eyes open but he refuses to sleep. I can actually spend an hour trying to get him to take a forty-five minute nap. Is it worth it? Is any of this worth it?

I wondered about the answer to this question, especially for the first four weeks of my son's life when it seemed like he cried, ate, slept, and cried, and had no idea who I was. But then, when he was about four weeks old, he actually looked at me and SMILED! Twice! Well, after that I was hooked. I would make any stupid face, sing any silly song to get that kid to smile again. And as time goes by, each little milestone makes me more and more confident that the answer to the question "Is it worth it?" is a resounding YES. It is definitely worth it. It is worth it to see that first smile, to hear the first ah-goo, to be the first one to notice that first tooth, to hear the first uncontrollable laugh... Granted I spend most of my day talking to someone who has no clue what I'm saying and has no appreciation for

how much my life has changed since he got here, but for me, this has undoubtedly been the best career move I have ever made.

I'm sure that when he gets older I will want to re-enter the workforce, and I doubt that 'stay-at-home mom' will be at the top of my resume. But since I've had this job, I've become an expert at time management because I have very little time of my own, I've become better at making decisions because I don't have time to change my mind, and I've become more sensitive to other people's needs because that's 90% of my job. And, of course, I can carry four grocery

bags, a purse, a diaper bag, and an eighteen pound child all at the same time (and chew gum!). Prospective employers probably won't appreciate the value of my stay-at-home experience, but they should. And despite the impact this decision will make on my career, I'll always remember something my dad once said - 'No one ever looks back on their life and says 'I wish I would have spent more time at work'.

My new career is costing me money, time, and earning potential. But I'll never regret it, because it is, for me and my family, the most important job in the world.

Neela Misra lives in Monroeville, PA.



Once a small curious boy saw a tall ugly woman standing on a busy street corner. He said to himself, "She looks like a nice lady. I think I will go up to her and ask if she needs something."

The street was quite a busy one, with lots of fancy cars and big trucks passing by. The kind boy grasped the lady's cold arm with his left hand. Then he said with a scary smile on his face, "Let's go. Come with me. I will help you across this busy street." He held up his right hand to stop the raging traffic and then led the weird woman across the street.

Once on the other side, he let go of her arm and then said in a low voice, "Is there anything else I can do for you?" The lady looked at him strangely and answered, "Yes. You can take me back across the street. You see, young man, I was waiting for a bus over there!"

The moral of this strange story is, don't do unnecessary things!

Sanjay Rath (Age 11)
Stafford Middle School, Stafford, AZ

A Page from History

Sura P. Rath

If we share the American writer Emerson's view of history as the lengthened shadow of a man, we may read the history of our culture as a collection of the personal tales of individual people. For the pleasure reading of our Oriya youth as well as for their understanding of a living culture that will forever remain distant, even alien, to their perspective toward the world around them, here is a story of a person I know very well, whom I have learned to emulate only with partial success. His story is a small piece of fabric on our culture quilt.

The year was 1915. A boy from the remote village of Gopinathpur in Puri district was a freshman at the famous Satyabadi Bana Bidyalaya (Satyabadi High School) in Sakhigopal. The Bana Bidyalaya was a special school with a distinct mission. Located near rural Sakhigopal, halfway between Bhubaneswar and Puri, it focused on teaching students in the native tradition. Yet, besides learning to read and write in Oriya and Sanskrit, and to do arithmetic, students here studied English language and literature as well as modern science. All subjects were taught to encourage students to think independently rather than to train for lucrative clerical jobs under the colonial rule. It was part of a grassroots organization whose goal was to prepare an educated work force that would help spread Gandhi's principles of non-violence and freedom to the youth around the state. Its graduates were expected to go into teaching careers, and spread the philosophy and ethics of Satyabadi education all over the state. As a training ground for strong nationalistic pride combined with open intellectual inquiry, it was as close to a Platonic academy in twentieth-century Orissa as possible.

It had been established by Pandit Gopabandhu Das; its faculty included some of the distinguished Oriyas of the time: Pandit Godavarish Mishra, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Acharya Harihara, and Acharya Kripasindhu, all scholars in their individual fields and, more

important, fiercely independent thinkers. The school was in a sylvan setting, and the classes were held under the fragrant blooming "baula" trees. This young man had been recruited to study there personally by the poet and patriot Pandit Godavarish Mishra of Banpur, who had his own vision of establishing a high school in his native Banpur.

The plan was for him to graduate from high school in 1918, then go on to Ravenshaw College for two years of studies in science and mathematics, and then proceed to Banaras Hindu University for a bachelor's degree in science. Scholarships for both Ravenshaw College and BHU had been promised by Pandit Godavarish, and after graduation he was to return to Banpur to a teaching position at the Godavarish Vidyapitha.

In 1915, a college education in English was an exceptional achievement for a young man from a traditional family. English was the sahib's language, and the degree meant a job in an office, good salaries, but most of all power and privilege. The potential for family income raised many hopes among the members of his extended family. There were also fears that an English education would separate the youth from the culture and tradition of the family, that he might fall in love with someone outside the caste. The system called child marriage was one way for the family to avoid this separation: boys were given in marriage even before the girls reached puberty. Marriage was a social responsibility, a debt one paid back to the family and the community.

This young man's family was no different. His extended family included his father, a retired priest with a small income from agricultural land handled by sharecroppers, and an elder brother, an elementary school teacher. Early next year, in a letter dated 1/25/1916, the elder brother wrote to him saying that a bride had been arranged for him and that he should return home to get married.

Following is the reply the young man wrote to his brother:

[Copy of letter sent by registered mail to "Bhaina" (elder brother) on 29/1/1916]

To Esteemed Brother
With the deepest regards
Respected Sir:

I have received your letter dated 25/1/1916. From it I came to know the details about marriage. However, before marriage I would like to know whether or not you will provide me with Rs. 7.50 (Rupees seven and annas eight) per month for my studies. I hope to get your reply to this request before 2/2/1916.

Satyabadi	{	Yours obediently,
29/1/1916	{	Gobinda

Besides the obvious reference to the monthly cost of living at Satyabadi Bana Bidyalaya (there was no tuition, only living expenses) at seven rupees and a half, about twenty cents by today's exchange rate, what is revealing in this concise letter is its direct focus on the subject. The young man acknowledges a preceding correspondence from the elder brother, a letter that must have mentioned the marriage plans arranged by the family for him, but makes no commitment, instead, he forcefully asks the

brother for the educational expenses, a subject that might have appeared in previous correspondence, and requests a reply by a specific deadline allowing only three days of interval. In striking contrast, however, the demanding voice is softened by the great respect with which the elder brother is addressed, and by the polite manner in which money is requested. The letter also speaks well of the reliable postal system at the time.

The young man did receive the living allowance requested in this letter, and also married the girl the family had selected for him. Later, he went on to study at Ravenshaw College, but the BHU plans had to be canceled because of Gandhi's call for political action. Turning down several job opportunities with the British government, he began a career in teaching math and science at Godavarish Vidyapith, a school modeled after Satyabadi and often called the Banpur Bana Bidyalaya, where he experienced the fury of local "scientists" for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution.

Later, in his home town of Balugaon he helped establish a high school, where he taught as an honorary math teacher, and a girls' middle school, where he served as the honorary headmaster. One might say history repeated itself as he did for others what his teachers had done for him half a century earlier.

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at Louisiana State University in Shreveport.*



World War I (1914-18) ended at last ... a bitter sense of humiliation and a passionate anger filled our people ... like derelicts, frantically seeking some foothold of security for body and mind and finding none, they floated aimlessly in the murky waters of Indian life ...

And then Gandhi came. He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths; like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes; like a whirlwind that upset the working of people's minds.

- Jawaharlal Nehru (Discovery of India, 1945)

The Withering of a Tongue : Chilika After a Half-Century

Lalu Mansinha

The National Highway from Bhubaneswar snakes between the two hills known as Mamu-Bhanaja (Uncle-Nephew). From there we get a glimpse of Chilika lake, the inspiration of so much poetry in Oriya. The blue waters of Chilika sparkled in the sun, matching the colour of the sky, in contrast to the burnt earth tones of the hills. A few sail boats and fishing boats dotted the water. Sea gulls hovered overhead. My brother Lalit, sister Nivedita and I were on our way from Bhubaneswar to our ancestral village, Nandala, at the southern end of Chilika lake. Nandala is the village where Bapa (Mayadhar Mansinha) was born; as was his father and his father's father.

Nandala, cradled between Chilika on one side and the Bay of Bengal on the other, formed part of the landscape of my childhood, some half a century and more ago. In addition to the visual beauty, there was the memory of the sounds of Nandala, of the soft swish of the wind blowing through the needles of the casurina evergreen forests and of the muffled roar of the sea breaking on the sandy beaches some distance away. In my youth Nandala was a place to while away the vacation, walking around on the sand, trekking to the sea shore, watching the fields being plowed, the crops being harvested. For us children Nandala was a place where we were smothered by love and affection by Apa, Bapa's older sister. She had the softness and gentleness that was much like Bapa's. Apa doted on us as she had no surviving offspring of her own. Above all, Nandala was the place where Bapa, the orphan, was enfolded and nurtured by the joint family to become what he became.

The Oriya, as spoken then in Nandala, would send us children into fits of laughter, because of differences in phrases and accents from the Oriya we were used to. With time, as we grew up, we began to appreciate the uniqueness of the phrases and the flavoured accent. Little did I realise then how evanescent that accent would turn out to be and how I would mourn its passing. The 'Withering Tongue' in the title of

this account is in reference to the dying of a dialect, and with it, the demise of a way of life and a subculture, that had survived 300 years of British rule, but could not survive 50 years of Indian independence.

In the days of my youth Nandala appeared to be a thousand miles from Sambalpur, in a different, magical land. The trip always started at night, with us standing by the bus with a mountain of luggage: earthen water carriers, bamboo food hampers, large hold-alls with bedding and heavy metal trunks. Under the watchful eye of Bou (my mother, Hemalata Mansinha) every piece of luggage was counted and recounted and loaded onto the top of the bus. We traveled the bus to Meramandli railway station, where we waited for the Talcher-Puri Passenger, in the early hours of the morning. We got off at Khordha station around noon and caught a train going towards Berhampur, getting off at Rambha on the shores of Chilika in the evening. Everyone was so tired after the overnight trip that we usually spent the night at Rambha.

For most of the year Nandala was approachable only by boat. On one trip our boat was caught by a sudden, violent storm. As the boat was tossing around in the waves Bapa made the boatman promise that he will save the baby boy (me) and take him to Nandala. We all survived the storm but after this experience the family always traveled by bullock cart from Rambha.

The regular bullock cart used in the village to haul things was modified as a passenger vehicle for the Mansinha family. A canopy made of a wood frame with a woven bamboo covering was placed on top and bundles of straw were thrown in. The straw had a double purpose. It was the fuel for the bullocks as well cushions for the ride. After years of wear and tear the hole in the wheel becomes much bigger than the axle, giving a wobbly ride regardless of the road quality. In addition, Orissa bullock carts have no springs. Even at the low plodding speed of the bullocks, anyone sitting on the cart was

bounced against the hard bottom, side and top of the cart. The cart ride was not only uncomfortable, it was painful. I usually preferred to walk the ten miles or so Nandala.

The difficulty of getting to Nandala contributed to its air of isolation. The outside world barely intruded into Nandala. During the times of my childhood, the Second World War raged, and there were wartime shortages in Orissa, of kerosene to light lamps, petrol to drive buses and trucks and of spare parts for vehicles and machinery. Nandala felt no shortage of anything, because there was nothing in Nandala that required any of those. In the entire village there was no vehicle, machinery, radio, telephone, electricity, bicycle etc. This was just a few years before Indian independence after 300 years of British rule. Yet many vegetables of the New World, introduced into India by the European traders, were absent in village cooking. The staples of Indian cooking elsewhere, tomatoes and potatoes were missing from the Nandala diet. Another foreign vegetable, the lanka (hot chilly pepper), had arrived, but not in full measure. Chilies were not a significant component of village cooking.

The food in Nandala was a true special feast, out of this world. There was this fresh and bountiful produce from the land and the lake. We had our fill of fish, fish roe, dried fish, prawns and shrimps. The giant Chilika crabs are the tastiest anywhere. Meat was rare. I do not recall ever eating chicken in any form in Nandala. The dahi (yogurt) of the village had a very special taste. And Apa made this delicious aarisa pitha out of rice, pure ghee and guda that lasted forever without any preservatives, even in the heat. This was my junk food as a teenager and I must have consumed tons of aarisa pitha. We ate ripe cashew fruit off the tree. When cashew is roasted in the shell it oozes a corrosive oil and we were warned not to touch the roasted cashews. But Apa always split some for us kids. The taste of fresh shell roasted cashew was a delight. The cashew oil was used to lubricate the axles of the bullock carts.

There was an Old Nandala, where Bapa was born. The floods that accompanied a cyclone in the early 1940's caused total devastation and it

was decided to rebuild the village on slightly higher ground, about a half mile away. My memory is of the mud walls and thatched roofs of the New Nandala. The entire area was sandy, much like a beach, and sand was everywhere. By nine o'clock the sand was too hot for me to walk on, though the locals had developed the ability to walk on the hot sand.

Most Oriyas of my father's generation had an emotional attachment with the village and in their hearts never really left the village. The bond with the ancestral village was many-stranded. Only one or two bright or enterprising individuals out of an entire village would be fortunate enough to get an education or get salaried employment outside. For the vast majority of Indians who managed to get a position with the government, life was tough. It was impossible to live on the measly salary. One consequence was a vast flow of harvested rice, pulses (dals and lentils), flattened rice (chuda), cooking oil, sugar molasses (guda), dried fish, achar etc. from the ancestral village to sustain those Oriyas who lived in the towns and cities holding down government jobs. The emotional bond with the ancestral lands was immeasurably linked with the economic ties.

In those days Bapa was the only person from Nandala who went outside and had a decent job. In the eyes of our relatives in the village he must have appeared immensely wealthy, because he had cash in hand every month. In contrast, the wealth in the village was definitely not liquid, mostly in land and in jewelry. Nandala was not poor, but neither was there profligate wealth. Virtually all the houses were of mud, including the floor. The roof was of straw. Although money was recognised and occasionally used, most of the transactions were through barter. The sole resident school teacher did not get a salary. Instead, he was given free lodging in someone's house and an annual allowance of rice. Items common to us, such as sugar and soap, were rare.

A cholera epidemic had killed off my grandfather and my grandmother also died shortly after. The loss of both of his parents was not an immediate crisis. Bapa was raised by the his uncle. In this young orphan boy there was

that seed of genius of a future poet. Some inner urge directed him towards getting an education, at a time when illiteracy in Orissa was about 98%. The normal course of those who lived off the land was to help in the fields, learn to plow the soils with the bullocks etc. etc. Education was not relevant to life in the village. But Bapa went on to the nearest high school in Khordha, to Ravenshaw College in Cuttack, to Patna University in Bihar, and finally to a PhD from the University of Durham in England. But spiritually and emotionally the village remained part of the fabric of his life as long as he lived.

Nandala was, and is, primarily a village of khandayats, the warrior caste in Orissa. In peacetime they are farmers and landowners. In times of conflict they don the vests of war and go out to defend raja and country. I do not know when was the last time young men from Nandala fought a war. There were a large number of ancestral swords in our house and in every house in the village. Each sword was double edged and heavy. I could barely lift one, let alone strike a death blow against someone about to deliver me a deathblow. It is certain that my forefathers had more muscles than I. Every year we worshipped the sword. Generation back, the sword was lifted ceremonially by the eldest son of the family and a goat was beheaded. By the time it was my turn to carry on the family tradition, mercifully the real goat had been replaced by a virtual goat made of watermelon. Beheading a watermelon was a lot of fun.



A metalled road, the Parikud Highway, now runs from the National Highway through Palur, Nandala, Malud and onto Parikud Gard. With Lalit and Nivedita we passed Palur and I was eagerly awaiting my first glimpse of Nandala after 25 years. The car turned off the Parikud Highway into a sandy lane lined on both sides by casurinas and stopped in front of a small memorial to Bapa. In front was a brick and plaster house with a television antenna sticking out from the roof. We were led to sit on chairs, under a fan. The fans soon stopped due to a power outage. Nothing looked familiar except the sand. Even the sand had changed. I

remember tromping around pure clean sand. The sand on which I trod now looked dirty, and dusty. Tea was produced, with biscuits and mixture. Lunch came, with chicken curry. We were told that fish and prawns are hard to get and had to be purchased in the market in Malud.

Nandala has a cricket club and we were invited to be guests of honor at the regional cricket tournament the next day. At about ten o'clock we were led towards the cricket fields, right on top of the site of the Old Nandala, almost on top of the spot where Bapa was born. A crowd of about a hundred people accompanied us. A colourful pandal had been made, and a few food carts were selling snacks. A loud speaker repeatedly boomed out 'Lalu Bhai, Lalit Bhai, Welcome Welcome'. We were then seated on the pandal, and a speech of welcome boomed out over the speakers. Lalit spoke a few words, officially inaugurating the tournament. Then we were led to the center of the field and introduced to each member of the teams. So far it was easy. A bat and a ball was handed to me and Lalit. We now had to really get the match going. Neither of us are sports minded and have never been near any cricket field. Everyone was watching us. I chose to bowl. Lalit held the bat. I lobbed the ball. He made contact with the bat. Everyone clapped and the tournament was on.

Although I had been to Nandala so many times, I had not been to the nearby village of Malud, nor to Parikud Gard, where the Rajah of Parikud once held sway. In those days it was an arduous journey. Malud is now a bustling town, only half hour away by car. I was struck by the bevy of very fashionably dressed girls on one side of the road and village women on the other side. The explanation lay in the new college in Malud. Thanks to movies and television the youth of Malud are fashionably dressed. In fact they would merge right in with the students of their age in Delhi or Bombay.

The Nandala of today clashes sharply with the romantic memories of Nandala of my childhood. Gone are the delicious special foods. Gone are those unique flavours. But I miss most the loss of the dialect that had evolved due to isolation of Nandala. The language of the Nandala of today is the standard Oriya spoken in Cuttack and

Bhubaneswar. The distinctive phrases, the lilting intonations are gone. Even Bapa, the great writer that he was, would speak a local phrase that would send us children roaring with laughter. Now there is nothing to laugh at. The passing away of Bapa, and of Apa, marked the death of a generation, of a distinctive subculture and of a distinctive lifestyle.

There was a gathering of the people from the village to meet and chat with me, Lalit and Nivedita. Lalit and Nivedita knew everyone and chatted comfortably. Due to my long absence, I knew very little about local events, and simply sat silently, absorbing, listening. Finally someone requested me to say something. All he wanted to find out was whether, after my long sojourn in the West, I still remembered my mother tongue. I surprised him and others by speaking in Oriya of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. I did not speak about my shock and sorrow that he and others had lost their language, even though they had never left Nandala.

The school with the lone teacher paid by annual quota of rice has now been replaced by the Mayadhar Mansingh High School. A teacher came by at night and told me that he had heard that I was a scientist, a Geologist. Perhaps I could give a talk to his class on the Theory of Plate Tectonics. I was astonished. The theory was developed around 1970. The Nandala of my childhood had resisted all change during 300 years of British rule in India. In the Nandala of today people are in touch with the latest in fashion as well as in ideas.

I last visited Nandala for an hour or so, just to show Apa my daughters. That is my last image of Apa, caressing my arm, touching my daughters. I never saw her again. In the intervening years Nandala had entered the twentieth century, facilitated by the new highway, electricity supply and television. Nandala of my youth is now gone forever. With my demise even the memory of an older, gentler Nandala will vanish.

Lalu Mansinha is a Geophysicist at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada.

THERE ARE NO SECRETS TO SUCCESS. IT IS THE RESULT OF
PREPARATION, HARDWORK AND LEARNING FROM FAILURE.

— Author Unknown

Wishing Success to the...

28TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
Orissa Society of the Americas

From

*Jogewsar and Punubala Rath
Bismoy, Prataya, Panjay, Pushri*

My Roots

Suchit Dash

As I walk through the courtyard of my school, I see kids from different ethnic backgrounds such as Chinese-Americans, Japanese-Americans, Jewish-Americans, and Indian-Americans. Since I was born in the USA, I am considered to be an American, but my roots go back to India. In our school we have a program called "Roots and Wings". Our teacher told us that you have to have roots to grow wings. That means knowing our roots will make us strong so that we can grow wings to fly as high as we want.

The first time I went to India was in 1985 and I was one year old. I don't remember much, but the pictures we took give me a good idea of my family in Orissa. Since then, I have been to India and Orissa five times. Each trip has taught me more and more about Orissa. Even though I have been to several Indian states and cities, Orissa is very special to me. I would like to describe why.

The main attraction of Orissa is of course my family: grandparents, uncles, aunts, and tons of cousins. They make me feel like a king. I enjoy riding the scooter with my uncle to the stores to buy Pepsi. I feel so free in Orissa. I enjoy picking guava from the tree and eating it. Knowing Oriya helps me a lot to communicate with my cousins, my grandparents, and even the shopkeepers. I like to visit my grandparents house where my father was born and spent his

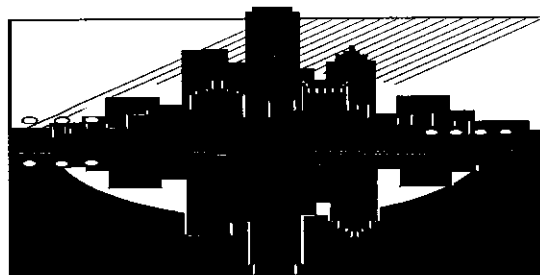
childhood. I also like to meet my mother's grandfather who turned 100 years old last year. I am only 89 years younger than him.

The other attractions of Orissa are the sights. I particularly enjoy Nandan Kanan which was designed by my grandfather. I like visiting Puri, the Jagannath temple, and the beach. During my 1995 trip, I also visited northern Orissa, places like Sambalpur, Hirakud, and Rourkela. I also had the opportunity to see the car festival, Rathayatra of Puri. Hundreds of thousands of people pulling the cart of Lord Jagannath was a unique sight, but a little bit scary.

After my return from Orissa, I miss it for a while. But we have many Oriya family friends here. We get together on weekends and we kids love to see each other. We had an Oriya language class for two years where we learned how to read and write Oriya scripts. In California we have an annual picnic of Oriya families and other events like the new year party. This gives me back memories of Orissa. The annual convention is another exciting place to meet new and old friends. I look forward to coming to the convention each year.

Knowing my roots makes me feel good about myself. I am proud to be an Oriya-American. I think my teacher is right - knowing my roots can help me face the world with confidence.

Suchit Dash is 13 years old and lives with his parents, Jnana Ranjan and Sweta Padma Dash, in San Jose, CA.



In Kashipur, Stargazing ...

Sarita Misra

I met you, Little One, months ago on a rugged mountaintop. Crying my eyes out in a village block. Feels like forever ago. The sight of you made me shudder with shame. I felt remorse, relief. Ah! To pity another, how comforting, and at the same time, inhumane. To see someone else suffering for a change.

The edge of your blue dress, tattered and sprayed with dirt from the red earth, the residue of yesterday. The infinite toil, the insipid sadness. Calcification spread so wide, it seeped through the cloth that fitted against your ashen skin. A cape of good hope for your battered soul. The soul of another season flirting with mildewed longing, flowing relentlessly through your veins; deep-seated, soiled through.

Brown orbits of hope are your eyes, light bleeds existence right through them. I behold you and weep. Shy eyes, sunk in, and swollen beside the lonely glow of the sole lantern. The flicker of that flame; so harsh and so bitter. You stand resolute, unashamed, and unfettered much like the growing hunger you know. That hunger creeps into your soul but cannot devour the love in your heart; deathless love which breathes dreams into you, unfolding, like a flower.

Time has passed since that night when the stars exploded with our laughter. I am back with my own. Shuffling wistfully down streets of despair. Moist, green lawns border asphalt and gloom. I watch silhouetted in the dawn. Lives of character and chaos have no place here. Here, we like to pretend. We weep silently, insulated in meek, brick prisons. From time to time, I hear your voice carried by the wind. I see you hope in the smile of a flower.

Others will think about you every once in a while. They will "tsk, tsk" over images of you in despair, dejected, downtrodden. They will show

up at the temple in their pretty saris. Gold earrings glaring. "*Hare Krishna, Hare Ram*".

We will rush into the emporiums of Delhi. Not to worry, Little One. We will clink whatever is left of our change into your wrinkled, outstretched hand. It makes us feel good to pity your strait and walk away, choking on complacency, self satisfaction.

I wanted to meet you, Little One, all alone, by myself. Not for a better job or access into institutions of "higher learning" or pseudo-intellectual circles (although I must confess, such thoughts did cross my mind). I wanted to see what life is for you. I wanted us to communicate with one another so that I could learn from you. Lessons learned from you, not filtered through the eyes and dreams of another.

Now I see things differently. So, much is still the same. And I don't feel lucky or thankful for the way I live. I feel embarrassed and ashamed. And I wonder why the disparity between us runs so deep, and *when* and *how* and *if* any of this might change.

Human nature takes delight in pitying you and this human nature has been witness to a violent, permanent despair; the kind you will never have to know. You are different from me. You glow. Your memory conjures up such beauty. I pray we meet again.

You gaze up at the sky at night.
You feel those bright stars blazing.
I am scared of stars these days.
They leave my ill heart craving.
The moment I beheld you
The world was still worth saving.
It's been months now
Since that chaste March night.
We stood together.
Stood stargazing.

Sarita Misra is a 1995 Journalism and Mass Communication graduate of the University of Georgia. In April 1997, she returned from a four-month stay in India, researching the activities of various NGOs. This article was inspired by her experience with the NGO Agragamee in Kashipur, Orissa.

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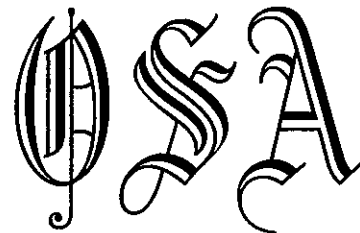
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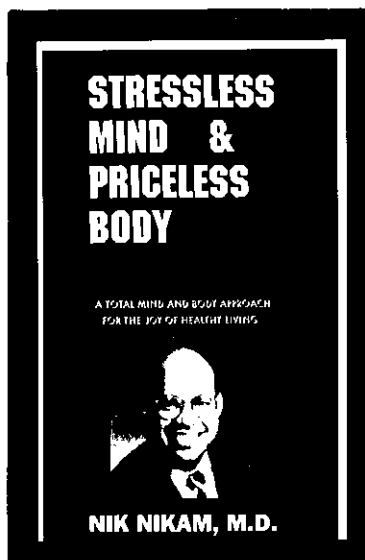
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NIK NIKAM, MD, FACC, FACP, DTM: Ink Nikam, a cardiologist, has been fixing broken hearts for the past seventeen years in Houston, Texas. Board certified in Internal Medicine and Cardiology, he is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians and the American College of Cardiology. He is also a clinical associate professor at the Baylor College of Medicine. Since coming to this country from India in 1973, he has made keen observations about people, life, liberty from illness, and pursuit of happiness which he shares with you in this book. Allow Ink Nikam, a member of the National Speakers Association and



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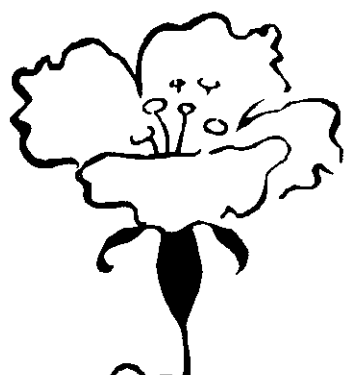
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*Women in
Our Society*

**By and about
women**

Family Conflict From a Woman's Point of View

Mamata Misra

Introduction

In a "Handbook of Proverbs of All Nations," a collection comprising many thousands, two facts are to be observed: first, that the proverbs concerning women are an insignificant minority compared to those concerning men; second, that the proverbs concerning women almost invariably apply to them in general -- to the sex. Those concerning men qualify, limit, describe, specialize. It is "a lazy man," "a violent man," or "a man in his cups." Qualities and actions are predicted of man as individually, and not as a sex, But of woman it is always and only as "a woman," meaning simply a female, and recognizing no personal distinction.

-- Women and Economics by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1898).

I have always thought of myself first a human being and then a woman. Therefore, what I am going to say today is primarily from a human being's point of view. My experience as a woman has given me some opportunities to understand the subject.

Nature of the Conflict

Conflicts are usually personal. Some are preventable and others are not. Some have happy endings and others don't. It is hard to generalize. In the past year, because of the nature of my work as a volunteer for the Center for Battered Women and *Saheli*, a support group for Asian women, I have been exposed to the conflicts many women experience in their lives within their own family. Their experiences vary and conflicts appear in different forms, but many seem to have a common thread. It is the conflict between a natural desire to be treated as a human being and being treated as something else - "simply a female." It is the conflict between being yourself and being a perceived gender role, an image someone else has carved out for you.

Most of us grew up in independent India, where the constitution defines how a human being in free India should be treated. This is specified in

various articles as fundamental rights and civil liberties. Let's examine some of these and ask ourselves whether Indian women enjoy these rights in their homes or are these fundamental rights often denied to women by members of their own family (both male and female) in the name of tradition. Instead of judging whether it is right or wrong to be traditional, please try to understand the questions and honestly evaluate them thinking of your mother, sister, daughter or daughter-in-law, yourself or your wife. I have used Madhu Kishwar's book "In Search of Answers" as reference for naming some of the fundamental rights and civil liberties.

Protection of Life and Personal Liberty (Article 21). Do women have personal liberty? Do families grant women the right to make their own decisions in matters of marriage, employment, and daily movements? Do girls receive the education and training to help them make such decisions? What about protection? Are lives of women protected within the family sphere? Why then do we hear about the burning brides and the high suicidal rates among young married Indian women?

Freedom of Movement (Article 19d). Does the woman in your family decide where she can or cannot go, with whom she can go, and when she must return? Do some husbands feel threatened if their wives go to places on their own? If yes, what is the source of this fear? Many mothers-in-law impose restrictions on the movements of their daughters-in-law. Why?

Right to Choose an Occupation and Pursue a Lawful Vocation (Article 19g). Do the women in your family have the freedom to choose the conditions of their occupation? Many families do not allow their women to work outside the house. Why?

Exploitation: ... against Forced Labour (Article 23i). Is a woman forced into unpaid labor within the family owned property because it is her natural duty? How many hours does she work? Does she get time to relax, rest?

Right to form Associations and Unions (Article 19c). Is she allowed or denied independent connections with people of her choice, relatives, friends, co-workers? Does she feel free to visit her parents as often as she wants or for as long as she wants? If not, why not? Why do some husbands feel jealous if their wives talk to anyone, even close female friends?

Right to Property (used to be under fundamental rights before an amendment). Do the female family members have independent control over their income? If not, why not? Are they allowed independent access to income-producing sources of property? How many women in India own land or houses in their name? Middle class families would rather give a large dowry to the in-laws illegally than give property to the daughters as they would to the sons. Why?

Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression (Article 19a). If the woman in your family feels violated, does she feel free to talk about it? Does your family shun her to silence in the name of family honor, respectfulness etc.? How often does a woman hold back her opinion because she thinks that it is not worth the price?

Denial of the Rights

We, Indians, show contradictions in our views towards women. On one hand, we worship female power and motherhood. On the other hand, we picture, raise, and treat our women as dependent and helpless beings. Why? Why does our gender, a mere attribute, play such a big role in our lives? From the time we are conceived (think of high-tech, gender-based selective abortion) to the time we die, why does our gender get in our way? Why don't we picture, raise, and treat our women as general human beings, and not as special cases?

Is it really because of tradition? Which tradition? What is our tradition? Indian history is so old and culture so diverse that one can pick any tradition one wants to suit his or her needs. There is a tradition of respecting others, of tolerance, of true education, of seeing the same attributeless essence of the universe called the Brahman or Atman in all beings and things. There is also a tradition of child marriage, of

exercising power and control, of oppression, of forced labor, of child labor, of dowry, of gender and caste divisions. Should one pick a tradition that contradicts the basic principles of freedom and human rights? For businesses to survive and do well, we quickly adopt new traditions. Why don't we do the same for the survival and well-being of the families, of society, of human race? Following a tradition, whether old or new, is not automatic, but a choice one makes in life consciously or unconsciously.

We understand and talk about our children growing up in a bi-cultural society here in the USA. But we may not have thought of women growing up in independent India in a bi-cultural society too. The environment consists of new values of freedom and human rights, and old values of glorification of servitude and bondage. If women have a common conflict, it is this conflict, the conflict between the expectations of servitude from others (both men and women) and their own expectations of freedom as human beings. If men do not have this conflict, it is because what others expect of them and what they expect of themselves match closely. Basic human rights have usually been granted to men by their families.

How Women Deal With Their Conflict

Why does a crane stand on one leg? Because if it lifted this leg also, it would fall. Why does the burden of marriage fall only on the woman? Because if she did not bear the burden, the institution of marriage would break down.

--The Riddle of Marriage by Kamla Bhasin.

Family conflicts that occur within an environment of mutual respect, in many cases, can be prevented or resolved by effective communication techniques, which one can learn and practice. However, when a conflict occurs due to a complete denial of basic human rights, it cannot go away magically. When one person uses his or her power to resolve a conflict, the conflict may be suppressed but is not resolved. Sometimes, one may conclude that the only way to solve a family conflict is by getting out of the family. However, many other aspects of life make it difficult to carry out such a solution. It is very important to understand the options one has. Often people can't see their options clearly.

Now-a-days, and especially in the USA, there is a lot of help available. Counseling helps one to understand the problem and see the options.

Often, the question of children comes up. Sometimes people stay in a conflicting marriage for the sake of the children. Sometimes one gets out of an abusive relationship for the sake of the children. Divorce of parents is hard for children. But living with violence can be harder. Many children who witness their fathers being abusive to their mothers do the same when they grow up. Similarly, many daughters-in-law who are abused by their mothers-in-law, abuse their

daughters-in-law. Women, who separate from a marriage, also go through a big transition to a new and unknown lifestyle. It is similar to what a woman goes through when her husband dies. Usually, the longer one has been in the marriage, the harder it is to separate, and the harder it is to adjust to the single life. Lack of money, earning skills, survival skills, confidence, and friends are initial hurdles. Women usually name faith in God, support from relatives and friends, professional counseling, help from support groups, job training and experience as things that help them overcome these hurdles.

Mamata Misra is a community volunteer involved in peer-counseling, legal advocacy, literacy tutoring, teen dating violence prevention and promoting healthy family relationships. She lives in Austin, TX, and works with non-profit organizations Center for Battered Women, Saheli, and Asian American Alliance. This article is based on a speech given by her at the 25th OSA Convention in New Jersey in July 1994.



In healthy relationships

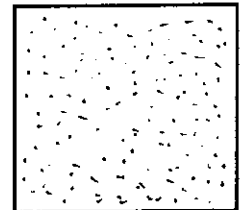
Your opinion is valued
You pursue activities of your choice
You get support for your goals in life
You share parental responsibilities
You make family decisions together
Your partner is willing to compromise
Feelings and opinions are expressed freely
Conflicts are resolved by communication.

In unhealthy relationships

You are humiliated and put down
You are told that you are crazy
You are treated like a servant
You are afraid of losing your children
Your partner threatens to leave
You are denied access to your family income
You are prevented from getting/keeping a job
Your actions and friendships are controlled
Angry looks or violent actions scare you
You feel guilty for your partner's anger.

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"The Loss of Sati Savitri?" : An Opinion

Liza Bhuyan

In the last decade or so, most Indian women who are moving into the U.S. after marrying men who have already lived here for a few years, are getting into schools to complete their higher education, getting professional degrees, and taking up jobs outside the home. And this growing trend is creating, perhaps not very noticeably, but nonetheless undeniably, a change in the dynamics of the Indian-American home, marriage and man-woman relationship. The Indian-American society is in the throes of a stage in family dynamics which the mainstream American society has possibly already passed. This change has given rise to vital questions regarding the various elements that are organically tied to family and home.

What had always been taken for granted in Indian marriages is no longer viewed as such. The perception of roles is changing. The traditional role of the man as the protector of family (and the earth?) and of the woman as the unassuming shadow, is no longer accepted as the inviolable norm. The woman's place is no longer limited to one where her own identity is surrendered to that of her husband, children, family. Family values, family ties, and duties are still very important to her, but she is now also able to perceive an important, identifiable, distinct place for herself within the institution of family.

That there is an emergence of a new awareness does not of course mean that the change is happily accepted across the sexes. The Indian man (much as he would like to claim otherwise in these days of political correctness) fondly cherishes the desire to identify his ideal woman in a *Sati Savitri*. But the truth is that the *Sati Savitri* ideal of womanhood is (and perhaps has always been) a myth. The real emigrant Indian wife, dividing her energy between

a husband (who is always upward bound on his professional ladder), a picture perfect home (which is a symbol of their success), her job (at which she is often successful, but has no time to think of it as such), children (who have to excel, be well-adjusted/"normal" individuals in an environment where they have to grapple with the biggest question - where do I belong, do I belong here?), has little energy left over to be or pretend to be a *Sati Savitri*. She does not have to contend with the question of whose side she would rather be in the Barbara Bush/Hillary Clinton skirmish. The Indian woman has assimilated both the roles of a cookie-baking homemaker and a successful career woman. Fighting over the issue is trivial.

The Indian man, however is left with a sense of loss, mourning the loss of the untouched *Sati Savitri* naiveté and sacrifice. And much of this mourning also focuses on how the influence of the decadent "western" values is causing this loss of the pristine Indian womanhood. Much thinking along these lines (on part of both men and women) is stereotypical. Myths and distortions about the influence of western values as what is causing these changes should be given up.

Men and women have to recognize that it is the woman herself who is emerging from a chrysalis, and that this emergence is only an inevitable stage in the growth of her own identity. She is not rebelling against the traditional role assigned to her; she is only asserting her newly-born individuality. Much as the pupa is amazingly but inevitably transformed into the beautiful butterfly, the transformation of the Indian woman is amazing, and yet, inevitable. We, the Indian women, have accepted this transformation; it is time now for the men to acknowledge and accept it.

*Liza Bhuyan lives in Auburn, AL, with her husband Jay Narayan and son Varun.
She is a Ph.D. candidate in the English department at Auburn University.*



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ରାଜୁ

ନୋଟିସ୍ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ ବାବୁ -- ଏଇ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ମାସ ପହିଲା ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଘର ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ନଚେତ..... ।

ନଚେତ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ସେ କୋର୍ଟର ଆଶ୍ରୟ ନେବେ -- ଏଇ ନୋଟିସ୍ ତାଙ୍କର କୌଣସି ଘର ଭଡାଟିଆ ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ନୁହେଁ ।

ଅବା କୌଣସି ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ସ୍ୱଜନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ନୁହେଁ ଯିଏ ସପ୍ତାହେ ରହିବ କହି ଗୁରୁମାସ ରହିଗଲେଣି ତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ ।

ନୋଟିସ୍ ଦିଆହେଉଛି ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜ ଧର୍ମପତ୍ନୀଙ୍କୁ । ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ ବାବୁ ରିଟାୟାର କରିବାର ପାଞ୍ଚବର୍ଷ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି ତି' ପୁଅ ଓ ଦି ଝିଅ ବାହା ହୋଇ ନାତିନାତୁଣୀ ହେଲେଣି ଅନେକ ଦିନୁ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ସେ ଅନୁଭବ କଲେ ଯେ ପତ୍ନୀ ଗୁରୁଶାଳାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଏକା ଛାତ ତଳେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାବରେ ରହିବା ଆଉ ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ ତାଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ -- ।

ଘର ଜଣକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ହେବ ।
ଘର ତାଙ୍କର ।

ଗୁକିରାରେ ଥିବାବେଳେ ସରକାରଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଲୋନ୍ ନେଇ, ପୈତୃକ ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି କିଛି ବିକି ବେଶ ଭଲ ଘର ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ ତିଆରି କରିଥିଲେ ସେ ନିଜେ -- ପ୍ରତିଟି ଇଟା ଯୋଡ଼ା ହେବାର ସେ ନିଜେ ଦେଖିଛନ୍ତି -- ଘର ତିଆରି ପାଇଁ ଗୁରୁଶାଳା ବା ତାଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ଆର୍ଥିକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ କିଛି ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି । କେବଳ ଦିନ ବେଳା ସେ ଅଫିସ୍ ଗଲେ ଗୁରୁ ଆସି ଛିଡ଼ା ହେଉଥିଲେ ମୁତ ଉପରେ ।

କେବଳ ସେତିକି ଛଡ଼ା ଆଉ କୌଣସି ଅବଦାନ ନାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କର ଏ ଘର ତିଆରି ବିଷୟରେ । ତେଣୁ ଏ ଘର ତାଙ୍କର । ଏକାନ୍ତ ଭାବରେ ନିଜସ୍ୱ । ଗୁରୁଶାଳାଙ୍କର କୌଣସି ଅଧିକାର ନାହିଁ ଏ ଘର ଉପରେ । ତେଣୁ ଯଦି ଜଣକୁ ଏ ଘର ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ହୁଏ, ତେବେ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ଭାବରେ 'ଗୁରୁ' କୁ ହିଁ ବାହାରିବାକୁ ହେବ ଏ ଘରୁ । ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ପହିଲା ଆଉଟି ଦେହମାସ ବାକି ।

ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସମୟ ଅଛି ତାଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ସବୁ ଭାବିଚିନ୍ତା ଠିକ୍ କରି ନବାକୁ । ତୁଇ ପୁଅ ତାଙ୍କର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବାହାରେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସରକାରଙ୍କର ପଦସ୍ଥ କର୍ମଚାରୀ । ପୁଣି ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ସମସ୍ତେ ଉଚ୍ଚପଦବୀରେ ରହିଛନ୍ତି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ଥାନରେ । ଗୁରୁର ଅସୁବିଧା କ'ଣ ଅଛି ? ବାହାଘର କେବେ ହୋଇଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର ? ଗୁଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ପୁରି ବେଶ କିଛିଦିନ ଗୁଲିଗଲାଣି ଯା'ଭିତରେ । ଏଇ ଗୁଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ସେ ଗୁରୁଶାଳାଙ୍କୁ କେବଳ 'ସହ୍ୟ' କରି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ଭଲ ପାଇପାରିଛନ୍ତି କି କେବେ ? କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁକି ଭଲପାଇ ପାରିନାହାନ୍ତି ତା'ର ଉତ୍ତର କେବେ ଖୋଜି ପାଇପାରିନାହାନ୍ତି ।

ସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟ ପରିବାରର ସୁନ୍ଦର, ସୁଶ୍ରୀ ଆଉ ମିଷ୍ଟଭାଷୀ ଝିଅ ଗୁରୁଶାଳା । ଛପନ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ବି ଦେହର ରଙ୍ଗ ସୁନାଭଳି ଝର୍କୁଛି ।

କୌଣସି ପୁଅ ବା ଝିଅ ଗୁରୁଶାଳାଙ୍କ ରୂପ ବା ରଙ୍ଗ ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାରୀ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଆସିନାହାନ୍ତି -- (ବେଳେବେଳେ ମନେହୁଏ, କଅଣ ସେ ନିଜେ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଦାୟୀ ? କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ କେବଳ ସାମୟିକ ଭାବନା) ବାପା, ମା, ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀ ଆଉ ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ସ୍ୱଜନମାନେ ଗୁରୁଶାଳାଙ୍କୁ ଅତି ମାତ୍ରାରେ ସ୍ନେହ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ସବୁଦିନେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ନିଜେ ?

ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱାକୃତି କ'ଣ କେବେହେଲେ ପାଇଛନ୍ତି ସିଏ ? ସ୍ୱାମୀର ସ୍ୱାକୃତି ନ ପାଇ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଗୃହରେ ରହିବାର ଅଧିକାର ତେବେ କାହିଁକି ରହିବ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ? ଗୁଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଆଗରୁ ଯାହା କରିବା ଉଚିତ ଥିଲା, ଅଥଚ ସେ କରିପାରି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ସେ କଥା ଏବେ କଲେ କ୍ଷତି କଅଣ ? ଇଂରାଜୀରେ କଥା ଅଛି *Better late than never* ରାସ୍ତା ଘାଟରେ ଏଇ ଲେଖା ଅନେକ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଲେଖାଥିବା ସମସ୍ତେ ଦେଖୁଅଛନ୍ତି - ତା କଅଣ କେବଳ କୌଣସି ଗତିଶୀଳ ଯାନବାହାନରେ ଯାଉଥିବା ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ? ଗୁଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ଯାହା କରିପାରି ନଥିଲେ ସିଏ ଆଜି ତା' କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଯଦି ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି କଲେ ତେବେ କ୍ଷତି କଅଣ ? ଲୋକଙ୍କ କଥାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଯାଏ ଆସେ କେତେ ? ଦୁନିଆରେ ଅନେକ କିଛି ଘଟୁଛି

ସବୁଦିନ ଏଇଟା ଏପରି ଗୋଟାଏ କଥା ବତ କଥା ? ଜଣେ ଅବସରପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ଉଚ୍ଚ ପଦସ୍ଥ କର୍ମଚାରୀ ତେଷ୍ଟି ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ନିଜ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ିପକ୍ତ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ସ୍ଥିର କରିଛନ୍ତି” ଏପରି ଗୋଟାଏ ସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟ ଖବରକାଗଜ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ବାହାରିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କେହି ଅତି ବିଚଳିତ ହେବେନି ଆଜିକାଲି ।

ସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିପକ୍ତ ଦେବାର ଅଧିକାର ଅଛି ସ୍ବାମୀର । ଆଉ ସେଥିପାଇଁ କୌଣସି ବୟସ ସୀମା ଧାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରାଯାଇ ନାହିଁ..... ତେବେ ଆଉ ବାଧା ରହିଲା କେଉଁଠି ? ନିଜ ଉପରେ ପ୍ରଗତି ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ବାସ ଅଛି ତାଙ୍କର । ଗୁରୁଶାଳା ଏ ଘର ଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଗଲା ପରେ ପରମ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ସେ ରହିବେ ଏଠି, ପ୍ରତିମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଏଇ ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟଭାବ ଆଉ ଶ୍ବାସରୋଧକାରୀ ବାତାବରଣରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ନିଃଶ୍ବାସ ନେବେ ସିଏ ସବୁଦିନ । ସୁନ୍ଦର, ଛୋଟିଆ ଲନ୍ଦଟିଏ ଅଛି ଘର ସାମ୍ନାରେ । ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳଟା ସେଠି ବସି ନିଜ ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ କଟେଇବେ । ଦିନବେଳା ନିଜ ଖୁସିରେ ବୁଲୁଥିଲେ କରିବେ । ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ହୋଟେଲ ଅନେକ ଖୋଲି ଗଲାଣି ସହରରେ । ଯେଉଁଠି ଯେତେବେଳେ ଇଚ୍ଛା ଖାଇବେ । ଏକ ସ୍ବାଧୀନ ଜୀବନ ଯାପନ କରିପାରିବେ ସିଏ ମାତ୍ର ଦେହମାସ ପରେ ।

ଦୁନିଆକୁ ଦେଖେଇଦେବେ ରିଟାୟାର କଲେ ଜୀବନ ସରିଯାଏ ନାହିଁ ।

ଜୀବନର ତିନି ଚତୁର୍ଥାଂଶ ପଛରେ ରହିବାପରେ ଆଗକୁ ଚାହିଁବା ପାଇଁ ଆଉ ଶକ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ଗୁରୁଶାଳାଙ୍କର । ଜୀବନ ସାରା ଘର ନିଆଁକୁ ପଶତ କାନିରେ ଘୋଡେଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରି କରି ଆଉ ପଶତ କାନି ବୋଲି ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ କିଛି ନାହିଁ ଶାନ୍ତର ଗୋଟାଏ ବିରାଟ ଘୋଡା ଜାଗା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଉପହାସ କରୁଛି କେବଳ । ନିଜର ଆତ୍ମ ସମ୍ମାନ ଟିକକ ନିଲାମ ହେବାକୁ ଯାଉଛି ଆଉ ମାତ୍ର ଦେହମାସ ପରେ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଏ ସମୟରେ ତାଙ୍କର ସବୁଠୁ ବଡ଼ ସାହସ ଦେଇ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅଭୟ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଥାଆନ୍ତେ, ସେମାନେ ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ତାରା ହୋଇ ଆକାଶରେ ରହିଲେଣି ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କର ଏ ବଞ୍ଚି ରହିବା ସାର୍ଥକ ହେଉଛି ବୋଲି ଯେଉଁମାନେ ସବୁ ଦିନେ ଭାବି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ସେମାନେ ଆଜି ନିରୁପାୟ । ପୁଅ, ବୋହୂ, ଝିଅ, ଜୋଇଁ ଆଉ ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜର ଏ ଦୟନୀୟ ଅବସ୍ଥା ପାଇଁ ଦାୟା କିଏ ? ଦୁନିଆ ହୁଏତ କହିବ “ସେ ନିଜେ ଦାୟା” -- କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁକି ? କାହିଁକି ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏତେ ନୀତି ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ଦେଖନ୍ତି ?

ଯେଉଁ ସମୟରେ ସେ ବାହା ହୋଇଥିଲେ, କେହି ଏମ୍.ଏ. ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବାହା ନ ହୋଇ ରହୁ ନଥିଲେ । ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ଆଉ କି ପାଠ ବା ସେ ପଢ଼ି ଥାଆନ୍ତେ । ଆଉ କେବଳ ସେତିକିକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ ଆଉ କୋଉଥିରେ କାହାଠାରୁ ସେ ନ୍ୟୁନ ଯେ ? ଆଜିଯାଏ ‘ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ’ ବୋଲି ନାଁ ଅଛି ପରିବାର ଭିତରେ -- ଦିନରାତି ଘରକାମ କରି ମଧ୍ୟ ରୂପରେ ଏତେ ଟିକେ ମନିନତା ଆସିନାହିଁ । ସବୁଦିନେ ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ କୃପଣ ଭାବେ ଚଳି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । କେବେହେଲେ ଘର କାମ କରିବାକୁ କେହି ନଥିଲେ । ଖାଇବା ପିଇବା ଗଲା ଆଇଲା ସବୁକିଛି ସବୁଦିନେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ହିସାବ କରି ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିବାକୁ ହେଉଛି । ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଅଫିସରଙ୍କର ସହଧର୍ମୀଣୀ ହୋଇ ମଧ୍ୟ ନିଜ ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ ଦିନେ ହେଲେ ମନଖୋଲା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିପାରି ନାହାନ୍ତି ସିଏ । ସବୁକିଛି ସହିଛନ୍ତି, ଚଳେଇ ନେଇଛନ୍ତି । କେବେ ଜୋର କରି କିଛି ଦାବା କରିନାହାନ୍ତି । ତାହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ଭୁଲ ରହିଲା କେଉଁଠି ? ଆଜି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏ ଘର ଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଯିବାକୁ ହେବ ? ସ୍ବାମୀର ଘର ଉପରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର କିଛି ଅଧିକାର ନାହିଁ ? ଅଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାକୁ ସାବଧାନ କରିବାକୁ, କୋର୍ଟ କଚେରୀର ଦ୍ବାରସ୍ଥ ହେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । କାଠଗଡ଼ା ଭିତରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ - ଅନେକ - ଅବାସ୍ଥିତ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଜବାବ ଦେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଘରର ସବୁ ମହତକୁ ଜଳାଞ୍ଜଳି ଦେଇ ସେ ପାଇବେ କଅଣ ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ?

ଏଇ ଘରେ କିଛି ଜାଗା ? ଆଉ -- ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ପେନସନ୍ ଟଙ୍କାର କିଛି ଅଂଶ ? ଛିଃ -- ଏତେ ନୀତିସ୍ତରକୁ ଓହ୍ଲେଇଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁକୁ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କରିନେବା ଉଚିତ ହେବ । ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ନୀତି ନାହାଣୀ, ଜୋଇଁ ଆଉ ବୋହୂମାନଙ୍କୁ ହସିବା ପାଇଁକା ଖୋରାକ ଯୋଗାଇବେ ଗୁରୁଶାଳା !

ଅସମ୍ଭବ --

କେତେଥର ରାଗି କରି ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ କହିଛନ୍ତି -- “ତମେ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରୁନ, ଯଦି କୁଆଡେ ଯାଇ ରହିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ନାହିଁ !”

କଷ୍ଟ ହେଉଛି ଶୁଣି -- ଭାଷଣ କଷ୍ଟ ହେଉଛି । ବାପା ବୋଉ, ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀମାନେ ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଛନ୍ତି । ଆହୁରି ବେଶା କୋହ ଉଠିଛି ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ଘରେ କାନ୍ଦିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିର ଲୁହ ପୋଛି ଦେବା ପାଇଁ କେହି ନାହିଁ। ବରଂ ବିରକ୍ତ ହେବେ ନିଜର ସ୍ବାମୀ। ଆହୁରା କହୁ କଥା କହିବେ। ଅନେକ ଥର ମନେ ହେଉଛି ଟିକ୍ -- ୨୦ ବା ସେମିତି କିଛି ଆଣି ଖାଇଦେଇ ଏ ବିଷାକ୍ତ ପରିବେଶଠାରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇବାକୁ। କିନ୍ତୁ ପାରିନାହାନ୍ତି।

କେତେଥର ରାଗି ଗୁଲି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ପୁଅ ବୋହୁମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ମାସେ ଦୁଇମାସ ରହିଲା ପରେ ପୁଣି ଫେରି ଆସିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଛି ନିଜ ଘରକୁ। କେଉଁ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଅନ୍ୟ କାହା ସଂସାରରେ ଗୌଣ ହୋଇ କେବେ ରହିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାକରେ ? ଫେରିବାର ପୁଣି ଅଳ୍ପ କିଛି ଦିନ ପରେ ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କର ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ବିରକ୍ତି ଭାବ ପ୍ରକାଶ୍ୟ ହୋଇଛି। ଅନେକ କହୁ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ? ଅଜସ୍ର ଅପମାନ।

ଜହର ପିଇ ନାଳକଣ୍ଠ ହୋଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ସିଏ। ସେ ଜହର ଏବେ ଆଉ କଣ ନାଳୀ ଦେଇ ତଳକୁ ଯାଉନାହିଁ।

ତାକୁ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାରେ ମାନସିକ ଭାରସାମ୍ୟ ହରେଇ ବସିଲା ପରି ଲାଗୁଛି ବେଳେବେଳେ ପୁଅମାନେ ଆଉ ଥରେ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି ଶେଷ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବାକୁ ନନାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ବୋଉ ଡରଫରୁ ଓକିଲାତି କରିବାକୁ ଝିଅମାନେ ବହୁଥର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରି ବିଫଳ ହେଲେଣି।

ବୋଉ ନ ଥିଲେ ଆମେ ଏଠିକୁ ଆସିବୁ କାହିଁକି ? ଆମର କଅଣ ବାପଘର ବୋଲି କିଛି ରହିବ ନାହିଁ ଆଜିଠୁ ? ସମାଜ ତମକୁ କଅଣ କହିବ ? ଏମିତି ମତିଭ୍ରମ ତମର ଏ ବୟସରେ ହଉଛି କାହିଁକି ?

ଏମିତି ସବୁ ଅନେକ ଆବେଦନ ଖାରଜ୍ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ କୋର୍ଟରେ ସେ ରାୟ ଦେଇ ସାରିଛନ୍ତି । ନିଜ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତିରେ ସେ ଅତଳ ଅତଳ। ଆଉ କାହାରି ଓକିଲାତିରେ ତିଳେ ହେଲେ ଏପଟ ସେପଟ ହେବେ ନାହିଁ ସିଏ। ଆଜି ଯଦି ତାଙ୍କୁ ତଥା କଥୁତ ଭଗବାନ୍ ଆସି ମଧ୍ୟ ନିବେଦନ କରନ୍ତି। ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଫେରିଯିବାକୁ କହିବେ। କାରଣ ସେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ବ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ବାସ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ। ସେ କୁହନ୍ତି ମଣିଷର ଭାଗ୍ୟ ସେ ନିଜେ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରେ। ସର୍ବନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରା ବୋଲି କେହି ନାହିଁ। ସବୁ ମିଛ -- ଦୁର୍ବଳଚିତ୍ତ ମଣିଷର 'ଭଗବାନ୍' ଏକ କାଳ୍ପନିକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ତାଙ୍କରି ଭିତରେ ଦୁର୍ବଳ ମଣିଷ ମାନେ ଖୋଜନ୍ତି ସାହସ ଆଉ ଶକ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯାହାର ନିଜର ଶକ୍ତି ଉପରେ ଅଗାଧ ବିଶ୍ବାସ ରହିଛି, ଯିଏ ନିଜ ବଳରେ ନିଜେ ବଳାୟାନ୍, ତା' ପାଇଁ ଏ ଭଗବତ୍ ପରିକଳ୍ପନା ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ ।'

ସୋଃଅହଂ --

ମୁଁ ନିଜେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଭଗବାନ -- ମୁଁ କାହାରି ଉପରେ କୌଣସି ଭାବରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ ନାହିଁ। ଆର୍ଥିକ ଆଉ ମାନସିକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ମୁଁ ସ୍ୱୟଂ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ -- ପୁଅ, ଝିଅ, ବୋହୁ, ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ଏମାନେ ସମସ୍ତ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ନିରର୍ଥକ । ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ--କାହାରି ସାହଚର୍ଯ୍ୟମୋର କେବେହେଲେ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ହେବ ନାହିଁ।

ଆଉ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ?

ସେ ହେଲା ଗୋଟାଏ ପରାଙ୍ଗ ପୁଷ୍ପ ପ୍ରାଣୀ। ଯେଉଁମାନେ ନିଜେ ରୋଜଗାର ନକରି କେବଳ ଅନ୍ୟର ଅଳ୍ପ ଧନ କରନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଉ କ'ଣ କୁହାଯିବ ?

ସବୁ ସହିଛନ୍ତି ଗୁରୁଶାଳା।

ସହିଛନ୍ତି କେବଳ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ : ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମଣିଷ କରିବା ପାଇଁ 'ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା' ବା 'ବିବାହ ବିଚ୍ଛେଦ' କୌଣସିଟାକୁ ବାଛି ନେଇ ପାରିନାହାନ୍ତି। ଆଉ ସେମାନେ 'ମଣିଷ' ହୋଇ ସାରିଲାବେଳକୁ ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବରେ 'ଅମଣିଷ' ହୋଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି। ହୃଦୟହୀନ, କଠୋର ଆଉ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଭୟଙ୍କର। ଯେତେଦୂର ସମ୍ଭବ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ଅଭିନୟ କରିଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଗୁରୁଶାଳା। ଜୀବନସାରା କାହାକୁ ନିଜ ଦୁଃଖ ଜଣେଇବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା କରିନାହାନ୍ତି।

କେବଳ ନିନ୍ଦା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ନିଜର ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ । ଲୁହ ଝରେଇଛନ୍ତି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଅଜାଣତରେ। ଅନ୍ୟ ସୁଖୀ ସ୍ବାମୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ନିଜ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଝଡ଼ ଉଠିବି ବାରମ୍ବାର। ନିଜକୁ ମନେ ହେଇଛି ରିକ୍ତ, ଅସହାୟ ଆଉ ଅସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ। ସ୍ବାମୀ ସୁଖ ନ ପାଇ କଅଣ କୌଣସି ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ଜୀବନରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତା ଆସିପାରେ ? ରୋଜଗାର, ଗୁକିରୀ, ପରିବାର, ଚେହେରା ସବୁଥିରେ ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ ସାଧାରଣ ଲୋକଙ୍କଠାରୁ ବେଶ୍ ଉଚ୍ଚରେ କହିବାକୁ ହେବ। ତେବେ ତାଙ୍କ ବୈବାହିକ ଜୀବନର ଗୁଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ କେବଳ ବୈଶାଖୀ ଝଡ଼ ବହିଲା କାହିଁକି ? ବସନ୍ତ ବା ଶରତର ଆଗମନକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି କରି ସେ ଆଜି କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ଅବସନ। ଆଜି ଶକ୍ତି ନାହିଁ କାହାପାଇଁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ। କାହିଁକି ଏମିତି ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ? ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର କିଏ ଦେବ ? ଯିଏ ଦେଇପାରନ୍ତା ସେ ନିରୁତ୍ତର, ନିର୍ବିକାର।

ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ପହିଲା ଆଉ ତିନି ଦିନ ରହିଲା -- ସବୁ ଆବେଦନ ନିଷ୍ଫଳ ହୋଇଛି -- ଆଇନର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ସେ

ନେବେ ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ସ୍ଥିର କରିଛନ୍ତି --

ଜନତାର ଦରବାରରେ ସବୁ ଓକିଲ ଓ ସବୁ ସାକ୍ଷୀ ତାଙ୍କ ସପକ୍ଷରେ ରହି ମଧ୍ୟ ସେ ହାରି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି, ବିଚାରପତି ନିଜ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତିରେ ଅଟଳ । ତେଣୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏ ଘର ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ପୁଅମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖେ କିଛି ଦିନ ରହି ଭାଇନାଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯିବେ । ତା'ପରେ ପଛ କଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବେ ।

ଏତେବେଳେ ସଂସାରରେ କଅଣ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଟିକେ ଜାଗା ମିଳିବନି ? ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ତ “ଟିକିଏ ଜାଗା”ର ନୁହେଁ !

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ନିଜର ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନର । “ନିଜର ଆତ୍ମ ସମ୍ମାନର” । ଜୀବନର ସାୟାହରେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଗୃହରୁ ବିତାଡ଼ିତ ହେବାର ‘ଅପମାନ’ର ସମାଜରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଟେକି ଚାଲିବାର ଅଧିକାରରୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ ହେବାର ଗୁଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଯାହା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ବିନ୍ଦୁ ଲଗେଇ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରବଞ୍ଚନାର -- ଏ ସବୁର ଜ୍ୱାଳା ଅତି ତୀବ୍ର -- ବୋଧ ହୁଏ ତାଙ୍କର -----

ହଠାତ୍ ଧଡ଼ କରି କ’ଣ ଗୋଟାଏ ଶବ୍ଦ ହେଲା ବାଥ୍‌ରୁମରୁ ଦୌଡ଼ି ଗଲେ ଗୁରୁଶାଳା ବାଥ୍‌ରୁମ୍ ଆଡ଼େ ଭିତରୁ ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ ଆର୍ତ୍ତ ଚିତ୍କାର କରୁଛନ୍ତି -- କବାଟ ଭିତର ଆଡୁ ବନ୍ଦ । ଏ ଖରାବେଳଟାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ପକେଇଲେ ବି ଶୁଣିବାକୁ କେହି କୁଆଡ଼େ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଗୋଟାଏ ଟେବୁଲ ଉପରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ପଛପଟେ ଥିବା ସ୍କାଇଲାଇଟ୍ ବାଟେ ହାତ ଗଲେଇ ପଛପଟ ଦୁଆରଟା ଖୋଲି ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଲେ ଗୁରୁଶାଳା । ଦେଖିଲେ ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ ବାବୁ ପଡ଼ିଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ତଳେ - ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ଭାଷଣ ଆଘାତ ଲାଗିଛି । ଦୁଆର ଖୋଲି ଏକା ଏକା ଧରି ଧରି ଆଣିଲେ ତାଙ୍କୁ । ଖଟ ଉପରେ ଶୁଆଇ

ଫୋନ୍ କଲେ ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କୁ । ଡାକ୍ତର କହିଲେ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାକୁ ନେଇଯିବାକୁ ଏକ୍ସରେ ପାଇଁ ବଡ଼ ଝିଅକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କଲେ ଗୁରୁଶାଳା - ସେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ରୁହେ । ଗାଡ଼ି ନେଇ ସେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ପରେ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ କୌଣସି ମତେ ନେଇ ଯାହା କିଛି କରେଇବାରେ ଥିଲା ସବୁ କରେଇଲେ ଗୁରୁଶାଳା ।

ଦି ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ହାତ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଛି ବୋଲି ଡାକ୍ତର ମତ ଦେଲା ପରେ ବୁଜ ପୁଅ ଓ ସାନ ଝିଅକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରି ଡକେଇଲେ ।

ଠିକ୍ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ମାସ ପହିଲା ଦିନ ଦି’ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ପ୍ଲାଷ୍ଟର କରି ଗୁରୁଶାଳାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଆତ୍ମଲାନସ୍ତରେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲେ ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ -- ଅତ୍ୟଧିକ କଷ୍ଟ ସହି ନପାରି ଦି ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ଝରୁଥାଏ ତାଙ୍କର ଅବିଶ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଗତିରେ -- ଗୁଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହ ଦେଖିଲେ ଗୁରୁଶାଳା -- ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ମନେ ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଜଣେ ସାଧାରଣ ମଣିଷ ! ସେ ଦାୟିକତା ଆଉ ଅହତାବର ଲେଶ ମାତ୍ର ଅବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ନାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ । ନିଃସହାୟ ଭାବରେ ଗୁହଁ ରହିଛନ୍ତି ସେ ଗୁରୁଶାଳାଙ୍କ ଆଡ଼େ ଆଜି ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ପହିଲା ।

“ବିଶ୍ୱ-ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରାଙ୍କର ଅଦାଲତରେ ଆଜି ରାୟ ବାହାରିଛି । ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ଧୁ ବାବୁ ହାରି-ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଗୁରୁଶାଳାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଇଥିବା ନୋଟିସ୍ ଫେରାଇ ଦେବାକୁ ହବ”--

ଅପିଲ କରିବାକୁ ଆଉ କିଛି ଉପର କୋର୍ଟ ନାହିଁ--

(ଏକ ସତ୍ୟ ଘଟଣା ଉପରେ ଆଧାରିତ)

■ ■

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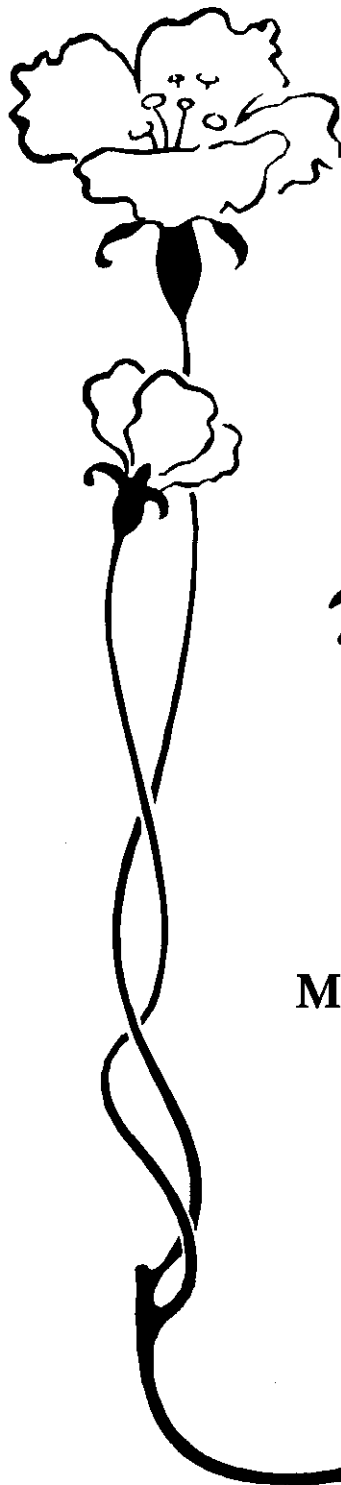
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*The Literary
Non-Resident*

Mostly poetic offerings,
but a story too!

My Grandfather's Flute

Nanu Das

His flute so light and airy like himself
Playing the magical notes of his life
Having its own personality
Full of magical tunes
His flute singing like a lonely nightingale
My grandfather's soul stuck inside the flute
Full of life and beauty
Like a golden jewel in the sky
His flute full of mystical powers
A part of his heart
Possessing his love for life and rich in wisdom
His flute now having a life of its own

Nanu is 10 years old, attends 5th grade at Kellogg School, and lives with his parents Ram and Jayantika Das in Santa Barbara, CA. The poem was written on April 20, 1997, the 83rd birth anniversary of his maternal grandfather, Jnanapitha Award Winner late Dr. Gopinath Mohanty.



Salmon Run

Babru Samal

I put on my rose colored glasses
and swim away

From the winter of discontent
from the snow storms inside the house
from the traffic jam in my career
from the cold rainy evening of existence

To the autumn of self discovery
to enjoy the colors I have inside me
hidden for ages and ages

To the steamy summer days
of full moon and evening breezes
and pounding waves.

To the spring of my life
when the emotion buds
started smiling at me
inside and outside
when the flowers
teased the butterflies
and the colors danced in soap bubbles.

I swim and swim
against the rapids of time
to realize all of me.

Babru Samal, Secretary/Treasurer-elect of OSA, lives in Thousand Oaks, CA.



Free at Last

Anooj Pattnaik

They walk for their rights,
They've done no real sin.
They've been treated unfairly,
For the color of their skin.

Their boycotts, their sit-ins,
And how Rosa Parks didn't give up her seat.
And when they were down in Atlanta,
The white men beat and beat.

Martin Luther King's speeches,
For the freedom of man.
Which made everyone there,
Give up and hold hands.

Even though he is dead,
His shadow still casts.
Whenever the people sing,
"WE ARE FREE AT LAST".

Anooj is 12 years old and is in the 7th grade at La Paz Intermediate School in Mission Viejo, CA. This poem was written for the Martin Luther King celebrations, and was selected from all entries to be recited before an audience of 1100.



Tears

Shanta Misra-Ekambaram

The sun is shining all bright and yellow
The daffodils have bloomed, a field of yellow
and yet...

Tears, idle tears flow
I know not what they mean
Tears from the depth of some divine despair,
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes.
I am looking at those happy autumn fields
and thinking of the days that are no more.

Shanta Misra-Ekambaram recently moved from Houston, TX, to work with Lucent Technologies in Chicago, IL, as a software developer.

Shadow

Vasudha Chhotray

The sun shone through me.
I saw a dark ominous figure
Staring with bitter animosity
It was noon.

Helplessly, I touched the ground
The figure crouched as well
In its ubiquitous presence, I was bound
As if in a cocoon.

I walked on as the day grew
From impulsive noon to mild sunset
The figure shot up in the brilliant hue
Dwarfing me so soon.

I felt inferior in its giant presence
I cupped my face in fright
And when, it stabbed me and
took my essence
I fell into a swoon.

Was I no more? I thought lifelessly
As I woke up that night
I saw it sleeping beside me
Who was it? By the light of the moon?

Vasudha presently lives in New Delhi, where she studies Political Economy. She also works for New Delhi TV as a journalist in production.

Why so different?

Raju Samal

How is it that
the clouds which bring rain
from distant seas
sail away with joy
without waiting for thanks from the trees?

How is it that
the tender blades of grass
laden with dew drops
do not complain of pain
when you tread upon them
with the total weight of your body?

How is it that
the cuckoo which sings
to bring spring to your heart
does not send its bill for the job done?

How is it that
we, nature's most privileged ones
are so very different?

Raju Samal is an insurance executive based in Bombay. He has published several books in English and Oriya.



Eternal Flame

Swadha Rath

Where is the face with the eternal smile
The eyes deep with love?
Where is the hand that touched my head
While showering blessings of love?

Bhubaneswar airport crowded as ever
People hanging outside the door
Friends and relatives hugging each other
Thankful they made it home.

I looked for your face in the crowded airport
Did you not come to receive me?
Your face is always the first I see
Why are you playing hide and seek?

Why are my Bhainas here alone
Where are you today?
Why didn't you come to pick me up
Did you forget this was the day?

The fearful phone call at 1:00 am
Could that really be true?
Or is this all another nightmare
And I will wake up soon?

At the house Bou was weeping
There were people everywhere
I saw your picture in the living room
Covered with flowers.

"Nana has left us", Bou was saying
"He is now a flame"
"See the lamp and the fire?"
"That is all that remains."

I looked for you all over the house
There was no sign of you
This cannot be true, you cannot be gone
I have so much to tell you.

Are you sad, are you upset
Are you not talking to me?
Are you mad because I said
"Nana this time you come see me"?

Where did you go on February 3rd
Did you forget your promise?
On May 10th you and Bou
Were supposed to come see me.

Nana, where are you? Please come
back soon
So I can straighten out this mess
The priests are saying you are
now a "ghost"
Others think you are a lucky man
and a "saint".

I don't want a lucky man, nor do I
want a saint
I just want my Nana back with me again
I want to tell him I love him and I miss him
everyday
The "flame" will be with me forever
until my dying day".

Swadha Rath lives and works in Houston, TX. This poem was written in the memory of her father, the noted writer Shri Durgamadhab Misra, who passed away suddenly this year.



Tandava Nritya

Snigdha Misra

The heavens darkened to a steely blue-black
Tall elms moaned and rocked in agony
Your jagged spears of lightning rent the sky
As it growled and thundered back
What awakened you, Lord Shiva?

The wounded heavens were bleeding
(They called it a severe thunderstorm)
You pelted the cowering earth with ice
(They said the hailstones were like golf balls)
Who angered you, O Lord?

Shrieking, You descended to the ground
Whirling, frenzied, in a funnel of wind
Bridges, cars, houses - wantonly flung around
(They reported the death toll was 30)
Are You appeased now, O Destroyer?

Snigdha Misra is a financial analyst for Capital Metro in Austin, TX.

This poem was written in the wake of a tornado which struck the town of Jarrell, 20 miles from Austin, causing immense damage to life and property on the 27th of May 1997.



Power of Silence...

Hemanta Ranjan Panda

Glass filled with chill draft lager
on the small square table
beside the couch and under Victorian lights
many articles lie on the table - 'The golden gate'
by Vikram Seth
many a remote and the cordless handset
indistinguishable from one another

A letter whose draft he started last week has
taken shape
and is raring to go across the seven seas for its
delightful destination
life seems to slow down because work is
mundane and monotonous
His left eye flickers a bit, and he wonders why
wish he had got the power of telepathy !!!!

He saw a star trek character moving with horns
in the cafeteria,
the other day, in the tinsel town
he kept betting on the stars, when things would
change
not for anything, but to unearth what's going on
why is that a feeling beckons
somewhere somebody pretty would be
remembering ????

There is a feeling which stoops to conquer when
he remembers
remembers about things unsaid and there may
be a fact
She had a point when she looked at him with
inquisitive eyes.
eyes seldom clash
She rotates her head and so does the guy
eyes do clash, but one in a million times
He really is shy, and he guesses she is too.

She does not make him concentrate
she does not make him work
He often looks at the edges of the roof

And would be counting the RPM of the fan, if
there would have been one ??
He stretches a bit, flexes his legs and moves
around his workstation
He tries calling his own residence number
and leave some message for himself in his
answering system
That's exactly the optimum point when it would
be a blatant lie,
to say he is not bored without her

So what's this silence doing then
I would imagine silence is golden
Very subtle and not at all bland and explicit
It's like what Lucy Gray was to Bill Wordsworth
and Malgudi to R K Narayan
They never existed physically
That's what his love is all about

Work is getting very trivial and straightforward
life is fairly easy and simple
He does not have to worry about work anymore
it has formed a pattern in itself
A pattern which could easier be done than said

He enjoys his loneliness
music, books, gossips over the phone
and of course scribbling something,
sometimes 'A Stream of Chaos'
yelling under the shower, the numbers which
are mostly outdated
no one to shout and complain
He is not quite sure if she can comply

He still remembers those minutes
when he just could not look at her
Amidst the cranking noise of the railway
platform
He guesses, a lot was said in the silence
The power is immense
The power of silence

*Hemanta Ranjan Panda works for Tata Consultancy Services in the U.S.
He enjoys reading and writing "a stream of chaos".*

At the Examination Hall

Siddhartha Panda

This incident happened several years back
During one of my final +2 exams which I did take.
Two lady invigilators, why in the hell !
Had to stand near me, I could never tell.

I was working on a calculus problem.
An animated discussion was going on between them.
About all possible problems they had to face in life;
As a mother, professional, daughter-in-law and a wife.

I was repeatedly getting an unreasonable solution.
Unable to focus, thanks to their animated conversation.
Which started with kids, who in school did not well fare.
The kids were bright, but not the teachers who gave marks tight and bare.

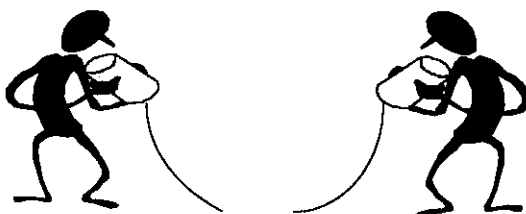
The difficult task of balancing professional and household work.
No help from insensitive husbands, who even the slightest task did shirk.
The whims of the mother-in-law were an occasional botheration.
All this chatter was building up my mounting irritation.

I understand you have problems, madams, but so also I have mine.
I have been stuck to this simple problem for the past minutes nine.
I wished those two quietened soon and let me work in peace.
To concentrate I needed silence and my irritation to ease.

To indicate my feelings, gritting my teeth, I gave them a furious glare.
Oblivious of me, their mutual problems, they continued to share.
Finally I called out to one of them requesting for a glass of water.
And to the other one, I asked for additional sheets of answer paper.

They acceded to my requests and this did break their conversation spell.
Quiet descended upon the locality and things began to look well.
I set upon working on the rest of the paper in haste.
Quite peacefully, to make up the time I had to waste.

Siddhartha Panda is a graduate student of Chemical Engineering at the University of Houston.



Desire

Nirupama Kar Mohapatra

You were quiet
You were distant
You were sophisticated
and very competent.

I was simple
I was shy
I was insecure
and I didn't know why.

When we encountered
purely by chance
I stood confused
as I felt your glance.

I raised my head
our eyes met
my body trembled
a strange sensation I felt.

Your deep intense gaze
started a fire
the earth moved
and I was engulfed by desire.

*Nirupama Kar Mohapatra is a molecular
biologist at UNC, Chapel Hill.*

Grand Ma

Srotalina Nayak

I saw my Grand Ma
in my dreams,
Fresh as a flower, like
You and Me.

I said to her, "Grand Ma,
My Mami cried, I wept,
You left Bapi sad, and
You could not wait"

She said to me,
with her winning smile
"Mortals are human, but
I love you all, in exile"

I kissed my Grand Ma
and touched her feet;
She passed away, and
We can never meet.

*Srotalina is the daughter of Surya and Sujata
Nayak. This poem is dedicated with love and
tears to her late maternal grandmother.*



Silence

Padma Muduli

silence is a golden thing
a word of truth from inside
where none but you know the code
where others can do no meddling
sometimes a sound often presides
and none but you can decode
the strangeness of its passing

Padma Muduli is from New York City, NY

My Little Sister

Bagmi Das

I have a little sister
she is soft and cuddly
she is beautiful as a flower
and talks so sweetly.

She loves animals
she loves the zoo
she loves to see
what animals can do.

And one thing for sure
we will never be apart
I would always care
and love her a lot.

She is such a cute baby
my sweet little sister
she is a rose in my heart
and a shining bright star.

Bagmi Das is a 4th grade student. She lives with her parents, Bigyani and Naresh Das, and two little sisters in Columbia, MD.

Two Poems

Aseema Mohanty

TO BE A GIRL

It's fun to be a girl.
We do a ballet twirl.
To be a girl, it's a real whirl!
We wear dresses and skirts,
pants and shorts, too.
That's why I like to be a girl.

A DREAM

I have lots of dreams.
Small dreams, big dreams.
Nice dreams, bad dreams.
Some are cool, some are funny.
But all dreams are dreams.

Aseema Mohanty is 8 years old, and lives with her parents, Kishore and Durgeshnandini Mohanty, in Houston, TX



Dear eyes, good-night,
In golden light
The stars around you gleam;
On you I press
With soft caress
A little lovely dream.

- Sarojini Naidu (The Cradle Song)

The Freedom Fighter

Prasanna K. Pati

My friend John was an incurable India lover. He was born in a small town in Kansas, finished high school there and did his undergraduate studies at the prestigious University of Puget Sound in Tacoma. He received his Masters of Library Sciences from the Berkeley campus of the University of California. In the early 1970's, while he was still an under-graduate student, he toured India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Nepal studying Religions of the World.

John and I met in the late 1970's. I had started my private practice in Psychiatry in San Francisco and John was a teacher of Library Sciences at the University of California. During the late 1970's and early 1980's the number of people immigrating from India rose rapidly in the greater San Francisco area. With the new people came a marked increase in Indian cultural activities. Despite being a busy Psychiatrist in this community I made it a point to attend as many cultural activities as I could. Each time I went I noticed a young white male, thin, with a beard, intensely expressive. He would come alone and have no conversation with anyone. One day during the intermission of a classical dance function I approached him and introduced myself. "Would you like to have a cup of coffee with me after the function?" I said. "I am Dr. Sonjee." He responded with a big smile and said in broken Hindi "*Ap Indiase Ayehe*?" meaning, "Are you from India?" I told him that I was originally from the State of Orissa, famous for Odissi classical dances.

After the show we had coffee and I was hardly aware of how much time had passed. I found John very knowledgeable about Indian history and Hindu philosophy. We became good friends and enjoyed getting together once a week to visit and have lunch. I always looked forward to our meetings. He talked about anything related to India. I admired his insight into the dynamics of India's history and culture. Even though I was from India, I found him quite analytical and objective about my country. I shared with him my personal upbringing in great detail, the

colorful Hindu festivals of Orissa, including the Rath Yatra of Puri, and our rituals and practices.

It was during one of our get-togethers in 1983 that I told him I had decided to take a brief trip to India. He was happy for me and asked about my itinerary. It was perhaps about a month later when John said, "How would it be if I come along with you? Since you are mostly going to Orissa I'd like to pay a visit to the land of my previous birth, especially in the company of a devotee of Lord Jagannath." I was a bit surprised. I knew John must have thought very seriously about it. "Yes, John," I told him, "I do visit the Jagannath Temple and the Lingaraj Temple at Bhubaneswar, just as my forefathers have for centuries, however I am not a tourist in Orissa. I go for family visits and to re-live the experiences of my childhood. You are a scholar and since this would be your second visit to India you probably would like to see the Taj, visit Delhi and Varanasi and the wonderful tourist places in Rajasthan. Even though you would not be allowed to visit the inner sanctum of Lord Jagannath, you could visit Puri and the Sun Temple at Konark."

I felt bad that I was rejecting his offer, but I felt it would be quite awkward to have this American fellow come along with me wherever I went. He obviously sensed my discomfort as he smiled and said, "Dr. Sonjee, I will not be going as a tourist. I wish to come with you as a brother. I am sure you understand the depth of what I am saying." I could not turn him down. So we continued our weekly lunch meetings, planning our trip to India, and in December we were on our way.

John was a very good companion. We arrived in Calcutta where we spent two days touring such places as the Victoria Memorial, Fort Williams, and Job Charnock's Mausoleum in the courtyard of St. John's Church. John was very knowledgeable about Calcutta and Bengal history. He told me that Job Charnock was an English adventurer and employee of the East

India Company and founded Calcutta in 1690 during the reign of Aurangzeb. We also visited the ancestral home of Subhas Bose who had escaped from Calcutta to Germany and Japan during World War II, and led the Indian National Army against the British from Singapore and Burma. We visited the Kali Temple, Ochterlony Monument, the Writers Building and the Asia Society Building.

John and I took a walk around the Raj Bhavan, now the residence of the Governor of West Bengal, once the seat of British power in India, and the former home of the Governor General of India before the capital was shifted to New Delhi. John made the remark, "You see, Dr. Sonjee, this imposing building was modeled after the Kedleston Hall of England and completed between 1799 and 1805." "Expansion of British imperialism in India started from this building," I added, "Even the conquest of Orissa in 1804 was plotted here."

We took an express train to Sambalpur where we visited my relatives and friends. There was a curiosity about him from all quarters and personal questions directed to him, which John handled with humility, charm and humor. During our stay we visited the Samaleswari and Pataneswari Temples. John was allowed into the inner sanctum of the Samaleswari Temple and to participate along with me in the prayer ritual. "Samaleswari is the presiding deity of Sambalpur," I said to John. "This temple goes back to about 1575 when Akbar was the Moghul Emperor at Agra and the Kingdom of Sambalpur had just begun. This kingdom was taken over by the British in 1849."

"In one of our get-togethers in San Francisco," John said, "you mentioned a freedom fighter, Veer Surendra Sai, who fought a guerrilla warfare more than a century ago. Can we visit his village?" "You mean Khinda," I responded. "In those days Khinda was surrounded with thick forests, meadows with tall sal trees, close to the Ib River and the Maula-Bhanja hills. The forests were full of wild life. It was almost an ideal location for guerilla warfare. Yes, we will visit Khinda on our return trip from the coastal areas of Orissa."

While in the Sambalpur area John and I were invited to various family rituals, including a marriage function. His curiosity, charm, humor and understanding of Hindu culture made him immensely popular. His laughter was wonderful and infectious, and despite the language barrier he got along well.

One beautiful morning at breakfast I told John I was going to make a trip by myself to the cremation ground on the bank of the Mahanadi where my parents and grand-mother were cremated many year ago. He understood and stayed behind. He had no comments or questions. I had made this trip often during all my previous visits to Sambalpur. I walked to the bank of the river, which was an old river and not as beautiful as it was in my childhood. I imagined the spots where the cremations might have taken place. I became sad as I thought of my father's cremation, the ceremony I could not attend as I was sailing from London, somewhere on the Arabian Sea. I made a silent prayer.

Several weeks later we left for Cuttack. "Cuttack is almost a thousand years old," I told John, "a city founded by the ancient kings of Orissa and subsequently under the Moghuls, the Marhattas and then the British." John added, "Ralph Cartwright was the first British officer to visit Cuttack in 1633. He had an audience with the Moghul Governor, Agha Muhammad Zaman, a Persian born in Tehran and a prominent soldier and administrator." I was very impressed with John's knowledge of the history of Orissa. John and I visited the ruins of the Barabati Fort, the Cuttack Chandi Temple and the Kadam Rasool, a sacred place for both Muslims and Hindus. We visited my old college, the Ravenshaw, where I had been expelled by the British administration for participation in the Quit India movement of Mahatma Gandhi in 1942. We went to the second floor balcony of the West Hostel, facing towards the East Hostel. I pointed out to John the area where we would gather for hours and call upon the British Government to "Quit India" and "Victory to Mahatma Gandhi." I began shouting the same slogans as I remembered the events of 42 years ago. To my surprise John joined in.

John asked, "Dr. Sonjee, why were you suspended from college? You were just a freshman, certainly not a leader." I smiled and said, "It is still a mystery to me. I found out later that I was on a list of about fifty students who were identified as agitators by British Government detectives. Perhaps the only reason was that I was newly elected as Joint General Secretary of the Hostel, a student organization for cultural and literary functions of the hostel. Subsequently, however, I was allowed to return to the college."

"So you are a freedom fighter?" John quipped. "Not exactly," I said, "except that my name went into the official British records as an agitator of the Quit India movement. Would you like to meet a real freedom fighter, a man who spent years in British jails and was the leader of Mahatma Gandhi's Party, the Congress in Orissa? I understand he is staying with his eldest daughter and her family in Bhubaneswar. He was several years older than I was, but I had heard about his student days at Ravenshaw College. His name is Mr. Jena, and he was originally from Puri. I'm sure you will enjoy listening to him." Of course John was enthusiastic about his upcoming meeting. He had read extensively on Mahatma Gandhi and the freedom movement of India.

It was mid-January when we arrived at Bhubaneswar, where we stayed in the New Kenilworth Hotel at Gautam Nagar. We made inquiries about Mr. Jena's whereabouts and was told that he was residing at Satya Nagar. Before we visited him we decided to visit Konark, Puri and around Bhubaneswar, the Dhauli, Khandagiri and Udayagiri complexes and the superb Mukteshwar and Raja Rani temples. I went to the Lingaraj Temple to worship while John, a non-Hindu, was not allowed to enter the temple complex.

One evening we just walked to Satya Nagar to the given address and knocked on the door. A young man opened the door and upon seeing us immediately went away and returned with another young man. I introduced us, "I am Dr. Sonjee. I am originally from Sambalpur and have been in America for many years. I am a Psychiatrist in the city of San Francisco. This is

my friend John, who teaches library sciences at the University of California at Berkeley. We are on a visit to Orissa. We would like to visit with Mr. Jena." At this both young men smiled and invited us into their living room and asked us to be seated. They both went into the other room and within a few minutes brought us a plateful of sweets and snacks and cups of tea. We sat in silence until a frail elderly man with a shawl wrapped around him walked in on the arm of a young woman. He seemed to be in pain but upon seeing us managed a faint smile. With assistance from the young woman he sat in a chair. One of the young men said, "Grandfather is ill. He had a stroke several years ago. Sometimes his mind is very clear and at other times he is quite confused. He can recall his early days clearly but not recent happenings."

I gently inquired of Mr. Jena, with folded hands, as to how he was feeling. In a very frail voice he responded, "Today I feel better than other days. Tell me about your American friend." "Mr. Jena, this is John. He is a very close friend of mine. He teaches library sciences at the University of California. He is a student of the culture and history of India. He has a particular interest in the freedom movement of Mahatma Gandhi that led to the end of the British rule in India." At this point I couldn't help laughing and added, "John believes that one of his previous births was in India." At this there was laughter all around. Then John asked Mr. Jena, "Sir, I would like to hear from you directly about your own personal experiences and participation in the freedom movement."

Mr. Jena seemed to come to life. He asked John to come and sit on a chair near him. He put his arm around him and said, "The Mahatma is dead in India, but perhaps alive in America. Yes, India is independent of the British *but* where is the economic freedom, where is the morality in Government that Gandhiji fought for?" I gently interrupted, "Mr. Jena, my friend here would like to hear from you about your own participation in the movement." Mr. Jena said, "I am disappointed with what is happening in India now. Yes I understand your friend's interest. It is a long story. Do you have time? It might take days because what I am going to tell you will come from my heart." "We will be

in Bhubaneswar for a few more days," I said. "Yes, we have time." John nodded in agreement.

Mr. Jena resumed, "You see, I was born in 1908 into a poor family in Puri. My father was a poorly paid school-teacher in 1919 when the Jalianawala Bagh episode happened in Punjab. I was eleven then. Until then I had no idea that it was not normal for India to be under the British. After all, the British had been in Puri for more than a century and what was wrong with that. Somehow we heard about the firing on innocent citizens by the British forces in Punjab. Of course we had heard adults talking about Mahatma Gandhi coming from South Africa and leading the Congress. You see in those days there was a cloud of fear overhanging India. I felt the stirrings in my heart, the impact of this movement. While a student in the high school at Puri I kept myself informed about the Mahatma's movement, although as students, we were keenly aware that any direct participation in street agitations or non-cooperation would result in suspension from school."

John asked, "Did your school go on strike at any time?" Mr. Jena responded, "Perhaps it was around 1924 that the Mahatma was jailed and we organized a strike in the school and a procession. When I entered Ravenshaw College in 1926 and during four years there I was very active in politics. In 1929 Jawaharlal Nehru, as President of the Congress, gave the clarion call for independence and I decided right then that after college I would be a Congress worker and join the movement actively. I was first jailed in 1931. This followed agitations all over Orissa after the arrest of Gandhiji at the end of his historic Salt March. You might have passed by the Cuttack Jail. I was there for several months.

John asked, "How did you get along in jail?" Mr. Jena continued, "I was a political prisoner. We were treated fairly. I had no hatred towards the British. It gave me time to reflect. It gave me time to read and study the history of India and especially that of Orissa. I remember after I came out of the jail I was more determined than ever to actively support Mahatmaji. We organized the party in villages. Dr. Sonjee, I was very active in organizing the Congress Party in your Sambalpur area. You may not know

that Gandhiji visited Sambalpur in 1934, and I had accompanied the Mahatma on that tour." "I remember," I said. "I was only nine when Gandhiji visited Sambalpur. I saw him and that scene is deeply engraved not only in my memory but heart. Even now I remember exactly the spot on which I stood and the Mahatma walked by just three feet from me."

Mr. Jena continued, "When Gandhiji walked, he walked like Jesus Christ. Let me return to my role. It was in 1942 when the Mahatma called upon the British to 'Quit India' After the arrest of Gandhiji and top leaders India was in flames. Parts of Orissa were inaccessible to British forces. There were wide-spread arrests in Orissa on August 8. I was in Balasore on that day and immediately went into hiding. I managed to take a train to Calcutta, where I stayed for several months with friends. I was very active in the underground that used sabotage and guerrilla tactics, not guns, while keeping up the 'Quit India' movement and our morale. After many months I decided to return to Orissa to continue the agitation. That was a mistake. I arrived at Cuttack Railway station one early morning and the Police were waiting for me." "How did they know?" John asked. "I don't know," Mr. Jena said. "The British Government Police detectives must have infiltrated our underground organization in Calcutta. I was taken straight to the Cuttack Jail and I was not released until 1945."

We had a second visit with Mr. Jena. It was obvious John was moved with the personal accounts as described by Mr. Jena. It was like listening to one of the Mahatma's disciples. We attempted our third visit on January 23rd. Mr. Jena's grandson appeared at the door and told us, "Grandfather is not feeling well. The doctor said he probably suffered from a mild heart attack, but nothing serious. He advised total bed rest. Grandfather should feel better tomorrow, please come back then. Do not come on January 26, however, as that is the day of the Governor's Annual Garden Party, which is part of the Republic Day celebrations, and we are expecting an invitation any day now." We returned on the 24th and the 25th but were told on both days that Mr. Jena was not feeling well and seemed depressed. I asked his grandson if the invitation

had arrived from the Governor's office. "Not yet", he said. "Maybe this evening."

John and I had a quick consultation and decided to go to the Governor's Office to check on the status of the invitation. After much difficulty and persuasive language by both of us we were allowed to meet a junior officer who was in charge of mailing out the invitations for the Republic Day party. Mr. Roy was very nice and said, "The invitations were mailed out more than a week ago." John said, "Please check the guest list to see if Mr. Jena is included. He is a well-known freedom fighter. He has been invited to these parties every year." Mr. Roy went through the list several times said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Jena's name is not on the list."

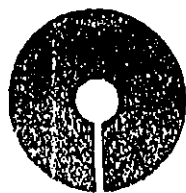
We were in shock. We couldn't believe that he had been overlooked. Mr. Roy expressed profound regrets and added, "There were new invitees added this year and some people were dropped. I guess there has been pressure to include a number of young politicians although I'm not sure who is responsible for the final list. I am very sorry." We were ready to depart in great sorrow. Then John turned around and asked Mr. Roy, "May I please have a sample of the invitation card as a memento?" For a minute Mr. Roy appeared suspicious but then he smiled, "Sure. Please have one and show it to your friends in America."

It was late in the afternoon. We hailed a taxi and I asked John, "May I have a look at the invitation card?" John handed it over to me. The card was embossed in gold lettering. I told John, "It is a nice memento from the office of the Governor of Orissa to take back to America." John appeared to be quite agitated. Abruptly, he asked me to direct the taxi driver to hurry to Mr. Jena's house. Only then was it clear to me that John was going to deliver the much anticipated invitation to Mr. Jena.

We arrived at Mr. Jena's residence around five o'clock. His grandson again answered the door and sorrow was written on his face. John insisted that we be allowed to see Mr. Jena. We walked up to his room and saw that he was indeed gravely ill. We were told that Mr. Jena had suffered another heart attack and was in and out of consciousness. We sat down on chairs near his bed. John clasped Mr. Jena's right hand and at that moment Mr. Jena opened his eyes and smiled. John took the invitation out of his pocket and tenderly told Mr. Jena, "Here is the invitation to the Governor's Republic Day party," as he placed it in Mr. Jena's hand. I cannot forget that beautiful smile like a rose opening up in the early morning sun, and then Mr. Jena lapsed into a coma from which he never recovered. He passed away in the early hours of the Republic Day, January 26, 1984.

Prasanna K. Pati is a retired psychiatrist who lives in Salem, OR. He played the role of Dr. Sonjee in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest", which won the Oscar for the Best Movie of 1975, and which was filmed in the Oregon hospital where Dr. Pati worked as a psychiatrist.





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ଅସୁରର ପରିଚୟ

ଦୁର୍ଗା ମାଧବ ମିଶ୍ର

ଜଣେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବାର ସୁବିଧା ଓ ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଲା, ନିଜର ସ୍ମୃତି ଶକ୍ତି ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ବେଶୀ। ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଛାତ୍ର ଯାହା ପଢ଼େ ମନେ ରହେ ନାହିଁ। କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରେ। ରାତି ଅଧ ଯାଏ ପଢ଼େ। ପାହାଡ଼ିଆରୁ ଉଠି ମଧ୍ୟ ପଢ଼େ। ସେ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ଭଲ କରି ପାରେ ନାହିଁ।

ଯେଉଁ ଛାତ୍ରଟି ଅଳ୍ପ ପଢ଼ି ନିଜର ସ୍ମୃତି ଶକ୍ତି ବଳରେ ସବୁ ମନେ ରଖିଦିଏ, ଅନେକ ଉଚ୍ଚତ ତାର କଷ୍ଟସ୍ଥ, ସେ ଜ୍ଞାନୀ ବୋଲି ଏହି ସଂସାରରେ ଆଦର ପାଏ। ଏମ.ଏ.ରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ପ୍ରଥମ, ତାପରେ ଏମ୍.ଫିଲ୍., ପି.ଏଚ୍.ଡି. ଡି.ଲିଟ୍... ଏମିତି ବହୁ ଉପାଧି ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ସମାଜରେ ଜଣେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ହୋଇଯାଏ। ସେ ଯେଉଁ ଗୁନିଗା କରିବାକୁ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା କରେ, ସେଥିରେ ସଫଳ ହୁଏ।

ସେହିପରି ଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଓ ସଫଳ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ଅମିତାଭ ବାବୁ। ତାଙ୍କର ଆଭା ବା ଜ୍ୟୋତିକୁ ମାପି ହେବ ନାହିଁ (ଅମିତ)। ସେ ଗୁଲିଗଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ନୁଆଁଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି। ଯେଉଁ ପଥ ଦେଇ ସେ ଯାଆନ୍ତି, ସେ ପଥରେ ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ ନାଲି ଗାଲିଗୁ। ସେ ଦୃଢ଼ ପଦକ୍ଷେପରେ ସେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗାଲିଗୁ ଉପରେ ନିଜ ଜୋଡ଼ାର ତଳିପାର ଧୂଳି ବିଶି ବଞ୍ଚି ଗୁଲି ଯାଆନ୍ତି। ସେ ଧୂଳିକୁ ଝାଡ଼ି, ସଫା କରିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ପରି ଜଣେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ମଣିଷ ଯେ ବୃଥା ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରିବେ, ସେ କଥା ସେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ।

ସଭା ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରକୁ ଉଠିଯାଇ ସଦର୍ପେ ଅନାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ଶ୍ରେଣୀପ୍ରଣାମକୁ । ଏମାନେ ସବୁ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କରି ପରି ମନୁଷ୍ୟ, ସେ' ତାହା ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ। ତାଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ସେମାନେ ହେୟ, ଅବଶେୟ। ସମସ୍ତେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ନିଜ ସ୍ଥାନରୁ ନମସ୍କାର କଲେ। ଜଣେ ସାଷ୍ଟାଙ୍ଗ ପ୍ରଣାମ ପାଦ ମଧ୍ୟ କଲା ସେ ଦେଖିଲେ। କିନ୍ତୁ ନମସ୍କାର କରିବା ତ ଦୂରର କଥା ହାତ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଠେଇଲେ ନାହିଁ।

କାରଣ ସେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗର ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ ପଦାଧିକାରୀ - ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଶାସନ ସଚିବ । ତାହା ଛଡ଼ା ବିଦ୍ୱାନ୍, ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଓ ଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଏମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତରକୁ ଉଚ୍ଚତ ନୁହନ୍ତି। କେବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଚ୍ଚତ ହୋଇ ପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ।

ଯେଉଁ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନକୁ ସେ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି, ତାହା ଏକ ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ । ଏହି ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ତୋରଣ ଭିତର ଦେଇ ସେ ଉଚ୍ଚତ ଚିରୁକରେ ବାହାରି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ତଳେ ବସିଥିବା ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଯେଉଁ ଆତ୍ମା ଅଛି ତାହା ତାଙ୍କ ଆତ୍ମାଠାରୁ ନିକୃଷ୍ଟ ସଂସାରର ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତ ରଣାଙ୍ଗନକୁ, ଜୀବନରେ ଉନ୍ନତ ଶିବିରକୁ । ସେ ସେଇ ଗାନ୍ଧୋରୁ ଘୁଷୁରୀମାନଙ୍କ ପରି ପରିଚିତ-ବିହୀନ, ରୁଦ୍ଧକ୍ଷ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ସୈନିକ ହୋଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି; ସେ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ଜଣେ ବୀରପୁରୁଷ, ସେ ସେନାଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ। ତେଣୁ ସେ ଏହି ଜନ୍ମଦାତ୍ରୀ ଜନନୀକୁ କୃତ୍ୟକୃତ୍ୟ କରିବା ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଆଜି ପଦରଜ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି। କି ତୁମ୍ଭ ଏହି ଲୋକଗୁଡ଼ାକ ।

ଆବାହକ ସଙ୍ଗୀତରେ ସ୍ମୃତିଗାନ, ସ୍ୱାଗତ ଭାଷଣରେ ସ୍ମୃତିଗାନ, ପରିଚୟ ପ୍ରଦାନରେ ସ୍ମୃତିଗାନ। ବେକରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ହୋଇଯାଇଛି ବିଚିତ୍ର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣା ବହୁବାସ ସମନ୍ୱିତା ପୁଷ୍ପମାଳା - ଅସରନ୍ତି, ଅକଳନ୍ତି।

ସେ ଭାଷଣ ଦେଲେ। ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଅବସ୍ଥା, ମୂଲ୍ୟବୋଧର ମୂଳୋଦ୍‌ପାଦନ, ବିଚକ୍ଷଣତା ଓ ପିପିତ୍ତର ଅଭାବ। କାହାର ଜଣକର ହେଲେ ନିଷ୍ଠା ନାହିଁ। ସମସ୍ତେ ଅସାଧୁ ଉପାୟ ଅବଲମ୍ବନ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ। ଚରିତ୍ରବତ୍ତା ପ୍ରତି ଆଦର ନାହିଁ। ଏ ଦେଶ ଯେ ଧୂସ ଆତକୁ କ୍ଷିପ୍ର ଗତିରେ ଯାଉଛି ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ସେ ନିଃସନ୍ଦେହ। ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଆସୁରୀ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦିଶିଯାଉଛି। ଗାତା, ଉପନିଷଦ୍, ବେଦ, ବେଦାନ୍ତର ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ଉଚ୍ଚତ ତାଙ୍କ ଅଧରୁ ଝରି ପଡୁଛି। ଟେପ୍ ରେକର୍ଡ ହୋଇ ଯାଉଛି ଭାଷଣ। କଲେଜ ମୁଖ ପତ୍ରରେ ମୁଦ୍ରିତ ହେବ। ସମସ୍ତେ କୃତ୍ୟକୃତ୍ୟ ହୋଇଯିବେ।

ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ପୋତି ବସିଯାଇଛନ୍ତି। ଏହାପରେ, ସ୍ଥାନାନ୍ତର ସୁନିଶ୍ଚିତ। ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନେ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ଚିମୁଟା ଚିମୁଟି ହୋଇ ହସୁଛନ୍ତି। ଜଣେ ଉଠିପଡ଼ି କହିଲା :-

“ସାର୍ ଆସୁରୀ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି କଅଣ ? ଆମେ ସବୁ କ’ଣ କ’ଣସୁର ନା ରାବଣ ?”

ହସରେ ଫାଟି ପଡ଼ିଲା ସଭାସଭା । ଏପରିକି ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ମହୋଦୟଙ୍କର ଅଧରୋଷ ମଧ୍ୟ କିଞ୍ଚିତ୍ ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହୋଇଗଲା ।

“ଆସୁରୀ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି ଉପରେ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାଥିଲେ ଗାତାର ପଞ୍ଚଦଶ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ପଢ଼...”

“ପଞ୍ଚଦଶ ନୁହେଁ ସାର୍, ଷୋଡ଼ଶ । ପଢ଼ି ଦେଇଛି ସାର୍ । ବୋଲିନି ?

“ଅଭୟଂ, ସତ୍ତ୍ୱସଂଶୁଦ୍ଧିଃ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଯୋଗ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥିତିଃ...”

“ତୁମ୍ଭ କର । ପଢ଼ିଛତ ପଚାରୁଛ କାହିଁକି ?”

“ପଢ଼ିଦେଲେ କଅଣ ହୋଇଗଲା ? ଶୁଆପରି ମୁଖସ୍ଥ କରିଦେଲେ କ’ଣ ଆସୁରୀ ଗୁଣ ଦୈବୀ ଗୁଣ ହୋଇଯିବ ? କେମିତି ଆମ ଭିତରୁ ଆସୁରୀ ଗୁଣ (ଯାହା ହିଁ ଆପଣ ଦେଖି ପାରୁଛନ୍ତି) ଯିବ ଓ ଦୈବୀ ଗୁଣ ଆସିବ ସେ ଉପାୟ ବତାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ।” ଏତେଦିନ ଜଣେ ପ୍ରତିଦ୍ୱନ୍ଦୀ ପାଇଛନ୍ତି ଅମିତାଭ । ସମ୍ପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣତା ହୋଇଯାଉଛି ବୁକୁ ଭିତର । ସେ ତ ଜାଣି ନାହାନ୍ତି ଉପାୟ । ସେ ଖାଲି ଗାତାଟି କଣ୍ଠସ୍ଥ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଉଦରସ୍ଥ କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି ।

“ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ସଭାରେ ସେ ଉପାୟ ବୁଝାଇବା ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ପୁଣି କେବେ ସେ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ କହିବି । ଆଜି ଏତିକି ।”

କିପରି ସେ ସଭା ସରିଲା କିଏ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଲା ? ସଭାମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରୁ ଜଳଯୋଗ ପାଇଁ ଗଲେ କି

ନାହିଁ ? ଯଦି ଗଲେ ସେଠାରେ କ’ଣ ଖାଇଲେ ? କେତେବେଳେ ଆସି ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ବସିଲେ ? ଏତିକି ମନେ ଅଛି, ଛାତ୍ରଜଣକ ସଭା ମଞ୍ଚର ମାଇକ୍‌ରୁ ଆବୃତ୍ତି କରୁଛି, ଗାତାର ଷୋଡ଼ଶ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ସ୍ଥୁଳଲିତ କଣ୍ଠରେ ।

“ସେ ପିଲାଟି କିଏ ରବିବାରୁ ?”

“ସେ ଆମ ଦପ୍ତରୀର ପୁଅ ସାର୍ । ଆରେ ମୋହନ ଆସୁନୁ ।”

ମୋହନ ଗୋଡ଼ତଳେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ଅମିତାଭଙ୍କର । ଏହି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ତ ସାଷ୍ଟାଙ୍ଗ ପ୍ରଣିପାତ କରିଥିଲା ଶ୍ରୋତୃମଣ୍ଡଳୀରୁ । ଏହାକୁ ଦେଖିଲା ପରି ମନେ ହେଉଛି । ମୋହନ, ସେହି ମୋହନ ନୁହେଁ ତ ?

“ହଁ ମୁଁ ସେହି ମୋହନ ଅମିତ ଭାଇ । ତୁମେ ମୋତେ ନ ଚିହ୍ନି ପାରିବା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ । ତୁମେ ତ ସିଡି ପରେ ସିଡି ଚଢ଼ି ଚାଲିଗଲା, ଥରେ ହେଲେ ପଛକୁ ଚାହିଁନ । ମୁଁ ରହିଗଲି ଆଇ.ଏ. ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ବର୍ଷରେ । ଦପ୍ତରୀ ପୋଷ୍ଟଟିଏ ମିଳିଗଲା ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କର ଅପାର କରୁଣାରୁ ।”

“ଆତ୍ମନ୍ୟବାହନା ତୁଷ୍ଟଃ, ନା କ’ଣ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ?”

ତୁଷ୍ଟାମାର ହସ ହସି ଓ ଭ୍ରାତୃଜ୍ଞା କରି ମୋହନର ପଛପଟୁ ସେହି ପିଲାଟି ଏଇ ପଦକ କହି ଦେଇ ପୁଣି ସାଥୁ ମେଳରେ ମିଶିଗଲା ।

■ ■

ଭଦାର ଗଛ

ସ୍ନେହ ମହାନ୍ତି

ବହୁତ ଦିନ ତଳେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ବନ ତୋଟାରେ ଆମ ଗଛଟିଏ ଥିଲା । ସେଇ ଗଛଟିର ଫଳ ଯେମିତି ମଧୁର ଖାଇବାକୁ, ସେମିତି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ସୁନ୍ଦର ବନକୁ ଲାଗି ପାଖ ଗାଁଆର ରବି ବୋଲି ପିଲାଟିଏ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସେ ଆମତୋଟାକୁ ଖେଳିବାକୁ ଆସେ । ଖେଳ ସରିଲା ମାତ୍ରେ ସେ ସେଇ ଆମଗଛ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଏ, ଆମଗଛର ପତରକୁ ଗୋଟାଇ ଗୁଡ଼ି ମୁକୁଟ ପରି କରି ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଲଗାଏ । ଭାବେ ସେ ବନସ୍ତର ରାଜା । ପୁଣି କେତେବେଳେ ଗଛ ଉପରେ ଚଢ଼େ, ଏ ଡାଳରୁ ସେ ଡାଳ ହୁଏ, ଗଛ ଡାଳରେ ଝୁଲେ, ଆମଗଛର ପଛରେ ଲୁଚି ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳେ । ପାଚିଲା ଆମ ତୋଳି ମନଭରି ଖାଏ । ଖେଳ ସାରି ଥକିଗଲା ପରେ ଆମଗଛ ମୂଳରେ ତାରି ଛାଇରେ ଶୋଇପଡ଼େ ।

ଆମଗଛ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଖରାବେଳ ହେଲାମାତ୍ରେ ରବିକୁ ଅନାଇଥାଏ । ରବି ଆସିଲା ମାତ୍ରେ ସେ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଯାଏ । ତୁହେଁ ଖେଳନ୍ତି, ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ହେଇଗଲେ ରବି ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଯାଏ ।

ଏମିତି ବହୁତ ବର୍ଷ ବିତିଗଲା । ଏହା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ରବି ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ରବି ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ସହରକୁ ଗଲା । ଆମଗଛ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ରବିକୁ ଗୁହଁରହିଥାଏ । ରବି କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ ଆସେନାହିଁ । ଦିନେ ଛୁଟିରେ ରବି ଆମଗଛ ପାଖକୁ ଆସିଲା । ଏତେଦିନ ପରେ ଆମଗଛ ରବିକୁ ଦେଖି ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଗଲା । କହିଲା, “ରବି ତୁ ଏତେଦିନ ପରେ ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ଆସିଛୁ, ତୋତେ ଦେଖି ମୁଁ କେତେ ଖୁସି ହେଉଛି । ମୋ ଡାଳରେ ଝୁଲୁ, ଗଛରେ ଚଢ଼, ଆମ ଖାଆ, ମୋ ଛାଇରେ ଶୋଇପଡ଼ ।”

ରବି ଆମଗଛକୁ କହିଲା, “ଦେଖୁ ମୁଁ ଏହା ଭିତରେ କେତେ ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଗଲିଣି । ମୋର ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପରି ଚଢ଼ିବାକୁ କି ଝୁଲିବାକୁ ଆଉ ଇଚ୍ଛା ନାହିଁ । ଏବେ ମୋର ମନ ପୋଷାକ ପତ୍ର, ସୌଖିନିଆ ଜିନିଷ କିଣି ଆନନ୍ଦ କରିବାରେ ଲାଗିଲା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୋର ଟଙ୍କା ଦରକାର । ତୁ ମୋତେ କିଛି ଟଙ୍କା ଦେଇପାରିବୁ ?”

ଆମଗଛ କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ ଟଙ୍କା କେଉଁଠୁ ପାଇବି ? ମୋ ଗଛରେ ଆମ ଅଛି, ପତର ଅଛି । ତୁ ମୋ ପତର ଓ ଆମ ସବୁ ନେଇଯା । ବଜାରରେ ବିକ୍ରି କରିଦେବୁ । ସେଥିରୁ ଯାହା ଟଙ୍କା ମିଳିବ ତୋ ମନଇଚ୍ଛା ଜିନିଷ କିଣିବୁ ।” ରବି ଗଛ କଥା ମାନି ଆମ ତୋଳି ବଜାରରେ ବିକ୍ରି କରି ଟଙ୍କା ପାଇଲା । ଗଛ ରବିର ଖୁସି ଦେଖି ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହେଲା ।

ଏମିତି ପୁଣି କେତେ ବର୍ଷ କଟିଗଲା । ରବି ଆଉ ଆମଗଛ ପାଖକୁ ଆସିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଆମଗଛ ଏକୁଟିଆ ହୋଇଯାଏ, ରବି କଥା ଭାବେ, ମନଦୁଃଖ କରେ । ଭାବେ ଏହା ଭିତରେ ରବି କେତେବଡ଼ ହୋଇଯିବଣି ! ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ରବି ଆମଗଛ ପାଖକୁ ଆସିଲା । ରବିକୁ ଦେଖି ଆମଗଛର ସବୁ ଡାଳ ଖୁସିରେ ଦୋହଲିଗଲା ।

ଆମଗଛ କହିଲା, “ରବି ମୁଁ ଭାବିଥିଲି ତୁ ମୋତେ ପୁରା ଭୁଲି ଯାଇଛୁ ବୋଲି । ତୋତେ ଦେଖି ମୋ ମନ ଖୁସିରେ ପୁରି ଯାଉଛି । ଆ.. ମୋ ଡାଳରେ ଝୁଲୁ, ଗଛରେ ଚଢ଼, ମୋ ଛାଇ ତଳେ ଶୋଇପଡ଼ । ରବି କହିଲା, “ମୋର ପଢ଼ା ସରିଲାଣି, ମୁଁ ଏବେ ଗୁକିରୀ ଖୋଜୁଛି । ବାହା ହେବି, ମୋର ଘର ସଂସାର କରିବି, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୋର ଘର ଦରକାର । ମୋତେ ଘର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିପାରିବୁ ?”

ଆମଗଛ ମନଦୁଃଖରେ କହିଲା, “ଏଇ ତୋଟା ହେଲା ମୋର ଘର, ମୁଁ ତୋତେ ସହରରେ ଘର ଆଉ କେଉଁଠି ଦେଇପାରିବି ? କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁ ମୋ ଡାଳ ସବୁ କାଟି ନେ, ସେଇ କାଠରେ ଘର ତିଆରି କରିବୁ । ତାହାଲେ ମୁଁ ଖୁସି ହେବି ।” ଆମଗଛର କଥା ରବି ମନକୁ ଠିକ୍ ପାଇଲା । ସେ ସବୁ ଡାଳ କାଟିନେଲା । ରବିର ଖୁସି ଦେଖି ଆମଗଛ ମନେ ମନେ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହେଲା ।

ପୁଣି ବହୁତ ବର୍ଷ କଟିଗଲା । ରବି ତା ଘର ସଂସାର ଜଞ୍ଜାଳରେ ରହି ଆମଗଛ କଥା ପୁରା ଭୁଲିଗଲା । ଦିନେ ରବି

ଏକୃତୀଆ ବସିଛି, ତାର ଆମ୍ବଗଛ କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା। ସେ ଆମ୍ବଗଛ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଙ୍ଗେ ଯାଙ୍ଗେ ଗଲା, ଦୂରରୁ ରବି ଦେଖିଲା ଆମ୍ବଗଛର ଡାଳଗୁଡ଼ା କଟାହୋଇ କେମିତି ଥୁଣ୍ଡା ଗଛଟିଏ ପରି ଦିଶୁଛି। ଆମ୍ବଗଛ ଯେମିତି ରବିକୁ ଦେଖିଲା। ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଗଲା। କହିଲା, ରବି ତୁ ଏତେ ବର୍ଷ କେଉଁଠି ଥିଲୁ ? ମୁଁ ତୋ କଥା କେତେ ମନେ ପକାଏ। ତୁ କଅଣ ମୋତେ ଭୁଲିଗଲୁ ? ଆ ମୋ ପାଖରେ ବସ, ଗଛ ଗୁରିପଖେ ଖେଳେ, ତୁ ହାଲିଆ ଦିଶୁଛୁ ମୋ ଛାଇରେ ଟିକେ ଶୋଇପଡ଼।”

ରବି କହିଲା, “ମୋର ଖେଳିବାକୁ ଆଉ ଶକ୍ତି ନାହିଁ, ମୁଁ ବୁଢ଼ା ହୋଇଗଲିଣି, ଏବେ ମୋର ବଡ଼ ଡଙ୍ଗାଟିଏ ଦରକାର। ପିଲାମାନେ ମୋର ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଗଲେଣି, ମୁଁ ଏବେ ନିଶ୍ଚିତରେ ସେଇ ଡଙ୍ଗାରେ ବସି ନଇ-ସମୁଦ୍ର ପାର ହୋଇ ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ସହର ଦେଖିବି, ତୁ କଅଣ ମୋତେ ଡଙ୍ଗାଟିଏ ଦେଇପାରିବୁ।”

ଗଛ କହିଲା, “ରବି ମୋର ଗଣ୍ଡିଟା ଯେତେ ମୋଟା ହୋଇଛି ତୁ ସେତିକି କାଠ କାଟିନେଇ ଡଙ୍ଗାଟିଏ କରିପାରିବୁ, ସେତିକି ମୁଁ କେବଳ ଦେଇପାରିବି।” ରବି ଗଛର ଗଣ୍ଡିଟି କାଟି ନେଇ ସେଇ କାଠରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଡଙ୍ଗା ତିଆରି କଲା। ଆଉ ସେଇ ଡଙ୍ଗାରେ ବସି ବହୁତ ସହର ବୁଲି ଦେଖିଲା। ଏକୃତୀଆ ଗଛ ଏଥର ବହୁତ ଦିନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରବି କଥା ଭାବି ହେଲା।

ଦିନ ପରେ ଦିନ ବିତିଗଲା। ଦିନେ ରବି ସେଇ ଆମ୍ବଗଛର ଖୁଣ୍ଟା ପାଖକୁ ଫେରି ଆସିଲା। ରବିକୁ ଦେଖି ଆମ୍ବଗଛ କହିଲା, “ତୁ ଆଜି ବହୁତ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ଦେଖା ଯାଉଛୁ। ତୋର କଅଣ ହୋଇଛି ? ଆ ମୋ ପାଖରେ ବସ, ମୁଁ ତୋତେ ଟିକିଏ ମନଭରି ଦେଖେ। କିନ୍ତୁ ତୋତେ ଦେବାକୁ ମୋର ଆଉ କିଛି ନାହିଁ।” ଥରଥର କଣ୍ଠରେ ଆମ୍ବଗଛ

କହିଲା, “ମୋର ଆମ୍ବ ଟିକେ ଥିଲେ ତୁ ଖାଇଥାନ୍ତୁ।” ରବି କହିଲା, “ମୋର ଆଉ ଦାନ୍ତ ନାହିଁ ଯେ ଆମ୍ବ ଛଡ଼େଇ ଖାଇବା ପାଇଁ।” ଆମ୍ବଗଛ କହିଲା, “ମୋର ଡାଳ ଥିଲେ ତୁ ଟିକେ ଝୁଲିଥାନ୍ତୁ।” ରବି କହିଲା, “ମୋର ଆଉ ବୟସ ନାହିଁ ତୋ ଡାଳରେ ଝୁଲିବାକୁ।” ଆମ୍ବଗଛ ଟିକିଏ ଥଙ୍ଗେଇ କରି କହିଲା, “ମୋର ଗଣ୍ଡିଥିଲେ ତୁ ତା ଉପରେ ବଢ଼ି ବସିଥାନ୍ତୁ।” ରବି କହିଲା, “ମୋର ଆଉ ବଳ ନାହିଁ ଗଛ ଉପରେ ବଢ଼ିବାକୁ।” ଆମ୍ବଗଛ ମନ ଶୁଖେଇ କରି କହିଲା, “ମୋର ଦେହରେ ଆଉ ଟିକିଏ କିଛି ଜିନିଷ ଆଆଉ କି ମୁଁ ତୋତେ ଦେଇଥାନ୍ତି, କେବଳ ମୋର ମୂଳ ଗଣ୍ଡିଟି ଅଛି, ତାକୁ ନେଇ ତୁ ବା କଅଣ କରିବୁ ?”

ରବି କହିଲା, “ମୋର ଆଉ କିଛି ଦରକାର ନାହିଁ, ମୁଁ କେବଳ ଗୁହେଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ନିରୋଳା ଜାଗା, ଆଉ ସେଇ ଜାଗାଟି ତୋରି ମୂଳ କାଠ। ତାରି ଉପରେ ବସି ମୁଁ ସହରର କୋଳାହଳ ଓ ଘରର ଜଞ୍ଜାଳରୁ ଶାନ୍ତି ପାଇବି। ଆମ୍ବଗଛ ଦୀର୍ଘ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ମାରି କହିଲା, “ତାହାଲେ ତୁ ମୋ ଉପରେ ଖୁବ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ବସି ପାରିବୁ, ଆ..ମୋ କୋଳରେ ବସ, ଆରାମ କର, ସବୁ ଜଞ୍ଜାଳକୁ ପାଶୋରିଦେ। ମୁଁ ଶେଷଥର ପାଇଁ ତୋତେ ଆଉଥରେ ଦେଖେ।”

ରବି ଥୁଣ୍ଡା ଆମ୍ବଗଛର ମୂଳ ଉପରେ ମହାଶାନ୍ତିରେ ବସି ପଡ଼ିଲା, ଅଳ୍ପା ମାରିଲା, ପିଲାବେଳର ସବୁ ସ୍ମୃତି ତା ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ଭାସି ଉଠିଲା, ସେ ଗଛର ମୂଳ କାଠଟାକୁ ଜୋରରେ ଜାବୁଡ଼ି ଧରିଲା। ରବିକୁ କୋଳରେ ଧରି ଆମ୍ବଗଛର ମନ ମହା ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ପୂରିଗଲା।

(ଏହି ଗଳ୍ପଟି ଶିଶୁ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ଲେଖକ Shel Silverstein କ “Giving Tree” ଛାୟାରେ ଲିଖିତ)



ପରିନାମ

ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନାୟକ

ରୁଦ୍ରରେ ନାଚିଛି
ବର୍ଷାରେ ଭିଜିଛି
ରକ୍ତରେ ଖେଳିବି ହୋଲି;
ହୃଦୟ ଡିରିଛି
ମନ ମୋ ଜଳିବି
ପାରିବି କେମିତି ଭୁଲି ?

କଣ୍ଠକ ଫୁଲ'ରେ
ଶଯ୍ୟା ବିସ୍ତାରିଲ
ପଡ଼ିଗଲି ସେଠି ଶୋଇ;
ରାତି ପାହିଲାଣି
ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲାଣି
ଆଗକୁ ପାରୁନି ଯାଇ ।

ନଦୀ ମାଡ଼ିଆସେ
କୁଳ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଦେଇ
ପାରୁଛି ତାକୁ କେ ରଖି;
ନିଆଁରେ ଜଳିବି
ଅଙ୍ଗାର ହୋଇବି
ଦେଖିବି ତୁମର ଆଖି ।

ମମତାର ଡୋର

ସୁଜାତା ନାୟକ

ମମତାର ଡୋରରେ
ଝିଅ ମୋର ବନ୍ଧା
ବଢୁଛି ସେ,
ଉତ୍ତରା'ର କୋଳରେ
ମୋ ଆଙ୍ଗୁଠିର ଇସାରା ଦେଇ ।

ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଥିଲା, ପିଲାଦିନେ ମୋର
ହେବି ମୁଁ ଦିନେ,
ନର୍ତ୍ତକୀ, ଗାୟିକା, ନାୟିକା
ଆଜି ଜାଗ୍ରତ, ସେ ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ମୋର
ତ୍ରିବେଣୀ ରୂପରେ ଝିଅର ମହ୍ଲାର, ଆଉ ତା'ର
ନୂପୁରର ତାଳରେ ।

ଉଷା-କାଳିର ଡୋର
ବାନ୍ଧି ଦେଇଛି ଝିଅକୁ ମୋର
ମାରା'ର ଘୁଙ୍ଗୁର
ଆଉ ଗୋଟେ ଦିଗନ୍ତର ସୁରା ସୁରରେ ।

ଏକ ରାଧିକାର ମନ

ବିଷ୍ଣୁପ୍ରିୟା ମିଶ୍ର

ରାଧା ନୁହେଁ
ଏକ ରାଧିକାର ମନ
କାନ୍ଦେ କୋରି କୋରି ହୋଇ
କିମ୍ପା କେତେ ନ ବୁଝନ୍ତି
ମତେ ହେ କହ୍ନାଇ ?
ଆଉ,
ତୁମକୁ କହ୍ନାଇ !
କେବେତ କରିନି କଳି
ପାଇବାକୁ ତବ ସନ୍ଧିଧାନ
ତୁର୍ମୁଲ୍ୟତ ନୁହେଁ ତୁମ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ ପରଶ
ପ୍ରମାଣତ ମୋର ପ୍ରତି ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ପ୍ରଶ୍ୱାସ
ଦେଖୁ ସେ ନବ ବିକାଶ,

କୁସୁମ କଳିକା
ମନ ଉଜ୍ଜାବନ
ଶ୍ରୀମୁଖ ଖେଳୁଛି ଦୋଳି ସୁଗନ୍ଧ ସମାରେ
ଅବା ତୁମେ ସମାରକୁ କରୁଛ ସୁଗନ୍ଧ
ସିଞ୍ଚି ଚିକିଏ ସୁରଭି ତବ ଦିବ୍ୟ ଅଙ୍ଗୁ
ଛୁଇଁ ଦେବାପାଇଁ ତୁମ ଭକ୍ତ ମନ ପ୍ରାଣ
ସେଇ ଦର ଦର ହାସ
ଆଉ ସେ ବାଙ୍କ ଗୁହାଁଣୀ !
କାଙ୍ଗାଳିନୀ ଚିନ୍ତାମଣି
ଦିଅନ୍ତିକି ନିବିଡ଼େ ସାଇତି
ଖୋଜେ ଯୋଗାସନ
କାହୁଁ ମୁଁ ପାଇବି ?
ହୃଦୟ ସିନ୍ଦୂକ ଭଙ୍ଗା
ପଣତ କାନି ମୋ ଛିଣ୍ଡା
ଆଉ ମନେ କେତେ, କେତେ ଦୋଷ ତୁଟି ?

କଠୋର ସତ୍ୟ

ଝାନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

କେଉଁଠାକୁ ଗଲ କେଉଁଠି ରହିଲ ଠିକଣାଟ ଦେଲନାହିଁ,
କେଉଁଠି ଲୁଚିଛ ବାପା ହେ ଅବା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ କହି ।

ଅଜାଣତେ ମନେ କଷ୍ଟ ଦେଇଛୁ ସନ୍ତାନର ଦାବୀ ନେଇ,
ଧାଇଁଯିବୁ ହେଲେ ଠିକଣା ଜାଗାକୁ କ୍ଷମା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ପାଇଁ ।

ଶୟନେ ସ୍ୱପନେ ଅବା ଜାଗରଣେ କଳ୍ପନା ନଥିଲା ମନେ,
ନିଜ ହାତ ଗଢା ସଂସାରକୁ ନିଜେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଯିବ ଦିନେ ।

ପଢୁଥିଲୁ ଆମେ ଗାତା ଭାଗବତୁଁ ଜୀବନଟା ନୁହେଁ ସ୍ଥାୟୀ,
ସାଧୁବାଣୀ ସଦା ହୁଅ ନାହିଁ ତମେ ମିଛ ପାଇଁ ତୁଚ୍ଛ ବାଇ ।

ଦେଖୁ ଆସୁଥିଲୁ ମହାନଦୀ କୂଳେ ତୁମ ଗଢା ଘରେ ଆଇ,
ବୁଝା ହେଉଥିଲେ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ କିଏ 'ରାମନାମ' ଡାକ ଦେଇ ।

ସୁଗୁରୁଥିଲା ସେ ଜୀବନ ରହସ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତିଟି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ପାଇଁ,
କହୁଥିଲା ପୁଣି ତମ ପାଇଁ ଧନ ସମୟ ଆସୁଛି ଧାଇଁ ।

ଏ କଠୋର ସତ୍ୟ ଏ କି ଅସମ୍ଭାଳ ବିଚିତ୍ର ସୃଷ୍ଟି ପ୍ରଭୁର,
'ପିତୃହୀନ ଆମେ' ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବା ଆଜି କେତେ ଭୟଙ୍କର ।

କରୁଥିଲୁ ଆମେ ଅଭିଯୋଗ କେତେ ନିତି ଭଲମନ୍ଦ ନେଇ,
ସତେ ଅବା ବାପା ରହିଥିବେ ସଦା ଆପଣି ଶୁଣିବା ପାଇଁ ।

ଏଇଟା ହେଲାଣି ସେଇଟା ହେଲାଣି ବାପାଙ୍କର ଏଟା ଦୋଷ,
କେତେ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟବାନ, କ୍ଷମାଶୀଳ ତୁମେ କରନ୍ତି ଟିକିଏ ରୋଷ ।

ତୁମ ସଂସାରର କରୁଣ ଚିହ୍ନର ପଢୁନାହିଁ ବାପା କାନେ,
ନିଜେ ଅରଜିଲ କେମିତି ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲ ? ଛାଡ଼ିଗଲ ସବୁଦିନେ ।

ତୁମବିନା ବୋଉ ଶୁଣିକି ପାରନ୍ତି କାନ୍ଦଇ ହୋଇ ବାତୁଳି,
ତା କଷ୍ଟ ସହିତ ତା ଲୁହ ଦେଖନ୍ତି ରୁହ କେମିତି ସମ୍ଭାଳି ?

ନିଜେ କଷ୍ଟ ପାଇ ରାଜାକୁ ତୁମର ଅଲିଅଳ କରିଥିଲ,
ଆକସ୍ମିକ ଭାବେ ସବୁ ଭାର ଲଦି କେମିତି ଉଠେଇ ଗଲ ?

ପଣ କଲ ପରା ପାଞ୍ଚଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଦ୍ୱାଇଁ ଦେଖିବ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ତୁମେ,
ଝିଅ କି ନଥିଲି ବାପାଙ୍କର ମୁହିଁ ରାଜା କାନ୍ଦେ ଅଭିମାନେ ।

ଡାକୁଥିଲ କେତେ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ମଙ୍ଗଳ ଦିଅଁ ଦେବତାଙ୍କ ପାଖେ,
ଜିତୁ, ଶିତୁ ତୁମ କୂଳେ ଲାଗିବାକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କଲନ୍ତି ଟିକେ ।

ତୁମ ପ୍ରାଣ ରାନ୍ତୁ, ଝାନୁ, ରାତା, ରୁନ୍ତ ଗୁହାଡ଼ି ବିକଳ ହୋଇ,
ବୋଉ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଆଜି କାହାକୁ ଡାକିବୁ 'ବାପା-ବୋଉ' ଯୋଡ଼ି ନାହିଁ ।

ଶ୍ରୀନୁ, ଶ୍ରୀନୁ ହୋଇ ସଦା ପଛେ ଥିଲ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତେ ଛାଡୁ ନଥିଲ,
ତୁମ ଗେହ୍ଲା ନାତି ଘରେ ଖୋଜେ ନିତି କାହିଁ ବାପା ଛାଡ଼ିଗଲ ।

ପର ପାଇଁ ତୁମ ଏଜୀବନ ସିନା ଡିଲ ଡିଲ ଗଲା ବିତି,
ଯୋଗଜନ୍ମା ତୁମେ ପ୍ରଭୁର ସୁପୁତ୍ର ନେଇଗଲେ ତାଙ୍କ କତି ।

କେତେ ପୂଣ୍ୟବନ୍ତ ଜାତ ତମଠାରୁ ସାର୍ଥକ ଆମ ଏ ଜନ୍ମ,
ଶିଖାଇଛ କେତେ ନିତିଶିକ୍ଷା ପୁଣି ଭଜିବାକୁ ହରିନାମ ।

ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ବଚନ ସତ୍ୟ ପୂର୍ବଜନ୍ମ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା ଆଶେ ମନେ,
ଜନ୍ମମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପଥେ ରଣ ସୁଝିବାକୁ ଭେଟିବା ତ ନିଶ୍ଚୟଦିନେ ।

ମାଗୁଣି ଏତିକି ପ୍ରଭୁ ପାଦେ ନିତି ଦିଅ ଏଇ ଅଧିକାର,
ଏ ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କ ସନ୍ତାନ ସକ୍ତି ହେଉ ଜନ୍ମ ଜନ୍ମାନ୍ତର ।

ଆମ ପୂଜ୍ୟ ପିତାଙ୍କ ଚିରୋଧାନରେ ଲିଖିତ ।

ସେପ୍ଟେମ୍ବର, ୧୯୯୭

ମାନବୀ

ମମତା ମିଶ୍ର

ନୁହେଁ ସେ ପାଷାଣ ଦେବୀ ପ୍ରତିମା ନୁହେଁ ସରସ୍ୱତୀ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ବା ଉମା ରକ୍ତ ମାଂସେ ଗଢ଼ା ଶରୀର ତା'ର ମାନବୀ ସେ, ଗୁହେଁ ଜନ୍ମାଧିକାର	୧୧୮	ମାନବୀ ସେ, ନୁହେଁ ଦୈବୀ ଶକ୍ତି ନ ଆଶିପାରେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ବିପତ୍ତି ଅପରାଧିନୀ ସେ ନ ହୋଇ ଦେବୀ ତେଣୁ ଶାସ୍ତି ଦିଅ କରି ଦାନବୀ	୧୨୮
ନୁହେଁ ସେ ବାଳ୍ମୀକି କଳ୍ପିତା ସୀତା ନୁହେଁ ଯାଜ୍ଞସେନୀ ଯଜ୍ଞସମ୍ବିତା ଅଗ୍ନି ଦଗ୍ଧ କରେ ଦେହକୁ ତା'ର ମାନବୀ ସେ, ଗୁହେଁ ନ୍ୟାୟାଧିକାର	୧୨୮	ଆଖି ଖୋଲ ସୁପ୍ତ ଭାରତବାସୀ ଦେବୀପୂଜକ ଓ ଦାନବାଧିପୀ ଦେବୀ ବା ଦାନବୀ କେହି ତ ନାହିଁ ମୂଳ ମାନବୀ ସେ, ରହିଛି ଗୁହଁ	୧୨୮
ନୁହେଁ ସେ କବିତା ନୁହେଁ ସେ ଲିପି ଆଶ୍ରୟ ଗୁହେଁନା ଗୁହେଁ ସେ ସତ୍ତା ମାନବୀ ସେ, ନୁହେଁ ପଦାର୍ଥ ଧନ କିପରି ତାହାକୁ କର ଯେ ଦାନ ?	୧୩୮	ଏକ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧ ପଦେ ବକ ପରି ରହିଥିବ କେତେ ଯୁଗ ଧରି ପଦ ଉତ୍ତୋଳନ କଲେ କାଲେ ଗଢ଼ି ପଡ଼ିଯିବ ବୋଲି ତଳେ	୧୮୮
ହୋଇପାରେ ପ୍ରିୟା ସହଧର୍ମିଣୀ ହୋଇପାରେ ସଖା ସହକର୍ମିଣୀ (କିନ୍ତୁ) ବିବାହ ନୁହେଁ ତା'ଜୀବନ ଭିତ୍ତି ମାନବୀ ସେ ଗୁହେଁ ଜୀବନ ବୃତ୍ତି	୧୪୮	ପାଦ ଯେ ହେଲାଣି ଭାରାକୁଳ ଅନ୍ୟ ପାଦଟିକୁ କରି ମୁକ୍ତ ହୁଇ ପାଦେ ବହି ଦେହ ଭାର ବଳପ୍ରବଳ ବି ହୋଇପାର	୧୯୮
ନୁହେଁ ସେ ଭୃତ୍ୟା ନଗୁହେଁ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଗୁହେଁ ପ୍ରିୟ ସଖା ସହକର୍ମୀ ସକ୍ତାନର ସେ ହୁଏ ଜନନୀ ନଗୁହେଁ ହେବାକୁ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗାସନୀ	୧୫୮	ପୁତ୍ରପୁତ୍ରୀ ଦେଖ ସମ ନୟନେ ପୁତ୍ରବଧୂ ଘେନ ସମ୍ବେଦନେ ମାନବୀକୁ ଯେବେ ମାନବୀ ମାନ ଶାନ୍ତିମୟ ହୋଇପାରେ ଜୀବନ	୧୯୦

ପାପ ଓ ପ୍ରାୟଶ୍ଚିତ

ହୁର୍ଗାବତା ତ୍ରିପାଠୀ

ପେଉଁକଥା ଆଜି ମୁଁ ଗଳ୍ପ ଆକାରରେ ଲେଖିବାକୁ ଯାଉଛି ତାକୁ ପ୍ରକୃତ ଜୀବନରେ ସ୍ୱାକାର କରିବାର ସତ୍ୟସାହାସ ମୋର ନାହିଁ। ପ୍ରଭୁର ସମ୍ପତ୍ତିବାଲାଗ ପୁଅ ହୋଇ ଜନ୍ମ ହେବାରେ, ଅଥବା ବେଶୀ ପାଠପଢ଼ି ବଡ଼ ଗୁକିରା କରିବାରେ ସୁଖ ସୁବିଧାର ଅଳ୍ପ ନାହିଁ। କିନ୍ତୁ ତା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଅନେକ ଅନୁକ୍ରମ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ରଡ଼ ନିଆଁ ଭଳି ଧକ୍ ଧକ୍ ହୋଇ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଜଳୁଥାଏ ଜୀବନର ଶେଷ ଦିନ ଯାଏ। ତାର ସ୍ଥିତି ଏତେ ନୀଚ ସ୍ତରର ଯେ ତାକୁ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତ କରିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ହୁଏନି। ତା'ପରେ ମୋ ଭଳିଆ ଆଦର୍ଶ ନାଗରାଜ ହିସାବରେ ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ସମ୍ମାନୀତ। ବିଦେଶରେ ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନର ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ ଆସନରେ ଅଧିଷ୍ଠିତ ଲୋକ ପକ୍ଷେ ଏହା ସ୍ୱାକାର କରିବା ଆହୁରି ଅସମ୍ଭବ। କିନ୍ତୁ ଯାହାର ବାହାର ଏତେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଡକ୍ ଡକ୍, ତାର ଭିତର ? ସେଇ ଭିତରଟାକୁ ଆଜି ଉଖାରି ନିଖାରି ଦେଖୁଛି ମୁଁ। ସେଇ ସମ୍ମାନ ଗୁଡ଼ା ମୋ ବିବେକକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ବିଛୁଆଡ଼ି ଛାଟରେ ପାହାର ଭଳି କ୍ଷତ ବିକ୍ଷତ ରକ୍ତାକ୍ତ କରୁଛି। ମୁଁ ରହି ପାରୁନି, ସହି ପାରୁନି। କହି ପାରୁନି କିଛି - ଖାଲି ଜୀବନର ପୁରୁଣା ଘଟଣାକୁ ସବୁରି ଆଗରେ ତୋଳି ଧରୁଛି।

- ଏକ -

ସେଦିନ,

ମୋ ବିଭାଗର ତିନିବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବୋଉ ମୋତେ ବୁଝାଉଥିଲା - ଦେଶ ବାପା ! ତୁ ଆମର ଗୋଟିଏ ବୋଲି ଆଖି। ତୋର ଯଦି ପିଲାଟିଏ ନ ହୁଏ ତେବେ ଆମ ବଂଶଟା ବୁଡ଼ିଗଲା ଜାଣ।

ମୁଁ ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିଥିଲି - ଆମ ଦେଶରେ ବହୁତ ଲୋକ। ଜଣଙ୍କର ତହିଁରୁ ପିଲା ନ ହେଲା ତ କଣ ଭାସିଗଲା !

ବାରମ୍ବାର ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ପୋଛୁଥିଲା ବୋଉ। ତା କଥାରେ ଖିଅ ଛାଡ଼ିଲାନି, - ତତେ ପାଇବାକୁ ମୁଁ କେତେ କଣ ନ କରିଚି ! ଶାଶୁ ଏ ଘୁଅରୁ ନାଙ୍ଗୁଡ଼ିଆ ପୋକ ଅଣେଇ ପାଟିଲା କଦଳୀ ଭିତରେ ପୁରେଇ ଖୁଆଇଛନ୍ତି। ମୁଁ ଖାଇଚି। ଆଜିକାଲିକା ବୋହୁ ପିଲାତ ଆଉ ସେ କଥା କରିବେନି। ଏଇ

ଥରକ, ଖାଲି ଏଇ ଥରକ ମୋ କଥା ରଖ। ତା ପରେ ଠାକୁରେ ଦୟା କଲେ ନ କଲେ କିଛି ଆଉ ତତେ ମୁଁ କହିବିନି।

-- କଣ ? କଣ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ ?

-- “ଶୁଣ, ବାଇକୋଳି ଗାଁକୁ ଜଣେ ବାବଜୀ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି, ହୁକୁମ ଦଉଛନ୍ତି। ମାସ ଦୁଇଟା ଭିତରେ ମାଆ ପେଟରେ ପିଲା ସଞ୍ଚରୁଚି। ମଣିଆ ବୋଉ ତା ବୋହୁକୁ ନେଇଥିଲା, ନାତିକୁ ସାତମାସ ହେଲାଣି। ଆଉ ସାଇ ମାଳତୀର ଝିଅକୁ ଗୁରିମାସ ହେଲାଣି। ଭରିଆର ଭାଇବୋହୁ ଆଉ ଗୁରିମାସକୁ ପିଲା ଖେଳେଇବ।”

-- ଓଃ ! ଏତେ କଥା କହନା, ମତେ କଣ କରିବାକୁ ହବ କହ।

-- ସେ ବାବାଜୀ ମହାରାଜ ନିଜେ କିଛି ନେବେନି। ଖାଲି ତାଙ୍କ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ହିମାଳୟ ଲୋକ ପଠାଇ ହୁକୁମ ଓଷ୍ଠୁଅ ଅଣାଇବାରେ ଟଙ୍କା ଦଶ ବାର ହଜାର ଲାଗିଯିବ। ଠାକୁରେ ଆମକୁ କୋଉଥିରେ ଉଣା କରିଛନ୍ତି ଯେ ! ତୋ ବାପା ରାଜି ଅଛନ୍ତି, ଯାହା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ହେବ ଦେବେ।

-- ସବୁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଠିକଣା କରିଛୁ, ମତେ ମଝିରେ ଆଉ ପଗୁରୁରୁ କାଜିକି ?

ମୁଁ ଉଠି ଆସିଲି। ବୋଉ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଏସବୁ ଆଲୋଚନା ମତେ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁ ନ ଥିଲା। ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କ କୋଡ଼କୁ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ବିଭାଗର ଚଉଦ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଆସିଥିଲି। ବୋଉର ଭୟ ତା ବୋହୁର ହୁଏତ ସେଇ ଘଟଣାର ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି ହୋଇ ପାରେ। ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବେଳକୁ ଏଇ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ନେବାକୁ ସେ ତସ୍ତର। ଉପାୟାନ୍ତର ନାସ୍ତି। ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କୁ ସବୁଖ କରିବାକୁ, ବାବାଜୀର ହୁକୁମ ମାନିବାକୁ, ବୋଉର ବରାଦ ଅନୁସାରେ ସେରେ ନିରୋଡ଼ା ଗୁଆଘିଅ, ହୋମପାଇଁ ଶାଳକାଠ, ଝୁଣା ଗୋଗୁଳ, ଆଳତୀ କର୍ପୁର, ଭୋଗରାଗ ଛଡ଼ା ଠାକୁରାଣୀଙ୍କ ସକାଶେ ଦି ବୋତଲ ଭଲ କାରଣ ବାରା ମଦ, ପାଟଶାଢ଼ୀ ଟଙ୍କା ଦଶ ହଜାର ସବୁ ରେଡ଼ି। ଘରକୁ ବାଇକୋଳି ଗାଁ ବାଟ କୋଣେ। କୁଆଡ଼େ ମୋ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ରମାର

ଅଧିଆ ପଡ଼ିପଡ଼ି ଯିବାକଥା । କିନ୍ତୁ କଣ ପାଇଁ କେଜାଣି ବାବାଙ୍କର ଦୟା ହେଲା, କହିଲେ, - ବୋହୂରାଣୀ ଖାଲି ଠାକୁରାଣୀ ଆସ୍ଥାନଟା ଅଧିଆରେ ପାରି ହେଇ ସେଇଠି ରାତିସାରା ଆରାଧନା କଲେ ଚଳିବ । ବୋଉ ତ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଗଦ ଗଦ । ମୁଁ ବି କେମିତି ଏସବୁରେ ସମ୍ମତି ଦେଲି ବୁଝିପାରୁନି । ଯେତେ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିଲେ କି ଯେତେ ବଡ଼ ଗୁନିରା କଲେ ବି, ପୁରୁଣା କାଳିଆ ବହୁ ଅନ୍ଧ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଯେ ଆମ ଗଡ଼ଜାତ ମାଳ ଅଞ୍ଚଳିଆ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ମନ ଭିତରେ ପୁରୀ ରହିବି ଏଥିରେ ସନ୍ଦେହ ନାହିଁ ।

ଯିବା ଦିନ ସକାଳୁ ରମା ଗାଧୁଆ ସାରି ମୋ ପାଖେ ଆସି ଠିଆ ହେଲା । କଳା ମତମତ ଗହଳିଆ ଲମ୍ବା ବାଳ ଓଦା, ଖୋଲା ଛାଡ଼ିବି, ଅଣ୍ଟା ତଳକୁ ପଡ଼ିବି । ହଳଦି ଗୁରୁଗୁରୁ ମୁହଁ । ଉଜ୍ଜଳ ଗୋରା କପାଳରେ ନାଲି ସିନ୍ଦୂର ଟୋପା । ସୁନ୍ଦରିଆ ଠିଆ ନାକରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁଡ଼ାରେ ଚକଚକିଆ ଧଳା ପଥର ବସା ନାକମାଛି । ହାତରେ ପୁଳାଏ ଲେଖା ନାଲି କାତ ଆଗକୁ ମଗରମୁହଁ ସୁନା ଖଡ଼ୁ । ଦେହରେ କଅଁଳିଆ କଦଳୀପତ୍ର ରଙ୍ଗର ପାଟଶାଢ଼ୀର ବେହରଣ । ସୁନ୍ଦର ମୁହଁଟା ତାର ପିଲା ପାଇବା ଆଶାରେ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ଉଜ୍ଜଳ । ମୋର ଗୋଡ଼ ତଳେ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ପାଖକୁ ଲାଗିଆସି ମତେ ଗୁହଁ ଫୁଲ୍ ଫୁଲ୍ କହିଲା, - କହି କହି ତ ଡାକ୍ତର ବଇଦ କଲନି । ଦେଖାଯାଉ ବୋଉଙ୍କ ଶେଷ ତେଷ୍ଟ । କଣ ଆହୁରି ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ କଲା । ଆଖି ନୁଆଁଇ ହସିଲା । କହିଲା, - ଯାହା କୁହ ତୁମଠୁ ପିଲାଟି ପାଇବାକୁ ମୋର ଭାରି ମନ । ଭାରି ସୁନ୍ଦରିଆ ହବ ଆମ ପିଲାଟା !

ଗୁହଁଥିଲି ତାକୁ, ହଠାତ ମୋ ମୁହଁଟା କଳା ପଡ଼ିଗଲା, ଛାତି ଭିତରେ ଗୋଟେ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦାନ୍ତ ଝଡ଼ ବୋହିଗଲା । ମୋର ଯେ ପିଲା ହେବନି ! କେମିତି କହିବି ! କଣ କହିବି ତାକୁ ! ଆମ ପିଲାଦିନୁ କୁଆଡ଼େ ମୋର ବାପା ବୋଉ ତା ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କ ସାଥରେ ସମୁଦି ବନିବେ ବୋଲି ମାହର୍ଜି ଛୁଇଁ ସତ୍ୟ କରାକରି ହୋଇଥିଲେ । କନ୍ଦାକଟା କରି ସେଇଟା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ କରାଇଛନ୍ତି । ରମା ମୋର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ହୋଇଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା ପ୍ରତି ମୋର ଅନ୍ୟାୟର ଯେ ସାମା ନାହିଁ । ନିଜକୁ ମୁଁ କ୍ଷମା କରି ପାରୁ ନ ଥିଲି ଜମା ।

ଆଖି ଉପରେ ଚଳଚିତ୍ର ଭଳି ଭାସି ଉଠିଲା ଅତୀତ
-- ଅତୀତର କଥା ସତ କାହାଣୀ ଗୁଡ଼ା --

- ଦୁଇ -

ମୁଁ B.Sc. ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଦେଇ ଗାଁକୁ ଆସିଥାଏ । ଫଳ ବାହାରିବାକୁ ଡେରି ଥାଏ । ସେତେବେଳେ ଟସର ମଠା ବୁଣିବାର କେତେଟା ତନ୍ତ ଥାଏ ଆମର । ବାପାଙ୍କର ବହୁତ ମନ ମୁଁ ସେଇ ବିଷୟରେ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିଅରିଂ ପଢ଼ିଲେ, ଗୋଟେ ଫାଏକ୍ଚରୀ ବସାଇବେ । ମୁଁ ପାଞ୍ଚିଥିଲି I.A.S. ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଦେବି । କିନ୍ତୁ,

କିନ୍ତୁ ଏତିକି ବେଳେ ମୋ ଜୀବନରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ନାରୀ ହେଇ ଦେଖା ଦେଲା ମରୁଆ । ତା ମାଆ, ଗୋସେଇଁ ମାଆ ଆମଘରେ କାମ କରୁଥିଲେ ସିଏ ବେଳେବେଳେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଯାଉଥିଲା । ସେତେବେଳେ ତାର ବୟସ କେତେ ହବ ? ହୁଏତ ତେର କି ତଉଦ । କଳା ମତମତ କୁଞ୍ଜକୁଞ୍ଜିଆ ଝାମ୍ବୁରା ବାଳ ଗୁଡ଼ା ମୋଡ଼ା ହେଇ କଢ଼ିକିଆ ଖୋସା । ତହିଁରେ ତେଜେ ଧୋବ ଫରଫର କୁରେଇ ଫୁଲ । କପାଳରେ ଗୁଞ୍ଜର ପୋକର ହରରଙ୍ଗା ଟିକିଲି । କାନରେ ନୋଲି । ନାକରେ ଚିଡ଼ିଆ ନାକମାଛି । କାଣିଆ କଛାମରା ନଅହାତ ନାଲିଛିଟର ବେହରଣଟା ତାର ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଶ୍ଚୁଟ ପୌବନକୁ ଅକ୍ତିଆରେ ରଖିବାରେ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଅସଫଳ । ଗ୍ରୀକ ଚେହେରା ଦାଆର ଠିଆ ନାକ, କଟା କଟା ଆଖି ସହିତ ଅପୂର୍ବ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗଡ଼ଣର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ପ୍ରତିମାଟିଏ ସତେ କି ! ମୋ ଆଖି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ତାଠି । ବେଳେବେଳେ ଧରା ପଡ଼ିଗଲେ, ସିଏ ଖିଲି ଖିଲି ହସି ଉଠୁଥିଲା । ଆଉ ମୁଁ କବାଟ ଉନ୍ନତରେ ଲୁଚି ଯାଉଥିଲି ।

ବୋଉ ପାଟି କରୁଥିଲା - ତୋର ଝିଅଟା ଏମିତି ବାୟାଣୀ ଭଳିଆ କିରି କିରି ହସେ କାଉଁକି କିଲୋ ଗୁଜୁରି ? ତାକୁ ଟିକେ ଆକଟ କର -- କିସ କରିବି ମାଆ ? ଆଜିକାଲି ମୋର ବୋଲ କିଏ ଶୁଣୁଛି ! ବାପ ତ ଗେଲ୍ଲା କରି କରି ତାର ମଥାଟା ଖାଇ ସାରିଲାଣି ।

ସେଦିନ ଅଧରାତିରୁ ଧାନ ଉଠୁଆ ହେଉଥିଲା । ମରୁଆର ମାଆ ଓ ମୋ ବୋଉ ବାଡ଼ିପଟେ ଥିଲେ । ମରୁଆ ହୁଏତ ଓଲା ଓଲି କରିବାକୁ ଭିତର ଖଞ୍ଜାକୁ ଆସିଥିଲା, ଦେଖିପାରି ଡାକିଲି । ମୋ ଶୋଇବା ଘରକୁ ଆସିଲା । ମୁଁ ଭିତର ଆଡୁ ଝିଞ୍ଜିରି ମାରିନେଲି । ତାକୁ ବିଛଣାକୁ ଉଠାଇ ନେଲି । ଆପଣା ଆଡ଼କୁ ଆଉଜେଇ ଆଣିଲି, ତାର ଦେହରେ, ମୁହଁରେ, ବେକରେ, କପାଳରେ ଅଜସ୍ର ବୋକ ଅକାଡ଼ି ଦେଲି । ସିଏ ପହୁଟିଏ ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିନି । ତ୍ରୁଷ୍ଟା ହରିଣୀ ଭଳି

ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସମର୍ପିତ ଗୃହାଣ୍ଡରେ ଗୁହଁ ରହିଥିଲା ମତେ । କାହା ସ୍ବର୍ଗରେ ନିଜକୁ ମାତାଲ କରିବାର ଇଏ ମୋର ପ୍ରଥମ ଅନୁଭୂତି । ଏମିତି ଆମେ କେତେଥର ମିଶିଥିଲୁ ଏବେ ଆଉ ତାର ହିସାବ ମନେନାହିଁ । ସେଦିନ ବି ସେମିତି ରାତି ପାହାନ୍ତି ପହରରେ ବାହର ପଟକୁ ଥିବା ମୋ ଝରକାରେ ଠୁକୁ ଠୁକୁ ଶୁଭିଲା । ଦେଖିଲି ମରୁଆ । ତରତର କରି କବାଟ ଖୋଲି ତାକୁ ଭିତରକୁ ଡାକି ଆଣିଲି । ଖବର କଣ ପଚାରିଲି । ସିଏ ସିଧା ସଳଖ ମୁଣ୍ଡଟେକି ମତେ ଗୁହଁଲା, କହିଲା - ଖାଲି ପୋଥି ପଢ଼ିଲେ, ରୁପସିଁ ଦାମୁଡ଼ି (ଆକାମି ବଳଦ)ର ଦେହେରା ବାଗେଇଲେ ଅଥବା ତିରିଲାର ଶେଜରେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଦେଲେ ମରଦପୁଅ ହରୁନିରେ ଛୁଆ ବାବୁ ! ତୋର ପିଲା ମୋର ପେଟରେ ବହୁଛି । ଆମର ଜାତିର ଭେଦିଆ ହେଇଥିଲେ ଏତେ ବେଳକୁ ମୋର ମଥାରେ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ଘଷି ତାର ଇଷାଣରେ ଭରି ସାରଢ଼ାଣି, ଆଉ ତୁ ? ବହିରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡମାଡ଼ି ବସିଥା ।

ଦଣ୍ଡେ ଦମମାରି ପୁଣି କହିଲା - ଶୁଣ, କାଲି ଠିକ୍ ଏମିତି ବେଳେ ଫତେ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ଧରି ଆସିବି । ମୋର ମଥାରେ ବୋରିଦେବୁ । ଯାଇ ତୋର ବାପା ବୋଉ ଆଉ ମୋର ବୁଆ ମାଆକୁ କହେବା କି ଆମେ ବାହା ହେଲୁଁ ।

ହଁ ନାଁ କିଛି କହି ପାରି ନ ଥିଲି ତାକୁ । ଖାଲି ବଲ ବଲ କରି ଅନାଇ ରହିଥିଲି । ଉପାୟହୀନ ଅସହାୟ ଗୃହାଣ୍ଡ ।

- ଚିନ୍ତି -

ସେଇଦିନ ଉପରଓଲି 'ଜରୁରା ଚିଠି ଆସିବି' କହି ଗାଁ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିଲି । B.Sc. ଫଳ ବାହାରିଲା । Engineering ରେ ନାଆଁ ଲେଖାଇଲି । ଫେରିଲି ପ୍ରାୟ ବର୍ଷକ ଉପରେ । ଆସି ଆଗ ବୋଉଠୁ ମରୁଆ କାହାଣୀ ଶୁଣିଲି । ସାରାଂଶ ହେଲା : କାହାସାଙ୍ଗେ କେଜାଣି ମରୁଆର ପାପଗର୍ଭ ହେଲା (ମୋ ଛାତିରୁ ପଥରଟାଏ ଓହ୍ଲାଇଗଲା ସତେ କି !) ସେଇ ଛତରା ଆରସାଇ ରତନାର ପିଲା ହୋଇଥିବ କି କ'ଣ ! ସିଏ ଭାରି ଲଗେଇଥିଲା ତାକୁ ମାଇପ ବନେଇ ରଖିବ ବୋଲି । ପୁଣି ତାଙ୍କ ଜାତି ଟୋକା ନେଙ୍ଗା ବି ତା ଛୁଆର ବାପ ବୋଲେଇବ । ଉଠିଆରି କରିବାକୁ ରାଜି ଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ସେ ବାରବୁଲି କ'ଣ ରାଜି ହେଲା ? ମା ନୁହଁ ରାକ୍ଷସାଟା ! ଦିବ୍ୟ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗୋରା ତକ ତକ ପିଲାଟାଏ ଜନ୍ମ କରି ବଡ଼ ପଲମଟାରେ ଛୁଆ ପାଟିରେ ପାଟିଏ ଲୁଣ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି କରି ଶୁଆଇ ଦେଲା । କୋଉଠି ଜାଣିବୁ ? ଏଇ ଆମରି ତାଟି ତଡ଼ୁଆ ସେ କଡ଼େ

ଘୋଡ଼ ଗହଳିଆ କିଆବୁଦାଟା ଅଛି, ସେଇଠି । ସଖାଳ ହେଲା ବେଳକୁ ଛୁଆଟାର ଗୋଟାଏ ଗୋଡ଼ ଶିଆଳ କୁକୁର ଶ୍ବେବାଇ ଖାଇଚକ୍ତି । ରକ୍ତ ଲାଗିବି । ପିଲାଟା ମରି ଶୋଇବି । ତା ପରେ ଥାନା ପୁଲିସ୍ ! ସିଏ କଣ ଅଳ୍ପ ଉସାତ । ହେଲେ ଛୁଆଟା ତା'ରି ଆଉ ସେଇ ମାରିବି ବୋଲି ମାନିଗଲା ମରୁଆ । ବାପ ନାଆଁ କହିଲାନି । ପୁଲିସ୍ ରତନା ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣକୁ ଓଟାରୁ ଥିଲେ । ହେଲେ, ପ୍ରମାଣ ଅଭାବରୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ । ମରୁଆକୁ କେତେଦିନ ଜେଲ ହେଇଗଲା । ଗୁଜୁରି କାମ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲା । ତା ବାପ ମଣିଆ ତ କାନ୍ଦି କାନ୍ଦି ଅନ୍ଧ ହେଇଗଲା । ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼କ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ତାଙ୍କର ସଂସାରଟାରେ ପୋଡ଼ାମୁହଁଟା ପାଇଁ ।

ବୋଉ ଉଠିଗଲା । ମୁଁ ସେଇଟି ସ୍ବାଶୁ ପାଲଟି ଗଲି ସତେ କି ମୋ କଲିଜା କିଏ କୋରି ପକଉଟି ! ଖଟଟାରେ ଯାଇ ମୁଁହ ଘୋଡ଼େଇ ଶୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲି । ପୃଥିବୀଟା ତଳୁର କାଗୁଥିଲା ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଭିତରେ । ବୋଉ ଆସି ପଚାରିଲା, - କିରେ ଅବେଳଟାରେ ଏମିତି ଶୋଇଲୁ ? କହିଲି - ରାତିରେ ନିଦ ହେଇନି । ରେଳଗାଡ଼ିରେ ଭାରି ଭିଡ଼ - ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡଟା ବିନ୍ଧୁଟି । ରାତିରେ ଆଜି କିଛି ଖାଇବିନି ।

ମତେ ଭଲଲାଗେ ବୋଲି ରାତି ପାଇଁ ବୋଉ ଛୁଞ୍ଚି ପତର ପିଠାର ବରାଦ ରଖିଥିଲା । କହିଲା - କିରେ ଏ ଦିନ ତିନିଟା ବେଳୁ ତୋର ରାତି ଚିତ୍ତା କାଙ୍କି ପଡ଼ିଲାଣି ! ଯାଆ ଯା, ବାହାରେ ଟିକେ ବୁଲାବୁଲି କରି ଆସିଲେ ଭଲ ଲାଗିବ । ନିଆଁଲଗା ମାଷ୍ଟର ଗୁଡ଼ାକ ଅଳ୍ପ ପାଠ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି ମୋ ପିଲାକୁ - ଛୁଟି ଦି ଦିନ ଆଉ ଜମା ବହି ଧରନା, ଟିକେ ଫୁର୍ତ୍ତି କର ।

ଏତେ ଦୁଃଖରେ ବି ହସ ମାଡ଼ିଲା । ନଇବନ୍ଦ ଆଡ଼େ ଏକା ଏକା ବୁଲି ଫେରିବା ବାଟରେ ରତନା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଦେଖା ହେଲା । ଗୋଟେ ତାଳଗଛ ମୂଳେ ବସି ଘଟଣାର ତଲାସ କଲି । ରତନା କହିଲା - ସେଦିନ କାଲି ଅନ୍ଧାରୁ ମରୁଆ ତୋଠିକି ଆସିବା ମୁଁ ଦେଖିଥିଲି । ତୁ ଗାଁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଗୁଲିଯିବା ବି ଦେଖିଲି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ପରର ଘଟଣା ସବୁ ବୁଝି ପାରିଲି । ଅଲେଖା'ଇ ତୁ ଏତେ ଭଲ ପଢ଼ୁ । ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ପ୍ରଥମ ହେଇଥିଲୁ । ତୁ ଆମ ଗାଁର ଗର୍ବ, ଟେକ । ଆମେ ଗାଁ ଟୋକାମାନେ ତତେ ଆଦର୍ଶ ମାନୁଥିଲୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁହି ମରୁଆକୁ ନଷ୍ଟ କଲୁ ଦେଖି ମୋର ବହୁତ କଷ୍ଟ ହେଲା । ମୁଁ ଛତରା ବାଲୁଙ୍ଗା, ଏ କଥା ଗାଁ ସାରା ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ତୋ ନାଁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ମରୁଆକୁ ମନା କଲି । ମୋ ନାଆଁ ଯୋଡ଼ି ଦେବାକୁ କହିଲି । ତୋ ନାଆଁ ପ୍ରକାଶ ନ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ରାଜି ହେଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ ନାଆଁ ଲଗେଇବାକୁ ମୋଟେ ମଙ୍ଗିଲାନି । ଗାଁ ଯାକ

ତଥାପି ମତେ ସନ୍ଦେହ କଲେ, ଛି ଛାକର କଲେ । ତାକୁ ଭେଟିବା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଜେଲଖାନା ଗଲି । ବାଗେଇବାର, ମଙ୍ଗୋଇବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲି । ମୁଁ ବାପମାଆ ଛେଉଣିଆ, ମୋର ଏଡ଼େବଡ଼ ଘର ପଡ଼ିଛି । ତାକୁ ଘରଣୀ ବନେଇବି କହିଲି । ସେ କିଛିରେ ରାଜି ହେଲାନି । ତାର ବୟସ ଉଣା ବୋଲି ଦିନ କେତେଟାରେ ତାକୁ ହାକିମ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଜେଲଖାନାରୁ ଛାଡ଼ିପାଇ ସିଏ ଯେ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗଲା କେହି କହି ପାରୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ଗାଁକୁ ତା ଘରକୁ ସିଏ ଆସିନି ଆଉ ।

ଇଏ ରତନା । ଆମ ଗାଆଁର ନାମଜାଦା ଛତରା ଚୋକା । କଥାରେ କାମରେ ଠିକଣା ନାହିଁ । ଜାତି ପତି ମାନେନି । ମାଝି ସାହାଜ ସବୁରି ସାଥରେ ହାଣ୍ଡିଆ ପିଏ । ଦଶବର୍ଷରୁ ବିଡ଼ି ସିଗ୍ରେଟ୍ ଟାଣେ । ଆଠ ଲାସରେ ତିନିଧର ଫେଲ ହେଇ ସ୍କୁଲ ଛାଡ଼ିଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାରି ଉତ୍ତରର ଏଡ଼େ ବଡ଼ ହିମ୍ମତବାଲା ଉଦାର ମନଟା ମତେ ମୁଗ୍ଧ କଲା । କୃତଜ୍ଞତାରେ ତାକୁ ଆଉଁସି ଦେଉଥିଲି । ଆଖି ପୋଛିଲି । ପରୁରିଲି - ଆଉ କଣ ?

ଆଉ କଣ କହୁଥିଲା ଶୁଣିବୁ ? କହିଲା ଯୋଉ ପେଟରେ ତୋର ଏଡ଼େବଡ଼ ପତୁଆ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଭାଇର ପିଲା ରହିଥିଲା, ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା ପାରିଲାନି । ସେଠି ଆଉ ମୁଁ କାହାରି କାହାରି ପିଲା ରଖେଇ ଦେବିନି ।

ସେଇ ଦିନରୁ ମୁଁ ମନେ ମନେ ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞା କରିଥିଲି ବିଭା ହେବିନି । ଆଉ, କଟକ ଯାଇ ଦିନକ ପରେ ଗୋଟେ ମେଡ଼ିକାଲ ଛାତ୍ରକୁ ଧରି, ମିଛରେ ଦୁଇଟା ଛୁଆର ବାପ ବୋଲି କହି, ଅପରେସନ କାହିଁକି ଯେ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲି ନିଜେ ବି ଜାଣେନି ।

- ଚାରି -

ବାବାଜୀ ପାଖକୁ ଯିବା ପରେ ରମା ପେଟରେ ସତରେ ପିଲା ସଂଚରିଥିଲା । “ଓଧ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଭୁଆଁ ବିରାଡ଼ି ବାଇ” ଭଳି ମନେ ମନେ ଚିକେ ଚମକି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ବି ଅଲୌକିକତାରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିଥିଲି । ପୁଣି ଭାବିଥିଲି, ମୋର ବନ୍ଧ୍ୟାତ୍ୱର ଅପରେସନ ହୁଏ ତ ଅସଫଳ ହୋଇଥିବ । ସେ ଯାହାହଉ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଖୁସିରେ ମୁଁ ବି ସାମିଲ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲି । ରମା ପୁଅ ପାଇଥିଲା । ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରିଂ ଛାତ୍ରାବସ୍ଥାରେ ମୋର ବିଭାଘର ସରିଥିଲା ଓ ସେଇ ବର୍ଷ ମୁଁ କୃତ୍ରିମ ସହକାରେ ବୟନଶିଳ୍ପ ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ହାସଲ କରିଥିଲି । ପୁଅଟା କିନ୍ତୁ କଲା ହୋଇଥିଲା । ବାପା କହୁଥିଲେ ସେ ଭାରି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀବନ୍ତ । ଆମ

ଫ୍ୟାକ୍ଟରୀର ଶୁଭାରମ୍ଭ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ବୋଉ କହୁଥିଲା ଛୁଆଟା କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗୋଟାପଣେ ତା ଶୁଶୁର ତଥା ମୋ ଜେଜେବାପାଙ୍କ ଚେହେରା ଆଣିବି । ଗେହ୍ଲାରେ ନାଆଁ ଦେଇଥିଲୁ କାହୁଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପୁଅ ପେଟରେ ରହିଲା ଦିନରୁ ରମାକୁ ନାନା ବ୍ୟାଧି ଘୋଟିଲା । ଯେତେ ଡାକ୍ତର ବୈଦ୍ୟ କଲେ ବି କିଛି ଫଳ ହେଲାନି । ପୁଅ ଜନ୍ମ ପରେ ରମା କିନ୍ତୁ ପୁରାପୁରି ପାଗଳି ହୋଇଗଲା । କାହାକୁ ମାରିଲାତ କାହାକୁ କାମୁଡ଼ିଲା । ଲୁଗାପଟା ଛିଡ଼ାଇଲା । ଖାଇବା ବାସନ ଫୋପଡ଼ା ଫୋପଡ଼ି କଲା । ବୋଉ କହିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ବଂଶରେ କୁଆଡ଼େ କିଏ ପାଗଳ ଥିଲେ । କାଳେ ମାରିଦବ ବୋଲି ପୁଅକୁ ବୋଉ ଗୋଡ଼େ ଗୋଡ଼େ ଜଗିଲା । ରମା ଅବସ୍ଥା ବେଳୁ ବେଳ ଅସମ୍ଭାଳ ହେଲା । ଶେଷକୁ ଗାଡ଼ି ଭଡ଼ା କରି ତାକୁ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରର ମେଣ୍ଟାଲ ହସପିଟାଲକୁ ନେଇଗଲି । ବାଟସାରା ମୋ ପାଖରେ ଦୁଇ ଗୁପ୍ତ ବସିଥିଲା । ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କଲି । ପରୁଣ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କାର ଡ୍ରାଫ୍ଟ ଆଗୁଆ ଦେଲି । ପୁଣି ଆସିବି, ଟିକିଏ ଭଲ ହେଲେ ନେଇଯିବି କହି ବିଦାୟ ନେଲା ବେଳେ, ରମା ଆଖି ଛଳ ଛଳ କଲା । ମୋ’ ଗୋଡ଼ତଳେ ପଡ଼ିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୁରିହାତ ଆଗେଇବି କି ନାହିଁ ହାଁ ହାଁ ଶବ୍ଦରେ ପଛକୁ ଫେରି ଚାହିଁଲି । ତିନି ତାଲା ପିଣ୍ଡାର ଖୋଲା ଝରକାରୁ ରମାର କାନିଟା ଖସି ଯାଉଛି ତଳ ଆଡ଼େ । ରମା ତଳକୁ ଡିଆଁ ମାରିବି । ହଠାତ୍ ଦୁଇ ହାତରେ ମୁହଁ ଗୁପ୍ତ ମୁଁ ଚିତ୍କାର କରି ଉଠିଲି । ମୋର ହାତଗୋଡ଼ ଅଚଳ ହୋଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା । ଦଣ୍ଡକରେ ଲୋକ ଜମା ହୋଇଗଲେ । ଦୌଡ଼ା ଦୌଡ଼ି କଲେ । ମାତ୍ର ସିଏ ପାଞ୍ଚମିନିଟ ବି ବଞ୍ଚି ନଥିଲା । ଡାକ୍ତର ମତେ ବୁଝାଉଥିଲେ ବହୁତ ପାଗଳ ପ୍ରଥମ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ କେବଳ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଥାଆନ୍ତି । ସେ ଟଙ୍କା ପରୁଣହଜାର ଆଉ ଡ୍ରାପସ ଆଣିଲିନି । ରମା ନାଆଁରେ କିଛି କରିବାକୁ କହିଲି ।

ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ ଫେରିବା ବାଟ ଗୁହଁ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଆହୁରି ଦୁଃଖ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥିଲା । ରମାର ଆଲମାରା ଥାକରୁ ମୋ ନାଆଁରେ ଗୋଟେ ମୁଦା ଲଫାଫା ପାଇଲି । ଖୋଲିଲି । ମୋଠାକୁ ସେଇଟା ତାର ଚିଠି, ଶେଷ ଚିଠି । ପହିଲେ ମତେ ବହୁତ ବହୁତ ଜୁହାର ଜଣାଇ କ୍ଷମା ମାଗିବି । ବଡ଼ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କୁ କୋଟି ଦଣ୍ଡବତ କରି ଜନ୍ମ ଜନ୍ମାନ୍ତରେ ମତେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ରୂପେ ପାଇବାକୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିବି । ତା ପରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବି ସିଏ ପାଗଳ ନଥିଲା । ଜଣାଇବି ହୁକୁମ ଦେବା ବାହାନାରେ ବାବାଜୀ ଟଙ୍କା ଧପେଇବି । କାରଣ ବାରା ନାଆଁରେ ନିଶା ପିଆଇ ତାକୁ ନଷ୍ଟ କରିବି । ଚିଠିରେ

ଲେଖିବି । ବଡ଼ି ଅନ୍ଧାରରୁ ମୋର ଅବସ୍ଥା, ମୋର ଲୁଗାପଟାର ଅବସ୍ଥା ବୁଝିଲା ଭଳି ତେଜା ମୋର ଆସି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଅତର୍କିତ ଚରିତ୍ରକୁ ଗୁହଁଲା ବେଳକୁ ଯାଗ ନିଆଁ ସେକଡ଼ର ଗୋଟେ ଗାତ ଭିତରେ ବାବାଜୀ ପଶି ଯାଉଛି । ପୁଣି ଦେଖିଲି, ସେଠି ଗୋଟେ ବଡ଼ କଳସା ଥୁଆ ହେଉଛି ସେଇ ଜାଗାରେ । ଆଖି ମକଚି ମକଚି ବାରମ୍ବାର ଗୁହଁଥିଲା । ସେତିକି ବେଳେ ବୋଉ ଆସ୍ଥାନ (ନା, ନିଆଁଥାନ) ବାହାରୁ ତାଲା ଖୋଲି ମତେ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଚେତନ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ବସାଇ ଘରକୁ ଆଣିଥିଲେ । ଲୋକଙ୍କର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହାସଲ କରିବାକୁ ଶୁଦ୍ଧିକାଠୀ ସେ ଘରଲୋକ ଦେଉଥିଲା । ଠାକୁରାଣୀ ଆନ; ପିଲା-କବିଳା ହାଉଲା ଖାଇବେ, ଡରିବେ କହି, ଗାଁଠୁ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଦୂରରେ ବନେଇଥିଲା । ତୁମର ସେ ଛୋଟ ଗୁକରପିଲା ମାସନ୍ତକୁ ମିଠେଇ ଖାଇବାକୁ ପଇସା ଦେଇ, ସବୁ ଗୁପ୍ତ ଖବର ସଂଗ୍ରହ କଲି । କେମିତି ସୁରାକ ପାଇଲା କେଜାଣି! ମତେ ହୁକୁମ ଦେବାର ବୁଦ୍ଧିନି ପରେ ପଳାଇଛି । କହିଛି, ତା ଗୁରୁ ତାକୁ ପାଞ୍ଚଟି ପିଲା ଦେବାର ହୁକୁମ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ନଈଠୁ ତା ଆସ୍ଥାନ ଯାଏ ସୁତଙ୍ଗ ବାଟ ବାଲି ପୋତା ହୋଇଛି । ସବୁ ବୁଝି ପାରିଲି । ପିଲାଟା ବୋଧେ ତା'ରି, ମାରି ଦେବାକୁ ମନ କରିଥିଲା । ବୋଉ ରକ୍ଷା କରିଦେଲେ । ବୁଢ଼ୀ ଲୋକ ! ଆଉ କେତେଦିନକୁ ! ଯାହା ମନ ବୁଝୁଛି କରନ୍ତୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ପାପ ଦେହ ନେଇ ତୁମ ପାଖକୁ ଆଉ କେମିତି ଯାଇଥାଆନ୍ତି । ପାଗଳାମାର ନାଟକ କଲି । ପୁଣି ମତେ ଦେବତା କହି, କ୍ଷମା ମାଗି ଚିଠିର ଅନ୍ତ କରିଛି ।

ହାୟ ଭଗବାନ ! ଇୟେ କି ପ୍ରହସନ !! ମୁଁ ପୁଣି ଦେବତା !!!

ପ୍ରିୟ ପାଠକ ପାଠିକା ! କାହାଣୀ ତ ପଢ଼ିଲେ । ବହୁବର୍ଷ ବିତି ଗଲାଣି ଏ ଭିତରେ । ବାପା ବୋଉ ମରି ହଜି ଗଲେଣି । ସେଠିକାର ସବୁ ବିକି, ଏଇ ବିଦେଶରେ ଏବେ ମସ୍ତ କାରଖାନା ବନେଇ ସର୍ବେସର୍ବ ହୋଇ ବସିଛି । କାହାକୁ ସାଥରେ ଘେନି ଆସିଛି । ତାର କି ଦୋଷ !! ସିଏ ଏବେ ପତିଶବ୍ଦର ଜୁଆନ୍ । ବହୁତ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ହାସଲ କଲାଣି । ଜମା ଆଶୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେବେନି । ତା'ର ମୁହଁଟାରେ ମୁଁ ମରୁଆର ପ୍ରତିଛବି ଦେଖିପାରୁଛି । ସେମିତି ଗ୍ରୀକ୍ ଢାଞ୍ଚାର କମ୍ପା ବେହେରା, ଠିଆ ନାକ, କଟା କଟା ଆଖି ମୁଗୁନି ପଥର ପ୍ରତିମା ଭଳି ଅପୂର୍ବ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗଢ଼ଣ । ମୋର ମରୁ ଜୀବନରେ ସିଏ ଓଏସିସ୍ । ଏବେ ବି ମୁଁ ତାକୁ ଗେଲ କରୁଛି Do not be so silly କହି ଶାସନ କରୁଛି ସେ ।

ହଉ ମୋ କଥା ଥାଉ । ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଏକାନ୍ତ ଅନୁରୋଧ । ଏଇ ବିଦେଶରେ ମୋରି ଭଲିଆ ଯଦି କେହି ଆପଣାର ଅବୈଧ ସନ୍ତାନ ଅଥବା ଉପେକ୍ଷିତା ପ୍ରିୟାଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ୱଦେଶରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଥାଆନ୍ତି, ମତେ ଗୁପ୍ତରେ ହେଲେବି ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତୁ । ଏବେ ବି ସତ ନାମ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବାର ସର୍ବସାହସ ମୋର ନାହିଁ । କଟକର ବସୁନ୍ଦରା ଭଳି, କୋରାପୁଟର ଡାହା ମାଳ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଶହେ ଏକର ଜମି ନେଇ, ଅନାଥାଶ୍ରମ, ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା, ଲାଇବ୍ରେରୀ, ସର୍ବଜାତୀୟ ବିବାହ ମଣ୍ଡପ ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଇଉନିଭରସିଟିର ଶୁଭାରମ୍ଭ କରା ହୋଇଛି । ପ୍ରାୟଶ୍ଚିତ୍ତ ହିସାବରେ ପଇସା ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ମୁଁ ଦେଲେ ବି, କାମ ଚାଲିଛି ଟ୍ରଷ୍ଟ ଜରିଆରେ । ତଳେ ଠିକଣା ଦେଲି, ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ସିଧା ସଳଖ ସେଠିକି ପଠାଇ ପାରନ୍ତି । ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ଠିକଣା । ■■

ବାସନ୍ତ ଅପା

ନନ୍ଦିତା ବେହେରା

ହଠାତ୍ ରାତିରେ ଫୋନଟି ବାଜି ଉଠିଲା । ଅଧରାତିରେ ପୁଣି କିଏ ଡାକିଲା ଭାବି ଫୋନଟି ଧକ୍କା ବେଳକୁ ସେପଟୁ ବାସନ୍ତା ଅପାର କଣ୍ଠସ୍ଵର, “କଣ ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗୁନିକି, ମହା ଅଳସେଇ ହେଲୁଣି, କେତେ ଡେରିଯାଏ ଶୋଉଛୁ କିଲୋ!” ଅପା ନିଦୁଆ କଣ୍ଠରେ ମୁଁ କହିଲି, ‘ଅପା ତମର ଦିନ ହେଲେ ଆମର ଏଠି ରାତି ଅଧ, ଆଉ ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିବ କେମିତି !’ ସିଏ କିନ୍ତୁ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ନାରାଜ, ତାର ଗପିଗୁଲିଥାଏ । ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବିଲି ଖରାବେଳିଆ ପାନଖଣ୍ଡେ ଖାଇଦେଇ ମନଶୁଥିରେ ଫୋନ କରୁଛି । ବାସନ୍ତା ଅପା ଭାବୁଛି ଯେମିତି ପୃଥିବୀର ସମସ୍ତ ସମୟ ତାରି ପାଖରେ ହିଁ ଅଟକି ଯାଇଛି । ଯାହେଉ ଅଧିକ କଥା ନ ବଢେଇ ମତେ ଜଣେଇଲା ତାର ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବା ବିଷୟ । ଶୁଣି ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ଲାଗିଲା । ସାରା ରାତି ମତେ ନିଦ ନଥିଲା । ଏ ଦେଶରେ ପୁଣି ବାସନ୍ତା ଅପାକୁ ଦେଖିବି; ମୁଁ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନରେ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଭାବିନଥିଲି । ଖାଲି ତୁହାଇ ତୁହାଇ ମନେ ପଡୁଥିଲା ମୋର ଏଇ ପୃଥିବୀର ସପ୍ନମାଣ୍ଡୁର୍ୟ ପିଉସା କଥା । ବାସନ୍ତା ଅପା ମୋ ମନର ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ଏକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀ ।

ଘରେ ଅତି ଅଳିଅଳ ହୋଇଥିଲା ବୋଲି ଜେଜେମା ତାକୁ ସରାଗରେ ଡାକେ ତଅପୋଇ । ସାତ ଭାଉଜରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ନଣନ୍ଦ । ବୋଉ, ଖୁଡ଼ି, ବଡ଼ବୋଉ ସମସ୍ତେ ଯେମିତି ତାକୁ ଘେରି ରହିଥାନ୍ତି । ତାରି ଭିତରେ କିଶୋରୀ ପ୍ରଜାପତିଟି ଭଳି ଉଡ଼ି ବୁଲୁଥାଏ ସିଏ । ତା ବାହାଘର କଥା ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୋର ମନେଅଛି । ପିଲାଟିଏ ହୋଇଥାଏ ମୁଁ । ତାର କନିଆବେଶଟି ଏଯାଏ ମୋ ମନରୁ ଯାଇନି । ତା ଭଳିଆ ସିଦ୍ଧିଚେ ପିନ୍ଧିବି ବୋଲି ଅଝଟ ହୋଇ ଜିଦି କରି ଶେଷରେ ବୋଉରୁ କାନ ମୋଡ଼ା ଖାଇଥିଲି । କେତେ ବାଜା ରୋଷଣା ଭିତରେ କଣ୍ଠେଇଟିଏ ଭଳି ଅପା ବସି ରହିଥାଏ । ଶେଷରେ ବିଦାହେଲା ବେଳକୁ ଯେତେକ ବାହୁନା ସ୍ଵରଧରି ବାହୁନିଲା । ବହେ ହସିଥିଲି ମୁଁ ସେଦିନ । ଅନେକ ଥର ତାର ସେଇ ନାକ ସୁଁସୁଁ କାନ୍ଦଣା ଭିତରେ ଦିଧାଡ଼ି ଗାତକୁ ଅନୁକରଣ କରି । କେତେ ହସେଇଛି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ । ଏମିତି କିଛିବର୍ଷ ବିତିଗଲା ଅପା ତା ବରପାଖେ ଛୋଟ ପୁଅ ନେଇ ସୁଖର ସଂସାର କରିଥାଏ

ଓ ଆମେ ଆମର ପାଠଶାଳା ନେଇ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥାଉ । ସିଏ ତ ସବୁଦିନେ ଖୁସିବାସିଆ । ତା କଥା ମନେପଡ଼ିଲେ ତା’ର ହସଖୁସିଆ ମୁହଁଟା ଆଖିରେ ନାଚି ଉଠେ । ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ଖବର ଆସିଲା; ବାସନ୍ତା ଅପା ଜୀବନର ପୃଷ୍ଠାଟି ଯେମିତି ଲେଉଟି ପଡ଼ିଲା । ତାର ଅଜାଣତରେ ପିଉସା ଗୁଲିଗଲେ **heart attack** ରେ, ଘରେ ଯେମିତି ତହଲ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ମୋର ମନେ ଅଛି କଟକ ଷ୍ଟେସନକୁ ମୁଁ ଯାଇଥାଏ ବାପାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଣିବାକୁ । ଟ୍ରେନ ଆସିଯାରିଥାଏ । ଦାଦା, ବାପା ତାକୁ ଧରି ଆଣୁଥାନ୍ତି । ତାକୁ ଦେଖି ହଠାତ୍ ତାର ବିବାହ ବେଳର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ମୋ ଆଖିରେ ନାଚିଗଲା । ଆଗକୁ ଝୁଙ୍କିପଡ଼ି ଗୁପାକଣ୍ଠରେ ଗୁମୁରି ଗୁମୁରି କାନ୍ଦୁଥାଏ ବାସନ୍ତା ଅପା । ତାର ସେ କାନ୍ଦ ଆଉ ବାହାଘର ବେଳର କାନ୍ଦଣା ଭିତରେ କେତେ ଫରକ । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ସମସ୍ତ ଶକ୍ତି ସେ ହରାଇ ବସିଛି, କଣ୍ଠରେ କେମିତି ଏକ ନିଃସହାୟ ଭାବ । ତା ପାଖକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ମୋର ସାହାସ ହେଉନଥାଏ । ସମଗ୍ର ପରିବେଶ ଯେମିତି ବିଷାଦଗ୍ରସ୍ତ । ଠିକ୍ ହେଲା ଅପା ଶାଶୁଘରକୁ ଯିବନି, ବାପଘରେ ଯେମିତି ତଳୁଥିଲା ଗାଁରେ ଯେମିତି ଚଳିବ । ପୁଅଟି ଧରି ଖଞ୍ଜାଘରେ ଖୁବ୍ ଶାନ୍ତ ଚଳି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ବାସନ୍ତା ଅପା ଧଳା ଶାଢ଼ିଟିଏ ପିନ୍ଧି ନିରାଭରଣା ରୂପରେ କୌଣସି ମତେ ନିଜକୁ ତଳେଇ ନେଇଥିଲା ସେ । ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ସନ୍ଦ୍ୟସ୍ନାତା ଅପା ଧଳା ଶାଢ଼ୀ ପିନ୍ଧି ସରସ୍ଵତୀ ଭଳି ଦିଶେ । ଜେଜେମା ସମୟେ ସମୟେ ବାହୁନି ଉଠେ ତାକୁ ଦେଖି । ଜେଜେମା ଦୁଃଖରେ ତାକୁ କେତେବେଳେ ତଅପୋଇରୁ ଦୁଃଖାନି, ତ ଗୋବରଗୋଟେଇ, ଅଭାଗିନୀ ଏମିତି କେତେକଣ ନାଁ ଦେଇ ଡାକେ । ଅପାର କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଥିପ୍ରତି ଖାତିର ନଥାଏ । ସିଏ ତାର ସାନ ନଣନ୍ଦଭଳି ସହି ସମ୍ଭାଳି ତଳୁଥାଏ । ପୁଅଟି ବେଶ୍ ଭଲ ପଢୁଛି ତାକୁ ନେଇ ତାର ଗର୍ବ । ଦିନେ ଦିନେ କହେ “ମୋ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଉପରେତ ମୋ ହାତ ନାହିଁ”, ସେଇ କୁନାଟାକୁ କାଳିଆ ଉପରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ମୁଁ ନିଶ୍ଚିନ୍ତ । ତେଣିକି ସେ ଠାକୁର ବୁଝିବେ, ମୁଁ ବା କିଏ ? ତାର ଏ ଭାବ ଦେଖି ଓମରଖୟାମ୍ଭା କବିତାର ଅନୁବାଦ କେଇଧାଡ଼ି ମୋର ମନେ ପଡ଼େ ।

ନିୟତି ଯେ ଲିପି ଲେଖିଛି ଲଳାଟେ ଅଙ୍କୁଳି ଧାରେ ଶୁଳି,
ଆନନ୍ଦେ କରବ ତହୁଁ ଏକ ପଦ ନୟନୁ ଅଶ୍ରୁ ଢାଳି ।
ପ୍ରକାର ବଳେ ପୁଣ୍ୟ ବିଧାନେ ସବିନୟ ଅନୁନୟେ,
ପାରିବନି କେହି ଲେଉଟାଇ ତାରେ ସେ ଲେଖା ବକ୍ତ୍ରପ୍ରାୟେ ।

ମୁଁ ଭାବେ ଜୀବନର ଏହି ଏତେବଡ଼ ଦର୍ଶନକୁ ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ଭଳି ମୁଖ ଗାଉଁଲିଆ ମଣିଷଟି କେମିତି ବୁଝିଲା ? ମୋ ବାହାଘର ବେଳେ ହସିହସି କହୁଥାଏ ‘କୁନା ମୋର ଦିନେ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ି କାହିଁରେ କଣ ହେବ ଦେଖିବୁ’ । ସତକୁ ସତ ମୋର ଏଠିକୁ ଆସିବାର କିଛିବର୍ଷ ପରେ କୁନା ଆମେରିକା ଆସୁଛି ଶୁଣିଥିଲି । ଗର୍ବରେ ଛାତି ମୋର ଫୁଲି ଉଠିଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଥମେ New York ରୁ ଫୋନ୍ ପାଇଲି । ସେତେବେଳେ କୁନା ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ଆସିଥାଏ । ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ପ୍ରତି ସପ୍ତାହରେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଲେଖା ଚିଠି ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ଦିଏ, “କୁନା କଥା ବୁଝୁଥିବୁ, ସିଏ ତତେ ଲାଗିଲା”, ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଥରେ ଗୋଟେ ଚିଠିରେ ଲେଖିଥିଲା, “ପୁଅ ମୋର ଅଫିସରୁ ଫେରିଲା ବେଳକୁ ଭୋକିଲା ଥିବ ଟିକେ ଗୁଆଘିଅରେ ଅବାଛେଗୁ ଦେଇ ବୁଡ଼ା ଭାଜି ମୁସୁ ମୁସୁ କରି ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦେବୁ ଯେ ସିଏ ଖୁସିରେ ଖାଇବ” । ଚିଠିପାଇ ବହେ ହସିଥିଲି ମୁଁ । ଆଛାକଥା ସିଏ ନ୍ୟୁୟର୍କରେ ତ ମୁଁ ଆଇଜୋନାରେ ଅଫିସ୍ ଫେରନ୍ତା କୁନାକୁ ଉତ୍ସୁମ ବୁଡ଼ାଭଜା ପୁଣି କେମିତି ଦେବି ? ତାଛଡ଼ା ଏଠିକାର ଭୌଗୋଳିକ ଦୂରତ୍ୱ ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ବା କାହିଁ ବୁଝିବ ? ତାକୁ କେମିତି ବୁଝେଇବି ? ସେଠି ବରଫ ପଡ଼ିଲେ, ଏଠି ଆମେ ବିରିବାଟି ବଢ଼ିପାରି ବସୁ । କୁନାକୁ ଫୋନରେ ଜଣେଇଲି, ହସରେ ଉଡ଼େଇ ଦେଲା ସେ । ଭାବିଲି, ଏଥର ନିଜେ ଆସୁଛି, ଦେଖିଯିବ ଏଠିକାର ଜୀବନ, କହିଥିଲେ ବୋଧେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଯାଇ ନଥାନ୍ତା ।

କୁନାର ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ଅଭିଳାଷ ଥିଲା ଶୁକ୍ରିନା କଲେ ଆଗ ବୋଉ ତାର ଆମେରିକା ବୁଲିଆସିବ । ଏବେ କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଚିନ୍ତା, ତାକୁ ଚଳେଇବ କେମିତି । ସାଧାସିଧା, ଖୁସିବାସିଆ ମଫସଲା ମଣିଷକୁ କୁନା ତେଣେ ଏକୁଟିଆ ଏଠିକା ମାପରୁପ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଭିତରେ କେମିତି ତା ରହଣୀ କଟିବ ତା ଥିଲା ତାର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଚିନ୍ତା । ବୁହେଁ ମିଶି ଠିକ୍ କଲୁ ଅପା କିଛିଦିନ ତା ପୁଅ ପାଖେ ରହି ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ଶୁଲିଆସିବ, ମୁଁ ଚଳେଇ ନେବି । ନହେଲେ ତାର ଯାହା ସୁବିଧା ଅସୁବିଧା ଫୋନରେ ବୁଝି ବତେଇ ଦେଉଥିବି ।

ସମୟ ସୁବିଧା ଦେଖି ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ଆସି ଆମେରିକାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ଆସୁ ଆସୁ ଦି ଦିନ ଯାଇନି ଫୋନକରି ମହା ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ, “କି ଜାଗାରେ ଅଛଲୋ, ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ବିଲେଇ ପିଲାଟେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳୁନି । ଆମ ଗାଁ ଭଲ । କେମିତି କଟକ ପଳାନ୍ତି” ଏମିତି ତାର ଦିନରାତି ଅସରନ୍ତି ଅପେକ୍ଷା । କୁନା ତାର କାମ ନେଇ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ତେଣେ ଭଲିକି ଭଲି ରାନ୍ଧି ବାଢ଼ି ସଜାଡ଼ି ପୁଅକୁ ଅନେଇ ବସିଥାଏ । ଶେଷରେ ତା ବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା ଦେଖି କୁନା ତାକୁ ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ପଠେଇଦେଲା । ଭାବିଲା ହଠାତ୍ ଗହଳିରୁ ଆସି ବୋଉ ତାର ଏକୁଟିଆ ଏଠି ଚଳି ପାରୁନି । ଠିକ୍ ହେଲା ମୋ ପାଖେ ଯେତେଦିନ ରହିବ ରହି ଶୁଲିଯିବ । ଶେଷରେ ଦିନେ ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ଆସି ହାଜର ସେଇ ହସ ହସ ମୁହଁ, ନିରଳସ ଶୁଲି । କଥା କଥାକେ ଖିଲିଖିଲି ହସ, ଟାଣି ଟାପରା । ଶୁଲିଗଲେ ମସଲାଦିଆ ପାନର ମଧୁର ବାସ୍ନା ମୋର ସମସ୍ତ ସଚେତନତାକୁ କାହିଁ ସେ ପୁରୁଣା ଦିନକୁ ଟାଣି ନେଉଥାଏ । ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ଆମର ଟିକେ ଉଜ ପାଟିଆ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ କହନ୍ତି “ଓହୋ ଅପାଙ୍କୁ କହ, ଟିକେ ଆସେ ଡାକିବେ, ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ କଣ ଭାବିବେ” । ଅପା ଶୁଣି କହେ “କି ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଅଛ ? ଏଠି କଣ ସମସ୍ତେ କୂଳ ଭୂଆଶୁଣି ଭଳି ବୁଝୁଛୁ କଥା କହନ୍ତି ?” ମୁଁ ଦେଖିଲି କେତେ ଦିନ ବା ରହିବ ତାକୁ ବଦଳେଇବା ଲାଭ କଣ ? ଦିନ ରାତି ରନ୍ଧାବନ୍ଧା, ମୋର ପିଲା ବୁଲଟିଙ୍ଗୁ ନେଇ ସିଏ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । କୁଆଡ଼େ ବୁଲିଯିବା କହିଲେ ସହଜେ ବାହାରେନି । ମୂଳରୁ କେମିତି ଏଠିକାର ସବୁକିଛି ତାକୁ ଅଡ଼ୁଆ ଲାଗିଥିଲା । ମୋ ଝିଅକୁ ଚିଡ଼େଇ କହିବ ‘ରଖଲୋ ତମ ସାହେବୀ ଢଙ୍ଗ ମୁଁ ମୋ ଦେଶରେ ରାଣୀ ତମେ ହେଲ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରକାଶୀ’ ନାକ କାନ୍ଦୁରା ଝିଅଟା ମୋର, ଆଇ କାହିଁକି କାଣୀ ତାକୁ କହୁଛି ବୋଲି ଘଣ୍ଟେ କାନ୍ଦିବ । ଏମିତି ଦିନରାତି କଟୁଥିବ । ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ଯେଉଁଠି ଗହଳି ସେଇଠି, ତା ସଙ୍ଗେ ଗପୁଗପୁ ଦିନରାତି ଜଣା ପଡ଼େନି । ଥରେ ଜଣେ ଭାରତୀୟ ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ତାକୁ ରାତ୍ରାଭୋଜନ ପାଇଁ ନେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ଭଲରେ ଭଲରେ ଖାଇପିଇ ସିଏ ଅଧା ହିନ୍ଦିକୁ ଇଏ ଅଧା ଓଡ଼ିଆ କହି ଚଳେଇ ନେଲେ । ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପାଟା ହଟିବାର ନୁହେଁ । ଆସିଲା ବେଳକୁ ମହାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ମତେ କହିଲା, “ଏଠିତ ସମସ୍ତେ କଳଗାଉଣା ଭଳି ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଶବ୍ଦଟିକୁ ମୁଖସ୍ତ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଇଏ କି କଥା, ଉଠିଲେ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ବସିଲେ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ, ପାଣି ଟିକେ ପିଇଲେ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ, ଏମାନେ ତ ହାଲିଆ ହୋଇ ଯାଉଥିବେ” । ଭାବିଲି ଇଏ ପୁଣି

ଗୋଟେ ନୂଆ ସମସ୍ୟା ଦେଖା ଦେଲାଣି । ତାଙ୍କୁ କହିଲି ଏଠିକା ସଭ୍ୟ ଜଗତର ଇଏ ଏକ ମାପକାଠି । ତଥାପି ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ବୁଝିବାକୁ ନାରାଜ । ତା ପରଦିନ ଅଫିସରୁ ଆସୁଆସୁ କହିଲା “ଟିକେ ବସ ଜରୁରୀ କଥା ଅଛି । ଶୁଣୁ ଶୁଣୁ ଗତରାତିରେ ଯେଉଁ ଭଦ୍ର ମହିଳା ରାତ୍ରୀଭୋଜନ ପାଇଁ ଡାକିଥିଲେ ସିଏ ଫୋନରେ ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପାକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ସମୟ କରି ଯାଇଥିବାରୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଇଥିଲେ । ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ହାରିବା ପାତ୍ରୀ ନୁହେଁ । ମହାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ତାର ଯୁକ୍ତି ହେଲା ସେମାନେତ କଷ୍ଟକରି ରାନ୍ଧିବାଢ଼ି ଖୁଆଇଲେ, ପୁଣି ଆଗତୁରା ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇ ଆମ ମୁହଁ ବାନ୍ଧି ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଏବେ କରିବି କଣ ? ଭାବିଲି ଅପା ଭାରୁଛି ନମ୍ରତାରେ ସିଏ କାହିଁକି ମୋଠୁ ଟପିବେ ? ତାର ସମସ୍ୟାକୁ ହସରେ ଉଡ଼େଇଦେଇ କହିଲି ତୁ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ତ ପଢ଼ିବୁ କଥାରେ ନଥା ଲଗେଇ ଦିପଦ କହି ଦେଲୁନି । ଏତେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କାହିଁକି ? ହଠାତ୍ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କଲାଭଳି ତା ମୁଁହ ଉଜ୍ଜଳ ହୋଇଉଠିଲା । କହିଲା “ବୁଝିଲି ଏଥର ଯିଏ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବ ତାକୁ ଧନ୍ୟରୁ ବାଦଦେଇ ପୁଣି ଏମିତି ଧନ୍ୟରେ ପୋତି ପକେଇବି ଯେ, ଅପର ପକ୍ଷର ମୁଁହ ବନ୍ଦ ହୋଇଯିବ । ମୁଁ ହାଲୁକା ହେଲି, ଭାବିଲି ଅନ୍ତତଃ ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ଆମେରିକା ଆସି ଏତିକି ଶିଖିଲା, ଗାଁରେ ଗଲେ କାମ ଦେବ ।

ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପାର ଯିବା ଦିନ ପାଖେଇ ଆସିଲା । ତାର ସେ ଅସରନ୍ତି ହସ, ଆଦର ଯତ୍ନ ସବୁଥିରେ ବାନ୍ଧିହୋଇ

ଯାଉଥିଲି ମୁଁ । ସିଏ ଗଲେ ଘରଟା କେତେ ଫାଙ୍କା ଲାଗିବ ସେଇ ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ମୁଁ । ପିଲା ଦୁଇଟା ମୋର, ତା କୋଳ ଛାଡ଼ନ୍ତିନି । ଛାଡ଼ିଲା ବେଳେ କଣ କହୁଛି ଭାବି ପାଟିରେ ଭାଷା ଲେଉଟୁ ନଥାଏ । ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ତାର ଅନର୍ଗଲ ଗପ ଶୁଣିଥାଏ । କହୁଥାଏ “ତୁ କୁନାକୁ ବୁଝା, କାହିଁକି ବାସି ପାଉଁରୁଟି ଶ୍ରେବାଇ ଏଠି ପଡ଼ି ରହିବ । ସେଠି ଗଲେ କେତେ ପିଠା କାକରା ଗରମ ଗରମ ଛାଣି ତାକୁ ଖୁଆଇବି । ନ ଦେଖିଲା ଓଡ଼ ଛଅ ଫଡ଼ା । କି ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ପଡ଼ି ରହିଛିଲୋ ସତେ ।” ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପାର କିଛି କଥା ମୋ କାନରେ ପଶି କିଛି ବାହାରି ଯାଉଥାଏ । କେମିତି ବୁଝାଇବି, ତାଭଳି ସରଳିଆ ମଣିଷଟିକୁ ଯିଏ ଜୀବନକୁ ସର୍ବଦା ଏକ ସହଜ ଗତିରେ ଧରି ନେଇଛି, ସେଠି ଆଶା, ନିରାଶାର କିଛି ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳ ନାହିଁ । ସିଧା ସଳଖ ତା କଥାର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବା ଅସମ୍ଭବ । ଏଣେ ତାକୁ ବିଦାୟ ଦେବାର ଦୁଃଖ ମୋ ଛାତିକୁ ଶୂନ୍ୟ କରିଦେଉଥାଏ । ମୋର ବିଷାଦଗ୍ରସ୍ତ ମୁଁହଟା ଦେଖି ହଠାତ୍ ସେ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ହୋଇ କହିଲା, “ମୋର ସମସ୍ତ ଅଳି ଅର୍ଦଳି ସହି ତୁ ତୋ ବର, ପିଲାପିଲି ସମସ୍ତେ ମତେ ସମ୍ମାନି ନେଲ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତମମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଉଛି । ହୋ ହୋ ହୋଇ ହସି ଉଠିଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ । ମୁଁ ତାର ହସ ହସ ମୁଁହକୁ ଚାହିଁ କହିଲି ବାସନ୍ତୀ ଅପା ! ତୁ ଆଉ ତୋ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ସତେ କଣ କେବେ ଭୁଲିହେବ ?

■ ■

ଶକ୍ତିତ ପ୍ରଦୀପ

ଶୈଳରାଣୀ ମିଶ୍ର

ସେଦିନ ଜନ୍ମୁଥିଲା ଅଶକ୍ତି ପ୍ରଦୀପଟିଏ
ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱଗାମୀ ଶିଖା ତା'ର ସ୍ଥିର... ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ
ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ... ସମୋହିତ... ତନ୍ମୟ ଆତ୍ମ...
ନିଷ୍ଠାରେ ଆବୃତ କରି ହୃଦୟ-କନ୍ଦର
ଏକୁଟିଆ ଯାତ୍ରାଟିଏ... ତା'ପାଇଁ ଅନ୍ଧାର କାହିଁ ?
ଆଲୋକିତ... ସୁଦୀପିତ... ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତିତ ଶରତ ସକାଳ ।

ସମୟ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କଲା, ...
ତା' ନିମନ୍ତେ ଅଟକି ରହିଲା
ଆସିବ ସଖି... ଆସିବ... ଆସିବ... ରାତ୍ରି ହେବ
ଅନ୍ଧକାର ଆମାବାସ୍ୟା ଜଳାଛାଇ ଭୟ ଦେଖାଇ
ଘୃତ ଶେଷ ହେବ
ପୁଣି ସଳିତାରୁ ସରି ଯାଇ
ଅଗ୍ନିଜଳ କେବେ ନିଭିଯିବ ।

ପୋଡ଼ା ପୋଡ଼ା ଗନ୍ଧ ପାଇ
ତୁମେ ଯଦି ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦଉଡ଼ି ଆସିବ
ଆଉ ଟିକେ ତେଜି ଦେବା ପାଇଁ...
ନୂଆ ସଳିତା ଲଗାଇ... ଘୃତ ଢାଳି
ଆଉଥରେ ପୂର୍ବାବସ୍ଥା ଫେରି ପାଇବାକୁ...
... ଅସମ୍ଭବ ହେବ ସଖା !
ଚଉଷଠି ଜଳା ନେଇ କୃଷ୍ଣ ଗଲେ;
ପେଶାରେ ତାକତ କାହିଁ
ଗାନ୍ଧୀବନ୍ଧୁ ଟେକି ଧରିବାକୁ ?
ଆହା, ସେତେବେଳେ ଆସିଲାନି କିଆଁ
ଝରକା କବାଟ ଖୋଲା... ନଥିଲା ତ ତାଲା !
ପଥର ଖସୁ ନ ଥିଲା... ନୀତି ସବୁଠିକ୍ ଚାଲିଥିଲା
ଫଗୁଣରେ ବର୍ଷା ହୋଇ ଶ୍ରାବଣ ଶୁଖିଲା ନଥିଲା ।
ଗଉଡୁଣୀ ଘରେ... ବିଷମନ୍ତ ଝାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ଯାଇ
ସାପୁଆ କେଳାର ଦାନ୍ତ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲା କଡ଼ମଡ଼ ହୋଇ !
କୁହ କୁହ ପଶୁ ଶବ... ଭୂମିକମ୍ପ ହୋଇଥିଲା ପରା !

ଏଠିକି ଆସିବ ତୁମେ ?
କୁର୍ବୀକ୍ଷରେ ନାମ ଫାଟିଯିବ
ସତକଥା ଶୁଣିଦେଲେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିବ ଯଦି
ଠୋ କରି ଛାଡ଼ି ଫାଟିଯିବ ।
କାମ କର ବା ନକର... ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରୋଜେକ୍ଟ
ପ୍ରୋଜେକ୍ଟ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରୋଜେକ୍ଟ ବି ଦିଅ ।

ତଥାପି ସେ ରହିବନି ଫରୁଆ ଭିତରେ
ବାରହାତୀ ଖଣ୍ଡା ଧରି ରଜାପୁଅ ଦିନେ ତାକୁ
ତୁଳାଫାଳ କରିଦେବ ଏକା ଶ୍ୱେତ କରେ ।

ତୋ ପାଇଁ ଗୀତଟିଏ

ପ୍ରତିଭା ପରିଡ଼ା

ଥରେ ମୋ ମଥାରେ
ହାତ ରଖୁ ଦେଏ
ତତେ ମୃଣୟା ସଜାଇଦେବି...
ଥରେ ଛୁଇଁବାକୁ ଦେ,
ତୋର ଦିଗମ୍ଭରୀ ପଣତ
ତତେ ଚିନ୍ମୟା ପାଲଟାଇ ଦେବି...
ବିଦୁଏ ପ୍ରୀତି କଣା ଫିଙ୍ଗିଦେଇ ଦେଖ
ତୋ ହିରଣ୍ମୟା ଗର୍ଭକୁ
କାଙ୍ଗାଳ କରିଦେବି...
ଥରେ ହେଲେ ବି ଶିଖାଇ ଦେ
ତତେ ଅନୁଭବିବାର ମାୟା,
ଏ ଦୌଦ ବ୍ରହ୍ମାଣ୍ଡ ସାରା ତତେ ଛାଇଦେବି...
ଥରେ ଆଖି ମେଲି ଗୁହଁ ଦେ ତ,
ତୋ ଛାତିରେ
ସମାଧି ମୋର ତିଆରି ଦେବି ।

**With Best Compliments to
OSA**

**during its 28th Annual Convention at
Houston, Texas**

From

**DR. MAHESH RAO
(GASTROENTEROLOGIST)**

&

MRS. MAMATA RAO

ଲୋଡ଼ା ନାହିଁ ମୋର “ଆହା” ପଦ

ଶ୍ରେତପଦ୍ମ ଦାଶ

ମରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁନାହିଁ ମୁଁ
ମୋ ଆଇମା, ବୁଢ଼ୀମା ପରି
ସବୁରି ସୁଖ ପାଇଁ ନିଜକୁ ଡଳ ଡଳି
ଶେଷ ବେଳେ, “ଆହା” ଟିକେ ପଦ ପାଇଁ ।

“ଆହା” କେତେ ଭଲ ଲୋକ ଥିଲେ
ମାଛିକୁ “ମ” କହୁ ନଥିଲେ
ଚିଲ ଶାରଗୁଣା ପେଟ ଚିହ୍ନିଥିଲେ
ଏତିକି ଦିନ ଘର କରିଥିଲେ, ତୁଣ୍ଡ ଟିକେ ଖୋଲି ନଥିଲେ ।

ଦୁଇଟୋପା ଶୁଖିଲା ଲୁହ, “ଆହା” “ଆହା” ପଦ
ସେ ଭିତରେ ଲୁଚିଯିବ ବର୍ଷ ବର୍ଷର ସାଧନା
କେତେ କେତେ ଜାଗର ରାତି,
କେତେ ଉପବାସ ବ୍ରତ, ଦିଆଁଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଅଧିଆ
କେତେ ପେଟରୁ କାଟି, ପିଠିରୁ କାଟି ଅନ୍ୟ ତୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଦେବା
କେତେ ଆଖିର ଲୁହ, କେତେ ଅକୁହା କଥା
ଆଉ କେତେ କେତେ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଫୁଟିବା ଆଗରୁ
ଝଡ଼ି ଯାଇଥିବା ଇଚ୍ଛାର କଡ଼ିମାନେ ।

ମାପକାଠି ଗଢ଼ିନାହିଁ କେହି ମାପିବାକୁ ମାଆର ଦାନ
କିଏସେ ମାପିଛି କେବେ ସ୍ନେହ ମମତାଭରା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସମର୍ପଣ?
ନିଜର ସବୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହତ୍ୟାକରି, ନିଜକୁ ଭାଳିଦେଲା, ସାରିଦେଲା ଯାହାପାଇଁ
ବୟସ ଗଢ଼ିଲେ, କରିପାରିବାର ସବୁ ଶକ୍ତି କ୍ଷୁଣ୍ଣ ହେଲେ,
ସିଏକି ଦେବ ତାର ମୂଲ୍ୟ?
ସିଏକି ଦେବ ତାର ମୂଲ୍ୟ?

ଲୋଡ଼ା ନାହିଁ ମୋର “ଆହା” ପଦ
ଲୋଡ଼ା ନାହିଁ ମୋର ଦେବୀର ଆସନ
ହେବିନାହିଁ ମୁଁ ସୀତା କି ସାବିତ୍ରୀ,
ମୁଁ ହେବି ରକ୍ତ ମାଂସର ମଣିଷଟିଏ
ଯାହାରବି ମନ ଅଛି, ଇଚ୍ଛା ଅଛି,
ନିଜେ କିଛି ନିଜ ପାଇଁ କରିବାର ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ଅଛି ।

କାମନାର ଶରଣ୍ୟା

ଶାନ୍ତିଲତା ମିଶ୍ର

ମୁଁ ନିଜେ ମରିଛି ନିଜ କାମନାର
ନିଜେ ହିଁ ଶିକାର ହୋଇ ।
ତୁମକୁ ମୁଁ ଦୋଷ ଦେବି ନାହିଁ କେବେ
ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ପାଷାଣ କହି ॥

ତପସ୍ବିନୀ ନୁହେଁ ତପସ୍ୟା କରୁଛି
ତୁମକୁ ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ।
ମିଛ କାମନାରେ ନିଜକୁ ଜାଲୁଛି
ରାତିଦିନ ଦୀପ ହୋଇ ॥

ନିତି ସଂଜବେଳ କହିଯାଏ ମତେ
ତୁମର ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ।
ହେଲେ ଏ ନିରବ ସକାଳ ଇସାରାରେ କହେ
ସିଏ ତ ଆସିବ ନାହିଁ ॥

ତୁମ ମୋ ମଝିରେ ଅନେକ ଦୂରତା
ତାକୁ ମାପିବା ପାଇଁ ।
ଏକ ପଡ଼ିଲାଣି ଶୁଖି ସାରିଲାଣି
ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଲୁହର ନଈ ॥

ଯୋଉଠି ମିଶିଛି ଆକାଶ ଛାତିରେ
ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଧନୁ ସାତରଂଗେ ନିଜକୁ ନିଜେ ସଜାଇ ।
ସେଇଠି ମିଶିଛି ସେତେ ରଂଗ ହୋଇ
ମୋ ମିଛ କାମନାର ନଈ ॥

ତୁମର ଆଳାପ, ତୁମର ସାକ୍ଷ୍ୟ, ତୁମର ସପନ
ମନ ଖୋଜେ ଅହରହ ।
ଆତ୍ମ ଗୋପନ ମୁଁ ଆଉ କରି ପାରୁନାହିଁ
ଅଭିମାନ ପରଦାରେ ॥

ସେ ପରଦା ଖୋଲି ଆସ ଅରେ ତୁମେ
ଆଖିରେ ଆଖି ମିଶାଇ ।
ମିଛ ହେଉ ପଛେ ଥରୁଟିଏ କୁହ
ବ୍ୟାକୁଳ ମୋ ମନ ଯାହାକୁ ଶୁଣିବା ପାଇଁ ॥

ଜୀବନର ପଥ ପିଚିଳ ହେଲେ ବି
ହାତେ ଥିଲେ ତୁମ ହାତ ।
ଗୁଲିବା ସହଜ ହୋଇ ପାରୁଥା'ନ୍ତା
ବାଧାଜାନି କେବେ ଝୁଣି ପଡ଼ିବାର କଷ୍ଟ ॥

ଦେବତ୍ବ କେବେ ମୁଁ ଆଶା କରିନାହିଁ
ମଣିଷତ୍ବ ମୋର କାମ୍ୟ ।
ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖ ବାଣ୍ଟି ମନ ପାଶେ ଥିବ
ମନର ମଣିଷ ହୋଇ ॥

ଏତେ ସବୁ ମିଛ ଆଶା କରିଥିବାରୁ
ଏ ମନ ପାଇଛି ଶାନ୍ତି ।
କାମନାର ଶରଣ୍ୟା ପରେ
ଶର ବିନ୍ଧା ହୋଇ ନୀରବେ ଯାଇଛି ଶୋଇ ॥

ଅକୁହା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ପ୍ରଫେସର ଦାସଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଫୋନ୍‌ରେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଶେଷ କରି ବିମଳ ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ଆସିଲେ । ମୁଁ ପଚାରିଲି -- କ'ଣ ହେଲା ? ପ୍ରଫେସର ଦାସ ପାର୍ଟିକୁ ଆସିବେତ ?

ବିମଳ ଉତ୍ତରରେ ନାଁ କହିଲେ ଓ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଦାସଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀଙ୍କର ଉତ୍ସାପିତ ବିୟୋଗ ଜନିତ ଦୁଃଖ ବିଷୟ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କଲେ । ମୁଁ ଟିକେ ଚକିତ ହେଲି ଯେହେତୁ ମିସେସ୍ ଦାସଙ୍କ ଜଣେ ଉତ୍ସାପିତ ଥିଲେ ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଶିଖାର ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ପ୍ରବୀର । ବିମଳଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଲି -- ମିସେସ୍ ଦାସଙ୍କର କେଉଁ ଉତ୍ସାପିତଙ୍କର ବିୟୋଗ ହେଲା ? ତାଙ୍କ ନାଁ ପ୍ରବୀର ନୁହେଁତ ଯିଏ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ଥିଲେ ?

ବିମଳ ପ୍ରବୀରଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ । ତେଣୁ ପୁଣିଥରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଦାସଙ୍କୁ ଫୋନ୍ ଲଗାଇ ମୋର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଟି ପଚାରିଲେ । ଉତ୍ତର ପାଇ ମତେ ଥିବା କରି କହିଲେ -- ହଁ, ସେ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁ ହିଁ ଗୁଲିଗଲେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ବାହା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଆଜି ତମର ଅବସ୍ଥା କ'ଣ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ଭାବ । ଯାହା ହେଉ ତମ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଭଲ, ମତେ ବାହା ହୋଇଛି ।

ମୃତ୍ୟୁକୁ ନେଇ ଏମିତି ଥିବା ମୋର ପସନ୍ଦ ହୁଏନି । ମଣିଷର ଗୁରୁପଟେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଜୀବାଣୁ ଯେମିତି ଭରି ରହିଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ସେ ଜୀବାଣୁ ମାନଙ୍କର ଆକ୍ରମଣର ଭୟ । ସେ ଆକ୍ରମଣରୁ ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ମଣିଷ ଯେତେ ଯେତେ ନୂଆ ଔଷଧର ଉଦ୍ଭାବନ କଲେ ବି ପୁଣି ନୂଆ ଜୀବାଣୁମାନେ ନୂଆ ରୋଗ ନେଇ ମଣିଷକୁ ଗୁଲେଖ ଦେବାକୁ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ସ୍ଥଳେ କାହାର ଯେ କେତେବେଳେ ଶେଷ ଆସିବ ଜଣାନାହିଁ । ବିମଳ କିନ୍ତୁ ମତେ ଯେମିତି ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲେ । ପୁଣି ଥିବା କରି କହିଲେ -- ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁତ ହାର୍ଟ ଆଟାକ୍‌ରେ ଗୁଲିଗଲେ । ହେଲେ ତମର ଆଜି ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ କଣ ? ଶିଆପିଆ ତ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ବନ୍ଦ ରହିବ । ଅନ୍ତତଃ ପୁରାତନ ପ୍ରେମିକଙ୍କ ବିୟୋଗଜନିତ ଔପଚାରିକତା ତ ରଖିବ ।

ବିମଳ ଭଲ କରି ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ପ୍ରବୀର ମତେ ପ୍ରେମ କରୁଥିଲେ ହୁଏତ କିନ୍ତୁ ସିଏ ମୋର ପ୍ରେମିକ ନ ଥିଲେ ।

ହେଲେ ପ୍ରବୀରଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଥିବା କରିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଖୁସି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ।

ପ୍ରବୀରଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଏମିତି ଖବର ପାଇ ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ହୋଇଗଲି । ମୋର ସେ କର୍ମମୟ ଜୀବନ ଭିତରେ କେଉଁ ଘଟଣାକୁ ନେଇ ଦୁଃଖ କି ସୁଖକୁ ତାରୁ ରୂପେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିବାକୁ ସମୟ ନଥିଲା । ଏମିତି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଅର୍ଥ ହିଁ କେବଳ ସମୟ ପଛରେ ଧାଇଁବାର ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା । ଟିକେ ଧାଇଁବା ଧାର କରିଦେଲେ ଅନେକ କିଛି ଯେମିତି ଆଗେଇ ଯିବ; ବହୁତ ପଛରେ ପଡ଼ିଯିବ ସୁଖଦୁଃଖକୁ ନେଇ ବିଚଳିତ ହେଉଥିବା ମଣିଷ ଜଣକ । ତେଣୁ ପ୍ରବୀରଙ୍କ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଖବର ପାଇ ଯାହା କିଛି ସମୟ ପାଇଁ ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ରହିଲି ସେତିକି ମାତ୍ର । ତା'ପରେ ସେ ଚିତ୍କାର ମନଭିତରୁ ଜବରଦସ୍ତ ବାହାର କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରି ଲାଗିଲି ମୋର ନିତିଦିନିଆ ସପ୍ତାହ ଶେଷ କାମରେ ।

ସକାଳ ସେମିତି ବିତିଗଲା । ବିଗତ ଦୁଇଦିନର ପ୍ରବଳ ବରଫଝଟ ପରେ ପ୍ରକୃତି ଶାନ୍ତ ଓ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଥିଲା । ଜାନୁୟାରୀ ମାସର ସେ ଶାନ୍ତ ସକାଳରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କ କିରଣ ଯେମିତି ଅତି ଆକାଂକ୍ଷିତ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ କିରଣର ସେ ଟିକେ ଉତ୍ତାପ ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଖାଇସାରି ଆମେସବୁ ଦାଞ୍ଚଘରର ଝରକା ପାଖରେ ଯାଇ ବସିଲୁ । ବିମଳ ଗୁଲିଗଲେ ଦୋକାନକୁ ପରିବାପତ୍ର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟବହାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଜିନିଷ ସବୁ କିଣିବା ପାଇଁ । ପାଖରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ କିରଣର ଉତ୍ତାପ ପାଇ ପିଲା ଦୁଇଜଣ ମୋର ଶୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲେ । ଯେମିତି ଗହଳ ବହଳ ସବୁ ଶାନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଆସିଲା; ପ୍ରବୀରଙ୍କର ଦେହତ୍ୟାଗ ବିଷୟ ସେମିତି ମୋ ମନ ଭିତରକୁ ପୁଣି ଜବରଦସ୍ତ ପଶିଆସିଲା ।

ମନେ ପଡୁଥିଲା ପ୍ରବୀର ଲେଙ୍କାର ସେ ପ୍ରେମ ପତ୍ରର ଖବର ଆଜି ମତେ ଯେମିତି ଭାବେ ଶୁଣାଇଥିଲା । ବାଣାବିହାରରେ ସେଦିନ ପ୍ରଥମ କରି ପୁଅମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଏକା ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ବସି ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବାର ଅନୁଭୂତି ମୋର । ଆଜିକୁ ମୋ କ୍ଲାସ୍‌ରେ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରି ସେଦିନ ମୁଁ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥିଲି । ଆଜି ମୋର ହିସାବରେ

ଆଜି ନଥିଲା । ତାର ନା ଥିଲା ଜୟଶ୍ରୀ ନାୟକ । ବେହେରା ତାର ଯେମିତି ବିଶାଳ ଥିଲା ସାହସ ବି ସେମିତି ଅସାମ ଥିଲା । ସିଏ ରାଉରକେଲାର ଝିଅ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାର ସାହଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମୋର ସଙ୍ଗୋତ ଯେ ଦୂରାତ୍ମତ କରାଇବାରେ ସହାୟକ ହେବ ସେ ନେଇ ମୁଁ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥିଲି । ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଲାସର ସାର ନ ଆସିବାରୁ ଆଜି ସହିତ ମୁଁ ତିପାର୍ଚମେଷ୍ଟ ପଛପଟେ ଘାସରେ ଆସି ବସିଲି । ଆଜି କହିଲା -- ଜାଣିଛୁ, ପ୍ରବୀର ଲେଙ୍କା ତୋ ପାଖକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଚିଠି ପଠାଇଛି ସେକେଣ୍ଡ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ ଠିକଣାରେ । ସେ ଚିଠି ହଷ୍ଟେଲର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଆଲୋଚନାର ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁ ହୋଇଛି । ଏବେ ସେ ଚିଠି ମାତା ଅପାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଅଛି ।

ଆଜି କଥା ଶୁଣି ମୁଁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲି । କହିଲି -- କେଉଁ ପ୍ରବୀର ଲେଙ୍କା ବିଷୟରେ କହୁଛୁ ତୁ ? ସିଏ ପୁଣି ମତେ କାହିଁକି ଚିଠି ଲେଖିବ ?

ଆଜି କହିଲା -- ସିଏ ଶିଖାର ଭାଇ; ଆମ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ କେତେ ଥର ଆସିଛି; ଦେଖିନୁ ତାକୁ ?

ମୁଁ କହିଲି -- ‘ହଁ, ହଁ, ଶିଖାର ଭାଇ ପ୍ରବୀର ଲେଙ୍କା । ହେଲେ ସିଏ କାହିଁକି ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିଛି ? ତୁ ସେ ଚିଠି ପଢ଼ିଛୁ ତ ? ଶିଖାର କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧା ହୋଇନି ତ ?

ଶିଖା ଶୈଳବାଳାରେ ମୋର ଦୁଇ ବ୍ୟାବ୍ ଜୁନିୟର ଥିଲା । ହେଲେବି ତାର ମୋର ବହୁତ ବନ୍ଧୁତା ଥିଲା । ତାକୁ ଜଣେ ବନ୍ଦୀସ ପିଲା ବହୁତ ହଇରାଣ କରୁଥିଲା । ବାଜେ ଚିଠି ସବୁ ଲେଖୁଥିଲା । ଏମିତି କି ବେଳେବେଳେ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ ଓ କଲେଜ ଗୁରୁପଟେ ବୁଲୁଥିଲା । ହଷ୍ଟେଲ ଆମର ଆର୍ଚସ ବୁଲ୍‌ରେ । ତେଣୁ ରାସ୍ତା ଅତିକ୍ରମ କରି ସାଇନ୍‌ସ ବୁଲ୍‌କୁ ଯିବାକୁ ହୁଏ ସବୁ ସାଇନ୍‌ସ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ । ସେହି ସମୟରେ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ସେ ପିଲା ବାଜେ ବାଜେ କଥା କହି ଶିଖାକୁ ହଇରାଣ କରେ । ଶଙ୍ଖା ଓ ଚଣ୍ଡା ମନ୍ଦିରର ଭୋଗ ଆଣି ତାକୁ ସେଇଠାରେ ବିବାହ କରିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରେ । ତେଣୁ ଆଜି କଥା ଶୁଣି ମୁଁ ଭାବିଲି ହୁଏତ ସେ ପିଲା ଶିଖାର କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧା କରାଇଛି ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜିଠାରୁ ଯାହା ଶୁଣିଲି ମୋର ବିସ୍ମୟର ସୀମା ରହିଲାନି । ଆଜି କହିଲା -- ଶିଖାର ଭାଇ ତୋ ପାଖକୁ ପ୍ରେମ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିଛି । ତାକୁ ପୁଣି ସେକେଣ୍ଡ ହଷ୍ଟେଲର ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ପିଲା ପଢ଼ିସାରିଲେଣି । ସେ ଏମିତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଲେଖିଛି ଯେ ପଢ଼ିକରି ହସିହସି ରହିଲୁଣି ଆମେ ।

ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଯେମିତି ବଜୁପାତ ହେଲା । ପ୍ରଥମରେ ତ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ କାହାର ଗେଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ରହିବି କେମିତି ସେ ସମସ୍ୟାରେ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲି । ତାପରେ ଗାଁରେ ବନ୍ୟା ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ଲୁହ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବାର ଦଶଦିନ ପରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଲୁହ କରିବାକୁ ଆସୁଛି । ଭାବୁଥିଲି ସେକେଣ୍ଡ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ଥିବା କେଉଁ ପୁରୁଣା ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖାକରି ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିବି ଗେଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ । ଏସବୁ ସମସ୍ୟା ସ୍ଥଳେ ଏ ପ୍ରେମ ଚିଠିର ଖବର ଯେମିତି ବେଢ଼ି ଉପରେ କୋରଡ଼ା ଭଳି ମୋର ଦୁଃଖକୁ ଦ୍ଵିଗୁଣିତ କଲା । ପ୍ରେମ ଉପରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ମୋର ଧାରଣା ବି ଏତେ ମାର୍ଜିତ ନଥିଲା । ଆଉ ପାଗଳ ପ୍ରେମୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅତ୍ୟୁତ ଧରଣର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକଳାପ ଓ ଗୁଣ୍ଡାମା ଖବର ଶୁଣି ମତେ ଭୟ ବି ଲାଗିଲା । ଶିଖାକୁ ହଇରାଣ କରୁଥିବା ସେ ବନ୍ଦୀସ ପିଲାର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକଳାପ ସହିତ ମୁଁ ଭଲଭାବେ ପରିଚିତ ଥିଲି । ହେଲେ ଶିଖା ଥିଲା ଅପରୂପ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ । ତାର ସେ କୋମଳ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଜଣଙ୍କୁ ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ କରାଇ ପାଗଳ କରିଦେବାରେ କୌଣସି ବିଚିତ୍ରତା ନଥିଲା । ସେତେବେଳେ ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଥିଲି ହୁଏତ ଭଗବାନ ମତେ ଅଧିକ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ନ କରି ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କରିଛନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ପୁଣି ଏ ପ୍ରେମ ଚିଠି ! ଆହୁରି ବି ଖରାପ ଲାଗିଲା ଯେ ଏ ଖବର ପାଇ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ମତେ ଜାଣୁଥିବା ମୋ ଲାସ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଧାରଣା ମୋ ବିଷୟରେ ବା କ’ଣ ହେବ ?

ଆଜିକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରି ସେ ଚିଠି ମିତା ଅପାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ନେଇ ଆସିବ ବୋଲି । ସେଦିନ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ ଯାଇ କାହାକୁ ଆଉ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ହେଲାନି । ଫେରିଆସିଲି କଟକ ଭାରାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ମନ ନେଇ ।

ମିତା ଅପା ନ ଥିବାରୁ ଆଜି ସେ ଚିଠି ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରିପାରିଲାନି । ଏ ଭିତରେ କେତେ ଦିନ ଯାଏ ହଷ୍ଟେଲର ପୁରୁଣା ଅପାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସବୁ ଦେଖା କରିସାରିଥିଲି । ଏମିତିକି ମୋର ବଡ଼ଭଉଣୀ ଭଳି ଯିଏ ଥିଲେ ଲିଲି ଅପା ସିଏ ବି ନିଜ ତରଫରୁ ମତେ ଗେଷ୍ଟ କରି ରଖିବାକୁ କିଛି ଆଗ୍ରହ ପ୍ରକାଶ କଲେନି ସେତେବେଳେ ଭାବୁଥିଲି ଦୁନିଆଟା ସତରେ କେତେ ଜଟିଳ । କେତେବେଳେ ଅପଣାର ଭାବୁଥିବା ଲୋକ ଜଣେ ତାର ଭଳି ବ୍ୟବହାର କରେ ତ କେତେବେଳେ ପୁଣି କେଉଁ ଅଜଣା ଓ ଅଜ୍ଞଜଣା ଲୋକର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସହାୟତା ନୈରାଶ୍ୟର ଅନ୍ଧକାରକୁ ଦୂର କରି ଆଶାର ପ୍ରଦାପ ଜଳାଏ ।

ହଞ୍ଜେଲ ପାଇବାରେ ଚିହ୍ନାଜଣା ଅପାମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଯେତେବେଳେ କିଛି ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା ପାଇଲିନି ସେତେବେଳେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କଲେ ମତେ ବିଜୟା ଅପା ଯାହାଙ୍କୁ କି ମୁଁ କେବଳ ଥରେ ମାତ୍ର ଦେଖିଥିଲି । ହେଲେ ସମ୍ପର୍କର ସୂତ୍ରକୁ ବୁଝିବା କଷ୍ଟ । ଆମେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଗଣିତ ଅନର୍ସର ଛାତ୍ରୀ ଥୁଲ । ସେଇ ଆକର୍ଷଣରେ ସେ ମତେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କଲେ ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ଚିହ୍ନା ଜଣେ ଝିଅର ଗେଷ୍ଟ ଭାବେ ରଖାଇ ଦେଲେ । ହଞ୍ଜେଲ ସମସ୍ୟା ଗଲା । ଭାବିଲି ଖୁବ୍ ମନ ଲଗାଇ ପଢ଼ିବି ଓ କମ୍ପିଟିଟିଭ୍ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ପାଇବି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି କରିବି ।

ଏ ସମୟରେ ମିଳିଲା ମତେ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଚିଠି । ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରେମ ପତ୍ର ମୋ ଜୀବନର । କିନ୍ତୁ ଲେଖା ହୋଇଥିଲା ବଡ଼ ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ଯେହେତୁ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁ କେବଳ ଚତୁର୍ଥ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଢ଼ିଥିଲେ । ଚିଠିପଢ଼ି ଆଉ ଓ ମୁଁ ଖୁବ୍ ହସିଲୁ । ସେ ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବାକ୍ୟକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣ କରିବାକୁ ମଜା ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ ମୋ ରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ଯିବା ପରେ ବହୁତ ଭୟ ପାଇଲି ମୁଁ । ଚିଠିରୁ ଜାଣିଲି ସିଏ କପିକଲ୍‌ରେ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ଅଛନ୍ତି ଓ ଶହୀଦ ନଗରରେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ମତେ ଶୈଳବାଳା ହଞ୍ଜେଲରେ ଦୁଇଗୁଣିବାର ଦେଖିଥିଲେ । ଖତଗୁପ୍ତରେ ଏମ୍.ଟେକ୍. କରୁଥିବା ସମୟରେ କେତେ ଝିଅଙ୍କର ସଂସ୍ପର୍ଶରେ ଆସିଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମତେଦେଖି ଆକର୍ଷଣ ଅନୁଭବ କଲେ କାହିଁକି ? ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆକର୍ଷଣର ନାମକୁ ପ୍ରେମର ନାମ ଦେଇ ସେ ମତେ ଏ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିଲେ ।

ଛୋଟବେଳୁ ଭାବିଥିଲି କାହାର ପ୍ରେମିକା କି ପ୍ରେୟସୀ ମୁଁ ହୋଇପାରିବିନି । କାରଣ ପ୍ରେମିକା କି ପ୍ରେୟସୀ ହେବାର ରୂପରଙ୍ଗ ମୋର ନଥିଲା । ସେମିତି ଗୌରବର୍ଣ୍ଣା କି ମୃଗନୟନୀ ନଥିଲି ମୁଁ । ନାକ ମୋର ଖଣ୍ଡାଧାର ଭଳି ନଥିଲା କି କୁଞ୍ଚିତ କେଶ୍ ନଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ମୋ ଜେଜେ ଜେଜେମାମାନେ ଯେବେ ମୋର ରୂପରଙ୍ଗ ନେଇ ଥିଆ କରୁଥିଲେ ଓ ବହୁତ ଘୌଡ଼ୁକ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଦରକାର ହେବ ବୋଲି ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ବାଣୀ ଶୁଣାଉଥିଲେ; ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୁହେଁ ମୁହେଁ କହୁଥିଲି ଯେ ଯେହେତୁ ମୋର ସେଭଳି ଇଚ୍ଛା ନାହିଁ; ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଘୌଡ଼ୁକ ବିଷୟ ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଦୁଃଖିତ ହେବାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ନାହିଁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଥିଆ ଯେ ସମୟେ ସମୟେ ମତେ ଦୁଃଖିତ କରୁନଥିଲା ସେମିତି ନୁହେଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଭାବୁଥିଲି ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ବାହାଦୁରୀ ନେବାର କୌଣସି ଅର୍ଥ ନାହିଁ କାରଣ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟତ ଭାଗବାନଙ୍କର ସୃଷ୍ଟି । ହେଲେ

ମଣିଷ ନିଜକୁ କେଉଁଭାବେ ଗଢ଼ୁଛି, ସେଇଟାହିଁ ବଡ଼ କଥା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତେଷା କରୁଥିଲି କେମିତି ନିଜକୁ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ କରି ଗଢ଼ିବି ।

ହେଲେ ମୋର ପ୍ରେମିକା ନ ହୋଇପାରିବାର ସମସ୍ତ ବିଶ୍ୱାସକୁ ଦୂର୍ଭ କରି ପାଇଲି ଏ ପ୍ରେମପତ୍ର । ପୁଣି ଜଣେ ଉଚ୍ଚପଦସ୍ଥିତ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ । ହୁଏତ ଖୁସିରେ ଉଛୁଳି ଉଠିଥାନ୍ତି । ଅନେକ ଝିଅଙ୍କର ସେମିତି ଆଶାହିଁ ଥିଲା । ଜଣେ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ପାଇ ସଂସାର କରିନେବାର । କେହି କେବେ ବିବାହ ପାଇଁ ନିଜ ରୁଚି ଅରୁଚି ସହିତ ଭାବୀ ପତିଙ୍କର ରୁଚି ଅରୁଚିର ମିଳନକୁ ଏତେଟା ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ଦେଉନଥିଲେ । ହେଲେ ମୋର ଇଚ୍ଛା ଥିଲା ଅଲଗା ଓ ମୋ ପରିବାରର ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ବି ଥିଲା ଅଲଗା ତେଣୁ ପ୍ରେମଭଳି ସୌଖୀନ କାମରେ ନିଜର ସମୟ ନଷ୍ଟ କରିବାର ଅଭିପ୍ରାୟ ନଥିଲା ।

ଆହୁରି ବି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଲାଗିଲା ଯେ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ମୋ ମନରେ କାହିଁକି ସେ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇନି । ପଢ଼ିଥିବା ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ମାନଙ୍କର ସୂତ୍ର ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଜଣେ ଜଣକୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ ଅନ୍ୟଜଣେ ସେ ତୁମ୍ଭକରେ ଆକର୍ଷିତ ହୋଇ ସେ ଜଣକୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେବ । ତେଣୁ ଯେହେତୁ ମୋ ମନରେ ସେମିତି କିଛି ଭାବ ଉଦୟ ହେଉ ନଥିଲା ତେବେ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁ ହୁଏତ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରକୃତ ନାୟକ ନହୋଇ ଖଳନାୟକ ହୋଇପାରନ୍ତି । ଏମିତି ଭାବି ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରି ରହିଲି ଯେ କୌଣସି କାରଣରୁ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁଙ୍କର ଯଦି ବା ଆକର୍ଷଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଛି ତାକୁ ଭଗବାନ ଫେରାଇ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

ଏମିତି କିଛି ଦିନ ଗଲା । ମୁଁ ସେ ଚିଠିକୁ ଭୁଲିଯିବାକୁ ବସିଲି ଓ ଭାବିଲି ମୁଁ କିଛି ଉତ୍ତର ନଦେଇ ମୌନ ରହିଲେ ଠିକ୍‌ରୂପେ ସେ ବୁଝିଯିବେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋର ମୌନତାକୁ ସମ୍ମତିର ଲକ୍ଷଣ ଭାବେ ଧରି ନେଇଥିବା ନାୟକ ଜଣକ ପୁଣି ପଠାଇଲେ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ଚିଠି । ଏ ଚିଠିଟା ମୁଁ କେବଳ ପାଇଲି । ହଞ୍ଜେଲ୍‌ର ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ ପଢ଼ି ମଜା ପାଇବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇ ନଥିଲେ । ଏ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିଥିଲେ ମହାଶୟ ଗୁଜୁରାବର କେଉଁ ଏକ ହୋଟେଲ୍ ଅମରଛି । ସେ ମତେ ଭେଟିବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ଓ ନିଜ ପ୍ରେମର ପ୍ରଗତି ନିଷ୍ଠା ବିଷୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରି ଚିଠିଟି ଲେଖିଥିଲେ । ମୌନ ଯାହା ରହିଥିଲା ଏବେ ଫଳ ପାଇଲି । ସେ ସମୟରେ ହଞ୍ଜେଲରେ ମୋ ନିଜର ବି ଅନେକ ଛୋଟ ବଡ଼ ସମସ୍ୟା । ସେ ସବୁ ସମସ୍ୟା ଭିତରେ ଏସବୁ ପ୍ରେମ ଚିଠି ମତେ

ପାଗଳର ପ୍ରଳାପ ଭଳି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଭାବିଲି ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ମନର ଭାବ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟରୂପେ ଜଣାଇ ଦେଇ ସେ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ସେଠାରେ ହିଁ ପରିସମାପ୍ତି କରିଦେବି । କ୍ରୋଧ ଯଦିଓ ଆସୁଥିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ କ୍ରୋଧ ଦମନ କରି ଅନୁନୟ ହୋଇ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିଲି ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ । ଭାଇ ବୋଲି ସମ୍ବେଧନ କଲି ଓ ଶିଖା ଭଳି ମତେ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ତର ଭଳି ଭାବିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲି । ମୋର ଯେ ଜୀବନର କିଛି ଉଚ୍ଚ ଆଶା ଅଛି ଓ ବିବାହ କି ଭଲ ପାଇବାର ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବା ସେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ପଥରେ ଅନ୍ତରାୟ ସେ ବିଷୟ ବି ଲେଖିଲି ।

ମୋ ଚିଠି ପଢ଼ି ସେ କ'ଣ ବୁଝିଲେ ମୁଁ ଜାଣିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ତୃତୀୟ ଚିଠି ମୁଁ ପାଇଲି ଉତ୍ତର ସମ୍ବେଧନ ସହିତ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଉପଦେଶ ସହିତ ଯା ଫଳରେ କି ମୁଁ ଭାବିଲି ମୁଁ ଠିକ୍ କରିଛି । ବମ୍ବେରୁ ଯେ ସେ ମୋପାଇଁ ସାତ ଶହ ଟଙ୍କାର ଶାଢ଼ୀ କିଣିଥିଲେ ଓ ସେଇଟା ମତେ ଦେଇ ପାରିବେନି ଭାବି ଦୁଃଖ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଥିଲେ । ଲେଖିଥିଲେ -- ଜୀବନଟା ଏକ କଳାପଟା । ସେଥିରେ ବହୁତ କିଛି ଲେଖିହୁଏ । ଲେଖି ଲିଭାଇଦେଇ ହୁଏତ ନୂଆ ଜିନିଷ ପୁଣି ଲେଖି ହୁଏ । ପ୍ରେମିକା ଭାବେ ପାଇବାକୁ ଯେଉଁ ଭାବଟି ମୋ ହୃଦୟରେ ତମ ପାଇଁ ଲେଖୁଥିଲି ଓ ଶାଢ଼ୀଟି ଉପହାର ଦେବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲି ଏବେ ତାକୁ ଲିଭାଇ ଉତ୍ତରୀର ନାଁ ଲେଖିବି ଓ ଶାଢ଼ୀଟି ତମ ଭାଉଜଙ୍କୁ ଦେବାକୁ ସାଇତି ରଖିବି ।

ଚିଠି ପଢ଼ି ମତେ ଲାଗିଲା ସେ ଯେମିତି ତାଙ୍କ ଉଚ୍ଚପଦ ଓ ପ୍ରାତୁର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଭାବରେ ମତେ ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି । ତାପରେ ଚିଠି ସବୁ ପାଇଲି ବମ୍ବେର ତାଜମହଲ ହୋଟେଲରୁ, ବାଙ୍ଗାଲୋରର ରାଜମହଲ ହୋଟେଲରୁ ଓ ପୁଣି ଜାପାନର ଟୋକିଓର କେଉଁ ହୋଟେଲରୁ । ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁ ଯାଇଥିଲେ ଜାପାନ ପାଞ୍ଚ-ଛ ମାସ ପାଇଁ । ମୁଁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲି । ଅନ୍ତତଃ ବାହାରକୁ ଯିବାର ଭୟ ତ ରହିବନି । କେଉଁଠୁ ଟେକି ନେଇଯିବାର ଭୟ କି ଗୁଣ୍ଡା ଲଗାଇବାର ଭୟ । ଏ ଭିତରେ ଆମର ଫାଷ୍ଟ ପାର୍ଟି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ସରିଯାଇଥିଲା ଓ ଯେହେତୁ ଲ୍ଲାସର ନେତା ସାଜୁଥିବା ଓ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଘୁଞ୍ଚାଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିବା କେତେଜଣ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରରୋଚନାରେ ନ ପଡ଼ି ମୁଁ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଦେଇଥିଲି । ସେମାନଙ୍କର କୋପଦୃଷ୍ଟି ମୋ ଉପରେ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ଏ ସମୟରେ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଚିଠି ପଠାଇଲେ ତିପାର୍ଚ୍ଚମେଣ୍ଟ ଠିକଣାରେ । ସେ ଚିଠିଟି ପଢ଼ିଲା କାହା ହାତରେ ମୁଁ ଜାଣିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସର୍ବ୍ବଲେସନ ହୋଇ ପନ୍ଦର ଦିନ ପରେ ସେ ଚିଠିଟି ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ଫେରିଲା ଅନେକ

ଅଶ୍ଳୀଳ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସହିତ । ମୋର ସବୁ ରାଗ ପଡ଼ିଲା ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଉପରେ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ତ ମୋର ଉତ୍ତର ନପାଇ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଚିଠି ଲେଖିବାରେ ଲାଗିଛନ୍ତି; ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟରେ ଚିଠି ପୁଣି ପଠାଉଛନ୍ତି ତିପାର୍ଚ୍ଚମେଣ୍ଟ ଠିକଣାରେ । କ'ଣ କରିବି କିଛି ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦିଶିଲାନି । ଶୋଭା ଅପା ଥିଲେ ମୋର ସିନିୟର୍ । ଶୋଭା ଅପା ଓ ମୋର କେତେ ଜଣ ସାଙ୍ଗଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଆଲୋଚନା କଲି । କେତେଜଣ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଦେଲେ ମୌନ ରହିବାକୁ । ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଠିକ୍ ହୋଇଯିବ । କେତେଜଣ କହିଲେ ଗୁଣ୍ଡା ଲଗାଇ ତାକୁ ମାଡ଼ ଦେବା ଉଚିତ ଯେଉଁଥିରେ କି ମୋର ରାଜି ନଥିଲା । ଘଟଣାକୁ ଏତେ ଜଟିଳ ଓ ବିଚିତ୍ର କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁ ନଥିଲି ମୁଁ ।

କିଶ୍ବରଙ୍କ ଆର୍ଶିର୍ବାଦରୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ମୋର ଗୋଟିଏ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦିଶିଲା । ପଡ଼ିଥିବା ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ମାନଙ୍କର ସୂତ୍ରକୁ ଗୁରୁବାକ୍ୟ ଭାବେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ତାହା ମିଛ ଲେଖି ମୁଁ ଚିଠି ପଠାଇଲି ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଲେଖିଲି ଯେ ମୋର ଜଣଙ୍କ ସହିତ ନିର୍ବନ୍ଧ ହୋଇସାରିଛି । ମହାଶୟ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ଆଇ.ଆଇ.ଟିରେ ପି.ଏଚ୍.ଡି. କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଥେସିସ୍ ଶେଷ କଲେ ବାହାଘର ହେବ । ତେଣୁ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁ ମତେ ଭୁଲ ନ ବୁଝି ମୋ ବାହାଘରକୁ ଆସି ଆମକୁ ଯେ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ରୂପେ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କରିବେ ସେ ଅନୁରୋଧ ବି କଲି ।

ମୋ ଥିଉରୀ ଠିକ୍ କାମ ଦେଲା । ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁ ମତେ ଶେଷ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିଲେ । ଯଦିଓ ମୁଁ ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ଘଟଣା ବିଷୟରେ ବିଳମ୍ବରେ ଜଣାଇ ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ସହିତ ଖେଳ ଖେଳିଲି ବୋଲି ମତେ ସେ ଅଭିଯୁକ୍ତ କରିଥିଲେ କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ ଖୁସି ହେଲି ଯେ ସେ ମୋ ଚିଠିକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କଲେ ଓ ଗୁରିମାସ ପରେ ଫାଷ୍ଟ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ୍‌ରେ ରହୁଥିବା ବାଣୀ ଅପାଙ୍କୁ ବାହା ବି ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲେ । ସେ ବାହାଘର ବିଷୟ ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗ କନକ ହିଁ ମୋତେ ଜଣାଇଲା । ବାଣୀ ଅପାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ବାହାଘର ବିଷୟରେ ଶୁଣି ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗ କନକ ମତେ କହିଲା । ଆମେ ସେଦିନ ସମସ୍ତେ ଯାଇ ତାଳପଦେଶ୍ୱରୀ କ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟିନ୍‌ରେ ଖାଇଲୁ ଓ ମୋ ଥିଉରୀ ଠିକ୍‌ରୂପେ କାମକଲା ବୋଲି ସେଲିବ୍ରେଟ୍ କଲୁ ।

କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ଆମର ସେକେଣ୍ଡ ପାର୍ଟି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ବି ସରିଗଲା । ବାଣୀବିହାର ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଯେହେତୁ ମିଛ କହିବା ପ୍ରତି ମୋ ମନରେ ଭୟ ଥିଲା ତେଣୁ ମୁଁ ଭାବିଲି ଯେ ଶିଖାକୁ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିବି ଓ ମୁଁ ଏତେ ବିରାଟ ମିଛ ତା ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଲେଖିଥିଲି ବୋଲି ଜଣାଇ କ୍ଷମା ମାଗିବି । ହେଲେ

ମୋ ଲେଖିଥିବା ଚିଠିଟା ପଢ଼ିଲେ ଶିଖାର ଭାଉଜ ବାଣୀ ଅପା। ତାପରେ ଅଗ୍ନୀଭଦ୍ରଗାରଣ କରି ସେ ମତେ ଲେଖିଲେ ଚିଠି। ସେଥିରେ ଲେଖାଥିଲା -- ନିଆଁ ନଥିଲେ ଧୂଆଁ ବାହାରେନି। ତମର ଯେଉଁ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ମୋ ସ୍ବାମୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଥିଲା ଓ ମୋ ସ୍ବାମୀଙ୍କ ସରଳତାକୁ ନେଇ ତମେ ଖେଳ ଖେଳିଲ, ମୋ ବାହାଘର ପରେ ସେ ସମ୍ପର୍କକୁ ଯୋଡ଼ି ପୁଣି ଖେଳ ଖେଳିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା କରନି। ଗୋଟିଏ ହାତରେ ତାଳି ବାଜେନି। ତେଣୁ ତମେ ଯେ ମୋ ସ୍ବାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଆକର୍ଷିତ କରି ଖେଳଖେଳିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଥିଲ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ତମକୁ କେବେ କ୍ଷମା କରିବିନି।

ଦୁନିଆଁଟା ଯେମିତି ଫାଟିପଡ଼ିଲା ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ। ଏମ୍.ଏସ୍.ସି. ପରୀକ୍ଷା ସରିଲା। ଗୁକ୍ତିରା ନାହିଁ। ଗୁକ୍ତିରା ଖୋଜିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ନହେଲେ ଏମ୍.ଏ., ଏମ୍.ଏସ୍.ସି. କରି ଘରେ ବସି ରହିଥିବା ବେକାରମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ନିଜର ନାମକୁ ସାମିଲ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ। କେବଳ ଈଶ୍ବରଙ୍କ ବ୍ୟତିରେକ ଦିଗ ଦେଖାଇବାକୁ କେହି ନାହିଁ। ଏ ସମୟରେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ସବୁଷ୍ଟ କରିବାକୁ ମିଛ କଥା ଲେଖିଥିବାର ଭୁଲ୍ ସ୍ବାକାର କରି ଭଲକାମଟିଏ କଲି ଯେ ତାର ଫଳ ଏମିତି। ମୁଁ ବି ଛାଡ଼ିବାର ନଥିଲି। ଏଇଟା କେବଳ ମତେ ନେଇ ନୁହେଁ। କେଉଁ ଜଣଙ୍କର କେଉଁ ଏକ ଅଜବ ଖିଆଲ ପାଇଁ ଅନ୍ୟଜଣକୁ ଯେ ବୋଷପୁକ୍ତ କରାଯାଉଛି, ସେ ଉଦାହରଣର ଶେଷ ନାହିଁ। ବାଣୀ ଅପା ହୁଏତ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଛାତ୍ରୀ ଥିଲେ। ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ କମ୍ ନଥିଲି। ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ଉତ୍ତରଟିଏ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲେଖିଲି-

ପ୍ରେମଭଳି ବିଳାସ କାମ କରିବାର ନିଶା ହେଲା ରୂପସା ମାନଙ୍କର ନହେଲେ ଧନାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ପରିବାରର ଦୁଲାଳା ମାନଙ୍କର। ମୁଁ ଏ ଦୁଇଟିରୁ କେଉଁଥିରେ ବି ଆସେନି। ସଂଘର୍ଷ କରି ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ସଂକଳ୍ପ ମୋର। ତେଣୁ ତମ ସ୍ବାମୀ ନିଜର ଦୁଇହାତରେ ହିଁ ତାଳି ବଜାଇଲେ ଓ ନିଜର କେଉଁ ଖିଆଲର ନିଆଁରୁ ଧୂଆଁ ବାହାର କଲେ। ମୋର ସରଳ ଜୀବନରେ ଜଟିଳତା ଭରିଲେ ଓ ଅକାରଣେ ମୋ ମନକୁ ଭାତ, ସଙ୍କୁଚିତ ଓ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧ କରି ରଖାଇଲେ। ତାପରେ ପତ୍ନୀ ହୋଇ ତମେ ବି ନିଜ ସ୍ବାମୀଙ୍କ ଭଳି ନିଜ ଖିଆଲର ବିଷ ମୋ ଜୀବନରେ ଭରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛ।

ଏମିତି ଚିଠି ଲେଖି ସେ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ପରିସମାପ୍ତି ସେହିଠାରେ ହିଁ ଶେଷ କଲି।

ହେଲେ ଶେଷ ସେଠି ହୋଇନଥିଲା। ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ଆଇ.ଆଇ.ଟି.ରେ ମୁଁ ଯେବେ ଜ୍ୟନ୍ତ କଲି, ସେତେବେଳେ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁ ବି ସମ୍ଭାକ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ରହୁଥିଲେ। ସଂଯୋଗ ପୁଣି ଏମିତି ଯେ ମୋର ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଥିବା ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିବାର ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କର ବନ୍ଧୁତା ଥିଲା ଯାହା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ କି ସାମନା ସାମନି ହେବାର ଅବକାଶ ମିଳିଥିଲା ମତେ। ଯେହେତୁ ମୁଁ ଖୋଲା ମନରେ ଥିଲି ତାଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀଙ୍କ ଉପସ୍ଥିତିରେ ହିଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନକରି ଉତ୍ତର ଗୁହଁଥିଲି ଯେ ତାଳି ସେ ନିଜେ ବଜାଇଥିଲେ ବୋଲି ସ୍ବାକାର କରନ୍ତୁ। ସେ ସ୍ବାକାର କରିଥିଲେ। ବାଣୀ ଅପାଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ଭାଉଜ ଭାଜି ଥିବା ହୋଇଥିଲି। ସେଇଟା ଥିଲା ମୋର ଶେଷ ଦେଖା।

କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ ମନ ଭିତରର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଟି ପରୁର ପାରି ନଥିଲି ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ। ସତରେ ସିଏ ମତେ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲେ କି ? ଯଦି ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲେ ତେବେ ମୋ ମନରେ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଆକର୍ଷଣ ଜନ୍ମିଲା ନାହିଁ କାହିଁକି ? ଆମ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ୍‌ରେ ମୋଠାରୁ ରୂପରେ ଗୁଣରେ ବହୁତ ଅଧିକ ଝିଅସବୁ ଥିଲେ। ସେ ମୋ ପ୍ରତି କାହିଁକି ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ ହେଲେ ? ମୁଁ ତ ସେମିତି ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ନଥିଲି ? ନହେଲେ ସେ ସେମିତି ସୌଖୀନ ମନ ଦେଇ ଗୁଲେଖି ନେବାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବାର ନାଟକ କରୁଥିଲେ କି ?

ଭାବିଥିଲି ସଂସାର କରି ମନର ପରିପକ୍ୱତା ଆସିଯିବା ପରେ ମନରୁ ସଙ୍କୋଚ ଭାବ ଯେବେ ପୂରା କଟିଯିବ, ସେତେବେଳେ ଭେଟିଲେ ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଟି ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିବି ଓ ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରେମ ସୂତ୍ରର ସତ୍ୟାସତ୍ୟ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରିବି।

ହେଲେ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଦାସଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସକାଳର ସେ ଫୋନ୍ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ପରେ ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳିବାର ଆଶା ମୋର ବିଲୁପ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲା। ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରବୀର ବାବୁଙ୍କର ସେ ପ୍ରେମପତ୍ରର ମନସ୍ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ମୋ ପାଖରେ ରହିଗଲା ଏକ ଅକ୍ତୁହା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ହୋଇ।

■ ■

ପରଦେଶୀ

ଧରିତ୍ରୀ ମହାନ୍ତି

ବାରମାସେ ଡେର ପରବ ପୁନିଅଁ
ଭରି ଯେ ରାଜଜେ ଅଛି,
କେତେ ସ୍ନେହ, ପ୍ରୀତି ଭାବ ବିନିମୟ
ପ୍ରିୟ ପରିଜନ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ବାନ୍ଧବ ସମଷ୍ଟି ॥

ଏ ନିଛକ ସ୍ନେହ ସରଳ ମମତା
ମିଳିବକି ଦିନେ ସେଠି ?
ଯେଉଁ ଦେଶ ଛାଡ଼ି -- ଗୁଲିଗଲ ଆନଦେଶେ
ନିଜ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଛି ! କରି ॥

କେତେ ଆଖିଲୁହ ଭିଜିଲା ପଣତ
କେତେ ହୃଦ କୋହେ ସାଜିଲା ପଥର
ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲାନି ଥରେ ॥

ପିଠା ପଣା ଦିନ, ରଥଯାତ ପୁଣି ରଜଦୋଳି କେତେ ପର୍ବ
ସେ ଦେଶେ ଅଛି କି ପରତେ ଭାବିଲ
ଗଲା ସବୁ ନୀତି ପ୍ରୀତି ॥

କାଉର କା'ରେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟ ବାରତା
କିଏ ଗୁହଁଥିବ ଲଫାଫାର ଗୋଟେ ଚିଠି,
ସେଇଥିରେ କ'ଣ ମନକୁଝେ ସତେ,
ଘର ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଗୁହଁଦେଲେ ॥

କାହା ବାପା, ମା' ଝୁରୁଥିବେ ବସି
ବିଦେଶୁ କେବେ ଆସିବ ?
ପାଟିରେ ଟୋପାଏ ପାଣି ଦେଇ ଦେଲେ
ଛାର ଏ ଜୀବନ ଯିବ ॥

କାହା ଭାଇ, ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଭଉଣୀ, ପିତାସା
କେତେ କେତେ ପରବରେ
ମନେ ମନେ କେତେ ଝୁରି ହେଉଥିବେ
ବିଦେଶୁ ଆସନ୍ତାନି ଏ ଶୁଭ ଲଗନେ ॥

ଯୋଉ ବିଦେଶର ଅଧୁନୁ ଏ ଦେଶ
ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଲା -- ଦେଇ
କେତେ ଲୁହ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥର ଜଳାଞ୍ଜଳୀ
ଆମ ଆଗର ମଣିଷ ମାନେ ॥

ତାଙ୍କ ମୁଲ ଆମେ ଟିକେ ରଖିବାନି
ଯିଏ ଥିଲେ ଆମ ଜେଜେ, ବାପା, ଅଜା, ମା,
ଏ ମା' କୋଳରେ ସବୁ ଭରି ଅଛି,
କି ଲେଉଟେ ଆଉ ଯେ,
ଏ ମା'କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ବିଦେଶକୁ ନେଲ ବରି ॥

“ ଫେରିଆସ ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟ ବାସୀ
ଆଜି ବି ଆକୁଳେ ଗୁହଁଚି ତୁମରି ପଥେ,
ମା' ଆଖିଲୁହ ପୋଛିଦିଅ ତା' ପଣତେ
କେତେ ବ୍ରତ କେତେ ଓପାସ ତା'ର
ଖାସ୍ ତୁମପାଇଁ ସିନା ସତେ !
ତମେ ନ ବୁଝିଲେ କିଏ ବୁଝାଇବ କହ ॥”

ଅନାମିକା

କବିତା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

କିଏ ମୁଁ ?

ଏକ ଡିମିର ରାତ୍ରିର ଗଭୀରତା,
ଅବା ବିଜନ ବେଳାର ବିଜନତା ?

ଏକ ଶୁଷ୍କ ତରୁର ବିଚପ,
ଅବା ବିତୁଷ୍ଟ ମନର ବିଳାପ ?

କିଏ ମୁଁ ?

ଏକ ଛଦ ନୂପୁର ନିଃସ୍ବନ,
ଅବା ନିହତ ଆତ୍ମାର ସ୍ବଦନ ?

ଏକ ଶୀତଳ ରାତ୍ରିର ନିହାର,
ଅବା ବିଭୀଷ ବୀଥର ବିହାର ?

କିଏ ମୁଁ ?

ଏକ ତପ୍ତ କୁଣ୍ଡର କାଞ୍ଚନ,
ଅବା ସନ୍ନିବିର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅଜିଞ୍ଚନ ?
ମୁଁ ଏକ ପୃଷ୍ଠା ବିହୀନ ପୁସ୍ତିକା,
ମୋର ନାଁ ନାହିଁ, ମୁଁ ଅନାମିକା ।

କେବଳ ଭରସା

ପ୍ରିୟମତା ମହାନ୍ତି

ଆହେ ଚକାଡ଼ୋଳା ତୁମେ ଭାବଭୋଳା

ଭାବରେ ଭାସଇ ଏ ଜୀବନ ଭେଳା

ସଂସାର ସାଗର - ନଦିଶିଖ କୂଳ

ଅତଳ ଅଧାର ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ବ-ଚଞ୍ଚଳ

ବଳିଆର ଭୂଜ ନଦିଶିଖ ରାହା

ତୁମ ବିନା କୁହ ଅଛି କିଏ ସାହା ?

ସବୁରି ଭରସା ତୁମରି ଚରଣ

ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖ ସବୁ ତୁମରି ବିଧାନ

ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତୁମ ଚରଣେ ମିନତି

ଅଜାଡ଼ି ଦେଇଛି ସଦା ଦିନରାତି

ତୁମେ ସକଳର ସକଳେ ତୁମର

ମୋତେ କିମ୍ପା ପ୍ରଭୁ କରୁଅଛ ପର ?

ମାନ ଅଭିମାନ ଜୀବନ ମରଣ

ସବୁ ତୁମ ପଦେ କରି ନିବେଦନ

କିଛିନାହିଁ ରଖି ଆଶା ବା ନିରାଶା

ତୁମେ ସିନା ମୋର କେବଳ ଭରସା

ଜାଣେ ନା ମୁଁ ତୁମେ ଆସିବ କି ନାହିଁ

ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ବସିଛି ଅହରହ ଗୃହିଁ ।

ଆଦ୍ୟ ଆଷାଢ଼

ଉର୍ମିଳା ଦାସ

ତମ୍ଭେ କାନେ କାନେ ବଞ୍ଚିଲ ସମାରଣ
କିବା କଥା ବୁଝି ବୁଝି କହିଲା,
ମଧୁପର ଗୁଞ୍ଜନେ ପଲ୍ଲବ କମ୍ପନେ
ସେ କି ଆଜି ମନ ମୋର ଛୁଇଁଲା !

ବରଷାର ଛନ୍ଦରେ, ଭିଜା ମାଟି ଗନ୍ଧରେ
ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ ବଫଳାଏ ଗଗନ,
ବଜ୍ର ନିନାଦ ଘୋର, ତମସାର ଅନ୍ଧାର
ଶକିତ କରି ତୋଳେ ଏମନ !

ରଜନୀଗନ୍ଧା ତା ଗନ୍ଧର ସାଥେ କହେ
କାହାପାଇଁ ଏ ସୁରଭି କହତ,
ବାୟା ହେନାର ସାଥେ ମାଳତୀର ମହକ
କେତେ କଥା ମନେ କରିଦିଏତ !

ନୀପ ଫୁଲେ ରୋମାଞ୍ଚ ସଞ୍ଚାରି ଯାଏ
କାହା ପରଶେ ତା ତନୁ ମନ ଅଧାର,
ସବୁଜ ଏ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତର ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ମେଲି ତାର
ଆଗମନୀ ଗାଜଯାଏ କାହାର !

ମାଧବୀର ଇଂଗିତ ସଂକେତ କିବା ଦେଲା
ରଂଗଣୀ ଲାଜେ ହେଲା ଲୋହିତ,
ଭାରୁ ଯୁଥୁକାଟି ଦୋଳେ ଶକିତ ସରସେ
ବାରେ ବାରେ କାହା ପଥ ଗୁଞ୍ଜିତ !

ପତ୍ରର ମର୍ମର ତରୁଲତା କାନେ କହେ
କାହା ପାଦ ଶବ୍ଦ ଏ ବତାସେ,
ସପନେ ତା ବଫଳ ଗୋ ଜାଗରଣେ ପୁଲକ
ବଞ୍ଚିତେ ଶୁମେଲି ଶୁହେଁ କେ ଆସେ ?

ଝିଲ୍ଲାର ମଞ୍ଜିର ତଟିନୀର କଲ୍ଲୋଳ
ତୋଳି ମେଘ ମହ୍ଲାର ରାଗିଣୀ,
ସମବେତ ସଂଗୀତେ ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛିନା ଭରି ଗାଏ
ଆଷାଢ଼ର ଆଗମନ କାହାଣୀ !

କେବେ ସରିବ ଏଇ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା

ଶିବାନୀ ମହାନ୍ତି

ବର୍ଷା ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହର ବନ୍ୟା। ଆଜି ୧୯୯୭ ମସିହା ମେ ମାସ ୫ ତାରିଖ। ଆଜିଠାରୁ ଠିକ୍ ତିନି ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ଏହିଦିନ ସେ ଆସିଥିଲା। I.A.S. ବିପ୍ଳବ ରାୟ ଚୌଧୁରୀର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ହୋଇ, ଜମିଦାର ରାୟ ଚୌଧୁରୀ ବଂଶର କୂଳବଧୂ ହୋଇ। କେତେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ ମନେକରିଥିଲା ନିଜକୁ ସେଦିନ। ଯେଉଁଦିନ ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବର୍ଷାର ବାହାଘର ଠିକ୍ ହୋଇଥିଲା ମା ଆସି ଶିବଙ୍କ ପ୍ରସାଦ ତା ପାଟିରେ ଦେଇ କହିଥିଲା “ତୁ ଭାରି ଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ ଲୋ ବର୍ଷା। ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଘରେ ବାହା ହେଉଛି।”

ଛୋଟବେଳୁ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ହରାଇ ବସିଥିଲା ବର୍ଷା। ବାପାଙ୍କ ଦେହେରା ତା’ର ମନେ ନାହିଁ, ହେଲେ ମା କହେ ବର୍ଷା ଠିକ୍ ତା ବାପାଙ୍କ ପରି ଦେଖିବା ପାଇଁ। ସେମିତି ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ଆଖି, ଖଣ୍ଡାଧାର ଭଳି ନାକ, ସରୁ ଗୋଲାପି ଓଠ ଓ ତୋଫା ଗୋରା ରଙ୍ଗ। ମା ସବୁବେଳେ କହେ “ଝିଅମାନେ ବାପା ପରି ହେଲେ ଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତି। ବରଷା ମୋର ଭାରି ଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ ହେବ।”

ବାପାଙ୍କ ଦେହାନ୍ତ ପରେ ମା ଘରୁ ଗୋଡ଼ କାଢ଼ିଥିଲା। ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଘରେ ବାସନ ମାଜି ବର୍ଷାକୁ ସ୍କୁଲକୁ ପଠାଇଥିଲା। ନିଜେ ସବୁ କାମ କରୁଥିଲା। ବର୍ଷାକୁ ଦିନେ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଘରକାମ କରେଇ ଦେଇ ନଥିଲା। କହୁଥିଲା “ପାଠ ପଢ଼ରେ ମା, ଦୁନିଆରେ ବଡ଼ ମଣିଷ ହେବୁ।” ମନଦେଇ ପାଠ ପଢୁଥିଲା ବର୍ଷା। ଗାଁ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢ଼ିଲା ବେଳେ class ରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ହେଉଥିଲା ଓ scholarship ମଧ୍ୟ ପାଉଥିଲା। ଶୁଣିଆଡେ ବର୍ଷାର ପ୍ରଶଂସା -- “ରୂପବତୀ, ଗୁଣବତୀ, ବିଦ୍ୟାବତୀ। ଏମିତି ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଝିଅ ଭାଗ୍ୟରେ ଥିଲେ ମିଳେ।” ଝିଅର ପ୍ରଶଂସା ଶୁଣିଲେ ମାର ଛାତି ଖୁସିରେ କୁଣ୍ଢେ ମୋଟ ହୋଇଯାଏ। Matriculation ପ୍ରଥମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ Pass କଲାପରେ କଟକରେ ଜଣେ ଦୂର ସମ୍ପର୍କୀୟ ମାମୁଁଙ୍କ ଘରେ ରହି ଶୈଳବାଳା ମହିଳା କଲେଜରେ ନାମ ଲେଖାଇଥିଲା ବର୍ଷା। ମା କେତେ କାକୁଟିମିନତି ହୋଇ ମାମୁଁଙ୍କୁ କହିଥିଲା ବର୍ଷାକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ ରଖି ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାଇବା ପାଇଁ। ମାମୁଁଙ୍କ ଘରେ ସବୁଦିନ ରୋଷେଇ ଓ ଘରକାମ କରି ସେ କଲେଜ

ଯାଉଥିଲା। I.A. ତାପରେ B.A.ରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ Pass କରି ରେଭେନ୍ସା କଲେଜରେ M.A. ରେ ନାମ ଲେଖାଇଲା।

ଥରେ ଚଣ୍ଡୀ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ବର୍ଷାକୁ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ, ବିପ୍ଳବର ମା ଶାନ୍ତା ଦେବୀ। ତାପରେ ଖବର ନେଇ ମାମୁଁଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ବର୍ଷା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବିପ୍ଳବର ବାହାଘର ପ୍ରସାଦ ନେଇ ଆସିଥିଲେ। ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆସିଥିଲେ କନ୍ୟା ମନୋନୀତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ।

ଜମିଦାର ରାୟ ଚୌଧୁରୀ ବଂଶର କୂଳ ପ୍ରତାପ IAS ବିପ୍ଳବ ରାୟ ଚୌଧୁରୀ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବର୍ଷାର ବାହାଘର ? ଶୁଣିଲେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଲାଗେ ନାହିଁ। ବିପ୍ଳବ ପାଇଁ କେତେ କନ୍ୟା ପିତାଙ୍କ ଭିତ ଲାଗିଛି। ସେଠି ଗରିବ। ମଫସଲି ବର୍ଷାର ସ୍ଥାନ କେଉଁଠି ? ବାମନ ହୋଇ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରକୁ ସେ କେମିତି ଆଶା କରିବ ? କିନ୍ତୁ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇଥିଲା। ସେଦିନ ଶାନ୍ତା ଦେବୀ ବର୍ଷା ହାତରେ ମୁଦି ପିନ୍ଧେଇ ଦେଇ କହିଥିଲେ। “ଏଇ ରାଜ ନନ୍ଦିନୀ ରୂପ ମୋ ପୁଅ ପାଇଁ ଠିକ୍ ସାଜିବ।” ଶୁଣିଦିନ ପରେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବର୍ଷାର ବାହାଘର ହୋଇଥିଲା। ବିଦା ହୋଇ ଆସିଲାବେଳେ ମା ତାକୁ ଛାତିରେ ଜାକି କହିଥିଲା “ମୋ ସାରା ଜୀବନ ଦୁଃଖ, ଅଭାବ ଓ ଅପମାନରେ ଘାଣ୍ଟି ହୋଇ ଆସିଛି। ଭଗବାନ ତୋ ଜୀବନରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୁଖ ଭରି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ। ତୋ ସୁଖ ଦେଖି ମୋ ସାରା ଜୀବନର ଦୁଃଖ ମୁଁ ଭୁଲିଯିବ।”

ତା’ପରେ ଶାଶୁଘରେ ଚତୁର୍ଥୀ ରାତି -- ଚତୁର୍ଥୀ ରାତିରେ ବର୍ଷା ମୁହଁରେ ଓଡ଼ଣା ଟେକିଦେଇ ବିପ୍ଳବ କହିଥିଲେ “ତୁମର ଏଇ ଆଖି ଦୁଇଟି ମତେ ପାଗଳ କରିଦେଇଥିଲା ବର୍ଷା।” ବାହାଘର ପରେ କେତେ Romantic ଥିଲା ସେ ଦିନ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ। ତାଙ୍କ ରହଣି। ଭିତରେ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକ ପାଇଁ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ବର୍ଷାକୁ ପାଖରୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ନଥିଲେ ବିପ୍ଳବ। କେତେ ଖୁସିରେ କଟିଯାଉଥିଲା ସେ ଦିନସବୁ। ଯେପରି କୌଣସି ଦୁଃଖ ବର୍ଷାକୁ ଛୁଇଁ ପାରି ନଥିଲା। ତାପରେ ଆସିଥିଲା ବିରହ। ବାହାଘରର ପନ୍ଦର ଦିନ ପରେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ଗୁଲିଯାଇଥିବ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ଗୁଳିରାରେ Join କରିବା ପାଇଁ।

ସବୁଦିନ Telephone କରୁଥିଲେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ଓ ସବୁଦିନ ବର୍ଷା ପାଖକୁ ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ ଚିଠି ଲେଖୁଥିଲେ ନିଜ Promise

ଅନୁସାରେ। ବର୍ଷା ମଧ୍ୟ କଥା ଦେଇଥିଲା ସବୁଦିନ ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିବା ପାଇଁ। ହେଲେ ନିଜ କଥା ରଖିପାରିନଥିଲା। ସେ। ଶାଶୁଘରେ ଏତେ ନଣନ୍ଦ ଓ ଦିଅରଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିବା ପାଇଁ ସମୟ ମିଳୁ ନଥିଲା। ସାନ ଦିଅର ପିଙ୍କୁ ଥକାରେ କହିଥିଲେ ଭାଇକୁ ତୁମେ ପାଗଳ କରିଦେଲଣି ଭାଉଜ।”

ଶାଶୁଘରେ ଦିନସାରା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ସମୟ କଟିଯାଉଥିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ ରାତିରେ ଶୋଇବା ବେଳେ ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କ କଥା ବେଶୀ ବେଶୀ ମନେ ପଡୁଥିଲା। “ତୁମେ ମତେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରି ଦେଇଛ ବିପ୍ଳବ। ଦୁଃଖ ଓ ଅଭାବରେ ଛୋଟବେଳୁ ମୁଁ ବଢି ଆସିଛି। ଆଜି ମତେ ନିଜର କରି ସବୁ ଦୁଃଖ ଅଭାବ ମୋର ମେଣ୍ଟାଇ ଦେଇଛ। ରାଜକୁମାର ତୁମେ ପକ୍ଷୀରାଜ ଘୋଡ଼ାରେ ଆସି ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିଛ ମତେ ଓ ଦୁଃଖ ଓ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟର ଅନ୍ଧ ଗଳିରୁ। ମଥାରେ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ପିନ୍ଧାଇ କାଙ୍ଗାଲୁଣୀକୁ ତୁମେ ରାଜରାଣୀ କରି ଦେଇଛ। ତୁମେ ଯେ ମୋ ଆଖିରେ ଦେବ ପୁରୁଷ।” -- ଯେତେ ବେଶୀ ଭାବୁଥିଲା ବିପ୍ଳବ ପ୍ରତି ସେତେ ପ୍ରେମ ଓ କୃତଜ୍ଞତାରେ ମନ ଭରି ଉଠୁଥିଲା ବର୍ଷାର।

ବାହାଘରର ୩ ମାସ ପରେ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ଆସିଥିଲା ବର୍ଷା। ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରୁ Planeରେ ସେ ଏକା ଆସିଥିଲା। Planeରେ ବସି ଭାବି ଚାଲିଥିଲା ବର୍ଷା -- ବିପ୍ଳବ କ’ଣ ସତରେ ତାକୁ ଏତେ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି ? ଚିଠିର ଭାଷା କ’ଣ ତାଙ୍କ ମନର ଭାଷା ? Telephone ରେ ସବୁଦିନ ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରେମ ନିବେଦନ କରୁଥିଲେ। ସେ କ’ଣ ତାଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ତରର ନିବେଦନ ?” କେମିତି ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଆଶଙ୍କାରେ ବର୍ଷାର ମନ ଦବି ଯାଉଥିଲା। “ଯଦି ସେଠି ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ପରେ ସେ ଜାଣିବଯେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ତାକୁ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ? ଛାଡ଼, ଏମିତି ଭାବି ଅଯଥାରେ ସେ ମନକୁ ଭାରାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ କରିବ ନାହିଁ। ସେ ଜାଣେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ତାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି। ଯଦି ତାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଉନଥାନ୍ତେ ତେବେ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ତା ପାଖକୁ ଚିଠି ଲେଖୁ ନଥାନ୍ତେ କି ଘଣ୍ଟା ଘଣ୍ଟା Phoneରେ ତା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ କଥା ହେଉନଥାନ୍ତେ। ଏ ଫାଲତୁ ଚିନ୍ତା ନକରି ସେ ବିପ୍ଳବ କଥା ଭାବିବ। କେମିତି ଦେଖାଯାଉଥିବେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ? ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେ Airportରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସେ ଦେଖିବ କେମିତି ଲାଗିବ ? ଦୀର୍ଘ ତିନିମାସର ବିଚ୍ଛେଦ ପରେ ପ୍ରିୟ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ତା’ର ମିଳନ ହେବ। କେତେ ମଧୁର ହେବ ସେ ମିଳନ ! “ଘଣ୍ଟା ଦେଖିଲାବର୍ଷା । ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ Plane ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ପାଇଁ ଆସୁଛି

ଦେହ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଅଛି। ‘ହଃ ! ଏ ସମୟ ଶାଘୁ ଯାଉନାହିଁ କାହିଁକି ?” ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମିନିଟ୍ ଯେମିତି ଗୋଟିଏ ଯୁଗ ପରି ମନେ ହେଉଥିଲା।

ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ Air Portରେ Plane ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା। ବର୍ଷାକୁ ନେବା ପାଇଁ ବିପ୍ଳବ ଆସିଥିଲେ। “ଜୟ ! କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦେଖାଯାଉଛି ସେ । ଗାଢ଼ ନାଳ ରଙ୍ଗର ସୁର୍ ତାଙ୍କ ଗୋରା ଦେହକୁ ବେଶ୍ ମାନ୍ଦୁଛି।” ବର୍ଷାକୁ କୁଣ୍ଡେଇ ଧରି Kiss କଲେ ବିପ୍ଳବ।

ତା’ପରେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ଓ ବର୍ଷାର ଦାମ୍ପତ୍ୟ ଜୀବନ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା। କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବରେ ଦିନ ସବୁ କଟୁଥିଲା। କେତେ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ତାକୁ। ଅଫିସରୁ ଦିନକୁ ଚାରି ପାଞ୍ଚ ଥର ଘରକୁ Telephone କରୁଥିଲେ। ସବୁଦିନ Lunch ପାଇଁ ଆସୁଥିଲେ। ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ୫ଟା ବେଳକୁ ଘରେ ଆସି ହାଜର ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲେ। ସବୁଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ବର୍ଷାକୁ ବୁଲେଇବାକୁ ନେଉଥିଲେ। ଏବେବି ପୁରୀ ମନେ ଅଛି ବର୍ଷାର ଯେଉଁଦିନ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ସେ ଯାଇଥିଲା Party କୁ ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ବର୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ଏକ Welcome Partyର ଆୟୋଜନ କରିଥିଲେ। Party କୁ ଯିବାବେଳେ ବର୍ଷାର ହାତକୁ ଚାପିଦେଇ ବିପ୍ଳବ କହିଥିଲେ। “ତୁମେ ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଦେଖାଯାଉଛ ଯେ ତୁମକୁ ନେଇ Party କୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଡର ଲାଗୁଛି। କାହା ନଜର ଯଦି ତୁମ ଉପରେ ଲାଗିଯିବ !” ହାଲୁକା ସବୁଜ ରଙ୍ଗର ବନାରସା ଶାଢ଼ୀରେ ମୃଣ୍ମୟ ପ୍ରତିମା ଭଳି ଦେଖାଯାଉଥିଲା ବର୍ଷା।

Party ରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ବର୍ଷାର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା। “ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଝିଅ ଖୁବ୍ କମ୍ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳନ୍ତି”। କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଠି ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମିଶିପାରିନଥିଲା ସେ। ଏଇଚାତ ଆଉ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ହୋଇନାହିଁ ଯେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସେ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ କଥା ହୋଇପାରିବ। ହିନ୍ଦୀ ଓ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଯଦିଓ ସେ ଜାଣିଛି ସେସବୁ ଭାଷାରେ Fluently ସେ କଥା କହିପାରେ ନାହିଁ। ତେଣୁ ସେଠି ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥା ହେବାରେ ତା’ର ଅସୁବିଧା ହେଉଥିଲା। ତା’ପରେ ଏମିତି High Society ର ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହିତ Interact କରିବା ମଧ୍ୟ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ ତାକୁ। ସେ ଜାଣିବ ବା କେମିତି ପିଲାଦିନରୁ ତ ମଫସଲରେ ବଢି ଆସିଛି। ସେଦିନ Party ରୁ ଫେରିଲା ପରେ ବେଦନାରେ ବର୍ଷାର ମନ ଭାରାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଉଠିଥିଲା। “ସତରେ କ’ଣ ସେ IAS ବିପ୍ଳବ ରାୟ ଚୌଧୁରୀର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ହେବା ପାଇଁ

ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ? ଏତେ High Society ରେ ସେ କ'ଣ କରିପାରିବ ?” ରାତିରେ ଶୋଇଲା ବେଳେ ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କୁ ସେ କହିଥିଲା “ତୁମର High Society ରେ ମଫସଲି ବର୍ଷା କେମିତି ଚଳିବ ? ମୁଁ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ନଆସି ବରଂ ଶାଶୁଘରେ ରହିଯାଇଥିଲେ ଭଲ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା” । ବର୍ଷାକୁ ନିବିଡ଼ ଭାବରେ ଜାକି ଧରି ବିପ୍ଳବ କହିଥିଲେ “ତୁମେ ଯଦି ଏଠାକୁ ଆସିନଥାନ୍ତ ମୁଁ ଗୁଳିଚା ଛାଡ଼ି ତୁମ ପାଖକୁ ଗୁଲିଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି ଯେ” । “ସତରେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ତାକୁ ଏତେ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି ! ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେମରେ ବେଦନା ସବୁ ପୋଛି ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା ବର୍ଷାର ।

ଧାରେ ଧାରେ ସମୟ ଗତି ଗୁଲିଲା । ତା’ପରେ ଅନେକ party attend କଲାଣି ବର୍ଷା, ତଥାପି ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ସେ ଭଲ ଭାବରେ ମିଶି ପାରୁନଥିଲା । ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣି ସାରିଲେଣି ଯେ ବିପ୍ଳବର ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମଫସଲି, Backward, High Society ର ଚଳଣି ତାକୁ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ । ସେମିତି ମଧ୍ୟ ବେଶା କେହି ସାଙ୍ଗ ନାହାନ୍ତି ବର୍ଷାର । ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ତେଷା କରି ସେ ହିନ୍ଦୀ ଓ ଇଂଲିଶ୍ରେ କଥା ହେବା ଶିଖୁଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଭଳି କଥା ସେ କହିପାରୁ ନଥିଲା କି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭଳି outgoing ମଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇପାରୁ ନ ଥିଲା । କ୍ରମେ ବର୍ଷା ମଧ୍ୟ ଅନୁଭବ କରିପାରୁଥିଲା ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କର ତା ପ୍ରତି ବ୍ୟବହାରର ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ । Romance ତ ଦୂରର କଥା ବର୍ଷା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆଉ ଭଲ ଭାବରେ କଥା ମଧ୍ୟ ହେଉନଥିଲେ ବିପ୍ଳବ । “ହଠାତ୍ ଏ କ’ଣ ହେଲା ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କର ?” ସେଦିନ ସାହସ କରି ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଥିଲା “ତୁମର କ’ଣ ହୋଇଛି ବିପ୍ଳବ ?” ରୁକ୍ଷ ଭାବରେ ସେ ଜବାବ ଦେଇଥିଲେ “ତୁମଭଳି ଏକ ମଫସଲିକୁ ବାହାହୋଇ ମୋ ଜୀବନଟା ନଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ବରଂ ଏ ବାହାଘର ହୋଇନଥିଲେ ଭଲ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା” । ବିରାଟ ଏକ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ ଘଟିଥିଲା ବର୍ଷାର ମନରେ । “ଏ କ’ଣ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ବିପ୍ଳବ ? ସବୁ ଜାଣିତ ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବାହା ହୋଇଥିଲେ !”

ତା ପରେ ଅନବରତ କାନ୍ଦିଗୁଲିଛି ବର୍ଷା । ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ତାର ଶୁଖୁ ନାହିଁ । ହେଲେ ବର୍ଷା ଆଖି ଲୁହର ଆଉ କୌଣସି ମୂଲ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ ବିପ୍ଳବ ପାଖରେ । ଦିନ ଗତି ଗୁଲିବା ସହିତ ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କର ରୁକ୍ଷତା ମଧ୍ୟ ବଢ଼ି ଗୁଲିଛି ।

ଯୌବନ ଆସିବା ଦିନଠାରୁ ରଙ୍ଗିନ୍ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା ବର୍ଷାର । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ନାୟକର ନାମ ସେ

ଜାଣିନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଥିଲା ତା କୁଆଁରୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ତା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ସମୁଦ୍ର କୂଳରେ ବସି ବାଲିଘର ତୋଳିଥିଲା । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିବାକୁ, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ବାଲିଘର ତୋଳିବାକୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ବର୍ଷାକୁ, ହେଲେ ତା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଯେ ଦିନେ ସାକାର ହେବ ସେ ଆଶା ସେ କେବେ କରିନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ତା’ର ଦିନେ ବାସ୍ତବରେ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ନାୟକ ତା’ର ଆସିଥିଲା ଜୀବନର ନାୟକ ହୋଇ । ବିପ୍ଳବ -- ଏଇ ବେହେରାତ ସବୁଦିନ ସେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ଦେଖି ଆସିଥିଲା । ଏଇ ପୁରୁଷର ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ତ ସେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଆସିଥିଲା ତା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ । ତାକୁ ପାଇଲା ପରେ ଦୁନିଆଟା, କେତେ ରଙ୍ଗିନ୍ ଦେଖା ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଜନ୍ମ ଓ ଜୀବନ ତା’ର ସାର୍ଥକ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଆଉ ତା ପ୍ରେମରେ ... ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ବାଲିଘରଟା ବାସ୍ତବତାର ରୂପନେଇ ହସି ଉଠିଥିଲା । ତା’ପରେ ବିରାଟ ଏକ ଭୂମିକାରେ ଜୀବନଟା ତା’ର ଓଲଟ ପାଲଟ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ବାଲି ଘରଟା ତା’ର ଭୂସ୍ତୁତି ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ପ୍ରେମିକ ପୁରୁଷ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ପଥର ପୁରୁଷରେ । ବର୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ଥିବା ପ୍ରେମ, ମାୟା, ମମତା ସବୁକିଛି ଉଭେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା ବିପ୍ଳବ ମନରୁ ।

ଅଜିକାଲି ରାତିରେ ଭୟଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖି ଚିତ୍କାର କରି ଉଠୁଛି ବର୍ଷା । ବୋଧ ହୁଏ ତା ଚିତ୍କାର ଆଉ Room ରେ ଶୋଇଥିବା ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଣାଯାଉନାହିଁ କିମ୍ବା ଶୁଣାଯାଉଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ କିଛି ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁ ନାହିଁ ।

ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଦୁନିଆଟାରେ ବିଲୁକୁଲ୍ ଏକା ହୋଇଯାଇଛି ବର୍ଷା । କାହାକୁ କହିବ ସେ ତା’ ଦୁଃଖ ? ମିସେସ୍ ରାୟ ମିସେସ୍ ବର୍ମା ? ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କର ସମାଲୋଚନା କରିବ ସେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ? ନା ସେମିତି ସେ କରିପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । ନହେଲେ ଫେରିଯିବକି ସେଠାକୁ ଯେଉଁଠାରୁ ସେ ଆସିଥିଲା ? ସେଠାକୁ କାହା ପାଖକୁ ସେ ଯିବ ? ତା ବାହାଘରର ବର୍ଷେ ପରେ ଯେ ମା ତା’ର ଗୁଲିଯାଇଛି ପର ପାରିକୁ । ଯଦି ସେ ଆତ୍ମ ହତ୍ୟା କରିଦିଏ ସବୁ ଦୁଃଖରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ମିଳିଯିବ ? ତା’ପରେ କ’ଣ ହେବ ? Police ଆସି ଯଦି ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କୁ ବାନ୍ଧି ନେବ ? ନା ! ଚିତ୍କାର କରି ଉଠିଲା ବର୍ଷା । ନିଜେ ଦୁଃଖରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କର ଏତେବଡ଼ କ୍ଷତି ସେ କରିପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ଯେ ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କୁ ଭଲପାଏ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ସେ କେତେ ଭଲପାଏ ଜାଣିନି, ହେଲେ ଏ ଦୁନିଆର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପ୍ରିୟ ଜିନିଷଠାରୁ ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବହୁତ ବେଶା ଭଲ ପାଏ -- ନିଜଠାରୁ ମଧ୍ୟ । ତାଙ୍କ ବିନା ସେ

ବହୁ ପାରିବନି । ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେମ ବିନା ସେ ବହୁ ପାରିବତ ? ବହୁତ କଷ୍ଟ ହେବ । ତଥାପି ସେ ବହୁ ରହି ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା କରିବ ସେ ଦିନକୁ ଯେଉଁ ଦିନ ପ୍ରେମିକ ପୁରୁଷ ତାର ଫେରି ଆସିବ -- “ବର୍ଷାର ବିପ୍ଳବ ଫେରି ଆସିବ ।” ଆଖିରୁ ତା’ର ଲୁହ ପୋଛି ଦେବ ଓ ତା ଆଖିରେ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ଆଖି ମିଶେଇ ଦେଇ କହିବ “ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ଭଲପାଏ ବର୍ଷା ।”

ଆଜି ବିପ୍ଳବ ଓ ବର୍ଷାର 3rd Marriage Anniversary । ଘରକୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବରେ ସେ ସଜାଇବ । ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କର ମନ ପସନ୍ଦ ଜିନିଷ ରାନ୍ଧିବ । “ଓଃ ! ଦିନ ଆସି ୧୨ଟା ହେଲାଣି କେତେ ଯେ କାମ ଅଛି ।” ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ପୋଛି ଉଠିଲା ବର୍ଷା । ବିପ୍ଳବ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି Tour ରେ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ବେଳକୁ ଫେରିବେ । ସକାଳୁ ମିସେସ୍ ବର୍ମା ଓ ମିସେସ୍ ରାୟ Telephone କରି Happy Anniversary ଜଣେଇ ସାରିଲେଣି ।

Orderly ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମିଶି ଘରକୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବରେ ସଜାଇଛି ବର୍ଷା । ସବୁ Flower Vase ରେ ବଗିଚାରୁ ତାଜା ଗୋଲାପ ଆଣି ସଜାଇଛି । ନିଜ ହାତରେ ବିପ୍ଳବର ମନଲାଖି Dish ସବୁ ତିଆରି କରିଛି । ତାପରେ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ପୂର୍ବରୁ orderly ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ପଠାଇଦେଇନିଜକୁ ସଜେଇଛି ଅଭିସାରିକା ବେଶରେ -- ବିପ୍ଳବର ଅଭିସାରିକା । ଘଣ୍ଟା ଦେଖୁଛି ବିପ୍ଳବ କେତେବେଳେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିବେ । ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ୭ଟା, ୮ଟା, ୯ଟା -- ସାରାଦିନ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରି କ୍ଳାନ୍ତିରେ Living Room ର ସୋଫା ଉପରେ ଢୁଳାଇ ପଡ଼ିଛି ବର୍ଷା । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଛି ସେ । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ବର୍ଷାର ହାତ

ଧରି ତାକୁ ଟାଣି ନେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଏ କ’ଣ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗର ନନ୍ଦନକାନନ ? ଯେତେଦୂର ବର୍ଷାର ଆଖି ପାଉଛି ମାଇଲ୍ ବ୍ୟାପା ରଙ୍ଗାନ୍ ଗୋଲାପ ଫୁଲର ବଗିଚା । ବଗିଚା ମଝିରେ ଏକ ଶଙ୍ଖ ମର୍ମର ବଟାଣ ଉପରେ ଗୋଲାପର ଶଯ୍ୟା । ସେଇ ଗୋଲାପ ଶଯ୍ୟା ଉପରେ ବର୍ଷାକୁ ବସେଇ ତା ଗହଳ କବରୀରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ରକ୍ତ ଗୋଲାପ ଖୋସି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ବିପ୍ଳବ । ତା’ପରେ ତାକୁ ବାହୁରେ ଜଡ଼ାଇ ଧରି କହିଛନ୍ତି “ତୁମ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ନାୟକ ତୁମ ପାଖକୁ ଫେରି ଆସିଛି ବର୍ଷା ।” ଓଃ ! କେତେ ଯେ ତୃପ୍ତି ! ଏଇ ଦିନଟି ପାଇଁ ତ ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ଆସିଥିଲା । ସ୍ୱର୍ଗସୁଖ ପୁଣିଥରେ ଫେରି ଆସିଛି ତା ଜୀବନରେ । ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେମରେ ପୁଣିଥରେ ସେ ଡୁବି ଯିବ । ନିଜ ଆଖିର ମାଦକତାରେ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ତା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ କୁମାରକୁ ସେ ବାନ୍ଧି ଧରିବ । ଆଉ କେବେ ବି ତାକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଦେବ ନାହିଁ ।

ହଠାତ୍ କଲିଂ ବେଲ୍ ଶବ୍ଦରେ ତନ୍ଦ୍ରା ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲା ବର୍ଷାର । ରାତି ଗୋଟାଏ -- ଘଣ୍ଟା ଦେଖିଲା ସେ । ତର ତର ହୋଇ କବାଟ ଖୋଲିଲା । ହାତରେ ଫୁଲ ତୋଡ଼ା ଧରି ବିପ୍ଳବ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ? ତା’ର ତନ୍ଦ୍ରା ବିଜଡ଼ିତ ଆଖିରେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ହାତରେ ଧରିଥିବା Brief case ଫୁଲତୋଡ଼ା ଭଳି ଦେଖାଗଲା । ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥା ହେଲା ବର୍ଷା । ସା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ପଦଟିଏ ମଧ୍ୟ କଥା ନକରି ବିପ୍ଳବ ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ଶୋଇବା କୋଠରୀ ଆଡ଼େ । ବିପ୍ଳବଙ୍କ ଯିବା ରାସ୍ତାକୁ ଅନେଇ ସେଇଠି ସ୍ଥାଣୁ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛି ବର୍ଷା ।

■ ■

ଉତ୍ତିଷ୍ଟ ତଃ ଜାଗ୍ରତଃ

କଳ୍ପନାମୟା ଦାଶ

କୁହ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ “ଅମୃତ ସିଂ” ଦେବତା ନାମରେ ଶପଥ କରି

ତୁମ ହୃଦୟେ କି ଉଠାଏନି ଦେଉ ବିଧବା “କଳି” ନୟନ ବାରି ? ୧୧।

ଇଚ୍ଛତ ସାଥେ ସୋହାଗ ଯାହାର ଲୁଚିନେଲେ ପତି ଦେବ ତୁମର,

ଗର୍ଭବତୀ ସେ ବିଧବା ନୟନେ ଚିରଦିନ ଲାଗି ଭରିଲେ ନୀର ୧୨।

ଅଗ୍ନି ଦେବତା, ଦଶଦିଶ ପାଳ କୁଳ ପ୍ରଦୀପରେ ରଖିଲ ସାକ୍ଷୀ,

କୁମାରୀ ଜୀବନ ଦେଇଛ ଉଜାଣ୍ଟ ସୋହାଗ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ସୁନ୍ଦାରେ ମାଣି ୧୩।

ପୁରୋହିତଙ୍କର ମନ୍ତ୍ର ମୟୂଖେ ହୋଇଗଲ ତୁମେ ଆୟୁଷ୍ମତୀ,

ଆୟୁ ଅଳଙ୍କାର ଦାସଦାସୀ ତୁଲେ ବୋଲାଉଲ ସିନା ଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ ୧୪।

ଭାବିଲଗୋ କେବେ ପାଇଥିଲ ସତେ ସ୍ବାମୀର ନିରୋଳା ସୋହାଗଟିକେ,

“ତୁମେ ମୋର; ଆଉ ମୁଁ ବି ତୁମର” କହିଥିଲେ ସିଏ ଜଡ଼ାଇ ବୁକେ ୧୫।

କୁହଗୋ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ କୁହ ସତ କରି, ଅଙ୍ଗେ ନିଭାଇ ଅନଙ୍ଗ ଦାଉ,

କେତେ କେତେ ରାତି ପାହିଛି ତୁମର ପୁଣି କେତେ ରାତି ପାହିବ ଆଉ ୧୬।

ଆଖି କଜଳ ଲିଭି ଯାଇଥିବ ଶୁଖୁଥିବ ପ୍ରୀତି-ଫୁଲର ମାଳା,

ରଜନୀ ଶେଷରେ ଫେରିଥିବେ ପତି ଧର୍ଷଣ କରି ଅପର ବାଳା ୧୭।

ବୁକୁତଲେ ଗୁପ୍ତି ଦୀର୍ଘ ଶୁଆସ କେତେ ବାନ୍ଧୁଥିବ ଧଇର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବନ୍ଧ ?

ଆଖିରେ ଲୁଗୁଇ ବିନ୍ଦୁବିନ୍ଦୁ ଲୁହ କେତେକାଳ ଆଉ ରହିବ ଅନ୍ଧ ୧୮।

ଅଛବ ବୋଲି ଦିବସ ଆଲୋକେ ମାଡ଼ନାହିଁ ତୁମେ ଯାହାର ଛାଇ,

ତାହାରି ନାରୀର ପଣତ ଉହାତେ ପ୍ରିୟତମ ତୁମ ଯାଆନ୍ତି ଶୋଇ ୧୯।

ନିଜ ଲୁହେ ସିନା ଭାସି ଭାସି ତୁମେ ଗୁଲି ଆସିଲଣି ଅନେକ ଦୂର,

ସହିକି ପାରିବ ତନୁଜା ଜୀବନେ ହୁଏ ଯଦି ପୁଣି ଏଇ ବେଭାର ? ୧୯।

ଜୀବନର ବିଷ, ପାୟୁଷ ମଣିଲ ଦେଖିକରି ଯେଉଁ ବାଳିକା ମୁହଁ,

ଧର୍ଷିତା ଯଦି ଦେଖିବ ତାହାରେ ସତେକି ସହିବ ତୁମର ଦେହ ? ୧୯।

ବରକୋଳି ପତ୍ର-ଦୁବ ଅକ୍ଷତେ ବନ୍ଦାଇ ଯେବେ ଆଣିବ ପୁରେ,

କନକ ପ୍ରତିମା ପୁତ୍ରବଧୂରେ କି ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଦେବଗୋ ତାରେ ୧୯।

ମନ୍ଦିରାକ୍ଷୀ ଆଉ ମନ୍ଦିରା ତୁଲେଏ ପୁତ୍ର ତୁମର ରହିବ ମାଡ଼ି,

ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଉଜ୍ଜାଣ୍ଟ ନିରିମାଣ୍ଡ ବଧୂ ପୁରାଇ ଗୁଲିବ ଦୁଃସହ ରାତି ୧୯।

କୁହଗୋ ଜନନୀ ଆତ୍ମା ତୁମର ସେପୁରେ ଶାନ୍ତି ଲଭିବ କେବେ ?

ତର୍ପଣ ଦେବ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଅନ୍ତରେ ତୁମ ସନ୍ତାନ ତୁମକୁ ଯେବେ ? ୧୯।

କାହାପାଇଁ ଏତେ ଓଷା ଉପବାସ କାହାପାଇଁ ତୁମ ‘କରବା କୌଥ’ ?

କାହାପାଇଁ ସେବା ଲାଗି ପୂଜାଥାଳୀ ଧରି ମନ୍ଦିରୁ ମନ୍ଦିରେ ଗୁଲିଛ ପଥ ? ୧୯।

ଜୀବନ-ଯଜ୍ଞେ ଯାଲାଗି ନିଜକୁ ଘୃତାହୁତି ସମ ଦେଲ ଅରପି,

ଅନ୍ତରେ ତାର ଭେଦିଲାନି ଯଦି ଭିଜା ଭିଜା ତୁମ ଆଖି ଦୁଇଟି ୧୧୭।

କେମିତି ଭାବୁଛ ପଥର ପ୍ରତିମା ଦେଉଳେ ତୁମକୁ କହିବ କଥା,

ଲୁହ ପୋଛିଦେଇ ଆଖିରୁ ତୁମର ଘୁଞ୍ଚାଇବ ବୋଲି ମରମ ବ୍ୟଥା ? ୧୧୮।

ସାତା-ଶକୁଳା ତୁଲେ ସମ୍ମାନ କରିବେ ତୁମକୁ ହୃଦୟେ ଆପି,

ସମବେଦନାର ଅଶ୍ରୁ ଢାଳିବେ ଆଉ ଥୋକେ ତୁମ ସକ୍ରାପ ଦେଖୁ ୧୧୯।

କିଲାଭ ତହିଁରେ କୁହଗୋ ଜନନୀ କିଲାଭ ତହିଁରୁ ମିଳିବ କୁହ,

ପତି ସ୍ନେହ ପ୍ରୀତି ଉଣା ଯା ଜୀବନେ ଜୀବନ ତାପାଙ୍କ କି ଦୁରୁବହ ୧୨୦।

ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ ନରକେ କି ଅଛି ଫରକ ନିଜେ ନ ମଲେ କି ବୁଝିବ ଆଉ ?

ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଲୋକକୁ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ବେଢାର - ଅଯୋଗ୍ୟର ପୂଜା ସେତିକି ଆଉ ୧୨୦।

କ'ଣ ଜୀବନ କଟାଇବା ଥିଲା ତୁମ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କର କପାଳ ଲେଖା,

ବର୍ବରତାର ସୀମା ଟପିଗଲେ - ଟପିଲେ ସମାଜ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ ରେଖା ୧୨୧।

ଫିଙ୍ଗିଦିଅ ଏ ପୂଜାଥାଳି ଏବେ ଅନ୍ୟାୟ ତୁଲେ ତୋଳଗୋ ଅସି,

ଲୁହ ପୋଛିଦେଇ ଆହ୍ୱାନ କର ସାଥେ ସାଥୁ ଦେବେ ଅନେକ “କଳି” ୧୨୨।

ବିଦ୍ରୋହ ନିଆଁ ଜଳାଅ ରକତେ ବୁଆ ନିଷ୍ଠାରେ ଦିଅ ଆହୁତି,

ଜାଗିବେ ଜାଗିବେ ଜଣାଇଲେ ତୁମେ ତୁମ ପତି ପରି ଅନେକ ପତି ୧୨୩।

ସଂସାର ସାରା ଭରି ରହିଛନ୍ତି ଚିରଦୁଃଖିନୀ ତୁମରି ପରି,

ସେବା ତପସ୍ୟା ଦେବା ବଦଳରେ ଖେଳୁଛନ୍ତି ଆଖୁଲୁହରେ ହୋରି ୧୨୪।

କେତେ କେତେ ‘କଳି’ ଇଚ୍ଛତ ଏଠି ଲୁଣିତ ହୁଏ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କ୍ଷଣେ,

ପର ସଂସାର ଉଦ୍ଧାତି ଦେବାକୁ ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ସିଂ ବି ଅଛନ୍ତି ପଣେ ୧୨୫।

ସେସବୁ ହିସାବ ରଖିଲେ କି ଲାଭ ଲାଭୁ ତ ହେବନି ହୃଦୟ ଭାର,

ନାରୀ ଭିତରେ ଯେ ଶକ୍ତି ରହିଛି ଚେତିବା ଏଥର ଉଚିତ୍ ତାର ୧୨୬।

ଝିନ୍ଦା ବତାସ ଥିଲା ହୋଇଗଲେ ନିର୍ମଳ ହେବ ଏ ସସାଗରା,

ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଶେଷରେ ଶାନ୍ତି କପୋତ ଉଡ଼ିବ, ଉଡ଼ିବ ମୁଲକ ସାରା ୧୨୭।

ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ ରାଘବ ହେଉସେ ରଜକ ଧୂଳାର ଯେତେ କଲେବି ତାଙ୍କୁ,

କଲ୍ୟାଣ ମୟା ଜାନକୀ ଆଉକି ଉଠିବେ ଫୁଟାଇ ଧରଣୀ ତୁକୁ ୧୨୮।

ବେଳ ଥାଉ ବରଂ ନିଜେ ବୈଦେହୀ ଜଗତ ଜନଙ୍କ ଖୋଲଗୋ ଆଖୁ,

ବଞ୍ଚିବା ଲାଗି ନହେଉ ନାରାକୁ ଚିରଦିନ କିଛି ଗରଳ ଭଣି ୧୨୯।

ପଥଧାରେ ନୁହଁ, ଅଙ୍ଗନେ ତୁମ ଜଳାଇ ଆଲୋକ ଦେଖାଅ ପଥ,

ଉତିଷ୍ଠତଃ ଜାଗ୍ରତ ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟ ବରାନ୍ ନିବୋଧ ତଃ ୧୩୦।

(ଜରବା ଗୋଥ ସେ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ସଧବା ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କର ବଡ଼ପର୍ବ । ସ୍ୱାମୀର ଗର୍ଭ ଜୀବନ ଏବଂ ମଙ୍ଗଳ କାମନା କରି ଏ ଉପବାସଟି କରାଯାଏ । ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ India Abroad ରେ ଏ ଧର୍ଷଣ ସମ୍ପାଦକ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲି । ଏବେ ଆଉ ଚରିତ୍ର ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ନାଁ ମନେ ନାହିଁ । ଧର୍ଷଣର ନାଁ ଥିଲା “Kuchi” ଯାହାକୁ ମୁଁ “କଳି” ବୋଲି ଲେଖିଛି । ତା ସ୍ୱାମୀର ଖାଉଦଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗିଆ ଥିଲା “ସି”, ମୁଁ “ଅମୃତ ସି” ବୋଲି ଲେଖିଛି । ବିଲ ମଝିରେ ଦିନ ଦ୍ୱିପ୍ରହରରେ, ହଳିଆଟିର ସାମନାରେ ଭାତଧରି ଆସିଥିବା ତାର ଗର୍ଭବତୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ ବଳାହାର କଲାବେଳେ, ମୁଲିଆଟି ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ସିଂଙ୍କୁ ବାଧା ଦେଇଥିଲା । ଏଥିରେ ଅଧିକ ଉତ୍ତେଜିତ ହୋଇ କାଣ୍ଡଞ୍ଜାନ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ସିଂ, ତାଙ୍କ ପୁରୁରା ସହିତ ମିଳିମିଶି ସେ ମୁଲିଆକୁ ହତ୍ୟା କରିଥିଲେ । ଉଭୟେ ଜେଲ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ତା’ପରେ କ’ଣ ହେଲା ଆଉ ମନେ ରଖିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ବିଧବା କଳିର ଦୂରବସ୍ଥା ଏବଂ ସଧବା ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସିଂଙ୍କର ମାନସିକ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଭାବି - ଏ କବିତାକୁ ଲେଖିଛି ।)

Contributors to the Oriya Section

"Sur Bharati" Arati Misra (p. 1-22 to 1-24) - from Bhubaneswar; renowned singer and composer of Hindustani classical, Odissi and light classical music.

Ranu Mishra (p. 3-6 to 3-9) - chairperson of the State Commission for Women in Bhubaneswar.

Late Durga Madhab Misra - Retired Director General of Police, author of several books, an eminent writer of short stories and poems and excellent orator, father of Swadha Rath.

Sneha Mohanty - lives in Huntington Beach, CA; regular contributor to the OSA Journal.

Surya Nayak - lives in Maryland; much-published poet and well-recorded lyricist.

Sujata Nayak - lives in Maryland; poet, singer, organizer of various Indian programs.

Bishnupriya Mishra - lives in St. Louis, MO.

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Mamata Misra - lives in Austin, TX; community volunteer.

Durgabati Tripathy - from Betnoti, Mayurbhanj; writer of short-story and poetry since 1944, honored by Orissa Sahitya Academy in 1980.

Nandita Behera - from Cerritos, CA; past contributor to the OSA Journal, noted Odissi dancer.

Shailorani Misra - from Bhubaneswar; author of numerous short stories and poems, translated the novel "Subarnalata" by Ashapura Devi from Bengali to Oriya, mother of Swadha Rath.

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Swetapadma Dash - lives San Jose, CA; has taught written and spoken Oriya to second-generation Oriya-Americans.

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Understanding Some Philosophical Terms

Saroj Behera

A thesis of any kind needs a few key features: definitions, assumptions, models, validations, and finally, conclusions. The objective of a thesis is to explain a phenomenon, either observed or experienced, and the relationships between the observer and the observed. From a thesis comes a set of corollaries and conclusions which sometimes dominate understanding and become the religions of people. Not understanding the foundations of a thesis leads to a misunderstanding of its basic premise. The older the thesis, the worse is the misunderstanding.

This seems to be the fate of many of the fundamental ideas of Veda and Vedanta, the cornerstones of Indian philosophy, which have been reduced to blind beliefs and ritualistic activities. Here, I shall try to provide definitions of a few words and phrases used in Vedanta as I understand them. It is an attempt to study Vedantic thoughts critically, analyze them, and understand the subtle ideas therein.

The Vedic teachers have never asked anybody to just believe in their teachings. The Manduka Upanishad states clearly that, "*One must examine in detail all this and all that*". With that in mind, we should be absolutely critical about the assumptions that Vedanta makes. However, we must add only one caveat: that we should not reject outright the assumptions made when they do not conform to our present day thought process.

Truth, Untruth, Illusion (Sat, Asat, Mithya):

The basic definitions of reality, on which the thesis is based and from which we should construct our analysis, are:

- **Sat** - Vedanta defines what is real and true as that which does not change. That which has a beginning and end is not real. All truth withstands the test of time and place; it is permanent and unchanging.

- **Asat** - That which could never exist is untruth. Examples are: the son of a barren woman, a rabbit with horns.
- **Mithya** - That which appears true at the instant of our experience and vanishes on analysis is called *Mithya*. Examples are: mistaking a piece of rope on a road to be a snake at time of dusk. At that instance it looks like a snake, causing fear. But on further observation and analysis, we recognize the rope as a rope, and the fear associated with the snake vanishes. Similar examples are seeing a mirage, or dreaming.

When Vedanta talks of reality, consider these definitions and determine for yourself what reality actually means. All things we know of, external and internal, change and hence are not real by this definition. Remember that this definition is key in developing a thesis and needs to be looked upon as an integral part of that thesis. Thus, the world is not real, the body is not real, all our thoughts are not real, and certainly not our ambitions and egos. Our experiences and observations appear real for as long as we do not critically analyze and understand the unchanging principles behind them. What then is truth? What is the unchanging principle behind all this we see, feel and relate to, becomes a fundamental question to investigate and analyze. This unchanging principle is something one only has to appreciate; it need not be something to be described or objectified. The Concept of Brahman originates in this idea of Reality in Hindu thoughts.

Experience of Pleasure and Pain:

When we mistake a rope lying on the street at twilight to be a snake, the fear in us is very real for that instant. Upon further analysis however, this feeling of false reality goes away and in its place we have the understanding that it was only a rope. Hence the superimposition of the idea of

a snake onto the rope caused the feeling of fear in us. Logically speaking:

- There was a nonunderstanding of the Real (a rope in this case).
- There was a misunderstanding of the Real (the rope to be a snake).

- There was value judgment made on the situation based on past experience or knowledge (that snakes are dangerous).
- All these created a situation of fear and hence instability in the mind and hence pain, discomfort, sweat etc.

So, the model is:



Note that the object does not play any role in the above model to create pleasure or pain except for its relative existence which triggers our mental processes. To give another example:

- There is a red rose in my garden.
- I see the rose, I smell it, and I touch it.
- I say it is beautiful, I say it smells good, and I say it feels good.
- Now I clip the rose and remove the thorns before I give it to my dear wife.
- Two days later, the flower becomes dry, petals have fallen off, the fragrance is gone, its texture is rough, and I get upset.
- Throughout this process it is me who is going through the actions and the associated feelings with them.
- Throughout the process the rose always existed and smelled good, but it never knew it was beautiful and it felt good.

Thus one can see that there is a very simple relationship between the subject (*I*) and the object (*Rose*). The object exists in the relative world, the subject recognizes the relative existence but adds on a few values which are totally his or hers alone. These superimposed values cause a reaction in the subject's mind and thereby cause pleasure or pain based on the subject's previous experiences. The object is totally indiscriminate. It is always the subject that discriminates, that acts and that suffers the consequences.

Renunciation:

The common understanding is that Hinduism is fatalistic and that leaving everything to God means that the individual has no responsibility and hence no accountability. Renunciation is typically understood to be just that: giving up responsibility and accountability. This is an error. The thesis, as I understand, is as follows.

- Action (*Karma*) always brings a result.
- The specific nature of the result is not predictable by the individual since a set of complex and multiple, uncontrollable parameters effect the results of an action. Examples: The process of the act, the mental attitude, the recipients, the timing, the location, and many other variables could affect the result of a given action. Because of this we define an identity called *Ishwara* or God who essentially becomes the keeper of the law of *Karma*.
- The Doer always receives the Results.
- Since Doer and the field of actions are relative, the action is relative and so is the result. That means that action is limited and bounded by time.

If that is the case, we do not have any problems if and only if we accept the results of all our actions gracefully and go on with life. But we do not. This leads to the following situations:

- If we get what we want or don't get what we don't want, we are happy.

- If we don't get what we want and we get what we don't want, we are unhappy.

Both of these cause a problem in the mind of the Doer. Hence the non-acceptance of the results of an action becomes a major issue. A solution had to be developed so people can face up and withstand the problem because action is a necessity for survival and non-action means death. So the following options are available.

- Accept results of actions as they are. Actions are mine and hence results are mine: good or bad.
- Accept the results as gift from *Ishwara* and thereby do not take ownership of the results although take accountability for the action. I take whatever God gives for my actions.
- Offer the actions to *Ishwara* (Give up the Doership) and hence the results also go to Him. The individual only becomes the instrument. I do as God wishes and hence what I get also is according to His wishes.

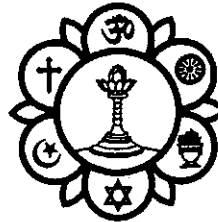
Each of these options is unique and requires strong mental discipline and a clean, delicate mental attitude which comes through continuous

practice, understanding, and eternal vigilance to one's self. Therein comes the concept of Renunciation and certainly not in giving up action. It is the acceptance of the results of actions in any one of the ways described above which is true renunciation.

In Conclusion:

- There is an unchanging principle we call Reality. All that we know is transient and hence illusory and is always supported by the Real.
- Analysis (*Vichara*) is the only means to understand *Sat*, *Asat* and *Mithya*.
- Living on this earth means we must take actions. We have full control over the actions and we do not have full control on the results thereof.
- The object of our actions and desires are neutral in characteristics; it is the observer who imprints values and perceptions on the object which creates pleasure or pain.
- Renunciation means total acceptance of the results of one's action with full responsibility and accountability.

*Saroj Behera, a past-President of OSA, lives in Cupertino, CA.
He offers special thanks to his son, Sanjiv, for editing and restructuring the sentences
and for asking insightful questions which helped clarify the writer's thoughts on the subject.*



Gita is one of the greatest spiritual books of the world. It explains to us what man is, what God is, what love is, what knowledge is, and what is the right way to work.

*- Prof. Dil Mohammed, Principal, Islamic College, Lahore
in his Preface to the Urdu translation of the Gita.*

A Trip To Aialik Bay

Debendra Kumar Das

INTRODUCTION: Every year a group of students and faculty from scientific and engineering disciplines at the University of Alaska Fairbanks go on a cruise through the Kenai Fjords, a part of northern Pacific Ocean located off the southern coast of Alaska, aboard the University's oceanographic research vessel, the *Alpha Helix*. This cruise is part of marine science course called "Shipboard Techniques," which is designed to give practical experience to students in the use of various types of instruments, shipboard operations, and sampling techniques at sea.

Since my arrival at the University thirteen years ago, I have always been interested in availing myself of the opportunity to take part in the cruise. It became a reality in May 1995, when my proposal to participate as a faculty member was approved in exchange for a series of lectures, which I was to present to the students and faculty on ship propulsion engineering during this study tour. This trip was designated as the Student Training And Field Station Research Expedition (STAR - 95) and lasted from May 8 through May 12, 1995.

The sights of mountains, glaciers, ocean, and wildlife that I was thrilled to observe on this trip were simply breathtaking. Through this article, I would like to share my experience, which may generate some interest in our youths to someday pursue research in the locations we visited. For the adults, I hope to pique their interest to visit the rare sights that this north country offers.

The journey began on the early morning of May 8, when ten students, four faculty members, including myself, one visiting professor from Russia, and a teaching assistant left the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus in several vehicles that were filled with various pieces of research equipment and personal gear. The distance from Fairbanks to the Seward Marine Center, where the M/V *Alpha Helix* is docked, is nearly 500 miles. The travel is

through the scenic Parks Highway that passes by Denali National Park, which presents a view of the majestic Mt. McKinley, the tallest peak in North America. Upon reaching Anchorage, we followed the scenic coast of Turnagain Arm (named by Captain Cook, when he had to turn his ship around again while looking for a passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic), a part of Seward Highway, until we arrived at the Seward Marine Center at about 6:00 PM. We took our time driving this distance, and on the way we stopped at various scenic points.

The Seward Marine Center, operated by the University of Alaska, contains adequate laboratory and library spaces for oceanographic research. All equipment was unloaded and brought into the main building to be transported to the ship later in the evening. After supper in the town, the research party headed toward the dock and started loading equipment and personal items onto the ship. Before 10:00 P.M. everybody was summoned to the main hall in the ship to be trained for emergency preparedness. With all personnel in attendance, the captain gave instructions and demonstrations for fire, flood, and abandon-ship drills. Everybody was asked to try on and secure a survival suit. Alarm bells for fire/flooding, man-overboard, and abandon-ship were explained. Exterior deck safety and functions of watertight doors and portholes were emphasized.

Right after midnight the ship left the Seward dock and headed out through Resurrection Bay into the open water. Since I had the responsibility to deliver lectures on ship propulsion, I proceeded to the engine room to get additional technical information on the *Alpha Helix* to augment my lecture notes.

SHIP SPECIFICATIONS: I sat down with the Chief Engineer to collect the technical specifications of the ship. The 133-foot research vessel *Alpha Helix* was built in 1966 for use by the Scripps Institute. While operated by

Scripps, the vessel worked in many remote locations, including Antarctica, the Arctic, the Great Barrier Reef of Australia, and the Amazon River. In 1980, the National Science Foundation transferred the vessel to the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Its hull is ice-strengthened to permit limited surveys in areas covered by seasonal sea ice and in locations adjacent to Alaska's tidewater glaciers, which are constantly calving. As a matter of fact, the objective of the STAR-95 expedition was to conduct research close to the face of the Aialik Glacier.

The main engine is a 820 horsepower diesel engine that drives a single variable pitch propeller. The ship can cruise at a steady speed of 9.5 knots with a capacity of reaching 11 knots at full thrust. It has a fuel capacity of 29,350 gallons and can cruise for 30 days at 9.5 knots. It can cover a distance of 6,500 miles at that speed during a continuous cruise. The ship has a fresh water storage capacity of 5,000 gallons and is equipped with an evaporator capable of producing 800 gallons daily. The ship's electrical service is powered by two 440-volt, 60-amp, 100-kilowatt generators.

The vessel provides living quarters for 15 scientists and 9 crew members. The ship has a laboratory space of 120 square feet wet and 1,000 square feet dry and special equipment to sample and analyze bathymetric, hydrographic, biological, and geological data collected by the oceanographic sampling devices.

After spending some time collecting the technical information and visiting the engine room, I went to the deck area for some fresh air, wearing a floatation device with another scientist. By that time, we were gradually getting out of the sheltered waters of Resurrection Bay and were heading out to the open water. The ship began to pitch and roll slightly. Years ago, in 1983, while working at the Naval Surface Weapons Center in Virginia, I had experienced seasickness while on a cruise designed for structural test firing. Therefore, I had taken the precaution this time of taking Dramamine several hours before the cruise. I also saw several scientists using a type of patch around their neck to minimize seasickness. Despite my precautions of taking adequate

medicine, I started feeling queasy as we approached the open water. To avoid becoming sick, I quickly returned to the cabin and climbed onto the bunk bed where I tried to rest calmly. I took some more pills and closed my eyes, trying to relax while the ship started rocking more vigorously. Due to my tiredness from the long journey from Fairbanks to Seward and a light stomach because of a small supper the evening before (deliberately trying to avoid seasickness), I soon started to feel groggy and fell asleep. That was very fortunate for me because when I woke up the next morning to join everybody for breakfast at the ship's mess hall at 6:00 AM, the rocking motion has subsided. Now the ship had again entered calm waters in Aialik Bay.

MARINE STUDIES: Very little is known about the interaction between the glacier edge and the iceberg zones of Aialik Bay, located within the Kenai Fjords National Park. A large amount of calving and outflow of glacial melt and silt occur on the face of Aialik Glacier of southcentral Alaska. General observations by mariners in the past have indicated that the glacier edge/iceberg environment may be highly productive in phytoplankton, the bottom of the food chain, given the high concentration of birds and marine mammals that inhabit the iceberg zone along the tidewater glacier's face. Therefore, it was the purpose of this expedition to go as close as possible to the iceberg calving area by launching a shore party in a skiff to conduct various oceanographic measurements.

The activities for the day began with an orientation in the ship's galley by the Chief Scientist of the STAR expedition. Then everybody went out on deck to begin the field study. The first action of the day was to lower a Sea Bird CTD (Conductivity, Temperature, and Depth) instrumentation system with water - sampling bottles to collect samples. This instrument has a remote trigger to open and close twenty-four different bottles at different depths to collect water samples. Later on, the samples were to be analyzed at laboratories on board the *Alpha Helix* and at the Seward Marine Center for salinity, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, pH, and many other properties that were of interest to students and faculty. A Secchi disc was lowered into the water to determine the

depth of light penetration. The availability of light at various depths in the water column has a direct relationship with the rate of photosynthesis in phytoplankton and the phytoplankton's productivity. The location of each sampling station was carefully recorded by a Geographical Positioning System.

Next, a Van Veen grab was lowered to sample surface sediments to determine the sources of organic material being used by marine organisms found within the Aialik Fjord area. This is simply a jaw-like device that brings up sediment materials. When this sample was washed over a screen and examined, I was surprised to find pieces of worm-like organisms. They looked just like the worms I used to apply to fishing hooks while fishing in Orissa. The water temperature at the bottom was measured at around 4°C, so these worms must be hardy to live at that low temperature. There were some clam-type shellfish in the bottom sample, which was not surprising. Two sediment cores were taken by a heavy cylindrical shaped gravity corer that was dropped by the ship's crane and lifted by the winch. The first gravity core was taken at a station where the water depth was thirty-nine meters, and the second core at two hundred fifty five meters. These cores, which were about two meters in length, would elucidate past sources of organic materials and provide insight into past climates. Both cores were frozen on the shipboard freezer for later analysis at the main laboratory in Fairbanks.

As we cruised toward the headwaters of Aialik Bay to meet the Aialik Glacier, majestic snow-covered mountains stood on both sides of the bay. They are part of Kenai Mountains that vary in height from 2,000 to 5,000 feet. The first sight of wildlife was two golden eagles circling on the right side of the bay. Then a ship's technician pointed us in the direction of two sea otters swimming nearby. As the ship approached, they dove and disappeared. We saw the Pederson Glacier on the far left and soon cruised past Slate Island. As we got closer to the Aialik Glacier, we could hear from the deck the thunderous sounds of the glacier calving. On the water were increased signs of floating icebergs. There were small chunks of blue-colored ice everywhere, and some were

hitting the ship hull as we cruised by. The captain slowed the vessel down, and at last we could see the face of the glacier. The massive blue ice wall appeared to be several hundred feet high and about a mile across. The bergs were continuously calving from different sections, and the chunks, as large as mid-size houses, that fell from the top section, were creating small tidal waves as they landed in the ocean. Everybody stood mesmerized on deck observing the calving and hearing the thunderous sound as huge chunks cracked away from the glacier face. Numerous sea birds were flying near the glacier face, indicating that it was biologically a highly productive area. We all took at the scenery and shot plenty of photographs of the glacier as the captain brought the *Alpha Helix* to rest and held it there for a long time. **Figure 1** (next page) shows a photograph of the Aialik Glacier.

CLOSER VIEWS: Then the ship made several traverses on the outer fringe of the iceberg zone. It always had to maintain a safe distance from the face of the glacier, due to abundance of icebergs, while sampling water and conducting measurements of conductivity, turbidity, salinity, temperature, and dissolved oxygen at a number of cast stations for various depths of the water column. Solar irradiance measurements were taken to estimate light penetration in the water column for analysis of phytoplankton habitability. The more the phytoplankton, the more would be zooplankton, and the greater the support of marine life.

The near-face zone was choked with icebergs; therefore, the ship could not maneuver through it safely. To go as near to the face of the glacier as possible, two skiffs—one an inflated raft with an outboard motor called “Zodiac” and the other, a small lifeboat named “Boston Whaler” — were launched with shore parties. Equipped with a floatation jacket, I went aboard the Boston Whaler. We slowly made our way through floating icebergs until we were deeply into the iceberg zones and the calving sounds got louder and louder. Our boat heaved and rolled on the tidal waves created by the falling icebergs. While keeping an eye on tidal waves and large icebergs, which at times become unstable and roll over, we conducted measurements of the water column at depths of



Figure 1. Aialik Glacier flows in the valley between two mountains and ending at the tidewater. Pieces of icebergs float everywhere in the bay.

1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 15 and 20 meters in this berg-infested water. The other party, in the small outboard powered Zodiac, traveled far into the floating ice zone on the east side of the bay. Soon we powered our small craft closer to the glacier than the other boat, and both parties continued collecting water and ice samples along the front of the tidewater glacier. Light penetration measurements and sampling from fresh glacial water and till, that spread as a film on the surface, were conducted. The till and other bio-products carried by the ice may be possible sources of injection of nutrients from the glacier into the bay, causing it to be biologically productive. Water temperature measurements showed a relatively cool (3°C) fresh surface water from the glacier's ice melt. The salinity was measured to be much lower at the surface due to the injection of fresh water from the Aialik Glacier.

WILDLIFE CENSUS: The next activity was the fun work of observing the distribution and

behavior of marine mammals. Equipped with binoculars, counters, data sheets and cameras, the students went to work to conduct a population census of wildlife at the expedition site. We observed many Harbor Seals, adults and juveniles, swimming nearby. Some of the pups with their mothers were lying on low icebergs sunning themselves. Occasionally, we approached these icebergs slowly, and as we came closer, they watched us curiously and then jumped off and swam away. We also observed several sea otters swimming nearby. At times they floated on their backs to rest, and at times they playfully rolled through several complete revolutions while meticulously, cleaning their fur. It was an absolutely beautiful sight because I hadn't seen these types of wildlife that close ever before. At a great distance, we saw the *Alpha Helix* deploying its deep-sea trawl and starting the trawling operation to catch various species of marine life. All the catch, after scientific examination and documentation, would later be turned into dinner for the visitors.

After investigating the marine environment within the iceberg zones, we steered our boat toward Squab Island to conduct a sea-bird census. Squab Island is a small island located on the left side of the bay, several miles in front of Aialik Glacier, and it is a large bird rookery. The island was filled with numerous birds. There were different varieties of sea gulls, cormorants, murre, puffins, kittiwakes and oystercatchers. These birds were not afraid of human beings and let us come very close to them before they walked away. There were numerous nests in the grass, but I didn't see any eggs - perhaps it was not yet the egg-laying season. We watched groups of shorebirds constantly landing and leaving. The rocks were coated with bird droppings. There were also broken shells scattered all around, indicating that these birds carried shellfish from elsewhere to eat here. The rocks on the island edge had sharp drops and were slippery with moss and sea weeds. Therefore, the shore party, while collecting beach and intertidal flora and fauna samples, had to be very careful. A careless step would land a person among the crashing waves. At about 3°C surface water temperature, it would take only a few minutes for hypothermia, that could be fatal to a person, to set in. Using the boat, water samples were collected at 0 m, 25 m, 75 m, and 125 m from the shore of Squab Island to determine the progressive decrease of phosphate contents in the water (bird rookeries are a potential source of phosphate). Many students assisted in observing and cataloging birds and other wildlife. Those students who were equipped with binoculars focused on the coastal mountains on the west side of the bay, which were closer to the Squab Island. There, at lower, snow free elevations, a group of Dall sheep or mountain goats were foraging on the rocky slope. At the end of the day, when we tallied the data sheets for the wildlife census report; we had observed 47 harbor seals, 22 sea otters, 9 Dall sheep or mountain goats, 2 bald eagles, and hundreds of sea birds.

While we were in the midst of this exciting activity, all of a sudden the sky became overcast, and a drizzle started. We sent radio messages to Both the Exit and Aialik glaciers are born from the same source - the Harding Icefield. An icefield is a large collection of snow and ice that

the other boat (Zodiac) and asked the *Alpha Helix* to sail toward us to meet us at a halfway point. Although the sky was overcast, visibility was fine even at 7:30 PM due to the long daylight hours. At this time of the year, the average daylight is about 18 hours at this location (60°N latitude), placing sunset at around 10:30 PM. The scientific parties and the small boats were recovered at around 8:00 PM. Upon boarding the *Alpha Helix*, everybody ran to the mess hall for dinner after a long productive day of hard work. All the data collected were beginning to be analyzed in the ship's laboratory when we started departing the area. As we sailed away from the Aialik Glacier, I went on deck to have one last look at the glacier. The sky had become darker and misty, and the visibility was fast fading when I bid farewell to the glacier. As we approached the open water, an acoustic sensor was lowered into the ocean to listen carefully for the sounds of gray, humpback or killer whales, who regularly visit the Kenai Fjords. But we had no luck that evening.

That night we returned and moored at the Seward dock. Everybody slept in the ship. The next day all equipment and samples were taken to the Seward Marine Center lab; the chemical and data analysis began and took several days to complete. During this time we had meetings, discussions, and lectures in the Marine Center library. I delivered my portion of the lectures on ship propulsion engineering that I had prepared several weeks earlier in Fairbanks. The talk was on the propulsion systems of Alaska Marine Highway Ferries and U.S. Navy vessels, and I supplemented the lecture with the propulsion system of the *Alpha Helix*. Various faculty members presented lectures on their disciplines, and the students elaborated on their findings on individual projects conducted during their Aialik Bay trip.

DAY TRIP: Every day was marked by steady progress in the preparation of the final cruise research report. With this encouraging sign, a trip was undertaken to visit the Exit Glacier, about ten miles north of Seward, on May 11. feeds valley glaciers. The Harding Icefield is the largest icefield completely contained within the borders of the U.S. (the Bagley and Juneau

icefields cover more area but are shared with Canada). The Harding Icefield and its nearly fifty glaciers blanket about 2,400 square kms or about two thirds the area of Rhode Island.

The Aialik Glacier discharges on tidewater, whereas the Exit Glacier discharges on land. However, long time ago, in terms of geologic time, the Exit Glacier extended all the way to Seward, and it helped to carve out Resurrection Bay. At the present time, this glacier is approximately 3 miles long, 1/2 mile wide, and 400 feet thick. The name Exit Glacier was given by early explorers of Harding Icefield, who found this to be the most convenient exit from the huge icefield. A one-mile trail up a hill through an alder forest took us to a glacier overlook. From there, we could actually touch the blue ice and look up to see the crevasses that had formed on the surface of the glacier. These crevasses could be 100 to 150 feet deep. The face of the glacier ends on an outwash plain containing braided streams formed by glacial melt. The Exit Glacier has been in general retreat since the 1800's. It flows continuously off the icefield at a rate of 600 feet per year. At this rate, the ice that we touched at the terminus must have come from the snow fallen at the top of the ice field about thirty years ago. We took

several nature trails to explore the glacier. The National Park Ranger Station sign nearby reminded us that both grizzly and black bears also use the same trails.

After exploring the active Exit Glacier on this day trip, which was well worth it, the research party returned to the Seward Marine Center. There, laboratory work, computer data analysis, lectures, and cruise report preparation continued with contributions from each member of the scientific team. On May 12, a draft of the final report to be submitted to the Institute of Marine Science, entitled "STAR-95 *Alpha Helix* Cruise of Resurrection and Aialik Bay, Alaska," took shape. After that, we all departed for the main campus to finish the final touch-up work in Fairbanks.

CONCLUSION: In the opinion of the participants, it was a very successful expedition in all aspects. Cooperation from the team members, ship crew, and administrative personnel at the Seward Marine Center was excellent. All students and faculty learned and experienced much. For me, it was one of the most unique, enjoyable, and productive experiences, and I would highly recommend a visit to this beautiful scenic area to all readers.

Debendra Kumar Das, a professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Alaska, has been living in Fairbanks with his wife Katherine and son Sunit for the past thirteen years.





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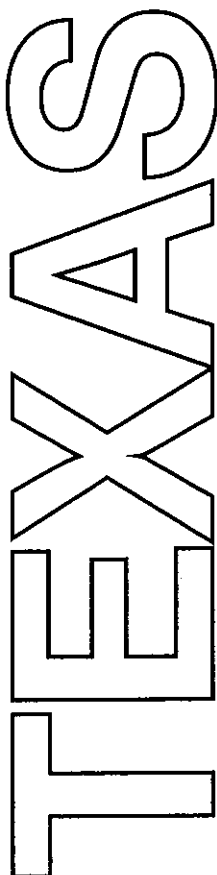
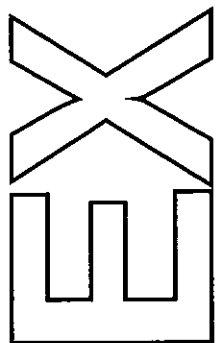
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From the Families of the Graduates of
**The University of Texas
at Austin**



*Best Wishes to Orissa Society of
Americas on the eve of the 28th
Annual Convention at Houston.*

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BIRENDRA MISHRA, PhD (Accounting)

TAPASI, SUKANYA, SUPRIYA and
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*Our Community,
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**Happenings in
North America
and Orissa**

Sustainable Economic And Education Development Society (SEEDS)

"A seed today, a tree tomorrow"

Collated by Lalu Mansinha

Persistent reports in the Indian and international press on starvation in the Kalahandi - Bolangir region of Orissa led to serious soul searching and discussion among a group of Oriyas in North America connected through the computer e-mail network ORNET. Priyadarshan Patra, then a graduate student at the University of Texas, suggested the formation of a group to undertake development projects in the worst affected regions. The Kalahandi - Bolangir Initiative was founded by Priyadarshan Patra, Dhanada Mishra and the late Srinivas Praharaj, and several others in 1993. Funds were raised through donations from the community and a major project was launched in Kalahandi. Later the name of the organisation was changed to Sustainable Economic and Education Development Society (SEEDS).

From the early initiation on ORNET, SEEDS has been closely affiliated with the Orissa Society of America. SEEDS was born on ORNET, originally established and maintained by Asutosh Dutta. It is fitting that he has also set up SEEDSNET, linking members belonging to SEEDS. The SEEDSNET email network forms the primary discussion and decision making forum for SEEDS.

The philosophy of SEEDS is what the name implies: we will help plant a seed so that many may enjoy the benefits of the tree. SEEDS welcomes imaginative project applications at the grass-roots level. For example, if a village needs a pond, and the villagers are willing to dig the pond, but lack the resources to buy the tools, SEEDS will provide for the tools. The key word is participatory. The local people must be willing to put in an effort. SEEDS will help. Projects that can be supported by SEEDS are:

- Scholarships for needy students
- Schools for the poor in cities and villages
- Water and irrigation

- Reforestation and planting of trees
- Education of village and city women
- Health and birth control
- Teaching of better agricultural methods
- Education of men and women in basic technical skills

Basically SEEDS is interested in any project that will improve the quality of life for the poor in both cities and villages. The key idea is that after a few years of SEEDS help, five years at best, the project must become self sustaining.

Reports on ongoing major SEEDS projects follow. Several other projects, not reported here, are under consideration. Many persons, both inside and outside of SEEDS are involved with each project. Only the SEEDS coordinator(s) is listed for each project.

SRINIVAS PRAHARAJ MEMORIAL

Durgamadhab Misra

Srinivas Praharaj, a founding and active member of SEEDS, passed away in a tragic automobile accident on June 12, 1994. He was close to many of us, and his absence is still being felt in day to day discussions over SEEDSNET. It is fitting that we at SEEDS commemorate his contributions through a project that he would have supported wholeheartedly. A library extension is being erected at the Kanyashram at Jalsapetta in Kalahandi. A plaque on the wall will honour the memory of Srinivas Praharaj. Construction of the library will be completed by September 1997. This memorial to our friend Dr. Srinivas Praharaj has been made possible by contributions of many individuals who knew him. We would like to acknowledge the fund-raising efforts by Dr. Minati Pattanayak and by the 25th Annual Convention of OSA, held at Pomona, New Jersey, in July 1994.

ADOPT A STUDENT PROJECT

Gopal Mohapatra, Sujata Patnaik

Adopt A Student Project (AASP) of SEEDS aims to help the poor children of Orissa to get a proper education. Many poor parents cannot afford to send their children to school. Some children are forced to work from an early age to help the family budget. The mission of AASP is to help provide a way out of the poverty cycle for the children, to fulfill their dreams, so that they do not continue to be the indigent and the poor like their parents, as they grow up. AASP is a channel through which the support goes from a sponsor to a child. It is you the sponsor that can make a child's dream come true. At present thirty-five students from three schools of Orissa are being sponsored by people from various parts of the North America through AASP. Each student receives the equivalent of twelve dollars a month as a scholarship, to pay for the education, food, clothing, and medical expenses.

LANJIGARH 1-TEACHER SCHOOL PROJECT

Priyadarsan Patra

Concern for the situation in Kalahandi and Bolangir districts of Orissa formed the inspiration for SEEDS. However, the philosophy of SEEDS is not direct help, but to provide the means to people to help themselves. We collaborate with the Vanabasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA) in the Lanjigarh region of Kalahandi district to run a number of one-teacher schools. The term 'school' is misleading, as these are actually community centers where instructions on a number of topics for sustenance are provided. Health care, agriculture and forestry are prime topics. The SEEDS Lanjigarh project includes 18 One-Teacher Schools (OTS) providing education to about 500 students in 8 panchayats of Lanjigarh block in Kalahandi.

<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Panchayat/Village</i>
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Butuka Majhi	- Bandhapari/Kandhobori
Godan Majhi	- Biswanathpur/Lumanjaoun
Shuban Bibhar	- Biswanathpur/Melghutu
Gauranga Majhi	- Biswanathpur/Sanjankiheju
Lingaraj Majhi	- Biswanathpur/Sapelkuchha
Mahendra Harpal	- Biswanathpur/Sulim
Purushottam Patra	- Chatrapur/Maskapader

Satya Narayan Naik - Chatrapur/Khujuripader
Subarna Majhi - Chatrapur/Kutingpader
Hari Majhi - Chatrapur/Kinari
Km. Jyoti Panda - Ghantamal/Allabula
Km. Rinamanjari Panda - Govardhanapur/Palespatta
Bimal Majhi - Lanjigada/Kendubordi
Kanhua C. Sahu - Lanji/Matkera
Amichan Saber - Lanjigarh Road/Kitting
Ananta Majhi - Govardhanapur/Latkakhanan
Kumari Kalpana Padhi - Shantapur/Bhaing
Rajeeb R. Dora - Shantapur/Ratul

SOUTH CHILIKA DROUGHT PROJECT

Somdutt Behura, Lalu Mansinha, Sarat Misra

Throughout Orissa there has been less rain during 1996. The dry riverbeds, the desiccated look of the land is visible as the mute evidence. The rainfall has been patchy, so that parts of coastal region are reporting bumper crops, while neighbouring regions report lower than normal harvest. The coastal patch at the southern end of Chilka Lake appears to be the hardest hit. The five panchayats of Malud, Siali, Siandi, Ramlanka and Badajhara at the southern end of Chilika Lake are facing the horrors of starvation and famine. About 20 villages, with 10,000 people are affected. The region depends on rice, peanuts, shrimps, and cashew nuts. This year all four have failed.

One of us (LM) visited south Chilika in December 1996. Two village meetings were arranged by the villagers, one in Nandala, the other in Ora, about 20km away. In the meetings the village elders and leaders formally gave speeches outlining the disaster of the drought. From the moment we arrived, we heard again and again the same story. 'What am I going to do next month? How am I going to feed the family? How am I going to feed the cattle?' With no rice harvest, no peanut harvest and no shrimp harvest, they have nothing to eat, nothing to sell. With nothing to sell, they have no means to buy the food available in the market. A young man said he is desperate. He will do anything to earn some money. One elderly man said that people have started leaving the villages, to earn cash elsewhere. He said from his village alone 20 people have left to work in the factories of Surat (in Gujarat). As was the case in the Great Orissa Famine a

century and quarter ago, there is no shortage of food. It is that the farmers and the villagers have no cash to buy the food. It is essentially a cash shortage in the villages. After learning of the severity of the drought, SEEDS decided to take up a project in this area. Currently SEEDS is the only NGO in the region. A number of ponds in the village are in disuse because of filling up with mud. The water is of poor quality. The volume of water stored is reduced. Digging out the ponds will provide water storage, to be used for irrigation. The work is all manual labour, to maximise cash flowing into the hands of the workers. Local villagers who wish to work will be given employment. No outsiders will be allowed to join.

SEEDS invites your participation in any or all its projects, by donating funds, coordinating a specific project or initiating a new project, and joining the discussions on SEEDSNET. In addition to devoting time, coordinators donate administration costs such as postage, telephone, fax etc. Every penny donated goes to projects. Contact addresses for the coordinators for the major projects:

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Ph: 713 797 0667
4720 Polk Street #1/2 Houston TX 77023

Lalu Mansinha <lalu@uwo.ca>
Ph: 519-433-0854; Fax: 519 661 3837
131 Ambleside Drive London Ontario N6G 4P8,
Canada

Durgamadhab Misra <dmisra@hertz.njit.edu>
Ph: 201 882-6698
71 Johnson Avenue Caldwell NJ 07006.

Gopal Mohapatra <gkm@geo.Arizona.edu>
Ph: 713 790 0815
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Ph: 630 224 6933; Fax: 630 713-7626
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Ph: 503 617-0667; Fax: 503 264-9359
14485 NW Alta Lane, Portland, OR 97229

SEEDSNET: <seeds@cs.columbia.edu>



**"The reward for the work well done
is the opportunity to do more"**
- anonymous

Compliments from
Hara and Manju Mishra
Leesa, Sue

Jagannath Society of the Americas

Panchanan Satpathy

The Jagannath Society of the Americas (JSA) is a non-profit religious organization founded in North America in 1992. The main objective of the JSA is to promote Jagannath philosophy and culture in USA and Canada. The shrine for Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra, and Sudarsan is a part of the Ganesh Temple in Nashville, Tennessee. The daily puja of the deities is performed according to the Vedic rituals by the Temple priests. Several important festivals like Janmastami, Snana Purnima, and Ratha Yatra are observed every year. The celebration of Ratha Yatra and Bahuda Yatra has become very popular in recent years. This year Ratha Yatra and Bahuda Yatra are scheduled to be held July 4 and 13, respectively. Professor Manoj Das and Dr. Nrusingha Panda, two distinguished scholars of Jagannath culture, will be guest speakers on July 6. Mrs. Sangeeta Mohapatra, Miss Suchitra Mohapatra, and Mr. Prasanna Mishra, who are touring the United States, have been invited to sing Bhajons on July 12 and 13. The Delhi-based Kabita Dwibedy, a leading Odissi dancer, is also scheduled to perform on Ratha Yatra.

The fifth anniversary of the Temple and "Murti Stapan" of Lord Jagannath were celebrated on April 19 and 20. Sri Dibya Singh Dev, Maharaja of Puri, along with his wife, Maharani Lilavati Devi, graced the occasion. The Maharaja eloquently spoke about "Sanatan Dharma" and its role in promoting the best in all religions for the benefit of the mankind.

The following office bearers were elected by JSA for the period 1997-99:

President	- Panchanan Satpathy
Vice President	- Smriti Bardhan
Secretary	- Prajesh Dash
Treasurer	- Manoj Senapati
Editor	- Ashok Mishra

The Temple in Nashville is the center of religious and cultural activities. Every Sunday classes are held on Gita, Upanishad, and Vedas for adults. Children and youth also receive

discourses on good life and prayers on every Sunday. Periodically, eminent spiritual leaders, scholars address devotees. Mrs. Sarojini Mishra and Mrs. Annapurna Parija are in charge of Prasad Committee. Dr. B.C. Joshi assists the Priests in performing daily worships.

Special thanks are due to Drs. Radhakant and Gita Mishra for their generous contribution of \$10,000 to build a shelter for the chariot. We are immensely thankful to those who send their donations to the JSA. Several friends have suggested that the JSA build a guest house in Puri for its members. They can spend a few days in Puri while visiting Orissa. We would like to hear from members on this proposal.

The JSA is working toward establishing a library in Nashville temple. Religious books will be available soon. We would like to request you to contribute books on Lord Jagannath to this library. We are trying to have direct communication with the Sri Jagannath Temple in Puri for better planning for future growth.

A prayer book is under publication. This book along with a Jagannath calendar will be mailed to all devotees by December 1997. Also, we will send you a copy of "Nilachakra", the journal of the Society to be published in July 1997. Foundation for another temple in Huntsville, Alabama was laid on May 9-11. Thanks to the leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Bhaghat Sahu and several others, murtistapana ceremony of Lord Jagannath was performed on May 10. The Maharaja of Puri was the chief guest on this occasion. Efforts are underway in other cities to install Lord Jagannath. The JSA will be pleased to extend full support. However, we would like to make it clear that the JSA is a national organization with headquarters in Nashville. We are trying hard to improve our activities as much as possible. We need your support and encouragement to fulfil our dream. May Lord Jagannath bless you and your family.

***Please contact Dr. Satpathy at 615-859-5326
about JSA activities and membership.***

Special Donation Schemes of Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri

Dibyasingh Deb, Maharaja of Puri

From time immemorial the Shri Jagannath Temple has been sustained and adequately maintained by extensive endowments of landed property. However, the implementation of land reforms in the State of Orissa during the last few decades has resulted in substantial loss of property rights and income for the Temple. The Temple has thus been confronted with an unenviable situation of escalating expenses against inadequate and stagnant sources of income. For the 1997-98 financial year, the Temple Managing Committee has projected an expenditure of Rs. 4.2 crores against an estimated income of Rs. 2.8 crores. Government grants are only expected to cover less than half the projected deficit.

With the objective of providing devotees in India and abroad the opportunity to donate directly to the Temple Fund of Shri Jagannath Temple while at the same time creating a stable and permanent financial base for the Temple, the Jagannath Temple Managing Committee has recently promoted (with the approval of Government of Orissa) two special donation schemes: (1) *Amruta-Manohi Bhoga Donation Scheme* and (2) *Corpus Fund Donation Scheme*. Both these schemes will be directly controlled and managed by the Temple Managing Committee, a thirteen-member body chaired by the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri. It is hoped that the donations schemes will provide the Temple with the required financial stability.

Amruta-Manohi Bhoga Donation Scheme:

Expenses for the traditional daily Bhoga offerings before the Lords (Kotha-bhoga) are traditionally borne by the Temple Fund, using income derived from the extensive endowments of landed property throughout Orissa known as "Amruta-manohi" lands. Income from these lands having now practically disappeared as a result of land reforms measures, the "Amruta-manohi" Bhoga Donation Scheme aims at eventually filling this financial void. At the same time, the scheme offers devotees, for the first time, an unique opportunity of serving the

Lord by contributing towards the "Kotha-bhoga" expenses. Under the scheme, the donor may contribute towards one or more of the following daily "Kotha-bhoga" offerings:

- Gopala-Ballabha Bhoga (early morning offering) - Rs. 1,000/-
- Badasinghara Bhoga (bedtime offering) - Rs. 3,000/-
- Sakala-dhupa Bhoga (morning offering) - Rs. 5,000/-
- Sandhya-dhupa (evening offering) - Rs. 10,000/- and
- Dwiprahara-dhupa Bhoga (mid-day offering) - Rs. 20,000/-.

Corpus Fund Donation Scheme: Under this scheme, there are two categories of donors:

- Patron Donor - donating Rs. Ten lakhs,
- Special Donor - donating Rs. One lakh.

Equivalent donations in foreign currency will also be accepted, as will both lump-sum and instalment payment options.

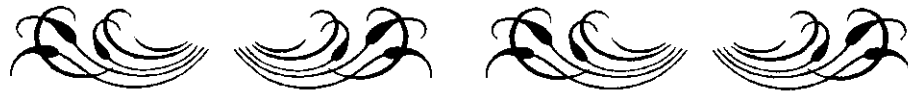
In both the Amruta Manohi and the Corpus Fund donation schemes, the donated amount, in its entirety, will be permanently locked-up in safe investment schemes approved by the Temple Managing Committee, and the annual interest/dividend received therefrom will be utilized, during the lifetime of the donor, towards the Bhoga expenses as per the donor's wish once every year on an English calendar date or Indian tithi date specified by the donor. A certain quantity of the Bhoga offering (Mahaprasad), depending on the amount of the donation, will be delivered to the donor or his authorized representative at the Temple on the specified date, or if the donor so desires, distributed on his behalf to Brahmins or Daridra-narayans by the Temple Administration and the Lord's Chandan and Tulasiprasad sent to the donor at his/her postal address.

In the Amruta-Manohi scheme, the income will be utilized only for the Bhoga expenses, the income by the way of interest/dividend accruing

from the Corpus Fund donations will go to meet the whole gamut of Temple expenditures including expenses for daily and periodical rituals and festivals, pilgrim facilities, developmental and charitable activities and cultural propagation. The Patron Donors will also be entitled to perform the privileged "Chamara Seba" of the Lords on the said specified date in accordance with Temple custom. Furthermore, two representatives of the Patron Donors will be co-opted as members to the Temple Managing Committee.

For further details and clarification regarding the above donation schemes, devotees in USA and Canada may kindly contact the President or Secretary of OSA or Jagannath Society of America, or correspond directly with the Temple Administrator at the following address:

The Temple Administrator
Shri Jagannath Temple Office,
Grand Road,
Puri, Orissa - 752001, INDIA.
Tel: +91-6752-22002



Vision of Jagannath Society of Americas

Bhagabat Chandra Sahu

It was the year of 1992, springtime, mid-April (from the 12th-19th), under clear blue skies at the foothills of Bellevue Mountains with all their lustrous greenery at the top and flora and fauna at the bottom, and inside the magnificently sculpted off-white temple (Sri Ganesh Temple, Nashville), along with Lord Ganapati, the Holy Chaturdhamurti, Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath, Devi Subhadra, and Maha Sudarsana, were installed according to all traditional Vedic rituals. Shortly thereafter, the Jagannath Society of Americas was created by a few enthusiastic and devout devotees of Lord Jagannath. It was registered and incorporated in Athens, Alabama according to state laws. However, Nashville was pronounced as "Srikshetra", and it continues to be the headquarters of JSA. JSA was formed with the sole objective of 'sustaining and promoting' Jagannath philosophy in the western hemisphere. Besides religious activities, Article III of the JSA constitution contained provisions for cultural, educational, and literary activities.

Accordingly, literary luminaries, research scholars, historians, artists, and proponents of Jagannath dharma have been invited to propagate Jagannath philosophy. To name a few

of the eminent people: Prof. K.C. Misra, Prof. Shantanu Acharya, journalist Manorama Mohapatra, Prof. Hrudananda Ray, Ambassador Lalit Mansingh, Mr. Jivanananda Pani, Padmashri Sunanda Panigrahi, Guru Gangadhar Pradhan, Padmabhusan Kelucharan Mohapatra, State Minister Bijoy Lakshmi Sahoo, writer Prativa Roy, former Chief-Justice of India, Shri Ranganath Misra, Prof. Prabodh Misra, and finally, Gajapati Maharaja, Sri Dibyasingh Deb, have all visited the Nashville temple and different cities in the USA. It is with great devotion to Lord Jagannath that these great people have come to the USA to do their share in spreading Jagannath philosophy.

We should be proud of the richness and unique qualities of Jagannath philosophy. It has graciously 'accommodated' all other beliefs of Hinduism, even the subsets of Hinduism such as Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. To be more exact, it is not really a fact of 'accommodation', but quintessence of Jagannath dharma. Jagannath is the embodiment of all other deities. His worship is the quiddity of all other worships. The worship has uniquely amalgamated tribal (daitas participating in various sevas), tantric, Brahmanaic or Vedic, Sakta, and Buddhist

practices. He is considered as Jeena for Jains, Triratna for Buddhists, Vishnu for Vaishnavites, Rudra for Saivites, Durga for Saktas, Ganapati for Gomapatyas, and Nilamadhava for Sabaras. He is also worshipped as Surya, the sun god. All of his worships are in the form of Lord Krishna. During the renaissance of Sanathana Dharma, which was done largely by Adi Sankaracharya, there were five principal deities (Pancha Devata), namely Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Ganapati, and Surya. The worship of Lord Jagannath was a synthesis of these five deities. As Prof. K.C. Misra has said, "Jagannath philosophy is an epitome of cultural synthesis."

During the revival of 'Hinduism', worship of Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, and Ganapati has spread remarkably well. Unfortunately, the worship of Lord Jagannath has not been proportionately popularized. It is probably not an uncommon experience for Oriyas outside of Orissa and outside of India to be recognized as persons from Jagannath Dham, Puri. There are two personal instances which are worth mentioning here. It was the year of 1971, and I was placed in Avadi, Madras to work as a physician in a paramilitary base. I was asked by the N.C.O.'s as well as by the commissioned officers where I was from. When I told them I was from Cuttack, nobody knew where it was, albeit Orissa. But when I said that I was from Jagannath Dham, Puri, they knew where it was. The second instance was much more recent. This time it was at the Sri Ganesh Temple at Nashville in 1992. By then Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, and Maha Sudarsana were already installed in a specially built shrine inside the temple complex. There was a change of guard in the worship mode. One particular priest was hired from India to perform the services as head priest. During the introduction which normally starts with Lord Jagannath, the question from the priest was "Who is Jagannath? Is it male or female?" That was an important message to all of us. Right then I knew that we had greater tasks ahead. And we "resolved" to propagate Jagannath philosophy, at least in the western hemisphere. JSA was born, the car festival and other major rituals were performed in the

temple, and most importantly, guest speakers and research scholars were invited from India to promote Jagannath dharma in the USA and Canada. These ambassadors have done an excellent job in promoting Jagannath philosophy, and I am proud to say that we reached the pinnacle of success this year by having His Royal Highness, Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingh Deb, who by hereditary lineage, is the founder of the Jagannath Temple at Puri. He toured extensively through major cities of the USA and was successful in creating the awareness of 'Jagannath bhakti' in many people, Oriyas, Non-Oriyas, and Americans as well. He further helped in installing Holy Chaturdhamurti at Huntsville, Alabama.

Efforts have been made to install Lord Jagannath in other places and the outcome has been gratifying. It is our aim and objective to install Lord Jagannath in major cities of the USA. In the past, we have made inroads for establishing a liaison between India and the USA for the purpose of promoting Jagannath philosophy. Discussions have been made in the past and recently as well to have some research projects, translations of old scriptures relating to Lord Jagannath, and the setting up of a liaison office for better communications at Puri. This was further strengthened by the visit of Gajapati Maharaja who is also the chairman of the Managing Committee of the Shri Jagannath Temple at Puri, India.

Besides propagation of Jagannath dharma in the western hemisphere, we need to strengthen the roots (Mulapitha, Jagannath Temple at Puri). We need to support the appeal made by Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingh Deb. It is needless to say that we need to bring some reforms to the existing puja system at Shri Jagannath Temple at Puri. It will have not only a better image of Lord Jagannath 'Tatwa' but will also slowly help to salvage the temple from financial crunches. Let us all do what we can do to help HIS cause. He will lead the way for us.

***"Jaya Jagannath Swami,
Nayana Pathagami Bhavatu Me"***

OSA Conventions - Then and Now

Saradindu Misra

I came to this country in August of 1971. So I missed the first OSA Convention held in Hartford, Connecticut. Next year the venue was also the Hartford Seminary under the auspices of Dr. Bhabagrahi Mishra, who was the President at that time. As far as I can remember, there were 10 to 12 families from the adjoining areas of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. The main event was the assembly of so many (!) Oriyas in one location. It was raining lightly in the evening. The function started around 7 P.M. with a welcome address by Bhabagrahi Mishra. Krusna Mohan Das, Amiya Patnaik, Jagat Subudhi, and Duryodhan Mangaraj also spoke on the occasion. Congratulatory letters were read from Oriyas living in far away places. Before dinner, Kabita Patnaik and Shakuntala Mangaraj sang Oriya songs for the benefit of the gathering. The food was prepared by the attending families. Dinner was served around 10 P.M., after which everyone went home.

Next year, in 1973, the convention was held in Riverdale, New Jersey. Amiya Patnaik was the principal organizer. The venue was the basement of a church in the town of Riverdale with dining facilities. The attendance was twice as much compared to 1972. There was an elaborate cultural function. Songs were presented to the accompaniment of musical instruments! Local people not only cooked food, but also played host to the visiting Oriyas.

In 1974, the convention was held in College Park, Maryland. Rabi Patnaik was the convener. The convention was gaining momentum. As usual, the local families not only cooked food for the occasion, they also accommodated families from other areas in their homes. The convention was held in the auditorium of a school. The cultural program was quite impressive with many people taking part. It was, once again, a one-evening affair. The following years, in 1975, 1976, and 1977, the conventions were held in Riverdale, NJ,

Toronto, Canada, and again in Riverdale, respectively. Although it maintained status quo, there were some novel activities in Toronto - like a "*Pakhala*" lunch.

In 1978, the convention moved to Wheaton, Maryland and was held during the July 4 long weekend. Initially there were some conflicts with the dates between NY Chapter and the National Organization as both of them were scheduled to hold their annual days on the July 4th week-end. In order to avoid such conflicts in future, it was decided that year, that the OSA Convention would always take place during the July 4th weekend. The Wheaton convention was held in a much bigger way. A high school auditorium was taken to accommodate a glittering cultural program. Besides songs, there were dancing and one act plays, as well. Although it was still a one-day affair, the convention was attended by no less than fifty families from all around the country. The local chapter took excellent care providing food and accommodation for the out of towners.

The conventions continued on the same pace for the next four years in New Brunswick, Detroit, Chicago, and Minneapolis, respectively. However, in Chicago, arrangements for overnight accommodation of visiting Oriyas were made for the first time - in separate cottages in a park-like recreational area. Another first - food was catered.

In 1983, however, it was altogether different. The convention was a big event compared to previous years. Oriyas came from all over the United States and Canada. It was held in the Bowie State College campus. Families were assigned separate rooms in the campus dormitory. Food was being prepared on site by volunteers, and the celebration continued for two and half days! Cultural programs lasted for two evenings, including childrens' program, mehfil, and women's forum.

In 1984, it was the turn of the NY chapter which hosted the convention in the historic Glassboro State College campus in New Jersey. The function continued for three days and well over one hundred families from all across U.S. and Canada participated. Following the Bowie tradition, the members and their families were housed in individual apartments in the campus. The campus kitchen was requisitioned for preparation of food. Six meals, excluding breakfast, and that too for more than one hundred families! Volunteers of the food department worked day and night to cook the delicious gourmet Oriya entrees. Similarly extravagant was the cultural program. There were one-act plays both by elders and youngsters, dance performances, besides the musical programs and mehfils, and other events. For the first time, a special Souvenir was published for the occasion. It was by far the best convention until that time.

In 1985, the convention moved to Kent, Ohio. No more college campuses. The Holiday Inn in Kent was booked for accommodation of the members. There were different venues for different events. Food was also catered. The increased attendance forced the small host chapter to outsource food and accommodation.

For several years, the practice of outsourcing food and accommodation continued until the Convention was held in Pomona, New Jersey in 1994 by the NY Chapter. The members of OSA, specially the second generation, complained that hotel atmosphere is very impersonal and lacked the openness of a campus. So the NY Chapter retained the Pomona College campus for holding the 25th Silver Jubilee Anniversary of the Convention. It was another landmark convention! Over 200 families attended. Preparing food for them and accommodating them in the campus hostel, along with organizing numerous other events, were a monumental affair. The volunteers of the NY chapter started preparation for this convention several months ahead in order to

make it as memorable and as enjoyable as possible. For the first time, a union cabinet minister from India, K.P. Singh Deo, the Minister for Information & Broadcasting, came as the Chief Guest. Lalit Mansingh, former Deputy Ambassador to the United States, attended as the key-note speaker for the occasion. The next convention, in Minneapolis Convention, was equally successful and was attended by a large number of people.

The 1996 convention in Washington, D.C. was another grand affair. The cultural program was simply superb. Three full days of activity for over 200 families! No mean achievement! The OSA convention was really coming of age. It can now boast of rivaling any other ethnic convention organized by Indians in the U.S.

This year, the convention is being held in Houston, Texas. The Convener and the volunteers have been working since the beginning of the year to make this event a great success. Eighteen distinguished Oriyas from Orissa, headed by Chief Minister, J.B. Patnaik, are attending this convention. This will yet be another milestone in the annals of the history of the OSA Convention.

Going back 28 years, one can clearly see how this organization has evolved over the years. It has become strong, vibrant, and has been able to attract a lot of Oriyas to its fold. However, let us not forget the pioneers who started the convention in a very small way, back then. There were no big hotels, no catered food, no large attendance, nor several days of festivities. Yet the zeal, enthusiasm and commitment were all there. The host chapter, consisting of a handful of people, undertook significantly more responsibility in hosting the convention in those days. They offered their homes for the visitors to stay while cooking for them and for the convention, and also showed them around. That was the sustaining force without which we would not be seeing the present stature of the OSA Convention.

Saradindu Misra lives in Dix Hills, NY, and has been a member of the OSA since 1971. He served as vice-president of OSA during 1978-81 and 1983-85, as president of the NY chapter in 1982, and as the Editor-in-Chief of the OSA Newsmagazine during 1987-89.

Meeting of the OSA Board of Governors, Detroit, MI, April 5, 1997.

This meeting was presided over by Dr. Hemanta Senapati, President of OSA. Present were:

Mrs. Sujata Patnaik	Vice President
Dr. Parikshita Nayak	Secretary-Treasurer
Dr. Digambar Mishra	Executive Director
Dr. Nitin Doshi	Michigan Chapter
Dr. Hara Padhi	Canada

Dr. Senapati presented a general report about the state of OSA. According to him, OSA's Washington Convention was a grand success. He thanked the convener and all the members of the Washington DC chapter for their hard work.

Dr. Parikshita Nayak presented the accounts of OSA since the 1996 Convention. Although he received membership dues (\$ 2,536.00) from the Washington Convention, the lists of names of different categories of membership was not received. Two Benefactors and 17 life members were recruited. The total amount (not including the dues received from Washington), received was \$3600.00. A vote of thanks was extended to Dr. Senapati for making a personal contribution of \$2,000.00 for the relocation of the OSA Center to Utkal University campus at Vani Vihar. The members present reviewed the expenses. A loss of \$307.75 to OSA on Basundhara account (\$4,840 sent against collection of \$4,532.25) was reported. This happened because of problems with a few checks. The secretary reported that persons responsible for raising funds for Basundhara have been asked to reimburse this difference.

Dr. Nitin Doshi, chairman of the Election committee presented his report about the uncontested election of office bearers for 1997-99. They are: Mrs. Gopa Patnaik - President; Mrs. A. Pandey - Vice President; Dr. Babhru B. Samal - Secretary-Treasurer. The report was accepted and congratulations were extended to the newly elected office bearers.

Dr. Digambar Mishra reported about the grand celebration that took place on the eve of the relocation of the OSA Center at Vani Bihar on

January 9, 1997. The Vice Chancellor and a number of a senior faculty of the University arranged a lunch on campus in honor of the visiting OSA members on December 20, 1996. More than 20 visiting members were present. The inaugural ceremony of the Center was celebrated on the 9th of January. Vice Chancellor Dr. Das presided over the meeting; Mr. Soumya Ranjan Patnaik, Member of Parliament (BBSR), was the guest of honor.

It was reported by the president that rental and other personnel expenses for the Center were not paid for the years 1994 and 1995. It was passed by the General Body several years ago that OSA would pay \$400.00 each year toward running the Center and the rest \$600.00 would be raised from some generous members. Dr. Senapati offered to pay \$500.00 for these two years. Dr. Mishra took the responsibility to negotiate that \$1,300.00 be sending to Mr. Satya Mohapatra for two years. Members present agreed to this resolution. The president took the responsibility to pay the amount of \$1,300 to Mr. Mohapatra.

Further discussion was held about the annual budget of the Center. Mrs. Sujata Patnaik, Dr. Hemanta Senapati, and Dr. Digambar Mishra were elected to a Committee to look after the Center. This standing committee will later include two members including the president of OSA as ex an officio member. An annual budget of \$1,000.00 for the Center was approved. This money will be used for two graduate students who will run the Center on daily basis under the supervision of Dr. Ajit Mohanty, Professor of Psychology. A vote of thanks was passed for Dr. Mohanty for his help and support without any compensation. It may be noted here that Dr. Ajit Mohanty is a former member of OSA when he was in Canada and the USA in the 1970.

Dr. Senapati and Dr. Doshi were generous enough to pledge a computer (cost not exceeding Rs. 75000) for the Center. Dr. Digambar Mishra took the responsibility to work on Internet for the Center through the Government of Orissa.

Arrangements for the upcoming OSA Convention were reported to be going well. Dr. Senapati and Dr. Mishra reported their satisfaction. They had visited Houston and College Station in November during the Kumar Purnima celebrations to review the progress.

Dr. Mishra reported about the possibility of the Chief Minister' visit to the Convention. It was agreed that if that happened, OSA would formally welcome them with plaques. Also it was agreed that the Executive Director would talk with Government delegation about bridge building between Orissa and OSA.

Dr. Mishra reported about three artists (Sangeeta and Suchitra Mohapatra, and Prasanna Mishra) visiting the United States, in June-July 1997. Chapter presidents are to be requested to organize programs. OSA will not advance any loan for this trip.

Dr. Hara Padhi has asked the Board to drop the SAT requirement for electing recipients of the Subrina Biswal Memorial Scholarship since it disables competitors from Canada. It was approved. The Selection Committee is to be informed by Dr. Mishra.

Members of three committees viz., Distinguished Oriya; Subrina Biswal Memorial

Scholarship; and Kalashree Awards were announced and approved.

Mrs. Sujata Patnaik raised a number of pertinent issues, i.e., guidelines for Pramod Patnaik Award, Election of chapter presidents, OSA Tax ID use, reforming the Convention holding rules, accountability of the convention accounts, and the role of the Vice-president. Discussions were held on almost all issues. Some of these important issues will be discussed in meetings at Houston. She was applauded for her active interest on certain key issues.

Dr. Senapati moved to form a standing committee consisting of three members to be in charge of \$40000.00 that OSA has decided not to touch now or in future. Dr. Panchanan Satpathy will head this committee with the present president and the immediate past president as members. This was approved, pending final approval by the General Body at the Houston Convention.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m. Mrs. Senapati held a grand lunch and dinner for the Board Members.

*Respectfully submitted by -
Parikshita Nayak
Secretary-Treasurer, OSA*



OSA Financial Statement from 5-29-96 to 6-15-97

INCOME

1. MEMBERSHIP (MAY 29,1996 TO JUNE 15,1997)	\$ 7,301.00
2. INTEREST INCOME AS OF JUNE 15,1997	
a. NBD	\$ 1,997.75
b. HARRIS BANK, CHICAGO	\$ 371.25
3. PREVIOUS BALANCE AS OF MAY 28,1996	
a. CD ACCOUNT AT NBD	\$35,544.81

b. CD ACCOUNT AT HARRIS BANK, CHICAGO	\$ 4,500.00
c. CHECKING ACCOUNT	\$ 6,364.00
4. PROFIT FROM WASHINGTON D.C. CONVENTION	\$ 689.12
5. ADVANCE RETURN FROM WASHINGTON D.C. CONVENTION	<u>\$ 3,262.42</u>
TOTAL	\$60,030.35

EXPENSES

1. GUEST EXPENSES WASHINGTON D.C. CONVENTION	\$ 4,157.20
2. AWARDS WASHINGTON D.C. CONVENTION	\$ 2,068.30
3. POSTAL EXPENSES FOR MAILING MAGAZINES	\$ 600.00
4. TELEPHONE, MAILING AND MISC.	\$ 914.66
5. ADVANCE TO HOUSTON CHAPTER	\$ 2,000.00
6. ADVANCE TO HOUSTON CHAPTER FOR YOUTH FORUM	\$ 500.00
7. OSA JOURNAL, SPRING 1997	\$ 1,645.44
8. CONTRIBUTION TO MR. KELU. C. MOHAPATRA	\$ 101.00
9. LOSS AND PENALTY BASUNDHARA ACCOUNT	\$ 307.75
10. BANK SERVICE CHARGES	\$ 240.00
11. ELECTION EXPENSES	<u>\$ 344.45</u>
TOTAL	\$12,878.80

CASH IN HAND

a. CD. ACCOUNT AT NBD	\$35,544.84
b. CD. ACCOUNT AT HARRIS BANK, CHICAGO	\$ 4,500.00

c. CHECKING ACCOUNT	\$ 7,106.74
TOTAL	\$47,151.55

**FUNDS RECEIVE FOR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS
FROM MAY 30,1996 TO JUNE 15,1997**

INCOME

1. BASUNDHARA & SAHAYA	\$ 4,532.25
2. SEEDS	\$ 1,405.50
3. OSA CENTER AT VANI VIHAR	\$ 2,000.00
4. MR. KELU. C. MOHAPATRA	\$ 2,870.00
5. EDUCATION FOUNDATION (FROM DR. S. K. DASH)	<u>\$ 3,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$13,807.75

EXPENSES

1. BASUNDHARA & SAHAYA	\$ 4,840.00
2. SEEDS	\$ 1,405.50
3. OSA CENTER AT VANI VIHAR	\$ 2,000.00
4. MR. KELU. C. MOHAPATRA	\$ 2,971.00
5. EDUCATION FOUNDATION (FOR DR. S. K. DASH)	<u>\$ 3,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$14,216.50

THIS ACCOUNT HAS BEEN AUDITED BY THE OSA MEMBERS
PRESENT AT THE BOARD OF GOVERNERS MEETING ON 4/5/97.



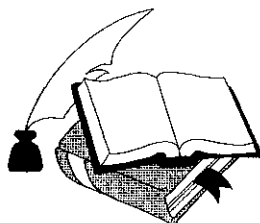
Subrina Biswal Award

Every year, the Orissa Society of the Americas, in joint sponsorship with Dr. Nilambar and Annapurna Biswal, presents the Subrina Biswal Memorial Award to one graduating high school senior. This award, initiated in 1990 by Dr. Nilambar and Annapurna Biswal of Maryland in the loving memory of their daughter, Subrina, provides the recipient with a one-time scholarship of US \$1000.

Recipients are selected based on their academic achievements, extra-curricular activities, interest in the arts, and personal qualities. Applicants must be the child of an OSA member in good standing and must submit a personal statement regarding their future goals and objectives, a list of extra-curricular activities, a letter of recommendation, and high school transcripts.

RECIPIENTS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>University</i>
1990	Nivedita Misra	Harvard
1991	Sarthak Das	Harvard
1992	Seema Mohapatra	Johns Hopkins
1993	Sarba Das	Yale
1994	Manas Mohapatra	Johns Hopkins
1995	Swaroop Mishra	Stanford
1996	Amit Doshi	Harvard



Kalashree Award

The criteria and guidelines for the Kalashree Award were developed by the OSA Cultural Committee and are as follows.

CRITERIA

1. The person should be a performing artist, living in North America.
2. The person should be active in performing arts related to Oriya art and culture. Activities can include performances, teaching, organizing Oriya functions, promoting local Oriya artists, or promoting visiting artists from Orissa.
3. The person should have at least ten years of participation in cultural activities of OSA.

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING A RECIPIENT

The presidents of the local chapters of OSA should submit the names of qualified artists to the Cultural Committee. The members of the cultural committee will then select the finalist by majority vote. No artist should receive this award more than once in his or her lifetime.

NAME, TYPE AND PRESENTATION OF THE AWARD

1. The name of the award should be an oriya word, preferably reflecting the purpose of the award, e.g., *Oriya Kalapriya*, *Kalamani*, *Kalashilpi* or *Kalashree*.
2. The award should be in the form of a plaque.
3. The award should be presented at the Annual Convention of the OSA by the Chief Guest or the President of the OSA, after the President of the OSA or the Chairperson of the Cultural Committee recognize the recipient in a speech.

RECIPIENTS

1991	Promode Patnaik, Pratap Das
1992	Chitralkha Patnaik
1993	Sushri Sangeeta Kar
1994	Annapurna Biswal
1995	Srigopal Mohanty
1996	Surendra K. Ray

Distinguished Oriya Award

The Distinguished Oriya Award is the highest award presented by the Orissa Society of Americas, a non-profit organization operating in the United States to preserve and promote the culture and the customs of the Oriya speaking people. Recipients receive an inscribed honor plaque and a certificate of achievement at a special function hosted by OSA.

CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION (selection is based on one or more)

- Lifetime achievements in the promotion and propagation of Oriya culture and language.
- Proficiency in professional disciplines with strong accomplishments in arts, theater, literature, science or medicine.
- Public service with innovative use of resources to enhance literacy, health, hygiene, child care or adult welfare.
- Leadership to bring forth social and political justice.
- Entrepreneurial skills to cultivate resources in order to provide economic stimuli and opportunities for employment and growth.
- Patriotic idealism to uphold the honor and dignity of Oriya people.
- Acts of heroism.

NOMINATIONS AND SELECTION

- Nominations may be made by individuals or by organizations, Self-nomination is discouraged.
- Nomination is made on plain paper and consists of biodata of the nominee with complete particulars of the contributions and a letter from the nominating person or organization.
- All nominations must reach the Award Committee by June 15 of the year of the award.
- The selection is made by a three-member Award Committee, appointed by the President of the OSA on behalf of the OSA Executive Committee.
- The decision of the award committee on the selection is final.
- The Award Committee may choose to defer the award on any year if it does not find a candidate of outstanding distinction.

RECIPIENTS

1992	Shri Biju Patnaik, Prof. J.N. Mohanty
1993	Dr. and Mrs. K.M. Das
1994	Dr. Gouri Das
1995	Dr. T.P. Das
1996	Dr. Bhakta Rath

Presidents of OSA

Gauri Das	1970	Boston, MA
Bhabagrahi Misra	1971	Hartford, CT
Gauri Das	1973	Boston, MA
Amiya Patnaik	1975	Riverdale, NJ
Promode Patnaik	1978	Birmingham, AL
Ladukesh Patnaik	1981	Detroit, MI
Rabi Patnaik	1983	Randolph Town, MD
Saroj Behera	1985	San Jose, CA
Asoka Das	1987	Toronto, Canada
Amiya Mohanty	1989	Richmond, KY
Digambar Misra	1991	Birmingham, AL
Sita Kantha Dash	1993	Minneapolis, MN
Hemant Senapati	1995	Bloomfield Hills, MI
Gopa Patnaik	1997	San Diego, CA

OSA Convention Venues

1970	Hartford, CT	1971	Hartford, CT
1972	Riverdale, NJ	1973	Riverdale, NJ
1974	College Park, MD	1975	Riverdale, NJ
1976	Toronto, Canada	1977	Riverdale, NJ
1978	Wheaton, MD	1979	New Brunswick, NJ
1980	Detroit, MI	1981	Chicago, IL
1982	Minneapolis, MN	1983	Bowie, MD
1984	Glassboro, NJ	1985	Kent, OH
1986	Toronto, Canada	1987	Stanford, CA
1988	Saginaw, MI	1989	Nashville, TN
1990	Washington, DC	1991	Chicago, IL
1992	Atlanta, GA	1993	Troy, MI
1994	Pomona, NJ	1995	Minneapolis, MN
1996	Washington, DC	1997	Houston, TX



Oriya Happenings

Lord Jagannath in Alabama

On May 9th, 10th, and 11th, the Hindu Cultural Center of North Alabama (HCCNA) had its Murthi Sthapana Puja, installing the deities Lord Ganesha, Lord Venketeshwara, Lord Krishna and Devi Radha, and the Holy Chaturdhamurti, Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, and Maha Sudarsana at the newly consecrated temple located in the outskirts of Huntsville, Alabama. Vedic rituals were conducted by two priests during the three-day ceremony. Nearly a thousand Hindu devotees came to participate in the festivities. Invited to bless the festivities were Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati from Ahmedabhad and Swami Pratyagobodhananda Saraswati from Surat. Especially invited to witness the auspicious occasion were Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingh Deb and his wife, Shrimati Leelavati Pattamahadei of Puri. This was another instance of the realization of JSA's goals of installing Lord Jagannath in temples all over the USA. Dr. B.C. Sahu, Chairman of HCCNA and his wife, Puspalakshmi Sahu, played key roles in bringing and installing the Holy Chaturdhamurti. The occasion was a grand success due to the untiring efforts of all members of HCCNA.

- Puspalakshmi Sahu

California Corner

Our population is growing rapidly, and our children count in high. Feels like California is prosperous again. The total Oriya population is running close to 450, of which 45 are below the age of seven (in the Bay area alone)! We all feel good about the RAJA party at Gopa's in San Diego, and the anticipation of the annual Labor day PICNIC in Cambria on the Pacific coast. We will also celebrate RATHAJATRA on 6th July in Fremont. Several Satsangs continue to help us develop awareness; discourses and discussions add immense value to the Bhajans and kirtans. Our children are growing up faster than we can think - Somesh Dash, Siddhartha Mishra and Sonali Padhi will go to Universities

this Fall. We also have the go ahead from OSA's Executive Committee to host the 1998 Convention here. We hope a big participation from all of you outside of California. Please come and plan a vacation with us.

- Saroj Behera

Maryland-Virginia Chapter Activities

Throughout the year, the Maryland-Virginia Chapter has remained active in many different ways. As a part of the Indian Cultural Coordination Committee, the chapter participated in the celebration of Independence Day, and put up a stall of Oriya food. Shreekant Nayak, chapter Treasurer, organized a "Food for the Hungry" program that day in Baltimore. About one hundred people were served. In October, the chapter organized a get-together with the well-known Gandhian couple, Manmohan and Sumitra Choudhury, who were visiting the USA. Mr. Choudhury, a man in his eighties, encouraged all to think of the needs of the people back home and how to help them.

In January, the chapter participated in the Republic Day Celebrations organized by the Federation of Indian Associations. Sujata Nayak coordinated the cultural program. In April, the chapter participated in the fund raising for the Shiv-Vishnu Temple. During the memorial day weekend, Jayanti Paine of Potomac, MD, gave an Odissi dance recital in Bethesda, MD. Nearly two hundred people gathered. Ms. Paine's efforts to help raise funds for the Odissi research project in Bhubaneswar was well appreciated. The members of the chapter also met Dr. Benudhar Baliarsingh, a former freedom fighter and Health Minister of Orissa. He and his wife Arundhati are visiting their grand-daughter, Dr. Lipishree Nayak. Throughout the year, the chapter children, Sonal Nayak, Srotalina nayak, Sri Ram Nayak, Priya Mehta and Adam Pani have participated in various children's programs. Srotalina has received several awards for her Kathak recitals.

- Anadi Nayak

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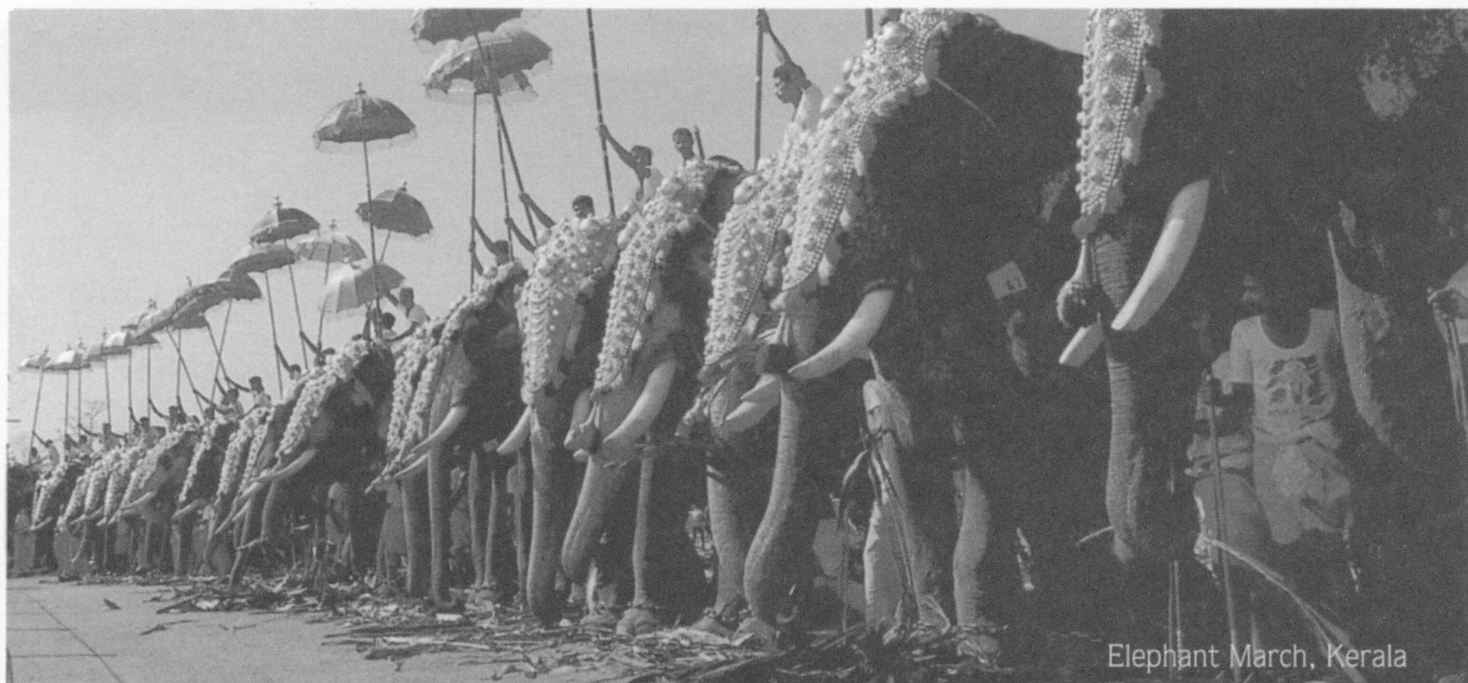


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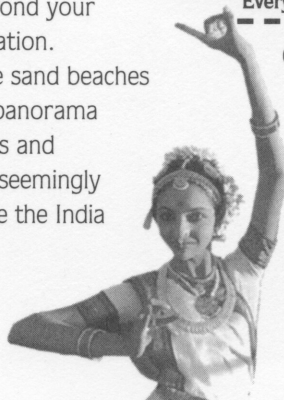
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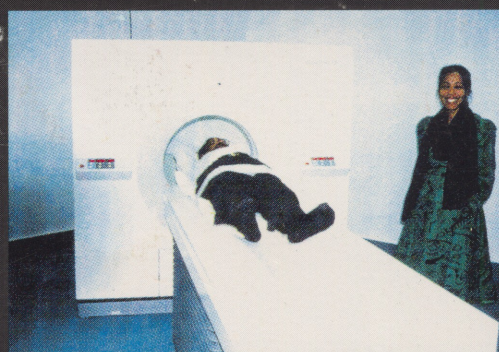


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A group of Oriyas who had emigrated to the United States, Europe, and Saudi Arabia felt that the health care situation in Orissa had reached a crisis state which was no longer tolerable. In 1990, the group envisioned and ultimately invested in what is now the Kalinga Hospital and Research Center (KHRC) in Bhubaneswar. Though construction is underway, KHRC is already open and providing radiology (including CT scan), pathology, nephrology (dialysis), and outpatient services, and will soon be inaugurating a 52-bed wing for both medical and surgical inpatients. By late 1997, KYRC will have 175 inpatient beds. When completed, KHRC will be a 350-bed hospital which will bring state-of-the-art medical care to Orissa at last.



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*Contact: Ramesh Raichoudhury, MD, 29 Westland Drive, Glenn Cove , NY 11542 Ph:(516) 676-6896
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**Our best wishes to
the Orissa Society of the Americas
on the eve of its 28th Annual Convention
at Houston, Texas**



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Dr. Nirmala Panda, M.D.
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